

FEBRUARY 2026



GFWC BLUE UMBRELLA CLUB NEWSLETTER



Next Board Meeting: Sunday, March 1, 6:00 pm ET

Next Membership Meeting: Sunday, March 1, 7:00 pm ET

Save the Date: GFWC Florida Convention May 1-4

gfwcblueumbrella.org



FROM DIANNE'S DESK

Hello, Blue Umbrella members!

Winter has come to Florida, and while I have some very dear friends who are truly enjoying the cooler temperatures, I've seriously considered hibernation! My aversion to the cold may be an age thing. The good news is that it won't last much longer. Soon we'll be pruning damaged plants, spotting new growth, welcoming back the birds and butterflies, and enjoying our favorite outdoor places. Rebirth and renewal are good for everyone and everything, including Blue Umbrella.

Not everything has gone into a dormant state. GFWC, GFWC Florida, and our own club have certainly not been idle. In fact, our volunteer efforts have been very much needed, and Blue Umbrella members have been incredibly active.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the first-ever reporting effort submitted by the GFWC Blue Umbrella Club to our state federation and GFWC club contests. A huge thank-you to Lisa Klatt and friends for designing an easy-to-use reporting format tailored specifically for a cyber club. Thank you to all who logged on and submitted your data. I am very proud to share that through your donations and participation, our club earned an Honor Score totaling more than 100 points. Congratulations! Lisa pulled everything together, met all deadlines, and made this success possible. While we emphasize cooperation and working together rather than competition, I am delighted that our data and ideas are now part of GFWC Florida's story.

Please save the date and mark your calendars for our next membership Zoom meeting on Sunday, March 1, at 7:00 p.m. Each dues-paid member will receive the Zoom link closer to the date. We will have business to attend to, along with fun and fellowship. Your presence is important, and your voice and opinions are truly wanted and appreciated. Nominating Committee Chairman Nancy Crawford will provide an update and share details about the election process. According to our bylaws, elections will be held in May, and the new administration will begin on June 1. I am very excited! Thank you to Nominating Committee members Nancy Crawford, Laura Connelly, Patty Fisher, Margie Harper, and Lee Kraus.

Further along in this newsletter, you will find articles commemorating Black History Month, a new "Kindness 101" project idea to consider, and an update—complete with photos—from the fantastic team that recently returned from Belize, which included two Blue Umbrella members. You will also see photos of members wearing red in support of Women's Heart Health. It has truly been a busy and meaningful month.

Spring is right around the corner, bringing exciting new opportunities. Most importantly, let us never forget our driving mission: bringing LOVE, RESPECT, and KINDNESS to every aspect of our lives and our world.

 Dianne

GIVING KINDNESS A VOICE: A BLUE UMBRELLA OPPORTUNITY

PATTY FISHER

Have you ever watched a story that stayed with you long after it ended, one that reminded you there is still so much good in the world? That's exactly how I feel every time I watch *On the Road* with Steve Hartman. His stories don't just inform; they inspire. They give hope. Steve Hartman is a longtime CBS News journalist renowned for sharing stories of kindness, compassion, and humanity. What makes his storytelling so powerful is that it comes from his own life.

Steve is also a father of three, and his oldest son, George, has autism. Through parenting, Steve has developed patience, empathy, and the understanding that people are more than their outward appearances. That perspective shines through in every story he tells.

When Steve interviews someone, he doesn't rush. He listens. He smiles. He asks thoughtful questions that help people open up. His stories remind us that every person has a story worth hearing and a heart worth knowing. He teaches us, without preaching, that kindness is not just something we talk about. It's something we live with.

Out of this philosophy came *Kindness 101*, a series developed in partnership with Drake University. These short, heartwarming videos, often just three minutes long, are paired with free K-12 lesson plans focused on kindness, empathy, and character education. Today, *Kindness 101* is used in tens of thousands of schools across the country, impacting millions of students. Teachers use these stories to encourage social-emotional learning, spark meaningful discussions, and show students how simple acts of kindness can change lives.

And yet, to my knowledge, *Kindness 101* is not being used in any schools here in the Panhandle. That realization led me to think, is this something the GFWC Blue Umbrella Club could help change?

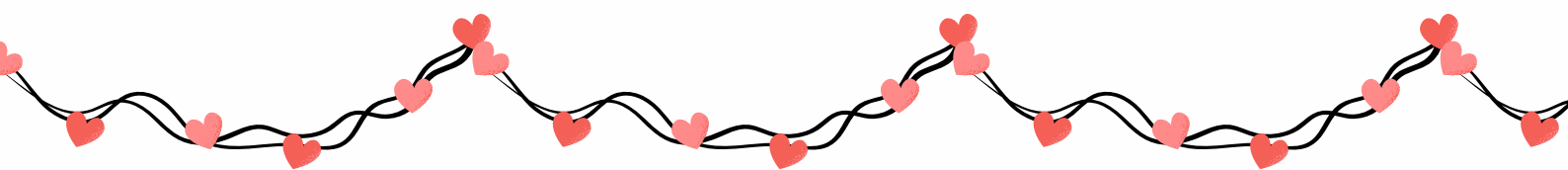
Imagine starting a campaign and forming a committee to explore how we might reach out to local schools and encourage them to look into *Kindness 101* if they aren't already participating. Imagine every homeroom, from kindergarten through 12th grade, beginning the day with a short message of kindness, empathy, and hope.

For some students, this could be the first time they truly understand how it feels to be kind or to receive kindness. For others, it could be the moment that changes how they see themselves or the world around them.

One story that deeply moved me is about a young man named Malachi Coleman, featured on *CBS Sunday Morning* in a segment called "Opening Doors to Acts of Kindness". One small request, something he was hesitant to do at first, ended up changing his life and the lives of those around him. It's a powerful reminder that even the smallest acts of kindness can create lasting change. When you have time, I encourage you to watch it.

This is what the GFWC Blue Umbrella Club is all about: bringing awareness, compassion, and hope where it's needed most. Giving kindness a voice. Supporting initiatives that uplift, educate, and empower.

Perhaps this is a project worth exploring together. Because if kindness can change one life, imagine what it could do for an entire generation.



BELIZE UPDATE

LAURA CONNELLY



Nineteen GFWC club women, including Blue Umbrella members Candy Jackson and Laura Connelly, traveled to Belize for an unforgettable experience. We partnered with our five GFWC clubs there, and from the moment our group arrived, we were welcomed with warmth and generosity by our Belizean sisters. Serving alongside them in their communities for a week was a powerful reminder that sisterhood and service matter far more than material things.

Our service work included visits to schools, where we taught children about healthy lifestyles and hygiene, and left behind books and games to support learning. Time spent with a group of 30 special needs students was deeply moving, as children expressed themselves through crafts, laughter, and creativity at their own pace. Equally powerful were moments shared with local women. Many carry heavy responsibilities and personal challenges, and it was a privilege to offer encouragement, care, and moments of renewal. The gratitude exchanged through hugs, tears, and heartfelt conversations left a lasting impression on everyone involved.

Our journey concluded on Caye Caulker, where the island's motto, "Go Slow," provided the perfect space for reflection and gratitude before returning home. These memories—from Belize City, Belmopan, and Orange Walk to the quiet beauty of the island—will stay with us always. This trip beautifully reflects the mission of the General Federation of Women's Clubs and what it means to live the volunteer spirit. We are deeply grateful to our Blue Umbrella sisters for your encouragement and generous support.



A Celebration of Black History Month



**Karen
Griggsby**

Black History Month is a time to celebrate and honor the courage, creativity, and the many noteworthy contributions of African Americans who have helped shaped our nation. From science and education to business, arts, and civil rights, Black Americans have played a vital role in helping build the America we know and love for all its' citizens. As we celebrate this month, let us not only reflect on history, but also commit to diversity, equity, and inclusion in our daily lives and into the future. The Blue Umbrella Club is proud to shine the spotlight on some of its' members during this month. We invite you to sit back, relax and meet some of our Club members as they share their thoughts on Black History Month.

For a long time, I carried bitterness around Black History Month because of a high school experience. I was excited for our first Black History program and felt a deep sense of pride—until it opened with Lift Every Voice. Most of my Black classmates stood. Some white classmates sat. Others walked out, and it felt planned. I still had to show up the next day and act like everything was normal. Today, my relationship with Black History Month has changed. I am still learning—and unlearning—things I was never taught and sharing history my own family didn't know. Black history is vast, layered, and powerful, filled with innovators, leaders, artists, and everyday people who change the world. I am grateful that I am learning, as well as UNLEARNING, and growing all year long because our history doesn't fit into one month.



**Tamica Thomas
Simpson**



**Lavette
Moore**

When I was growing up in Historic Overtown, Miami, my fourth grade teacher asked me to portray Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune for a school program. At the time, I didn't fully understand the magnitude of who she was, but I knew the moment mattered. I stood before the audience and declared, "I am Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune—educator, organizer, White House advisor, and United Nations delegate." In that moment, I was embodying possibility. As I walked off the stage, the applause filled the room, and I felt seen, proud, and powerful. I learned that legacy is built through service, education changes lives, and young Black girls should see themselves reflected in greatness early and often. My work today—in libraries, historic preservation, nonprofit leadership, and community advocacy—is guided by the same values I first encountered through Dr. Bethune's life: education, access, dignity, and collective uplift!



Black History Month continued



**Harriet
Hankerson**

Since Black History Month was officially recognized in the United States fifty years ago, I have believed its significance extends far beyond a single month. The question remains the same today as it was then: how do we help those who do not yet know learn about the lasting contributions of African Americans throughout history?

For me, it began with sharing daily historical “nuggets,” especially with young people, during Black History Month. While I continue to share what I know, I also recognize there is still much to learn—and much more to integrate into how American history is taught and told every day.

“Lift Every Voice & Sing,” the Negro National Anthem, is sung with heads held high, full of pride and joy. Black History Month is more than learning about African American inventions—many of which went uncredited—and recognizing their lasting impact on society. It is more than the clothing that expresses our identity, the foods that nourish us, or the joyful family gatherings that unite us.

Black History is a deep sense of pride in where we come from and the belief that we are destined for greater things. It invites reflection on the hardships our ancestors endured, the faith that sustained them, and the resilience they carried through every challenge. Though celebrated in February, the shortest month of the year, its significance is not diminished. Black History Month calls us to explore our roots, honor our culture, and uplift our legacy—this month and every month that follows.



**Pat Tillman
Shad**

What Black History means to me is a sacred reminder of the legacy I stand on, the purpose God continues to shape within me, and the responsibility I carry to honor those who came before me. As an HBCU graduate, my undergraduate years grounded me in a lineage of Black excellence where our history, faith, intellect, and creativity were affirmed as central to our identity. Joining a Black sorority further deepened my commitment to service, sisterhood, and intentional uplift—especially for youth and underserved communities.

As a mother in Florida, amid recent K-12 changes that minimize DEI-related content, I feel an even greater responsibility to be intentional about what my child learns and to protect the truth of our heritage. Black History Month strengthens my resolve to stand firm in my faith, uplift my community, and safeguard the stories that shaped us so our identity, culture, and progress remain for generations to come.



**Crystal
Bryant**



NOMINATING COMMITTEE UPDATE

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIR - NANCY CRAWFORD

A warm hello to our wonderful GFWC Blue Umbrella Club Members. This is just a quick update on our Elections. The Nominating Committee will give an update at the next Virtual Meeting scheduled for March 1 at 7 pm. The slate of proposed officers will be presented at the April Board meeting as outlined in our bylaws. After that, the slate will be emailed out to the entire membership. Elections will be held at the May Virtual Meeting scheduled for May 17, at which time nominations can be made from the floor. If we only have one candidate for each office, the vote can be by hand. If we have additional candidates, we will need to arrange a virtual ballot vote at that time. Once elected, the new officers take office June 1. If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know. I look forward to seeing you on Zoom. Nancy Crawford - ngbrat@gmail.com - 407-474-3763

SHARE SHEET

SHARE SHEET CHAIRMAN – LAURIE AUTH

We are planning to prepare a Blues News Share Sheet to be handed out at the GFWC Florida Convention. Jasdeep Cook and I have contacted all the clubs that federated since 2022, the year that the Blue Umbrella Club federated. This includes 7 Juniorette clubs. As Juniorette Advisory Committee Chairman, Jasdeep has contacted the lead advisors for those Juniorette clubs. We have asked them to advise on one project that they are working on, or plan to work on, where other clubs might help them in some way. I have suggested a limit of 260 words and a deadline for submission of March 1st. I will update further on these efforts in our March club newsletter. You can contact me by email at rauth1@tampabay.rr.com.



HEART HEALTH MONTH



Be Heart Aware! I encourage you to take a few minutes to watch a short, heart-felt presentation by Karyn Charvat from GFWC Illinois, as we work to raise awareness for Heart Health!

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1s18aX4DN21Sbo6yrGHcQ7QLr5LA_wVal/view?usp=sharing

Blue Umbrella Club celebrated National Wear Red Day *February 6, 2026*

Go Red for Women: "Heart Disease Doesn't Care What You Wear –
It's the #1 Killer of Women"



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!  



LEGISLATIVE ACTION CENTER (LAC)



GFWC celebrates congressional action to increase funding for Family Violence Prevention and Services and housing programs supporting survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

GFWC also applauds increased funding for Alzheimer's and dementia research, strengthened public health efforts, and restored funding for UNICEF and global health.

When we stay informed, speak with one voice, and engage with our congressional leaders, GFWC helps shape federal policy and create meaningful change. Join our Legislative Action Center (LAC) today!

<https://www.votervoice.net/GFWC/home>

Suellen B Brazil

International President

General Federation of Women's Clubs

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>



GFWC Florida Webinar Series – Club Treasurers *Wednesday, March 4 at 7:00 pm ET*



Join us for “Better Together: Leadership Essentials for Club Treasurers” on Wednesday, March 4 at 7:00 pm ET. Do you have questions about how to keep records? Are you wondering what to include in a financial report to your members, or looking for tips to stay organized and confident? GFWC Florida Treasurer Candy Jackson will share practical guidance, tools, and real-world strategies to help you succeed.

Register today!
<https://forms.gle/NiQShkmGNPscU68ZA>

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

FEBRUARY

Lynn Werner 2nd

Mindy Estep 3rd

Jean DiMaria 8th

Pat Tillman-Shad 9th

Candi Aubin 10th

Elizabeth Moore 18th

MARCH

Barbara Sundholm 1st

Laurie Auth 7th

Virginia Yermoli 17th

Linda Joseph 24th