



HEALTH AND WELLNESS

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM

2024-2026 GFWC CLUB MANUAL

"THE POWER OF COMMUNITY TO CREATE HEALTH IS FAR GREATER THAN ANY PHYSICIAN, CLINIC OR HOSPITAL" MARK HYMAN, M.D.

The "Wellness Wheel" first came about in the late 1970s as the brainchild of Dr. Bill Hettler. His principle was that we can live healthier, fuller, and better lives by being attentive to our balance and awareness in various areas of our lives. The original model, known as the "Six Dimensions of Wellness," contained 6 different sections that relate to a certain aspect of life. This visualization helps to focus on these facts and allows us to see how each is connected and how they, in turn, can affect overall health.

This Community Service Program aims to explore the various opportunities for awareness and advancement of each of these vital areas:

- Disease awareness and prevention involves understanding the causes, symptoms, and ways to prevent diseases, including social determinants and health inequity. This includes screenings, vaccinations, and sharing information.
- Nutrition is a key element in the quest for good health. Wise food choices, proper usage of vitamins and supplements, and food allergy awareness help maintain a healthy lifestyle free of weakened conditions and chronic illness.
- Physical and emotional care encompass behaviors to manage a healthy body, mind, and spirit throughout life. This includes physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, environmental, and social well-being.

A few facts from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention include:

- The risk of heart disease and stroke, two of the leading causes of death in the United States, can be reduced with moderate-intensity aerobic activity.
- Over 60 million women (44%) in the United States have some form of heart disease. Heart disease is the leading cause of death for women at any age. In 2021, it was responsible for the deaths of 310,661 women – about 1 in every 5 female deaths. Research has shown that only about half, 56% of US women, recognize heart disease is their number 1 killer.
- The average number of stroke deaths is higher among females than males every month.
- Alzheimer's Disease or Dementia? Dementia is an overall term for a particular group of symptoms. Alzheimer's disease is one cause of dementia.
- A regular fitness regimen can also reduce your risk of developing type 2 diabetes and several cancers such as bladder, breast, colon, and lung, and heart disease and strokes.
- As we age, physical activity can slow the loss of bone density, reduce the risk of falling, and help with arthritis and other rheumatic conditions affecting the joints.
- Regular physical activity helps to keep your thinking, learning, and judgment skills sharp and reduces your risk of depression and anxiety and helps you sleep better.
- 150 minutes of physical activity a week can reduce and lower your risk for these diseases. The good news is that moderate physical activity, such as walking, is generally safe for most people.



GFWC
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**GENERAL FEDERATION
OF WOMEN'S CLUBS**

2024-2026 HEALTH AND WELLNESS COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM

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Direct any questions regarding projects that do not involve GFWC Affiliate Organizations to the Health and Wellness Community Service Program Chairman or GFWC Programs Department at Programs@GFWC.org.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION INITIATIVE:

CAREGIVERS' CIRCLE



The Caregivers' Circle focus will build upon the importance of the connection between health and the importance of maintaining balance with emotional, nutritional, and physical health and provide much needed and deserved support for caregivers. A caregiver is a person who tends to the needs or concerns of a person with short- or long-term limitations due to illness, injury, or disability. Many times, those who are providing care for others overlook their own well-being. Caregivers are often an overlooked group who need support.

According to Claire Samuels, author of *Caregiving Giving* in 2023, unpaid family caregivers increased by 9.51 million between 2015-2020 to more than 53 million. Not all caregivers assist seniors. Data applies to caregivers of all adults, including younger adults with physical or mental disabilities. Of the U.S. adult population, 17% provide care, with 50.75% being women. There are 5.5 million military caregivers. Support is essential for the well-being of these dedicated individuals taking care of loved ones. Equally important is support for those who have experienced the loss of the loved one they cared for.

The Caregivers' Circle will encourage caregivers to prioritize their own needs, such as emotional health, nutritional health, and staying active. Clubs and members can start a community support group for club friends and others who would benefit. Enlist help from professional counselors, dietitians, medical personnel, and physical fitness trainers. Invite them to speak at a club meeting or see if you could attend one of their sessions to enhance your understanding of what caregivers experience and strategies to help.

November is Caregiver Recognition Month. Show special support by writing notecards, providing meals, taking the caregiver to lunch, hosting an afternoon tea, or treating them to a manicure, pedicure, or massage. How about a movie night – watch an uplifting movie with friends? If feasible, consider offering the caregiver a break.

Don't ask the caregiver to let you know how or when help is needed. Feedback will likely not be given. Rather, offer specific ideas for what support could be given to help. Be flexible and understanding of the caregivers' schedule and try to assist when they need you versus when it's best for you. With the caregiver's permission, use an online platform, such as Meal Train to provide meals when it would be most helpful. You could also offer to shop for them or schedule grocery delivery. Offer to clean their home, run errands, cut their lawn; things that may get pushed to the side while they are caring for a loved one. Be ready to make a difference.



FEATURED PROJECTS



TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

GFWC NU Era Study Club in District 2 (MO) donated their time to the Hillcrest Transitional Housing Organization, which provides temporary housing for homeless families. The organization runs a Thrift Store and uses the funds to operate the program. Members sort, mark, and stock the children's department six days a week. A total of 3,500 hours are donated to the project each year. Clubwomen completed the project by providing Christmas bags for the clients.



STEPPING THROUGH THE BLUEGRASS

GFWC Kentucky Woman's Club of Madisonville (KY) embraced the call for "walking toward a healthier tomorrow." Members were challenged to walk 485 miles. Eleven members met the challenge, while the club logged 11,483 miles. The club enhanced the project by organizing three separate two-mile group walks while viewing the downtown.



NURSES CARE KIT

GFWC Marlborough Junior Woman's Club (MA) delivered 100 care kits to nurses at the University of Massachusetts Memorial Hospital's Marlboro Campus. Kits included hand creams and facial cleansers to help reduce the damage from constant mask-wearing and hand sanitizing. The note attached read: "Your hands have helped to pave the way. They have given love and care each day. No matter the tasks they have to do, they're tender, caring, and strong like you. They've healed or lifted, encouraged and touched, and in return, you are thanked so much."



HARVEST DAY CALM SPACE

GFWC Dover Area Woman's Club (DE) partnered with the Greater Dover Chamber of Commerce and Twenty-One Senses to run the Calm Space/Family Respite Area at the Fall Apple Harvest Day. This Calm Space allowed attendees with sensory disabilities to relax, reregulate, and return refreshed to the festivities. Earplugs and earphones were available. A balance board, rocking chairs, butterfly chairs, wiggle seats, yoga mats, Legos, crayons, puzzles, and books were also available.



PROJECT IDEAS

Be inspired by this list of ideas of how GFWC clubs can support the Health and Wellness Community Service Program. Find further information about organizations named here under Resources.

DISEASE PREVENTION

- Celebrate American Heart Month in February by planning programs on women's heart health and posting support for National Wear Red Day® (on the first Friday) with information from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.
- Promote local breast and cervical cancer screenings and diagnostic services for low-income, uninsured, and underinsured women. Find a screening program in your state on the CDC website.
- Provide care items for cancer patients, such as warm blankets and socks, moisturizers and lip balm, water and hard candy, and diversions such as books, magazines, crossword puzzles, and more.
- Post and/or share information on the safe disposal of unwanted medications and the location of local medication disposal drop boxes.
- Learn about and share information on social media about the many National Health Observances such as Save Your Vision Month (March), and Childhood Cancer Awareness Month (September). To find a comprehensive list, visit [Health.gov](https://www.health.gov) or the Wellness Council of America (WELCOA) website for monthly health observances.
- Share information about the early signs and symptoms of diabetes in children and adults. Engage a local diabetes educator to attend GFWC club, District, and State meetings. Encourage other local organizations, such as Lion's Club or Rotary, to jointly host meetings.
- Establish a Medical Loan Closet for your community, stocked with canes, crutches, walkers, wheelchairs, personal care items, etc.
- Participate in or sponsor a local Wellness Fair. Include dentists and eye doctors for screenings and nurses for blood pressure readouts. Distribute coloring/activity books on dental care and eye care.
- Hold a BraHaHa or ARTragious Bra decorating contest to raise funds for breast cancer awareness.
- People with dementia often find comfort in having something to do with their hands. Make Fidget Quilts or wristbands for dementia and Alzheimer patients. Visit seniorcorner.com/sensory-stimulation-seniors-dementia-4148.
- Make attractive cloth bags and fill them with feminine hygiene products. Donate them to middle or high schools for the school nurse to discreetly distribute to young girls in need.
- Educate members on female reproductive issues such as endometriosis and gynecological cancers. Cervical cancer is the only gynecological cancer with a screening test. Additionally, have a Menopause Party with educational materials on the symptoms and treatment of menopause, fans as favors, creative refreshments, and menopause trivia games. See Pinterest or Etsy for party ideas.
- With the increasing use of computers for all age groups, observe Eye Care Month (January) or Save Your Vision Month (March).

NUTRITION

- Share information with club and community members about making wise food choices. Two sources of trusted information include [Health.gov](https://www.health.gov), coordinated by the Office of Disease



Prevention and Health Promotion, and [Nutrition.gov](https://www.nutrition.gov), a resource of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

- Partner with a local food bank, clinic, and hospital to sponsor a Wellness Fair that provides healthy recipes and handouts on nutrition, such as those offered on [Nutrition.gov](https://www.nutrition.gov) or Medline Plus, a program of the U.S. National Library of Medicine.
- Host a community Wellness Fair that provides healthy recipes and handouts on nutrition, such as those offered on [Nutrition.gov](https://www.nutrition.gov) or Medline Plus, a program of the U.S. National Library of Medicine.
- Celebrate National Nutrition Month in March with a healthy potluck dinner at your club's monthly meeting. Or organize a community event, such as a "Recipe Makeover Contest," which transforms a favorite dish by cutting calories and increasing its nutritional value.
- Invite a local nutritionist to provide a club program on eating healthy and vitamin/supplement use.



- Hold a "Healthy Food Drive," requesting donors to contribute nutritious foods from Feeding America's Healthy Food Donation List. When choosing items, look for labels that note: low sodium, no added salt, no added sugar, unsweetened, or 100% fruit juice. Possible recipients include community food banks, pantries, soup kitchens, or programs coordinated by schools, shelters, and children's organizations.
- Donate healthy food items and/or funds to a college campus food bank, such as one affiliated with the College & University Food Bank Alliance. Monetary donations to food banks are an excellent way to take advantage of their large-scale negotiating and wholesale buying power.
- Volunteer with Meals on Wheels to provide nutritional support to seniors.
- Establish a school garden or expand an existing school garden to emphasize nutrition with strategies established by Growing Minds, a program of the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project.
- Engage club and community members in a Plant a Row for the Hungry Campaign, a program sponsored by Garden Communicators International, to provide fresh and nutritious produce for local soup kitchens and food pantries.
- Ensure a year-round supply of fresh produce in the community by establishing or supporting a local farmers market. Promote the market on social media and coordinate special events, such as a seasonal taste testing or children's poster contest.
- Put together a "Healthy Meal Basket" that includes items from nutritional food groups, and preparation instructions. A holiday or birthday provides an opportunity to make someone or a family smile.
- Participate in Backpack Buddies to provide nutritious foods for school children over the weekend. Donate nutritious food/snacks. Include a coloring/activity sheet for the backpack.
- Educate members and your community on the importance of food safety in a disaster or emergency. Resources available from [FoodSafety.gov](https://www.foodsafety.gov) include Foodkeeper App; 4 Steps of



Food Safety; Food Safety in a Disaster or Emergency.

- Utilize [Nutrition.gov/topics/nutrition-age](https://www.nutrition.gov/topics/nutrition-age) for KidsCorner coloring & activity sheets and My Plate Grocery Store BINGO.
- Partner with the Legislation and Public Policy Committee to promote advocacy.
- Every 3 minutes a food allergy sends someone to the emergency room. Bring awareness to food allergies by providing non-food items, such as plastic spider rings or Halloween themed pencils, for trick-or-treaters. Have your club participate in a local Trunk or Treat using FARE resources. Visit Food Allergy Research Education – Teal Pumpkin Project for information and resources.

PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL CARE

- Integrate physical fitness activities during club meetings. Practice chair yoga, line dancing, balance training, or flexibility exercises. Start an exercise and/or walking group in your club using an app such as Charity Miles or FitBit Challenge.
- Partner with a local assisted living home to provide senior exercise equipment such as leg pedaling machines, resistance bands, and yoga mats, or to support their exercise program in other ways.
- Sign up to receive the monthly newsletter from the National Institutes of Health, *News in Health*, to share new research with club and community members through club newsletters, social media, and other means.
- Promote physical activity in the community with a Move Your Way Campaign using materials and information from [Health.gov](https://www.health.gov). Sponsor a “Stepping On Program” – with a focus on fall risk prevention or a “Strong Body – Strong Minds Program” focusing on strength.
- Hit the mat with a workshop for club and community members on yoga and meditation, an alternative form of exercise to stay fit, healthy, and happy. Yoga improves balance, flexibility, endurance, and strength, while meditation releases stress and focuses the mind. Practiced together, they enhance the mind/body connection and provide confidence and a sense of well-being.
- Support Special Olympics and other athletic contests, therapeutic sports, and/or social programs and opportunities for the challenged and disabled.
- Learn about and share information from the Choose Love Movement, a nonprofit organization founded after the mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School, which teaches life skills and fosters a school culture that reduces violence. Now used across the U.S., the Choose Love Enrichment Program offers lessons in courage, gratitude, forgiveness, and compassion to boost confidence, promote positive decision-making, and to create and enhance communication, connection, and relationships.
- Offer resources and/or promote programs that prevent bullying, so children and youth are safeguarded and supported at school, in the community, and online. Set up an anti-bullying booth at a parenting fair, health fair, or other community event and distribute brochures, articles, and posters to attendees.
- Utilize resources in the Safe Surfin’ Foundation, Inc. ([Safesurfin.org](https://www.safesurfin.org)) including Cyber S.W.A.T., a peer-to-peer program designed to educate youth about online safety. Program facilitators use the provided curriculum and activities to help facilitate tough conversations about bullying, online predators, and other online risks. Donations should be marked as GFWC for tracking purposes.
- Join the Campaign to Change Direction by pledging to learn the five signs that could mean that someone is in emotional pain and might need help: personality change, agitation, withdrawal, poor self-care, and hopelessness. Educate others with free posters and public service announcements from Change Direction, which works to change the culture



surrounding mental illness. Help spread awareness by posting photos of club members on social media, hand up to pledge, and stand with #ChangeMentalHealth.

- Inform club and community members about the many issues surrounding substance abuse with information from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, which is a part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. From opioids and meth to alcohol abuse, addiction changes the brain and alters decision making. The site offers brochures, information sheets, research reports, news about assistance programs, treatment locator services, and more.
- Work with the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) by educating, advocating, and/or donating during Mental Health Awareness Month in May, or any time of the year. Consider sponsoring a NAMI volunteer to bring an education class to your community, such as NAMI Basics for parents and caregivers of youth with mental health symptoms. Participate in NAMI's annual walk.
- Eating disorders are serious and often fatal illnesses. They are associated with severe disturbances in people's eating behaviors and related thoughts and emotions. Preoccupation with food, body weight, and shape may also signal an eating disorder. Common eating disorders include anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge-eating disorder. Get free brochures and shareable resources from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH).
- Learn and share the risk factors and signs and symptoms of someone in danger of suicide, as outlined by the NIMH. Consider holding a club or community program on the five action steps to help someone in emotional pain and/or distribute the number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK).
- Check into a State or Local Public Health Department's Emergency Mental Health Training program, which brings together community representatives from hospitals, clinics, clergy, senior centers, schools, behavioral health providers, law enforcement, and first responders (fire and medical) personnel.
- Send notes or cards to residents of nursing homes to boost their emotional well-being.
- Paint "Encouragement Rocks" with images or sayings symbolizing a sense of hope and faith. Place them around your town, on the hospital grounds, outside cancer centers, and at schools.
- Youth need a minimum of sixty minutes per day of physical activity for good health. The Presidential Youth Fitness Program helps schools achieve excellence in physical education



through quality fitness education. Work with your local elementary schools to implement the program and assessment process. Provide funding for PYFP awards – medals, certificates, patches, or t-shirts. Visit [PYFP.org](https://pyfp.org) for information.

- November is National Family Caregivers Month. Looking for Home Care Assistance? Search for a local office at thekey.com/our-services. Host a community thank you reception for caregivers. Donate a food delivery, your time, or gift cards to a caregiver in your club. Distribute free care guides, legal checklists, and information on care options as found at aarp.org.

CONNECT WITH GFWC AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS

CANINE COMPANIONS

- Work on the Veteran's Initiative. www.cci.org/assistance-dogs/Our-Dogs/veterans-initiative.html
- Support the "Give A Dog A Job" program.

HEIFER INTERNATIONAL

- To address global hunger, create a Heifer International "farm." At each monthly meeting, choose a farm animal and decorate featuring the animal (chickens, rabbits, etc.).
- Initiate "Operation Santa's Cookies and Milk" to raise funds to help Heifer International's Milk Project and provide a carton of nutritious milk to children.

MARCH OF DIMES

- Many moms arrive at the hospital to deliver a premature baby without any personal items. Create Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) Mom Care Packages. March of Dimes provides a toolkit for what moms need at the hospital. marchforbabies.org/files/MFB-Personal-Care-Kit-How-to-Guide.pdf?PersonId=843951

OPERATION SMILE

- Donate quilts, blankets, and afghans to comfort a child in a hospital after surgery.
- The Child Life Station is where children can relax and play before surgery. Donate new and gently-used stuffed animals, art supplies, liquid bubbles, and other toys to help with screening and pre-surgical/post-surgical play therapy. www.operationsmile.org/our-care

ST. JUDE CHILDREN'S RESEARCH HOSPITAL

- To share information at club meetings or to learn more, please visit www.stjude.org/aboutus or www.stjude.org/waystogive You may also visit www.stjude.org/getinvolved to find great activity ideas for your club to connect to the St. Jude mission.
- Rally friends, family, and community members and register for St. Jude Walk/Run to End Childhood Cancer. Visit www.stjude.org/walkrun to find an event near you.

UNITED NATIONS FOUNDATION, SHOT@LIFE CAMPAIGN

- Support Shot@Life with a "Pop a Shot" fundraiser, with shooting baskets for prizes.
- Support Walgreens "Get a Shot, Give a Shot" for flu vaccinations. Gather after for a fun lunch to celebrate how many vaccines you have provided. www.shotatlife.org



UNICEF USA

- Hold a Halloween-themed cornhole tournament for UNICEF for a “hole” lotta fun.
- Share UNICEF USA Kid Power with Junioresettes as a project. Participate as a group and/or engage their local schools and organizations such as Girl Scouts. Kids wear activity bands that measure their steps and physical movement for points to unlock funding from UNICEF partners to provide ready-to-use-therapeutic food (RUTF) to severely malnourished children around the globe. www.gokidpower.org/about-us

GFWC RESOURCES

AARP Financial Support for Caregivers & Dementia Support www.aarp.org/caregiving

Alzheimer's Association www.alzheimers.gov

A Place for Mom www.aplaceformom.com

Campaign to Change Direction: A Wise Mind www.changedirection.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov

Paul Coverdell Stroke Program

Wise Woman Program

For information on Diseases and Conditions go to www.cdc.gov/DiseasesConditions

For cancer screening programs go to www.cdc.gov/cancer/nbccedp/screenings.htm

Charity Miles www.charitymiles.org

College & University Food Bank Alliance www.cufba.org

Family Caregiver Alliance www.caregiver.org

Feeding America www.feedingamerica.org

For information on food allergies and the Teal Projects visit FoodAllergy.org

FoodSafety.gov - Foodkeeper App; 4 Steps of Food Safety; Food Safety in a Disaster or Emergency

Growing Minds www.growing-minds.org

For information on school gardens go to www.growing-minds.org/school-gardens

Health.gov, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion www.health.gov

For information on nutrition go to www.health.gov/our-work/food-nutrition

For information on National Health Observances go to www.health.gov/news/category/national-health-observances

For information on the Move Your Way Campaign go to www.health.gov/moveyourway

Mouth Healthy, American Dental Association www.mouthhealthy.org

For children's coloring and activity sheets go to www.mouthhealthy.org/en/resources/activity-sheets

Meals on Wheels www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org

Medline Plus, U.S. National Library of Medicine www.medlineplus.gov

For information on recipes go to www.medlineplus.gov/recipes

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) www.nami.org

For News in Health newsinhealth.nih.gov



National Institute of Mental Health www.nimh.nih.gov

Nutrition.gov, U.S. Department of Agriculture www.nutrition.gov

For information on recipes go to www.nutrition.gov/topics/shopping-cooking-and-food-safety/recipes

Prevent Child Abuse America www.preventchildabuse.org (and local chapters)

Presidential Youth Fitness Program www.pyfp.org

Plant a Row for the Hungry Campaign www.gardencomm.org/StartPARCampaign

Safe Surfin' Foundation, Inc. Cyber S.W.A.T. Project www.safesurfin.org

Society for Women's Health Research www.swhr.org

Special Olympics www.specialolympics.org

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
www.samhsa.gov

U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Office of Women's Health
www.fda.gov/about-fda/office-commissioner/office-womens-health

Vaccines.gov, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services www.vaccines.gov

AWARDS

GFWC recognizes State Federations for outstanding projects and clubs for creative projects in implementing effective Health and Wellness Community Service Program 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 Health and Wellness Community Service Program projects. Clubs do not submit entries directly to GFWC.



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 Resolutions for the **Health and Wellness Community Service Program** 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.

170-010	Autism Spectrum Disorder
170-020	Breast Cancer
170-030	Cancer
170-040	Child Survival in Developing Countries
170-050	Diabetes
170-045	Dementia
170-060	Family Caregivers
170-070	Food, Drug, Cosmetic, and Medical Product Regulation and Safety
170-080	Freedom of Access to Health Clinics
170-090	Healthcare and Research
170-100	Heart Disease in Women
170-110	Long-Term Care
170-120	Mental Health Parity
170-130	Nursing Shortage Crisis
170-140	Nutrition and Obesity
170-150	Organ and Tissue Transplantation
170-160	Preventable Disease
170-170	Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare
170-180	Stem Cell Research
170-190	Substance Abuse and Rehabilitation
170-200	Support for Emergency Services Personnel
170-210	Tobacco and E-Cigarettes

