



EDUCATION AND LIBRARIES

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM

2024-2026 GFWC CLUB MANUAL

“LEARNING IS NOT ATTAINED BY CHANCE; IT MUST BE SOUGHT FOR WITH ARDOR AND ATTENDED TO WITH DILIGENCE.” ABIGAIL ADAMS

Equitable, quality education is the key to acquiring the knowledge to succeed in our ever-changing world. Whether in the classroom or via the internet, we gain the knowledge and understanding that forms our perspective, our ideas, and our opinions. It is essential that society provides the best education to all, with no exception to socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, or gender.

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) education encourages students to pursue careers in the STEM fields. Students learn through interaction, problem-solving, creativity, communication, and collaboration. This approach to learning can help meet the challenges of the future and enable them to be successful individuals.

Equitable access to affordable, high-quality early learning programs provides a safe and nurturing environment while promoting the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of young children. Early childhood is generally defined as birth through age eight. Five Key Elements are fundamental to achieving high-quality experiences and strong outcomes for preschool children: the learning environment, daily routine, adult-child relationships, teaching practices, and family engagement. Economic research examining the return on investment for early education suggests tremendous value ranging from \$4 to \$13 in return for every \$1 spent from impacts on educational attainment, employment, health, truancy, and criminality.

Public libraries serve a critical purpose and essential role in our communities not only from books and resources but also as a safe place to meet, learn, and study for all ages. Shining light on public libraries is an important mission to meet the needs of its patrons and the community. They offer free access to all people for information through books, online services, classes, workshops, etc. Libraries can be a safe place for children and adults to learn and interact with friends.

In the 1930s GFWC women’s clubs were credited by the American Library Association as having founded over 474 free public libraries and 4,655 traveling libraries. Supporting local libraries continues to be a Federation priority today. Above all, be supportive of your library and implement a project at your library that makes your club proud.

Epsilon Sigma Omicron (ESO) is an honorary educational society open to all per-capita dues paying GFWC members. The purpose of ESO is to provide clubwomen with a structural reading program, which is educational and stimulates a desire for self-improvement. Are you an ESO member?

As clubwomen, GFWC members promote education for both children and adults. Projects in the Education and Libraries Community Service Program are designed to foster schools and other educational institutions and opportunities, and promote libraries, literacy, and reading good books. Through these efforts, we encourage the growth of individuals and communities at home and around the world.



GFWC
est. 1890
**GENERAL FEDERATION
OF WOMEN’S CLUBS**

2024-2026 EDUCATION AND LIBRARIES COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM

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

COMMUNITY CONNECTION INITIATIVE:

SUPPORT HIGH-QUALITY EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS



Children enrolled in a high-quality program have a safe space to grow and learn. They can explore the world around them, build relationships with trusted, caring adults, feel accepted, and gain confidence to become active learners. High-quality programs engage families in meaningful ways. Positive family-program connections have been linked to greater academic motivation, grade promotion, and socio-emotional skills across all types of young children, including those from diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.

An early learning program overlaps with a child's development of gross and fine motor skills, physical coordination (hand-eye coordination, biking, running, etc.), and their understanding of healthy skills like handwashing, regular exercise, and balanced eating.

High-quality early learning programs can increase earning potential and encourage and support educational attainment. Early childhood development and education programs can also help reduce educational gaps.

Early childhood education has the potential to mitigate the high costs of special education, dropouts, and other poor educational outcomes. Investing in early childhood is a solution that creates upward mobility through opportunity. Instead of costly and marginally successful programs later in life, quality early childhood education helps prevent the achievement gap by building the cognitive and social skills necessary for school readiness.

Establish a working relationship with an early learning program in your area. Engage your members to participate with their ideas, talent, and time. Engagement can be volunteering to read, supporting a parent meeting, providing needed supplies for arts and crafts, providing books for the children to take home, and hosting a library card sign-up drive.

Collaborate with the local elementary school to ensure that first-time parents can visit the school prior to their child's enrollment so that they feel comfortable enrolling their child and, when appropriate, to become involved as a parent in the school.

Other Ideas:

- Members can be classroom volunteers - this offers flexibility in time and skill level. Volunteers can help with art projects, reading, field trips, and many other activities.
- Special Event Volunteers - programs often have parent nights and family fun nights. Club members can help with event logistics, silent auctions, registration, and beverage carts.
- Facility Volunteers - plan a club project for a cleanup day. This may include yard work, painting, cleaning, and playground repair.
- Members can volunteer to do clerical work to relieve front office staff.
- Members can hold a library card sign-up for children in the program. This can be coordinated with the local library to be done when parents are there to pick up the children from the program instead of making a separate trip to the library.
- Host a Scholastic Book Fair, handling all the logistics of organizing the program. Perhaps the club can purchase a book for each child.
- Celebrate the Week of the Young Child, held each April, and Advocates for Children Week in October as well.



FEATURED PROJECTS



STORYBOOK TRAIL

The GFWC Grangers Women's Club (IA) partnered with the Granger Public Library to display a series of published children's picture books at a local park. The Storybook Trail focused on families with small children to enjoy nature and be entertained by reading books along the walk. The walk was 835 feet long, and each page of the story was separated by thirty-two feet. Pictures from the children's book were installed along the path with the help of club members. As families stopped along the path, they were directed to the next page in the story. Pages frequently were accompanied by activities. Twenty-five stations were installed in the park.



WORCESTER THE CITY THAT READS

A retired school principal in Worcester, Massachusetts, was concerned about the number of students leaving school in June with no books at home to read and no access to the public library. GFWC Northboro Junior Woman's Club (MA) assisted in his mission to ensure that these students (preschool through Middle School) got at least one book to take home for summer reading. One club member took over collecting and delivering NJWC's books. She placed a bin outside her home for the collection, visited library book sales, picked up books from members who could not get to her house, and delivered all the books to a local school. The collection this year was a whopping 874 books!



TRUNK OR TREAT

The GFWC Curwensville Woman's Club (PA) participated in the Trunk or Treat project hosted by the Curwensville Area School District. The club purchased more than 250 new books from Scholastic and some candy. Volunteers gave out traditional Halloween candy and literacy "treats" as every child received books, bookmarks, a new pencil, finger puppets, and a packet of Halloween reading and writing activities. Working with their community partners, nearly 1,000 children and their families walked away with new books and literacy tools to help support reading in their homes.



LIVING HISTORY WALK

The Brentwood/Franklin Woman's Service Club (TN) researched notable persons in their community's history and presented a "Living History Walk" at two local libraries. Ten actors in costume gave a ten-minute presentation about themselves to community attendees. The club estimated that over 350 people attended the events and received excellent print and social media publicity.



PROJECT IDEAS

EDUCATION

- Establish a scholarship for a local student using these steps:
 - Determine the purpose of the scholarship (reason for awarding it and the target audience, for example—the scholarship could be in honor or memory of a club or community leader, or it might help a student with a special need). Consider a scholarship for a trade school.
 - Set a timeline (including development, fundraising, advertising, application evaluation, award presentation, etc.).
 - Create the application (incorporating components that fit the purpose of the scholarship, such as essay, resume, transcripts, financial need information, letters of recommendation, etc.).
 - Determine the duration of the award (one or multiple years).
 - Determine the funding source.
 - Select the recipient and plan the award presentation.
- Advocate for and assist children and adults with special needs by:
 - Researching learning disabilities on the website of the Learning Disabilities Association of America (<https://ldaamerica.org/>) and subscribe to their newsletter, or follow them on X (formerly Twitter), for news on advocacy efforts and how you can help.
 - Volunteering in the Special Education Department of a local school.
 - Sponsoring events for children with special needs such as holiday parties, proms, or athletic events.
 - Adopting a special needs teacher for the school year, providing class incentives, teaching or craft materials, and other needed support.
 - Initiating a reading program or book club for children and adults with special needs, and/or donating books to special needs groups.
- Support schools, educators, and students with donations:
 - Obtain a supply list from a local school and organize a club or community drive to supply book bags, notebooks, binders, and other recommended items to underserved students.
 - Provide local teachers with supplies for their classrooms, including “treasure chest” stickers or small items that can be used as incentives for positive behavior.
 - Partner with a local early learning program to provide supplies that some children cannot afford to bring but are required.
 - Contact a local early learning program and offer to come and read with the children at various times of the day.
 - Provide healthy snack bags to be taken home for the weekend for children who may have food insecurity and won’t get a nutritious meal until they return to school the following week.
 - Replace or add to playground equipment, including a buddy bench.
 - Provide reading software, other materials, or funds for after-school enrichment programs.
 - Fund field trips for underserved students.
- Support STEM programs in schools and the community.
 - Advocate for and support local schools STEM for Her, an organization that encourages girls to pursue STEM-related careers. Visit the website stemforher.org to learn more about STEM for Her programs.



- Support and volunteer with STEM Scouts, helping girls and boys learn about science, technology, engineering, and math through creative, hands-on activities, and field trips interaction with STEM professionals.
- ProjectCSGirls is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization working to cultivate a love for technology and computer science in girls and encourages them to pursue their interests and careers in these fields.
- Support first-year teachers by providing welcome messages and snacks for their teacher orientation.
- Consider providing books for classroom libraries or supplies such as Band-Aids, tissues, a sewing kit, small hand lotions, and other useful items.
- Host a special event on Teacher Appreciation Day (the first Tuesday in May), such as a celebratory breakfast or lunch, or provide thank you cards or other expressions of gratitude.
- Organize a group of members to work together to support a local school by volunteering to help a teacher or several teachers set up their classrooms at the beginning of the year. Stay connected by volunteering in the classroom(s) and providing assistance as needed.
- Become a partner in education with a Title 1 school by volunteering one-on-one time with students, providing take-home snacks for weekends, supplying toiletries that can be distributed as needed, and assisting or donating to special programs so children can flourish, such as music, art, and athletics.
- Sponsor recognitions, such as student of the month. Provide goody bags, ice cream tokens, or books.
- Partner with the local PTA/PTO on an important issue, such as raising awareness about internet safety.
- Work with school counselors to support an anti-bullying campaign in October, during National Bully Prevention Month. PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center offers free classroom resources. www.pacer.org/bullying
- Assist GED candidates by tutoring or establishing a fund to pay for tests and/or babysitting.
- Promote summer reading by providing books to be given to children at the close of the school year along with a flyer or calendar of summer reading events scheduled at local libraries.
- Organize a Read Across America event in March during National Reading Month. Consult the Read Across America website (<https://www.nea.org/professional-excellence/student-engagement/read-across-america>) for suggested books, event ideas, and promotional materials.
- Create nooks for reading at welfare offices, health departments, doctor clinics, shelters, children's hospitals, laundromats, and other places children might visit, and stock them with a variety of books. Add a club sticker with the message, "If you read a story while you wait, the less time it will take."
- Celebrate Children's Book Day/Día de los Niños on April 30. Donate books in English and Spanish to local Head Start programs.
- Promote DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) Day by posting photos on social media of community leaders, such as the mayor, police chief, and your club president with their nose in a book. DEAR Day, celebrated on April 12, reminds families to make reading a priority in their lives by setting aside at least 30 minutes that day to enjoy books together.
- Plan a pajama and book drive for Pajama Program, an organization that promotes and supports a comforting bedtime routine for all children to help them thrive. Visit the Pajama Program website for information on contributing pajamas and/or books, fundraising, and volunteering.
- Support local English as a Second Language (ESL) programs by tutoring students and/or funding their classes or materials.



- Plan or sponsor a “Books Alive” program for your community by bringing a favorite children’s book to life as a play or puppet show.
- Learn more about established reading programs such as Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library, Reach Out and Read, Reading is Fundamental, Reading Rockets, Room to Read, and 1000 Books Before Kindergarten, and see if your club can get involved in, donate to, or sponsor an event in your community.
- Celebrate World Read Aloud Day, a program sponsored by LitWorld, is on February 5. Celebrate at schools, work, and a club meeting. Create and wear reading crowns that illustrate what you are thinking as you read.
- Visit the LitWorld website to register, gather ideas for community engagement, and find other resources.



LIBRARIES

- Support your local public library (or school library if appropriate). Club projects could include:
 - Donating books, books on tape, movies, music, and other resources.
 - Providing exploratory tours for children that enable them to navigate the facility and use its electronic search tools.
 - Sponsoring materials and programs for the underserved, disabled, and/or non-native speakers.
 - Funding online education classes.
 - Promoting library history, events, and services on social media or through alternate means.
 - Encouraging the selection of a mascot and then helping develop a publicity/public-relations plan.
 - Making and wearing promotional buttons or pins for the library.
- Establish a group of club members who would like to offer volunteer assistance at the library, such as:
 - Assisting library patrons.
 - Assisting with library programs, such as children’s story hours and craft projects.
 - Shelving books or tidying library shelves.
 - Creating a bulletin board or other educational displays.
 - Decorating for various holidays.
 - Repairing and cleaning books.
 - Sorting book donations.



- Providing clerical services or helping with newsletters.
- Maintaining outdoor displays and/or beautifying flower beds.
- Assisting at fundraisers and book sales.
- Organize and/or sponsor public service or community enrichment programs at your public library (or school library if appropriate). Programs could include:
 - Tutoring and/or homework assistance for students.
 - Supporting summer reading events and classes for students.
 - Hosting children's events such as a Book Character Parade or Literary-themed poster contest.
 - Assisting with ESL classes.
 - Presenting creative endeavors such as book readings, film screenings, or art displays.
 - Promoting classes in art or art history, creative writing, gardening, and other creative pursuits.
 - Hosting a murder mystery event.
 - Offering "Library Lunches" that examine and/or problem-solve local issues.
- Celebrate National Library Week and National Library Workers Day in April by saying #ThankYouLibraries on social media with photos and stories about the library. Or organize a special event for library patrons and staff, such as a book reading by an author.
- Establish a Little Free Library in your community, choosing an area where books are scarce. Find free plans plus tips on stewardship and other helpful information on the Little Free Library website. Consider partnering with a local scout troop or carpentry class to build the library.
- Organize a mobile book program to serve rural or underserved areas of your community.
- Encourage club and community members to become a member of Friends of the Library (or organize a group if none exists), serve as a Library Trustee, and advocate for library funding and other important library concerns. Find more information on these initiatives and others on the I Love Libraries website. lovelibraries.org
- Establish or support an existing service to deliver books to homebound library patrons.
- Celebrate Library Card Sign-up Month in September with an event such as a Fall for Books Funfest for children with games, face painting, prizes, and a library card sign-up table.
- Organize a display for Banned Book Week, held the last week in September, which highlights the value of free and open access to information. For other event ideas and a list of restricted books, visit the Banned Book Week website.
- Work with the library to establish a teen advisory board to form a teen book review, develop teen services, and recommend additional library resources for teens.
- Sponsor a photography contest for teens that features the library, with winners receiving gift certificates or cash awards. Use the winning photos as screensavers on library computers and display them on club and library social media.
- Work with the library to organize a homework helpline or a term paper clinic.
- Collaborate with other groups, such as the local Chamber of Commerce, to develop small business services at the library, such as information centers that include a video conference room, staff training workshops, and other resources.
- Consider supporting a library in another part of the world. Check the websites of The Library Project (rural Asia) and the African Library Project. Or donate books to Books for International Goodwill.



ESO

Epsilon Sigma Omicron is an honorary educational society open to all GFWC members. ESO provides clubwomen with a structured reading program that is both educational and stimulates a desire for self-improvement. ESO materials are available on the GFWC website. Support ESO in your state with these activities.

- Verify the charter of an ESO Chapter in your state by contacting the State President or GFWC Education and Libraries Chairman. If none currently exists, work with your State President and the State Education and Libraries Chairman to establish a State ESO Chapter.
- Refer to the ESO Reading List on the GFWC website, and then select one or two books from the reading list to discuss at a meeting and/or highlight through your club newsletter. Any books not listed may be deemed eligible by the State ESO Chapter.
- Establish an ESO reading group for study and discussion.
- Maintain a reading log, which is provided to the State ESO Chairman to achieve ESO levels.
- Participate in the online GFWC ESO reading book club. The online reading book club has selected one book per month from various categories. Search for the Facebook page: GFWC ESO Book Club.

CONNECT WITH GFWC AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS**CANINE COMPANIONS**

- Assist with outreach to veteran organizations, including presentations, outreach booth staffing, literature, as well as poster and video distribution.
- Arrange for a Canine Companions team to speak at your club meeting to learn more about assistance dogs and Canine Companions.

HEIFER INTERNATIONAL

- Encourage the educational resources that Heifer offers to schools at the elementary and secondary levels (www.heifer.org/what-you-can-do/get-involved/schools/home-school-activities.html).
- Publicize the books and reading resources as well as the virtual field trips for children who are homeschooled (www.heifer.org/what-you-can-do/get-involved/schools/home-school-activities.html).

OPERATION SMILE

- Organize a community event to bring awareness to the work of Operation Smile.

UNICEF USA

- “Shop for a Cause” to provide educational materials for children around the world. Prepare educational items for display and donate them to a local school (www.market.unicefusa.org/inspired-gifts).

GFWC RESOURCES

Before Kindergarten www.1000booksbeforekindergarten.org

American Library Association www.ala.org



African Library Project www.africanlibraryproject.com

Banned Books Week www.bannedbooksweek.org

Books Alive www.books-alive.org

DEAR www.readingrockets.org/calendar/dear

ESO www.gfwc.org/what-we-do/community-service-programs/epsilon-sigma-omicron

Global Partnership for Education www.globalpartnership.org

I Love Libraries www.ilovelibraries.org

Dolly Parton Imagination Library www.imaginationlibrary.com

Learning Disabilities Association of America www.lidaamerica.org

Little Free Library www.littlefreelibrary.org

LitWorld www.litworld.org

For information on Read Aloud Day go to www.litworld.org/worldreadaloudday

National Education Association www.nea.org

PACER Center—Champions for Children with Disabilities www.pacer.org

For information on the National Bullying Prevention Center go to www.pacer.org/bullying

Pajama Program www.pajamaprogram.org

ProjectCSGIRLS www.projectcsgirls.com

PTA www.pta.org

For information on Safer Internet Day go <https://www.pta.org/home/events/safer-internet-day>

PTO www.pto.org

Reach Out and Read www.reachoutandread.org

Read Across America www.readacrossamerica.org

Reading is Fundamental www.rif.org

Reading Rockets www.readingrockets.org

Room to Read www.roomtoread.org

STEM for Her www.stemforher.org

The Library Project www.library-project.org

GFWC LIBRARY REPLENISHMENT FUND

To assist GFWC communities affected by man-made and/or natural disasters, GFWC established the GFWC Library Replenishment Fund. Tying together members' generous financial gifts and passion for literacy with our mission of community improvement through volunteer service, this fund may assist in restocking the collections of public libraries and public school libraries that have been affected by either natural or manmade disasters. Clubs or Federations may apply for funding by completing the GFWC Library Replenishment Fund application located in the Member Portal Digital Library. Once complete, the application is returned to the WHRC Librarian at GFWC Headquarters.

AWARDS

GFWC recognizes State Federations for outstanding projects and clubs for creative projects in implementing effective Education and Libraries 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
- Certificate to one State Federation in each membership category for ESO
- \$50 award to one club in the nation for project creativity for ESO

Award winners will be determined by entries submitted for the Award Program. Each State Federation may submit one State Award Entry and one Club Creativity Award Entry for the Education and Libraries 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 2023 Resolutions for the Education and Libraries 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.

150-010 Community Colleges and Vocational/Technical Education Institutions

150-020 Digital Media in Education

150-030 Education

150-040 Education of Children Raised in Foster Care

150-050 English Language in the United States

150-060 Libraries

150-070 Lifelong Learning

150-080 Literacy

150-090 Sex and Gender Equity in Education

