

MARCH 2026



GF WC BLUE UMBRELLA CLUB NEWSLETTER



Board Meeting: Sunday, April 12, 6:30 pm ET

GF WC Florida Annual Convention: May 1-4

gfwcblueumbrella.org



FROM DIANNE'S DESK

What an incredible month it has been! Since our last newsletter and membership meeting, it feels as though everything has been moving in overdrive throughout the entire GFWC family. From Suellen, Wendy, Jolie, and Shannon at the international level, to Sara and the Florida Board, to our individual club presidents and members, women across our organization are on the move, and making a meaningful difference.

The official Calls to GFWC Annual Convention and GFWC Florida Annual Convention have been received, and soon we will have the opportunity to reflect on the accomplishments of the current administrations and look ahead to 2026–2028. Our Blue Umbrella members are an active part of this exciting work. Way to go!

Our April Blue Umbrella Board meeting will be held on April 12 at 6:30 p.m. ET. The Nominating Committee will formally present the proposed slate of officers for the 2026–2028 term, which will be shared with members immediately following the meeting. Elections will take place during the May Membership Meeting on Sunday, May 17 at 7:00 p.m. ET, with an opportunity for nominations from the floor. A quorum will be needed to conduct business, so please mark your calendar and plan to attend. Your participation truly matters and is greatly appreciated.

You will find several wonderful features in this edition of the newsletter. Karen Griggsby has prepared a Member Spotlight highlighting Dana Montenieri and her remarkable artistic gifts. You will also enjoy a heartwarming article from Paula Juvinal, sharing her experiences with her new Canine Companion, Genie.

I had the tremendous honor of attending the Flight of Honor Welcome Home celebration. The atmosphere was absolutely electric! This project has truly touched the hearts of members across the state, and the financial and emotional support from our clubs has been extraordinary. Blue Umbrella members Kathy Mammenga, Amber Treat, and Lynn Werner served as guardians on the flight, and Kathy will be sharing a personal report. It was inspiring to see so many people, including our Blue Umbrella members, gathered to welcome our Veterans home. Congratulations to President Sara, Chairman Ronda, and the entire President's Project team.

Finally, a friendly reminder that according to the Blue Umbrella bylaws, annual dues are due by April 1 and become in arrears after May 31. Later in this newsletter, you will find details on how to submit payment by mail, along with the address and a QR code for online payment. This information is also available on our website.

Thank you for continuing to stay engaged and committed to helping change our world through LOVE, RESPECT, and KINDNESS!

Hugs,

Dianne

DANA MONTENIERI

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

BY KAREN GRIGGSBY



In celebration of Women's History Month, we are proud to spotlight Danella (Dana) Montenieri, a dedicated member of GFWC Blue Umbrella Club whose commitment to uplifting and empowering women truly shines.

An only child, Dana was born and raised in Chattahoochee, Florida. Creativity has always been central to her life, with art and music shaping her personal and professional journey. At nineteen, she launched her first small business, a mercantile-style shop where she designed floral arrangements, framed artwork, and created ceramics. She also sang professionally with a Gospel Quartet for more than twenty years.

Today, with the continued support of her husband, she owns a ceramics business where she teaches art classes and enjoys sharing the joy of creativity while remaining actively engaged in service and her community.

Dana earned a Bachelor's degree in Education and completed her Master of Fine Arts just one week ago! Professionally, she works in a mental health and rehabilitation setting where she designs employee training programs and teaches CPR and physical defense. She previously served as a rehabilitation therapist, helping psychiatric patients develop coping and daily life skills. An accomplished artist, she recently held a successful exhibition at a local gallery. Her long-term goal is to open a community center offering accessible art-based and practical therapies that support healing, creativity, and community connection.

Her GFWC journey began in 2022 when a friend invited her to join the GFWC Chattahoochee Woman's Club. Recognized early for her interest in service and leadership, she was selected to attend the GFWC LEADS Seminar and, in 2023, was honored as Florida's LEADS candidate, representing the state at the GFWC Annual Convention in Louisville, Kentucky. Since then, Dana's involvement has continued to grow. She has served on her club's Board of Directors, as District 2 Chaplain, GFWC Florida Photography Contest Chairman, and on the GFWC Florida Leadership Committee, where she served as a Leadership Camp presenter.

Encouraging and mentoring others brings Dana the greatest fulfillment, especially helping women recognize their strengths and grow into leadership roles. She joined the GFWC Blue Umbrella Club three months ago and was immediately drawn to its mission of flexibility, inclusion, and outreach. Passionate about membership and connection, she hopes to use her professional and creative skills to support the club through outreach, fundraisers, art-based activities, and communications. She believes meeting women where they are will help attract and retain members, especially younger women.

Dana encourages others to pursue opportunities they are passionate about and believes leadership develops naturally when women feel supported. She looks forward to helping the GFWC Blue Umbrella Club, GFWC Florida, and GFWC continue to grow as welcoming organizations that empower women to lead, serve, and connect. Dana, thank you for Living the Volunteer Spirit through the GFWC Blue Umbrella Club!

KAREN GRIGGSBY



A LIFE-CHANGING PARTNERSHIP: MY JOURNEY TO A SERVICE DOG

THROUGH CANINE COMPANIONS FOR INDEPENDENCE (CCI), A GFWC AFFILIATE PARTNER

BY PAULA JUVINALL

In March 1987, just months before my 21st birthday, I ruptured a disc in my back. After many medical complications and 10+ surgeries, I was left disabled and living with constant pain. Even simple daily tasks became difficult.

Everything changed when I attended an event featuring service dogs. Seeing what they could do sparked my interest, and after extensive research and paperwork, I was eventually matched with my first service dog, Angus. He was trained to retrieve items I dropped, bring my medication, and help with everyday tasks that had become nearly impossible for me. Angus gave me back something I had been missing for years --independence and confidence.

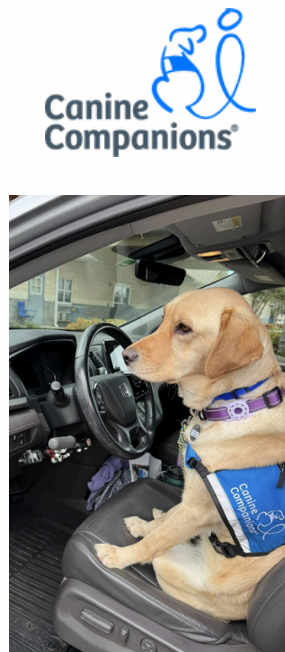


When Angus passed away ten years later, it was devastating. Thankfully, I had already begun the application process with Canine Companions, an organization I first learned about through GFWC. Their application process was extremely thorough, including medical documentation, interviews, and an in-person evaluation at their campus in Orlando.

After more than two years on the waiting list—and a few times when I had to decline training due to health issues—I finally received the call inviting me to team training. I would spend two weeks at the facility learning to work with my new service dog, Genie!

What happened next was one of the most incredible experiences of my life and showed me exactly why Canine Companions is known as the gold standard in service dog training.

Coming Next Month: CCI's Gold Standard of Training



A FLIGHT TO HONOR

BY KATHY MAMMENGHA



GFWC Florida's Flight of Honor was fascinating! The Veteran that I had originally been assigned to spend the day with was unable to attend at the last minute. I was reassigned to help where needed throughout the day. I had the pleasure of getting to meet and spend the day touring DC with two amazing military women. They each shared touching stories of life, adventures, and their military service. We walked miles, viewed memorials, shared laughs, and shed a few tears. My life has been enriched by them and our shared journey of the day. I am thankful that the day turned out just as it was supposed to and that I know two more fascinating GFWC Sisters who have vision and work hard get things done in their clubs and, for one, during projects around the world.

On the Flight of Honor were five women from my club. They are amazing women that I am very proud of and enjoy spending time with. We had heartfelt conversations and belly laughs. In this unique setting, we took the time to share stories at a deeper level and I learned more about them and their military service. My view of each of them is now richer knowing more of their triumphs and tribulations of military life and their lives before and after their service.

There were around 120 military women on the flight and several civilian guardians plus the organizers, EMTs, airline personnel, media, and others. There was a lot that happened behind the scenes that most of us will never know. The day was orchestrated well. Beyond the trip to our nation's Capital, it was fun to see and hear the connections being made between so many GFWC sisters. My hope is that connections will remain and that many will see each other again at other GFWC events.

Two of the many highlights of the day were the Mail Call and the Welcome Home Reception. One of my Veterans never received any mail during her years of service. The smile I was able to capture on her face with my camera as she opened her envelope shows the joy and love she felt. Her envelope was full of cards and letters from people she does not know. They touched her heart. Constantly throughout the day, her concern was for others and how she could help them. It was heartfelt for me to watch her read the cards and letters and see her go through emotions, similar emotions that I witnessed other military men and women exhibit that day when she handed them a star from a retired flag.

The Welcome Home Reception was a surprise for both of my Veterans. Being the last three off the plane, the crowd was still there cheering these two amazing women. My heart overflowed when I saw so many ladies from my local club and neighboring clubs there to greet me and the Veterans. Having made the trip as a civilian, I proudly guided my two Veterans along the line to more than a dozen ladies, letting them know these were my sisters from my club and nearby clubs who were there to welcome them home. Their smiles grew larger. To those in the reception line, your presence warmed the heart of every Veteran who went through the line. Your love, respect and kindness was felt by all.

Thank you to all for your service!

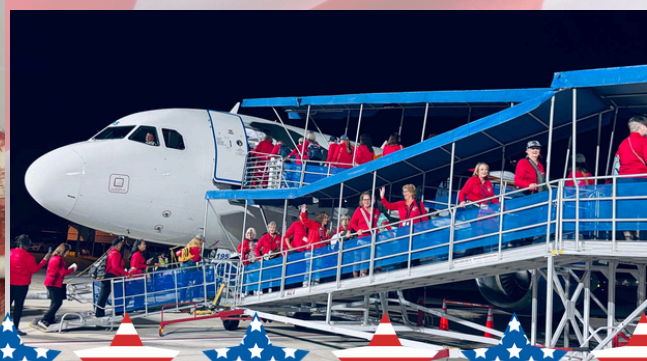
Thank you to everyone who brought this trip to fruition. The part you played was important to make this a success.

Thank you to all who were there to greet the Veterans home!

I had an amazing day and hope everyone else did too!

A Flight to Honor cont'd.

BY KATHY MAMMENGGA



TSA SUPPORT PROJECT INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

Note from Dianne --- As we are all aware, TSA employees have gone several weeks without receiving full—or even partial—paychecks, leaving many struggling with food insecurity and even the ability to afford fuel to get to work. In response, GFWC Lutz-Land O'Lakes Woman's Club is inviting us to join a meaningful project that can be implemented anywhere. Please read their note and consider joining this important effort to support those in your home communities who continue to serve despite these challenges.

The GFWC Lutz-Land O' Lakes Woman's Club is donating Walmart gift cards to support the TSA employees at Tampa International Airport who have been working without a paycheck, and all Blue Umbrella members are invited to participate.

Because of the ethics clause in their contracts, TSA employees cannot accept cash, checks, or anything given directly. Organizations that choose to help must send gift cards through Mission Support, where all 600 employees' names are placed into a lottery. Once someone receives a card, their name is removed until everyone has had a turn, ensuring the process is fair. Walmart cards are especially helpful because they can be used for gas, groceries, or other essentials.

If Blue Umbrella members would like to participate, we would be grateful. I'm glad to pick up the cards, or I can coordinate with any of your members who would like to come along with our club to help deliver them to Ruth at Mission Support.

On behalf of the GFWC Lutz-Land O' Lakes Woman's Club,

Elayne Bassinger
Past President

BLUE UMBRELLA DUES ARE DUE



Pay online:
[Click Here to Pay Online](#)

or scan the QR code



GFWC Blue Umbrella Club
PO BOX 371
Mango, FL 33550-0371

PHOTOCIRCLE

A Small Request That Makes a BIG Difference

Amber Treat has a small plea to make the newsletter easier to create.

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).

When members upload photos as events happen, it creates one easy, organized place for Amber to access all the wonderful moments you capture throughout the year. No searching through emails. No hunting through text threads.

No wondering who took what.

If you take a photo at a BUC event — upload it.

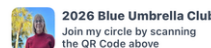
If your club gathers — upload it.

If you see Blue Umbrellas in action — upload it.

This simple step helps ensure your events are included and showcased properly in the newsletter, on social media, and on our website.



Thank you for helping make this process smoother — and for continuing to document the incredible work of BUC!



GFWC FLORIDA WEBINAR SERIES

EDUCATION & LIBRARIES WEBINAR

Hear from
Clubs & State
Chairmen

LEARN NEW
PROJECT
IDEAS

APR
07



Register in the Member Center on
gfwcflorida.org

Join us for the “Better Together: Winning Project Ideas for Education & Libraries” webinar on Tuesday, April 7 at 8:00 pm ET (note new time). You will hear Education & Libraries ideas from clubs across the state who will spark your creativity as they share unique and winning project details! Our GFWC Florida Chairman, Junior Chairman and Juniorette Chairman will offer additional tips and suggestions. Register today: <https://forms.gle/fJEopTzsuDpBnXMx9>

EXPLORE THE **NEW** GFWC LEARNING ACADEMY!



The GFWC Learning Academy is GFWC's online training platform, offering a variety of courses tailored to meet members' needs. Members seeking insight and training to advance their skill set will find the videos helpful as they continue their journey as club members and leaders.

These training videos can be utilized to enhance personal skills, train and expand club leader/member knowledge, used as programs during club meetings, or share information from past GFWC Learning Gateway Series.

GFWC has made it easy for you to build your technology toolkit, uncover the importance of financial oversight, learn how to utilize governing documents for club success, and so much more. The GFWC Learning Academy is one of the many benefits of belonging to the General Federation of Women's Clubs.

Access the GFWC Learning Academy and begin your path to lifelong learning:
<https://memberportal.gfwc.org/pages/learning-academy>



MORE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES



Mark Your Calendar for the April 7 GFWC Webinar: "Dancing With Your Brain!"

Don't miss the next GFWC webinar, Dancing With Your Brain, with Amy Peele. Experience a webinar designed to help you partner with your brain to create sweeter sleep, calmer days, and more energized living. Register now for Tuesday, April 7, @ 7 PM ET: Dancing with your Brain. Registration Link: <https://bit.ly/gfwcgateway040726>



New Member Virtual Tea: Unsung Women of GFWC-Florida.

Join us for this great opportunity on Sunday, March 29 at 4 PM for a New Member Virtual Tea: Unsung Women of GFWC-Florida. We will share inspiring stories of women who have made a lasting impact on the GFWC Florida Federation.

Sign up today! Join us on zoom!

Registration Link:

<https://forms.gle/hjTnDiTDRAamL1Ut7>



Planning for the 2026 Leadership, Education and Development Seminar (LEADS) for GFWC Florida is underway! It will be held just prior to the Florida Fall Board meeting on Friday, September 18, 2026 at the Rosen Plaza in Orlando. Start thinking today about your club's candidates to participate. Do it "Right Now!"

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

GFWC Blue Umbrella Club, Inc.

PO Box 371

Mango, FL 33550-0371

CLUB OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Position	Name	Email
President	Dianne Foerster	president@gfwcblueumbrella.org
1st Vice President	Sallie Milner	firstvp@gfwcblueumbrella.org
2nd Vice President	Patty Fisher	secondvp@gfwcblueumbrella.org
Recording Secretary	Karen Griggsby	recordingsec@gfwcblueumbrella.org
Treasurer	Kathy Mammenga	treasurer@gfwcblueumbrella.org
Corresponding Secretary	Lisa Klatt	correspondingsec@gfwcblueumbrella.org
Communications Chairman	Amber Treat	communications@gfwcblueumbrella.org
History Chairman	Rachelle Warmouth	historian@gfwcblueumbrella.org
Merchandise Chairman	Paula Juvinall	merchandise@gfwcblueumbrella.org
Technology Chairman	Lisa Klatt	technology@gfwcblueumbrella.org
Parliamentarian	Nancy Crawford	parliamentarian@gfwcblueumbrella.org
Social Media Chairman	Sharon Grace	socialmedia@gfwcblueumbrella.org
Advisor	Julie Babcock	advisorbabcock@gfwcblueumbrella.org
Advisor	Laura Connelly	advisorconnelly@gfwcblueumbrella.org
Advisor	Karen Morris	advisormorris@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

GFWC Blue Umbrella Club, Inc.

Happy Birthday

MARCH

Barbara Sundholm 1st

Laurie Auth 7th

Virginia Yermoli 17th

Linda Joseph 24th

Happy
St Patrick's
Day

APRIL

Sharon Grace 5th

Margie Harper 5th

Maribel Fruitstone 7th