



PUBLIC ISSUES

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM

 Visit www.GFWC.org/membership/club-manual/ for updates and more information.

CIVIC AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES ARE KEY COMPONENTS IN OUR LIVES

The GFWC Public Issues Community Service Program is designed to actively connect members with effective projects and activities relating to civic and social responsibilities. This program focuses on the following areas:

Citizenship

- Educate club members and local communities on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
- Use resources, including GFWC Resolutions, to increase patriotism, pride in heritage, and active community involvement.
- Encourage active involvement in the legislation and regulation of issues that affect the world around you.

Military Personnel

- Educate club members and local communities on needs of military families
- Advocate for legislation that supports active and veteran military personnel and their families
- Support military personnel and veterans returning to community living

Emergency and Disaster Preparedness

- Educate club members and local communities on disaster readiness, recovery, and relief
- Work with law enforcement agencies and first responders to increase public awareness
- Develop community programs and coalitions to address disaster recovery and relief

Safety and Crime Prevention

- Educate club members and local communities on home, transportation (including bicycles, rail, and air) and internet safety
- Provide programs, tools, and training
- Create safer homes and communities through crime prevention awareness

Consider projects that address issues such as running for office; voter registration; elections; democracy; disaster preparedness; road safety; and supporting our military personnel. Below is a comprehensive list of ideas on how clubs may support the Public Issues Community Service Program.

We have partnered with like-minded organizations that promote civic engagement. Refer to the Partnership section beginning on page 2 for activities designed especially for GFWC clubs.



2014-2016 PUBLIC ISSUES COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM

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IDEAS

Citizenship

- Celebrate patriotism.
- Visit, volunteer, and help preserve historic sites, monuments, and homes.
- Promote classroom lessons on American heritage symbols.
- Take an active role in the election process. Encourage schools to engage future voters with innovative programs on elections.
- Encourage qualified women to seek elected or appointed office.
- Participate in the legislative process.
- Help someone study for the U.S. Citizenship Test. Visit www.USCitizenship.org.
- Create and support ways to observe the National Day of Remembrance and Moment of Remembrance at 3 p.m. on Memorial Day each year.
- Hold a National Issues Forum.
- Work to promote student volunteer service requirement in schools.
- Promote classroom and club member lessons on American heritage symbols and flag etiquette.

Military Personnel

- Promote legislation in support of veterans' issues.
- Conduct programs and projects to recognize and honor all veterans.
- Seek volunteer opportunities at community veteran facilities.
- Provide resources to support military families.
- Assist and advocate for severely wounded, ill or injured soldiers, veterans and their families.
- Promote the hiring of returning veterans.
- Invite returning men and women who are serving overseas to speak at club meetings and community forums. Recognize their dedication and patriotism with a small token of appreciation.
- Work to promote jobs and health care benefits for Veterans.

Emergency and Disaster Preparedness

- Partner with local health organizations to sponsor First Aid and CPR classes and programs.
- Educate communities on the need for emergency provisions.
- Build a kit for disaster preparedness.
- Learn about opportunities to get involved and expand resources for first responders.
- Provide in-kind and financial assistance to disaster victims. Consider supporting the GFWC Disaster Relief-Library Replenishment Fund.

Safety and Crime Prevention

- Work with local fire departments to provide fire safety awareness. Establish an awareness campaign to remind community members to change batteries in smoke detectors when clocks change back between standard and daylight savings time.
- Sponsor community programs on home fire drills, safe storage of combustibles, and special safety concerns for children and older adults.
- Get involved with local National Night Out events. Register, at no charge, and receive the NNO resource kit.
- Work with local law enforcement officials, neighborhood coalitions, and civic groups on crime prevention programs.
- Promote vehicle safety. Work with local officials and schools to encourage driver training and safe driving seminars for young and mature drivers.
- Sponsor community programs on special safety and crime prevention concerns for young children and older adults.

PARTNERSHIPS

GFWC partners are the organizations listed with whom GFWC has established a formal relationship and mutual understanding. Our partners offer unique and customized services: materials, speakers, kits, and/or additional information specifically designed for GFWC clubs. They are aware of GFWC clubs' specific needs, our organizational structure, and have a signed Memorandum of Understanding with GFWC.

To ensure that donations to GFWC partner organizations at the individual, club, district, or state level are reflected toward GFWC's collective impact, make sure to write GFWC in the memo line on your donation check.





Kettering Foundation

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The Kettering Foundation is an independent, nonpartisan research organization rooted in the American tradition of cooperative research. Everything Kettering researches relates to one central question: what does it take for democracy to work as it should? Or put another way: what does it take for citizens to shape their collective future?

The foundation explores ways that key political practices can be strengthened through innovations that emphasize active roles for citizens. Kettering's research is distinctive because it is conducted from the perspective of citizens and focuses on what people collectively can do to address problems affecting their lives, their community, and their nation.

The foundation seeks to identify and address the challenges to making democracy work as it should through interrelated program areas that focus on citizens, communities, and institutions. But Kettering doesn't study communities, schools, professions, or institutions like governments or colleges and universities. Instead, they study how all of these relate to citizens trying to make a difference in shaping their common future.

National Issues Forums

As a partner in the National Issues Forums, Kettering engages with other civic, educational, and professional groups, organizations, and individuals to promote nonpartisan public deliberation in communities across the country.

GFWC and Kettering have created an issue booklet entitled ***Bridging and Bonding: How Can We Create Engaged Communities in a Time of Rapid Change?*** This endeavor is similar to the *Which Way Forward for Women?* issues booklet produced by GFWC and the Kettering Foundation in the mid-1990s. Visit www.GFWC.org to download the booklet or contact the Kettering Foundation to request copies.

GFWC clubs are invited and encouraged to host issue forums in your communities using ***Bridging and Bonding: How Can We Create Engaged Communities in a Time of Rapid Change?*** where club and community members can deliberate on this compelling topic to produce an understanding of the issue as well as promote further involvement.



Sew Much Comfort

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Sew Much Comfort provides adaptive clothing to support the unique needs of our wounded service personnel members, including all branches of the military and national guard. Unfortunately, standard clothing does not properly fit with fixators, prosthetics, and casts. For many, a hospital gown is the only option. SMC adapts store-bought or sewn clothing using our custom-designed patterns. The clothing is designed to appear as normal civilian clothing, and is constructed for ease of dressing, fostering self-care. Most of all, it is a symbol of gratitude for their sacrifice. Sew Much Comfort is the only organization providing adaptive clothing at no cost to our wounded service members.

Together, Sew Much Comfort and GFWC can make a difference in the following ways:

- Collect and donate adaptable clothing. Sew Much Comfort accepts:
 - Woven or cotton knit boxer shorts in sizes L, XL, and XXL
 - Heavy weight t-shirts in solid colors or college/professional team prints in sizes M, L, and XL

- Contact your local sports teams for t-shirt, shorts, and/or pants donations.
- Hold fundraisers to purchase needed garments and supplies.
- Volunteer to be a seamstress.
- Have a group sew day. Appoint one person as the quality checker to ensure that all sewing meets Sew Much Comfort standards.

Request an information packet from Sew Much Comfort. Include GFWC in the subject line, if making the request via email. Note your name and mailing address.



United Service Organizations (USO)

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Millions of times each year at hundreds of locations around the world, the USO lifts the spirits of America's troops and their families. A nonprofit, congressionally chartered, private organization, the USO relies on the generosity of individuals, organizations, and corporations to support its activities. The USO is not part of the U.S. government, but is recognized by the Department of Defense, Congress, and the President of the United States, who serves as Honorary Chairman of the USO. The following are some of the programs and ways you can support the USO:

- **United Through Reading's Military Program:** Deployed parents are videotaped reading a book to their child. The DVD and the book are then sent to the child back home so they can watch mom or dad read them a bedtime story. This service is available at many USO centers in airports, community locations, military medical facilities, and overseas bases. All recording equipment, books, and packing and shipping materials are supplied by the USO. In 2013, 30,000 books were recorded by deployed parents to their children. You can support this program with monetary donations or by hosting a book drive. Just \$10 gives a child a bedtime story from a deployed parent. When hosting a book drive, you must stick to the USO pre-approved children's book list and all donated books must be new. Clubs supporting this program are able to include note cards or bookmarks with personal messages to the families and the name of the club that made this possible.
- **Operation Phone Home:** The USO distributes phone cards to individual service members and offers a Private Telephone Network providing dedicated phone and Internet service at our centers in Afghanistan and Kuwait. In 2011, the USO shipped phone cards to more than 250 locations around the globe. In Southwest Asia alone, more than 28 million minutes were logged in free talk time for our service men and women in 2011. To date the USO has provided nearly 3.2 million free pre-paid international calling cards to troops stationed overseas. You can support this program by making a monetary donation. For \$25, 70 soldiers can call home using the satellite service.
- **USO2GO:** USO2GO delivers the USO's most popular services to troops in remote and restricted areas. Everything from beanbag chairs, snacks, coffee, and toiletries to phone cards, DVDs, Xbox® 360, PlayStation® 3, and Nintendo's Wii™. Musical instruments, art supplies, footballs, Frisbees, and horseshoes are also available. USO2GO bundles, weighing nearly one ton each, have been delivered to more than 700 remote forward operating bases in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Philippines, Egypt, Djibouti, and Kuwait, with 160 bundles delivered in 2013. You can sponsor USO2GO kits by raising money to support the kits. Kits range from \$5,000 to \$25,000 depending on what is sent and the size of the forward operating base.
- **Sesame Street/USO Experience:** All of your favorite Sesame Street characters deliver live performances to military children ages two to five. Last year's tour featured a new character named Katie, a military child dealing with the uncertainty of making friends after a family move. Launched in April, this tour will deliver 147 shows on 59 bases in the Pacific and Europe. Children also receive The Talk, Listen, Connect (TLC) DVD series to help them cope with the affects of deployment, multiple deployments, combat-related injuries, and, unfortunately, the loss of a loved one. You can support this program with monetary donations.

- **USO Warrior and Family Centers:** On June 27, 2011, the USO broke ground on the Warrior and Family Center at Fort Belvoir, Va, the first of two stateside centers to support healing heroes and their families. Later this year, we will break ground on the second at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda, Md. These centers offer a comprehensive array of specialized services and programs designed to meet the needs of recovering troops – and their families—in a supportive and home-like setting. The approximately 20,000 square-foot buildings will include movie theaters, classrooms, sports cafés, healing gardens, and more, all created expressly for wounded warriors and their families and caregivers. The USO has undertaken a \$100 million capital fundraising campaign to raise \$25 million to build two new centers, \$50 million to support ongoing programs, and \$25 million to endow the centers. One hundred percent of all cash and cash-equivalent contributions will go to the initiative that supports wounded warriors. No funds will go to administration or overhead.
- **USO Centers:** There are more than 160 center locations around the world, including in the United States, Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, UAE, Germany, Italy, Japan, Guam, and Korea. In 2011, military members and their families visited centers nearly 8 million times. GFWC members can volunteer at these centers greeting and helping service members daily. Clubs can help collect needed items like salty snacks and water for the centers to provide to troops. Clubs can host service projects or events to support the many programs at USO Centers (programs vary with each center).

Contact the USO for more information on how you can participate in support of our troops and their families.

GFWC COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS

All programs and projects that relate to Public Issues should be reported here, whether they are club initiated, involve other members of the community, other organizations or work with any GFWC partners.

Direct any questions regarding projects that do not involve GFWC partners to the Public Issues Community Service Program Chairman or GFWC Programs department at Programs@GFWC.org.



GFWC Women's Club of Crookston partnered with the USO to hold a "Barbeque for the Troops" fundraiser at a community wide "Night to Unite". They used the USO toolkit to set up a website to collect donations, wrote letters to groups that support veterans and set up a booth at the "Night to Unite". Because they could not serve and sell barbeque, they gave out bags of barbeque flavor potato chips. Proceeds of \$927 were donated to the USO's United through Reading Program.



The **GFWC Town & Country Women's Club of Santa Barbara** (California), in support of homeless veterans in their community, the club partnered with the local Elks Lodge and invited veterans for a monthly "Bring a Vet to Lunch" meeting at which informational programs were presented by community organizations that provide services.



GFWC Junior Woman's Club of Barnesville (Ohio) sponsored a "Touch A Truck" program for local elementary school children to learn about various vehicles used in and around their community. Firefighters and EMS staff demonstrated their vehicles and equipment.

AWARDS

GFWC recognizes clubs and state federations for creativity in implementing effective Public Issues Community Service Program projects and partnership projects, as follows:

- Certificates to one state federation in each membership category
- \$50 award to one club in the nation for project creativity

Award winners will be determined by entries into the Awards Program. Each state federation may submit one State Award Entry Cover Sheet and one Club Creativity Award Entry Cover Sheet for the Public Issues Community Service Program projects. Clubs do not submit entries directly to GFWC.

GFWC partners will recognize state federations and clubs for their efforts. Contact the GFWC Programs Department for information.



Refer to the Reporting section of the *Club Manual* for more information, including the Award Entry Cover Sheet guidelines.