

## **MEMBERSHIP TOOLKIT: WELCOMING AND MENTORING NEW MEMBERS**

### **APPOINT A CLUB MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN**

While it is true that all members should be involved in the recruitment process, each club should have one person who is willing to step up and take the lead on membership efforts. Electing or appointing a Membership Chairman is an important step to recruiting new members and can make a world of difference to the future of your club. The Membership Chairman should be:

- Organized and efficient.
- Motivated and enthusiastic.
- Knowledgeable and positive about the club and GFWC.
- Comfortable speaking in public.
- Outgoing and happy to meet new people.
- Willing and able to delegate responsibility.

Engage new members by:

- Offering a ride to club and committee meetings and project sites.
- Organizing a seating plan, such as grouping by favorite color, to mix new and seasoned members.
- Conducting an icebreaker at the beginning of each meeting or several times a year.
- Inviting them to travel with you to a District or State Federation meeting.

Consider these suggestions for integrating new members into the club:

- Hold a special initiation or induction ceremony for new members and present them with a GFWC member pin. (GFWC Marketplace offers pins and a GFWC Ceremonies Guide.)
- Encourage a class of new members to plan and execute their own service project under the guidance of an experienced member.
- Find out what skills, talents, and abilities each new member offers and is willing to share (e.g., computer skills, artistic talents, knowledge of specific program or advancement areas, etc.).
- Teach new members about the club and GFWC. Host new member orientations, set up Big Sis/Little Sis or other mentoring programs, and welcome them to each meeting and encourage their participation in discussions and project activities.

## **GROUP ACTIVITY FOR AQUAINTING NEW AND SEASONED MEMBERS**

To retain members, everyone must be excited about the club and its opportunities for personal growth and friendships. Pairing experienced and new members to meet and share ideas and expectations is a good way to accomplish this task. Below are sample questions for a strategic “getting to know you” exercise but think creatively and adjust them for your needs. Choose thought-provoking questions that will offer new ideas and goal-setting opportunities for the club.

Create groups of equal numbers of seasoned and new members and ask:

### **SEASONED MEMBERS**

- If you could do last year again, what would you do differently?
- What advice do you have for new members?
- What club accomplishment(s) are you most proud of?
- What has GFWC membership added to your life?

### **NEW MEMBERS**

- What would you like this club to mean to you a year from now?
- What ideas do you have for community service projects?
- What personal or professional accomplishment are you most proud of?
- What talents or interests do you want to share with the club?

Allow 15 minutes or more for small group discussions and then gather the groups together to share highlights. Typically, it is more effective for seasoned members to report first, followed by new members.

### **MENTORING NEW MEMBERS**

Mentoring is an effective way to encourage the involvement of new members. Clubs can designate mentors as “Federation Buddies” or “Big Sisters.” The job of a mentor is to explain the “who, what, and how” of club work, so new members understand the club’s structure, activities, affiliation with GFWC, and how each part relates to the others. To find mentors within the club, find enthusiastic, committed members who are interested in helping and supporting new members. Some basic qualifications for a mentor include:

- A high level of interest and knowledge about the club and GFWC.
- The willingness and ability to devote the necessary time and energy to be an effective mentor, including offering a GFWC Orientation before the club year begins.

- The openness to share some common interests, such as hobbies, family situations, business connections, etc.

Mentors can be assigned before or after a new member is welcomed into the club. Establish some guidelines, such as when the mentoring period begins, what it consists of, and how long it extends. Here are some basic tasks that are typically part of a mentoring relationship:

- Accompanying the new member to club meetings and other functions; making them feel at home.
- Introducing the new member to the club and individually to members.
- Staying in touch to encourage participation and engagement.
- Sharing information on the GFWC programs and special projects of the club.
- Explaining club rules, routines, customs, and traditions.
- Encouraging a connection to GFWC and attendance at District, State Federation, Region, and GFWC meetings and events.