

## Civic Engagement and Outreach

Fall Board 2020

Bulletin 1



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The Civic Engagement and Outreach CSP encourages us to help create a better life in our community – from local to global. This can be done in different ways from volunteering, fundraising, and donating, but also advocating, which helps solve problems and improve communities. There are four basic areas within this CSP: Citizenship; Crime Prevention, Safety, and Disaster Preparedness; the Needy, Hungry, and Homeless; and Military Personnel and Veterans. Please check the Club Manual for a complete list of ideas and suggestions for organizations to help and projects that clubs can do. *Remember, some projects may not be able to be done for a while due to COVID safety precautions.* Here are some suggestions:

### CITIZENSHIP

- Honor/celebrate patriotic holidays by marching in a parade or flying the flag.
- Advocate for civics education in schools
- **Get Out the Vote** - ensure people are registered and voting
- Sponsor or help with a Candidates Forum
- Volunteer at the polls
- Learn and teach others proper **flag etiquette**: folding, displaying, and finally retiring old flags. Donate old flags to the American Legion.
- Help someone get ready for their U.S. Citizenship test
- Celebrate **Women's History Month** in March by setting up community exhibits.
- Visit and help support monuments and historic sites

### CRIME PREVENTION, SAFETY, AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

- Provide information on **Identity Theft** and **scams** against seniors.
- Support and thank local Police and Fire Depts for keeping the community safe.
- Sponsor classes on **CPR, First Aid**, carbon monoxide poisoning, stopping traumatic injury bleeding and the hazards of furniture tip-overs.
- Hold a **bicycle safety workshop**; educate **teen drivers** about distracted driving, texting and failure to use seat belts.
- Plan a program on possible emergency situations, natural disasters, and how to create a **Disaster Preparedness** plan.
- Coordinate efforts to provide disaster victims with needed items.

### THE NEEDY, HUNGRY, AND HOMELESS

- **Habitat for Humanity** – donations, labor, or meals/snacks for volunteers.
- Donate service or goods to a local **food pantry**; provide weekend and summertime meals for needy children.
- Establish "**closets**" in schools with clothing and personal hygiene items for children in need.
- Collect **socks for homeless** shelters.

- **I Support the Girls** – hold a collection drive to provide bras, underwear, and sanitary napkins/tampons to women and girls in need.
- **Days for Girls** - access to menstrual care/education for girls around the world.

## **MILITARY PERSONNEL AND VETERANS**

- Dept of Veterans Affairs for programs to help military/veterans. For female veterans: contact Women Veterans Program Manager at the VA Medical Center.
- Support military personnel through the **USO** programs: **USOWishbook**, to provide gifts of comfort food packages, phone calls home, and long distance bedtime stories; or **USO2GO** Kits, which provide snacks, toiletries, and fun items to troops deployed to remote areas.
- **Fisher House Foundation** – homes at military installations and VA Medical Centers for military families to stay during medical treatment for their service member. **Hero Miles program** - uses donated airline miles to bring family members to the hospital bedsides of the injured; **Hotels for Heroes** - uses donated hotel points.
- Create awareness about: Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (**PTSD**), **Depression**, and Traumatic Brain Injury (**TBI**); Support the National Alliance for Mental Illness (**NAMI**).
- Create awareness about the **high rate of suicide** among veterans, especially women veterans, whose suicide rate is twice that of non-veterans.
- Seek out and provide support to veterans in homeless shelters.
- Donate items needed for **Stand Down** Veteran events.
- **Wreaths Across America** - sponsor wreaths and/or volunteer to place wreaths on graves at Veteran Cemeteries.
- **Honor Flight Network** - donate, volunteer as a “Guardian,” or be part of a “Welcome Home”.
- **Quilts of Valor Foundation** - donate fabric, quilt squares, quilts or make monetary contributions or become a sponsor.

***Here are a few ADDITIONAL organizations I recommend:***

**Cup of Joe** <https://www.greenbeanscoffee.com/products/cup-of-joe-for-a-joe>

Buy a deployed service member their next cup of coffee and include a personal message.

**Special Operations Warrior Foundation** <https://specialops.org/>

Provide full financial assistance to accredited colleges, universities, technical or trade schools to the surviving children of Special Operations personnel who lose their lives in the line-of-duty.

**Women in Military Service for America (WIMSA) Memorial Foundation**

<https://www.womensmemorial.org/>

This organization maintains the Women In Military Service For America Memorial, the only major national memorial honoring all women who have served with the US Armed Forces since the American Revolution.

**Homes for Our Troops** <https://www.hfotusa.org/>

Build and donate specially-adapted custom homes for severely injured post-9/11 veterans to help them rebuild their lives.

**Gary Sinise Foundation** <https://www.garysinisefoundation.org/>

With nine key programs, they work to ensure that the sacrifices of America's defenders and their families are never forgotten.

**Folds of Honor** <https://www.foldsofhonor.org/>

Provide educational scholarships to spouses and children of America's fallen and disabled service-members.

**Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)** <https://www.taps.org/>

TAPS offers a variety of programs providing comfort, care and resources to all those grieving the death of a military loved one.

**Operation Helping Hand** <https://operationhelpinghandtampa.com/>

Since the beginning of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, many wounded and injured have been treated at the Spinal Cord Injury unit at James A. Haley VA Hospital in Tampa. Families travel from all over the country to be with their loved ones. Operation Helping Hand of Tampa was organized to help these families during their stay in Tampa Bay. There are free monthly dinners (the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month) to honor the poly trauma patients. Approximately 250-300 people attend each dinner providing an opportunity for clubwomen to help by donating money or needed items (gift cards for gas, amusement parks, movies, restaurants, or food markets), helping to serve the meal and/or clearing tables afterward, or just enjoying the chance to talk to these heroes.

**CHALLENGE PROJECT: SUPPORT AND AID WOMEN VETERANS'** health needs, reduce isolation and depression, and provide comfort and encouragement, with the assistance of a Women Veterans Program Manager at a VA Medical Center. For specific ideas, see the Club Manual.

Please check the Club Manual for a listing of our **GFWC AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS** and **GFWC RESOURCES** that includes the organizations' websites.

*Here's to a great and safe year!*

*Elena*