

ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN SUPPLEMENT 2022-2024

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Projects in this Program benefit and support youth locally, statewide, and around the world.

All GFWC clubs are invited to participate by planning events related to this GFWC Juniors' Special Project.

GFWC Advocates for Children Week: To raise awareness for GFWC's child advocacy efforts, the fourth week of October has been designated as GFWC Advocates for Children Week.

GFWC Partner, March of Dimes – www.MarchofDimes.com

- "Go Purple" during November, Prematurity Awareness Month
- Observe National Birth Defects Prevention Month in January
- Participate in a March for Babies event

GFWC Partner, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital – www.stjude.org

- Hold a real or virtual walk during September, Childhood Cancer Awareness Month
 - Donate funds for a red wagon
 - Donate items for use in patient care and support, such as mask straps and pillowcases
- When making donations, reference GFWC and your state and club so that it will be credited properly.

There are many projects that Clubs can do to benefit children. Contact local groups within your community, or check the websites of specific organizations to find out what they may need. Groups within your community might include your town's social services department, community outreach centers, food pantries, domestic violence or homeless shelters, foster care organizations, schools or school nurses, hospitals or pediatric care centers, churches, or any group that works with children. A list and description of specific organizations' websites, along with their requested items, is listed on the next page.

**Before working on any of these project ideas,
check with the organizations first to see what they can use.**

Note: For any of the project ideas listed, consider partnering with other organizations such as PTA's or PTO's, scout troops, or students looking for volunteer opportunities. You can also solicit the public to support your projects and collection efforts with online posts or collection sites at various locations.

Project Ideas

- **Back-to-School Supplies or Backpacks:** Collect items over the summer to be distributed in August/September. Contact social services departments or schools to find out what is needed; some organizations will only take certain items, others ask for filled backpacks.
- **Snacks for Children:** Provide healthy snacks (no nuts) or non-perishable meals, especially over the summer when children don't have access to school nutrition programs. Put together individual bags with crackers, raisins and candy that can be given to siblings of children in the hospital.
- **Birthday Bags:** In a decorative gift bag, put a box of cake mix, can of frosting, birthday candles, birthday plates and napkins so parents can make a child's birthday special. Other items, such as a small gift, can be included.
- **Bubble Bags:** Put a bottle of bubbles, small toy, crayons, stickers, etc. in a decorated bag and attach this poem: "Bubbles, bubbles in the air, swirling, twirling everywhere. Some are big, some are small. See if you can pop them all!"
- **Pajama/Sock/Underwear Collection:** Collect new children's pajamas, socks or underwear to donate to shelters or foster care groups.
- **Dress a Needy Child:** Find a child in your community through your social services department or school who could benefit from a new outfit for the first day of school or the holidays.
- **Supply a School Nurse's Closet:** Help stock these with items for students who may come to school hungry. This might include bottles of water and packaged snacks (no nuts).

- **Wish Trees/Warming Trees**: Put these in various locations during the holidays for the public to take a card or ornament with a child's gift wish. Returned gifts are distributed where needed. Put up a Warming Tree to collect new gloves, hats and scarves.
- **Baby Item Collection**: Find an organization that can use new baby items such as diapers, formula, baby monitors, new baby clothing, etc. Hold a baby shower to collect needed items.
- **Stuffed Animals for Police**: Donate new stuffed animals to police and fire departments to be given to children in traumatic situations.
- **Blanket Donations**: Knit, crochet, sew or quilt blankets to donate. One organization that needs these is Project Linus (website below); other organizations may want them also.
- **Hat Donations**: Knitted or crocheted baby and children's hats can be donated; Hat Not Hate (website below) is one organization that requests blue hats to highlight their anti-bullying campaign.
- **Safety Workshop/Safety Town**: Contact police, fire department, or other community groups to sponsor workshop(s) on safety issues for children, such as bicycle, driving, seatbelt, car seat, and internet. etc.
- **Foster Care Support**: Help organizations that work with children in the foster care system, or children who have aged out of foster care. Organizations (listed below) include CASA, Embrella, and Roots and Wings. You can put together duffle bags of items for children who have to move from place to place frequently, or provide items for youth who have aged out of foster care to help get them started in a new place.
- **Drug Awareness Programs**: Contact your police department or local Municipal Alliance Coalition to find out ways to promote drug abuse awareness.

AIDS Resource Foundation for Children www.aidsresource.org helps children and families impacted by HIV/AIDS. See their website for donation drive and collection information.

Children's Home Society of New Jersey www.chsofnj.org helps at-risk infants, children, youth and families. Contact them to find out what items they need, or to participate in any of their events.

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) www.casaofnj.org provides trained volunteers to be a "Voice in Court" for children who have been removed from their families because of abuse or neglect. Contact your local affiliate for donation items needed or how you can volunteer.

Days for Girls www.daysforgirls.org provides washable, reusable menstrual products to girls around the globe so they can continue their education without interruption. Clubs can sew DfG washable pads and liners.

Partnership for a Drug Free NJ www.drugfreenj.org has drug awareness materials for students, age-appropriate by grade. They also present "The 15-Minute Child Break," a one-hour interactive multimedia webinar for parents and educators to effectively communicate with children about the dangers of drugs and alcohol.

Embrella www.embrella.org (formerly Foster and Adoptive Family Services) supports programs for foster children. Contact them to see how you can help in your area.

Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE) www.fare.org enhances the lives of individuals with food allergies. Participate in the Teal Pumpkin Project at Halloween by placing a teal-colored pumpkin on your porch to signal that, in addition to candy, you offer non-food trinkets for all trick-or-treaters.

Hat Not Hate www.hatnothate.org is an anti-bullying campaign that asks knitters, crocheters and loomers to make blue hats to donate to their cause. There are drop-off sites in New Jersey, or hats can be mailed to the Lion Brand Yarn Company. Check the website for information and to find drop-off sites

Hugs for Brady Foundation www.hugsforbrady.com was established to help children battling cancer. You can raise funds to purchase a Brady Buddy Wagon for a hospitalized child.

Parents of Autistic Children NJ www.poac.net provides year-long recreational events for autistic children and their families. Participate in a walk or one of their many events.

Project Linus www.projectlinus.org provides new handmade blankets to children in need. Knit, crochet, sew or quilt blankets. Check the website for patterns and to find a location near you.

Putting Prayers To Action www.puttingprayerstoaction.com (formerly Tender Loving Care Ministries) helps children and their families in Appalachia. Their website has a long list of needed items.

Ronald McDonald House www.rmh-cnj.org (for central and northern New Jersey) and www.rmhsnj.org (for southern New Jersey) provides housing for families of seriously ill children being treated nearby. Collect aluminum tabs, donate items on their wish list, or check the website for other volunteer opportunities.

UNICEF www.unicef.org works for the rights of every child, every day, across the globe. Participate in the Trick or Treat for UNICEF campaign, and check the website for programs for children, by children.

Review the Advocates for Children section of the 2022-2024 GFWC Club Manual for additional projects and resources.