

# GFWC TEXAS CLUBWOMAN

## Newsletter



*The Newsletter of GFWC Texas*  
*Proud Member of the General Federation of Women's Clubs*  
**Volume 1, Issue 5 Spring 2026**

**GFWC Texas  
Officers  
2024 - 2026**

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Committee Chair  
Terri Kennedy**



*From the GFWC Texas  
President*



When I retired in 2008 after 42 years of working, I was certain of one thing—I was going to be bored. So, I began looking for volunteer opportunities, and that is when I found GFWC.

I can honestly say—I have never been bored.

Serving as your 63rd State President has been one of the greatest honors of my life. The highlight of this journey has been visiting clubs and districts across Texas and getting to know you. You are the heart of this organization, and everything we have accomplished is because of your dedication and passion.

At my installation, I spoke about the waters ahead—some smooth, some rough—and my hope that we were moving toward a better shore. Today, I believe we have reached that shore together.

This success did not happen alone. It took all of us—our Executive Committee, our district leaders, and our clubs—working together to make an impact. I am especially proud of your work on Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention and of those who raised their voices at Day at the Capitol. Your efforts matter, and they are making a difference.

My theme has been: It's not where you start—it's where you finish. Like the butterfly, we continue to grow, adapt, and transform—and that is exactly what I have seen across GFWC Texas.

As I step into the role of “past president,” please know that I am not stepping away. I will still be attending meetings, supporting our programs, and cheering you on every step of the way.

So, what comes next?

Keep inviting others to join us.  
Keep sharing your stories.  
Keep stepping forward as leaders.

And most importantly—keep showing up, speaking up, and standing up for those who need us.

Because that is who we are.

More than 150 years ago, Jane Croly believed that women working together could change the world—and every day, you prove that she was right.

As we move forward, I ask you to continue building on what we have started. Reach out to someone new. Encourage a future leader. Take pride in the difference you make—because it matters more than you may ever know.

Serving you has been a privilege I will always treasure. While this chapter is ending, the work we do—and the friendships we share—will continue.

I will miss seeing you as often, but I hope our paths cross again soon.

Until then, keep growing, keep leading, and keep making a difference.

With gratitude and appreciation,  
Thank you.

*Barbara Harvey*

63rd President of GFWC Texas



GFWC Texas President  
Barbara Harvey (Right).

GFWC President-elect  
Wendy Carriker (Left).

# GFWC Texas' Novella Byrd, Carol Habgood, Barbara Harvey, and Billie Williams are Named to the General Federation of Women's Clubs 2026-2028 Board of Directors

Washington, D. C. — The General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC) is pleased to announce the appointment of Novella Byrd as GFWC President of Texas, Carol Habgood as Bylaws Committee Chairman, Barbara Harvey as a Committee Member of the Signature Program, and Billie Williams as the South Central Region representative of the Fundraising Committee to the 2026-2028 GFWC Board of Directors officially on July 1st.

January 8-11, 2026, Novella, Carol, and Barbara traveled to Washington, DC, to attend the biennial GFWC Board of Directors Leadership Conference for the GFWC 2026-2028 Administration leaders.

"It is a privilege and honor to serve as a member of the GFWC Executive Committee for the past 12 years in preparation for my role as the 2026-2028 GFWC International President on July 1," said Wendy Carriker, President-elect. "This GFWC Board of Directors Leadership



**Left to Right: 2024-2026 GFWC Texas President Barbara Harvey, 2024-2026 GFWC Director of Junior Clubs Shannon Bailey, 2024-2026 GFWC International President Suellen Brazil, 2024-2026 GFWC Parliamentarian Carol Habgood, 2024-2026 GFWC Texas President-elect Novella Byrd.**



**Left to Right: 2026-2028 GFWC International President Wendy Carriker, GFWC Signature Program Committee Member Barbara Harvey, 2026-2028 GFWC Texas President Novella Byrd, and 2026-2028 GFWC Director of Junior Clubs Trina Behbahani.**

Conference is essential to the seamless transition of duties from one Administration to another." This Leadership Conference serves as an opportunity for approximately 200 GFWC leaders to prepare and train for their new roles for the 2026-2028 Administration. Keynote speaker for the event, Amanda Hunter, Vice President of Communications of the Women's Suffrage National Monument Foundation, expressed their gratitude to GFWC members for rising to the challenge of having raised the \$150,000 pledged as an Advisory Council member.

In addition, participants heard from GFWC Headquarters staff, various Committee Chairmen, met other members of their respective Committees, and heard from

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GFWC International President Suellen B. Brazil, President-elect Wendy Carriker, and Trina Behbahani, GFWC Director-Elect of Junior Clubs. Those in attendance also had the opportunity to network, share ideas, and plan for the future administration, while developing as a strong collective unit to serve the more than 63,000 members nationwide and internationally.

The General Federation of Women's Clubs is an international organization dedicated to improving local communities through volunteer service. GFWC has state federations in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. There are 21 International Affiliate Clubs in 12 countries worldwide. GFWC members are community leaders who advocate for domestic violence awareness and prevention programs, and efforts to support children. Volunteers work locally to impact their communities by supporting the arts, preserving natural resources, advancing education, promoting healthy lifestyles, and encouraging civic involvement.

## **Operation Smile and GFWC Texas Plan To Work Closer**

Austin — GFWC Texas President Barbara Harvey met with Melany Bishop at the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs Headquarters to discuss shared missions and opportunities for future collaboration.

The meeting focused on the work of Operation Smile, a GFWC Affiliate Organization that operates in more than 30 countries. Operation Smile provides individuals born with cleft conditions life-changing reconstructive surgery and comprehensive medical care at no cost to patients and families.

During the conversation, both leaders explored how GFWC Texas and Operation Smile might partner more closely to support awareness, fundraising, and service initiatives that expand access to care and strengthen community impact.

The meeting reflects GFWC Texas' ongoing commitment to building meaningful partnerships that align with its mission of service and global outreach.

**Pictured Left to Right: GFWC Texas President Barbara Harvey with Melany Bishop, Senior Manager, Community Engagement for Operation Smile, at the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs Headquarters in Austin, Texas, discussing collaborative opportunities to support children and adults born with cleft conditions through life-changing surgical care and comprehensive treatment.**



# GFWC Texas President Harvey Attends Leadership Forum

Washington, D. C. — GFWC Texas President Barbara Harvey attended the National Strategic Leadership Forum on Ending Violence, Exploitation, and Trafficking at General Federation of Women's Clubs Headquarters in Washington.



Right to Left: GFWC Texas President Barbara Harvey with Eleanor Kennelly Gaetan at GFWC Headquarters.

The forum featured a distinguished panel of national experts and advocates addressing issues related to violence prevention, exploitation, trafficking, survivor advocacy, and public policy. Panelists included Eleanor Kennelly Gaetan; Rachel I. Graber; and Lynn Rosenthal, who also served as the first White House Advisor on Violence Against Women during the Obama-Biden Administration and later as HHS Deputy Assistant Secretary for Population Affairs and Director of Sexual and Gender-based Violence during the Biden-Harris Administration.

The forum provided valuable information and national perspectives that support GFWC Texas' continued advocacy efforts addressing human trafficking and violence prevention.

# Federation Sisters Aide Flooded Areas in Central Texas

Kerrville — GFWC clubs, state federations, and GFWC Texas members from across Texas donated funds to support recovery efforts following the devastating floods in Central Texas. The contribution was presented to the Community Foundation of the Texas Hill Country on March 3<sup>rd</sup>.



Left to right: Lou Hitt, TFWC Historical Foundation Chairman; Dr. Kathy Horak Smith, GFWC Texas First Vice President; Amy Rector, Chief Financial Officer, Community Foundation of the Texas Hill Country; Barbara Harvey, GFWC Texas President; Novella Byrd, GFWC Texas President-elect; and Katherine Hajek, GFWC Texas Second Vice President.

**GFWC Texas extends its sincere thanks to everyone who contributed and supported this important relief effort.**

## ***GFWC Texas Membership*** ***Women of Weston (WOW)***

Let us introduce you to the newest club in Texas, Women of Weston in Weston Texas. The Women of Weston is the newest club in Trinity District. The Women of Weston was established in 2022. It was a revitalized mission of the members mothers, who had established a group in 1968 which was no longer active. The Women of Weston mission is to benefit and enrich the lives of the community of Weston and the surrounding communities, by holding fundraisers, and charitable contributions through local events, all while enjoying the fellowship of friends, neighbors and embracing our historic traditions. To make this group even more special three members were part of the founding group, they were members in the 1980's. The community of Weston is fortunate to have members of the community who are willing to service across a sixty-year span. The Women of Weston are looking forward to belonging to the General Federation of Women's Clubs, and the General Federation of Women's Clubs of Texas. These women are already fitting into Trinity Districts by attending their fall board and the spring convention. President Jamie McManus and Donna Estep attended the GFWC Texas Spring Convention in San Antonio, TX. They have already started making connections. As President Jamie McManus said, they are looking forward to expanding their partnership the GFWC Texas and GFWC.

Welcome to GFWC Texas and GFWC, we are looking forward to hearing all about the wonderful projects and programs, that you do for your community. Again, welcome to GFWC Texas and GFWC.

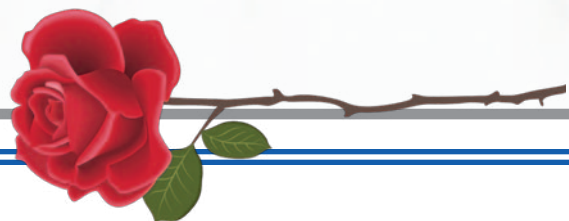
**Left to Right, Fran Mask, Jamie McManus,  
Beth Hemby and Donna Estep**



## ***In Memoriam***

***Lynn Long***

**Pioneer District**



## **Alamo District 2026 Spring Convention Recap**

Jourdanton —Members walked into the meeting room of the Jourdanton Community Library on Saturday, April 18, 2026, to see beautiful decorations with spring flowers, covered tables and chairs in white fabric, and the Alamo District banner in blue and white in front of the lectern. Serving platters of breakfast goodies greeted attendees with aroma of coffee just brewed.

Alamo District has a little flea market affectionately called “Country Store” to raise operating funds and student scholarships. Members donate the items for sale. Experienced attendees dive right in as they arrive. This meeting offered baked goods such as zucchini bread, banana bread, cookies, and homemade candy which flew off the sale table. Decorative and practical things for the home were a big hit. After lunch, prices are slashed to one-half the listed amount causing another rush to buy. The “merchandise” must have been especially nice because the total sales figure was a record since the Country Store began years ago.

All five clubs were represented at the meeting and perfect attendance shined as thirty-one ladies had registered and thirty-one ladies arrived. Among them was GFWC Texas President Barbara Harvey who gave her final address to Alamo District as her administration comes to an end. Carol Habgood, GFWC International Parliamentarian spoke about her duties as an international officer and her experiences traveling to Washington, D.C.

Elections for District Officers were completed. GFWC Texas Life Member Patsy Troell conducted the Installation with “The Spice of Life theme.” Officers took home fresh spices as little gifts. The five clubs shared sixty award certificates representing their projects and programs.

This officer heard comments later that the meeting was very enjoyable. All duties and requirements were met and that adjournment came a bit early was appreciated.

## **Alamo District President’s Spring Newsletter 2026**

Remember the Alamo!.....District.

Remember Alamo District has five clubs.

Remember Alamo District has the second oldest club in Federation, Bronte Club of Victoria, founded in 1873.

Remember Alamo District presently has steady membership around 200.

And remember, Alamo District has brought you the 2026-2028 GFWC Texas President, Novella Byrd.

My recommendation and challenge as District President was for clubs to embrace the arts. I know it brings joy if you add it to volunteer work. A few examples of just that: Woman’s club of Pleasanton invited Ms. Tera’s Tap-n-Toe dancers (ages 3-13) to the Christmas pot luck meeting. There were miles of smiles as the girls danced to traditional Christmas music in delightful costumes. They brought roadies! Meeting attendance went up to 60 for the performance. The arts bring joy and people out to the show.

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The club also sponsored two summer youth art contests in conjunction with the county public libraries. Again, there were miles of smiles as participants took home art supplies as prizes for entering an original work of art. The same club sponsored an art lesson for their own members who were guided by a teacher in painting on canvas. Everyone took home the same basic picture, but it was their very own work of art. Overheard during the lesson, "Painting is so relaxing."

San Antonio Women's Federation held a meeting at an art gallery. The resident artist and teacher, who conducts lessons for budding artists around the country, hosted the club members for lunch. She gave a tour of the residence which she renovated and restored and turned into a gallery for other artists to offer their works for sale. The residence is located in an historic neighborhood near downtown and it is glowing like it did when it was built around 1900. The above was a sampling of enjoyment of the arts in Alamo District 2024-2026.

Remember, the arts bring joy if you weave it into to your Federation work. Thanks to everyone who helped me these last two years. Congratulations to all clubs on their successful programs.

Annette Anderson  
President  
GFWC Texas Alamo District

## **Capitol District's 84<sup>th</sup> Year of Sunshine and Community Blessings celebrated**

Round Rock — The GFWC Texas Capitol District celebrated its 84th Year of Community Blessings at the Spring Convention on April 1 in Round Rock. Clubwomen from all eight Central Texas clubs gathered to reflect on a year filled with service, fundraising, and heartfelt community impact.

District President Monica Benoit-Beatty and her administration welcomed 52 attendees, including special guests: GFWC Texas President Barbara Harvey, President-elect Novella Byrd, First Vice President Dr. Kathy Horak-Smith, and Second Vice President Katherine Hajek. President Harvey shared greetings and updates on statewide 2025 service initiatives, highlighting the first GFWC Texas "Day at the Capitol" in twenty-five years. More than sixty members traveled to Austin to advocate for stronger laws against human sex trafficking — efforts that contributed to the passage of eight new laws supporting both her Special Project and GFWC's 2025 International Day of Service goals.

### **Project in a Day: Isaiah 117 House**

This year's hands-on service project supported the Isaiah 117 House of Williamson County, a comforting temporary home for children awaiting CPS placement. The house provides clothing, meals, play spaces, and a safe overnight stay during what can be the most difficult days of a child's life.

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Capitol District members donated nearly \$1,600 in new socks, underwear, pajamas, jeans, and cash — ensuring the home remains well-stocked for children and the CPS workers who care for them.

### **Celebrating Excellence Across the District**

The convention recognized 49 award-winning projects and programs completed in 2025 by clubs in Austin, Franklin, Georgetown, Hillsboro, Killeen, and Lampasas. Highlights included: Outstanding Clubwoman Volunteer - Carol Wright, Lampasas Pierian Club; State Life Membership Nominee - Bonnie Haynes (later awarded at the 129th Texas Spring Convention in San Antonio); Outstanding Americanism Program - Killeen Wednesday Review Club; Outstanding Club Program - San Gabriel Woman's Club, Georgetown.



**Honorees**

### **A Heartfelt Farewell**

In a touching surprise, Capitol District members honored outgoing President Monica Benoit-Beatty with a bouquet of sunflowers, an engraved vase, and a gift card — a warm expression of gratitude for her leadership and service.

### **Welcoming the 2026–2028 Officers**

GFWC Texas President-elect Novella Byrd installed the incoming district officers: President - Judy Boram, President-elect - Sherry Eishen, First Vice President - Connie Higdon, Second Vice President - Juli Chaney, Recording Secretary - Karen Dunn, Treasurer - Bonnie Haynes, Scholarship Chair - Joyce Hodson, Historical Foundation Trustee - Darlene Bergmann, and Parliamentarian - Jeri Harkins.

### **A Sweet Ending**

The 84<sup>th</sup> Spring Convention wrapped up with hummingbird cupcakes, punch, and plenty of laughter — a joyful close to a memorable year of service before members headed into their summer break.



**New slate of officers for Capitol District with GFWC Texas President-elect Novella Byrd ( in turquoise) conducting the installation ceremony. Officers were given hummingbird feeders as tokens.**

## Lone Star District Hosts Pioneer District President Short

Albany — Invited by Mary Lou Gilbreth, Pioneer District President Angel Short traveled to Albany to speak about Children’s Advocacy Centers and what they do. Patti Poe, SCR Secretary and Past State President, traveled to Albany with Short.

Children’s Advocacy Centers provide a safe, welcoming place where children can speak about traumatic events they have experienced or witnessed. Instead of being questioned multiple times in intimidating environments, they are gently interviewed one time by a trained forensic interviewer—someone who knows how to talk to children in a way that reduces fear and prevents further trauma.

This is not just important—it is essential. But what these centers do goes far beyond interviews. They provide counseling—completely free of charge—for as long as a child needs it. And when I say “as long as needed,” I truly mean it. Healing from trauma doesn’t happen overnight, and these centers are there every step of the way.



**Pictured Left to Right: Pictured: Sandy Conway GFWC Texas Past State President, Patti Poe GFWC SCR Secretary and GFWC Texas Past State President, Angela Short Pioneer District President, Mary Lou Gilbreth GFWC Texas HF Trustee and members of the Albany Study Club with Bob (2 year old mascot)**

They also meet basic, everyday needs. Many of the children who come to CACs have had to leave their homes suddenly. They may arrive with nothing—no clothes, no school supplies, sometimes not even knowing where their next meal is coming from. CACs step in to fill those gaps. They provide groceries, clothing, and essentials. They make sure children have snacks after school. They offer comfort, stability, and a sense of normalcy during a time when everything else feels uncertain.

And this is where our role becomes so important. The mission of General Federation of Women’s Clubs Junior’s Special Program: Advocates for Children is to protect, support, and improve the lives of children—especially those facing hardship, abuse, or neglect. Supporting Children’s

Advocacy Centers is a direct and meaningful way we fulfill that mission.

When we support CACs, we are advocating for children in the most real and impactful way possible.

We are helping protect them. We are helping them heal. And we are helping give them a voice. These centers rely heavily on community support. Donations, volunteer work, and service projects make it possible for CACs to continue serving children and families in crisis. Every dollar, every item, every act of kindness matters. Children’s Advocacy Centers are more than buildings. They are places of hope. They are places of healing. And for many children, they are the first place where someone truly listens.

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By supporting them . . . we are not just giving back, we are making a lasting difference in the lives of Texas children.

## **Reflections From Pioneer District President Short**

Montague — Like the butterfly, our journey in Federation is one of growth, change, and transformation. Each of us began this term in a different place—with different goals, different challenges, and different experiences—but through service, leadership, and dedication, we have all taken flight.

As District Presidents, this year marks our “final flight.” It is a time to reflect—not on where we started—but on how far we have come, the impact we have made, and the lives we have touched along the way. These butterflies have donated their time to their special projects across the state including Children’s Advocacy Centers, Elder Care, Women’s Shelter and foster children, Supporting victims of domestic violence, embracing the arts and educating the community about human trafficking to build a safer community. Because in Federation, it is not where you start...it is where you finish.

And as we reflect on that journey, I’d like to take a moment to speak about something that is very close to my heart—Children’s Advocacy Centers—and the critical role they play in the lives of children across Texas.

During my time as a Victim Witness Coordinator for the 97th District Attorney’s Office, I saw firsthand just how vital these centers are—not only to the cases we worked on, but to the children and families experiencing some of the most difficult moments of their lives.

Children’s Advocacy Centers provide a safe and welcoming place where children can share what they have experienced or witnessed. Instead of being questioned multiple times in intimidating settings, they are interviewed one time by a trained forensic interviewer—someone who understands how to speak with children in a way that reduces fear and prevents further trauma. This is not just important—it is essential.

For our law enforcement and prosecutors, these centers are a crucial part of doing their jobs effectively. This allows our law enforcement to seek justice while protecting the emotional well-being of the child. That balance is something you simply cannot put a price on.

But their work does not stop there. They provide counseling—free of charge—for as long as a child needs it. Healing from trauma takes time, and these centers are there every step of the way.

They also meet basic needs. Many children arrive having left their homes suddenly, often with nothing. These centers provide clothing, school supplies, groceries, and even something as simple—but meaningful—as an after-school snack. In moments of uncertainty, they offer comfort, stability, and hope.

And this is where our role becomes so important. Across the Pioneer District, I am proud to say

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that our clubs have stepped up in a meaningful way—contributing \$2,050 in donations and giving hundreds of volunteer hours in support of these centers through project in a day. 24 projects, 495 hours, \$13,239 dollars donated and \$2,670 in kind. That is the true spirit of Federation in action.

I am also proud to report that we are staying strong in the Pioneer District, with 20 clubs continuing to hold their own. That strength reflects the resilience, dedication, and heart of service found in each of you.

As we continue this journey and prepare for our final flight, let us remember that like the butterfly, transformation takes time, commitment, and heart. And it is through that journey that we create lasting impact.

And in closing—

As we take our final flight, may we carry forward the spirit of service, the strength of our Federation, and the knowledge that it is not where we started—but where we finish, and the lives we touch along the way.

### ***Caprock District President Tina O'Connor Announces Changes***

Well, If I could carry a tune, which I cannot, I guess this would be a good time to sing ... “So long, farewell, Auf Wiedersehen, Adieu. Adieu, Adieu, to you and you and you! Goodbye! Caprock District is leaving and will no longer exist. This is sad as the district has been part of GFWC for many, many years but the two remaining clubs will continue to exist and be part of GFWC by joining the Lone Star District.

Unfortunately, the history of Caprock District seems to have been lost. I know numerous Caprock clubs existed before the districts were given names and were known by numbers. The district became Caprock in 1960 when all the districts were given names. Caprock District was comprised of sixty-three clubs in 1985 and has slowly dwindled in numbers over the years. We lost our third remaining club this past summer so the process to join Lone Star began. Our two very small remaining clubs, the Las Fidelis Study Club of Levelland and the Phebe K. Warner Study Club of Tahoka will continue to actively work to be of assistance to their communities, as they have been for many years. as Fidelis will celebrate its 80th Birthday this year and Phebe K. Warner is 104! That is a lot of years of service to their communities... and their commitment will continue. The wo clubs both give college scholarships and participate in the day of service. Project that these clubs support include Honor Flight, M.D. Anderson, Open Door which is an organization that helps the homeless and victims of Sex Trafficking, Voices of Hope an organization that rescues victims of sex trafficking, local libraries, Community Outreach, Backpack programs, and many others. This community involvement will continue as members of the Lone Star district.

So, although it is Adieu, Farewell, and Goodbye from Caprock District, it is Hello and Howdy to Lone Star!

# Magnolia District Supports Victims of Domestic Violence

Submitted by Magnolia District President, Julia Napper

Jasper — As the end of the 2024 – 2026 administration approaches, I am very proud of the work Magnolia District clubs have done to support victims of domestic violence. In keeping with my administration’s theme, “Think Strong, Be Strong, Finish Strong,” Magnolia District has remained intentional in both thought and action when it comes to this important work.

Thinking strong has meant recognizing the ongoing and often hidden needs within our communities. Being strong has meant stepping forward with compassion, resources, and resolve. And finishing strong has meant ensuring that our efforts are not one-time gestures, but sustained commitments that truly make a difference in the lives of those seeking safety, dignity, and hope.

This year, our clubs across the district completed 16 impactful projects focused on supporting victims of domestic violence. These projects ranged from assembling care packages and supporting local shelters to raising awareness and partnering with community organizations. Through these efforts, members contributed an impressive 784 volunteer hours, demonstrating both dedication and heart for this important cause.

In addition to service hours, Magnolia District clubs provided \$2,375 in in-kind donations, including purses filled with essential toiletries and cosmetics—simple but meaningful items that restore a sense of personal dignity and care for those who have experienced trauma. These thoughtful donations remind recipients that they are seen, valued, and not alone. Furthermore, our clubs contributed \$200 in monetary donations to organizations that provide shelter, advocacy, and resources for individuals and families affected by domestic violence.

Each hour served, each item given, and each dollar donated reflects our shared commitment to lifting others up during some of their most difficult moments. The work we do may not always be visible, but its impact is deeply felt.

As we reflect on this administration’s accomplishments, let us continue to think strong about the needs around us, be strong in our willingness to act, and finish strong by sustaining and growing these efforts in the years ahead. Together, we are making a difference—one project, one act of kindness, and one life at a time.

1984

**THE GFWC WOMEN'S HISTORY AND RESOURCE CENTER** opened to serve as a valuable venue for research, interactive workshops, lectures, and events highlighting the role of volunteers in the history of the United States and the importance of GFWC members in women’s history.

1985

GFWC International President Jeri Winger (1984-1986) was an **OFFICIAL DELEGATE FOR THE UNITED STATES** to the U.N. Decade for Women Conference in Nairobi, Kenya.

1986

**GOOD HOUSEKEEPING MAGAZINE** DONATED an archive of related collections to the GFWC Women’s History and Resource Center.



# GFWC 66<sup>th</sup> South Texas District Spring Convention Recap

Kingsville — GFWC Texas South Texas District held its' 66th Spring Convention at the Helen Kleberg Community Center, in Kingsville, March 13-14, 2026.

GFWC South Texas District met for a 5 pm Social with wine and hors d'oeuvres at St. Gertrude's Hall in Kingsville. The Presidents' Council did a wonderful job with decorations, food, and entertainment. We were joined by GFWC Texas 2nd Vice President Katherine Hajek, GFWC President-elect Novella Byrd, and GFWC President Barbara Harvey. After dinner, the new officers were installed by GFWC President-elect, Novella Byrd.

The following morning, the business meeting was held at the Helen Kleberg Community Center where we enjoyed a lovely breakfast. Highlights of our meeting included a "State of the Union" address for GFWC Texas by GFWC Texas President, Barbara Harvey, who spoke about the many ways we've impacted the issue of Human Trafficking for Sexual Purposes through our legislative push with the Day at the Capitol, providing purses and toiletry items for Magdelene House, as well as learning more about the issue through programs at our GFWC Texas meetings.

We also had a guest speaker from the St. Gertrude's food pantry who described the various ways they help the community in addition to providing food. For our service project, club members brought canned goods and pantry staples (such as pasta, coffee, macaroni and cheese) to distribute to those seeking food at their pantry.

President-elect, Judy Makus had us singing Federation songs as well as a team building activity where we gathered into groups of 5 or 6 ladies and tossed a ball to one another. Whoever caught the ball had to say their name and give an example of something they like or have learned through GFWC.

We honored Maria Elia Ramos of GFWC F.J. Scott Woman's Club as our Outstanding Clubwoman for her many years of service and dedication to GFWC. In Memoriam Chairman, Carolyn Swenson, gave a moving tribute to all our Club Sisters who have passed away in the last year.

We raised funds for South Texas District and for the Melba Dorothy Lillian Louise Scholarship. This year's scholarship will go to Savannah Diaz from Ingleside High School.

The meeting concluded with final remarks from the 2024-2026 South Texas District President and remarks from the 2026-2028 South Texas District President, Judy Makus, followed by the passing of the gavel and the outgoing President's gift. A fun time was had by all!



## GFWC Texas, South Texas District President 2024 - 2026 Cammie Hyatt's Special Project: Elder Care

Aransas Pass — Since Texas ranks second in the nation in the number of elderly facing food insecurity, many of those individuals utilize food pantries. Almost every club in South Texas District and the District itself supported food pantries through donations of canned goods and staples, as well as raising awareness of the issue through their programs.

The Presidents' Council had a program by Alan and Cindy Moore, on the Texas Ramp Project which is a non-profit organization that goes to the homes of elderly individuals in need and installs wheelchair ramps for them free of charge. This club also provided Valentine's goodies and toiletry items for La Paloma Adult Day Care.

For Christmas, The Woman's Club of Aransas Pass gives gift baskets to elderly individuals who have little or no family in the area. Club members purchase food items, toiletries, socks, and blankets. Other members bake bread, cookies, trail mix, and candy to give the baskets a personal touch along with a Christmas card.

Eleanor Brackenridge Literary Club also had a Christmas project where they wrote Christmas cards for three rest homes in Edna and Ganado as well as donating to Project Christmas. The Woman's Club of Kingsville had a program on Adult Protective Care Services and the Alzheimer's Association. Both programs/projects are critical for the health of the elderly in making members aware of potential hazards, whether physical, mental, or even potential threats, by those who would take advantage of our elderly citizens.

GFWC Florence J. Scott Woman's Club held a nursing home outreach program led by Maria Elia Ramos at the Kelsey-Bass Museum where members made towel bunnies to be delivered to the residents for Easter. Outreach and advocacy were promoted by President Lori Peterson Perez through a PowerPoint Presentation at the 2025 South Texas District Spring Convention and GFWC Texas Fall Board titled "Essential Tools for Life and Legacy." This critical information provides the elderly with tools needed to help them create a will or trust and teaches the difference between the types of powers of attorney. She also presented her program at a convention of retired educators, and at a retired state employee meeting.

Through our efforts, the elderly citizens of South Texas District have received emphasis within our programs and projects and hopefully felt the love and admiration that we have tried to bestow upon them.



## **GFWC Texas Trinity District Spring Convention and Installation Ceremony hosted by Fidelis Inter Se Club**

Celina — The 2026 GFWC Texas Trinity District Spring Convention and Installation Ceremony was held on April 11, 2026, in Celina, Texas, hosted by the Fidelis Inter Se Club of Celina. The weekend began with pre-convention activities on Friday, April 10th, as twenty members gathered in downtown Celina to visit, shop, and explore the charming square. The evening concluded with dinner at Toasted Walnut on Main Street, followed by fellowship at The Silo, a historic restaurant and bar, where members spent time reconnecting with friends.

On Saturday morning, 51 members and guests convened at First State Bank of Celina for the 67th Annual GFWC Texas Trinity District Spring Convention and Installation Ceremony. Attendees embraced a Tea Party theme, wearing spring colors and festive hats. Tables were beautifully decorated with teapots adorned with floral bouquets, creating a welcoming and elegant atmosphere.

A special highlight of this year's convention was the addition of a new club to Trinity District. We are proud to welcome the Women of Weston of Weston, Texas, and look forward to the energy, service, and fellowship they will bring to our district.

Three outstanding clubwomen were honored for their service and achievements:

- Carolyn Jo Snow, District Second Vice President and Lake Area Woman's Club First Vice President, was recognized as the newest District Life Member, honoring her twenty-four (24) years of dedicated service to GFWC Texas.
- Sarah Peel, Lake Area Woman's Club, was selected as the 2026 Trinity District LEADS Representative.
- Keisha Head, Whitesboro History Club, was named the 2026 Club Volunteer Woman of the Year.

This year, nine out of ten clubs submitted reports to district chairman and were recognized for their exceptional work, with eighty-three (83) First Place Awards and thirty-three (33) Second Place Awards were presented reflecting another successful year of service and commitment across the district.

A meaningful highlight of the program was presented by Lillie White, District In-Memoriam Chairman, who honored five beloved clubwomen who passed away this year. Her tribute beautifully reflected their lives of service and the enduring Volunteer Spirit they exemplified.

The day concluded with the installation of the 2026–2028 District Officers, conducted by Beth Hemby, GFWC Texas Life Member Committee Member and Past Trinity District President. The newly installed officers are:

- Fran Mask, District President
- Patricia Davis, District President-elect
- Janie Grumbles, District First Vice President
- Keisha Head, District Second Vice President
- Tami Wells, District Treasurer

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- Kimberly Platt, District Secretary
- Terri Kennedy, District Scholarship Representative
- Pam Windham, District Historical Foundation Representative

Special guests in attendance included GFWC Texas State President Barbara Harvey, Past GFWC Texas State President and current GFWC South Central Region Secretary Patti Poe, and Pioneer District President Angela Short.

As I complete my two years serving as Trinity District President, my heart is full. This journey has been one of growth, friendship, and shared purpose, and I am truly grateful for the opportunity to serve alongside such dedicated and inspiring women. I have every confidence that our incoming officers will continue to lead with strength and heart, guiding Trinity District to even greater accomplishments in the years ahead. Trinity District proudly celebrates another successful convention, marked by fellowship, recognition, and continued dedication to community service.

## **Donna Parkinson, GFWC Texas Trinity District President 2024-2026, Reflects on District Accomplishments as Term Ends**

Sadler — This year, 9 of our 10 clubs submitted reports, representing a total of 441 projects across Trinity District. Collectively, our members contributed 13,314 volunteer hours, donated \$156,559, and provided \$282,652 in in-kind support. In addition, clubs invested \$7,465 in project-related expenses throughout 2025. These numbers reflect not only measurable impact, but a deep and ongoing commitment to service within our communities.

As their District President, I had the privilege of visiting nine clubs this year, including our newest addition to the district, The Women of Weston in Weston, Texas. In doing so, I traveled 2,272 miles across the district to meet with and support our clubs firsthand.

My President's theme, "Transformation arises from the beating wings of volunteers," has been beautifully reflected throughout Trinity District. The women of Trinity truly embody that spirit, like butterflies in motion, each club contributing unique strength, color, and purpose as they transform their communities through service.

One accomplishment I am most proud to share from Trinity District is how our clubs responded to a simple call to action, education on human trafficking for sexual purposes, and turned it into a meaningful, community-wide impact. What began as a request to learn quickly became a movement.

Our members took the time to understand not only the reality of human trafficking, but also why it is so difficult to prosecute. Rather than discouraging them, that knowledge empowered them. Trinity District members carried that understanding into advocacy at the Texas State Capitol on May 13, 2025, during the GFWC-TX Day at the Capitol, where they urged stronger legislation and policies to better protect victims of human trafficking. Their presence reflected courage, compassion, and a commitment to ensuring survivors are seen, heard, and protected.

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One club partnered with their local leaders to help establish “Trafficking Free Zone” in their city, encouraging official recognition and awareness that their communities stand against trafficking and find training to support law enforcement there.

Others collaborated with organizations like Hope for Justice to distribute educational materials in high-risk areas such as at the area lakes located off I-35, truck stops, and public spaces placing critical hotline information directly into the hands of those who may need it most. Club members learned the universal hand signal to be more aware if a person should signal that they need “Help”.

Many of our clubs extended their efforts even further by joining women’s support groups or shelters, collecting and providing essential items for survivors as they rebuild their lives, and offering compassion where it is needed most.

One club even hosted a full-day Human Trafficking workshop titled “Texas Isn’t for Sale.” This event brought together community leaders from churches, the District Attorney’s office, school officials, city government, medical and mental health professionals as well as their local law enforcement creating a powerful space to share ideas and strengthen efforts to keep children and families safe and bring trafficking awareness to light.

At our Fall Board Meeting, we deepened our understanding by welcoming a representative from Refuge for Women to speak, reminding us all that behind every statistic is a person, a story, and a future worth fighting for.

What makes this accomplishment so meaningful is not just what we did ,but how our clubs came together, took ownership, and went above and beyond in ways that were unique to their communities.

This was more than a project. It was a commitment to awareness, to action, and to hope. And that is what makes me so proud of Trinity District.



***Pecan Pie Muffins,***

***From Sharon Walker, Decatur Woman’s Club, Pioneer District***

- 1 C. light brown sugar***
- ½ C. all- purpose flour***
- 2 eggs***
- 2/3 C. melted butter***
- 1 C. chopped pecans***
- pecan halves***

*Thank you,  
Sharon!*

***Preheat oven to 350. Mix all ingredients in a bowl with a wooden spoon. Pour into a greased mini-muffin pan, filling each cup 2/3 full. Garnish each muffin with a pecan half. Bake about 12 to 15 minutes.***



129<sup>th</sup>  
Annual Spring Convention  
**GFWC Texas**



**April 29<sup>th</sup> — May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026**  
Embassy Suites by Hilton  
San Antonio Brooks Hotel & Spa

*"The Final Flight -  
It's Not Where You Start,  
It's Where You Finish."*

## GFWC Texas LEADS Graduates Eight In San Antonio

San Antonio — Completion certificates were bestowed to eight clubwomen at the graduation ceremony for GFWC Texas LEADS at the recent GFWC Texas Spring Convention in San Antonio.

Since Texas is only allowed to send one representative to the annual GFWC Leadership and Development Seminar (LEADS), the national organization encourages state organizations to provide a similar training for its state members. This is the second year for GFWC Texas to hold a state level LEADS training. An in-person workshops were held for the eight participants on the days before GFWC Texas Fall Board and Spring Convention. There were six additional zoom meetings held between the two state meetings.

Topics covered included types of leadership styles along with a survey to determine each participant's individual style, GFWC and TFWC history, body language, how to run a successful meeting, conflict management, setting goals, creating a vision, GFWC protocol, how to increase participation, tips on organizing a meeting, giving a speech with ways to use technology during your talk, parliamentary procedure, identifying and building leaders, creating a line of succession, transitioning to a new leadership team, and resources for further studies.

Congratulations to the new Texas LEADS graduates!



**Graduates of GFWC Texas inaugural class of 2026 (Left to Right):**  
Lou Hitt, GFWC Texas LEADS Chairman, Judy Boram (Capitol District),  
Kathye McGregor (Capitol District), Lisa Kotz (Magnolia District), Christi  
Melton (Pioneer District), Dr. Kathy Horak Smith (Pioneer District), Marcia  
Bordovsky (South Texas District), Keisha Head (Trinity District), Wendy  
Carriker, GFWC President-elect, and GFWC Texas President Barbara Harvey.  
Not pictured: Wanda Godso (Trinity District) and Novella Byrd (GFWC Texas  
President-elect and GFWC Texas Leadership Chairman).

A new class will be offered in the Fall. Watch for more information coming this summer.



## **GFWC Texas Welcomes Phyllis Wilson, President of the Military Women's Memorial as Guest Speaker**

San Antonio — When Carol Habgood returned from a trip to Washington, D.C., she shared that the President of the Military Women's Memorial expressed interest in visiting Texas. GFWC Texas quickly explored the opportunity and made plans to include her in the GFWC Texas Annual Convention program.

GFWC Texas President Barbara Harvey began coordinating with her advisor to arrange for Phyllis Wilson to serve as a featured speaker at the convention. Wilson's distinguished background includes service in the U.S. Army as a Military Intelligence Voice Intercept Operator, along with her current leadership as President of the Military Women's Memorial. Unlike many speakers, Wilson did not simply arrive, speak, and depart. She fully engaged with GFWC Texas members throughout the convention experience. As a member of The Woman's Club of Chevy Chase, she embraced the spirit of GFWC fellowship by joining the group tour of the San Antonio Missions while wearing GFWC logo apparel.



**Phyllis Wilson**

She also attended the special dinner honoring Wendy Carriker, GFWC President-elect, as well as opening ceremonies and other business sessions. Her presence throughout the convention created meaningful opportunities for connection and engagement with members. During her featured presentation following lunch on Friday, Wilson shared the story of the Military Women's Memorial. Her remarks captured the full attention of attendees as she described the legacy and importance of honoring women who have served in the United States Armed Forces.

Women have served in the military since the founding of the Republic, from the story of Molly Pitcher during the Revolutionary War to the millions serving today. The Military Women's Memorial honors that legacy and recognizes more than 3 million women who have served since the American Revolution.

Located at the gateway to Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, the Military Women's Memorial is the nation's only major national memorial dedicated to honoring women's service in the U.S. Armed Forces. Opened to the public in 1997, it features award-winning design by the architectural firm Weiss/Manfredi and incorporates the historic Hemicycle, originally intended as the ceremonial entrance to Arlington National Cemetery.

Situated along the historic axis connecting the Lincoln Memorial and Arlington House, the Memorial stands as a lasting tribute to women's courage, patriotism, and leadership in service to the nation.

Following Wilson's presentation, many attendees expressed a strong desire to visit the Memorial in Arlington, reflecting the lasting impact of her message.

# ***Standing Together Against Domestic Violence***

***Beth Hemby, Chairman***

***“Domestic abuse will never end until we make it socially unacceptable.”  
— Mark Groves***

The fight against domestic violence requires courage, compassion, education, and unwavering advocacy. Throughout the 2024–2026 administration of Barbara Harvey, GFWC Texas members across the state worked tirelessly to fulfill that mission by bringing awareness to their communities, supporting survivors, and advocating for meaningful legislative action to combat this devastating crime.

Domestic violence impacts individuals and families from every background, leaving emotional, physical, and generational scars that can last a lifetime. Recognizing the urgent need for prevention, intervention, and healing, clubwomen throughout Texas united in service and advocacy to ensure victims know they are not alone. Through educational programs, awareness campaigns, community partnerships, and service initiatives, members demonstrated that collective action can create lasting change.

During the 129<sup>th</sup> Annual GFWC Texas Spring Convention in San Antonio, the organization made a bold and compassionate statement in support of survivors through a substantial donation to Magdalena House. Located in San Antonio, Magdalena House is a remarkable five-acre neighborhood of transitional homes serving mothers and their children who have fled dangerous and abusive environments.

Magdalena House provides far more than shelter—it offers hope, healing, and a pathway toward independence. Through a dual-generation approach, mothers and children receive comprehensive wraparound services in a safe, nurturing, home-like environment where accountability and encouragement are foundational principles. Families are provided with safe housing, basic necessities, therapeutic services, educational opportunities, and a supportive community designed to help them rebuild their lives.

Mothers residing at Magdalena House participate in accredited educational programs year-round, including college coursework, high school completion, GED preparation, and ESOL classes. In addition, they engage in parenting classes, wellness programs, peer enrichment groups, and life-skills development opportunities that strengthen emotional wellness and self-sufficiency. Families often remain in the program for multiple years while completing educational goals and preparing for long-term stability.

The organization also provides extensive case management services, legal assistance connections, and access to vital community resources. Special gatherings and family-centered events help model healthy, positive relationships while fostering a sense of belonging and emotional support. Holistic therapeutic services are woven throughout every aspect of the program, helping both mothers and children develop the emotional, educational, financial, and social skills necessary to thrive independently in the future.

Convention attendees had the privilege of hearing directly from Becca McNitzky, who

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graciously accepted the donation on behalf of Magdalena House. McNitzky shared powerful information about the services offered, the number of women and children the program is able to support at one time, and the life-changing impact these resources have on families seeking safety and healing.

Beth Hemby, the GFWC Signature Program: "Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention" Chairman commended the extraordinary work being accomplished through Magdalena House and emphasized the commitment of GFWC Texas clubs and members across the state to continue supporting survivors of domestic violence. Her remarks reflected the heart of the organization's mission: to stand beside victims during some of the most difficult moments of their lives while advocating for a future where abuse is no longer tolerated.


As GFWC Texas continues its work in communities across the state, members remain steadfast in their belief that education, advocacy, compassion, and service can help eradicate domestic violence. By supporting organizations like Magdalena House and speaking openly about the realities of abuse, clubwomen are helping create safer communities and brighter futures for women and children throughout Texas.



**Left to Right: Becca McNitzky receives check from GFWC Texas President Barbara Harvey and Chairman Beth Henby for Magdalena House.**

**2006**

GFWC WAS RECOGNIZED ON THE FLOOR OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE as "a gem among our midst" by Senator Joseph Biden (D-Delaware) for work in bringing hope to victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse.



**2008**

GFWC Board of Director members participated in a DAY ON THE HILL TO ADVOCATE FOR THE BIPARTISAN PAY EQUALITY BILL based on the discrimination case of clubwoman Lilly Ledbetter (Alabama). President Barack Obama signed The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act in January 2009.

**2009**

Delegates to GFWC Convention in Cleveland, Ohio, SELECTED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS AS THE GFWC SIGNATURE PROJECT.



# GFWC President-elect Wendy Carriker Charms GFWC Texas Membership While Visiting

San Antonio — General Federation of Women's Clubs President-elect Wendy Carriker brought warmth, inspiration, and enthusiasm to the GFWC Texas 129<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention in San Antonio. From the moment she arrived, convention attendees felt the significance of welcoming a future international president to Texas and appreciated the generous time she devoted to fellowship and participation throughout the event.

Before convention activities officially began, Wendy was honored at a special dinner attended by the GFWC Texas Executive Committee, past state presidents, and invited guests, setting the tone for several memorable days together. Her participation continued as she celebrated the graduation of the second state LEADS class and joined members for the tour of the historic San Antonio Missions, sharing in both the educational and fellowship opportunities that make convention gatherings so meaningful.

Wendy also brought greetings from GFWC during the convention opening session, reminding members of the strength and unity of Federation. As keynote speaker for one of the convention evenings, she encouraged and inspired attendees with her message of leadership, service, and dedication to clubwomen across the nation. The convention concluded on a special note as she installed the 2026–2028 GFWC Texas Executive Committee, marking the beginning of a new administration and leaving members energized for the work ahead.

GFWC Texas was truly honored by Wendy Carriker's presence at the convention. Her gracious spirit, engagement with members, and commitment to Federation made her visit both meaningful and memorable for all who attended.



**GFWC President-elect Wendy Carriker, right, poses with GFWC Texas member.**



**(Left to Right) GFWC President-elect Wendy Carriker and GFWC Texas President Barbara Harvey.**



**All smiles on the tour, GFWC President-elect Wendy Carriker (in red) poses for pictures.**

## Mia Barrientos – GFWC Texas Juniorette of the Year 2024

San Antonio — Mia Barrientos, GFWC Texas Juniorette of the Year 2024, returned to speak at the GFWC Texas 129th Convention in San Antonio. Last year, Mia attended and spoke at the GFWC Annual Convention in Atlanta, where she shared her experiences as a Juniorette and quickly became somewhat of a “rock star” among convention attendees.

At this year’s convention, Mia continued to emphasize the important role her Juniorette experience has played as she began her college career. She shared that she has continued her GFWC involvement as a member of the Woman’s Club of Kingsville and spoke about her many accomplishments during her first year of college. Mia credited much of her success to the leadership skills, confidence, and values she developed through her time as a Juniorette.



Mia Barrientos

## Spring Convention Reporting and Awards

### GFWC Community Service Program

**Pam Hoke, GFWC Texas Civic Engagement and Outreach Chairman**

**8 Districts/7 Reporting; 179 Programs/Projects; 11,405 Volunteer Hours;  
\$64,451 Dollars Donated; \$55,309 In-kind Donations**

### GFWC Texas Most Creative Award Entry

*“Our fingerprints don’t fade from the lives we touch: - Judy Blume*

The Most Creative Award Entry for GFWC Texas is The Florence J Scott Woman’s Club of Rio Grande City, TX in the South Texas District. This club is in Category III which has 21 – 40 members.

Wreaths for Veterans. GFWC Florence J. Scott Woman’s Club partnered with the Starr County 4-H Council and Immaculate Conception School to honor local veterans while educating young people about the importance of patriotism and community service. Club members donated supplies, and members Lori Perez and Agueda Garza led a wreath-making and history session for the Starr County 4-H Council and Immaculate Conception School. During the program, youth participated in a patriotic trivia game and learned about local Silver Star heroes and their service to the nation.

The club also worked with students at Immaculate Conception School, providing materials and guidance as students created wreaths to honor veterans in their community. With the support of club members, students from both organizations helped create 50 wreaths, each intended for presentation to a local veteran.

Students were encouraged to personally deliver the wreaths to veterans they knew, creating

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meaningful connections between generations and giving young people the opportunity to express gratitude directly to those who served. The pride students felt in their work reinforced the importance of recognizing and honoring the sacrifices of American servicemen and women.

Members of the Florence J. Scott Woman’s Club also continue their longstanding tradition of attending Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies hosted by the City of Rio Grande City. By involving student volunteers in these activities, the club helps ensure that the tradition of honoring American veterans—both living and deceased—continues with respect, gratitude, and community participation for generations to come.



Students of Immaculate Conception School with the wreathes they made.



Students delivering wreathes to veterans.

### **GFWC Advancement Plans Membership 2025**

**Katherine Hajek, GFWC Texas Membership Advancement Plan Chairman  
9 Districts/7 Reporting; 106 Programs/Projects;  
4653 Volunteer Hours; 1125.00 Dollars Spent**

### **Club Creative Project: “Big Dill!”**

The GFWC Gunter Ladies of Tomorrow is one of the newer clubs in Texas. The formation of this club started with a new person in the community that is a member of another club. She wanted to start something in her new community, to get women civically involved. She posted a call on the community Facebook page asking if anyone was interested in joining a woman’s group.

Well, that call was answered and a club was formed. They have been going strong ever since. They have had their ups and downs with membership, but they are working on making sure the community knows who they are and what they do. In Texas there is no better way to be seen than at a football game. When the Gunter ISD Homecoming Tailgate Party was announced they jumped on the bandwagon. What a way to gather interest in your club by being out in the community educating, engaging, empowering and having fun.



GFWC Gunter Ladies for Tomorrow had an amazing time participating in the Gunter ISD

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Homecoming Tailgate Party! The event gave them a great opportunity to connect with community members, share their mission and spread some school spirit.

Their table quickly became a fan favorite as members handed out pickles and miniature form spirit fingers, creating a fun, lively atmosphere that naturally drew people in. Throughout the evening, attendees stopped by to ask who they were, learn more about their organization and chat about the positive impact GFWC Gunter Ladies for Tomorrow is making in the community. The response was overwhelmingly positive, and the excitement around our mission was truly encouraging.

They are proud to share that their outreach efforts resulted in welcoming three new members to the organization, along with several promising conversations with future members who showed strong enthusiasm for getting involved.

Overall, the Homecoming Tailgate Party was a huge success! The event increased our visibility, strengthened community connections, and helped fuel the continued growth and momentum of GFWC Gunter Ladies for Tomorrow.



### **GFWC Signature Program: “DSVAP”**

**Beth Hemby, Chairman GFWC Signature Program: “DSVAP”**

***9 Districts/6 Reporting; 81 Projects; 4,614.5 Volunteer Hours;  
\$2,908 Dollars Donated; \$4,568 Dollars Spent; \$6,860 Dollars Raised;  
and \$8,949.65 In Kind Donations.***

### **Club Creativity Project - In Her Shoes**

To educate, engage, and empower the community, the GFWC Women’s Club of Kingsville commemorated the GFWC National Day of Service with a deeply moving, community-wide program entitled “In Her Shoes.” Guided by the belief that meaningful change begins with understanding, the club created an experience that invited participants to step beyond awareness and into empathy. In collaboration with the End Domestic Violence Task Force of Kingsville—a grassroots coalition dedicated to ending domestic violence while supporting survivors, law enforcement, and advocates—the club designed an immersive program intended not only to inform participants about the realities of abuse, but also to engage their hearts and empower them to become part of the solution.

Domestic violence remains a pervasive crisis. Nationally, 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men experience severe intimate partner violence in their lifetime, and on average, nearly 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States. In Texas alone,

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thousands of cases of family violence are reported each year—yet many more go unreported due to fear, financial dependence, or concern for children. These statistics underscore the urgency of community education and advocacy.

Participants were divided into small groups and given the name of a survivor, along with a tangible item to carry—a backpack, wagon, or diaper bag—representing the visible and invisible burdens victims often shoulder. As the survivor’s story unfolded, alongside the perspective of the abuser, participants were asked to make real-time decisions at each critical juncture. With every choice, they were challenged to step fully into her reality—navigating fear, uncertainty, limited resources, and deep concern for children and family.

When the exercise concluded, participants gathered to reflect on their journey. Many shared that the items they carried seemed to grow heavier with each step—a powerful metaphor for the emotional, financial, and systemic weight survivors endure.

The experience fostered profound empathy and a clearer understanding of the complex barriers victims face when seeking safety. “In Her Shoes” did more than raise awareness; it educated participants about the realities of domestic violence, engaged them through a powerful experiential learning process, and empowered them to become advocates for change. The program illuminated the courage required to leave abusive situations and underscored the community’s responsibility to remove obstacles, extend compassion, and offer unwavering support to those seeking safety and hope.

## **GFWC Legislation and Public Policy**

**Maridell Fryar, Chairman**

**9 Districts/5 Reporting; 240 Programs; 390 Volunteer Hours;  
\$932 Dollars Spent; \$1,317 In Kind Donations.**

***Below is a sampling of the kinds of efforts Texas club women exerted  
as they made an impact in their communities and state.***

### ***Club Creativity Award Narrative***

The Culture Club of Sanderson is a small but active club of seven members. It is an important part of a ranching community of 664 individuals perched on the edge of Big Bend National Park. Keeping the club active and making an impact on the community requires creative effort as well as determination. This past year demonstrated the existence of those qualities and led this chairman to submit this club for the creativity award.

Sanderson is not only small, it is geographically isolated. Culture Club members are challenged to participate physically in district or state activities, but they do so when possible. In May 2025, after a year of planning and preparation, GFWC Texas held “A Day at the Capitol,” a gathering of Texas club women from across the state at the capitol in Austin. It became clear that Sanderson club members were not going to be able to attend. The challenge, then, was how could they be part of this advocacy about Human Trafficking if they could not be in Austin?

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Their three step plan was creative and successful. First, they wrote letters to their Texas legislators, enclosing copies of the resolution on the issue which had been adopted by GFWC Texas during the Fall Board Meeting. They included copies of statistics about the extent of the problem in Texas as well as information about legislation under consideration by the House and Senate. The second step was to follow the printed letters with emails to the legislators. Third, on the day of the event, members who were able called the offices of their legislators to remind them to vote in favor of the bills,

The Culture Club of Sanderson did not let distance, isolation or size hinder them from actively

### **GFWC Leadership**

**Novella Byrd**

**GFWC Texas President-elect/Leadership Chairman**

**9 Districts/6 Reporting; 165 Programs/Projects; 11,940 Volunteer Hours;**

**\$3,785 Dollars Donated; \$8,610 Dollars Spent; and \$20,207 In Kind Donations.**

**The following projects highlight leadership in action displayed at the grassroots level.**

### **Club Creativity Award- Leadership in Action**

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." – Margaret Mead.*

GFWC Kirbyville Woman's Civic Club Vice President Patti Greer demonstrated proactive and compassionate leadership when she discovered that Kirbyville ISD had not been approved by the regional food bank to implement a backpack program providing weekend meals for 60 students.

She immediately began mobilizing support within the Kirbyville Woman's Civic Club; reaching out to local churches, businesses, and community partners to secure the financial resources needed to independently establish and sustain the program.

What started as concern quickly evolved into purposeful action. Through consistent outreach, presentations, and one-on-one conversations, the effort gained momentum and generated more than \$18,000 in community support.

However, this success was not hers alone. Club members demonstrated exceptional leadership alongside her. They assisted with organizing donations, tracking contributions, and communicating with partners. Members volunteered their time to sort, pack, and prepare weekend food bags, ensuring consistency and quality. Others helped coordinate logistics with the school district and supported delivery efforts each Friday so that backpacks reached campuses on schedule. Their collective commitment turned an idea into a sustainable, ongoing service project. The Club donated \$261.00 and amassed over 20 volunteer hours.

In partnership with the Chamber director, volunteers were organized to assemble and distribute food packs to qualifying students. The collaboration between civic organizations, businesses, and dedicated clubwomen reflects the true spirit of federation—working together to strengthen communities.

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The Club's project embodies the essence of GFWC leadership: recognizing a need, mobilizing resources, empowering others to serve, and building a solution that directly impacts children and families.

This project stands as a powerful example of servant leadership in action—demonstrating that when one leader steps forward and fellow clubwomen rise alongside her, an entire community can be transformed.

### **GFWC Community Service Program - Health and Wellness**

**Julia Napper, GFWC Texas Health and Wellness Chairman**

**9 Districts/7 Reporting; 98 Programs/Projects; 3,274 Volunteer Hours;  
\$19,841 Dollars Donated; \$8,024 In-kind Donations**

### ***Lake Area Woman's Club Go Red Day***

This chairman nominates the Lake Area Woman's Club for a club creativity award. This club demonstrated exceptional commitment to Heart Health Month in February by actively promoting women's cardiovascular awareness. Members wore red on Go Red Day, and again at their February business meeting, turning the room into a sea of scarlet solidarity. Photos were shared on social media to extend their outreach, as well as their stylish show of support.

The club secretary added a creative and memorable dimension by rewriting the lyrics to the song "Perfect" in honor of the club's "Ladies in Red", incorporating photos from the GFWC Texas Spring Convention. After professionally recording the song and producing a YouTube video, the project was shared publicly and on the GFWC Texas website, amplifying heart health awareness well beyond the membership and proving that advocacy can have a catchy tune. Following below is the first verse of the re-written lyrics:

*I found a club... for me  
Ladies, just dive right in ... (and) follow my lead  
(Well) I found a club . . . it's T F W C  
(Well) I never knew it was the wmn's club waiting for me*

*'Cause we were just kids when we found this club  
Not knowin' what it was  
I know you'll join with me in time  
Ladies, just start out slow  
Our club is gonna grow  
And in my mind we're gonna shine*

*Ladies, I'm . . . dancin' in the dark  
and heard our friend remark  
"lookin' good in Red"  
Listenin' to our president*

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*When you said you looked a mess  
I whispered underneath my breath  
(But) you heard it,  
Ladies, you look perfect tonight*

What a fun and creative way to share the importance of heart health and the joy of club membership with this club's members, as well as the entire GFWC Texas membership.

### **GFWC Advancement Plans; Fundraising and Development**

**Tracy Lamar, GFWC Texas Chairman**

**9 Districts/7 Reporting; 152 Programs/Projects; 16,388;  
Dollars Donated \$14,387; Dollars Spent \$125,925; In-Kind Donations \$24,176; Dollars  
Raised \$423,436.**

### **Club Creativity Award GFWC Texas; Trinity District; Fairfield History Club**

History and Longevity, each have a meaning that overlaps one another. A series of past events connected with someone or something, along with remaining popular or useful for a long time. Each of these meanings describes the purpose and intent on which the Fairfield History Club designed their 2025 spring fundraiser.

May of 2025 marked the 100th Anniversary of the club's existence. With this in mind the club set forth to celebrate with the community it's involvement of volunteer work throughout the century. The theme was based on the 20's era of history. The event was open to the community and those who had been impacted by the work of the Fairfield History Club. The event was held on the grounds of the Moody-Bradley house with games from the 1920's, a local high school jazz band served food under tents,



They gave away cotton candy, which was developed in the 1020's by a dentist, and gave away popcorn. Two 1920's cars were parked on the lawn for guest to look at and all the members were dressed in 1920 costume. The club held a Little Miss 1920 Pageant where the girls were dressed in costume as well. This event gave the community an opportunity to relive times of the past along with educating those younger ones who may not have heard or seen what the 1920's was all about. Entry fees for the pageant along with food sales proved to be a profitable fun event for all.

Community involvement with a club event proved to be a history lesson, impacting those who lived the 1920's and to those now getting the experience of the 1920's. One could say that this had an educational impact on those who didn't know and a wonderful look back into the past for those who lived it.

## **GFWC TEXAS ESO - CLUB CREATIVITY AWARD ENTRY**

**Mary Nettie Rodriguez, GFWC Texas ESO Chairman**

The nominee for the 2025 Club Creativity Award from GFWC Texas ESO is the Woman's Club of Cotulla. Member Jennifer Franklin spearheaded The Woman's Club of Cotulla Book Club that has reached thousands of readers in and around the rural West Texas community. While the woman's club fully participates and supports the book club, Jennifer's special brand of creativity and vast technological skill set the trajectory that has cast a large net to area readers.

The bedrock stages toward establishing the book club began in 2024 with face-to-face meetings at Jordan Hall on the campus of the local Episcopal Church, but rapidly grew in response to Jennifer's email invitation in January, 2025, to join the launch of a private Facebook page titled Woman's Club of Cotulla Book Club. Participation and interest increased and, by June, the Facebook page went public, a parallel Instagram page was launched, and meetings transitioned to a dual format with the face-to-face monthly book club meetings now simultaneously broadcast on Zoom! The large tv screen and two-way audio equipment installed during Covid to facilitate on-line Sunday church were called into service again, this time for a briskly growing audience of book lovers.

A variety of eye-catching social media posts attracted attention through the creative use color, motion, music, fonts, and stickers. Jennifer creates each page from scratch, rendering a blank slate into engaging posts by using self-taught Canva techniques (through trial and error!) and her innate artistic acumen. (See photos.) Among the methods and techniques employed to streamline the participation process is the use of a permanent QR code, created by Jennifer, and published on every Facebook and Instagram entry to lessen confusion about finding the link to each month's live book club meeting.

A process has been established in preparation for each month's book club meeting. First, a genre is selected using a spin wheel App, that Jennifer downloaded and which randomly chooses one of 14 different genres (which, not surprisingly, mimic the ESO categories). That genre is then eliminated from the spin wheel choices to avoid future duplication. Participants are invited to submit possible titles through email, pictures of which are posted on social media. Voting is done through Google Docs, with updates shared during the election period. Once the book selection is chosen, Jennifer posts encouraging reminders about the next meeting to keep enthusiasm strong. A few days before the meeting, she posts potential questions as prompts for the meeting. Her goal is to use them as a springboard for discussion, but always strives toward spontaneous and organic discourse. Guidelines are set to allow participants to share openly; but, because some selections may contain sensitive topics (such as grief, death, or suicide), the book club is open to anyone over 18 years old. Another innovative layer to the WCC Book Club page is the link to the WCC monthly newsletter which features "Book Nook," a monthly column authored by Jennifer that features five titles with short summaries, adding depth to the Facebook and Instagram pages and introduces readers to various literature genres.

A brief bio of Jennifer Franklin includes her work in the banking industry before her husband's work moved the family to Cotulla. She home schools her children, is an ESO First Century awardee, thrives on projects that promote literacy and early reading, and led the effort to install two Little Libraries in town. She is a Renaissance woman!

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The numbers tell the story about the book club's extraordinary community and club engagement. While past numbers of "clicks" are not available past 90 days, Jennifer was only able to retrieve the data of 873 views from December of 2025, 745 views in January, and 874 views in February. The admin page showed a running 90 day count (as of March 2nd) of 2,570 views with a 15% monthly increase! The Instagram hits hover around 90 per month. It bears noting that none of the pages are linked to income generating sites.

Features that significantly expanded the audience are that (1.) participants are not required to be a Woman's Club of Cotulla member to join and (2.) all are welcome to "attend" the meeting even if they have not finished reading that month's selection. The overarching goal is to learn about authors, be exposed to a variety of genres, and be part of a community group that is having fun discussing books. The inclusive nature of the book club, being open to ESO members and the entire community, aligns with the ESO principles of broad literary exploration, extending horizons of club camaraderie, and strengthening community bonds through a shared passion for reading. A mighty cross-section of Cotulla area residents have engaged with Jennifer's creative social media posts, are building new relationships, have had fun in a book discussion group, and are learning about General Federation of Women's Clubs...all because the Woman's Club of Cotulla and Jennifer Franklin decided to start a community book club and attract followers through the artistic lens and creative use of social media.



1966

The United States Post Office  
**AWARDS GFWC A STAMP** in honor  
of the Federation's 75th anniversary.



GFWC creates a special  
membership category for  
young women in high school,  
**JUNIORETTEs**, as part of its  
"Build with Youth for a Better  
World" program.

1967

A group of 114 clubwomen  
including GFWC  
International President  
Carolyn Pearce (1966-  
1968) embarked on a  
**THREE-WEEK TOUR**  
**OF ASIA** and attended  
a conference in Manila,  
Philippines, where  
President Ferdinand  
Marcos spoke.



## **CSP Education and Libraries - GFWC-TX Club Creativity Award**

**Donna Parkinson, Chairman**

**Programs/ Projects: 10, Volunteer Hours: 300, Dollars Donated: \$1,600,  
In-Kind \$700, Dollars Raised \$ 1,000.**

### **Partnering to Place Books in Children's Hands and Homes**

The GFWC Texas Woman's Monday Club, South Texas District, demonstrated creativity and collaboration in advancing the mission of the GFWC Education and Libraries Community Service Program by partnering with local organizations to promote literacy and place books directly into the hands—and homes—of children in their community.

Working alongside community partners, the club helped create a magical holiday experience for students at Faulk Elementary. The event featured a festive Christmas Tree Forest, complete with snow, where students visited with Mr. Claus, enjoyed refreshments, had their photos taken, and most importantly selected a book to take home. To ensure every child could participate, the club purchased 500 books for the event. Through the Book Bundler website, members discovered a creative and cost-effective way to purchase gently used, high-quality books for just one dollar each, carefully selecting grade-appropriate titles. Each book included a bookplate bearing the GFWC logo and the club's information, reinforcing the connection between community service and literacy. Recognizing that access to books at home plays a vital role in academic success, the club expanded the project by purchasing an additional 240 books for third through fifth grade classrooms, ensuring students could build their own home libraries and strengthen their reading habits.

The club further expanded its impact by partnering with the local library to sponsor a community book drive. The library served as a convenient drop-off location, and the community responded generously by donating 400 gently used new books. Each book was labeled with a "Happy Reading" bookplate identifying GFWC and the Woman's Monday Club.

Collaboration continued with the Harbor City Junioresettes, who joined club members in distributing books at community events including National Night Out, the city's Halloween celebration, and the community Thanksgiving Feast. At the Thanksgiving event, members also assisted the library by providing coloring pages and word puzzles to entertain children attending the celebration. Through creativity, partnership, and a shared commitment to literacy, the Woman's Monday Club, the local library, and the Junioresettes successfully placed hundreds of books into homes throughout their community. These projects reflect the heart of the GFWC Education and Libraries Community Service Program by encouraging reading, supporting educational success, and demonstrating how collaborative efforts can inspire a lifelong love of learning.



## Yearbook Cover Winners

### America

Franklin Woman's Reading Club,  
Capitol District



### Volunteer

Gunter Ladies for Tomorrow,  
Trinity District



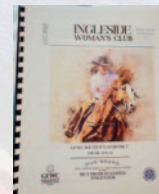
### Whimsical

The Woman's Club of Pleasanton,  
Alamo District



### Texas

The Woman's Club of Ingleside,  
South Texas District



### Federation

Amity Study Club,  
Trinity District



## Yearbook Gold Star Winners

### Alamo District

Bronte Club of Victoria  
San Antonio Women's Federation  
Woman's Club of Cotulla  
The Woman's Club of Pleasanton

### Capitol District

Modern Study Club  
Pierian Club  
San Gabriel Woman's Club  
Wednesday Review Club

### Magnolia District

Silsbee Woman's Club  
Kirbyville Woman's Civic Club  
Woman's Civic Club of Jasper  
Cleveland Woman's Club

### South Texas District

Eleanor Brackenridge Literary Club  
Florence J. Scott Woman's Club  
The President's Council

### Trinity District

Amity Study Club  
Fairfield History Club  
Fidelis Inter Se Club  
Lake Area Woman's Club



# **CONGRATULATIONS CHRISTY MELTON**

**(PIONEER DISTRICT)**

**For Being Selected As  
This Year's  
LEADS Representative!**



**(Left to Right) LEADS Chairman Lou Hitt, Christy Melton, GFWC Texas President Barbara Harvey.**

# *Calendar of Events*

**2026**

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>June 25 — 29</b>    | <b>GFWC Annual Convention, Scottsdale, Az.</b>                  |
| <b>June 29</b>         | <b>Installation — GFWC, Scottsdale, Az.</b>                     |
| <b>July 11</b>         | <b>Pioneer Summer Workshop</b>                                  |
| <b>July 13</b>         | <b>GFWC Texas HF meeting, Austin.</b>                           |
| <b>July 14</b>         | <b>GFWC Texas EC meeting, Austin.</b>                           |
| <b>July 18</b>         | <b>Trinity Summer Workshop</b>                                  |
| <b>July 22</b>         | <b>Capitol Summer Workshop</b>                                  |
| <b>July 25</b>         | <b>Magnolia Summer Workshop</b>                                 |
| <b>August 1</b>        | <b>Alamo Summer Workshop</b>                                    |
| <b>August 8</b>        | <b>South Texas Summer Workshop</b>                              |
| <b>September 17-19</b> | <b>GFWC Texas Fall Board, Embassy Suites<br/>Austin Central</b> |

*Enjoy your summer!*

*The close of the Spring Convention comes  
with one administration coming to an end  
as a new administration takes flight.*



*God bless GFWC Texas.*