



# Bits & Pieces

**GFWC Vernon Township Woman's Club**

**November 2025**

**Volume 16, Issue 9**

**Next Meeting: November 20, 2025**

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

**Fran Gialanella**

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With Halloween and Heaven Hill behind us and the holidays ahead, it is a very busy time of year for everyone. We offer our thanks to all those who helped out with our Heaven Hill fundraiser. Hopefully, we can plan another fundraiser for the spring so there will be more to come on that.

Thanks also to all of you who came out to our October meeting for the presentation from the Market Street Mission and for the generous donations to that cause. I know that they were quite overwhelmed with the generosity of our group of women and that speaks to how much all of you are committed to helping our community. We hope to see as many as possible for our 'baby shower' in November with Birth Haven. The list of their needs is in this newsletter as well as last month's newsletter.

As mentioned, it is coming upon the time of year when all the projects/people we support are reaching out to VTWC for donations.

MJ Palmer shared with me that, on a recent call with a VTWC member, she was asked how best to determine which projects have the greatest need during the holiday season. She said she was really struck by this phrase—'the greatest need'. Our projects are basically equally weighted when it comes to need, although some may be more inclined to ask for help than others.

We know our department chairs will be dipping into their assigned budgets, during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday seasons, to satisfy as many of these needs as possible. The assigned budgets should be the first source of any donations since, in the recent past, many have not been spending their budget monies while still asking the club for certain donations.



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If you are a member who wants to regularly donate, you probably have already identified which projects you are able to donate to in-kind and want to support. If you are a new member, or one who is conflicted about where to donate, choose the ones that touch your heart. Perhaps it is a project where children are the focus or the un-housed or lonely. There are many organizations we support, many of which request the same types of things. However, please remember that no club member is obligated in any way to make in-kind donations.

During this season of giving, the greatest need will be the one you can aim to freely and joyfully fulfill. I wish you all the best and hope to see you soon.

Fran



# 2025-2026 EVENTS CALENDAR

**\* Contact Maria Dorsey, Federation Secretary, if interested in any of the NJSFWC or District events**

## 2025

- November 15 \*      Headquarters Open House Celebration for 60th Anniversary
- November 20      VTWC Meeting—Birth Haven Speaker and Baby Shower for Birth Haven
- December 4        VTWC Holiday Celebration (strictly social, fun and games, puzzle exchange)
- December 18      VTWC Business Meeting and Installation of New Members

## 2026

- January 14 \*      Highlands District Council, Thursday Morning Club, Madison, New Jersey
- January 22        VTWC Meeting—Speaker Lisa Valentino, NJ State Outreach Coordinator, CUE (Community United Effort) Center for Missing Persons
- February 26      VTWC Meeting—Heart Warming Presentation—Soothing Paws Therapy Dogs and Annual Cookie Baking and Gifting
- March 5 \*         Civic Engagement and Outreach Day
- March 11 \*        Highlands District Performing Arts Festival (snow date 3/18)
- March 26         VTWC Meeting—Presentation related to Women’s History Month
- April 8 \*         Highlands District Spring Conference
- April 23         VTWC Meeting—Speaker from Sussex County Sheriff’s Dept. Topic TBD

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**2026**

- May 28                   VTWC Meeting—TBD (tentative—new officers for 2026-2028)
  
- June 10 \*               Highlands District Council Meeting—Vernon Township  
                              Woman’s Club, 21 Church Street, Vernon, New Jersey
  
- June 25                 VTWC Meeting—Summer Sendoff

## 2025-2026 VTWC Leadership

### Executive Board

President	Fran Gialanella
First Vice President	MJ Palmer (Programs)
Second Vice President	Fran Janusko (Fundraising)
Treasurer	Judy Phillips (Ways & Means)
Recording Secretary	Donna Maher
Corresponding Secretary	Linda Hibbert
Federation Secretary	Maria Dorsey (traditionally outgoing President)

### Committee Chairs

Communications	Maria Dorsey (Facebook and Media)
Internal Communications	Karen Breese (Newsletter “Bits & Pieces”)
Webmaster	Deborah Fagnan
Membership	Joan Danaher

### Department Chairs

Advocates for Children	Fran Gialanella
Birth Haven	Rosetta Peterson
Dulce Esperanza	Meg Gleason
Ginnie’s House	Donna Maher
Arts Performing & Arts & Culture	Dee Garbarino
Civic Engagement & Outreach	Debra Piccirillo
Veterans & Military Support	Debra Piccirillo
International Affairs	Lisa Mills
Birthday Bags	Lisa Thomas, Judy Phillips
Benny’s Bodega	Lisa Murphy
DASI	Lisa Murphy
Market Street Mission	Pat Berls, Joanne Matthes
Project Self-Sufficiency	Joan Danaher, Dee Garbarino
WAFO (Warwick Area Farmworkers Organization)	Meg Gleason
Education & Libraries	Valerie Seufert
Environment & Conservation	Maria Dorsey
Health & Wellness	Karen Szepietowski
Blankets with Care	Karen Szepietowski
Comfort Pillows	Reba Burrell
Vial of Life	Rosemarie Guidice
Special State Project (The NJ Children’s Alliance)	Fran Gialanella
President’s Scrapbook	Nancy Speruta and Maryann DiCola

## **THIS MONTH'S MEETING**

**BIRTH HAVEN 'BABY SHOWER'**  
**Rosetta Peterson**

**Come Join Us**  
**November 20, 6:30 pm**

This month, we will be welcoming a speaker from Birth Haven followed by a Baby Shower for Birth Haven residents. For over 40 years, Birth Haven has provided shelter and support to homeless, pregnant women. The speaker will share with us Birth Haven's ongoing work in Sussex County and their vision for the future.

If you are able to make a donation to Birth Haven, I invite you to bring it along to our November meeting. Donations may be placed on the donation table and should be labeled as "Birth Haven". There are currently 8 moms and 2 babies in residence with 6 babies on the way.

Please access the link below (which will bring you to our website) for a list of suggestions for the baby shower.

<https://www.vtwc.org/current-upcoming-news-events>

Thank you for your support.

Rosetta

**VTWC**  
***Holiday Party***  
***December 4<sup>th</sup>, 6:30pm***  
***Vernon Senior Center***  
***You're Invited***  
***to***  
***CONNECT with VTWC***  
***members***  
***PLAY games***  
***WIN prizes***  
***RELAX and have fun!!***



*We are taking a different approach this year, enjoying our holiday celebration on its own, not in combination with our business meeting.*

***WEAR*** festive, casual clothing (think sweats and PJs). There will be a prize for the most festive outfit!!

***BRING*** a savory nibble, sweet snack, or holiday beverage to share.

***EXCHANGE*** a grab-bag gift (\$15 or less). This is optional. Bring a gift, get a gift

*As always, your ideas and help are welcome. Feel free to contact MJ Palmer or Anne Whitty.*

**FUNDRAISING**  
**Fran Janusko**  
**Second Vice-President**

Thank you to all of the members who volunteered their time to make our Heaven Hill event a success. Our members worked a total of 200 hours this season. I am submitting an invoice to Heaven Hill for reimbursement this month.

Thank you to Barbara Fimia and Linda Hibbert for conducting the 50/50 at the October meeting.

50/50 will be available at our November meeting.

Fran

**CORRESPONDING SECRETARY**  
**Linda Hibbert**

To all:

We received a beautiful thank you note from Robert Wickham for the birthday bag he received from us! He said he enjoys puzzles and appreciates the hand-made throw blanket and the treats as well!

Just a gentle reminder... If you receive a thank you letter personally from one of our organizations for our donations and help, please give the original to me so I can pass it on to our scrapbook ladies, Maryann and Nancy!

If you wish to share it with our members at a meeting or in the Newsletter, that would be welcomed or, when you give it to me, I will.

See you all at our November meeting!

Linda

**TREASURER'S NOTES**

**Judy Phillips**

It will be nice to see everyone at the November meeting after being away. If there is anyone who has money owed to them, please bring your original receipts to the meeting for reimbursement. I apologize for any inconvenience that my absence may have caused you.

Judy

**SEASONAL NOTES**

**Santa Letter Boxes**

**Valerie Seufert**

Santa letter boxes will be in place by November 20 at the Dorothy Henry Public Library in Vernon and the Glenwood, McAfee and Highland Lakes post offices. The letters will be picked up from these locations on December 16th to allow time to send letters out so the letters are received before Christmas.

Valerie



## ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN

**GINNIE'S HOUSE**  
**Donna Maher**

Calling all teddy bears and children's blankets!

Ginnie's House Annual Children's Christmas Party is approaching. Each child is given a teddy bear and blanket. Your kind donations toward this cause will be needed no later than the November meeting.

Thank you in advance for your kindness!

Donna



## **CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH**

### **BIRTHDAY BAGS**

**Lisa Thomas and Judy Phillips**

This month, we delivered 8 birthday bags for October and November birthdays at the nursing home. We will send an email mid-November to get the list for their December and January birthdays.

As always, thank you for your continued support and contributions.

Lisa

### **DASI**

**Lisa Murphy**

DASI has a couple of specific requests this month:

Gingerbread house kits. DASI would like assembling the gingerbread houses to be an activity on Thanksgiving.

Crocheted or knitted afghan blankets to be provided to the clients on an 'as needed' basis.

Thank you for your donations. They are truly appreciated!

Lisa

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

### MARKET STREET MISSION

Pat Berls and Joanne Matthes



Many thanks to all for your generous donations to the Market Street Mission. We were overwhelmed by your response and grateful for your support.



NOTE: We will be happy to accept any additional in-kind donations for the Market Street Mission at any time. We will periodically provide an updated list of items that can be donated.

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

### EARTH ANGELS

Valerie Seufert

Hi All: Thank you for your donations at the October meeting. We will be collecting again at the November meeting. As a reminder, any 2026 calendars you receive, that you do not use, can be donated to the Earth Angels project along with greeting cards that homebound seniors can use throughout the year. All types of greeting cards, except Christmas cards, are requested.

We are making up the packets on December 1st. Any items brought to the December meeting will start next year's collection. I also just found out the seniors request puzzle books—crossword, sudoku and word search—so, if you feel like buying any at the dollar stores, they will be appreciated.

Thank you,  
Valerie



## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

WAFO  
Warwick Area Farmworker Organization  
Meg Gleason

### HOMEWORK CLUB

The Homework Club is underway and off to a great start! This program takes place on Tuesday afternoons at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, 70 Little York Avenue, Warwick, New York from 4:30—5:30. Tutors work one-on-one with students to complete homework, read together and then wrap up the hour with a board game or puzzle. If you are interested in volunteering your time to this program, please contact Kathy Brieger at [kbrieger@sunriver.org](mailto:kbrieger@sunriver.org) or JoBeth Leon at [jleon@sunriver.org](mailto:jleon@sunriver.org). You can also reach out to me for more information. You can email me at [mmgleason98@yahoo.com](mailto:mmgleason98@yahoo.com) or call/text me at 201-906-9814.



## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

WAFO  
Warwick Area Farmworker Organization  
Meg Gleason

### THANKSGIVING TURKEY DINNERS

In the past few years, VTWC has helped prepare and deliver Thanksgiving turkey dinners for farm workers who otherwise would not have a hot turkey meal. Most of these workers are the single men who live in the camps in and around the farms. Following is an email from Kathy Brieger setting forth the specifics for this year's turkey distribution. If you are interested in volunteering, please let me know at [mmgleason98@yahoo.com](mailto:mmgleason98@yahoo.com) and Kathy know at [kbrieger@sunriver.org](mailto:kbrieger@sunriver.org).

#### ***Email from Kathy Brieger:***

On Tuesday, November 25, we will be preparing for two things on that day—the first is food delivery to about 14 camps. We will prepare the foods in the kitchen of St. Peter's Lutheran Church and then have outreach to the locations. We are also going to host dinners for 25 farm workers in the Alamo Community Center in the evening from 6:30—8:00 p.m. It is a smaller dining experience since the space is limited in the Alamo. We will be taking reservations. I will be putting a call out to all volunteers who would like to get involved in any way.

We have received a donation from the Hope Chest and Elba Bizoni (WAFO Board Member) to offer this meal. We are still in need of 8 turkeys that need to be cooked and carved. They would need to be brought to the church by 4:00 on November 25. We are also looking for platters of cookies to be brought to the camps with the delivery.

If you can do either of those things, let me know! We appreciate all that you do for our children.

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

**WAFO**  
**Warwick Area Farmworker Organization**  
**Meg Gleason**

### **THE CHRISTMAS STORE**

The Christmas Store for WAFO families will once again take place this December. For those who are not familiar with the event, it is a significant undertaking for WAFO. Over 100 families shop for holiday gifts in the store that is filled with new donated items. In the past, VTWC members have helped with many of the tasks related to the store including the pricing and sorting of gifts, store set-up and assistance during shopping hours. Children's activities are done in the lower level of the church while parents shop during their appointed time. On the last day of the program, help is needed for clean-up. Below is a chart with the dates and times for each activity. The location is St. Peter's Lutheran Church, 70 Little York Avenue, Warwick, New York.

If you would like to volunteer your time for any of these time slots, please use the Sign-Up Genius link below. If you are not comfortable using that, please let me know and I will assist you.

DATE	HOURS	ACTIVITY	VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
12/08	5:30—8:00 pm	Pricing/sorting gifts	10
12/10	5:30—8:00 pm	Pricing/sorting gifts	10
12/11	5:30—8:00 pm	Pricing/sorting gifts	10
12/15	5:30—8:00 pm	P/SG & room setup	10
12/17	5:30—8:00 pm	P/SG & room setup	10
12/18	5:30—8:00 pm	P/SG & room setup	10
12/19	5:00—8:00 pm	Christmas Store	10
12/20	10:00 am—4:00 pm	Christmas Store	10
12/21	1:00—5:00 pm	Christmas Store and Final Clean Up	10

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050C4FA9A729A0FF2-59978361-wafo#/>

## ARTS & CULTURE

### ART CONTEST VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Dee Garbarino

We have some volunteers for the Bicentennial+50 years Art Contest for next year. The project is an Art Contest for July 4, 2026 for the children of Vernon.

This will be based on the 250th anniversary of our country.

Please let me know if you would like to help out. It should be fun!

Thank you,

Dee



**HEALTH & WELLNESS**

**BLANKETS WITH CARE**  
**Karen Szepietowski**

Below are the measurements for the blankets we donate to local organizations:

- Chemo & Dialysis      28 wide by 45 long    (maximum 30 wide by 50 long)
- DASI                      36 wide by 60 long    (for beds)
- Lap Robes                26 wide by 26 long
- Baby Blankets            29 wide by 29 long
- Rectangles                7 inches by 9 inches

\*\*\*\*\*

To all our knitters and crocheters out there, if anyone is feeling ambitious, DASI has asked for bed blankets. The blankets should be twin-size, roughly 4 feet x 6 feet. (Anywhere between 40-48 inches wide x 60-72 inches long should be sufficient.) I will have a couple made by our November meeting and, hopefully, a couple more by our December meeting. Thanks to all who can help out!

I would like to remind everyone that the end of the year is approaching so keep in mind that all project reports will be due at the end of December for all activities you participated in during calendar year 2025.

Thank you.

Karen Szepietowski  
Health & Wellness Chair

## HEALTH & WELLNESS

### OPERATION SMILE

Lisa Mills

At our October meeting, a dozen lovely ladies helped tie the fringes into three soft, snuggly blankets for children served by Operation Smile. The blankets will be sent to Operation Smile's headquarters along with some small toys we have collected. Thanks to everyone who helped!

Lisa



### COMFORT PILLOWS

Reba Burrell

I would like to thank those that continue to support the comfort pillows project. I am amazed with the many generous gifts of material and polyfil that I receive from members. I graciously accept all gifts of materials that are donated to help with this ongoing project.

THANKS!

Reba J. Burrell

**Margaret Conti**

Margaret is our special friend and likes to receive cards and small “gifts” from us. Any time you would like, send her a card to say “HI”.

Margaret Conti  
PafaCom, Inc.  
543 East Garden Road  
Vineland, NJ 08360

\*\*Reminder: The cost for Margaret’s cards, gifts, etc. each month is the responsibility of the “friend” member. Our budget does not have any monies allocated to reimburse for postage, etc.

Thanks to all who contributed to Margaret Conti’s Halloween treats. I am sure she enjoyed receiving them.

Thank you.

Karen Szepietowski



*Ongoing Collections*

*We have an ongoing collection for pop tabs found on soda cans, pet food, soup cans, etc. We also have an ongoing collection for children's DVDs for DASI.*

*Thank you all for your donations to these ongoing collections.*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Friendly Reminder*

*If you haven't already done so, please be sure to review the NJSFWC Website at your leisure (information below).*

**NJSFWC Website**  
  
**The New Jersey State  
Federation of Woman's Clubs'  
website  
is packed full of information.  
[www.njsfwc.org](http://www.njsfwc.org)  
  
No log in is necessary.**