

## **ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN**

**Carol Burkhart, CFWC Chair**

The Hot Topic for June is Advocacy for Children.

There are 2.3 million children in the world and many are in need of basics for survival. That is why this is such a “hot topic.” As clubwomen we advocate to ensure that children are protected from harmful situations. We encourage healthy physical and emotional lifestyles. We acquaint ourselves with public policy that has an impact on improving children’s lives. Every project we do for children makes a difference. This spring GFWC offered several Zoom talks on Affiliate Organizations. I watched them all and found the work done by these organizations extremely impressive. March of Dimes focuses on babies born prematurely, Operation Smile helps children born with a cleft palate or cleft lip, St. Jude assists seriously ill children and their families, Shot @ Life offers vaccinations to children worldwide, UNICEF USA and Heifer International help families with sustainable food supplies. There are 155 million people worldwide facing food insecurities. All these organizations do wonderful things to help children and families around the world.

Although life with a pandemic has improved, people are still being cautious. Some clubs are meeting on Zoom, in parks or in member’s yards. A lot of clubs do not meet in June which makes this the perfect time to plan your club’s calendar of projects for the next year. We all know the more we plan the more successful our meetings and events. Clubwomen always look forward and are constantly trying new projects. When you are planning for this next year, add an extra project for children into your club schedule. People are slowly starting to step out of their homes and back into the world, so step out and help our children.

This past year I have stressed assessing the needs of your own communities. Although the pandemic has improved, food banks are still a lifeline for many families. Add extra food drives into your club schedule. Schools are closing down for the summer, but most schools are providing strong summer programs to assist students who may have fallen behind due to the pandemic. Some schools have school gardens that have been abandoned this past year; reach out and help by building raised garden beds for vegetable or donating garden supplies. Families of new babies are often in need of help, especially if that newest family member is a preemie. Homeless shelters and foster care children need our help. Many clubs have sewing groups; add an extra project for children. Court Appointed Special Advocates will again need volunteers now that the pandemic has eased up a bit. If each club in California adds one project

this next year to help children, we will make a stronger impact on the lives of the children in the world.

I was very impressed with the Advocacy for Children reports and amazed at the creativity clubs used to carry out projects during this time. There were online fundraisers, craft fairs in parking lots, drive through food and toy drives, assembly line sewing projects, children's books collected in garages etc. There is the old saying, "Where there is a will, there is a way." Well, the clubwomen in California had the will and found many creative ways to reach out and help. As I read reports for Advocacy for Children this past spring, I could visualize the various communities in our State and imagine the Clubwomen doing their projects. Next year I hope to read twice as many reports. I challenge each club to add one extra project for children this next year. Use your creativity to reach out to a unique need in your community. I urge your clubs to reach out to help in any way. Plan a special project for GFWC Advocates for Children Week in October. If you have questions or need project ideas, please contact me.

### **GFWC ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN WEEK**

**Sunday, October 24-Saturday, October 30, 2021**

Because children are so important to the future of our world, projects we do for children assure a better future for us all.