

GFWC CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

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Welcome to the GFWC Civic Engagement and Outreach CSP! I am excited to serve as your chairman for the 2022-2024 Administration. My goal is to provide information for you to be able to pass on in your state and assist you in this area. Please feel free to share this newsletter with clubs in your state.



www.GFWC.org

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

GFWC members are reminded that each of us is part of a larger society and responsible for addressing public concerns. We advocate because there is a need, we volunteer because we are needed. Our focus is on our community and looking for better ways to make an impact.

UNDERSTANDING THE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM

Civic Engagement and Outreach are highlighted and encouraged. Many areas are emphasized and identified; however, your projects and programs are most important in reaching out and preparing for community outreach and impact. You will make the difference.

Essential Workers

Citizenship

Crime Prevention

Safety and Disaster Preparedness

Needy, Hungry, and Homeless

Military Personal

Veterans

Women Veteran Support and Outreach



EMPOWERED WOMEN EMPOWER OTHER WOMEN.....

HAPPY SPRING!

I hope you enjoy the soft rains, the sunshine, and the beautiful flowers. Here in Florida, the spring roadside flowers have started to bloom along the roadways. It is amazing how they come up yearly and brighten my daily drive. It made me think about how they know when to bloom. They do their thing, they are hearty and fill a path, a patch in front of a school, fill a median, or a front yard. They paint a beautiful pink, yellow, orange, and white palate. The mixtures are perfect, and they are just scattered around in a perfect picture scene.

As women in today's world, we are like wildflowers on the side of the road. We show up and bloom. We do our thing. We are HEARTY, we take over an area that needs a bit of sunshine. We are a perfect mixture—GFWC has something for everyone. We need each other. We need support, friendship, love, and companionship. Give a bouquet to a friend-take time to smell the flowers, bloom where you are planted.

In Civic Engagement and Outreach, one of our jobs is to be supportive not just in our volunteer service but to each other. As you enjoy nature, I hope you will take time to smell the flowers and think about the mixtures and how we paint a beautiful picture.

As we prepare to come together in Louisville, Kentucky, to celebrate all we have done together, we must continue to encourage, empower, and embrace our relationships.

Sharon



Lemon POKE CAKE

Even if you are not a baker, this is so easy to make!



Ingredients

- 1 (18.25 ounce) package yellow cake mix
- 1 (3.4 ounce) package instant lemon pudding mix
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup vegetable oil
- 4 eggs
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup lemon juice
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease and flour a 9x13-inch pan.
2. In a large bowl, stir together the cake mix and instant pudding. Add the water, oil, and eggs, and mix until smooth and well blended. Spread batter evenly into the prepared pan.
3. Bake for 40 to 45 minutes in the preheated oven until a toothpick inserted comes out clean. While the cake is still hot, poke holes in the top with a fork. Mix the lemon juice and confectioners' sugar in a small bowl until smooth. Pour it over hot cake.

Nutrition Facts (per serving)

200	Calories
8g	Fat
31g	Carbs
2g	Protein



UPCOMING DATES AND EVENTS May-June

MAY MONTH CELEBRATIONS

The month of May is named after the Roman Goddess "Maia."

May is the return of Spring Flowers which Maia was the overseer.

May 21, Armed Forces Day

May 21, National American Red Cross Founder's Day

May 28, National Amnesty Day

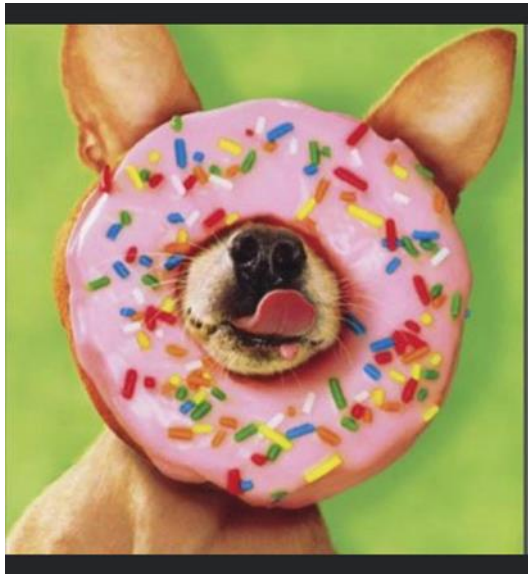
May 29, Memorial Day

May 31, National SMILE Day

May 21-27, National EMS Week

ALS Awareness Month

Military Appreciation Month



JUNE MONTH CELEBRATIONS

June 3, National Donut Day

June 5, Constitution Day

June 11, Making Life Beautiful Day

June 14, Flag Day

June 18, International Picnic Day

June 19, Father's Day

June 20, National American Eagle Day

June 12-18, National Flag Week

JULY IS

**NATIONAL CLEFT PALATE AND CRANIOFACIAL
AWARENESS AND PREVENTION MONTH**

Hunger in America



INFORMATION TO START PLANNING

The **General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC)** is united in its dedication to volunteer community service. The National Day of Service (NDS) is a day in which all of GFWC come together to highlight an area of need, take action to address the need and raise public awareness about its importance. State federations and clubs are encouraged to join and organize community service programs (CSPs) in their communities as part of the NDS. It's also a wonderful opportunity to invite guests to participate in your NDS activities and introduce them to the benefits of GFWC.

This year's NDS issue of focus is food insecurity. To initiate the planning process, GFWC encourages you to contact your local food banks and food pantries — wherever people go for food — to find out how best to be of service. For example, a club can sponsor a food bank, pantry, or food program to organize a volunteer activity with fellow club members, family, and friends. Ask every club member to invite a friend not presently a member to participate and experience GFWC. Use the activity to motivate and inspire your friend to join. The benefits of community service make a person feel good, but it helps to build meaningful friendships and bonds that will last a lifetime.

Here are suggestions for NDS activities:

- **Volunteer at a Local Food Bank**
- **Food Drives:** Connect directly with the local food bank to determine how your club can be of service. They will welcome the support and donation of time and food.
- **Raise Awareness About Hunger:** Reach out to your local media to introduce NDS and the cause of being promoted. Ask the reporter to mention NDS and how people can participate and donate. Also, use social media to discuss food insecurity with community members, clubs, schools, church groups, and others.
- **Advocate to End Food Insecurity:** Use GFWC's Legislative Action Center (LAC) to interact with your federal and state elected officials to advance a bill or introduce legislation that helps to end hunger by funding programs specific to the issue.

Information and updates about NDS will be in the weekly electronic newsletter *GFWC News & Notes*, Facebook, Instagram, and website, www.GFWC.org. Every week until September 30, GFWC will make announcements, provide project ideas, and discuss food insecurity. Stay tuned for additional resources, including a tool kit and a media kit.

Start planning today!

Locate your local food bank and food services at the following links:

Second Harvest - [food near me - Second Harvest \(2-harvest.org\)](https://www.2-harvest.org)

Feeding America - [Find Your Local Food Bank | Feeding America](https://www.feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-food-bank)

Type "food banks (your state)" into your search engine

Find churches with food banks in your state - [https://save.lovetoknow.com/Churches with Food Pantries](https://save.lovetoknow.com/Churches_with_Food_Pantries)

Find information about food insecurity at the following links:

US Department of Agriculture - <https://www.fns.usda.gov/fact-sheet/usda-support-for-food-banks-emergency-food-system>

Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion - <https://health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/social-determinants-health/literature-summaries/food-insecurity>

National Public Radio, Food Insecurity in the US By the Numbers - <https://www.npr.org/2020/09/27/912486921/food-insecurity-in-the-u-s-by-the-numbers>

To register or for more information, contact Melanie Gisler, Director of Membership Services, at MGisler@GFWC.org and copy Deb Strahanoski, International President, at DStrahanoski@GFWC.org. Please include the following in your email: Club Name, Point of Contact, Address, Phone Number, and Email. GFWC will send information, articles, and announcements directly to your club.

Military Recognitions



When Is Memorial Day 2023?

This U.S. federal holiday is observed on the **last Monday of May** to honor the men and women who have died while serving in the military. It was formerly known as Decoration Day.

"Take a moment to learn the true meaning of Memorial Day." ("Memorial Day 2023: When is Memorial Day? | The Old Farmer's Almanac") It's important to recognize the difference between this federal holiday and Veterans Day (especially to vets). Also, learn why it was originally called Decoration Day, why the red poppy is a symbol, and when to fly the flag.

Memorial Day commemorates the men and women who **died** while serving in the United States Armed Forces, particularly those who died in battle or as a result of wounds sustained in battle. In other words, the purpose of Memorial Day is to memorialize the veterans who made the **ultimate sacrifice** for their country.

You'll find that some veterans find it dismaying when they are thanked on this day. It's a time to remember those who lost their lives and could not come home. We might consider how we can support and safeguard their grieving families and loved ones who are left behind and reflect on why we—the living—have the luxury and freedom that we enjoy today.

In remembering the fallen, we also honor their loved ones: spouses, fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, sisters, brothers, and friends. There aren't proper words, but we live in gratitude every day for the precious gift they gave us.



The RED POPPY

*In the war-torn battlefields of Europe, the common red field poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*) was one of the first plants to reappear. Its seeds scattered in the wind and sat dormant in the ground, only germinating when the ground was disturbed—as it was by the very brutal fighting of World War 1.*

As [Memorial Day](#) approaches, red poppies begin to make their annual appearance, especially pinned to people's lapels, tote bags or even hats. **These colorful flowers, often made of fabric or crepe paper, honor and memorialize fallen soldiers and serve as a fundraiser to support our nation's war veterans.** The red poppy officially became the national emblem of remembrance in 1920 – but the resilient little flower's roots run deep, all the way back to the battlefields of World War I, where they grew in the unlikeliest places.

Despite their cheerful flowers, poppies are technically classified as weeds. They have grown in even the most inhospitable landscapes — [including the war-torn battlefields in 1915](#). Even though the landscapes were left devastated, red poppies arose from the wreckage come spring, like tiny beacons of hope.

The wearing of the poppy was traditionally done on Memorial Day in the United States, but the symbolism has evolved to encompass **all veterans living and deceased so that** poppies may be worn on [Veterans Day](#) as well.

FLAG Etiquette

You might be surprised to learn that prior to Flag Day in 1923, there were no official guidelines on how to display our star-spangled banners. It was on this day that the National Flag Code was drafted by representatives of the Army and Navy under the auspices of the [National Americanism Commission](#) of the [American Legion](#). It was printed and given nationwide distribution. Years passed. Then, on June 22, 1942, Congress passed a joint resolution (later amended on December 22, 1942) that dictated what is known today as the U.S. Flag Code.

US FLAG CODE—

- 1. The flag should usually be displayed from sunrise to sunset.
- 2. The flag should be raised briskly.
- 3. The flag should be lowered ceremoniously.
- 4. The flag should never touch the ground.
- 5. The flag should not be flown in inclement weather unless it is an all-weather flag. The flag code allows for all-weather flags to be displayed in inclement weather.

Did you know the local VFWs have Flag Disposal Boxes? It is a terrific opportunity for our clubs to invite a VFW national officer to speak at your club and have members bring flags to be retired. June is a great month to honor our symbol of freedom and hear about the programs, duties, and responsibilities. It is a great partnership for GFWC and VFW.



Veterans of Foreign Wars

OUR MISSION: To foster camaraderie among United States veterans of overseas conflicts. To serve our veterans, the military, and our communities. To advocate on behalf of all veterans.

OUR VISION: Ensure that veterans are respected for their service, always receive their earned entitlements, and are recognized for the sacrifices they and their loved ones have made on behalf of this great country.

~~COMING SOON---GFWC Convention in Louisville Kentucky~~

This is the time to SHINE!



Community Service Projects~~11,913,000~~Volunteer Hours~~528,113~~Dollars
Donated~~\$3,756,990~~In Kind Donations~~\$2,958,995

How exciting it was to read all of the state reports for Civic Engagement and Outreach. All of the states have so much to be proud of. Our communities are lucky to have such advocates for our neighbors. I had an extremely tough time judging the award entries and made so many notes of great projects and programs.

Some wonderful ones included teaching and educating others on GFWC, our community connections and identifying the needs of our own neighborhoods. You have heard “GRASSROOTS” a lot in the past year and it is more important now than ever to get to know those that live next door.

Another fantastic area of serving was networking. We worked with other organizations and had an improved impact. We are better together. I am also proud of those clubs that took on today’s youth. How will they learn if we don’t share? How will they continue the future of serving if we don’t show them how? How will they appreciate history if we don’t instruct?

A lesson in cooking, wrapping gifts, writing letters, serving together, learning a craft, reading to others, adopting families, and writing thank-you notes. I was at the post office recently, and a young woman asked the postmaster for help with where the stamp went and how to address an envelope. I also remember when a young man came to the Thrift Center that I managed and asked if he could do some community service. I agreed and asked him to sweep and clean up our donation area. Watching him try to use a broom was a bit sad. He had no idea. Only a few minutes to teach and develop our future generations benefit us. And they will remember what they learned from YOU.

I saw many of these types of lessons in your reports. It makes me feel good to know that we make a difference. Since COVID and many family losses, our generations of “teachers” have disappeared. As GFWC, we are responsible for continuing to Live the Volunteer Spirit in all areas. Something so small has an ENORMOUS impact. Keep teaching so others can keep learning.

GFWC Affiliate Organization Highlight — Operation Smile

GFWC has been involved with Operation Smile since 1982.



Use this QR code to follow Operation Smile on Facebook.

5 Billion people in the world do not have access to safe, affordable and timely surgical care. A major global concern particularly in low income and middle income countries. Having seen first hand the need for safe and “free” medical care, Operation Smile has created a organization that protects families first. They offer free evaluations, care, surgery, supplies, medications, care and follow up. Continuing the strength in the health care system, the many volunteers come from around the world and do not charge for any of their services.

In Guatemala last year, I saw billboards and flyers for cleft palate and cleft lip surgeries. Scaring parents and care givers in to giving money, borrowing money, and selling everything to care for their child. I asked how this information is shared and presented to families, and the answer, many countries do not allow Operation Smile to come in. The government wants all the funding, money, and income to “take care” of their children. Dr. Magee and his wife, Kathy, have worked hard to establish relationships with over 20 countries and continue to share the critical role of their care. Operation Smile has become one of the largest non-profit medical volunteer-based organizations. They are committed to being the best stewards of all donations. GFWC has a strong partnership allowing Operation Smile to attend International Conventions, share at workshops and be an affiliate because their code of ethics is in line with ours.



March 17, 2023, the Bill and Kathy Magee Treatment Center was inaugurated in Guatemala City, the first honoring the organization's co-founders. This center will provide more than 1500 patients annually with multi-specialty care and care they need.

One year ago, I was able to travel to Guatemala City, Guatemala and work with Operacion Sonrisa. Our team of 4 GFWC Volunteers were able to work closely with this group and we continue to follow the progress of our little patients.



In addition to the four governing boards, the company created an 11point code of conduct that helps to self-regulate all internal dealings. These are listed below:

1. The organization has no affiliation with any political or religious groups.
2. There is zero tolerance for fraud or corruption within the organization.
3. They strive for transparency in every department.
4. They work to protect and value their employees and volunteers.
5. They promote whistleblowing for any employee or volunteer who discovers fraud or misdealing.
6. They focus on transparency and accountability with all financial information.
7. The board vows to function as stewards of all the organizations' assets.
8. The organization will strive to only collaborate with companies who respect human rights, take responsibility for children, and responsibility for the environment.
9. Operation Smile pledges to be environmentally responsible.
10. The organization has created a Child Protection Policy that all staff and volunteers must follow.
11. They commit to upholding a global standard of care.

“We know right now 70% of the workforce in medicine is women,” said Operation Smile co-founder and president Kathy Magee. “But yet, they only have 25% of the senior leadership. So how do we balance that out a little bit?”

Through the Women in Medicine initiative, Operation Smile provides education and training pathways for women to become empowered to be global leaders in health care. During each women-led program, a leadership and education day took place, enabling local and international volunteers to participate in specialty trainings with mentors.

Women representing 34 countries across 16 different specialties delivered 280 transformative surgeries to children affected by cleft conditions. Worldwide, it's estimated that 143 million more surgeries are needed annually, requiring 2.2 million more surgeons, anesthetists, and obstetricians.

The General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC), one of the world's largest women's volunteer service organizations, has supported Operation Smile for more than 20 years. They've raised money for programs, donated handmade quilts, blankets, hospital gowns, and smile bags, and collected personal hygiene products and toys. During our long partnership, they raised over \$1 million through their Outreach for Children program to benefit Operation Smile. Operation Smile thanks all GFWC members for their ongoing support.

Looking Ahead-Praising Essential Workers

Community Connection Initiative: A Little THANKS Goes A Long Way.

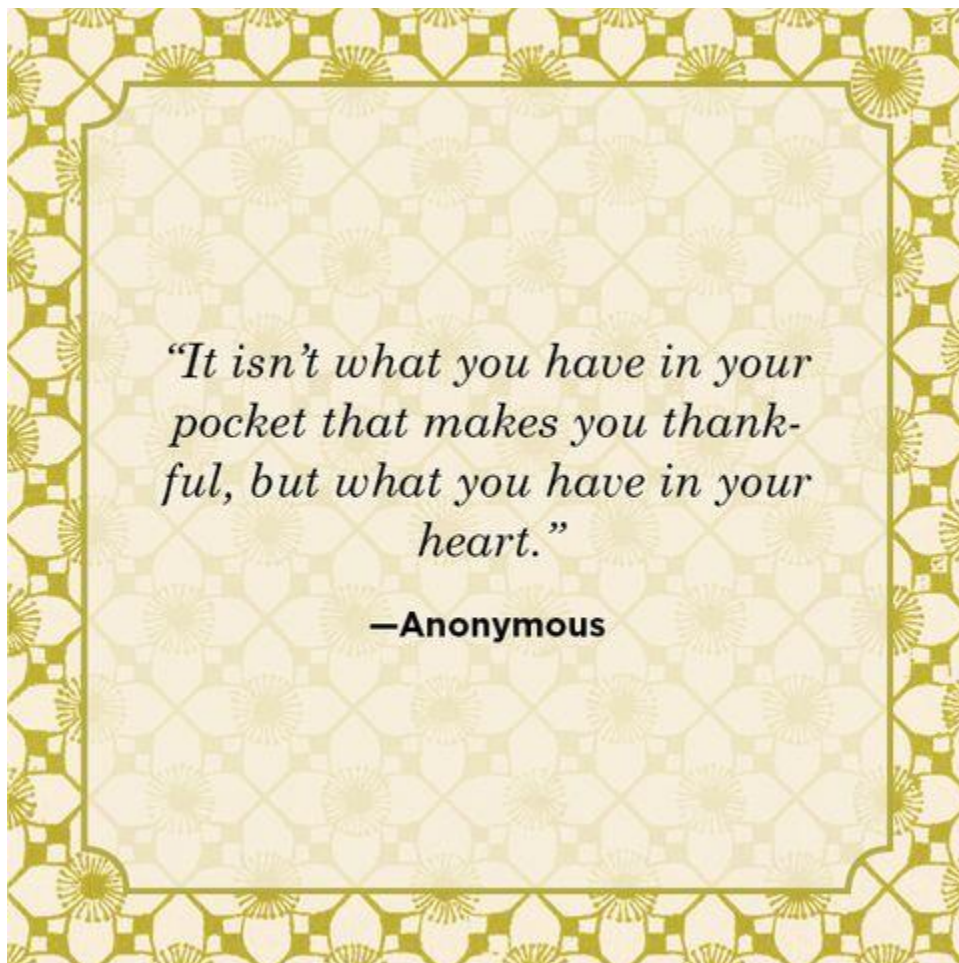


Unfortunately, the “Praise to the Essential Workers” was not felt by all. The praises and thanks didn’t get filtered to them as we had hoped. There is still time! And this is it! A study showed that essential workers that received public praise are encouraged and recover in healthy ways. A lot of people are still behind the scenes trying to make up for lost wages, lost work, loss of homes and cars. Some of them do three times the work just to make up for what their family lost. Some are asking themselves why....why me? why can’t I recover? why can’t I get help?

Public gratitude goes along way....we all like to hear the words, “thank you” or “I appreciate you.”

Their efforts have not gone unnoticed, and during these times of financial burdens, food insecurity, loss of transportation (including higher gas prices and insurance costs) we can be the ones that work towards assistance or education. Take time to look in your local news, social media or in your own workplace to identify those that are needing a boost. They say a penny for your thoughts....how about pass the penny jar at your next meeting. Gather up loose change and purchase a few gas cards. It is the little things that make a big difference. I know sometimes I pull up to the pump and see people putting a few gallons in to get them to their next destination or to their next paycheck.

Make up a Happy Meal for someone for lunch. For a group of workers at the local city office, fire department, police station, vet office, or any place you can bring a SMILE.



Blue Star Families

Did you know that Blue Star Families originated from a handful of dedicated military spouses that wanted better for their families and their communities? That's how we know and understand the needs and struggles of military spouses firsthand. And year over year, our research indicates that military spouse employment remains the top concern for active-duty spouses. Our solution is a cross-collaborative effort with USAA, PenFed, Navy Federal, and several others, to better understand the work we can all do to address military spouse employment and show our appreciation.



And if you're looking for a more extensive way to lend a hand...

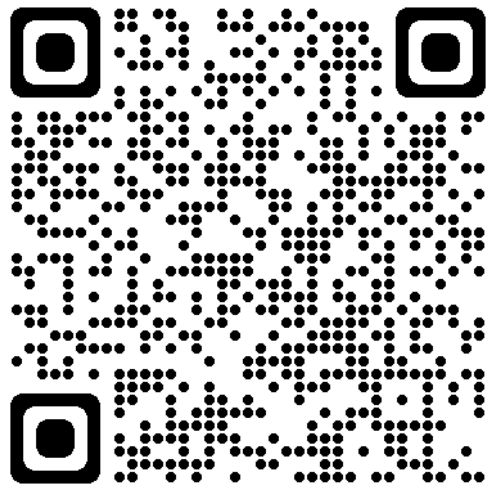
Become a Volunteer Leader in a Chapter location. You can be a Military Lead, Civilian Lead, Social Media Manager, Blue Star Museums Lead, and even Caregiver Lead. We genuinely value our volunteer leadership.

Host a Blue Star Families meet-up in your community. Our volunteers have been a part of hosting Blue Star Museums and Blue Star Parks events in communities all over the country. You could also host a Coffee Connect at your local Starbucks. If you have time to host an event, sign up to volunteer and keep an eye on our monthly volunteer emails for upcoming meet up opportunities.

Have a particular skill you want to share with Blue Star Families? You want to volunteer to bring your yoga skills to military family members, or you own a skating rink and want to host an evening for families. You could even be a resume writing pro looking to support local military spouses in landing their dream job! **Regardless of your skill, reach out to us and let's see how you can share your talent with Blue Star Families.**

www.bluestarfam.org

Try these Nature Bingo Cards over the Summer. They tie in to Blue Star Families and how important it is to get outside.





This summer as you travel, look up these museums:

National Museum of the United States Air Force-Wright Patterson AFB, Ohio

National Museum of the United States Army-Ft. Belvoir, Virginia

National Museum of the United States Marine Corps-Triangle, Virginia

National Museum of the United States Navy-Washington, DC

COMING SOON-July 2023

National Coast Guard Museum-New London, CT

The Coast Guard is the only branch of the armed services without a national museum to celebrate its role in the life of our Nation and to honor the men and women who serve. The public is unaware of the scale and scope of the Coast Guard's missions. We have come to expect the MOST from the Coast Guard, but there is no place for the USCG to share with the public its history, to demonstrate its critical role in protecting us, and highlight its relevance to the greatest issues facing our Nation. ("Future National Coast Guard Museum")

That is until now; it is the right time to build the National Coast Guard Museum in honor of those who serve. Join us in doing the most for them!

<https://www.coastguardmuseum.org>



"It is my honor to be part of this noble project to build America's first national museum to share the stories of selfless Coast Guard heroes who have protected our shores for over 228 years."

The Honorable Thomas J. Ridge
1st Secretary of Homeland Security
Co-Chairman, NCGMA Secretaries' Circle