



ARTS AND CULTURE

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM

2024-2026 GFWC CLUB MANUAL

“BEFORE A CHILD TALKS, THEY SING. BEFORE THEY WRITE, THEY DRAW. AS SOON AS THEY STAND, THEY DANCE. ART IS FUNDAMENTAL TO HUMAN EXPRESSION.” PHYLICIA RASHAD

The current edition of the Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines the word “ART” as follows:

“art” (noun) 1. “the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power...”

The same learned tome defines the word “culture” in this manner:

“cul-ture” (noun) 2. “the customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people or other social group...”

However, one chooses to define the words; collectively, those two small words speak volumes as they define us, who we are, what we believe and strive to accomplish today, and what we leave for future generations. Combined, the two are subjects of study primarily concerned with the processes and products of human creativity and social life, such as languages, literature, imagination, developing the technical ability to create something from nothing, and the capacity to bridge the things that separate us from one another; age, education, location, religion, or economic disparity. Arts and Culture create common ground on which to build a mutual understanding and respect of one for the other.

Art and culture combine to define our basic humanness and can be found in every location around the planet as we work to make our lives better and to find things that we enjoy, either as a group socially or as an individual. In the study, development, and love of the arts and culture, there truly is...
“SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE!!!”

Another quote from Ms. Rashad, “Where the Women go, the Culture goes!” should be the rallying cry for all clubs, Districts, and State Federations within GFWC. Our members should represent the vanguard in leading the development of projects and programs to highlight and focus support for all aspects of human expression. From local activities like awarding art scholarships, sponsoring local and school art contests, participating in community beautification projects, assisting little theater activities, sustaining library growth and expansion, developing photography contests, backing



GFWC
est. 1890
GENERAL FEDERATION
OF WOMEN'S CLUBS

**2024-2026
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COMMUNITY SERVICE
PROGRAM**

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

local choral performances...and not just sponsoring but participating in the above activities... contribute to a GFWC approved statewide project. Or perhaps reach out to sister clubs in our GFWC International network to learn about their arts, local customs, and culture. By learning from them and sharing what we know, we expand our horizons and develop a greater understanding of our world and the people with whom we share it.

The GFWC Arts and Culture Community Service Program hopes to provide the impetus for the development of and the appreciation for Art and Culture throughout all our involved communities; be they rural or urban, sophisticated or not, rich or poor, and at every level, from beginner to expert.

The Arts and Culture Community Service Program exists to provide creative project ideas, support to ensure greater impact, and encourage club women to participate in and/or otherwise facilitate a love and appreciation for the arts across their community and within their entire sphere of influence.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION INITIATIVE:

DEVELOPING COMMUNITY ORIENTATED ART



GFWC encourages clubs to take an active role in creating and enhancing their community by partnering with their City Government, Chamber of Commerce, local schools, and other organizations (i.e., Art League or Artist Guild) to create mural paintings throughout their city or town. Murals that highlight the local culture and display pride in their town's history and traditions, as well as showcase local celebrities or figures prominent in the historical legacy of the community.

Murals can be located on city property and schools, as well as local businesses. Working with other entities helps to develop community-wide pride of accomplishment. Garnering support from all the above, as well as enlisting the help of club members, students, retirees, and other service organizations, is key to the development and activation of this project. If a building is too big a project, there is nothing wrong with starting small and working your way up. Start with a standalone sign or billboard, something that can be changed to accommodate the seasons or is portable and can be moved around town to highlight an event or activity that the community is enjoying. Let your ideas flow, and don't forget to brand your artistic endeavors with your club's name, contact information where possible, and the GFWC Emblem.



FEATURED PROJECTS



**MEALS ON WHEELS
VALENTINE CARDS**

The GFWC Big Rapids, Inc. Club (MI) gathered around a large table to make Valentine's Day Cards. Members were asked to bring anything they had that could be used on the cards for decoration. A total of 183 cards were created and delivered to shut-in clients of the local "Meals on Wheels" program.



**COMMUNITY SERVICE
FOR THE ARTS**

The GFWC Platonic Club of Cheyenne (OK) supported the high school drama department by sewing, repairing, and remaking costumes for students to use in one of their season's productions. The club also donated money to renovate the theater, restrooms, and kitchen area, as well as supported the annual Art Camp from the Metcalf Museum, and decorated the museum for the holidays.



TIME CAPSULE

The GFWC Thompson Falls Women's Club (MT), after collecting historical documents and artifacts while preparing for its 100th Anniversary, developed a "Time Capsule" with memorabilia. The club placed the artifacts in a metal container and hid it in the jail during its recent renovations to be found by future generations.



FALL-O-WEEN

The GFWC Junior Women's Club of Verona (NJ) joined with the Township of Verona and the Verona Public Library to create a town festival called "Fall-O-Ween." The goal was to host a free event with a DJ, petting zoo, costume parade, pumpkin painting, inflatable entertainment, and goody bags for children containing toys, trinkets, candy, and club promotional flyers to distribute.



EDUCATE, ENGAGE, EMPOWER

The Arts & Culture Community Service Program offers a myriad of opportunities to connect with the community, and the following are a few more examples in which your club may work within your community.

“EDUCATE”

- Award Art-related Scholarships to deserving students planning to continue their artistic endeavors.
- Identify members of your club with a talent for art and encourage them to share their knowledge with other members or perhaps with students from local art classes.
- Hold cooking demonstrations during meetings to introduce foods and customs from other cultures.
- Sponsor a trip to a museum or the theater for students and engage members as chaperones.

“ENGAGE”

- Work to develop relationships between your club and other service organizations in your area to take on large projects together.
- Participate in or sponsor local arts and crafts contests.
- Set up tables at local festivals to sell handmade items from the club’s members as a fundraiser.
- Sponsor a craft time at a local elementary school or daycare...something hands-on, messy, and fun.

“EMPOWER”

- This one is easy because by “EDUCATING & ENGAGING” yourself, your club, and your community, you are laying the foundation for the “EMPOWERMENT” of everyone within your sphere of influence.
- By your example, you will “EMPOWER” others to:
 1. Learn a new skill.
 2. Try a new food.
 3. Experience a new culture.
 4. Develop a deeper understanding of this world in which we all live.

PROJECT IDEAS

This list of ideas for how GFWC clubs can support the Arts and Culture Community Service Program will inspire you.

Find further information about organizations named here under Resources.

COMMUNITY RICH IDEAS FOR ALL AGES

- Sponsor an author visit to your local library.
- Use an artistic event to raise funds to sponsor local community art and cultural programs.
- Sponsor an Artist in Residence program for local seniors to attend. Donate the supplies needed and provide transportation to and from the classes.
- Work with your city to sponsor and promote an outdoor classic film festival showing movies



with themes such as musicals, foreign language, and Academy Award Winners.

- Have a neighborhood or city music event, such as a Battle of the Bands for teens or an outdoor Concert Series featuring area bands.
- Set up a member craft table to sell art at a hometown Farmer's Market or craft fair. At your booth, make sure to include plenty of information on how to join a local GFWC club.
- Support your local community theatre by ushering, assisting at intermission, or holding a fundraiser at a performance and donating the proceeds back to the theatre.
- Be the hostess in a home tour where participants stop by for coffee and cookies and view the historical culture of your club through your scrapbooks and other historical items.



MEMBER CREATED ART AND CULTURE

- Create a Yard of the Month project partnering with the water authority or city. Have members decide which yard in their community deserves recognition with signage.
- Paint rocks with inspirational words and place them all over the city in places where they can be found. A good word for a stranger goes a long way.
- Make jewelry and cards for distribution to the homes of teen mothers or wives of soldiers serving overseas. Give them out on Mother's Day.
- Make homemade holiday cards for nursing home residents or Meals on Wheels recipients.
- Hold a recycled art contest for art projects using recycled materials for area artists or the Art Association.
- Host an art supply drive within your club. Contact local schools, daycare centers, and/or community centers to see what is needed.
- Design and decorate the garden in front of your clubhouse or meeting space, maintain it with local flora, and post signage indicating when your club meets.
- Help build, paint, register, maintain, and decorate a Little Free Library.
- Provide artwork and help decorate a reading nook at the library, a local laundromat, or other location in your community.
- Donate books with an art and/or cultural theme to the public library, a school library, or a Little Free Library.
- Donate art books, sketchbooks, coloring books, crayons, and other art supplies to hospitals, doctor/clinic waiting rooms, schools, and shelters.



- Attend public art displays, plays, and concerts as part of a social event for your club.
- Visit or hold a club meeting at an art gallery, museum, local cultural center, or tourist center.
- Explore museums online with Google Arts and Culture or visit art galleries and art museums through their websites for virtual gallery tours.
- Hold a holiday centerpiece/wreath-making workshop at a local florist as a club program.
- Decorate a city park or municipal plaza for holidays and/or the seasons.
- Sponsor ads in local theatre or school theatre playbills.
- Host a craft time at the library to make simple crafts with children. Coordinate with the library story time and match the book theme or make a seasonal or holiday-themed craft.
- Decorate ceramic piggy banks or have local artists, art classes, or town officials decorate them. Put them in area businesses to collect money for high school scholarships or to support the local high school theater programs, band programs, and glee clubs.
- Participate in your club, District, and State arts and crafts contests by entering your crafting, needlework, painting, and photography items. Enter photographs in the GFWC photography contests.
- Celebrate international holidays, such as the Chinese New Year, Oktoberfest, Cinco de Mayo, and Bastille Day, and learn more about the historical customs, food, and entertainment of those cultures.
- Host welcome events for international students at local universities and local boarding schools.
- Invite foreign exchange students to speak about their lives and culture at meetings.
- Learn about Native American culture and its various forms from one part of the country to another. When traveling, visit museums on Native American culture.

VALUABLE IDEAS FOR YOUTH

- Hold a "Chalk the Walk" contest for elementary school children on sidewalks in front of a municipal building, library, elementary school, or other public venue. Choose a theme and have your club supply the chalk and ribbons for the winners.
- Utilize local student jazz combos, string quartets, or even the whole band to perform at club events and fundraisers.
- Hold a fundraiser to purchase a large piece of equipment for your local schools' art, music, or drama departments, such as a potter's wheel, kiln, microphones, or technology.
- Work with local Girl Scouts or Juniors clubs to foster a safe Halloween by offering free face painting to children before they trick or treat. Invite the Girl Scouts to have a cookie sale in your club to support their efforts, and then donate the cookies to schools or the



area USO.

- Develop an art scavenger hunt for members or students at a local or online museum. Select items for participants to find and snap photos (if allowed) or document the location in a notebook. Discuss the art pieces after the hunt.
- Use member or children’s art for club cookbook covers, greeting cards, program covers, etc.
- Establish scholarships for arts students, such as literature, drama, or music. This could be to attend an arts school or summer camp.
- Establish awards that acknowledge the artistic achievements of club and community members.
- “Love the Police, Bus Drivers, Firefighters, or Veterans” – Assist local elementary students make Valentine cards for town police, bus drivers, firefighters, and veterans.
- Include a category in Art Contests that is specific to special needs children. Many times, these students need to receive recognition for their creativity.
- Host a craft time at the library to make simple crafts with children. Coordinate with the library story time and match the book theme or make a seasonal or holiday-themed craft.
- Volunteer at a school to teach students a lesson from your cultural heritage. Include information about the food of the culture and provide samples for the students to taste.
- Sponsor a bus and tickets for children to learn more about well-known international ballets, operas, musical composers, museums, and artists. Let them see and share the experience of a live performance.

CONNECT WITH GFWC AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS

CANINE COMPANIONS

- Purchase bolts of fabric for Canine Companions to sew vests for dogs or stuffed puppies.
- Make donations for dorm rooms or decorate the dorm rooms at Regional Training Centers.
- Participate in the Canine Companions Signature Event–Dog Fest Walk’n Roll. For more information visit www.cci.org/dogfest.

HEIFER INTERNATIONAL

- Construct and decorate a parade float designed to promote Heifer International and join in the next parade in your community. Hand out bookmarks and “Cow Tail Candy” along the parade route.

MARCH OF DIMES

- Create blankets for babies. Create a pattern just for your club. The blankets will be distributed to military moms at baby showers sponsored by March of Dimes.
- Create baby hats with your club’s special colors. March of Dimes has a toolkit that provides instructions and guidance for pattern and size. volunteer.marchofdimes.org/the-general-federation-of-womens-clubs/
- Use your creative skills to make handmade costumes for babies in the NICU. These costumes are simple to make but make a huge impact and help families connect with their babies. volunteer.marchofdimes.org/the-general-federation-of-womens-clubs/



OPERATION SMILE

- See how your club can help prepare a child for life-saving surgery with coloring pages, stuffed animals, and games to relieve the stress of surgery. www.operationsmile.org/service-projects
- Host a neighborhood ice cream social to share the mission of Operation Smile and the resulting improvement in the quality of life for children. Accept donations to support an operation.

ST. JUDE CHILDREN'S RESEARCH HOSPITAL

- Sew mask straps. Do you have seamstresses in your club? Consider meeting to assemble bags with materials to make mask straps for the children at St. Jude and having seamstresses take the bags home to complete the project with their personal sewing machines.

UNICEF USA

- Consider how individuals in other countries are handling the COVID-19 pandemic. Utilize UNICEF's website to gather information on how different cultures are tackling the pandemic and how UNICEF has already helped reach over half a billion people with COVID-19 prevention messaging. www.unicefusa.org/mission/covid-19.

GFWC RESOURCES

Americans for the Arts www.americansforthearts.org

Americans for the Arts builds awareness and support for the value of the arts and works to ensure that every American has access to their transformative powers.

A.R.T. (Artistic Realization Technologies, Inc.) www.artrealization.org | 908-359-3098

A.R.T. has created technologies, studio programming, and training that empower those who lack the articulate use of their hands to gain perfect individual control of the artmaking process from start to finish.

Google Arts and Culture artsandculture.google.com/

Google Arts and Culture provides virtual tools to explore works of art and tour famous sites and landmarks, offers information about nearby museums and other centers of arts and culture, and space to create a virtual gallery of your favorites.

National Endowment for the Arts www.arts.gov

The National Endowment for the Arts is an independent federal agency that funds, promotes, and strengthens the creative capacity of our communities by providing all Americans with diverse opportunities for arts participation. This site also lists Arts Councils in each state: www.arts.gov/partners/state-regional. In partnership with state and jurisdictional arts agencies and regional arts organizations, the NEA provides federal support for projects that benefit local communities.

National Organization for Music Education www.nafme.org

The National Organization for Music Education advocates and provides resources for music education, hosts professional development events, and offers opportunities for both students and teachers.



AWARDS

GFWC recognizes State Federations for outstanding projects and clubs for creative projects in implementing effective Arts and Culture Community Service Program projects and Affiliate Organization projects as follows:

- Certificate to one State Federation in each membership category
- \$50 award to one club in the nation for project creativity

Award winners will be determined by entries into the Award Program. Each State Federation may submit one State Award Entry and one Club Creativity Award Entry for the Arts and Culture Community Service Program projects. Clubs do not submit entries directly to GFWC.

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

RESOLUTIONS

Resolutions adopted by GFWC are the foundation of our organization. They guide our call to action and are the basis of all programming and advocacy. Current 2022 Resolutions for the Arts and Culture Community Service Program are listed here by number and title. Refer to the complete text in the GFWC Resolutions document, filed under “Governance” in the Digital Library on the Member Portal. Resolutions are an important and integral part of GFWC Programs.

130-010 Historic Preservation

130-020 Museums

130-030 Rosie the Riveter Memorial Project

130-040 Support of the Arts

