

MEMBERSHIP TOOLKIT: RECRUITMENT

DEVELOP AN “ELEVATOR SPEECH”

An “elevator speech” is a brief personal statement about something that is meaningful to you, which can be presented in 30 seconds—about the length of the average elevator ride. Chance encounters at grocery stores, coffee shops, community events, and social gatherings are often great opportunities to share your enthusiasm for GFWC with a potential member, but you must be prepared. Even when more time is available, boiling down your passion for GFWC into just a sentence or two is a great way to discern and recognize the value of your membership.

SAMPLE ELEVATOR SPEECHES

I am a member of GFWC—the General Federation of Women’s Clubs—a long-standing and productive women’s volunteer organization. We are committed to bettering our local communities and those around the world, and we work to improve the lives of women and their families. GFWC volunteers get a lot of joy from working together and helping others. Here, let me give you one of my cards. Call me, I would love to tell you more and invite you to get involved in some of our projects.

GFWC was one of the first volunteer organizations founded by women, and we continue to serve individuals and communities through a wide variety of service projects. Our current national emphasis is Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention. Would you like to learn more? Let me have your number so I can invite you to our next meeting.

Thanks for asking about my pin! GFWC is a sisterhood of women in clubs across the country who support their communities and like to help others. We have a good time doing it, too. Would you like to come to our next lunch and learn? We will be discussing local gardens, the importance of pollinators, such as bees and butterflies, and their role in healthy, vibrant gardens.

I am a member of a GFWC Junior Club, an organization with members across the country. Our club meets once a month, except in summer, and we work primarily on children’s issues, but we do all kinds of things. One of my favorite projects is our annual Kentucky Derby Party, a fundraiser for Shot@Life, which ensures children around the world have access to vaccines. You would be great on our decorations committee! Here is my card, look at the GFWC website and give me a call.

SET GOALS FOR GROWTH

If your club starts a new year with a decrease in members, recruit to restore your numbers. Set a goal for growth! Consider asking committed members to help increase GFWC membership by attaining three new members for the club each year.

Every member should have a personal goal:

- Individual members should invite at least one prospective member to a club meeting each year.
- Club presidents should aim for a net gain of three members each year.
- District Presidents should set a goal of one new club each Administration and share information and success stories to encourage other Districts.

IDENTIFY PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS

Wherever you go, you are likely to meet someone who will be interested in your GFWC volunteer service. Prospective members are everywhere!

- At the office: Invite a co-worker who has expressed an interest in a project you are working on to accompany you to a club or project committee meeting. Keep her special interests in mind and point out where her talents could be helpful.
- At social gatherings: Neighbors, friends, friends of friends, and even former members are all people who might want to assist with the projects your club is doing. Follow-up with a phone call or email invite. Consider getting the Membership Chairman involved too.
- At community meetings: Women who volunteer or work with other groups, such as PTA or a garden club, or others who show an interest in community improvement, are also good prospects. Never hesitate to talk about the projects that our club is working on and ask them to lend a hand or get involved.
- At local schools: School administrators, teachers, and other parents who have benefited from your club's programs, projects, scholarships, and other initiatives are good candidates. Schools are also a great opportunity for recruiting Juniorette members or forming Juniorette clubs.

Think of other places and ways to find members. Reach out to diverse groups and explore options for working together. Share news about club events and projects through online services, such as "MeetUp," or on social media for friends and family to see. Consider partnering with other local organizations on a common cause. Wear your pin—you never know who might ask about GFWC.

PLAN A RECRUITMENT EVENT

After identifying a list of prospective members, one of the most effective ways to connect them with your club is to host a recruitment event. There are many options for an event, from an afternoon social held in the home or garden of a member, to a quick and easy "mix and mingle" at a local restaurant or café. Many clubs are discovering that a hands-on-approach can be both fun and fruitful.

Research shows that clubs that plan relevant, stimulating, and meaningful projects that contribute to the growth of individuals and the community are the most successful at attracting new members. Consider looking at the GFWC Special Programs and Community Service

Programs for ideas and then choosing a simple but poignant project to feature at a recruitment event. Here are a few ideas:

- Create homemade cards or write encouraging messages to deployed servicemen or local nursing home residents.
- Collect comfort items for a domestic violence shelter and invite the shelter's manager to offer thanks and provide a brief synopsis of the shelter's work.
- Ask members and invitees to donate a book and make no-sew tie pillows at the event to be contributed to a program for underserved children.

SUCCESSFUL RECRUITMENT EVENT TIPS

Consider these tips before planning a recruitment event:

- Begin planning well in advance, at least three months before the event.
- Dedicate a club meeting to brainstorming for the guest list and ask members to bring lists of potential invitees.
- Consider holding award ceremonies in conjunction with the event, showing that the club appreciates and rewards participation.
- Keep the event short, informative, and interesting. Do not inundate guests with too much information.
- Choose a date and time that will appeal to your target audience, accommodating those who work or have childcare concerns.
- Select a venue that is easy to locate. Avoid crowded public areas.
- Provide the Membership Chairman's contact information for follow-up questions.
- Send invitations a month before the event, including the "when, where, and what," along with information on how to RSVP.
- Let invitees know they can bring a friend, which might make them more comfortable.
- Provide club members with the RSVP list prior to the event, so they know who will be there.
- Prepare by downloading and printing GFWC materials or order Living the Volunteer Spirit brochures from the GFWC Marketplace.
- Provide nametags for members and guests.
- Have a designated greeter to welcome guests at the door.
- Have all guests sign in and ask them to complete a Membership Profile (created by the club).

- Introduce each guest and ask them if they would like to say a few words.
- Begin and end on time. Have fun and create a welcoming environment.
- Ask invitees to join the club if club bylaws allow.
- Follow up with each attendee after the event with a phone call, email, or handwritten note.
- Connect with local chamber of Commerce & Real Estate Offices to leave Club brochures.