**GENERAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN’S CLUBS PENNSYLVANIA**

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GFWCPA Summer Leadership Conference – July 2022

Have you ever considered the importance of one piece of a puzzle – maybe the first piece or an edge piece? How about the last piece, the one that completes the puzzle? Think of how you feel as put each piece in its place. The first or edge piece sparks your interest to continue working on the puzzle. That last piece brings joy at the completion of the puzzle. But how do you feel about the missing piece? Probably, you feel disappointment, you might even be upset. How we view the puzzle is much like how we view our club and its members.

Think of your club like you think of a puzzle. The puzzle is not complete until all the pieces are in place and linked together. Each piece is different/unique – color, shape. Each club has its collection of unique pieces/members. No project is complete unless each member adds their uniqueness.

I came across this analogy and felt it can be applied to our members and clubs, written by Eva Harrison, RCDP, MCDI. She writes, “when asked recently to bring something to a business networking event, something that represented what my business did, I brought a jigsaw puzzle.”

The analogy of a team and a jigsaw puzzle is very powerful.  Here are my top 5 reasons why:

1. Each piece of a jigsaw puzzle is like one of your team members. A different shape from all the other pieces and with different needs. As a result, a good team leader will get to know their needs and treat each person differently based on their needs.
2. Each piece of a jigsaw forms part of the bigger picture. Like individuals in a team, the quicker the jigsaw pieces are put together, the quicker the reason they exist can be identified.  The full picture develops as does the team, as each part/role each individual plays is identified.
3. Putting a jigsaw together requires patience, foresight and vision. In forming teams, the leader has a vision and with patience the team will reach this. Patience is required to try team members in different roles. Eventually the right role is found for each person, the role which will ensure the team succeeds.
4. Just like missing pieces in a jigsaw prevent the whole picture being developed, in a team a key skill may be missing to meet the team’s objectives. A good team leader continually reviews the skills of each team member and is always looking ahead for the future needs of the team and the skills that may be required.
5. Like any good jigsaw puzzle, there is great satisfaction when the final picture is created and in the same way working to develop the “perfect” is extremely satisfying.

But look out! Once a good jigsaw puzzle has been completed, as with a “perfect” team being formed, the best team leaders will be doing a constant review of their team to make sure the pieces aren’t lost or moved and that everything still fits together.

Puzzle Activity

To do this activity you can reproduce the puzzle piece below or purchase a package of pieces through TREND-Classic Accents Variety Pack (36 pieces/6 of 6colors). They are also sold at Staples.

Have each member:

1. Select a puzzle piece.
2. Write your name on the puzzle piece.
3. Decorate your puzzle piece. This can be done at a meeting or taken home and brought back.
4. Place the pieces together one at a time until the puzzle is completed. Each linking to each other.

