

## GFWC/CT EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING and FALL CONFERENCE

Saturday, October 12, 2024

Manchester Community College, Manchester, CT

**CALL TO ORDER:** President Kathleen Barnes called for the Executive Board Meeting to come to order at 9:15 am.

**Jean Kehoe, GFWC/CT Treasurer,** presented the 2024-2025 Budget and copies passed out to attendees. Jean noted that most expenses are in line with last year's budget. Revenue increased as the hope is that we get additional members this year. She also noted that District Day was not included in the budget since these monies come in and go out. Income from District Day is disbursed right away to chosen charities.

Deb Moretz from Manchester Woman's Club asked about meeting costs, officer expenses, and charitable contributions. Kathy explained the cost of meetings are food, room rental, printing, etc. Meetings are held 4 times a year. Officer expenses: President and 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President can be reimbursed for their travel expenses. Other officers for minimal expenses and travel. Charitable contributions: In July we donated to HOBY (Hugh O'Brien Youth Leadership) to send a young woman from Connecticut to the leadership convention in Chicago, and there will be other donations to come. Marlene Patren from the Woman's Club of Danbury/New Fairfield asked about District Day reimbursements. Each district has \$400 allotted to it that stays in the bank to be used to pay for room reservations, printing programs, etc.

**Motion to approve budget made by Treasurer Jean Kehoe. The motion passed.**

**CALL TO ORDER:** President Kathy Barnes called the GFWC CT Fall Conference 2024 to order at 9:30 am.

**INSPIRATION:** Sandy Barry, North Central District President, gave the Inspiration which included a poem by Brooke Hampton and a quotation by Emily Dickinson.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA** was led by Nicole Figueiredo, Manchester Woman's Club President.

**COLLECT FOR CLUB WOMEN** was led by Marlene Patren, Southwest District President.

**CREDENTIALS REPORT** was read by Joanne Sullivan, Meeting Chair. President Kathy Barnes declared a quorum.

Past State Presidents: 2. Club Presidents/Co-Presidents: 13. State Executive Board: 38. Total Voting Delegates: 51. Non-Voting Delegates: 2. Guests: 1. TOTAL ATTENDEES: 51. Club w/ largest attendance: Manchester, 10. District w/ highest attendance: North Central

### **INTRODUCTIONS:**

**PAST STATE PRESIDENTS:** Jeanne Waseleski (2006-2008), and JoAnn Calnen (2010-2012).

**GFWC/CT OFFICERS:** President Kathy Barnes introduced the State Executive Committee: Jean Ann Keating, Corresponding Secretary; Jean Kehoe, Treasurer; Joann Hohensee, Recording Secretary; Sara Newell, 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President; Nicole Karalli, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President; Wendy Clery, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President. Regrets were received from Pam Lerner, Assistant Treasurer, and Mischa Campbell, Member at-large. Aides Maddy Marzullo and Sally Johnson were introduced and thanked.

### **OFFICER REPORTS:**

**Corresponding Secretary** Jean Keating began with regrets received from Kathy DeBurra, Past State President, 2022-2024. She has sent out three sympathy cards since our July meeting. She reports that she is maintaining a chronological/hard-copy file of all correspondence received from President Kathy Barnes. As an ongoing project Jean is gathering information for the GFWC/CT yearbook

**Recording Secretary** Joann Hohensee reported that the Minutes of the July 13, 2024 Executive Board Meeting have been edited, approved and posted on the GFWC/CT website. She asked for three people to read today's minutes and the following volunteered: Donna Farrell, Michele Eifes, and Jean Kehoe.

**Treasurer** Jean Kehoe reported: Since our last meeting in July, much has been completed relating to GFWC/CT finances. Club dues have been received & deposited. Our tax forms for the 2023-2024 Club year have been prepared & will be filed on Monday. Our expenses are within budget, with all 2024 Scholarship payments made. Our current checking account balance in the TD Account is \$28,581. There is still a small balance in the Webster account, which will be closed next week."

**3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President** Sara Newell reported that all 4 Districts have chosen their District Days and are in the planning process. Southeast District– Sat., March 29<sup>th</sup>. North Central District – Sat., April 12<sup>th</sup>. Southwest District – Tues., April 15<sup>th</sup>. Northwest District – Sat., April 26<sup>th</sup>.

As of October, we have 27 clubs in CT with a total membership of 1,055. Our clubs range in size from 4 members to 202 members. As membership across the state has fluctuated, she would like to gather some data regarding the best practices in growing membership. Clubs have ways that have worked for them in the past. A problem can occur when your methods become overused and/or they no longer work. The good news is that we have 27 different places to look to for guidance. Sara would like to put together a list of the best practices used to grow club membership, and then distribute this list to you and your Club Presidents. Whether the smallest or the largest, each club is unique and has a wealth of information to share, so let's share! Sara's email is [sdn0104@gmail.com](mailto:sdn0104@gmail.com)

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President** Nicole Karalli. Nicole reported she attended the Enfield Woman's Club meeting on September 12th, where they celebrated the founding of the GFWC and hosted a fundraising event for their National Day of Service. Their NDS project focused on assembling cold weather packs for local first responders to distribute. The club has a strong mentorship program, demonstrated by the presence of several past State Presidents in their ranks. Additionally, she attended a vigil at Prudence Crandall to honor 19 Connecticut citizens who lost their lives to domestic violence. Nicole encourages everyone to submit their reports by January 15th, noting that last year 100% of clubs submitted their reports and challenges them to achieve the same this year.

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President** Wendy Clery. Wendy reported that as Leadership Chair, she also manages the Community Impact Program, or CIP, submissions. This is a two-year contest run by GFWC and entries are judged in even number years. She explained the CIP project is not required to be a new, separate project, but could be something that you're already doing, it just needs to be done on a larger scale, at least for your club. Please contact her if you have any questions or want to go over your submission. She'll be happy to help you work it out.

Wendy is also Fundraising Chair for the New England Region and as such she is working with NER President Tina Smith. Tina has chosen a president project for her two-year term to ~~try and~~ raise \$10,000 for Saint Jude Children's Research Hospital. Ten thousand dollars sounds like a lot, but spread over the six New England states, it is a doable plan. Some very generous donations were received at the NER conference and, though that may not keep up, it definitely is a big start. A flyer about the NER fundraiser was put on every table today. The flyer has a QR code on it, and by scanning it, a website should pop up with different resources for NER members, including the link to the Saint Jude fundraising page for the New England region. NER President Tina Smith would like to see any club donation for St. Jude go directly to Saint Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Wendy talked about our new GFWC/CT Leadership Library. She brought a few books to start us off with, and all you do is sign in your name, the book title, and your email so she can send you a reminder to bring it back at the next state meeting. She went on to urge everyone to check out the member portal on the GFWC website and the amazing club manual full of good information and very helpful. Wendy closed her report requesting all club presidents and co-presidents to stand and be recognized.

**President's Report** State President Kathy Barnes reported that since we last met, all clubs have sent their rosters and payment for dues and all the insurance payments have been made. Membership numbers are close to what they were 6 months ago. "Keep recruiting and engaging new members but remember – retention of members is the fastest way to growth." Over the past five months she has attended club meetings, helped with induction of

new members, and has had a chance to sit with new leaders and answer questions about club operations and policies.

Kathy represented GFWC/CT at the New England Region Conference (NERC). Our state was assigned a part of the service project providing 30 pencil cases and supplies for them. Due to the generosity of members from **the Mystic Woman's Club, the Suburban Woman's Club of Greater New Britain** and the **Northeastern CT Woman's Club**, those pencil cases were filled with great items for children going into foster care.

In August, she attended the GFWC Board of Directors meeting in Washington, D.C. The Women's Suffrage National Memorial Foundation is working to create a monument on the National Mall to recognize women whose actions a century ago have an impact on us today. Kathy spoke of her grandmother who got the right to vote when she was 25 and lived into her 80s. "Gramma wrote in her journal her annoyance at not being able to speak at town meetings but her "ignorant" brother could. She never drove and never missed voting after she had the right." We can support this monument and we can also honor them by exercising our right to vote in November.

Two things Kathy took away from the meeting in Washington and the NER Conference: 1) We are a respected organization and our circle of connections is valuable and strong. 2) GFWC is pursuing connections to help develop non-dues based revenue to enhance the work we do, our visibility and benefits for our clubs. More information to come on this and she will share with us as it becomes available.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and the last week of October is Advocates for Children's Week. That is what drove the program for this meeting. We have been using different facilities than in the past and different schedules for the meetings. Sometime within the next week, all attendees will receive a short questionnaire about our meetings from Mischa Campbell, our member-at-large. Please answer it. Your answers matter.

Finally, open your calendar and save 2 dates! **December 7<sup>th</sup>** – the December Executive Board meeting will be held at Café Fiore in Cromwell. That meeting will start a little later – doors will open at 11 AM – so everyone gets a couple hours to do all the busy Saturday things. **May 3, 2025** – May Convention. It will be a one-day event and we will be returning to the Elks Club in Rocky Hill.

**Advocates for Children:** Donna Recknagel, Chairman. Donna began with reading a declaration from Governor Ned Lamont proclaiming **October 20 - 26, 2024 as GFWC/CT Advocates for Children's Week**. Donna then welcomed and introduced our guest speaker, Adrianna Ramirez, Executive Director of CT Family Support Network. She is a mother and advocate and has always championed and advocated for her family and community members. Adrianna explained the CTFSN is committed to helping families of individuals with disabilities and special health care needs, and the professionals who work with them, find information, resources and support to improve their lives. Sometimes you may feel alone, that your situation is only happening to you, but CTFSN is here to give you information and resources and support to help you improve your life. Of particular note is the "Empowering the Caregiver" program that helps parents and caregivers deal with burnout, or "compassion fatigue." All types of workshops and support groups are held monthly across Connecticut. CTFSN support is available in all 169 Connecticut towns, in both English and Spanish, and all services are free of charge. Their website is [www.ctfsn.org](http://www.ctfsn.org) President Kathy Barnes asked where their funding came from and Adrianna explained that they are funded by the Dept. of Public Health (DPH), and the Dept. of Developmental Services (DDS), fundraising and donations. As the GFWC/CT 2-year Presidents' project is focused on increasing access and independence for people with disabilities, Kathy asked how we can help CTFSN. Adrianna replied by spreading the word of what we do. GFWC/CT is statewide and CTFSN is statewide. Our services are always free to families. Share us on social media and support our activities and fundraisers. Photos are so important for the history of our clubs. Take them. Share them. Post on Facebook, on your websites.

**Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention** presentation from the GFWC New England Conference. Before the presentation, Nicole asked that if anyone felt uncomfortable with the content and have to step out, that Michelle Eifes would be in the hallway to help if needed. Cards with X's and O's were handed out. Those with X's stood up; 1/3 of those with an X card represented a victim of sexual assault. Christine Stanlonis, Chairman, and Nicole Karalli, 2<sup>nd</sup> VP narrated while eight members held up placards representing the 8 focus areas and percentages: Campus sexual assault (13%); Child abuse (reported every 9 minutes); Elder abuse (1 in 10 Americans

over the age of 60) ; Human trafficking for sexual purposes (27.6 million victims worldwide); Intimate partner violence (In the US, 41% women and 26% men victimized in their lifetime); Military sexual assault (8,942 reports by both men and women in 2022); Teen dating violence (1 in 12 high school students); and Violence against Native American women, including Alaska Native women, and Two Spirit women (4 out of 5, or 84.3% in their lifetime). What to do? How to get the word out? Become a champion. Be a Voice for those who have no voice. Host, advocate, campaign

See something, say something. Advocating – talk to your representatives.

Support – join the GFWC Legislation Action Center. Top 5 states taking action were Florida, North Carolina, California, New Jersey and Illinois. Let's get Connecticut on that list.

Change can start with only one thing. Clothesline campaign. Light in the window (purple lights in October).

Educate and host programs to schools and in your communities. Invite police officers to your meetings.

Interstates are the human trafficking corridors: north/south, east/west. Major sporting events. Shopping malls.

Nail salons. See something that doesn't look right? Say something. Bring it to attention.



**Hand sign for HELP -**  
- thumb in closed palm. Talk to your children & grandchildren.

**Veterans:** Maddy Marzullo, Veterans Chairman, announced that National Wreaths Across America Day will be held on **Saturday, December 14, 2024**. This year's theme is "Live with Purpose." WAA is a national nonprofit whose year-long mission is to Remember the fallen. Honor those who serve. Teach our children the value of freedom. In 2023, over 3 million sponsored veterans' wreaths were placed by volunteers on headstones at 4,225 participating locations worldwide, each an acknowledgement to honor and thank all veterans for our freedoms. Google for "CT cemeteries sponsoring WAA", only a few cemeteries will be listed. Ask around, dig deep, you'll find them. New to our area last year was a cemetery in Winsted. Be good to your heart. Volunteer to lay wreaths and talk with your veterans at their gravesites when placing their wreaths. There are bags at each table for donations to WAA. We will announce the amount raised at the end of the meeting. Maddy mentioned that in the past this committee also donated to Vets Oasis which is located in CT colleges and universities and serves the veteran population looking for a space on campus to relax in-between classes.

For more information on Wreaths Across America, please visit [www.wreathscrossamerica.org](http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org)

Veterans Day 2024 is Monday, Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>. 11<sup>th</sup> Day – 11<sup>th</sup> Hour – 11<sup>th</sup> Month. Please attend your local Veterans Day ceremonies if you can! At this time, Maddy asked our lady Veterans to stand up and be recognized: **JoAnn Calnen, Donna Farrell, Nicole Karalli, and our newest veteran, Laurie Dunlop**. Thank you, ladies for your service!

**GFWC Scholarships:** Beverly Regan, Chairman, announced that the Mary Phipps and Dorothy Schoelzel Memorial Scholarships application is available online and easy to access. Go to the GFWC/CT website, select "About Us" and click on the application. October is a good time to get out the information. College students get busier as the school year unfolds with final exams and winter breaks. The deadline to apply to local clubs is February 10, 2025. These scholarships are awarded every year to women who are CT residents and, in their 3<sup>rd</sup>, or 4<sup>th</sup> year of college studying towards a bachelor degree or studying for a post-graduate degree. We'd like to help you and your club find candidates for this wonderful opportunity. First, let your friends, neighbors, family members know about these scholarships. Beverly passed out a sample article to publish or put online, and a poster that gives an overview of the scholarship, how to access it online and space for your club's contact information. Feel free to make copies and distribute them to a community bulletin board in your town, the library, the local public schools – anywhere parents, grandparents, and students frequent. Last year \$12,000 in scholarships was awarded. The amount depends on the number of candidates, usually from one to six women. Remember if your club has more

than one qualified applicant, you may ask another club to sponsor her. If you have any questions, please contact Bev at: [bevregan@gmail.com](mailto:bevregan@gmail.com)

**Expression of Thanks:** At 12:00 noon, Ginny Chulkovs, Health & Wellness Chairman, sent the Expression of Thanks followed by a buffet luncheon catered by the College food service contractor.

**National Day of Service (NDS):** Kathy Barnes reported and recognized the 14 clubs who participated in the NDS. **“Thank you!” to Bethel WC, East Hartford WC, GFWC Manchester WC, GFWC Newington-Wethersfield, North Haven WC, Northeastern CT WC, Mystic WC, Newtown WC, Somers WC, Suburban WC of Greater New Britain, Terryville WC, WC of Madison, Windsor WC, and WC of Enfield.** One hundred and fifty pounds was delivered to the Cougar Pantry on Friday, and Kathy will report on the final number when today’s donations are delivered on Tuesday. Laura, the pantry director, and the students working there were thrilled with all the donations! Not only food but toiletry items as well. Some of their sponsors are no longer able to donate, so they were very, very appreciative. Hunger is a horrible thing and GFWC/CT is doing a lot to help combat this. Kathy reminded us that October 18<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for any reporting for NDS.

**GFWC Member Portal:** Kathy urged us all to please sign up for this great tool. A wealth of information is available and there are tons of examples of how to work with the GFWC affiliates, and in turn, those affiliates advertise on our behalf and get the word out about GFWC/CT. Affiliates like: Canine Companions, Shot at Life, St. Jude Children’s Hospital, Heifer International, and UNICEF to name just a few.

**LEADS Report:** Michelle Eifes, Harwinton WC member and 2024 LEADS Graduate, reported on her experience this summer at the LEADS Seminar in Chicago. She also spoke at New England Regional in Maine in September. “It is with honor and pride that I represented Connecticut as the 2024 LEADS graduate. How did the LEADS program in Chicago this summer teach me to be bold and use my voice? To me, leadership is more than just a position or title – it’s about having the confidence to stand up, speak out, and make an impact. As the LEAD graduate for CT, I learned that being bold doesn’t mean being the loudest in the room. It means having the courage to share our ideas, to advocate for others, and to take action, even when it’s difficult. As a social worker, the topics that were presented in the LEADS program were familiar. Advocacy and being the voice for those who feel powerless to use theirs. Commitment to the community and using our voices to make change starting on a local level. Listening to the voices of all the beautiful women who were chosen to be LEAD candidates from their states, and the experience and knowledge learned from those who came before. I came home from Chicago equipped with not just tools but humbled by dedication that I observed. I sat in awe of so many women and left with such pride for being part of such an amazing organization. Through discussions, activities, and real-world experiences, this class has empowered each of us to find our voice. We’ve practiced stepping outside our comfort zones and discovered how to lead with purpose. Whether it’s in small group settings or addressing larger audiences, we now understand that our voices have power – and it’s our responsibility to use them. Leadership isn’t about perfection, but progress. This class has given us the tools to be bold, to listen, and to inspire others. In doing so, we’re not only growing as individuals, but we’re also learning how to create positive change in our communities.”

**Leadership Workshop:** Wendy Clery, GFWC/CT 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President. A 4-page handout from the GFWC Leadership Tool Kit (available on GFWC.org) was distributed to everyone. Wendy briefly went over each topic. First, “The principles of empowered well-being and its key principles.” Next, “Set the tone and create a healthy club culture”. Third, “Set achievable goals and cast a compelling vision”; and fourth, “Enjoy the benefits of belonging to GFWC.” Wendy went on to highlight the GFWC history and some of its many noteworthy goals and accomplishments. She wrapped it up by reminding our members to always know that the officers are here to help and support the membership. Talk about a problem when it’s a little problem, not when it’s huge. Communicate. Wendy spoke of her experiences as a leader. Every person here is a leader and you’re here because you want to be.

**New England Region Conference:** Kathy Barnes spoke about her wonderful experience in Maine at the NER conference this summer. Some highlights included an awe-inspiring speech given by SueEllen Brazil, International President of the General Federation of Women’s Clubs. Inspiring speakers from ~~Canine Companions~~ and St Jude

Children's Research Hospital. Many workshops to attend to share and learn from one another. The Besento Multinational Girls Choir, a group who works with at-risk refugee and immigrant native born young women, provided one evening's musical entertainment. The state-sponsored conference service project was to provide backpacks full of necessary items for children being placed in foster care. Most children arrive in foster care with all they have in a black garbage bag. This project provided them with a backpack full of fleece blankets, school supplies, personal care supplies, socks, and sweatshirts. They were packed full!

**Other Announcements:** Heather Spencer asked members to please send cards of support to her co-workers, staff and the 120 residents at the Apple Rehab Center in Cromwell, who recently experienced a very, sad tragic event at the facility. Prayer shawls, comforters, any crafty items would be appreciated to help them in their recovery. It would mean a lot, and if you would like to do so, the address is Apple Rehab Center, 156 Berlin Road, Cromwell, CT 06416.

Send flyers of your coming club events to Wendy Clery and she will post them on the GFWC/CT Facebook page.

[WendyGFWCLady@gmail.com](mailto:WendyGFWCLady@gmail.com)

Final thankyou from Kathy Barnes extended to all those who attended today's meeting, especially **Joanne Sullivan, Meeting Chair, and Lisa, Donna, Maddy and Sally** who always show up early to help out!

**Fundraising:** Elaine Santos from the East Hartford Woman's Club announced the 50/50 raffle raised \$296 with \$148 of that won by a lucky member. Maddy Marzullo, Veterans chairman, reported that \$178 was raised for Wreaths Across America. Eight wreaths will be sponsored by GFWC/CT for a cemetery in Enfield, Conn. Also, the Suburban Woman's Club of Greater New Britain Woman's Club Domestic Violence CIP raised some funds for the Prudence Crandall Center with a cookie & candy sale.

Conference was adjourned at 2:00 pm by Kathy Barnes.

Joann Hohensee, Recording Secretary  
2024-2026 Administration