



# JUNIORS' SPECIAL PROGRAM:

## ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN

**“CHILDREN ARE OUR MOST VALUABLE NATURAL RESOURCE.”** — HERBERT HOOVER

GFWC Juniors' Special Program: Advocates for Children is designed to encourage all Woman's, Junior Woman's, Juniette, and International Affiliate Clubs to make a difference in the life of a child by being an advocate. The Program was envisioned as a way for clubwomen to provide a voice for children and to teach and encourage parents and other caregivers to advocate for children at the grassroots level.

The definition of child advocacy is "support for children who are in a vulnerable position in society or in a vulnerable situation."

Clubwomen can be an advocate by working to:

- Ensure that children are protected from harmful situations.
- Encourage healthy physical and emotional lifestyles.
- Impact policy to improve children's lives.

During the 2020-2022 Administration, our aim is to honor our roots and be a voice for children. The Program includes a special focus in two areas:

- To advocate for art curriculums and outdoor activities at schools for all students, including those with disabilities, and to highlight the value of art and outdoor programs as therapy and enrichment for children with emotional, mental, and physical challenges.
- To advocate for education and training that helps parents and other caregivers be the best advocate possible for a child in emergency and other health situations.

Multiple studies demonstrate the correlation between participation in arts programs and academic achievement. Yet, as budgets are crunched in school districts, the arts are repeatedly cut from education curriculums. Likewise, outdoor school activities, another indicator of success and a key component of children's health, is in critical decline. Currently, children spend roughly half as much time outdoors as they did 20 years ago. Outdoor exercise, education, and experiences are essential for physical and emotional wellbeing, the hands-on opportunities that intensify learning and increase student engagement and enthusiasm, and for understanding the natural world and developing an appreciation for nature.



### 2020-2022 JUNIORS' SPECIAL PROGRAM

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### CHALLENGE PROJECT: SERVICE PROJECT FOR ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN WEEK

GFWC Juniors' Special Program: Advocates for Children is initiating a challenge for clubs to "stick their neck out" by undertaking a service project that directly benefits children during GFWC Advocates for Children Week.

### GFWC ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN WEEK

Sunday, October 25, to  
Saturday, October 31, 2020

Sunday, October 24, to  
Saturday, October 30, 2021

Children also depend on the advocacy of others, especially their parents and caregivers, to protect and promote their interests in an emergency or long-term health situation. First-rate children's healthcare should be available to everyone and family voice and choice is essential in providing the best healthcare plan for each unique situation. Educate yourself and others about medical resources and organizations that will help you be the best advocate possible for children.

The Juniors' Special Program: Advocates for Children also encourages advocacy and projects that will assist and protect children in crisis, including those experiencing:

- Child abuse
- Depression and suicide
- Foster or residential care
- Homelessness
- Human trafficking
- Life-threatening illness
- Poverty



### **FUN SOCKS BRIGHTEN THE FEET AND DAYS OF PEDIATRIC CANCER PATIENTS**

The North Arlington Woman's Club (NJ) saw that the rooms at a local pediatric cancer center were monotone and dull and that the hospital's slipper socks were not interesting to young patients. To lift spirits and keep feet cozy, the club collected and donated socks in crazy colors or with fun designs such as puppies, rainbows, and sports themes.



### **BUDDY BENCHES**

The Women's Club of Mount Airy (NC) purchased and donated pressure-treated lumber to the woodworking class at their local high school. The class constructed seven "Buddy Benches" and delivered them to two elementary schools. Clubwomen and students painted the benches with weatherproof paint and then decorated them with handprints. Strategically placed on playgrounds, the benches help lonely students make new friends.



### **KINDERGARTEN FIRST-DAY PET PROJECT**

The GFWC Vi-Sa-Wen Woman's Club (AZ) supports two elementary schools on the first day of school. To ease the transition of kindergarteners from home to school, members collect and donate small stuffed animals. Students choose a "pet" to keep at school until the end of the year. The pets soothe students who feel sad or anxious during the day and help keep them focused on learning.



### **RING THE BELL FOR HOLIDAY HOPE**

GFWC Millington Junior Women's Club (MI) created donation buckets out of paint cans, paper, and laminated sheets decorated with the club's name. Members then rang bells outside local shopping centers during November to collect funds for their holiday service projects, which included boxes of food and toys for families identified as food insecure and warm winter clothing for children in foster care.

## **PROJECT IDEAS**

Be inspired by this list of how GFWC clubs can use local resources and creativity to be the voice for children. Find further information about organizations named here under Resources.

- Advocate for art curriculums and outdoor activities for your local schools and/or state by reaching out to local city and state officials about the importance of these programs. Ask the PTA to partner with the club by encouraging parents to join the advocacy effort.
- Check if local schools qualify and have applied for funds under the Every Child Succeeds Act if art funding is cut or eliminated.
- Investigate grants, such as those available through the U.S. Department of Education, including the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants and the 21st Century Community Learning Center Funding.
- Create an art awareness social media campaign that spotlights student art and provides information on the benefits of art education.
- Highlight the role art plays in student education by partnering with a local business, such as a café, to display student art in a public forum.
- Visit the extremely comprehensive and informative Art Advocacy and Resources page of Incredible @rt Department for additional ideas on art advocacy.
- Research art supplies that work best for special needs students, such as thick markers rather than crayons, and ensure local teachers have a ready supply.
- Sponsor a creative art activity, such as modeling with clay, that provides additional benefits for children with motor disabilities.
- Engage in art therapy projects with children in hospitals, shelters, and other facilities.
- Create "worry rocks" with children who are attending school for the first time.
- Work with special needs children to create Vision Boards or Dream Boards using magazine cut outs.
- Support under-funded schools and after-school enrichment programs by collecting and donating supplies for all types of art programs, including music and theater.
- Be inspired by the Dreaming Zebra Foundation to collect and donate used art and music supplies to local schools and activity centers.



- Support Save the Children's HEART (Healing and Education through the Arts), a therapy program for children with serious and chronic stress.
- Sponsor a visiting artist at a local elementary school.
- Volunteer with or sponsor art programs at local children's museums.
- Plan and sponsor a program celebrating children's art in conjunction with a local library or activity center in March for Youth Art Month.
- Investigate virtual platforms for creating student art and provide an after-school workshop.
- Sponsor rock painting and other community art projects for youth organizations.
- Offer art scholarships for area youth to attend art schools or camps.
- Organize an art show and sale with proceeds benefiting a local art program.
- Hold a one-week summer art camp for budding visual or performance artists.
- Support an outdoor performance at a local park.
- Sponsor a library program featuring an author who focuses on art projects or outdoor activities for school-age children.
- Partner with and/or provide volunteer support to community youth organizations that promote arts, outdoor activities, and/or other enrichment programs including civic engagement, such as Boys and Girls Clubs of America, Boy Scouts (BSA), Girl Scouts, FFA, and 4-H.
- Advocate for programs that directly benefit children at local and nearby state parks.
- Partner with a local school to build an outdoor classroom or school garden, using resources from Project Learning Tree such as *School Site Investigation* and *Creating an Outdoor Classroom*.
- Create a learning habitat for children at a local school or park using free, downloadable guides from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, including *The Schoolyard Habitat Project Guide* and *The Schoolyard Habitat Curriculum Guide*.
- See if your local school qualifies for the National Park Foundation's Open OutDoors for Kids fieldtrip program to connect kids to national parks, the world's largest outdoor classroom. The program subsidizes and delivers outdoor experiences for fourth graders nationwide.
- Help fourth-grade students secure their own Every Kid Outdoors pass through the Outdoor Alliance for Kids, which will provide them free access to national parks across the country. Consider sponsoring a family day at the nearest national park.
- Support local parks and recreation centers by volunteering or providing scholarships and/or supplies for summer camps and other programs.
- Sponsor a 5k run to benefit outdoor education programs in schools and/or communities.
- Learn about and promote Ecotherapy or Nature Therapy, which can help children with anxiety, depression, mental fatigue, eating disorders, feelings of isolation, and other emotional and mental ills.
- Volunteer with and/or support Equine therapy programs.
- Use resources from Kids Health, a nonprofit organization that provides doctor-reviewed advice on hundreds of health issues, to present a club or community program that will give families the tools and confidence to make best-health choices. Augment the program with other information resources, such as those available from the National Institute for Children's Health Quality and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.
- Learn from and inform new parents about HealthyChildren.org, sponsored by the American Academy of Pediatrics, for information on optimizing children's health, dealing with injuries and emergencies, and evaluating treatments for long-term health situations such as asthma, diabetes, autism, learning disabilities, and others.
- Inform parents and other caregivers about NAMI, the nation's leading voice on mental health, and their resources and services, including the NAMI Helpline (1-800-950-NAMI or info@nami.org). Consider hosting a community program that specifically addresses depression and suicide in children and teens.
- Advocate through your state legislature for bills that benefit children's physical and mental health.
- Advocate for law enforcement training on mental health awareness for children.
- Research and engage with advocacy groups in your area that support children's physical and/or mental health.
- Advocate for Big Brothers/Big Sisters and other programs that provide children with mentors and/or offer activities to help them develop positive social skills.
- Advocate for support programs, such as Ronald McDonald House Charities, to establish a chapter in your community.
- Partner with local businesses to sponsor a family day or family night at a sporting event or another activity in April for Child Abuse Awareness Month.



- Learn about and share information on ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences), such as information provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and advocate for community education programs that create and sustain stable, safe, and nurturing relationships and environments for all children.
- Work with your city, county, or state to have the fourth week in October recognized as Advocates for Children Week. Send the proclamation to Juniors' Special Program Chairman Carrie Zimmerman at [czim22@gmail.com](mailto:czim22@gmail.com).
- Undertake projects that provide a sense of security for children in foster care, such as making or customizing duffle bags for carrying their clothes and/or creating overnight kits with hygiene and comfort items.
- Sponsor an international child through *Save the Children* to secure educational opportunities and health services.

## **CONNECT WITH GFWC AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS**

Undertake these and other projects with GFWC Affiliate Organizations that fit within the guidelines for the Juniors' Special Program: Advocates for Children.

### **MARCH OF DIMES**

- The March for Babies is a fun event to raise funds to help support mothers and premature babies and raise awareness of the research needed to find solutions and advocate for policies that prioritize mom and baby health. March of Dimes provides instructions, guidance, and a web page to organize an event ([www.marchforbabies.org/Home/SearchtoDonate](http://www.marchforbabies.org/Home/SearchtoDonate)).

### **OPERATION SMILE**

- Help Operation Smile provide the necessary equipment and medications to enable the delivery of the safest surgeries (<https://catalog.operationsmile.org/provide-medicines-supplies>).

### **PCAA**

- Become a mentor to a child or parent you know as a great way to make an impact in your community (<https://preventchildabuse.org/resource/mentor>).
- Review GFWC Resolutions and be an advocate for children and families by contacting your elected officials. Let them know that you support policies and programs that promote healthy child development and the prevention of abuse and neglect.
- Volunteer your time and talent to your Prevent Child Abuse America state chapter to help prevent the abuse and neglect in your community. To find the chapter in your state, visit [www.preventchildabuse.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.org).
- PINWHEELS FOR PREVENTION® is Prevent Child Abuse America's national campaign that promotes great childhoods and raises awareness of child abuse prevention. You can participate in this campaign by:
  - Conducting your own pinwheel activities at any time of year, including gathering with neighbors to plant "pinwheel gardens" in your communities to continue raising awareness of child abuse prevention.
  - Holding fundraisers with local schools, faith-based organizations, or community centers in which pinwheels are sold to benefit the state chapter from which you bought the pinwheels.

### **ST. JUDE CHILDREN'S RESEARCH HOSPITAL**

- The St. Jude Trike-A-Thon is a fun, service-learning program for daycares and preschools that teaches trike and riding toy safety while helping the children of St. Jude. Any advocate for children can make a difference with the St. Jude Trike-A-Thon. If you sign up to become a coordinator, St. Jude will provide everything you need to have a great event at a preschool or daycare in your area. Log on to [www.stjude.org/get-involved](http://www.stjude.org/get-involved) to find out more.
- Waiting Room Fun Bags. Fill a sealed zippered plastic bag with fun things a child or teen can do as they wait to visit the doctor.



### **UNITED NATIONS FOUNDATION SHOT@LIFE CAMPAIGN**

- Promote World Immunization Week as an opportunity for the global health community to come together to urge our leaders to make #VaccinesWork for all.
- Encourage young people to enroll in Shot@Life's Student Advocacy Program. This program offers a great opportunity for students to build leadership skills and engage in global health issues to support vaccination efforts for children in developing countries (<https://shotatlife.org/champions>).

### **UNICEF USA**

- Host a "Trick or Treat for UNICEF" event, a long-time tradition in our country to collect donations for their general fund. At your October meeting decorate and include UNICEF Trick or Treat on each table for donations ([www.unicefusa.org/trick-or-treat](http://www.unicefusa.org/trick-or-treat)).

## **GFWC RESOURCES**

### **Arts/Outdoor Education**

**Boys and Girls Clubs of America** [www.bgca.org](http://www.bgca.org)

**Boy Scouts of America** [www.scouting.org](http://www.scouting.org)

**Council for Art Education** [www.councilforarteducation.org](http://www.councilforarteducation.org)

**Every Kid Outdoors** [www.everykidoutdoors.gov](http://www.everykidoutdoors.gov)

**4-H** [www.4-h.org](http://www.4-h.org)

**FFA** [www.ffa.org](http://www.ffa.org)

**Girl Scouts of the USA** [www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org)

**Incredible @rt Department** [www.incredibleart.org/links/artedu.html](http://www.incredibleart.org/links/artedu.html)

**National Park Service** [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)

**National Park Foundation** [www.nationalparks.org](http://www.nationalparks.org)

**Open Outdoors for Kids** [www.nationalparks.org/our-work/campaigns-initiatives/open-outdoors-kids](http://www.nationalparks.org/our-work/campaigns-initiatives/open-outdoors-kids)

**Outdoors Alliance for Kids (OAK)** [www.outdoorsallianceforkids.org](http://www.outdoorsallianceforkids.org)

### **Project Learning Tree**

**Building an Outdoor Classroom:** [www.plt.org/educator-tips/creating-an-outdoor-classroom-things-to-consider](http://www.plt.org/educator-tips/creating-an-outdoor-classroom-things-to-consider)

**School Site Investigation:** [www.plt.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/PLT-GreenSchools-School-Site-Investigation-2018.pdf](http://www.plt.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/PLT-GreenSchools-School-Site-Investigation-2018.pdf)

### **Save the Children**

**HEART** [www.savethechildren.org/us/what-we-do/global-programs/protection/healing-and-education-through-the-arts](http://www.savethechildren.org/us/what-we-do/global-programs/protection/healing-and-education-through-the-arts)

**Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants** [www.ed.gov/programs/ssae/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/programs/ssae/index.html)

**The Dreaming Zebra Foundation** [www.dreamingzebra.org](http://www.dreamingzebra.org)

**21st Century Community Learning Center Funding** [www2.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/applicant.html](http://www2.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/applicant.html)

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Habitat Guides:** [www.fws.gov/northeast/cpwn/schoolyardhabitat/syhguides.html](http://www.fws.gov/northeast/cpwn/schoolyardhabitat/syhguides.html)

### **Advocacy for Healthy Children Child abuse**

**Big Brothers Big Sisters of America** [www.bbbs.org](http://www.bbbs.org)

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ACEs** [www.cdc.gov/violencepreventionchildabuseandneglect/acestudy/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/violencepreventionchildabuseandneglect/acestudy/index.html)



## **AWARDS**

GFWC recognizes State Federations for outstanding projects and clubs for creative projects in implementing effective Juniors' Special Program: Advocates for Children 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 Juniors' Special Program: Advocates for Children projects. Clubs do not submit entries directly to GFWC.

## **SPECIAL AWARD**

The Giraffe Award will be presented at the Junior Business Session of the GFWC Annual Convention (2021/2022) to honor all State Federations that participate in the Challenge Project. An award certificate will be provided to each club that undertakes a project directly benefiting children during the fourth week of October. To be recognized, complete the Giraffe Award Application Form found at the end of this club manual section and send it to Juniors' Special Program Chairman Carrie Zimmerman at [czim22@gmail.com](mailto:czim22@gmail.com).



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

## **RESOLUTIONS**

**Currently Under Review**



# GIRAFFE AWARD APPLICATION FORM

The Giraffe Award will be presented at the Junior Business Session of the GFWC Annual Convention in 2021 and 2022 to honor all State Federations that participate in the Challenge Project. An award certificate will be provided to each club that undertakes a project directly benefiting children during the fourth week of October.



**STATE FEDERATION:**

**CLUB NAME:**

**CLUB CONTACT & PHONE NUMBER:**

**NARRATIVE:** Please provide a short description of 50 words or less to describe your club's activity for GFWC Advocates for Children Week, plus one or two photos.

Mail or email form and photos to Juniors' Special Program Chairman Carrie Zimmerman, 605 White Oaks Farm Road, Tamasee, SC, 29686, or [czim22@gmail.com](mailto:czim22@gmail.com). For GFWC's use of photos, please include the Creative Arts Waiver Form found in the Awards, Contest, and Grants section of the GFWC Club Manual.