

**\$2.00**

# **FACT PACK FOR MEMBERS**



NJSFWC Headquarters

**NEW JERSEY STATE FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S CLUBS OF GFWC**

# ABC'S OF FEDERATION

- AC - Affiliate Club
- CARE - Cooperative American Relief Everywhere
- CIP - Community Improvement Program
- CSP - Community Service Program
- DVP - District Vice President
- EMD - Evening Membership Department
- ESO - Epsilon Sigma Omicron  
*(Continuing Education Reading Program)*
- GCI - Girls' Career Institute
- GFWC - General Federation of Women's Clubs
- HOBY - Hugh O'Brian Youth Fund
- KAB - Keep America Beautiful
- MAL - Member-at-Large
- MAR - Middle Atlantic Region
- NJSFWC - New Jersey State Federation of Women's Club
- SO - State Organization
- SSP - Special State Project
- WC - Woman's Club

## FEDERATION HISTORY

There had always been religious organizations for women who had banded together for charitable and missionary work. Women also worked in groups as auxiliaries to men's organizations as early as the 1820's, and fostered cultural activities in frontier communities. By the 1830's, there were attempts in the northeast by women to affect community life. These were stirred up by efforts to eliminate prostitution and were led by female moral reformers. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, a handful of women were beginning to organize on behalf of Women's Suffrage. For many women, this idea was too radical and the proponents too strident. An alternate approach was desired.

In March 1868 a newspaper writer, Jane Cunningham Croly, who wrote under the pen name "Jenny June," was refused admission, because she was a woman, to a dinner given by the Press Club of New York honoring the visiting Charles Dickens. Her indignation was such that she interested some of her friends in forming a club for women, which was named "Sorosis" – a collective fruit formed by the union of many flowers. Sorosis was not the first Woman's Club in existence, but is always referred to as the "Mother Club."

Early clubs usually were comprised of women with interests in common. Programs were literary in character, designed to educate and cultivate self-improvement. Founders of the club movement – Jane Cunningham Croly, Charlotte Wilbur, Julia Ward Howe, and Caroline Severence – envisioned something more meaningful and far-reaching than just the formation of study clubs and literature classes. By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the movement had gained in scope and momentum. Clubs served to meet the pressing needs of the women of the day and became the vehicle for independence and self-determination – a way of earning women the right to an education, the right to work, the right to manage finances, the right to own property, and the right to vote.

By 1890, there were 97 women's clubs in existence and their representatives were invited to a meeting in New York to create a permanent organization. GFWC – the General Federation of Women's Clubs was born. The first president of GFWC was Charlotte Emerson Brown of Orange, NJ. Ella Dietz Clymer, President of Sorosis, first stated the GFWC motto, "Unity in Diversity" in 1889. She stated, "We look for unity, but unity in diversity. We hope that you will enrich us by your varied experience."

The establishment of a permanent headquarters was considered in 1920. Agnes Schermerhorn, former NJ President and GFWC Second Vice President, was appointed chairman of a committee to establish a headquarters in Washington DC. She located a beautiful, historic site and began fundraising for its purchase. Our national headquarters is located on N Street in Washington DC.

Causes for which GFWC members have worked are many. GFWC was largely responsible for the first Child Labor Law, enactment of the 8-hour workday, and the creation of the Pure Food and Drug Act. GFWC Clubs are responsible for 75% of the

country's public libraries, and the formation of the National Park system. Today the General Federation of Women's Clubs is the oldest and largest non-denominational, non-partisan organization of women volunteers in the world, with 100,000 members in affiliated clubs in every state and more than a dozen countries.

The NJSFWC of GFWC was born on November 16, 1894 when approximately 150 women representing 36 clubs met in Union Hall in Orange, NJ. Before the day had ended, a constitution and bylaws had been written and adopted and officers elected. Margaret T. Yardley was the first president. By 1897, the first state Yearbook had been published listing five departments. It was during the 1902-04 administration clubs were first asked to send reports of their work to the Federation so that the information could be used to aid other clubs. By 1906, the Federation had grown to such an extent that it became necessary to reconstruct the organization by forming districts. Ten District Vice Presidents were appointed. Re-districting took place several times. The most recent, in 2006, resulted in 8 Districts that were re-named from their previous numerical designation. In 1911, "A Collect for Clubwomen," written by Mary Stewart, was read at the semi-annual meeting of the Federation. This, as revised, became the official collect, or prayer, for all federated meetings. The NJ Junior Membership was organized in 1923, the Evening Membership in 1937, and Junioresettes in 1948.

The NJFWSC is one of the few state Federations to have its own Headquarters building. It is centrally located in New Brunswick on the Douglass Residential College campus. Prior to 1959, the NJSFWC of GFWC met in Newark in any building where they could obtain a room. Then, in 1959, the Federation moved to a four-room suite in the Griffith Building where, for the first time, records could be stored. In 1964, a committee met to formulate plans for the establishment of a new headquarters, and it was suggested that fundraising be accomplished through redemption of trading stamps. In 1964, the final approval for leasing the land was granted by the Rutgers trustees. Fundraising began in earnest, and each club appointed a stamp chairman. The building was formally dedicated at 2pm on May 1, 1966. The collection of trading stamps had raised half the funds for the building.

The achievements of the NJSFWC of GFWC have been many, including the founding of the New Jersey College for Women, now called Douglass Residential College. In 1912, a committee was formed to establish a college for women. Mable Smith Douglass traveled the state endlessly on behalf of the Federation and was finally rewarded when the NJ College for Women opened. Mrs. Douglass became its first Dean and the College was later renamed for her. Since its beginning, the state Federation has donated over \$1,000,000 to Douglass in the form of scholarships and large donations for buildings.

The Federation is also responsible for the preservation of the Palisades. Commercial interests were building on the Palisades and our Federation members were incensed. They traveled to Trenton where the legislators thought they were going to read poetry to them; rather, they spoke passionately about the need to keep the Palisades in their natural condition. As a result of our work, and the work of others, the Palisades Interstate Park Commission was formed and a permanent tribute to the Federation in

the form of a small monument stands along the Palisades. NJSFWC is also responsible for keeping billboards off all state highways.

Our greatest fund raising achievements have been reflected in our state projects, with all of our clubs working toward a common goal. Examples of these projects include the Valerie Fund when \$226,658 was raised; Canine Companions for Independence, raising almost \$190,000; the Community Food Bank of New Jersey and its statewide affiliates, contributing \$140,000. Cash and in-kind services totaling more than \$600,000 were raised to support New Jersey's domestic violence shelters and their client families. Recent state projects include Autism New Jersey, Gilda's Club/Wellness Communities, and Family Promise. The New Jersey State Federation of Women's Clubs of GFWC is the oldest and largest organization of women volunteers in the state with over 7,500 members in women's clubs, juniorette clubs, and evening membership departments.

Women's clubs throughout history have been derided by those not in them as a bunch of women wearing white gloves sitting around drinking tea. Just the opposite is true. Each of us who is a member now has inherited a history of activism, on the community, state, national, and international level. Now well into our second century of community service, we can look back with pride at what we have accomplished.

# BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

## ***For Individuals:***

Broader contacts and viewpoints – The exchange of projects and ideas on a district, state, and national/ international level provides a wealth of information to members.

Avenues for worthwhile service – Every member contributes her individual efforts. The combined force of members on the club, district, state, and national/ international levels demonstrates “strength in unity.”

Opportunities for stimulation and growth – Special programs, club projects and personal contact are open to all and provide the basis for developing valuable interpersonal and leadership skills, which can easily be translated to the job market.

Opportunities to mold public opinion – Our united efforts provide a greater impact on important issues than individual voices would be able to provide on their own.

Opportunities to make contacts within the community – Service through a federated club gives each member the avenue to make contacts with community leaders and to meet other women with similar interests. Members experience fun, sisterhood, and most important of all, lasting friendships based on mutual respect and shared experiences.

Individual development – Freedom to be yourself and develop personal and leadership skills, without having to be labeled as someone’s wife, mother, or employee. Many women credit their Federation experiences with developing skills that have opened the door to new jobs.

## ***For Clubs:***

GFWC and NJSFWC of GFWC can be viewed as the “professional organizations” for volunteer women. Federation is the network of support that exists to help you and your club better serve your community. Virtually every profession has a national and state organization behind it to look after and protect its interests. GFWC and NJSFWC of GFWC are there for the benefit of each individual club, as well as each individual member.

Additionally, your club may benefit from any of the following services provided by Federation:

Liability Insurance – NJSFWC of GFWC offers low cost liability insurance to their members clubs. Currently, NJSFWC Clubs may become part of the Federation’s liability policy for less than \$170 a year, and receive \$2 million coverage. This includes all special events that would normally be held by a club.

Federal Tax Exemption – NJSFWC of GFWC has a Group Letter of Exemption under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. Once a year, member clubs have the opportunity to become part of this group.

State Sales Tax Exemption – Once your club has become federally tax-exempt under section 501(c)3 of the IRS Code, the club is eligible for state sales tax exemption. Once the club has state sales tax exemption, it never again has to pay sales tax on items purchased for club use in New Jersey. This includes meals the club holds in restaurants.

Charity Registration and Investigation Act – According to New Jersey Law, every non-profit organization that collects money from the public must be registered with the state. The NJSFWC of GFWC removes the burden of paperwork from individual clubs (with income over \$10,000 and under \$25,000) by registering for them.

Shared projects and goals – Throughout our history there have been many examples of clubs banding together to work toward a common goal. The collective results of these efforts have increased the status of each individual club.

Leadership and Membership Assistance – Each club can benefit from the opportunities for membership promotion and leadership training provided by the Federation. The Federation also has instructional written material available to each club on a wide variety of topics. The State Federation will always provide an officer or a State Board member to come to a meeting when a club needs assistance, or would like information on a specific topic.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS**

Club presidents receive information and reservation forms for all upcoming events sponsored by the NJSFWC of GFWC or GFWC. Some of the events held yearly are as follows:

**Achievement Day** may or may not be held in conjunction with Spring Conference. Club members enter their personal handiwork, floral arrangements, and plants they have grown in District-wide contests. The categories of the contests are determined yearly by the State Chairmen of the Arts/Creative Community Service Programs (Departments) and the Conservation Community Service Program (Department). The winning entries from each District go on to compete on a statewide level at Convention.

**Convention** – Both NJSFWC of GFWC and GFWC hold yearly Conventions. The annual Convention is the official business meeting of the organization. As many members as choose to may attend Convention, but the number of those members that are official delegates is dictated by the bylaws of the organization. In addition to business meetings, Conventions offer workshops, banquets, and many learning opportunities.

**District Councils** are held in June, September, January, and April. Every member is invited to attend, and it is hoped that each club will have at least one representative. State and District Chairmen bring useful information to each Council meeting, and written materials are distributed.

**State Fall Conference** is held annually, usually in October. There are several speakers to entertain and inform the members, membership awards are given out, and a meal is enjoyed.

**Leadership Institute** is held every other year, usually in March. This special day at Headquarters is provided for incoming and continuing club presidents. Members of the state Executive Committee explain various aspects of club leadership, and written material on many topics is distributed.

**Middle Atlantic Region Conference** – GFWC divides the country into eight regions. New Jersey belongs to the Middle Atlantic Region, along with Pennsylvania, New York and Delaware. Every year a region conference is held in one of the four states. There are informative workshops and other learning experiences, as well as visits from the GFWC International President and the GFWC President-elect.

**Performing Arts Festival** – Club members entertain other District members with their talents. There are group skits, individual and group singing, serious or comic readings, musical and acting performances.

**Program Assistance Day** is held yearly in each District. Each club shares information about the programs they have held at their club meetings, and tell whether the program was worthwhile or not.

**Public Issues Day** is almost always held the fourth Monday of March. Several invited speakers inform our members, and answer members' questions. Speakers often include state officials, and heads of state agencies. Proceeds from the day are given to the Political Science Scholarship.

**Spring Conference** – the April District Council Meeting is designated Spring Conference and includes club presidents' reports, a keynote address from the state President or First Vice President, a luncheon and awards.

**Women of Achievement** is co-sponsored with Douglass Residential College of Rutgers, The State University. A group of outstanding New Jersey women, as selected by a committee of Douglass and NJSFWC of GFWC Representatives, is presented. Each woman is given the opportunity to speak about her area of experience, and is presented an award for her achievements.



## HOW IT ALL WORKS...

Each local club is autonomous. The only absolute obligation a local club has to Federation is to pay per capita dues yearly. Each club elects its own officers, and chooses its own programs and projects.

Each club or EMD belongs to one of the nine Districts in the State Federation. While Districts vary in number of members, number of clubs, and geographic area covered, they all operate in a similar way. A Vice President, affectionately known as the DVP (District Vice President), represents each District on the NJSFWC State Board. She presides at the four District Councils held yearly, and at all other District events.

The governing body of the state federation is the Board of Directors. The officers and community service program chairmen of the Board of Directors are elected by the Convention delegates in the even-numbered years. The officers are the President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Third Vice President, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, the eight District Vice Presidents and Evening Membership Department District Chairman. The state Community Service Program chairmen are the chairmen of Arts/Creative, Arts/Performing, Conservation, Education, Home Life, International Outreach, and Public Issues. There are also approximately nineteen chairmen appointed by the state President each year. Club members are always welcome to contact any State Board member with questions, problems, or request for information.

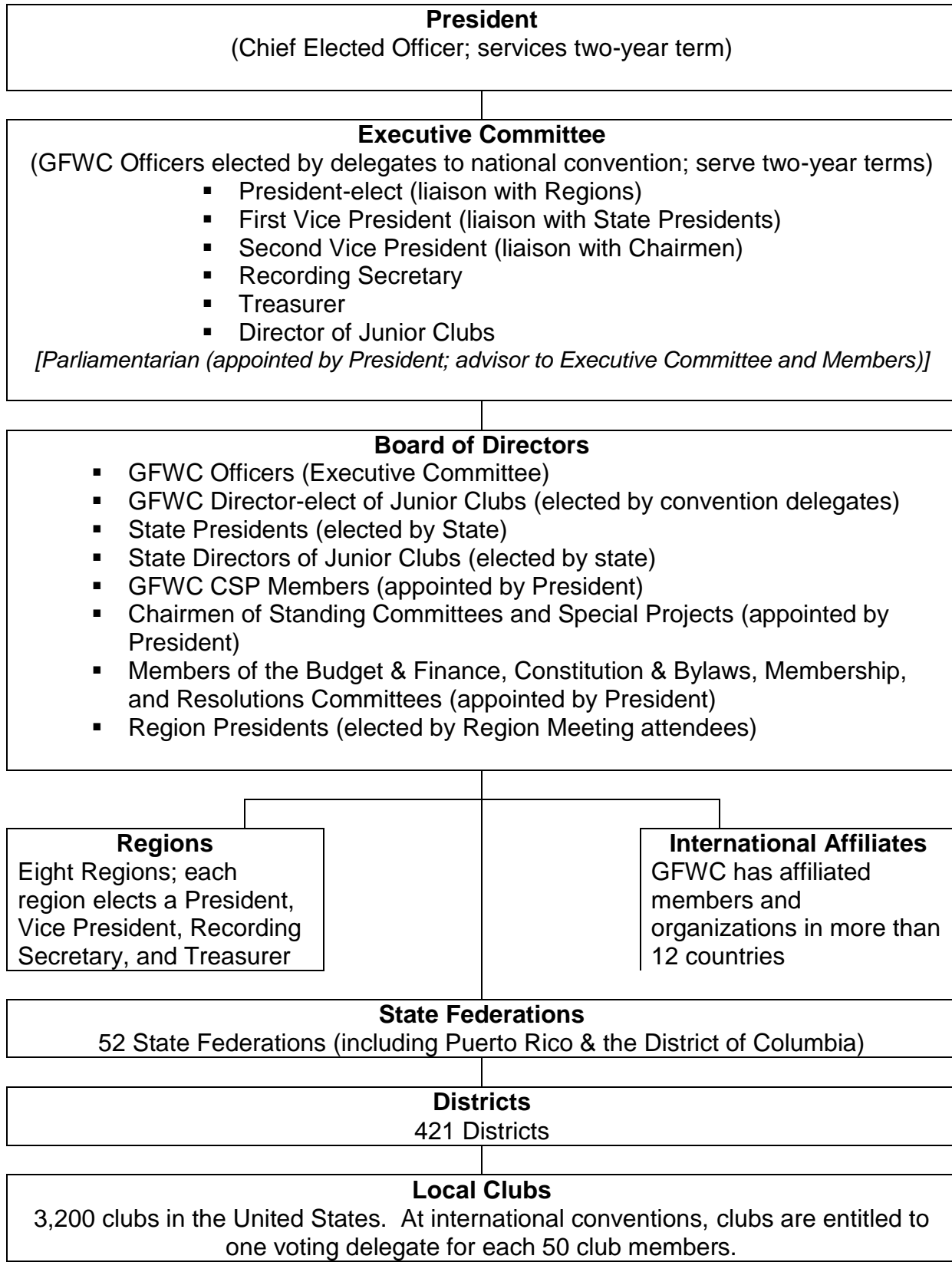
The State Board meets monthly, except July and August, at Federation Headquarters in New Brunswick, NJ. At each meeting, Board members report to the Board and Federation business is conducted.

The NJSFWC of GFWC holds universal membership in the General Federation of Women's clubs (GFWC). This means that if anyone who joins NJSFWC automatically belongs to GFWC.

The governing body of GFWC is the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors consists of the officers, all state Presidents, all state Directors of Junior Clubs, and appointees. There are 7 officers of GFWC, elected by delegates at Convention in the even-numbered years. These officers are International President, President-elect, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, and Director of Junior Clubs. The GFWC Board of Directors meets twice a year, once at Convention and once at a Board Meeting.

Both NJSFWC of GFWC and GFWC CSP and Committee Chairmen plan a suggested group of projects for each administration. These project ideas are sent to each club president at the beginning of each administration. Clubs then choose whether or not to participate in one or more of the suggested projects. There are so many projects suggested, it would be impossible for any club to do every single one suggested. Each club may choose those projects that interest the club membership.

# GFWC ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE



## Past State Projects

Over the years, clubs throughout the state have banded together with a common goal of raising funds and public awareness for a variety of State Projects. Many clubs continue to support these organizations after the State Project has ended. Some recent projects are:

**Family Promise** – The 2012-2014 State Project, Family Promise, mobilized communities to help homeless families and provides people with a way to address a national problem locally in their own communities. The money raised for Family Promise through the State Project was earmarked to open affiliates in New Jersey counties where none existed.

**Gilda's Club/Cancer Support Community** - During 2010-2012, NJSFWC clubs donated a total of \$205,181 in cash and in-kind donations to the Gilda's Club/Cancer Support Community and made a difference in the lives of those affected by cancer.

**Autism New Jersey** - In addition to fundraising, club members worked with families and organizations in their communities to assist those affected by Autism. Over \$50,000 in cash and in-kind donations was raised in support of Autism New Jersey in 2008-2010.

**Domestic Violence Awareness** - One goal of the 2006-2008 State Project was to raise public awareness about Domestic Violence, as well as encourage members to initiate service projects to benefit Domestic Violence Shelters in their communities. On Make A Difference Day alone, club members throughout the state met and assembled 767 First Night Kits, 720 Birthday Bags, 1,118 Anger Kits and 1,666 Bedtime Snack Sacks, which were donated to local shelters.

**The Community Food Bank of New Jersey** and its state-wide affiliates were the focus of the 2004-2006 State Project and were the recipients of \$140,000 in cash and in-kind donations.

**Canine Companions for Independence** - The goals of the 2002-2004 State Project were to increase awareness of assistance dogs, raise funds to support the growing need for Canine Companions, and help children and adults with disabilities achieve greater independence. Puppy raisers were recruited, items were donated to CCI and almost \$190,000 was raised.

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The NJSFWC of GFWC prints its newsletter, the ALMANAC, eight times a year. The ALMANAC includes federation news, CSP and committee information, news of special events and needed forms. Each club president receives a free copy, and is expected to share the information with her club members. Any member may purchase her own subscription to the ALMANAC. For information about purchasing the ALMANAC, members should call the NJSFWC Headquarters office. The ALMANAC is available on the Federation Website.

GFWC publishes CLUBWOMAN magazine four times a year. The latest CSP and committee information, news from around the federation, and project ideas are included in each issue. Each club president receives a free copy of this informative publication, and every member may choose to purchase a subscription. Information about new subscriptions is in every issue of the magazine or on the GFWC website. News & Notes is emailed weekly and members can join the GFWC Facebook page.

### NEW JERSEY STATE FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S CLUBS OF GFWC



Official Flower: Lily of the Valley

Official Colors: Continental Blue & Buff

Official Symbol: A badge in the shape of a shield with a plow, a rising sun, the word UNITY, and the letters NJSF

Office: 55 Labor Center Way, New Brunswick 08901

Telephone: (732) 249-5474

Fax: (732) 249-8822

Website: [www.njsfwc.org](http://www.njsfwc.org)

Email: [njsfwc@njsfwc.org](mailto:njsfwc@njsfwc.org)

### GENERAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S CLUBS



Official Flower: Red Rose

Motto: Living the Volunteer Spirit

Office: 1734 N Street, NW  
Washington DC 20036

Telephone: (202) 347-3168

Fax: (202) 835-0246

Website: [www.gfwc.org](http://www.gfwc.org)

Email: [gfwc@gfwc.org](mailto:gfwc@gfwc.org)