



ARTS AND CULTURE

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM

2024-2026 GFWC CLUB MANUAL

“BEFORE A CHILD TALKS, THEY SING. BEFORE THEY WRITE, THEY DRAW. AS SOON AS THEY STAND, THEY DANCE. ART IS FUNDAMENTAL TO HUMAN EXPRESSION.” PHYLICIA RASHAD

The current edition of the Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines the word “ART” as follows:

“art” (noun) 1. “the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power...”

The same learned tome defines the word “culture” in this manner:

“cul-ture” (noun) 2. “the customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people or other social group...”

However, one chooses to define the words; collectively, those two small words speak volumes as they define us, who we are, what we believe and strive to accomplish today, and what we leave for future generations. Combined, the two are subjects of study primarily concerned with the processes and products of human creativity and social life, such as languages, literature, imagination, developing the technical ability to create something from nothing, and the capacity to bridge the things that separate us from one another; age, education, location, religion, or economic disparity. Arts and Culture create common ground on which to build a mutual understanding and respect of one for the other.

Art and culture combine to define our basic humanness and can be found in every location around the planet as we work to make our lives better and to find things that we enjoy, either as a group socially or as an individual. In the study, development, and love of the arts and culture, there truly is... “SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE!!!”

Another quote from Ms. Rashad, “Where the Women go, the Culture goes!” should be the rallying cry for all clubs, Districts, and State Federations within GFWC. Our members should represent the vanguard in leading the development of projects and programs to highlight and focus support for all aspects of human expression. From local activities like awarding art scholarships, sponsoring local and school art contests, participating in community beautification projects, assisting little theater activities, sustaining library growth and expansion, developing photography contests, backing



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Direct any questions regarding projects that do not involve GFWC Affiliate Organizations to the Arts and Culture Community Service Program Chairman or GFWC Programs Department at Programs@GFWC.org.

local choral performances...and not just sponsoring but participating in the above activities... contribute to a GFWC approved statewide project. Or perhaps reach out to sister clubs in our GFWC International network to learn about their arts, local customs, and culture. By learning from them and sharing what we know, we expand our horizons and develop a greater understanding of our world and the people with whom we share it.

The GFWC Arts and Culture Community Service Program hopes to provide the impetus for the development of and the appreciation for Art and Culture throughout all our involved communities; be they rural or urban, sophisticated or not, rich or poor, and at every level, from beginner to expert.

The Arts and Culture Community Service Program exists to provide creative project ideas, support to ensure greater impact, and encourage club women to participate in and/or otherwise facilitate a love and appreciation for the arts across their community and within their entire sphere of influence.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION INITIATIVE:

DEVELOPING COMMUNITY ORIENTATED ART



GFWC encourages clubs to take an active role in creating and enhancing their community by partnering with their City Government, Chamber of Commerce, local schools, and other organizations (i.e., Art League or Artist Guild) to create mural paintings throughout their city or town. Murals that highlight the local culture and display pride in their town's history and traditions, as well as showcase local celebrities or figures prominent in the historical legacy of the community.

Murals can be located on city property and schools, as well as local businesses. Working with other entities helps to develop community-wide pride of accomplishment. Garnering support from all the above, as well as enlisting the help of club members, students, retirees, and other service organizations, is key to the development and activation of this project. If a building is too big a project, there is nothing wrong with starting small and working your way up. Start with a standalone sign or billboard, something that can be changed to accommodate the seasons or is portable and can be moved around town to highlight an event or activity that the community is enjoying. Let your ideas flow, and don't forget to brand your artistic endeavors with your club's name, contact information where possible, and the GFWC Emblem.

