



Illinois | Indiana | Michigan | Ohio | Wisconsin

GF WC GREAT LAKES REGION COMMUNIQUE

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December 2025

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

HEARTS IN ACTION: CELEBRATING KINDNESS – HONORING VOLUNTEERS

A Warm Ohio Welcome was given to all who attended the “Hearts in Action: Celebrating Kindness – Honoring Volunteers” GFWC Great Lakes Region Conference in Columbus, Ohio —“The Heart of It All.” Members from the five Region states gathered for a weekend of connection, celebration, and inspiration. Hosted by GFWC Ohio, the three-day event highlighted the dedication, kindness, and volunteer spirit that defines the GFWC mission.

The conference opened with registration and hospitality events on Thursday evening.

On Friday, October 10, members of the Great Lakes Region gathered in the hotel lobby for their Statehouse tour, lunch at a well-known pub, then on to the Franklin Park Conservatory where members were treated to a glass-blowing demonstration. The skilled craftsman made a glass pumpkin that would be placed in the retail shop after it cooled.



Their guided tour of the historic Ohio Statehouse was an experience made even more memorable by a distinguished state welcome. They were greeted on the Statehouse steps by Karl Mason from the Ohio Secretary of State's Office. Representing Secretary of State Frank LaRose, Mr. Mason presented GLR President Rose Logston with a formal proclamation welcoming the Great Lakes Region to Columbus for the annual conference. The proclamation commended GFWC members for their lasting impact in strengthening communities and improving the quality of life for Ohioans and citizens across the region.

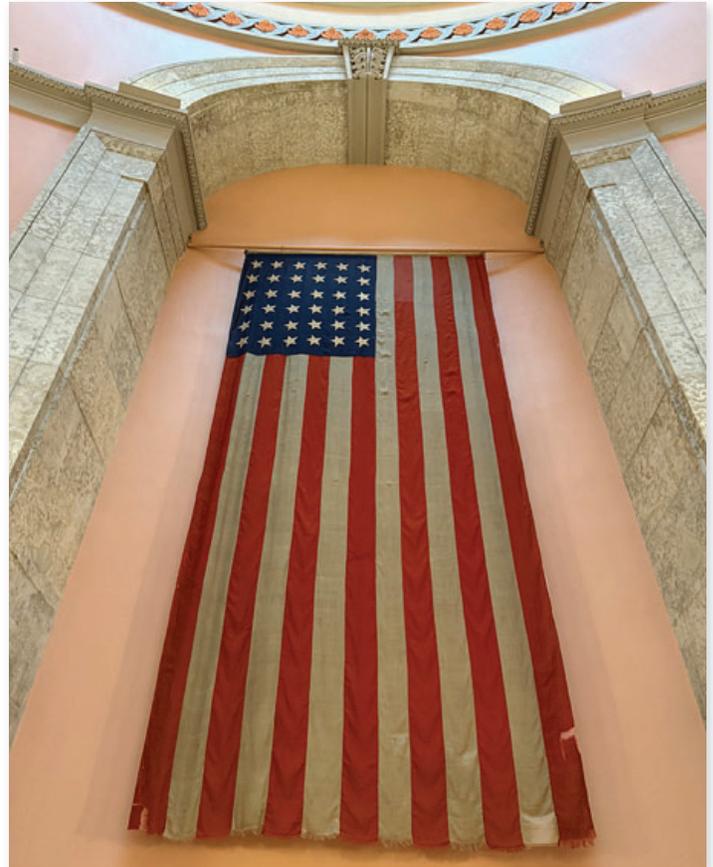


In a deeply meaningful moment, Mr. Mason also presented President Logston with a Certificate of Recognition honoring her over fifty years of dedication and service to the General Federation of Women's Clubs. The certificate—signed by Ohio Governor Mike DeWine and Lieutenant Governor Jim Tressel—acknowledged her extraordinary commitment to volunteerism and leadership.

Mr. Mason extended welcoming remarks to GFWC International President Suellen Brazil and GFWC President-elect Wendy Carriker, wishing them continued success as they lead GFWC forward.

Friday evening's “Ohio – The Heart of It All” State Night Banquet set a warm, festive tone. Tables were decorated with member's prized teapots filled with multi-colored roses (GLR President's symbols of the

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administration). Greetings from leaders filled the ballroom, and GFWC International President Suellen Brazil and GFWC President-elect Wendy Carriker brought inspiring messages to kick off the weekend. Entertainment by Insured Sound energized the crowd before guests concluded the night with a reception honoring GFWC and GLR Officers.

Saturday morning began with the Parade of States, Presentation of Colors by the Grove City High School NJROTC, and the National Anthem led by Karyn Charvat. President Rose Logston formally opened the business session, welcoming delegates and guests to a conference dedicated to service, leadership, and collaboration.

Reports and presentations showcased the work happening across the Federation: education, membership, protocol, legislative advocacy, fundraising, communications, and more. Special recognition was given to eight Past GLR Presidents, three Past GFWC Directors of Junior Clubs, and numerous committee members who continue to serve GFWC at all levels.

The afternoon featured an inspiring keynote address by GFWC President-elect Wendy Carriker,

followed by the GFWC Leadership Committee and the 2025 LEADS Graduates—always a conference highlight. Members were recognized for milestone achievements and presented small gifts, including first-time attendees and those with 50+ years of Federation service.

Several clubs throughout Ohio created table centerpieces honoring the nine GFWC Affiliate Organizations. Collection bags were on each table and almost \$200 was donated to the various affiliates. Many donations were matched two to four times making their contributions even more meaningful.

Vendor and Mini-Mart participants presented commercials, and innovative membership and fundraising ideas were shared from several clubs.

A lighthearted “Getting to Know Your Federation Sisters” activity brought laughter and connection to the room.

After recess of the afternoon session, GFWC President-elect Wendy Carriker met with the incoming leaders of the 2026–2028 administration.

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All members were invited to stop by the GLR President's room for "Talk and Taste." They were greeted by the President's aides and shared homemade treats and beverages.

Saturday evening, members gathered for the "Serving with Heart – Celebration of Kindness, Friendship, and the Volunteer Spirit" dinner — a night to honor the warmth, generosity, and heartfelt service that defines who we are and what we do together.

GFWC International President Suellen Brazil captivated attendees with her keynote message.

A moving highlight of the evening was the presentation of the 2025 Jennie Award state nominees, each escorted by her State President and honored for exemplary service and leadership. Their stories inspired the entire region and can be read elsewhere in this edition of *The Communiqué*. Congratulations to each of the five nominees: Karyn Charvat, Dana Jones, Linda Clark, Sue Hovanec, and Mary Kaye Ernest.

The night ended with a spirited Paddle Auction that brought laughter and generosity together—successfully raising funds to keep GLR thriving.

Sunday opened with an uplifting Thought for the Day from Past International President Deb Strahanoski, followed by the Final Credentials Report and a touching Memorial Service led by Teresa Cannon to honor GLR members who passed during the year.

Reports from the "Great 8" (Presidents and Directors of Junior Clubs from each state) showcased achievements, challenges, and continued dedication to community service, focusing on their state's support of our GFWC affiliates.

Wisconsin members extended an enthusiastic invitation to the 2026 GLR Conference to be held October 2–4, 2026, in Pewaukee, Wisconsin.

President-elect Wendy Cariker and International President Suellen Brazil each shared closing remarks and received handcrafted wooden bowls made by the Region President's brother from President Logston and given in recognition of their leadership and participation at the conference. Great Lakes Region members also made a donation for each of them to the "Facade Restoration Fund" for our home in Washington, D.C. The Region also made an additional large donation to the fund.



President Rose Logston closed the conference with heartfelt words: "Every act of kindness, no matter how small, is a powerful gift. Together, our hearts in action can build brighter, stronger communities."

The closing ceremony featured the Junior Pledge, the Collect for Clubwomen, and "Let There Be Peace on Earth," led by Acting Music Chairman Karyn Charvat.

Before adjourning, President Rose expressed deep appreciation to GFWC Ohio members for their outstanding hospitality and tireless work in making the 2025 Conference a memorable and meaningful success.

The 2025 Great Lakes Region Conference adjourned with warm farewells, renewed inspiration, and a shared commitment to carrying the spirit of kindness and volunteerism home to clubs across the region.

Members were encouraged to watch for the registration information for the GFWC Convention in Arizona and get their registrations in early for the semi-annual dinner meeting of the Great Lakes Region. You will be a part of the installation of the 2026–2028 leaders of not only GFWC, but also of the GFWC Great Lakes Region.

We look forward to gathering again at the 2026 GFWC Great Lakes Region Conference in Wisconsin. ■

With appreciation, Rose

"Living the Volunteer Spirit" is enthusiasm, kindness, and friendship in action!



GFWC ILLINOIS

JOINT PRESIDENT/DIRECTOR OF JUNIOR CLUB'S SPEECH AT 2025 GFWC GREAT LAKES REGION CONFERENCE

“UNITED IN SERVICE – SUPPORTING OUR GFWC AFFILIATES”

GFWC Illinois President Trisha Schafer (in Black)
GFWC Illinois Director of Junior Clubs Maria
Uribe (in Teal)



Good morning Madam President, members of the Great Lakes Region, and Federation friends. It is such a joy to be here among women who share the same passion for purpose, partnership, and progress.

This year's conference theme — with its emphasis on GFWC Affiliates — truly resonates with us in Illinois. These partnerships expand our ability to serve far beyond what any of us could do alone.

When we work side by side with our GFWC Affiliates, we amplify our compassion with action and our voices with advocacy.

Absolutely, Trisha. The power of those partnerships is something Illinois has embraced. Our administration's theme, "GFWC Illinois — A Unified Journey in Service," perfectly reflects how we approach our Affiliate collaborations: united, focused, and moving forward together.

We see our Affiliates as allies in the mission of GFWC — organizations that share our values, our goals, and our commitment to making lives better.

Throughout this administration, we've worked to make sure our members not only know who our Affiliates are but also understand how they can personally connect with them — as donors, volunteers, advocates, and friends.

One of the best examples of that is our growing relationship with the Alzheimer's Association,

one of GFWC's proud Affiliate Organizations.

In Illinois, we've created a statewide team called GFWC IL — Unified Journey for the Walk to End Alzheimer's. This effort truly reflects the heart of who we are — clubwomen walking side by side, raising awareness and funds, and offering hope to families who have been touched by this devastating disease.

But it doesn't stop there. Many of our clubs and districts have also formed their own local teams, walking proudly under the GFWC banner. Every step we take honors those we've lost and supports the research that will one day end Alzheimer's for good.

That's right — and it's been inspiring to see how our members have embraced this cause!

It connects beautifully with our Federation's emphasis on family and community — reminding us that caregiving, compassion, and advocacy are all forms of leadership.

At the Fall Conference this September, we expanded that same spirit of collaboration by launching another statewide effort — our GFWC Illinois Team for the St. Jude Walk/Run.

This initiative supports the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, another of GFWC's long-standing Affiliate partners, and ties directly into my Director's focus on "Advocates for Children."

St. Jude's mission is to ensure that no child is denied treatment based on a family's ability to pay.

Through this effort, we're not just raising money; we're building awareness, sharing stories, and inspiring others to stand with families facing the unimaginable.

Our partnerships remind us that collaboration makes every cause stronger.

My President's emphasis this administration is the GFWC Signature Program: Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention.

In Illinois, this program is led statewide by two incredible co-chairs whose energy and compassion have truly set the standard for leadership.

Through their guidance, our members have built strong relationships with another important



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GFWC Affiliate — Hope for Justice — an organization committed to ending human trafficking and supporting survivors worldwide.

This partnership has not only educated our members but has also inspired meaningful, hands-on action.

In addition, our Illinois Legislation Chairman and her dedicated “committee of one” are working tirelessly to advance legislation that would allow placement of human trafficking hotline stickers in state rest areas. This simple but powerful action has the potential to reach victims in moments of vulnerability and connect them to critical help. We are optimistic that this legislation will move forward and be approved during the spring 2026 session.

And that action has been extraordinary!

Just this year, Illinois members came together for a statewide International Day of Service project that perfectly captured the spirit of hope and new beginnings.

Attendees of our September Statewide Conference filled 15 laundry baskets — each one overflowing with brand-new kitchen essentials to help survivors of domestic and sexual violence start a fresh chapter as they move from shelter into their new homes.

It was more than just a collection drive; it was a visible act of love and empowerment. Each basket symbolized a community standing behind someone as they rebuild their life with dignity and independence.

Yes, and that is the heart of GFWC — transforming compassion into concrete change.

Our Signature Program co-chairs didn’t stop there. They’ve also raised funds by selling purple ribbon/ butterfly pins at our state meetings, with proceeds supporting the GFWC Survivor Scholarships.

What I love most about our members in Illinois is that they don’t wait to be asked; they act!

They organize walks, fundraisers, and awareness campaigns with enthusiasm and creativity. And by connecting their local projects to GFWC’s Affiliates — like Canine Companions, March of Dimes, Heifer International, and UNICEF USA — they make the global impact feel deeply personal.

At every level, our Federation women see these Affiliates as extensions of their own hearts and hands.

That’s so true. And part of our responsibility as leaders, both at the state and junior levels, is to make those connections visible and accessible.

We’ve made a point to feature our GFWC Affiliates in our state communications, conferences, and board meetings.

We invite Affiliate representatives to speak at events. We share their resources in our newsletters. And most importantly, we celebrate the stories — the lives changed because a GFWC member cared enough to act.

Our goal is to ensure that every Illinois member understands that when she supports GFWC, she is also standing alongside world-class organizations that share her mission and multiply her impact.

And that’s where our theme — “A Unified Journey in Service” — really comes to life.

It’s not just about unity within Illinois; it’s about unity within our Federation family — with our Affiliate partners, our sister states, and every woman who believes that service can change the world.

Working together with our Affiliates, we are raising awareness, saving lives, and planting seeds of hope that will grow for generations to come.

Partnership is the thread that weaves through everything we do — from our statewide walks for Alzheimer’s and St. Jude, to our advocacy for survivors, to the way our members collaborate with national leaders.

In GFWC Illinois, every act of service is a step on our unified journey. And thanks to our incredible Affiliates, those steps reach farther and leave a lasting mark.

So today, as we gather in fellowship here at the Great Lakes Region Conference, we celebrate not only what our Affiliates do, but what they make possible: stronger communities, safer families, and a world filled with hope.

We are thankful to our Affiliate partners for walking beside us. And thankful to our GFWC sisters for saying “yes” again and again to service that matters.

Together, we are proof that when women unite — when we combine heart, vision, and partnership — there is no limit to what we can achieve.

From Illinois, we show our gratitude, our friendship, and our commitment to keep walking this Unified Journey — hand in hand with GFWC and every Affiliate organization that shares our mission.

Both (together): Because together...we are GFWC Strong! ■

GFWC ILLINOIS JENNIE AWARD NOMINEE KARYN CHARVAT

Dear GLR Sisters,

It is my distinct honor and heartfelt privilege to introduce to you the GFWC Illinois Jennie Award Winner — **Karyn Charvat**.

The Jennie Award, as we all know, is the highest individual honor bestowed upon a member of our Federation. It recognizes a clubwoman who embodies the very essence of GFWC through her commitment to family, club, and community. Karyn truly represents the spirit of this award in every way.

I have had the joy and privilege of calling Karyn my dear friend for more than twenty years. In that time, I have witnessed her unwavering passion for volunteerism, her remarkable leadership across every level of GFWC, and her deep compassion for others. She is an inspiring example of a woman who leads with both purpose and heart.

Karyn's **commitment to family** runs deep. Following the loss of her mother to Alzheimer's disease, she transformed her grief into action — becoming a passionate advocate and fundraiser in the fight to end Alzheimer's. Her efforts have been recognized nationally, and she continues to be a source of strength and support to those



around her. And through her team, Big D's Daughters, Karyn has personally raised over \$51,000 since 2018 for the Alzheimer's Association.

Her **commitment to GFWC** is equally extraordinary. Karyn currently serves as the GFWC

Membership Chairman and is the GFWC Illinois President-elect, preparing to lead our state Federation from 2026 to 2028. Since joining the Joliet Juniors in 2002, Karyn has personally started or helped charter **more than a dozen new clubs**, expanding the reach of GFWC and creating opportunities for countless women to experience the joy of service and friendship. She has served continuously on the GFWC Board of Directors since 2014, contributing her vision, creativity, and enthusiasm to every level of Federation work. Karyn inspires others through her kindness, optimism, and ability to bring out the very best in those she leads.

And finally, her **commitment to community** reflects her professional expertise and generous heart. With a background in marketing and public relations, Karyn uses her skills to elevate causes, connect people, and build awareness for the organizations she serves. Her leadership extends far beyond GFWC — she is a trusted board member and dedicated volunteer for several community nonprofits, always working to make life better for others.

Karyn Charvat is, without question, a shining example of the values and vision that define our Federation. Her compassion, dedication, and leadership inspire us all.

It is with great pride and heartfelt respect that I present to you **GFWC Illinois' Great Lakes Region Jennie Award Nominee — Karyn Charvat.** ■

Trisha Schafer

GFWC Illinois President 2024–2026



GFWC INDIANA

PRESIDENT'S SPEECH AT 2025 GFWC GREAT LAKES REGION CONFERENCE

We have been reminded this weekend of partnerships that make our diverse missions possible. Indiana has found our affiliates to be a source of innovation and inspiration.

This past year, Indiana partnered with Alzheimer's Association, Canine Companions, Heifer International, Operation Smile, St Jude's, UNICEF, Shot@Life, and March of Dimes.

Our newest partnership with the **ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION** began through personal connections with its members, and has quickly grown into meaningful participation, including our involvement in the Walk to End Alzheimer's. Through these efforts, we raised more than \$3,000 across the state, with 10% of our members joining the walk. One highlight was taking photos with a very large purple bear, fittingly named HOPE.

The Alzheimer's Association also engaged with one of our clubs, delivering a talk that sparked lively discussions and questions. The session was so engaging that we have invited the Association to be a featured speaker at our 2026 State Convention. At one meeting, we distributed Alzheimer's help line phone magnets to all attendees—an encouraging sign, as every member took their magnet home.

CANINE COMPANIONS has held a special place among GFWC Indiana's affiliates. For many years, one dedicated member brought her Canine Companion dogs to both regular meetings and State Conventions, until she recently moved into a nursing home. Building on this legacy, the President of a local club introduced a "Pocket Change for Pup" initiative this year. Members contribute their spare change at each monthly meeting, and the donation jar also makes appearances at community events like the Cruisin' the Ridge Car Show, encouraging additional support from attendees. At the end of the campaign, all proceeds are donated directly to Canine Companions.



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INDIANA



SHOT@LIFE has a few champions and more enrolling with their recent webinars. Their donations are starting to accumulate.

For a quick overview on the balance of affiliates, Indiana has sent flocks of chickens with Heifer, digital Mother's Day cards for St Jude's, necessities bags for parents at March of Dimes, and blankets for Operation Smile.

We were even able to take home a Certificate of Recognition from the International Convention from Operation Smile for the largest Statewide Contributions in our Category.

Our hope for the future is to see even more webinars from our affiliates, with repeats for members who may have missed the originals. They have championed values that we hold dear in Indiana, and we thank them. ■

Betsey Nielsen

GFWC Indiana President 2024–2026

GFWC INDIANA JENNIE AWARD NOMINEE DANA JONES



Dana Jones has been a GFWC member for 43 years, has led many projects and held all club leadership positions in her clubs, multiple times. Joining at the age of 18, Dana belonged to a well-established club alongside her mother and served on the Scholarship and Fundraising Committee to start her GFWC journey. She soon began producing the monthly newsletter and the annual yearbook. She quickly moved into leadership serving as an officer, holding the treasurer position multiple times and the presidency for five terms prior to moving to Indianapolis. The club held successful fundraisers, awarded annual scholarships and kept a steady membership of 18–20 members. During her membership, she also served as Lake County President.

When Dana relocated to Indianapolis, there were no active clubs in the area, so she worked with the State Federation to establish one. Dana became the inaugural president and has served actively as a member and advisor. She is currently in her third term as secretary. The club has grown from the initial eight members to a strong 18 members and is seeing a growth trend through goal-oriented outreach and engagement.

She has served as Central District President, State Vice President and State President, Great Lakes Secretary, Vice President and President. Dana currently serves as GFWC Indiana Parliamentary Advisor. Her service to the GFWC Board of Directors includes Membership Committee, Campaign for the Future, and currently Dana is the Chairman of Education and Libraries.

Of course, this commitment to club service has extended to her community and goes back to her high school days as secretary and treasurer. She has always been involved in her local church as part of her life commitment, holding multiple positions including women's ministry director, children's ministry leader and youth leader. She has planned and executed many service projects and outreach programs for her respective groups.

Dana has been an active volunteer with Ovar'Coming Together, Indiana's support and education group for ovarian cancer. As a 35-year survivor herself, she sees the value of support for those in the fight and for education for all women and medical personnel about the signs and symptoms. Dana has volunteered at their



annual fundraisers including the annual Walk and Run and their Teal Basket Bingo for the past ten years. In 2024, she was the lead for the Teal Market at the Walk and Run selling "swag" for the event. In 2025, she made 65 dog bandanas for Ovar'Coming Together to sell for funding as she overheard comments about needing to dress dogs for the event. She recruited club members to volunteer as well.

Growing up in a traditional family of six, Dana has a deep commitment to her loved ones, which only intensified the profound impact her father's passing in her mid-twenties had. This led to her prioritizing her mother's support over career opportunities. Dana stood by her mother through significant health challenges, traveling to doctors and specialists in Chicago until her passing. Later, she stood with her brother through his wife's battle with melanoma of the brain. Dana consistently seeks ways to make her family feel loved and valued, enjoying countless numbers of sporting events each weeknight for her nieces and nephews.

There is so much more that Dana has accomplished. We in Indiana wholeheartedly support our Jennie June, Dana Jones. ■

Betsey Nielsen

GFWC Indiana President 2024–2026

GFWC MICHIGAN

PRESIDENT'S SPEECH AT 2025 GFWC GREAT LAKES REGION CONFERENCE



We all know that many governmental aid agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGO's) have been adversely affected by cuts in federal funding. An NGO is a nonprofit organization that operates independently of any government, typically one whose purpose is to address a social or political issue.

At this point in time programs are adjusting by scaling back, pausing previously awarded aid, consolidating services, and unfortunately even closing.

When I asked ChatGPT if any of our affiliates have been affected by these cuts, I found out that all of our affiliates have been affected to some extent. Some more than others.

- Heifer International – not so much
- Hope for Justice – yes
- United Nations Foundation – Shot@Life Campaign – not so much

- St. Jude Children's Research Hospital – yes, due to revoked and cancelled NIH Grants
- Canine Companions – no
- March of Dimes – yes, due to cuts to Medicaid
- Operation Smile – no
- UNICEF USA – yes

United Nations Agencies, including UNICEF, are experiencing significant budget shortfalls.

- HIV/AIDS programs are disrupted in many countries.
- TB cuts could lead to millions more cases.
- Health/Nutrition/Maternal and Child Health – large scale shocks especially where USAID had been a major or lead funder.
- Humanitarian relief/food security – many emergencies, especially for displaced people, have had to be scaled back.

Leaders are meant to inspire. I have been busy attending Michigan district meetings. They all have a different flavor, the definition of diversity. I have heard how much each club “gives” to their local communities. The members donate the best of their time, talents, and funds for those in need and for the greater good of those in the world.

I would hope that GFWC and all our clubs reach deeper into their pockets to help our affiliates close the gaps in their budgets.

After all, “We are women, hear us roar. If I have to, I can do anything. I am strong. I am invincible. I am woman...” ■

Respectfully submitted,
Rae Lynn Hicks, GFWC Michigan President
 2024–2026

GFWC MICHIGAN JENNIE AWARD NOMINEE LINDA CLARK

Linda's journey with GFWC began in 1983 when she first joined the GFWC Altruista Club, now known as GFWC Marlette. She actively participated in club projects and church volunteer work before serving as East Central District President from 1994–1996. Her leadership expanded further when she attended the 2001 state convention and agreed to run for GFWC Michigan Financial Secretary. Following the passing of the President-Elect, she stepped up as First Vice President.

Installed as GFWC Michigan President in 2004, Linda led with the theme "I Hope you Dance," uniting her love of music with her passion for helping others. She later served as Treasurer of the Great Lakes Region (2006–2008), while also contributing to the GFWC Leadership committee. From 2008–2014 she held multiple positions, including Secretary and Vice President of the Great Lakes Region and worked on the Domestic Violence Awareness committee. She became Great Lakes Region President (2012–2014), overseeing conferences and attending GFWC board meetings.

Currently, Linda is the President of GFWC Pigeon Area Woman's Club (2020–2025) while maintaining her membership in the Marlette Woman's Club and the GFWC Past State Presidents Club. She previously served as President of GFWC Huron County Federation (2020–2023) and as Parliamentarian for GFWC Michigan.

Beyond GFWC she has been actively involved in her community, serving in the Scheurer Hospital Auxiliary since 2007, where she was President (2009–2011) and Treasurer (2019–2023). Since 2013, she has served as liturgy coordinator and musician at her local parish.

After Linda's administration with the East Central District ended, she took time to attend classes at Delta College at the age of 46. Still eager to improve herself with the belief that "you can always learn something new each and every day" she enrolled in voice and piano lessons, to hone her skills that provided joy to herself and others in the years to come.

Linda remains humble despite her many accomplishments, which include being honored as "Ms. Federation" in 2002 and "Woman of Achievement" in 2005 from the Marlette Club. She is gratified by the many friends and memories she has made from across the



country, especially during her presidency with GFWC MI and the GFWC Great Lakes Region.

After reading all the letters of praise and recommendations from friends, community leaders, and club members I noticed some "common" words in their description of Linda. They include:

Family, devotion, music, volunteer, well rounded, master leader, expert in domestic violence and awareness, patient, kind, understanding, sympathetic, professional in her approach and advice, dedication by example, collaborative spirit, strong work ethic, positive influence on others, committed, mentor to many, never hesitant to step up and take command, born leader and doer, music director, always an active member, and, most importantly, a devoted wife, mother, grandmother, and great grandmother.

Linda's lifelong dedication to service, leadership, and advocacy exemplifies the spirit of our founder Jane Cunningham Croly. Her unwavering commitment and extensive contributions to her community, family, and the General Federation of Women's Clubs make her an outstanding nominee for the Jennie Award.

I present to you with great admiration Linda Clark the great state of Michigan's Jennie Award nominee. ■

Rae Lynn Hicks, GFWC Michigan President

GFWC OHIO

PRESIDENT'S SPEECH AT 2025 GFWC GREAT LAKES REGION CONFERENCE

Ohio Federation Members have a long and proud history of supporting our GFWC Affiliates, and I am pleased to report that these past two years have been no exception. Ohio clubs have stepped up to participate in several statewide and district-wide programs and projects that have supported our Affiliates.

One of our members from the Lake Erie District, Debi D'Apice, faithfully held a Walk for St. Jude every October in the park near her home, and always invited members from across the state to join. Following her unexpected passing in the spring of 2024, in July at our State Leadership Day, we held a statewide walk for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in her memory. This was well attended by many members, including having the pleasure of her husband and daughter attend to participate.

To highlight the addition of our new Affiliate, Alzheimer's Association, Ohio held district-wide Alzheimer's Walks at each of our Fall Conferences last year. Members made signs, painted and decorated pumpkins in purple themes, wore pins in support of family members, and provided information to all in attendance. These walks generated much-needed funds for Alzheimer's in each district. Alzheimer's was also the focus of a district-wide bake sale this past September by our Northeast District, with participation by all clubs in the district. To support this new affiliate, we had a very powerful workshop presentation on Alzheimer's at our State Convention that was helpful, moving, and educational to many.

At our 2025 GFWC Ohio Convention, we had a wonderful presentation by Bridget Murphy, an Ohio member who is also a Shot@Life Champion. At the end of her presentation, a challenge was made to our members to donate funds. By the end of the day, over \$1,600 had been raised, which included matching funds from one employer.



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OHIO



This fall, the focus of our statewide drive has been St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, with each district holding a Walk during their Fall Conference. At this point, we are nearing \$1,000 in donations from our members for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Clubs across Ohio are continuing to hold fundraisers, raffles, challenges and creative projects to raise awareness and support for Heifer, March of Dimes, Canine Companions, Hope for Justice, Operation Smile and UNICEF. Displays, speakers, and handouts are available for all members at our Ohio conventions, often including special canine visits from Canine Companions. They always steal the show!

Ohio members leave no stone unturned when it comes to raising funds for Affiliates. We are currently on track to surpass all Affiliate donations from the previous year. The support and dedication of GFWC Ohio members is greatly appreciated. ■

Esther Gartland

GFWC Ohio President 2024-2026

GFWC OHIO JENNIE AWARD NOMINEE

SUE HOVANEC

GFWC Ohio is proud to present Sue Hovanec, an outstanding nominee for the Jennie Award. She is recognized for her commitment as a clubwoman, community member, and devoted family matriarch. With thirty years of dedicated membership in her club, Sue's lifetime of service exemplifies the spirit of independence, courage, and persistence that the Jennie Award celebrates. She has significantly enriched her community through a wide array of activities.

Sue founded the "Taste of Austintown" event in 2007. This project has continued each year since its inception and has become a major fundraiser for her club, providing funds for many of their projects.

Sue spearheaded the collection of feminine products for hurricane and flood victims in lieu of a traditional Christmas exchange. Her environmental initiatives include a recycling project that collected 100 pounds of bottle caps that were used to build benches at schools and parks, and she helped establish a pollinator garden at Austintown Park. She has served on many committees including Scholarship and Bylaws.

As Co-Chair of the tree lighting ceremony for several years, Sue organized the baking and bagging of over 2,000 cookies each year, spreading holiday cheer. She also coordinated Samaritan Purse, Operation Christmas Child boxes, and supported food pantries. During Advocates for Children Week, Sue read to special needs children while engaging them in art projects.

Sue's creative spirit shines in projects like making cards for veterans on various occasions and organizing community events such as "Trunk or Treat" and "Trash or Treasure" to assist the Senior Center. She has raised awareness with the promotion of breast and ovarian cancer ribbons and pinwheels in the park.

Sue has prepared and delivered Easter baskets to nursing homes, promoted bike safety, assisted in park cleanups, supported soup kitchens, and provided holiday swags for local businesses. Sue's community outreach extends to domestic violence shelters, where she prepared and delivered purses filled with beauty products.

Sue contributes both professionally and as a volunteer. She serves on the Dive & Shore team for the Mahoning County Sheriff's Department and has advised the Austintown Middle School Ski Club for 17 years, earning the prestigious Ski Patrol Angel Award. Sue's commitment



to education is further demonstrated by the creation of the Lynn Kirk Aftercare Program.

Her volunteer work includes participation in PTA activities, environmental projects, and 911 community swags. She supported youth organizations such as Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, supported Doctors Without Borders, and organized fundraising for playground equipment at her church.

Sue is dedicated to her husband, children, and grandchildren. Her daughter Rebecca is a teacher, and her son Robbie is Deputy Commander of the Mahoning County Dive Team. Sue hosted three exchange students from Sweden, Argentina, and Venezuela and remains friends with them.

She is an active member of The Austintown Community Church. Her family history includes teaching children about primitive life and caring for her godmother through breast cancer. Currently, Sue cares for her 101-year-old aunt providing daily support. She was highly involved in her children's education through PTA and treasures time spent with her grandchildren and their new family dog.

Sue's lifelong dedication to club service, community involvement, and family care embodies the personal excellence and commitment that the Jennie Award honors. Her contributions and leadership reflect the highest ideals of a clubwoman, making her a truly deserving nominee for this recognition. ■

Esther Gartland

GFWC Ohio President 2024-2026

GFWC WISCONSIN FALL ACTIVITIES IN WISCONSIN

Nancy Niedziela, *GFWC Wisconsin Correspondent*

THE BEES OF WISCONSIN ARE WORKING TIRELESSLY FOR OTHERS

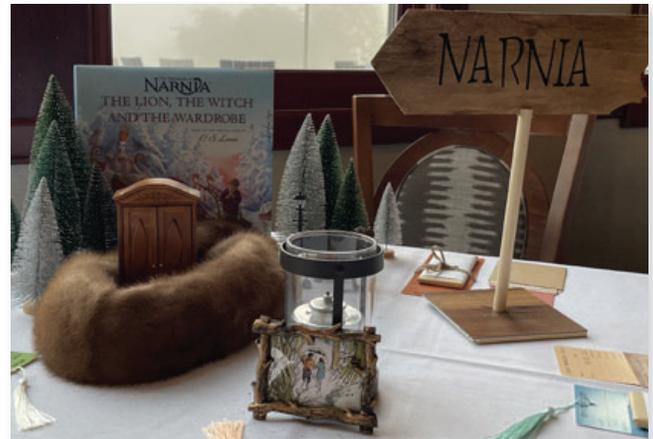
The 2025–2026 season in Wisconsin began with Beehive Chats. President Linda Brown asked each of the six district presidents of Wisconsin to prepare a 30-minute “Beehive Chat” on various aspects of GFWC leadership. Held on three separate nights in September, the topics included “A History of the GFWC,” LEADS, Membership, Environment, and Civic Engagement and Outreach. The sisters of GFWC-Wisconsin were sent a link to log into the three TEAMS meetings. Meetings were attended by members from across the state.

A highlight of the fall season was the Fall Workshop planned and executed by the Junior Clubs of Wisconsin. State Director of Junior Clubs, Missy Kimball, created the theme of “Books are Magic” based on her administration’s theme of “Bee a Reader.” Events began with a gathering at a local bookstore for a conversation night with an author where proceeds from book sales were donated. Members were also encouraged to purchase children’s books to be donated to Bernie’s Book Bank. This is a local nonprofit that collects books for children. It is well known that owning a book can open a world of opportunities for children. Books in a child’s home are the single biggest indicator of academic success – surpassing income, parents’ education, and all other factors. Attendees enjoyed tea, cocoa, and treats while purchasing many books to be donated.

The next day, sisters gathered in Oconomowoc for a full day of activity. As the event was held on the National Day of Service to prevent domestic abuse, the day featured workshops on human trafficking, a visit by a working drug seeking dog, and time for attendees to write cards of encouragement to be distributed at the Waukesha Woman’s Center, which provides safety, shelter and support to empower all those impacted by domestic abuse, sexual violence, child abuse and trafficking.

The “Books are Magic” theme of the day came to life in the spectacular table decorations for

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the luncheon. Director Kimball asked her club members to select a “magic” book and create a tablescape. She suggested “Alice in Wonderland,”

Harry Potter, “Neverland,” “The Wizard of Oz” and more. She then let the members’ imaginations run wild. The creativity of GFWC members was on display; one tablescape was more intriguing than the next; the detail and connection to scenes in the book was dramatic. Each attendee also received a 2025–2026 bookmark as a table favor. This was a spectacular and informative workshop. Members from all areas of the state were on hand to share ideas and sisterhood.

President Brown is working hard on preparing for her Snowflake Winter Board Meeting, to be held in February, which is open to all members, not just the board of directors. This meeting will feature a food drive, a service project for Women Veterans, and a continuation of the collection of new children’s books. Members are marking their calendars to be sure not to miss this weekend. Plans are also in the works for a unique Red, White, and Blue State Convention in Baraboo in April of 2026.

Wisconsin is also excited to host the Great Lakes Region Conference in October of 2026. We hope to see a record number of attendees witnessing the Magic of Fall in Wisconsin. Plans for great fun will include a visit to Ten Chimneys, the National Register historic estate of Broadway legends Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne. Those who visit, like guests of the Lunts, are welcomed into their extraordinary home without the fuss of ropes or barriers.

The tour celebrates the one-of-a-kind collection the Lunts amassed during their lifetimes, and honors the values found in every corner of their lives, both on the stage and in the house they called home for more than half a century. GLR members don’t want to miss this!

As you can see, the bees of Wisconsin are learning leadership skills, sharing great ideas and history, and spreading the pollen of community service throughout the state. ■

“Collaboration is the essence of life. The wind, bees and flowers work together, to spread the pollen.”

—AMIT RAY



GFWC WISCONSIN JENNIE AWARD NOMINEE MARY KAYE ERNEST

It is both an honor and a joy to introduce a woman who truly embodies the very best of GFWC — our GFWC-Wisconsin nominee for the Jennie Award, Mary Kaye Ernest.

For nearly five decades, Mary Kaye has been a shining example of leadership, compassion, and dedication — to her profession, her family, her church, her community, and to this organization we all love.

A proud graduate in Early Childhood Education, Mary Kaye devoted 36 years to the Milwaukee Public Schools, shaping the lives of countless young children. Whether serving as a substitute or leading her own kindergarten classroom, she approached every assignment with patience, creativity, and heart. Her colleagues knew that when a challenge arose, Mary Kaye was the one they could count on — always professional, always positive, always putting the needs of her students first.

Beyond the classroom, Mary Kaye's life has always been guided by faith and family. Together with her husband, Don, she has built a beautiful legacy of love and service — celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary this past year, cherishing their children, Darcy, Michael, Samantha and Christopher, and taking enormous pride in their five grandchildren.

Mary Kaye's devotion to family goes far beyond everyday care — it is rooted in compassion, loyalty, and selflessness. When her father passed unexpectedly, she helped her mother resettle in an assisted-living facility and made daily trips after her school days to visit her and ensure she never felt alone. She offered that same love to Grace, the mother of Don's first wife, visiting her daily and bringing her joy with small acts of kindness — a Brewers game on TV or a fresh coat of nail polish in her favorite color.

Her strength in difficult times has been a steady anchor for her family — whether supporting her brother through hardship or helping his grandson, baby Parker, grow up knowing the grandfather he never met. Also, when her oldest grandson prepared to attend college far from home, Mary Kaye welcomed him for a month, teaching him the independence and resilience he'd need to thrive.



And then, of course, there is her extraordinary service to GFWC. Mary Kaye has been a dedicated member for nearly fifty years — beginning with the Junior Woman's Club of Mequon-Thiensville and continuing through the Members-at-Large Club, where she now serves as President. She has held leadership roles at every level, from GFWC-Wisconsin Director of Junior Clubs and State President to Great Lakes Region President, and continues to give her time and talents nationally and internationally.

Her work revitalizing Wisconsin's Own Library, her thoughtful mentoring of fellow members, and her generous spirit — whether organizing, fundraising, or lending a helping hand — reflect the very essence of what Jennie June envisioned for women in service.

Mary Kaye doesn't just participate — she motivates and she inspires. She leads with humility, gives with joy, and serves with a heart as big as her smile.

So tonight, as we celebrate her as Wisconsin's nominee for the Jennie Award, we also celebrate the extraordinary woman she is — a teacher, a leader, a friend, and a role model for us all.

Please join me in honoring **Mary Kaye Ernest.** ■

Linda Brown, GFWC Wisconsin President

OFFICER REPORTS



GLR PRESIDENT

Rose Logston

GFWC GLR President 2024–2026



Report for November 2024 to November 2025:

- Prepared for and attended the GFWC Board of Directors meeting in Washington, D.C.
- Presented an invitation to attend the GFWC Great Lakes Region Conference to those attending the Board of Directors meeting.
- Had virtual meetings with some committees planning for the Conference, including the chairmen of various Michigan committees.
- Contracted COVID for the fourth time and was down for approximately ten days, so many planned meetings were put on hold or canceled.
- Made final preparations for the GLR Conference.
- Attended the GLR Conference in Michigan.
- Wrote an article for *GFWC News and Notes* about the Conference.
- Did additional site visits for the GLR Conference in Ohio in 2025.
- Prepared articles for the December 1st edition of *The Communiqué* and collected articles from others.
- Was honored to attend the GFWC Indiana Convention and was so impressed with the activity boards prepared by clubs in each district. I also enjoyed listening to the presentation regarding Goodwill, they are so much more than I thought.
- Proudly accepted an invitation to attend the GFWC Wisconsin Convention. One of the highlights of the time in Wisconsin was attending and graduating from their very well-organized and presented LEADS seminar. I encourage all who have the opportunity to attend, please do. It was unbelievable to see the statewide support of Heifer International. Plus, it was so much fun helping them with their innovative fundraising.
- Prepared for the GLR luncheon at the GFWC Convention, preparing programs, writing scripts, and confirming with other participants.
- Attended the GFWC Convention in Atlanta, GA, and lead the GLR luncheon meeting.
- After being in considerable pain since the latter part of March and it escalating during the GFWC Convention, and after visiting a GP, a dentist and having a molar removed, and three specialists, finally had a doctor agree to do a biopsy of a tumor on my tongue. It was cancer, so I was scheduled for surgery immediately. After four weeks recovery after removal of less than one half my tongue, was scheduled for additional surgery to remove many lymph nodes (a radical neck dissection). Reports were promising as no cancer was found in any of the nodes removed. Suffered a lymphatic breach during that surgery so recovery was delayed trying to stop the chyle leak.
- During the inactive period trying to stop the chyle leak without surgery, I worked on the program and details of the GLR Conference to be held in Ohio in October.
- Made arrangements to attend the GFWC Board of Directors meeting in Salt Lake City but after consultation with my doctors, I was advised not to travel and was scheduled for additional surgery due to the size of the tumor.
- Prepared the script for the invitation to the GLR Conference that I was to present at the meeting and shared it with Loretta Caron, GLR Vice-President.
- Worked with GLR Conference chairman and others regarding plans for the Conference.
- Held several remote meetings regarding the Conference plans.
- Attended a remote Executive Committee meeting in preparation of the Conference.
- Attended the Conference and from the feedback, all went well.
- Prepared for the next edition of the *GLR Communiqué*.
- Accepted invitations and excited to attend GFWC Illinois and GFWC Ohio conventions in the spring.

I sincerely thank all those who participated in both GFWC Great Lakes Region Conferences. Your

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participation made my job much easier and the Conferences successful.

It is a pleasure to work with the other officers, committee chairmen, and members of the GFWC Great Lakes Region. It is so nice to see and feel the enthusiasm offered by the GFWC appointees and all the Great Lakes Region appointees.

Special thanks to Jodi Hanson for sharing her many skills with us and preparing such an informative and attractive *Communiqué* with all.

I am so grateful for the friendship and encouragement given so freely by all of you. I appreciate each and every one of you – you have been so uplifting for me. Thank you! ■

GLR VICE-PRESIDENT

Loretta Caron

GFWC GLR Vice-President 2024–2026



Since the last *Communiqué* issue, I have:

- Communicated to the GFWC GLR “Great 8” their topic to present at the GLR semi-annual meeting in Atlanta, GA (“Pearls of Wisdom / Purses of Power”) and the GLR Fall Conference in Columbus, OH (how your state encourages/ supports the GFWC affiliates during your administration).
- Attended GLR EC meetings on June 1st and October 5th via Microsoft Teams.
- Attended the GFWC Board of Directors meeting and Regions/Vice-Presidents meeting in Atlanta, GA (June, 2025) and in Salt Lake City, UT (August, 2025).
- Attended the GFWC International Convention in Atlanta.
- Presented the GFWC GLR “Great 8” at the GLR semi-annual meeting and at the GLR Fall Conference.
- Attended orientation for incoming leaders at the GFWC International Convention.
- Worked on updating the commercial exhibitor application for the 2025 GLR annual conference.

- Worked on securing vendors for the GLR Fall Conference.
- Worked with GFWC-WI on site selection for the 2026 GLR annual conference and secured a location.

It was great seeing so many of you this past year as we celebrated wins, heard great speakers and enjoyed each other’s company. I look forward to seeing many of you out west at the end of June in Scottsdale, AZ. ■

GLR SECRETARY

Candee Godbee

GFWC GLR Secretary 2024–2026



Serving the Great Lakes Region as Secretary is an honor and I am pleased to have participated in various activities representing our region. I attended the semi-annual meeting at GFWC Convention in Lexington, KY, and our Annual Conference in Columbus, OH, recording the activities of both. I participated in two remote meetings of the Executive Committee and prepared the minutes from them. I have received the reports to file with the minutes from those presenting at the semi-annual meeting and annual conference minutes, which were sent to those appointed to approve them.

I attended incoming leader meetings at GFWC Convention in Lexington and at Great Lakes Region Conference with First Vice President Jolie Frankfurth and President-Elect Wendy Carriker, respectively.

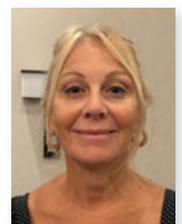
In addition to corresponding in Executive Committee emails, I have corresponded with Jolie and Wendy regarding the upcoming administration.

I look forward to continuing my responsibilities this administration and serving our dedicated members. ■

GLR TREASURER

Kathy Lewis

GFWC GLR Treasurer 2024–2026



Being in the second year of the current administration, I find myself feeling confident in my skills as your Great Lakes Region Treasurer. I wish I could tell you I was confident the first year, but the truth is serving as a treasurer or secretary of any

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organization is not in my wheelhouse. Nonetheless, I trusted that my GFWC region sisters would support me and ensure my success. Our region president, Rose Logston, was both patient and kind when requesting information regarding our finances, walking me through the information step by step.

I will be forever grateful to Rose and the executive committee for helping me to be comfortable with my new position. This is the true GFWC way, but often I feel we miss the mark on giving unconditional support and grace to those in new positions. Including and training new faces for leadership positions throughout GFWC is essential to our sustainability and future growth. Ask yourself if you encourage and lift future leaders, or do you sometimes judge and criticize them? We have all been guilty of this, but recognizing the behavior is the only way we can correct it.

I encourage each of you to strive to be a kind teacher, an amazing mentor, and a sensitive GFWC sister when you have the opportunity. I know the GLR executive committee has been that for me. I look forward to running for secretary for the next administration because I know they will not let me fail!

GLR State Presidents – thank you for promptly paying your dues! ■

GLR PARLIAMENTARIAN

Barbara D. Whitaker, PRP

GFWC GLR Parliamentarian 2024–2026



Since the installation of officers in June 2024, this officer has served as a consultant to the Region President and officers, assisting with the region’s annual meeting by reviewing the program with the

Region President and addressing issues concerning bylaws and protocol for states and clubs. She reviewed the region’s Standing Rules and submitted suggestions for amendments to the Standing Rules Committee. She attended the region’s executive committee meetings and participated in the GFWC Board of Directors’ meetings.

She continued her parliamentary education by attending virtual meetings of the Grapevine Parliamentary Electronic Unit, the Ohio Association of Parliamentarians, and the National Association of Parliamentarians, in order to better serve the membership.

She has submitted articles for publication in Ohio and the region, and has served as an advisor to the Wisconsin President in establishing the state’s parliamentary education project. She has reviewed the minutes of the region officers’ meetings and performed other duties as requested. In addition, she served as Parliamentarian Pro Tem for the 2025 GFWC Annual Convention.

She is available to assist state federations and clubs with parliamentary issues. Due to her work schedule, the best contact method is via email at gfwcglr@sbcglobal.net. It is an honor to be able to once again serve GFWC Great Lakes Region as Parliamentarian. ■

GLR TREASURER 2026–2028

Congratulations to Lisa Hedrick from GFWC Ohio, newly elected GFWC Great Lakes Region Treasurer for the 2026–2028 administration. ■



JENNIE AWARD – GFWC GREAT LAKES REGION FINALISTS



Dana, Mary Kay, and Sue, congratulations on your nominations as the Jennie Award winner from your states. We are all so proud of each of you and your many, many contributions to GFWC, GLR, and your communities.

All of the five nominees were very accomplished candidates, but only two could be sent to GFWC for further evaluation, and I know the choice of just two was very hard, but the committee selected Linda Clark and Karyn Charvat to represent Great Lakes Region.

Please know how much all of you are appreciated and wished many blessings. ■



A PERSONAL NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I am honored and proud to serve as the President of the GFWC Great Lakes Region and am available to help you in any way I can. As we celebrate the holiday season, please know how thankful I am for each and every one of you. It has been such a pleasure getting to know many of our members and seeing all the ways you make lives better, especially for those less fortunate. I hope each of you have great holidays and have the opportunity to spend time with your special ones. Enjoy each and every second of the time.

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

—MAYA ANGELOU

This is a reminder to make everybody around you feel as special as they are and above all be kind!

I cannot thank you enough for the prayers, concern, and beautiful cards you've shared with me. Each one has brought comfort and strength on days when I needed it most. What began as a frightening diagnosis and two unexpected surgeries has now turned into a story of gratitude and hope. This journey has had its share of challenges, but my most recent checkup brought good news—no further surgery is needed right now. With that relief, I feel ready to take a deep breath, let go of some of the anxieties, and begin moving forward again. Your love and encouragement have reminded me that even in hard times, blessings abound and friendships are priceless. I am grateful for each and every one of you. So many people could be named as so many worked for a long time to make this weekend a success, and if I tried to name them all I would invariably hurt someone's feelings. However, there are a few that I especially feel I need to acknowledge. Peggy Hickenbottom – for over a year she has worked with me almost daily trying to cover every detail. She also traveled many miles with me trying to find the perfect location for the Conference, and we hope the ones who attended found the accommodations comfortable. Carol Christy – for taking such organized care of all registrations, special requests, and money. She kept meticulous records and could always answer any question. To all those who donated to our fundraising efforts and to our very enthusiastic fundraising team – Karen Margala, Sandy Christofanelli, Lucy Devine, Marianne McCombs and Barbara Reardon – we cannot thank you enough. My aides have answered the call each year and baked, decorated, and then served as hostesses with a smile on their faces. Thank you, Pat Ketzell, Marjean Sizemore and Mary Beth Allan. Tammy Van Horn joined us this year and did a phenomenal job. Special thanks, too, to all the Ohio members who were so willing to do anything they could to make the weekend a success. ■

With love and friendship,
Rose Logston, GFWC Great Lakes Region President



RESOLUTIONS – NEW YEAR’S & OTHERWISE

By **Barbara D. Whitaker, PRP**, GFWC GLR Parliamentarian 2024–2026



Resolutions are not something invented by Henry Robert. They have been around for a long, long time. The earliest known resolutions date back to nearly 2000 BCE in Babylonia, when, during the twelve-day celebration called Akitu, they made promises to their gods, returned borrowed items, and paid debts, hoping for good fortune in the coming year.

The Romans later adopted the practice, and when Julius Caesar established January 1 as the beginning of the new year in 46 BCE, they made sacrifices to Janus (who looked both forward and backward), reflecting on past actions and setting intentions for the year ahead.

In Medieval times, knights renewed their vows of chivalry at the start of the new year, and early Christians adopted the practice of reflecting on the past year and making resolutions for self-improvement. John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church, created the Covenant Renewal Service in the 18th century. The term New Year’s Resolution first appeared in a Boston newspaper in 1813, indicating the practice was widely recognized. Today, millions of people make New Year’s Resolutions, mostly secular, setting goals for finances, health, and personal development.

What is a resolution? It is a formal record of decisions made, ensuring accuracy and accountability. **What are its components?**

Title: Clearly state the purpose of the resolution. For example, “Resolution to Create and Follow an Annual Budget.”

Date and Resolution Number: Include the resolution date and a unique tracking number. For personal resolutions, this may not be necessary; for organizations, it is essential for tracking.

Preamble (Whereas Clauses): Begin with “Whereas” statements that provide context or reasons for the resolution. Each statement should begin with “Whereas” and outline the background or rationale for the decision. These are not necessary, but they help explain why a resolution is created in the first place. Ideally, the number of preamble clauses should not exceed the resolved clauses.

Resolved Clauses: Use “Resolved” to introduce the specific actions or decisions being made. Each resolved

clause should clearly state what is being decided. For example: “Resolved, that the Board authorizes the purchase of a computer for the secretary in February, cost not to exceed \$1,500.” The word “Resolved” should be underlined or italicized.

FORMATTING GUIDELINES

Use Formal Language: Since resolutions are legal documents, maintain a formal tone throughout.

Clarity and Conciseness: Ensure that each clause is clear and to the point to avoid ambiguity.

Proofreading: Before finalizing, proofread the document to eliminate any grammatical or spelling errors. A resolution, no matter how long, is one sentence.

Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised, 12th edition, has a more detailed explanation in 10:9 to 10:26, but here’s the basic format:

Whereas, The... [text of the first preamble clause];

Whereas,... [text of the next to the last preamble clause];
and

Whereas,... [text of the last preamble clause];

Resolved, That... [stating action to be taken];

Resolved, That... [stating further action to be taken]; and

Resolved, That... [stating still further action to be taken].

Robert, Henry M.. *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised, 12th edition* (pp. 181–182). PublicAffairs. Kindle Edition.

Resolutions hold power within GFWC. No action, no project undertaken by GFWC may proceed without a resolution supporting it. Resolutions state what the Federation stands for. They are available in the Member Portal on the GFWC website. ■



CONTENT, PHOTOS & TECH...OH MY!

By **Jodi S. Hanson**, GFWC GLR Communiqué Editor/Graphic Designer 2024–2026



PREPARED FOR THE 2025 GFWC GREAT LAKES REGION CONFERENCE

Hello! My name is Jodi Hanson and I am the editor and designer of the *GFWC Great Lakes Region Communiqué*. Does everybody here read *The Communiqué*? No? You’ve all heard of *The Communiqué* though, right? No? Seriously? *The Communiqué* is the digital newsletter publication of the GFWC Great Lakes Region. It comes out four times a year and will keep you in the know about what your Great Lakes Region sisters have been up to, as well as providing important information about the Great Lakes Region conference and region banquets at the GFWC Convention. The easiest way to find *The Communiqué* is through the link on the GFWC Great Lakes Region Facebook page. That will take you to the GFWC Illinois website and you can download it from there. Your state president will also be able to e-mail a copy to you.

*[Editor’s note: Since you are reading this article, I am assuming you already know how to find **The Communiqué** online. Please pass the above information along to your non-techy friends.]*

Let’s talk about creating a newsletter article. Maybe it is your job to send me an article about your state federation for *The Communiqué*, or maybe you have been asked to write a short article for your state or club newsletter. Everybody is asked to contribute an article for a newsletter at some point in time. I am going to break down the process into three easy parts so you will be able to put together a winning article with ease!

CONTENT

Starting with content, choose a few activities or projects that you would like to focus on and write a paragraph or two about each. It is better to choose your very best projects or activities and give a little more information about each than to basically list everything you have done over the past four months. You will want to add enough interesting details that the event sounds really spectacular, without wasting time on details that are insignificant. For instance, your club had a purse auction and raised quite a bit of money. Rather than just writing:

“My club had a purse auction in September. It was a big success.”

How about writing instead:

“It was a beautiful fall day when our club had its second annual purse auction at the elegant Edgewood Country Club. The theme was the Roaring ‘20’s and everybody was dressed in their very best flapper dresses and pearls. Over 100 people attended and we raised almost \$800 that we plan to use to purchase bedding for the local homeless shelter. The top selling purse was a snazzy red number with a sparkly strap that went for \$100 and was generously donated by member Muffy Vanderpool. We will definitely have this fundraiser again next year, so start saving purses to donate now!”

Include a photo of that fancy red purse with the person who won it and the paragraph is done! Who wouldn’t want to attend THAT exciting fundraiser! This is your chance to really talk up your state’s events, so have fun with the writing experience.

PHOTOS

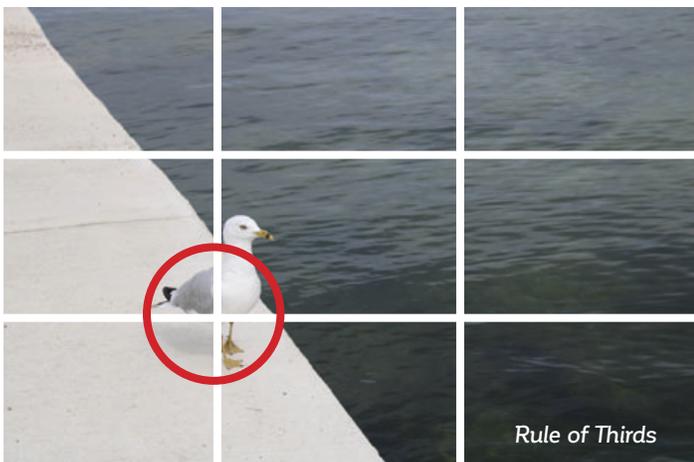
What about adding a photo or two? Photos are the icing on the cake that will help guarantee your article gets read. If possible, include at least one photo about each event. Studies have shown that most people read photo captions first and are more attracted to stories that have interesting photos. Photos are a graphic designer’s best friend. We use them to break up large expanses of text and make pages easy to read or skim. A page without photos looks boring and overwhelming to the reader and will often get skipped over.

Your photos should be as unique as your article. Avoid the “police lineup” photo where everybody is in a line looking straight ahead at the camera. Photos are much more interesting when people are in action. Going back to our purse auction, try to get a photo of the auctioneer holding up a purse for people to bid on. Or one of two or three ladies showing off their colorful new purses. Stick with only a few people per photo. Photos are not used large in newsletters, so the more people you squish into the frame, the smaller their faces get – and often they become unrecognizable.

So what type of photo files should you send with your article? You will probably shoot the photos

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yourself on your smart phone, which is perfectly acceptable. No fancy cameras needed here! JPEGs are the preferred photo file format and they are the type of file your phone generates. When taking the photos, always make sure they are in focus and that the setting is not too distracting or dark. Center your subject matter and do not cut off people's heads. Everybody knows that, right? But you also want to make an interesting composition. Putting one smiling lady in the center of the photo is boring and would be more interesting if she had two friends with her to help fill the frame. Practice using the "Rule of Thirds." Imagine your photo is divided into nine equal parts by two horizontal and two vertical lines. Place your main subject along these lines or at their intersections for a more dynamic and balanced composition. If photography is not your thing, make sure one of your friends is also taking photos and ask to use a few of their best shots.



TECH

The last thing I am going to address is technology. I wrote a full-page article about digital photography for the December 2024 issue of *The Communiqué*. If you would like to read that issue, it can be found online in several places, including the GFWC Illinois website under the "Publications" header. I am not going to go into all the details of what I talked about there, but I will give a few pointers about the technology of photo files.

When it comes to submitting photos to the newsletter designer, bigger is better! Always submit the largest image you have. If you are sending an image directly to the designer from your phone either via e-mail or text, you will want to select "actual size" or "high-quality image" when prompted. The designer can always downsize it to whatever size

they need, but once the resolution of the photo has been decreased, there is no way to get the pixel information back. Avoid pulling photos or graphics from a website or Facebook page. Those image files are usually low-quality and will only be able to be used very small before they become pixelated.

And here is something I see a lot. I know it is common practice, but resist the urge to embed photos in a Word document that you are preparing for the designer. These embedded photos are essentially useless to us. When you resize a photo to fit your layout, pixel information is deleted and the photo file size reduced. Why does this happen? Microsoft Word compresses the JPEG images in a document. This can be useful for reducing document file size, but it can also affect the quality of the images in the document, especially when the images contain text. A "fake" image in your Word document is not the same as the digital "source" image that lives on your computer. It may be reduced in size and could also have a different aspect ratio. By the time the graphic designer extracts that image and opens it in Adobe Photoshop, too much information has been lost for the image to be good quality. It is always best to send the original JPEG file from your phone or computer via e-mail. That will give the designer the best quality photo file to use.

You are almost finished! You have your Word document and individual photo files ready, along with a separate page of short photo captions that give a little extra information about each photo. "Short" being the most important word here. Now what? I always recommend e-mailing both the Word document and a PDF of the Word document to the designer. That way the designer can copy and paste the text out of the Word document, but can also see how you have it formatted in the PDF if there are questions about line breaks, bold or italic text, etc. Attach everything to your e-mail and hit "Send." Mission accomplished!

Great Lakes Region writers, I look forward to receiving your stories for future issues of *The Communiqué*! If anybody has any questions, I am always reachable at jshdesign@hotmail.com. Thank you for your time! ■

GFWC Great Lakes Region Conference 2025

October 10, 2025 | Columbus, Ohio



GFWC Great Lakes Region Conference 2025

October 10, 2025 | Columbus, Ohio





GFWC Great Lakes Region Conference 2025
October 11, 2025 | Columbus, Ohio



GFWC Great Lakes Region Conference 2025

October 12, 2025 | Columbus, Ohio



GFWC LEADS GRADUATES

At the Great Lakes Region Conference in Ohio, the GFWC LEADS graduates from the Great Lakes Region each gave a short presentation about their GFWC LEADS experience. Read what they had to say!

GFWC ILLINOIS

Lisa Flanigan

Good afternoon Federation Sisters,

I have never liked to stretch myself from what I know, being an accounting professional. I have had no problem volunteering to be a club or district Treasurer. Leading a meeting or serving as chair has never been within my comfort zone. But others have always seen something in me that I have never seen in myself; the ability to be a leader.

But that all changed for me when I attended my first GFWC convention in Louisville, Kentucky, in 2023. One of the speakers was Mariama Whyte, a performer, recording artist and motivational speaker. That day, she spoke about finding your voice. She slowly transformed during her speech from a scared little girl in a bathrobe holding a teddy bear to the performer she is today. Her motivational performance awoke something in me that day. It was no longer not me, BUT why not me?

GFWC LEADS Spinning Vision into Reality was an amazing experience. I enjoyed meeting the other candidates in Atlanta and learning about their own GFWC experiences living out the volunteer spirit. The GFWC Leadership Committee provided enriching content, offering practical tools, techniques, and concepts to enhance our leadership skills. My favorite tool was the folder that contained a wealth of knowledge. As I come across tools I think would be helpful, I add them to the back of the folder.

In closing, I would like to share a quote from one of my favorite people, Eleanor Roosevelt: "You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You must do the thing you think you cannot do."

Thank you. ■

Lisa Flanigan
GFWC Illinois LEADS graduate



GFWC INDIANA

Joan Cannon

I didn't know what I didn't know!

As I joined the other LEADS candidates and flipped through the class workbook, I had a sinking feeling that I didn't belong with the class.

As a behind-the-scenes-introverted-non-public-speaker who doesn't like to delegate, I felt that I didn't possess the skills or the confidence to take in the multiple areas of leadership and content outlined in the workbook.

Some topics were comfortable to me, others challenging. But with an enlarged group of fellow LEADS grads and new friends, I have a network from which to draw, to learn, to share with. With a notebook full of areas to continue to explore, I have a resource at my fingertips. I can't wait to practice these new skills.

What an exciting day! Thank you, GFWC Indiana, for the opportunity you gave me to represent Indiana. ■



GFWC MICHIGAN

Lisa Ball

My name is Lisa Ball and it was my honor and privilege to attend the LEADS training at the 2025 international convention representing Michigan.

Several LEADS ambassadors that encouraged me to apply for LEADS really talked up the experience, so I went down to Atlanta with pretty high expectations. And after attending the training, I can say that my expectations were exceeded. I met wonderful like-minded women who were looking for a way to enhance their capabilities and broaden their skills. We learned valuable lessons, including tips on public speaking, listening with empathy and conflict resolution. And the LEADS committee members were just as enthusiastic about being there as the candidates.



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GFWC LEADS GRADUATES

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The training topics were much more diverse than I expected. I thought there might be training on time management, teamwork and parliamentary procedures (which of course there were) but I didn't expect a presentation on Taking Care of Yourself. Key points in this topic were living healthy, doing one thing you enjoy every day, and regular doctor and dentist visits are things that can help keep us happy. And our happiness helps make us better leaders and better people. And how true that is!

Possibly the most impactful topic of the day for me was Developing Your Why. It gave me a chance to think about how I became involved with GFWC and how my why developed over time. In the summer of 2021, I had barely finished moving into my house (I still had so many boxes left to unpack) and I joined the Flushing Women's Club. I knew this house was my forever home and decided that I wanted a sense of community that I didn't have in our old house in our old city. I found what I was looking for and more with my club and my original why – to be involved in my community, developed into, “to inspire and empower women to volunteer their time and talents enabling us all to uplift our community.”

Overall, LEADS was the great day I hoped it would be. Being able to transform the knowledge I gained into practical application within my club and my state is not a gift I take for granted. I encourage everyone to discuss LEADS at your club meetings, making sure your membership is aware of what LEADS is and what it can offer them, a valuable leadership learning experience.

Thank you! ■

GFWC OHIO **Rae Jane Araujo**

Good morning, ladies. I had a wonderful time at my first national Convention and I want to thank GFWC Ohio for sponsoring me this year.

Of all the topics covered in our day-long training session — and there were many — I have to say that “Developing Your Why” was the one that touched me the most.



Why am I GFWC member? What's my elevator speech, if someone were to ask me that question?

The workshop brought up the following questions for us to ponder:

- Why we do what we do? We volunteer to help our communities.
- How we do it? We donate our time and money.
- What is it we do? One of the organizations my club has helped is Found House (a local homeless shelter).
- What's your cause? To help our communities become a better place to live.

The questions at the end this workshop were:

- Why do you volunteer? My answer was “to support my community.”
- What drives you to maintain your membership in GFWC? My answer was “the ladies in my club.”
- Why do you want to be a GFWC leader? My answer was “to help my club improve and thrive.”

I have developed my elevator speech and it is:

GFWC is a volunteer women's organization. We volunteers use our time and talents to make our communities a better place to live. And that's why I'm a member of GFWC.

I'd like you all to think about why you are a GFWC member and what is your elevator speech. ■

GFWC WISCONSIN **Sandra Potter**

Our class was particularly close. I credit it to the fact that many of us met on Facebook prior to meeting in person in Atlanta. From the moment we met in President Suellen Brazil's suite on Thursday evening through class on Friday, we became not only friends, but support and encouragement for each other as well.



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GFWC LEADS GRADUATES

(continued from page 28)

So here is my story about my new friend. At my table was the LEADS representative from Illinois, Lisa Flanigan. As we talked and were getting to know each other, we found out that we both grew up in the same area of Wisconsin and graduated from high schools within the same school district. That connection created a friendship that we have continued.

The nice thing about having all these newfound friends from class is that we now have more resources. Aside from the many GFWC resources and our club sisters in our District, State, and Region, we now also have club sister contacts throughout the country to call on when we have questions or need help.

Getting back to our training, it was a full day of learning. The Leadership Committee touched on many aspects of leadership. Among the topics we covered were public speaking, advocacy, organization, time management, teamwork, and others. We learned

how GFWC works to strengthen communities through the community service programs.

Of the topics we covered, the one I felt we needed more information on was conflict resolution. We all have conflict in our lives, and in our clubs. However, since our class, I've been watching various leaders. I have come to realize that while conflict resolution is important, communication is at the core of resolving conflicts. In watching people, I have noticed that people do not always clearly communicate. Sometimes, they do not communicate at all. Along with communicating is listening with an open mind. Listening carefully and communicating clearly tends to get the facts sorted out. If done well, I have seen that a satisfactory resolution can be established.

In the end, the class was a starting point. We have all picked up various nuggets of information, and from here we can build on it and hopefully become effective leaders. I want to thank the 2024–2026 GFWC Leadership Committee for sharing their knowledge with us so we can continue our leadership journeys. ■



2025 GFWC Great Lakes Region LEADS graduates, from left: Rae Jane Araujo from Ohio, Sandra Potter from Wisconsin, Lisa Flanigan from Illinois and Lisa Ball from Michigan. Not pictured: Joan Cannon from Indiana.

GFWC LEADS APPLICATION



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**GENERAL FEDERATION
OF WOMEN'S CLUBS**

GFWC Leadership Education and Development Seminar (LEADS)

The GFWC Leadership, Education, and Development Seminar identifies GFWC members at the local level who have the potential and desire to assume leadership positions in their State Federations and/or GFWC on the national level. Participation in GFWC LEADS can help up-and-coming leaders gain the capabilities, confidence, and commitment necessary to pursue and achieve higher offices and serve with distinction.

GFWC LEADS is typically held annually on the day prior to the official opening of the GFWC Annual Convention. The program may include the following:

- Overview of public speaking, time management, vision casting, and conflict resolution.
- Explanation of GFWC resources, materials, and assistance.
- Outline of GFWC policies, parliamentary procedure, and protocol.
- Discussion of tips and techniques for pursuing personal growth and developing leadership opportunities.

Application Process and Deadline

Each State Federation and International Affiliate may select one LEADS attendee annually.

LEADS Candidate: Return this form, along with two letters of support from active GFWC club members, to your State Federation by the state application deadline. If your state has a form, use that instead.

State or International Affiliate Leadership Chairman or President: Your chosen LEADS Candidate's application form (page 2 or similar, containing contact information) and photo is due to GFWC Second Vice President Mary Beth Williams (MBWilliams@GFWC.org) and GFWC Leadership Chairman Ann Landis (alandis@ec.rr.com) by the March 15 deadline. Thank you!

State and District LEADS Programs

States and Districts are encouraged to hold a LEADS program to identify and develop strong potential leaders prepared to assume club, District, and State Federations leadership positions. By implementing a well-designed LEADS event, the leadership gap of some experience will be addressed, and the talent and enthusiasm of a trained, confident group of volunteers will be more effectively used. The individual member, as well as our organization and communities, will benefit. State leadership can determine when the State Federation or District LEADS program is best conducted. The GFWC Leadership Committee can assist State and District leaders in creating half- and full-day events using materials available in the toolkit. States may choose to select one participant from their own LEADS program to attend GFWC LEADS.

GFWC LEADS APPLICATION

GFWC Leadership, Education and Development Seminar (LEADS) APPLICATION FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Club: _____ District: _____

Year: _____

Please conceal applicant's identity during selection deliberation

Please answer the following questions in as much detail as possible:

(Attach a separate sheet of paper if more space is needed)

List all local club offices and/or chairmanships held: _____

List all District offices and/or chairmanships held: _____

List GFWC club/District programs/projects in which involved: _____

List positions at the District, State Federation, and/or national level in which you are interested: _____

Are you willing to:

- Cover costs to attend GFWC LEADS not covered by GFWC or state? Yes No
- Share what you have learned at LEADS with your state's members? Yes No

Return this form, along with two letters of support from active GFWC club members, to your State Federation by the application deadline. State Federations submitting their candidate information to GFWC Second Vice President Mary Beth Williams and GFWC Leadership Chairman Ann Landis do not need to attach the letters of support.

GFWC LEADS APPLICATION

Criteria for LEADS Participation

It is highly recommended that each State Federation or International Affiliate LEADS candidate meet the following criteria:

- Demonstrates leadership capabilities at the club level as an active club president, club officer, or club project or committee chairman.
- Exhibits a commitment to the Federation.
- Exhibits an understanding of the GFWC mission of community service, illustrated by programs and projects in which she is or has been involved.
- Demonstrates leadership characteristics, including, but not limited to, organization, responsibility, trustworthiness, enthusiasm, and flexibility.
- Exhibits an interest in and willingness to pursue higher leadership positions in GFWC.
- Agrees to share information gained from participation in LEADS with others in the State Federation.
- Understands and accepts potential expenses involved in participation.
- Has not held elected positions at or beyond the state level (this criterion is recommended in order to encourage potential leaders at the club level to apply).
- Has not attended a previous LEADS program. Members are eligible to attend only once.
- Agrees to make every effort to attend the Fall GFWC Region Conference to report on their LEADS experience.
- Must be a member of a per capita dues paying club, or a delegate of an International Affiliate as noted below.

EXPENSES

GFWC demonstrates its commitment to training leaders by funding a portion of the expenses of candidates who are members of per capita dues paying clubs. State Federations may consider underwriting a portion of an attendee's expenses. LEADS candidates are asked to be responsible for a portion of their expenses as an affirmation of their personal commitment to the leadership development and training. LEADS participants are responsible for making their own travel and lodging arrangements.

State Federation attendees:

- Travel and lodging stipend of \$325.00.
- Lunch during the LEADS program (no registration fee is required).

Checks will be distributed to candidates upon completion of the seminar.

International Affiliates:

One attendee from each International Affiliate is welcome to apply and participate in LEADS at a cost of \$60.00, the GFWC stipend for travel and lodging allowance do not apply.