

# Education & Libraries + ESO

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## Back to School offers many opportunities

A new school year is in full swing, and some are even taking their Fall Break. Clubs are back in session and making plans for the club year.

How do your club members want to support Education in your community? Does your club have an ongoing project that benefits the teachers and students? Do members have time to volunteer in the school? Do they only want to make a donation? These are three highly valued ways to support education in our schools.

Or, are your club members tired of the same yearly project or you haven't done any projects for education in recent memory? Well, here are a few ideas to refresh support for education in your community.

These opportunities are great for those with busy schedules who can't commit to being at the school during the day.

- **Materials Prep Kits:** Pick up a box of administrative work to do at home, such as cutting out lamination, assembling packets/flyers, stuffing envelopes, or sorting/labeling classroom supplies.
- **Newsletter & Communications Editing:** Volunteer to be the editor or proofreader for the school or PTA/PTO newsletter.
- **Curriculum Resource Curating:** Help a teacher find and organize online educational resources, videos, and virtual field trips related to a specific unit of study.
- **Record Audiobooks:** Record yourself reading stories for visually impaired students or for lower-grade teachers to use in their classrooms.

**These roles place you directly with students or teachers, but often with a fresh focus.**

- **"Reading Buddy" for Literacy:** Focus specifically on reading fluency by partnering with a student one-on-one for 30 minutes each week to read aloud and practice.
- **Lunch/Recess Monitoring:** Free up teachers to have a full, uninterrupted lunch break by volunteering to monitor the playground or lunchroom.
- **DIY Beautification/Maintenance Day:** Gather a group of volunteers for a weekend to tackle physical projects like painting over old graffiti, building raised garden beds, organizing the teacher's lounge, or inspecting the playground for hazards.



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# ESO Projects – let's get our community reading!

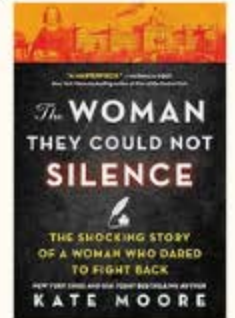
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I want to continue to challenge you to think of ESO as a way to promote reading in your community. Your club and state ESO Award entry needs to be much more than how many books your club members read. What have you decided to **do** to promote reading in your community?

In the last issue of the newsletter, I provided many ideas. Did you take those to your club meeting and start planning a project? If so, please let me know!

## Book Review

I readily admit that I enjoy reading fiction more than anything. I saw a Facebook post from one of our GFWC IL members about the book, **"The Woman They Could Not Silence," by Kate Moore**. I've had good luck following her recommendations, so I took the plunge!



The narrative begins in Illinois in 1860, a time when women had virtually no rights, and under "coverture" laws, a married woman was legally considered the property of her husband. Elizabeth Packard's minister husband, Theophilus, grew increasingly frustrated and threatened by her independent intellect, outspoken nature on social issues, and theological differences. In a shocking act of oppression, he had her committed to the Illinois State Hospital for the Insane without a public hearing or medical examination—a legal power he possessed simply as her spouse.

The book details Elizabeth's three years of unjust confinement in the horrific conditions of the asylum. Moore's compelling storytelling brings to life Elizabeth's resilience as she finds herself among other women who were committed simply for being "too emotional, opinionated, independent... or intellectual"—essentially, for not staying "in line." Recognizing the grave injustice, Elizabeth begins to secretly document the abuse, neglect, and the stories of the sane women trapped inside.

Her fight doesn't end with her release (which she eventually secures through a writ of habeas corpus and a sensational jury trial that declared her sane). The second half of the book chronicles her tireless activism and lobbying efforts. Her refusal to be silenced led to lasting legislative change, including the passage of the "Act for the Protection of the Personal Liberty of the Citizen" in Illinois, which granted women a public jury trial before being committed to an asylum. She also fought for married women's property and custody rights.

I highly recommend this 561-page page-turner that reads like a thriller even though it is a meticulously researched non-fiction.



## GFWC ESO Book Club on Facebook

Are you one of the over 1,700 members of our GFWC ESO Book club on Facebook? If not, I encourage you to join us for some great conversations about our most recent reads, ESO project ideas, and some laughs along the way.

You must be a member of GFWC to join and answer two simple questions (in what State are you a member, who is your GFWC State President), along with agreeing to the terms of belonging. It's a great community to share a common interest.

### The Holidays are On the Way!

Whether you need a gift for your child, grandchild, or godchild, let's get the kiddos reading! Here are some ideas to start that shopping list.



#### Ages 2–5 (Toddlers & Preschoolers)

- Interactive Board Books (lift-the-flap, touch-and-feel, sound books)
- Personalized Storybooks (with the child's name as the main character)
- Book + Toy Sets (like The Very Hungry Caterpillar with plush toy)
- Reading Nook Accessories: cozy pillows, soft lighting, mini bookshelves

#### Ages 6–8 (Early Readers)

- Early Chapter Book Series (e.g., Magic Tree House, Junie B. Jones)
- Reading Reward Chart or stickers
- Book-themed Puzzles or Games (like Guess Who? Book Characters Edition)
- Book Light or Clip-on Reading Lamp

#### Ages 9–12 (Middle Grade)

- Boxed Book Series Sets (e.g., Percy Jackson, Harry Potter, Wings of Fire)
- Subscription to a Kids' Book Box (e.g., Literati, OwlCrate Jr., Bookroo)
- DIY Book Journal Kit or reading log notebook
- Gift Card to a Local Bookstore

#### Themed Gift Ideas

##### "Reading Adventure" Gift Basket

- A couple of age-appropriate books
- Hot chocolate mix or snacks
- Comfy socks or a cozy blanket
- Fun bookmark
- A note: "Let's go on a reading adventure!"

##### Book-of-the-Month Coupon Pack

- Create homemade coupons: "Pick any book at the store," "One extra bedtime story," etc.
- Give 12 – one for each month of the year!