



Bits & Pieces

GFWC Vernon Township Woman's Club

January 2026

Volume 17 Issue 1

Next Meeting: January 22, 2026

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Fran Gialanella

(Page 1 of 2)

Happy New Year ladies. I certainly hope everyone was able to take some time for themselves and their families to rest and enjoy some time for renewals. I was in the theme parks in Florida riding on roller coasters and while I wouldn't have missed that time with my children and grandchildren for the world, I am also literally happy to be back on solid ground and in my little office typing and sewing!

We are immersed in report time and many have already submitted their information and reports to the respective chairs and to me. Just as a reminder, we have set a deadline to me of January 16th when the chairpersons need to have their reports done. I know that there may be some last minute additions and changes so please try and properly document and report all time and contributions you have made to our various projects in 2025. Let me or your respective chairpersons know if there are any questions or concerns. Reporting is an important part of the way our club can show the rest of the state the great work we are doing and service we are continuing to provide to our community. We should all be very proud of that.

I also wanted to mention that we will need to create a Nominating Committee this month to come up with a slate of officers for the next 2 years beginning in June. If anyone is willing to be a part of that committee, if you could let me know before the January 22nd meeting, that would be helpful. I cannot sit on that committee but other Board members could. In addition, if any of the current Board members are willing to serve another 2 year term, it would be helpful to know that.



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Our January meeting, in addition to having an interesting speaker from the Center for Missing Persons, will include a swearing in of several new members; some business we must address such as the Nominating Committee and a discussion and vote on the proposed amendments to the By-Laws which I sent you all a few days ago.

I hope to see as many of you as possible at the meeting.

Fran



2026 EVENTS CALENDAR

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

January 22	VTWC Meeting—Speaker Lisa Valentino, NJ State Outreach Coordinator, CUE (Community United Effort) Center for Missing Persons; Installation of New Members
February 26	VTWC Meeting—Heart Warming Presentation—Soothing Paws Therapy Dogs and Annual Cookie Baking and Gifting Project
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 & Achievement Day, Hanover Manor, East Hanover, NJ
April 13 *	GCI Orientation, Roxbury Senior Center, 1:30 pm
April 23	VTWC Meeting—Speaker from Sussex County Sheriff’s Dept. Topic TBD
April 27	Taste of Vernon 2026, Red Tail Lodge, Mountain Creek, NJ
May 3-6 *	NJSFWC 132nd Annual Convention, Hard Rock Hotel, Atlantic City, NJ—Theme: “When Friends Gather”
May 28	VTWC Meeting—TBD (tentative—new officers for 2026-2028)

2026 EVENTS CALENDAR

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

- | | |
|------------|---|
| June 1-4 * | Girls' Career Institute, Douglass Residential College at Rutgers University |
| June 11 * | 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

MONTHLY MEETING
January 22, 2026 6:30 p.m.
MJ Palmer, First Vice-President
Programs
CUE Center for Missing Persons



**On January 22, 2026, our speaker will be Lisa Valentino,
NJ State Outreach Coordinator for CUE.**

CUE (Community United Effort) Center for Missing Persons is a non-profit organization serving missing persons nationwide. Since 1994, CUE has provided advocacy for missing children and adults, free professionally trained search personnel and victim support service. To date, the CUE Center has helped more than 12,000 families in what is often the most confusing and desperate times of their lives.

For more information about 'CUE 'or to volunteer, please visit the website
<https://ncmissingpersons.org>

Lisa can be reached via email at
lvalentino86093@gmail.com or via phone at **[\(201\)401-1665](tel:(201)401-1665)**

MONTHLY MEETING
January 22, 2026 6:30 p.m.
MJ Palmer, First Vice-President
Programs
Installation of New Members

In addition to our speaker, Lisa Valentino, the NJ State Outreach Coordinator for CUE, we will have the Installation of New Members over the past year:

New Members

Eileen Donovan
Marilyn Frandfors
Kim Higgins
Rose Nakamura
Susan Peltyszyn
Amanda Philippe
Lorren Renninger
Shelley Spierman
Barbara Tesa
Linda Vaccarella
Michelle Woolley



UPCOMING MEETING
February 26, 2026 6:30 p.m.
MJ Palmer, First Vice-President
Programs
Annual Cookie Baking and Gifting



February is our Cookie Project month when we bake thousands of home-made cookies just to give them away! So ... pick out the recipe for your favorite **nut-free** cookies, bake six (6) dozen cookies and bring them to the meeting on February 26th. Sugar-free cookies are also an option to bring. Although store-bought cookies can be delicious, for this project, we only bake and deliver home-made cookies.

We will spend time together at the meeting packaging them in Ziploc bags with labels identifying our club. Our members will deliver them to The Homestead in Newton and to DASI. Feel free to bring a few extras to share at the meeting.

UPCOMING MEETING
February 26, 2026 6:30 p.m.
MJ Palmer, First Vice-President
Programs
Soothing Paws Therapy Dogs



During our February meeting, in addition to our annual cookie baking and gifting, we will feature a heartwarming presentation from Soothing Paws Therapy Dogs. Carrie Plantamura, the Soothing Paws Program Manager, will be speaking to us about this beloved animal-assisted therapy program featuring trained dogs and volunteers who provide comfort, reduce stress and improve well-being for patients, families and staff across Atlantic Health System's hospitals. If you are willing, there will be an opportunity for some hands on, unconditional love from the dogs Carrie will be bringing that night.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

BIRTHDAY BAGS

Lisa Thomas and Judy Phillips

Happy New Year! We have 1 Birthday Bag for February and 3 Birthday Bags for March. I will be delivering them to The Homestead in February.

As always, thank you for your donations and contributions.

Lisa and Judy

DASI

Lisa Murphy

I have checked with Kim Prentiss at DASI and she has informed me that DASI is in need of the items listed below. If you can, please bring one or more items to the January meeting and I will deliver the items to DASI.

Cereal
Peanut Butter & Jelly
Jarred Pasta Sauce
Chip bags for school lunches
Fruit cups for school lunches
Plastic food storage containers
Bottles of juice.

Thank you!

Lisa

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

MARKET STREET MISSION

Pat Berls and Joanne Matthes



HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

Once again, we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks for your donations to the Market Street Mission. Your generosity is making a meaningful difference for those in need.

Please remember the unhoused who are living in difficult conditions with all the cold elements winter brings. At this time, shelter is okay but they are always in need of bottled water and individually wrapped sweets such as cakes or cookies, granola bars, etc.

On a positive note, Jeff asked us to relay to you that one of the clients from the shelter has entered the Life Change program in Morristown and is doing well. He is under 30 years old and has decided he doesn't want to continue to live the way he is. Please keep him in your prayers.

See you at the meeting on the 22nd!

Joanne and Pat

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

WAFO
Warwick Area Farmworker Organization
Meg Gleason

HOMEWORK CLUB

The Homework Club is underway! 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 or JoBeth Leon at jleon@sunriver.org. You can also reach out to me for more information. You can email me at mmgleason98@yahoo.com or call/text me at 201-906-9814.



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

WAFO
Warwick Area Farmworker Organization
Meg Gleason

THE CHRISTMAS STORE

Thank you to everyone who participated in the success of the WAFO Christmas Store! Whether it was through donations or volunteering your time during the store hours, your generosity is appreciated! Over 80 families were able to purchase gifts for their loved ones at just a fraction of the retail cost!



EDUCATION & LIBRARIES

GIRLS' CAREER INSTITUTE

Valerie Seufert

Girls' Career Institute Applications will be in the Vernon Township High School by January 20th. If you know of any girls in their junior year at the high school, who might be interested in applying to us to attend this four day mini-college experience, please have them contact their Guidance Counselor. We pay the cost of the session and provide our delegates with \$25.00 spending money while attending. They are responsible for transportation to and from Douglass College. Any questions, I can be contacted at 973-764-3314.

Thank you,
Valerie



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	

During December 2025, 4 twin-size bed blankets were delivered to DASI and 13 hospice blankets (including 4 red/white/blue) were delivered to the Karen Ann Quinlan Hospice Center. This brought the total blankets distributed during 2025 to 42. Thanks to all who contributed in any way to the Blankets with Care project.

**LET'S GET MOVING CHALLENGE
Karen Szepietowski**

During calendar year 2025, our club members collectively clocked in a total of 1,922.50 hours of various exercise and physical therapy activities. Great job, ladies! It's a new year so start keeping track of all of your exercise hours again. Hopefully, we can top that number during 2026. Thank you!

Karen Szepietowski
Health & Wellness Chair

HEALTH & WELLNESS

COMFORT PILLOWS Reba Burrell

At the present time, I have about 120 pillows in the attic ready to be donated. The auxiliary representative requested that I wait until February to make a donation for the new year. So I will be donating pillows in February to NMC—Newton, New Jersey. There is a quilters' group that also makes pillows for the hospital; therefore, my donations have been curtailed some.

I have been asked to make seatbelt covers and port pillows for chemotherapy patients. These pillows can also be used by pacemaker patients. The Velcro attachment fits snugly on the seatbelt. So, as a result, I am busy sewing again making mostly port pillows.



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.

A \$50.00 gift card was sent to Margaret Conti as a Christmas gift from our club.

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

No log in is necessary.

PLEASE KEEP SAVING

Ongoing Collections

POP TABS—found on soda cans, pet food, soup cans, etc.

CHILDREN'S DVDs FOR DASI

GREETING CARDS—Valerie Seufert volunteers for the Senior Earth Angels in Sussex County. Each December, Valerie and her team put together packages of assorted greeting cards (except Christmas), puzzle books, calendars and note pads for each homebound senior for them to use throughout the year. We often get cards and note pads in the mail from organizations—these are great.

JUST FOR YOU BAGS—Items are needed for clients who come into one of the DASI programs and for clients who transition out of the programs. Some items requested are bath towel; body lotion; body wash; brush; ChapStick; comb; shampoo/conditioner; deodorant; face cloth; hand/kitchen towel; oven mitt; pillow case; pillows; potholder; sheet set (twin); soap; socks; sponge; toothbrush/toothpaste.

Donations are collected through the year. These projects are ongoing.

Thank you all for your donations to these ongoing collections.