



CELENE POST  
GFWC PUBLIC ISSUES  
COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM CHAIRMAN  
NEWSLETTER #2  
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**HELLO LADIES AND FRIENDS IN GFWC!**

With the Holidays behind us, I hope you are enjoying the thought of spring and warmer weather. However, looking at the national weather reports, we might be needing our scarves and gloves a bit longer!

Many thanks to those of you who participated in the Martin Luther King national day of service. Whether your project was under Public Issues or any one of our GFWC Community Service Programs or GFWC Special Program areas, I know cities and towns across the country benefited from your volunteer service activities.

For this newsletter, we are going to focus on **SAFETY and CRIME PREVENTION**. Safety covers a wide variety of topics....let's look at a few of them.

**Safety in the Home – Is your home**

**“Accident Prone?”** Develop a Checklist to include:

1. Are extension cords in good condition?
2. Do you know how to turn off water, gas and electricity in case of emergency?
3. Are floor surfaces non-skid?
4. Are fireplaces screened and protected?
5. Do you have working smoke detectors?
6. Do you have approved fire extinguishers on each floor – does everyone know how to use it?
7. Are your emergency phone numbers – police, fire, utilities - near the phone?
8. Are firearms unloaded, locked up, out of the reach of children?
9. Keep poisons and medicines out of reach and **locked** away with child-proof locks.

Review your list with family members on a regular basis.

## **Safety on the Road – ARRIVE**

**ALIVE!** 1 in 3 collisions is estimated to be linked to cell phone use. Drivers using a cell phone fail to see 50% of what's in front of them...meaning they may never notice stop signs, traffic signal changes or pedestrians. 4.6 seconds is how long (on average) your eyes leave the road when you send or receive a text behind the wheel. What can you do? Educate your members to do the following:

1. Switch your phone to airplane mode! We have all seen drivers checking their phones at a stoplight. Don't get into that habit! It takes your brain 20 seconds to reorient/focus on the road.
2. Keep your hands off your car's hands-free features. Car interiors now look like cockpits, with voice activated controls and options. You can dictate texts and make dinner reservations while you cruise the highway. There's a limit to how much our brain can process while we are driving.
3. Listen to books and music. Audiobooks, music – on the radio or your favorite CD's doesn't demand as much from the brain. Sing along to Jimmy Buffett or Celine Dion and arrive safely.
4. Know what to do when you are behind the wheel and you hear the boom of a tire blowout.

## **Safety for Children, Teens and Senior Citizens**

1. Promote Trick or Treat safety and organize a "Trunk or Treat" event in your community or neighborhood. Families park their cars and open their car trunks for trick or treaters.
2. Don't Drink and Drive – distribute stickers to local florists to be affixed to corsage boxes for spring/fall proms. Sticker message – "Think of your future. Think of your date. Now think before making a fatal mistake. Don't drink and drive."
3. Develop a car safety program that alerts Emergency Personnel to pertinent information in case of a car accident leaving the driver unconscious. Ex: a red dot in the back window alerts Emergency Medical Technicians to look for an envelope with a red X or red dot in the glove compartment that contains medical and emergency information regarding the driver/passengers.
4. Do you know seniors living in your community who live alone? Organize a senior reassurance program. Make a list of those individuals who could use a call every day to make sure they are okay. If no response, the volunteer contacts the person's emergency contact and/or dispatches fire or police help.

## **Crime Prevention – Your property, Your Community, Yourself**

1. Is your house an easy target? Educate your members at what can attract – and deter – thieves.
2. Invite members of the police department to speak at your meetings on how to protect your home.
3. Check with local schools – do they provide education on Stranger Danger for students? If not, work with the schools to see if they would allow policemen to provide a program for the students.
4. Work with your local agencies and other organizations on solving common problems.
5. Set up a Neighborhood Watch, working with police. Make sure your streets and homes are well lit.
6. Report any suspicious neighborhood activity to the police.
7. Identity Theft – Educate your members on how to protect their identity. Provide steps that need to take place when their identity has been compromised.

If you have any questions please drop me a line or give me a call. State Public Issues chairman, please share this information with your clubs. On the last page I have included a very simple, short Identity Theft activity you could include at a club meeting.

I hope to see many of you at the GFWC convention in Austin, Texas in June!

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**Announcer:** Hear Ye! Hear Ye! The Dawson Damsels have a financial tip on identity theft!

**Mail box homeowner** – Proudly: (Announcer reads) I'm so glad I've paid all my bills. (Show envelopes that are addressed in bold letters so they are easily seen) In each of these envelopes is one of my checks. I'm such a good person and I've paid them all on time. I'll put the envelopes in my mail box in front of my house, put the flag up so the postman can pick them up. (The mail box homeowner "prances up" with great flair and places the envelopes in the mail box and walks away.)

**Villain:** (Announcer reads) Hee, Hee, Hee! (She sneaks to the mailbox as she rubs her hands together with a villainly sneer on her face, takes the envelopes out of the mailbox and waves them around.) Another victim! Look! Checks! Checks! And more checks! I have her account number and I'll just wash the writing off and write the checks again. She should have taken them to the drop box at the shopping center or to the post office when I couldn't get them. Hmm...a trip to Hawaii, a new plasma TV or a new car! WHAT FUN I'M GOING TO HAVE!!

**Announcer:** Ladies, take your outgoing mail to a secure postal box so you won't have to be a victim of mail theft. It happens more often than we know!