

GENERAL FEDERATION of WOMEN'S CLUBS

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“Back to Basics – Federation Education” - September/October 2010

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As fall approaches, thoughts turn to children returning to school and the importance of the basics. In elementary school, the three Rs – reading, writing & arithmetic are the focus and for college students the 101 classes help set the foundation for the course of study. In the working world, employees go through an orientation on the basics of the company. In every aspect of our lives, our education begins with the basics. Have you armed your fellow members with the Federation Basics? By ensuring our members have a broad base of Federation education, we will strengthen our foundation. As you kickoff your club year, it's a great time to provide a refresher course on Federation 101.

What are the Federation Basics?

- **Structure**
 - Provide members a glimpse of the overall Federation picture by explaining each level of the organization and how the levels inter-relate. Clubs have found that using a visual aid assists in this explanation. Successful examples include a Federation family tree or a Federation house.
 - Highlight how members can become involved in each level by sharing information about what occurs in the meetings and when the next meeting is being held. It is also important to share the leadership opportunities afforded to members at each level.
 - If your club is privileged to be the home of an officer or appointee for a higher level of the organization, share this with your club members and ask her to provide some insight on the position she is holding.
- **History & Key Accomplishments**
 - Throughout our history, GFWC has made significant impacts on the world. Choose a few to share with your members and encourage them to find out more about what we have done in the past.
 - Did you know that GFWC is one of a few organizations who hold a charter from Congress?
 - Did you know that the lines on our roads were created by a club woman?
 - 75% of public libraries in the United States were established by GFWC clubs!
 - GFWC had a part in the passage of women's right to vote, child labor regulations, more recently the Violence Against Women Act and the Lily Ledbetter Equal Pay Act.
 - GFWC has raised funds to purchase an ambulance for the New York City Fire Department after September 11th, 2001 and recently close to \$60,000 was collected to be contributed to the Haiti earthquake relief.
 - Today's members are writing the history of GFWC and are a part of GFWC's future accomplishments!
- **Benefits**
 - Remind members of the benefits of membership in Federation. Benefits exist from both a club and individual member perspective. A few samples of the benefits of membership are outlined. Ask members to share the benefits that they see from their participation in GFWC.

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- **Individual benefits** range from the feeling of accomplishment for making a difference in your community. Members can bring causes that are near and dear to their hearts to the club for additional resources to help accomplish a project or fill a need. Federation is like a family – the relationships that members form among their club and across clubs and states are strong connections that add to the quality of life. Members can increase leadership development through hands-on experience of participating in committees, serving as an officer and working on the various projects and programs clubs have to offer. Members also have access to formal leadership training through GFWC and State Leadership Education and Development Seminars (LEADS).
- **Club benefits** include seeing the impact of their work multiply as their work is added to the other clubs throughout the United States and world. What clubs believe is a ‘small’ impact in their home town, may result in multi-million impact once all clubs’ contributions are considered. Clubs have access to specialized resources and program information through the GFWC Club Manual and web site, as well as one copy, to the club president, of the award winning *GFWC Clubwoman Magazine*.

Need help pulling together the basics? Here are a few resources:

- GFWC Web site
- GFWC Club Manual – Club Management section includes historical timeline – available in your Club President’s mailbox
- GWC DVD – Covers GFWC History, Our Headquarters and Programs – It is available through the Marketplace
- State Federation history information – start with your State Yearbook or Web site
- District information – start with your District Handbook
- Your Leadership – Club, District, State, Region and/or International officers and chairmen
- Seasoned Club Members

There is no limit to the way or how often you can present the basics information. Make it interesting and keep your members involved. Basics can be shared as a program, as a trivia game, or via your newsletter a few tips at a time. Whatever method you choose, share the Federation Basics with your members to increase the strength and success of our club. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Start today to ensure that your club is a strong link in GFWC’s chain by educating your members on the GFWC Basics.

The Federation Membership R’s

While you consider the start of the club year, do not forget the Federation Membership R’s

- Retain
- Recruit
- Renew
- Rebuild

Your GFWC Membership Committee

We are here to serve you! Please let us know what we can do to assist your clubs, districts or State Federations in any area of Membership. Names and contact information of region representatives are listed in the GFWC Membership Advancement Guide on page 3.