

Woman's Club of Springfield, Inc. – 2015 Activity Summary

2015 was a banner year for the Woman's Club of Springfield. We celebrated our 61st Anniversary of affiliation at a luncheon at the Springfield Country Club, with members and guests from GFWC Virginia and the Springfield community. We are proud to have served the Springfield community for so many years! This year we also celebrated the 51st anniversary of owning and operating our thrift shop, The Pink Elephant. What an accomplishment!

In connection with the GFWC signature project, Domestic Violence and Abuse, we continued our support of Bethany House of Northern Virginia, a shelter for families seeking an escape from violence. We held a Spring Faire to raise money to donate to Bethany House and were able to give \$1,000 to their mission. In December, we collected gifts donated by club members to give to the women at Bethany House as Christmas gifts at their facility. The value of these in kind gifts was over \$1,695, a tribute to the generosity of club members. Our December meeting was especially meaningful to us this year because we were able to celebrate with 5 woman and their family members sheltered at Bethany House. We were able to share member donated Christmas gifts with them during a gift exchange, partake in delicious food, and enjoy locally sourced entertainment.

Our Arts committee kept us busy all year with 16 workshops for crafts and knitting/crochet classes. Our projects were to make items for Ways and Means to use in fundraising and to make blankets, hats and scarves which are donated for our layettes and Operation Gratitude projects of the Home Life Committee and to have fun! We helped at the needlework show at Woodlawn, enjoyed Tea, and toured the Pope House. The Arts Extravaganza, our art contest in February, was a huge hit with the membership again this year! We enjoyed displaying, promoting, and selling local art at our February meeting. Our Hospitality committee works closely with our Arts group to create cross curriculum results. Heading out to the Meadowlark Gardens inspired many ladies to be creative using our natural environment and our trip to see the Capital Steps Show made us laugh! Our Art group is highly integrated throughout the other committees of the club. Asked to contribute to Ways and Means, some ladies made cotton crocheted dish clothes, ornate fabric egg ornaments, decorative & festive fascinators, and other items to sell throughout the year. Even supporting a local dance club that performs at many of our local nursing homes throughout the year shows our ladies' enthusiasm for supporting the Arts.

To promote conservation in our community we have partnered with our fabulously wonderful local park called Hidden Pond, donating a science exploration unit and sand/water table. We have formed a new Nature Walkers Group to explore and enjoy our local parks. We show our main support by recycling at our Pink Elephant Thrift Shop. We continue our effort in International Outreach with a \$300 donation to UNICEF and a \$275 donation to Heifer International, GFWC Partnership projects.

Our Public Issues group brought us community information, encouraged political involvement, funded a student's participation in the Virginia program for Girl's State, and donated 15 wreaths and served as greeters for Wreaths Across America which we helped place at Arlington Cemetery for the holidays.

The Home Life committee decided on projects supporting families in our school district by contributing holiday foods, after school snacks, and Christmas clothing to local elementary schools. The Home Life ladies organized member and club donations of layettes to our local hospitals and purchased requested "Pack N Play" beds for Fairfax Hospital. Our interest in and support of soldiers and their families are reflected in our donation to the VFW military family holiday programs by "adopting" a family. We added a donation to Eddie's Club this year for \$350 in support of special needs children and young adults. We made and sent scarves to deployed military members for Operation Gratitude. In the Health category we donated to the Heart Association, the Avon Walk for Breast Cancer. The Club donated over \$4300 toward these Home Life and Health projects.

The Education Committee supported the Richard Byrd Library's Educator's Night with donations as well as volunteer time: organizing, setting up, cleaning up, greeting, and general assistance. This committee also made donations to local teachers, giving snacks, and winter break foods to Garfield school families, and collected Box Tops for education for the school. All night grad party donations at two high schools and a \$3000 scholarship to a graduating senior top off the unique and generous contributions made by our Education Group! Our donations topped \$4800!

Communications are important to any organization. We continued our membership news, naming our monthly newsletter, *The Elephant's Ear*, and publishing our Yearbook with essential addresses and scheduling, which included a group photo this year! To keep up with our club "happenings" we have a website with current pictures and calendars, and now are on Facebook with club information. We publish news in community papers and newsletters. Our public interaction helps keep our name in the community and attracts new members. Our hospitality committee planned 8 events to promote interest and camaraderie in our club. We have a bridge club and added a new Movie Group to our offerings. We installed 1 new member this year and hope to increase membership with all of these efforts.

The Woman's Club of Springfield has excellent leadership, including the GFWC state treasurer, and 4 ladies serving in positions in the Northern District as Social, Credentials, and Arts Chairmen, and one a member of the auditing committee. Our club officers are active in the District, supporting their activities and sharing ideas about programs with other clubs. Funding for our club activities and GFWC donations comes from our dues and Ways and Means fundraisers. At our meetings we had vendors, 50/50 raffles, a silent auction, and held a separate fashion show. All of the charitable donations made by our club are possible because of our thrift shop, The Pink Elephant. We raised over \$25,000 there this year! Staffing the shop 5 days a week year round is quite a commitment, one we have been able to sustain, with some strains, for 51 years. We look forward to continuing this commitment to our community and to GFWC as we work and have fun together in 2016!