



JUNIORS' SPECIAL PROGRAM

ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN

2024-2026 GFWC CLUB MANUAL



GFWC
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GENERAL FEDERATION
OF WOMEN'S CLUBS

**2024-2026
JUNIORS' SPECIAL PROGRAM**

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"EVERY CHILD DESERVES A CHAMPION; AN ADULT WHO WILL NEVER GIVE UP ON THEM, WHO UNDERSTANDS THE POWER OF CONNECTION AND INSISTS THAT THEY BECOME THE BEST THEY CAN POSSIBLY BE." RITA PIERSON

CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN

GFWC Juniors' Special Program: Advocates for Children is designed to encourage all Woman's, Junior, Juniorette, and International Affiliate Clubs to make a difference in the life of a child by being an advocate. The program was envisioned as a way for clubwomen to provide a voice for children and to teach and encourage parents and other caregivers to advocate for children at the grassroots level.

The definition of child advocacy is "support for children who are in a vulnerable position in society or in a vulnerable situation." We aim to honor our roots and be a voice for children.

Clubwomen can be an advocate by working to:

- Ensure that children are protected from harmful situations.
- Encourage healthy physical and emotional lifestyles.
- Impact policy to improve children's lives.

Children also depend on the advocacy of others, especially their parents and caregivers, to protect and promote their interests in an emergency or long-term health situation. First-rate children's healthcare should be available to everyone, and family voice and choice are essential in providing the best healthcare plan for each unique situation. Educate yourself and others about medical resources and organizations that will help you be the best advocate possible for children.

The Juniors' Special Program: Advocates for Children encourages advocacy and projects that will assist and protect children in crisis, including those experiencing:

- Child abuse
- Cyberbullying
- Depression and suicide
- Foster or residential care
- Homelessness
- Human trafficking
- Life-threatening illness
- Limits on screen time
- Cyber Predators
- Poverty
- Texting while driving

Direct any questions regarding projects that do not involve GFWC Affiliate Organizations to the Juniors' Special Program Chairman or GFWC Programs Department at Programs@GFWC.org.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION INITIATIVE:

BE A CHAMPION IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN



Encourage clubs to work with your local police and social services agencies to determine what they most need to spruce up their children's waiting room areas. Sponsor a room and make it kid-friendly, and cozy. Clean, paint, and add children's-size furniture items to the room to bring warmth and caring into the surroundings. Create a book nook and art area and keep items stocked.

GFWC ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN WEEK

Sunday, October 20, to Saturday, October 26, 2024

Sunday, October 19, to Saturday, October 25, 2025

During Advocates for Children Week clubs and members are encouraged to contact their local law enforcement or child protective service agencies to identify their needs for children or families. In addition to responding to their determined needs, clubs can create "busy bags" that may be filled with items such as books, coloring books, crayons, art supplies, fidget toys, stuffed animals, and so much more. These bags will be immensely helpful in occupying children's minds during challenging experiences.



FEATURED PROJECTS



THE POWER OF SPORTS

GFWC Southwest Region Women's Club (CO) held a Girls on the Run. Members collected athletic shoes, socks, headbands, hair spray, hair chalk, and pens and donated them to Girls on the Run.



TEDDY BEAR WASHCLOTHS

GFWC Vienna Woman's Club (GA) members brought twelve washcloths and learned to craft them into cloth teddy bears. The finished teddy bears were delivered to the Department of Family and Children's Services office for distribution to foster children.



BOOKS TO SHELVES

GFWC Woman's Club of Rock Hill (SC) members placed books in local businesses, and the club donated the bookshelves and books for three locations.



BIG SMILES IN LITTLE BAGS

GFWC Dover Area Woman's Club (NH) club members partnered with End 68, a weekend food program for food-insecure students. Members made small zipper treat bags to pack extra treats to bring smiles to the children.



PROJECT IDEAS

Be inspired by this list of how GFWC clubs can use local resources and creativity to be the voice for children. Find further information about organizations named here under Resources.

ADVOCACY EFFORTS

Check the Legislative Action Center. There are current bills that affect children. Work with your city, county, or state to have the fourth week in October recognized as GFWC Advocates for Children Week. Send a copy of the proclamation to Juniors' Special Program Chairman Suzanne Hooser, suzhoosergfwc@gmail.com

- Advocate through your state legislature for bills that benefit children's physical and mental health.
- Advocate for law enforcement training on mental health awareness for children.
- Research and engage with advocacy groups in your area that support children's physical and/or mental health.
- Advocate for Big Brothers/Big Sisters and other programs that provide children with mentors and/or offer activities to help them develop positive social skills.
- Investigate grants, such as those available through the U.S. Department of Education, including the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants and the 21st Century Community Learning Center Funding.
- Visit the comprehensive and informative Art Advocacy and Resources page of Incredible@rt Department for additional ideas on art advocacy.
- Advocate for support programs, such as Ronald McDonald House Charities, to establish a chapter in your community. Volunteer as a club or individuals to cook a meal at your local shelter or Ronald McDonald House. Check your local Ronald McDonald House or other shelters for specific food preparation guidelines.
- Juice Box Challenge: Challenge clubs to donate at least one juice box per member to their local Child Advocacy Centers (CAC). Juice boxes help CAC staff build rapport with children as they discuss difficult issues.
- Child Advocacy Ribbons: Create awareness ribbons in royal blue and attach to bookmarks or business cards to be left at local libraries, businesses, or healthcare centers with information about your local Child Advocacy Center and the services they provide.
- Advocate for cyber support programs, such as Safe Surfin, to establish a Cyber swat program in your local schools.

COLLABORATE ON A PROJECT

- Paint and decorate a room(s) at a local shelter, youth center, or visitation room at the social service office.
- Sponsor a creative art activity, such as modeling with clay, that provides additional benefits for children with motor disabilities.
- Engage in art therapy projects with children in hospitals, shelters, and other facilities.
- Support in-school and after-school food programs.
- Support summer food programs for school children and have club members volunteer at the distribution sites.
- Build Little Libraries and encourage reading programs. Build a neighborhood Little Library



and keep it stocked with children's books or commit to keeping a local Little Library stocked. Volunteer at libraries and bookstores to read to children. Reach out to schools and sponsor a reading incentive program.

- Partner with a local school to build an outdoor classroom or school garden, using resources from Project Learning Tree such as School Site Investigation and Creating an Outdoor Classroom.
- Purchase mittens and beanies to deliver in December for Head Start and Preschool children.
- Pediatric Unit Playtime: Ask members to donate items such as coloring books, small jigsaw and cube puzzles, Play-Doh, and other small toys for hospitalized pediatric patients to enjoy during their stay in your local pediatric unit. Be sure to check with the Hospital Pediatric Unit for suggestions of what is preferred and needed.



FOCUS ON CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Use resources from Kids Health, a nonprofit organization that provides doctor-reviewed advice on hundreds of health issues, to present a club or community program that will give families the tools and confidence to make the best health choices. Augment the program with other information resources, such as those available from the National Institute for Children's Health Quality and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.
- Learn from and inform new parents about [HealthyChildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org), sponsored by the American Academy of Pediatrics, for information on optimizing children's health, dealing with injuries and emergencies, and evaluating treatments for long-term health situations such as asthma, diabetes, autism, learning disabilities, and others.
- Inform parents and other caregivers about National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI), the nation's leading voice on mental health, and their resources and services, including the NAMI Helpline (1-800-950-NAMI or info@nami.org). Consider hosting a community program that specifically addresses depression and suicide in children and teens.
- Learn about and share information on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE), such as information provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and advocate for community education programs that create and sustain stable, safe, and nurturing relationships and environments for all children.
- Furniture Safety: Raise awareness in your community and help save a child's life by planning a program about the dangers of furniture tip-overs and other hazards in the home. Distribute anchoring kits to help secure heavy furniture.
- Screen Time Awareness: In this age of digital media, children are exposed to cell phones, tablets, and electronic screens as early as infancy. Too much screen time for children can lead





to issues such as obesity, irregular sleep schedules and shorter duration of sleep, behavioral problems, loss of social skills, violence, and less time for play. Educate the members of your club about the new guidelines for screen time use for young children. Educate children on the dangers of internet predators and cyberbullying.

- Children's Choking Awareness: The Toilet Paper Roll Safety Project consists of attaching a decorated toilet paper roll to cardstock paper with the following statement: "Any toy or toy part that can pass through is a choking hazard for children less than three years of age."

WORK WITH SPECIAL NEEDS/FOSTER CARE

- Work with special needs children to create Vision Boards or Dream Boards using magazine cut-outs.
- Support Save the Children's HEART (Healing and Education through the Arts), a therapy program for children with serious and chronic stress.
- Learn about and promote Ecotherapy or Nature Therapy, which can help children with anxiety, depression, mental fatigue, eating disorders, feelings of isolation, and other emotional and mental illnesses.
- Volunteer with and/or support equine therapy programs.
- Undertake projects that provide a sense of security for children in foster care, such as making or customizing duffle bags for carrying their clothes and/or creating overnight kits with hygiene and comfort items.

PROVIDE SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- Support local parks and recreation centers by volunteering or providing scholarships and/or supplies for summer camps and other programs.
- Partner with local businesses to sponsor a family day or family night at a sporting event or another activity in April for Child Abuse Awareness Month.
- Sponsor an international child through Save the Children to secure educational opportunities and health services.

CONNECT WITH GFWC AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS

Undertake these and other projects with GFWC Affiliate Organizations that fit within the guidelines for the Juniors' Special Program: Advocates for Children.



MARCH OF DIMES

- The March for Babies is a fun event to raise funds to help support mothers and premature babies and raise awareness of the research needed to find solutions and advocate for policies that prioritize mom and baby health. March of Dimes provides instructions, guidance, and a web page to organize an event. www.marchforbabies.org/Home/SearchtoDonate

OPERATION SMILE

- Help Operation Smile provide the necessary equipment and medications to enable the delivery of the safest surgeries. www.catalog.operationssmile.org/provide-medicines-supplies

ST. JUDE CHILDREN'S RESEARCH HOSPITAL

- The St. Jude Trike-A-Thon is a fun, service-learning program for daycares and preschools that teaches trike and riding toy safety while helping the children of St. Jude. Any advocate for children can make a difference with the St. Jude Trike-A-Thon. If you sign up to become a coordinator, St. Jude will provide everything you need to have a great event at a preschool or daycare in your area. Log on to www.stjude.org/get-involved to find out more.
- Create Waiting Room Fun Bags by filling sealed zippered plastic bags with fun things a child or teen can do as they wait to visit the doctor.

UNITED NATIONS FOUNDATION SHOT@LIFE CAMPAIGN

- Promote World Immunization Week as an opportunity for the global health community to come together to urge our leaders to make #VaccinesWork for all.
- Encourage young people to enroll in Shot@Life's Student Advocacy Program. This program offers a great opportunity for students to build leadership skills and engage in global health issues to support vaccination efforts for children in developing countries. www.shotatlife.org/champions

UNICEF USA

- Host a "Trick or Treat for UNICEF" event, a long-time tradition in our country to collect donations for their general fund. At your October meeting decorate and include UNICEF Trick or Treat on each table for donations. www.unicefusa.org/trick-or-treat

HEIFER INTERNATIONAL

- For \$275 clubs can send a girl to school for a year. In some countries, girls are often denied the opportunity to go to school because resources are limited, and education for girls is not considered important. www.heifer.org/gift-catalog/womens-empowerment/send-a-girl-to-school.html

CANINE COMPANIONS

- Children with special needs can benefit from a service dog. www.canine.org

HOPE FOR JUSTICE

- Children make up 27% of all human trafficking victims worldwide. Learn how to make a big impact. www.hopeforjustice.org



GFWC RESOURCES

Advocacy for Healthy Children Child Abuse www.nationalcac.org/about-child-abuse/

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America www.bbbs.org

Boys and Girls Clubs of America www.bgca.org

Boy Scouts of America www.scouting.org

Bureau of International Labor Affairs Dol.gov | Child Labor, Forced Labor & Human Trafficking | U.S. Department of Labor

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ACEs www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/index.html

Connect with a Crisis Counselor Crisis Text Line | Text HOME To 741741 free, 24/7 Crisis Counseling

Distracted Driving www.cdc.gov/distracted-driving/site.html

Ending Distracted Driving is Everyone's Responsibility nsc.org | Distracted Driving - National Safety Council

4-H www.4-h.org

Girl Scouts of the USA www.girlscouts.org

HEART www.savethechildren.org/us/what-we-do/protection/healing-and-education-through-the-arts

Kids Online www.kids-online.org/ | Kids Online | FTC Consumer Information

National Children's Alliance www.nationalchildrensalliance.org/

Net Cetera Chatting with Kids About Being Online www.bulkorder.ftc.gov/publications/net-cetera-chatting-kids-about-being-online

Parent Guides from ConnectSafely www.connectsafely.org/parentguides/#:~:text=By%20parents%2C%20for%20parents%3A%20A,%2C%20please%20let%20us%20know | Parent Guides from ConnectSafely - ConnectSafely

Prevent Child Abuse America preventchildabuse.org/

Project Learning Tree www.plt.org/

Safe Surfin Cyber Swat Project www.safesurfin.org

Save the Children www.savethechildren.net/

School Site Investigation www.plt.org/greenschools

Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants www.ed.gov/programs/ssae/index.html

Suicide Prevention Lifeline www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org | Youth: Lifeline

The Dangers of Distracted Driving fcc.gov | The Dangers of Distracted Driving | Federal Communications Commission

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 justice.gov | Key Legislation

21st Century Community Learning Center Funding www2.ed.gov/programs/21stccclc/applicant.html



What Is Human Trafficking? [dhs.gov](https://www.dhs.gov) | Homeland Security

Youth Suicide Warning Signs [Youth.gov](https://www.youth.gov) | Youth Suicide Warning Signs

Youth Mental Health [Youth.gov](https://www.youth.gov) | Risk and Protective Factors for Youth

AWARDS

GFWC recognizes State Federations for outstanding projects and clubs for creative projects in implementing effective Juniors' Special Program: Advocates for Children projects and Affiliate Organization projects as follows:

- Certificate 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 Award Program. Each State Federation may submit one State Award Entry and one Club Creativity Award Entry for the Juniors' Special Program: Advocates for Children projects. Clubs do not submit entries directly to GFWC.

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

RESOLUTIONS

Resolutions adopted by GFWC are the foundation of our organization. They guide our call to action and are the basis of all programming and advocacy. Current 2023 Resolutions for the Juniors' Special Program: Advocates for Children are listed here by number and title. Refer to the complete text in the GFWC Resolutions document, filed under "Governance" in the Digital Library on the Member Portal. Resolutions are an important and integral part of GFWC Programs.

120-010	Child Foster Care
120-020	Keeping Children Safe
120-030	Sexual Exploitation of Children
120-040	Youth Suicide Prevention

