

JULY 2026



GFWC BLUE UMBRELLA CLUB NEWSLETTER



Board Meeting: Sunday, August 2nd 6:30 pm
gfwcblueumbrella.org





President's Message

BY: KATHY MAMMENGGA

I spent many years managing people. It was a position I was placed in, not one I sought or applied for. As a very quiet person at the time, I often went to my office to focus on work involving my pad of paper and my pen versus being among people. I usually kept my door open so I didn't feel as if the walls were closing in on me. Just inside my door was a short two-drawer cabinet. On top of the cabinet were my handicrafts, and during the growing season, fresh flowers.

Flowers make me smile. I kept a knife in my truck's center console. Once a week, as the gate to my driveway was closing, I would jump out of my truck with my knife in hand. I cut fresh flowers for my secretary. If there were any left over after arranging the vase on her desk, I put them in the vase on my short cabinet.

People would often stop in to chat and ask where the flowers came from or how my gardens were doing. Countless conversations took place over those 20 years. I was the shy person in the 60 to 70-person office. The flowers drew the people in and conversations followed. Sometimes people had something to say, needed someone to be a sounding board, or were looking for a pair of ears attached to someone who spoke very little.

Sometimes when people came into my office to see the flowers, see my latest handicraft, or just share a greeting, they would stand in silence. Shy me certainly was not able to initiate a conversation to break the silence. I could see in their eyes that there was more on their mind that they did not want to share. I learned to ask light-hearted, thought provoking questions that made them think and redirect their thoughts from the unspoken unpleasanties they held.

One of my desires is to engage all of our Blue Umbrella members. That engagement may look different for each person. We are all unique. We each have our own responsibilities and schedules. Engagement for one person is not the same as engagement for another, yet all are important to our club.

It reminds me of a time when I organized a team building activity for my team that was similar to musical chairs. I was approached by a woman who was not feeling well and said she could not participate. I told her the timing was perfect because I needed someone to stop and start the music so I could do another position. She hesitated, and agreed.

After a couple of rounds, the ear-to-ear smile on her face and her laugh (two things none of us had seen for a very long time) were bonuses to the three goals that warranted some team building. That story reminds me that each of us contributes in different ways, and every contribution matters. We need everyone to continue the momentum. Blue Umbrella needs each one of us. Like the flowers on my cabinet drew people in, what would draw you closer to our club?

I am very interested in your thoughts, project ideas, and getting to know you. What project ideas do you think we could do knowing we are in many locations? What is an area that is near and dear to your heart? What resources would you need to take part in the project? What flower makes you smile?

What is your preferred way to participate: coordinate, hands on, donate supplies or funds, something else? What makes you smile? If you created a bouquet, what color flowers would you use? What is your favorite flower? Mine are tuberous begonias, pansies, and Black-Eyed Susans.

When you read those questions, did you stop after any of them and answer before moving to the next one? We have amazing leaders and awesome members in Blue Umbrella. I am thankful for each and every one of you. Thank you for opening your door to let me put forth a glimpse of myself and my experiences, while stepping beyond my comfort zone.

In Love, Respect and Kindness,
Kathy Mammenga





Featured Member of the Month

Joanne Schiefer

BY: KAREN GRIGGSBY

As the lazy, hazy days of summer continue, we invite you to find a cool place to relax and enjoy this month's Member Spotlight featuring Joanne Schiefer.

Originally from Northern Virginia, Joanne's passion for service began early while attending an all-girls high school. After graduation, she worked in the Washington, D.C. Mayor's Office and later on Capitol Hill with senators and members of Congress. After becoming a stay-at-home mom, she returned to work at her son's school, which inspired a new career in education. At age 40, Joanne returned to college, earning both her bachelor's and master's degrees. During her 24-year career, she taught computer technology to students from pre-kindergarten through graduate school.

Joanne's GFWC Florida journey began with a visit to a GFWC Lake Placid Junior Woman's Club Sock Hop fundraiser. After retiring and relocating to Lake Placid in 2015, she quickly became involved in the club and soon learned to be careful what she said "yes" to! One opportunity led to another, as she served as her club's Environment Chairman, Club President, District 9 Junior Secretary, State Junior Fundraising Chairman, Leadership Chairman (twice), District 9 Junior Director (twice), and now Junior State Corresponding Secretary. Through it all, she has remained dedicated to her home club, where she currently serves as President-Elect.

Joanne joined the Blue Umbrella Club shortly after its launch. She believes cyber clubs provide a wonderful opportunity for busy women to remain active in GFWC while balancing careers, families, and other commitments. Joanne believes education is the key to member retention. She feels that when members understand GFWC's remarkable history and the organization's impact, from supporting public libraries to advancing women's rights, they develop a greater appreciation for their membership and a stronger commitment to remain involved.

Joanne, thank you for exemplifying the spirit of a GFWC clubwoman through your leadership, dedication, and willingness to say "yes" to serving others. Your fellow members appreciate all you do!





A Life-Changing Partnership: My Journey to a Service Dog - Part 3

BY PAULA JUVINALL

Well, the day we get matched is finally here. We were all so excited that morning. We were up and to class early. Everyone on campus comes to watch and join in the fun and excitement.

We had all talked at dinner the night before guessing which dog we'd get. Since I worked with Marvin, a large black lab, most of the time, we all were fairly sure that is who I was getting. We were all spread out through the room, and we were so excited and nervous. After having to wait for what seemed like forever, they announced my name and that I was matched with Genie, a yellow lab. My friends and I were all surprised because I had only worked with Genie on the last day for a little while. I trusted the instructors though, so I was extremely excited to find out what life with Genie would be like. They did warn us though that they could change our dog at any time if they felt there was a better choice.

After all the pictures and congratulations, all of us recipients went back to the dorms. We were now responsible for the dogs 24/7. We had to feed them, walk them, brush them, do their nails, and everything else that comes with being a dog owner. On top of that we had to work with them on their training to get them used to taking commands from us.

The dorm was in a big building so I had to use my scooter a lot so Genie and I would zoom up and down the hallways. I got the nickname "Speedy." The first night I had Genie sleep in the crate like we were supposed to. She slept through the night; however, I kept waking up worried if she would be Okay. At class in the morning, we talked about how we did through the night, and it seemed that Genie was the only one that did not have to go potty in the middle of the night. Yay, for Genie. Now the adventure and hard work really begin.



A Delightful Intermission Featuring You

We often spend our days lifting others up, giving support, working on a project, showing up, giving back and we push aside the idea of stepping to the side, even for a short moment, because the feeling of not being the helper or doer is unfamiliar. It is a feeling we are not used to. We are not comfortable in that space. Instead of viewing it as stepping away, how about seeing it as stepping into your own well-deserved spotlight? It is your intermission, the moment you get to take a deep breath, slow down, stand still, and the audience gets to appreciate you. It can be ten minutes with a cup of tea, a stroll around the block, closing your eyes outside and listening to the birds, sitting in a comfy chair to do nothing but let your mind and body rest. These moments of intermission are important for our wellbeing.

To be able to offer care and kindness to others, we need to tend to ourselves. We need the quiet moments, time to stop and smell the roses, and an opportunity to appreciate the view. Be the rock star of your intermission. Do what you want to do. Shift your mind to something that warms your heart. Enjoy! You are the guest of honor. Without a period of rejuvenation, we run out of capacity to give. When the curtain rises, you will be refreshed and ready to shine as you always do.



Imagine the Possibilities

We are thankful that you read the newsletter each month and we appreciate your feedback. To keep Blue Umbrella strong, we need your ideas, thoughts, and vision. There are new ideas brewing behind the scenes and we are excited to let them take a little more shape before sharing them with you and gathering your input. Your input is important. We will be sending out a survey to our members, and we encourage everyone to take a moment to share their thoughts.

We want to hear from you. What is a project that excites you? Do you see a need that is not being addressed in your community? How do you like to be involved? These are the types of questions we will be asking. Sometimes the best ideas come from tossing ideas around and letting them take shape, like a snowball. One idea shared can spark an idea from someone else, and on and on. Before you know it, the snowball has a corn cob pipe, a button nose and two eyes made out of coal. Then, when an old silk hat is placed on his head, his adventures begin.



GIVE IT A WHIRL

Give It a Whirl!

Looking for a little spark in your month? Why not give something new a whirl just for the fun of it! Think of it as your own personal “*A Beautiful Morning*,” a chance to step into the day with a fresh outlook. Change up your routine in a simple, low pressure way such as taking a different route on your walk, trying a new recipe and inviting a neighbor to taste-test it, or visiting a local park or museum you’ve never explored. If you’re spending time with your grandchildren, let them take the lead for the day. Build a creative fort inside or out, invent a game, or create your own mini challenge with fun, simple prizes. Sometimes when we make a small change, it brings big smiles and before you know it, it feels like “*Here Comes the Sun*.”

Is getting together with friends what you enjoy? Try a spontaneous picnic where each person brings something small to share, maybe a new food or a flavor you’ve never tried before. Meet on the front porch, at a park, or somewhere completely new. And if you’re ready to stretch just a little further, take a cue from “*Come Fly With Me*” and sign up for a class that’s a bit outside your usual routine such as painting, line dancing, or even walking dogs at a local shelter. Big or small, when you try something out of the ordinary, life feels fresh, a little brighter, and a lot more fun and you may just discover a new favorite activity that makes you want to take a whirl!





This Month's Feel-Good Tunes

 Perfect companions while
you give it a whirl!



A Beautiful Morning
A gentle reminder
that every day is
a fresh start



*Here Comes
the Sun*
Because even small
changes can brighten
everything



*Come Fly
With Me*
A playful nudge to try
something just a little
different

Put one on, take a step outside
your routine, and see where the
day takes you. 



GFWC FLORIDA PRESIDENTS PROJECT

Get involved with **Terry Reese's** President's Project, **"Fired Up For Firefighters,"** by participating in the Firefighter's Calendar Contest! Clubs should submit a photo with local firefighters to their District or Junior District Director by mid-July. The best photo from each district will be sent to Chair Georgia Browning by August 1st.

Georgia Browning - gbrowning78@gmail.com



A firefighter holding a camera, with the text 'Firefighter's Calendar Contest' in a stylized font.

A fun and engaging project to support Scholarships & Equipment for the Florida State Fire College

Who Can Participate All GFWC Florida Clubs	Why It Matters - Support Firefighter Training & Certification - Scholarships for the Florida State Fire College - Essential Equipment for Fire Safety
The Project 2027 Firefighter Wall Calendar - Photos with local firefighters in action - Club members encouraged to join the fun! *Get in the photo. Be creative & interactive!	Timeline May – July: Clubs take & select photo Mid-July: Submit digital photo to District Director August 1: Districts submit one digital photo to State Chairman
How It Works - Take photos with local firefighters - Make it fun and engaging - Submit one photo to your District Director	
Where To Find It - Available at 2026 Fall Board - Available on gfwcflorida.org Marketplace	

Winning Photos Featured in the 2027 Calendar and Recognized at Fall Board 2026

Contact: Georgia Browning, President's Project Chairman gbrowning78@gmail.com

GFWC FL JUNIOR DIRECTOR PROJECT



Donate essential breakfast items to keep summer filled with possibilities.

Benefiting
FEEDING TAMPA BAY

MOST NEEDED BREAKFAST ITEMS

- Breakfast Bars
- Dry Cereal
boxes or bags | nutritious cereals like Cheerios, Chex, or Wheaties!
- Shelf-Stable Milk
- Oatmeal
- Granola

SCAN TO JOIN OR SUPPORT OUR TEAM!



Together, we can provide meals and hope to children and families in our community.



SHOP OUR AMAZON WISHLIST
Items ship directly to our collection site!



https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/FCQXFQL9R5V1?ref=wl_share

EVERY ITEM COUNTS.

Summer should be full of possibilities, not hunger. Donate today to give kids in 10 counties a nourishing start to their day.



GFWC DISTRICT 8 SPRING WORKSHOP MEETING
Saturday, June 6, 2026
10:00 AM – 2:00 PM
Doors Open @ 9:00 AM



THE GROVES GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB
7924 Melogold Circle
Land O'Lakes, FL 34638

Nourishing bodies. Restoring dignity. Serving with love. Royally Served.

In Support of **Sherry Clendinen's** Director's Project, **Royally Served**. We are proud to be participating in Feeding Tampa Bay's Cereal for Summer campaign as we work to nourish bodies, restore dignity, and serve with love.

Together, we can help provide essential breakfast items to children and families experiencing food insecurity this summer.

There are many ways to help: Join or support our team: <https://donate.ftb.org/GFWCFLROYALLYSERVED>

Donate Breakfast through our Amazon Wishlist – all donations will be shipped directly to Feeding Tampa Bay:

<https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/FCQXFQL9R5V1...>

Summer should be full of possibilities, not hunger.

DONATE ❤️

SAVE THE DATE



The General Federation of Women's Clubs is united in its dedication to volunteer community service. The 2026 GFWC International Day of Service is scheduled for Saturday, September 26. The focus will be to help end domestic and sexual violence across the United States and internationally.

Clubs can register here:

<https://memberportal.gfwc.org/pages/gfwc-international-day-of-service>

We ♥ our Volunteers



Planning for the 2026 Leadership, Education and Development Seminar (LEADS) for GFWC Florida is in progress. Scheduled for September 18, 2026, at the Rosen Plaza in Orlando, it will take place before the Florida Fall Board meeting. If you are interested please contact Kathy Mammenga

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES



Check out the GFWC Learning Academy today:

The General Federation of Women's Clubs continues its mission of supporting women through education, leadership, and community impact. The GFWC Learning Academy offers free online training in leadership, membership, technology, and more—helping members grow and succeed in their club journey.

<https://memberportal.gfwc.org/pages/learning-academy>

BLUE UMBRELLA MERCHANDISE

Do you need a Blue Umbrella Club T-shirt? These fitted tees come in a stunning turquoise blue and are available in sizes Small through 4XL. Please order at least one size up—these shirts are fitted and may shrink slightly in the wash.

T-Shirt Pricing (tax included):

 Small-XL: \$27

 2XL-4XL: \$29

 Add \$5 shipping per order

 Jewelry Collection:

✨ Bracelets: \$15

(more pictures on the website)

✨ Earrings: \$10

✨ Pins: \$10

 Shipping additional

 NEW! Blue Umbrella Totes \$5
Perfect for meetings, errands, or
gifting—grab one (or more)!

NEW!! Blue Umbrella Lanyard \$5

To Order:

Email Paula Juvinall at"

merchblueumbrella@gmail.com

with your order and shipping info.

Payment Options:

✓ Use any of the payment links on our website

✓ Or mail a check



Use the QR code for online payment, or mail a check to the address listed below.

QR Code - put a checkmark in the box labeled "Other". Note t-shirt size or jewelry details in the box below that

Check - in memo line, write t-shirt size or jewelry details

Please download the PhotoCircle App and begin uploading your BUC photos directly to the Blue Umbrella Club PhotoCircle (scan the QR code below to join).

It makes creating the newsletter and gathering historical memories so much easier!



 2026 Blue Umbrella Club
Join my circle by scanning
the QR Code above

GFWC Blue Umbrella Club, Inc.

PO Box 371

Mango, FL 33550-0371

CLUB OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Kathy Mammenga	president@gfwcblueumbrella.org
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Advisor	Laura Connelly	advisorconnelly@gfwcblueumbrella.org

Mission Statement

This Club is organized to encourage an ongoing, positive opportunity for volunteerism based on incorporating the attributes of love, respect, and kindness through all aspects of life. The mission will encompass support for existing clubs and projects at local levels.

A COLLECT FOR CLUBWOMEN

Keep us, oh God, from pettiness;
Let us be large in thought, in word, in deed.
Let us be done with fault-finding
And leave off self-seeking.
May we put away all pretense
And meet each other face to face,
Without self-pity and without prejudice.
May we never be hasty in judgement
And always generous.
Let us take time for all things;

Make us to grow calm, serene, gentle.
Teach us to put into action our better impulses,
Straightforward and unafraid.
Grant that we may realize it is
The little things that create differences,
That in the big things of life we are at one.
And may we strive to touch and to know
The great, common human heart of us all.
And, oh Lord God, let us forget not
To be kind!

Mary Stewart, 1904

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

July

Mimi Frezza 4th

★ Helen Smith 7th

Candy Jackson 9th ★

Kaitlyn Doty 18th

Carey Bates 23rd

Wilma Jackson 27th ●

Theresa Crockett 28th ★

AUGUST

Sheila Zuhlke 4th

Bradlee Swanson 7th ●

● Jodi Ratica 9th

Janette Sweeney 10th

Patricia Wolff 10th ★

Dianne Foerster 15th

Harriet Hankerson 19th

Jasdeep Cook 20th

Linda Mitchell 20th

Beverly Hendrickson 21st ●

Beth Rhodes 23rd