



Bits & Pieces

GFWC Vernon Township Woman's Club

September 2025

Volume 16, Issue 7

Next Meeting: September 25, 2025

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Fran Gialanella

Lisa DeRitter

Welcome back to a new season for our Woman's Club. I hope you all had a wonderful summer with family, friends and just enjoying life a bit. It was wonderful to see so many of you at the picnic and we couldn't have asked for a more beautiful day. At the end of the day, I think that's what it's about and also trying to do our part to ease life for those having some difficulties. Our club is great at that.

We have a great year of programs, fundraisers and some fun planned for 2025-2026. There will be plenty of volunteering opportunities and it would be wonderful if all of our members could find something they could do to assist in our efforts. With that in mind, our first and major fundraiser for the season is the Heaven Hill Pumpkin Fest and we need volunteers. I know that an email has already gone out for sign up, so please consider helping. It's an easy job and a lot of fun and, if it's your first time, there is always someone there to help out.

I hope to see as many as possible at our first meeting on September 25th, which is one we always look forward to between the pot-luck dinner and a report from our Girls' Career Institute representatives. Happy September to all.

Fran

2025-2026 EVENTS CALENDAR

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

2025

- September 15- November 2 Heaven Hill Farm, Great Pumpkin Festival
- September 25 - VTWC Meeting—Annual Potluck Dinner and report from the young ladies we sponsored at GCI
- October 20 * - NJSFWC Fall Conference—Lobster Shanty, 80 Channel Drive, Point Pleasant Beach, NJ, \$60
- October 23 - VTWC Meeting—Speaker Jeff Lukawski from the Market Street Mission
- November 13 and November 15 * Headquarters Open House Celebration for 60th Anniversary
- November 20 - VTWC Meeting—Birth Haven Speaker and Baby Shower for Birth Haven
- December 18 - VTWC Meeting—Holiday Celebration

2026

- January 22 - VTWC Meeting—Speaker Lisa Valentino, NJ State Outreach Coordinator, CUE (Community United Effort) Center for Missing Persons
- February 26 - VTWC Meeting—Presentation related to Heart Health and Annual Cookie Baking and Gifting
- March 11 * - Highlands District Performing Arts Festival (snow date 3/18)
- March 26 - VTWC Meeting—Presentation related to Women's History Month

2025-2026 EVENTS CALENDAR

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

2026

- April 8 * - Highlands District Spring Conference
- April 23 - VTWC Meeting—Speaker from Sussex County Sheriff's Dept.
Topic TBD
- May 28 - VTWC Meeting—TBD
- June 10 * - Highlands District Council Meeting
- June 25 - VTWC Meeting—Summer Sendoff

Note: Dates for the installation of new members and Executive Board elections are TBD.

2025-2026 VTWC Leadership

Executive Board

Co-Presidents	Fran Gialanella, Lisa DeRitter
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”)
Membership	Joan Danaher
Webmaster	Deborah Fagnan

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
September 25, 6:30 pm Meeting Program
MJ Palmer, First Vice-President
Programs
ANNUAL POTLUCK EVENT



We will once again be “breaking bread” together at our September meeting during our annual potluck supper. This well-attended event provides an opportunity to reconnect after our summer meeting hiatus while enjoying delicious appetizers, entrees and desserts prepared by our members. If you would like to bring something to place on the potluck buffet, you will find the signup sheet here:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0A4DAEA62EA3FFC52-58509765-vtwc>

As always, if you have any challenges with signing up to bring a dish, feel free to email me at mjp307@aol.com.

Thank you.

GIRLS CAREER INSTITUTE
OUR DELEGATES SHARE EXPERIENCES
MJ Palmer, First Vice-President



Many of the programs/projects we feature at our monthly meetings highlight a particular “cause” which our members support. One of the causes we have been involved with for many years, and which is especially meaningful to our women’s organization, is the sponsorship of young ladies in our community to attend the annual Girls’ Career Institute (GCI). Val Seufert, who is the VTWC lead in selecting our GCI delegates, had this to say about GCI: *“This is a project that really helps girls feel much better making the decision to go away to college or not. There is so much anxiety for students getting ready for the next chapter in life that, if we can relieve it a little, it is so worthwhile. They also meet so many wonderful people there and many become lifelong friends.”*

GCI offers a “mini college and career exploration experience” at Douglass Residential College on the campus of Rutgers University. Delegates experience a sample of college life by living in a dorm, eating in a cafeteria and attending lectures and workshops. They learn about career choices from volunteer professional speakers and how to network with other delegates from all over the State of New Jersey.

During our September meeting, the young ladies we sponsored for GCI this year, Ashley Gallego Giraldo and Alexandra Monson, will share their experiences from the event. So, have your questions ready.

MESSAGE FROM THE VTWC EXECUTIVE BOARD
by MJ PALMER



The VTWC Executive Board met on August 21 to plan for the Fall projects and discuss some concerns voiced by members.

You might have noticed for the June meeting an abundance of requests for in-kind donations. The Board would like to minimize these requests, or eliminate them all together, when there is money in budgets to cover the cost of these donations. This has been previously communicated at our meetings. Committee leaders should consider this a gentle reminder.

When there is no longer any money left in budgets, committee leaders are asked to coordinate with other leads when asking for in-kind donations. This way our generous members will not feel over-solicited when donating in-kind. If you are a member who wants to bring in-kind donations to every meeting, please contact committee leaders about what is urgently needed that month or for any upcoming special needs such as during holidays.

One of the other concerns the Board discussed was a better way to distribute sign-up requests. This was another situation that arose in June with the soldier stockings. There was a lot of confusion over what was still needed. This resulted in many emails and a lot of extra donations which will, gratefully, be put to other use.

Those of us on the Board, who have been involved in projects where volunteers are needed to sign up for helping or for donating items, feel the hard copy sign-up sheets circulated at meetings are the best method to use. We are exploring an online process with a document that can easily be accessed by members and not at risk of corruption by members who are not as fluid with Signup Genius or Google Docs. If you do not attend meetings, but need volunteers or donations, please ask a fellow member who attends meetings to circulate and collect the hard copy sign-up sheets.

If you are challenged by signing up for any event, feel free to directly reach out to the committee lead for that event rather than “reply all” to email.

As always, your cooperation regarding these matters is appreciated!!

TREASURER'S NOTES

Judy Phillips

Dear Members:

I want to inform you that I will not be able to attend the meetings in September and October.

If you have any original receipts and require reimbursement from the club, please feel free to reach out to me at 973-670-0091. I can arrange to meet with you personally or I can send the reimbursement check to the September meeting with Maria Dorsey.

Let's work together to ensure you receive your reimbursements promptly.

Thank you!
Judy

FUNDRAISING

Fran Janusko
Second Vice-President

- 50/50 tickets will be available before the start of the meeting, 8 tickets for \$5.00;
- There are several available opportunities to volunteer for the Pumpkin Festival at Heaven Hill. Feel free to speak with me at the meeting with any questions regarding this fundraiser.

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

Linda Hibbert

On 7/12/25, Kristen Silipena sent us a thank you note for awarding her the Community Service Scholarship from our club.

On 7/25/25, we received a thank you note from DASI for our July donations of gift cards, towels, flip-flops, pantry items, toiletries, breads and storage bags.

On 8/13/25, Alexandra (Allie) Monson sent us a thank you note for our club sponsoring her for the GCI program.

COMMUNICATIONS

Maria Dorsey

A great big THANK YOU to Deb Fagnan, our new Webmaster. She has been working very hard on our new updated website (with a little tweaking from me). Please take a look at it and let her know what you think—if you have any additions, deletions or corrections, send her an email. If you just want to let her know how great it is compared to our old one, I'm sure she would love to hear from you.

ENVIRONMENT

Maria Dorsey

I was very disappointed last week when we had to cancel our road cleanup for Vernon Clean Communities and lose another fundraising event. I will try once again to schedule a cleanup in the spring and perhaps we can get more members to sign up.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

DASI

Lisa Murphy

Items requested by DASI for this month's collection are:

Jarred applesauce
Cans chili and stew
Pasta and rice side dish packs
Pudding snack packs for school lunches
Fruit cups for school lunches
Syrup

Ongoing collections for DASI's Just for You Bags consist of items requested for DASI clients who come into one of the DASI programs and/or for DASI clients who transition out of the program. The ongoing collection requests are:

Bath Towel	Hand Towel
Blanket (Twin)	Kitchen Towel
Body Lotion	Oven Mitt
Body Wash	Pillow Case (Twin)
Brush	Pillows
Chapstick	Potholder
Comb	Shampoo
Conditioner	Sheet Set (Twin)
Dawn	Soap
Deodorant	Socks
Dish Towel	Sponge
Emory Board	Toothbrush
Face Cloth	Toothpaste
Hand Cream	

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

MARKET STREET MISSION **Pat Berls and Joanne Matthes**

The Market Street Mission is a new outreach project which was approved unanimously at our June meeting and has been added to the other outreach programs helped by the VTWC. The Mission is an experienced organization with proven methods of helping to fight alcoholism, drug abuse and hunger. Its aim is to fulfill the immediate basic needs of homeless men in Sussex County.

Jeff Lukawski, the site manager of the Newton Mission, will be our speaker at our October 25 meeting. If you can donate any of the items listed below, please bring them to our October meeting marked as “MARKET STREET MISSION”.

Thank you for your support!
Joanne and Pat

Shelter Needs

Laundry Detergent—Liquid only

Bleach

Dryer Sheets

Fabuloso—Multi-Purpose Cleaner (can be found in dollar stores)

First Aid Supplies: Band-Aids/anti-bacterial cream or spray/antiseptic/gauze

Food Products

Bottled Water—Case

Coffee

Sugar (no packets please)

Breakfast Snacks (Grab & Go—individually wrapped items)

Entenmann’s or any cereal, protein, breakfast bar, granola bars of all types

Personal Products

Men’s Body Wash

QuickChek \$10 Gift Cards—given out to homeless at Jeff’s discretion for client to purchase a breakfast/lunch at the QuickChek which is close to the shelter.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

BIRTHDAY BAGS

Lisa Thomas and Judy Phillips

There were five birthday bags delivered in August. Three birthday bags for August and two birthday bags for September. I will be reaching out to the Homestead the end of September to get the list of birthdays for October and November.

Thank you!
Lisa

WAFO

Warwick Area Farmworker Organization

Meg Gleason

One of the programs WAFO sponsors is the Tuesday Afternoon Homework Club. The program follows the Warwick school calendar and is held at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, 70 Little York Avenue, Warwick, New York from 4:30—5:30 p.m. Tutors work one-on-one with students to complete homework, read together and wrap up the hour with a fun game.

If you are interested in volunteering your time, please contact Kathy Brieger at kbrieger@sunriver.org.

Thank you.
Meg

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

EARTH ANGELS

Valerie Seufert

Hi All: Friendly reminder to save any calendars you receive for 2026 for the Earth Angels project along with greeting cards. You can also purchase calendars at Dollar General for \$1.00. Last year, with donations and what I purchased myself, we provided 55 calendars to go in the holiday bags for home bound and nursing home seniors. Earth Angels puts together at least 100 bags for seniors at the holidays.

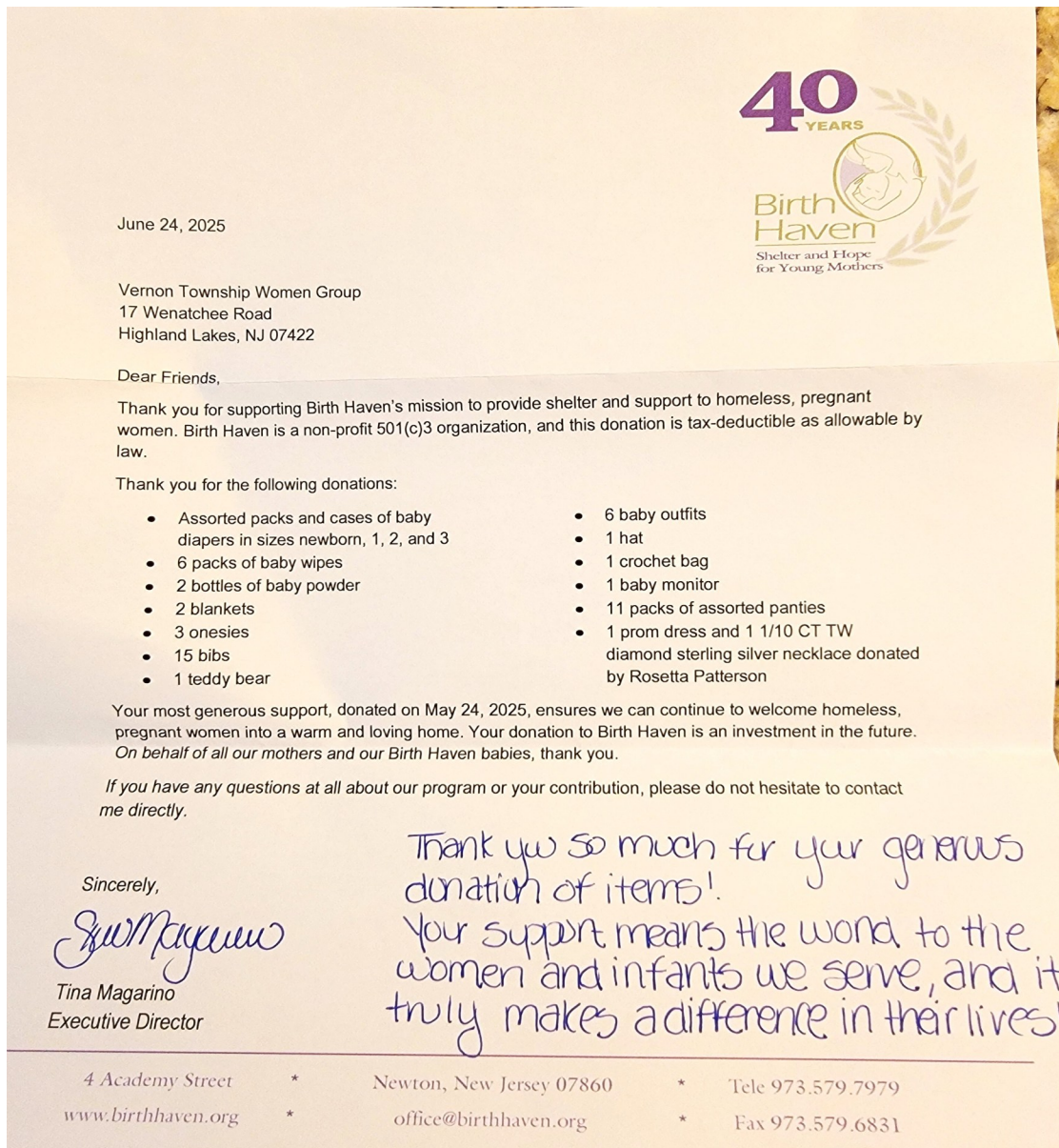
Thank you!
Valerie



ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN

BIRTH HAVEN Rosetta Peterson

Lovely note attached below from Birth Haven thanking the Club for its donations and support of Birth Haven's mission.



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	

Now that the summer heat is at an end and cool autumn weather is just beginning; hopefully, our knitters and crocheters can resume clicking their needles and using their hooks again.

Since I haven't delivered any blankets to the Karen Ann Quinlan Hospice yet this calendar year, I am hoping to get a few more together before I make a trip there. They appreciate all the blankets our club donates to them no matter the color. They especially love the red, white and blue blankets that can be given to their patients that are veterans. Just a reminder that the blankets provided to hospice patients are the same size as the Chemo/Dialysis blankets, 28 inches wide by 45 inches long (maximum 30 inches wide by 50 inches long).

Thank you.

Karen Szepietowski
Health & Wellness Chair



FEDERATION SECRETARY

Maria Dorsey



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On September 10, 2025, Elaine Hossfield and myself attended the Highlands District Council meeting hosted by the Long Valley Women's Club. We were very happy that we had three members a/k/a "First Timers" join us: Elaine Cochran, Barbara Speer and Linda Hibbert.

Prior to the meeting, I was asked by our District Vice-President, Karen Jeisi, to lead the members in reciting the Collect and the Pledge of Allegiance. In the absence of President Fran, I gave a recap of what our Club has been doing these past several months and what we are planning in the near future.

I also reported, as Highlands Membership Chair, that I will be emailing Presidents in the District for their Membership Chair's contact information and preparing a questionnaire. Elaine Hossfield reported as Highlands Civic Engagement & Outreach Chair. She will be collecting the Holiday Stockings from the Clubs and will deliver them to headquarters. There will be no organized statewide Day of Service in 2026. Clubs are encouraged to participate in the GFWC International Day of Service, September 27, 2025, or plan their own Day of Service. Nancy Levy, Highlands Corresponding Secretary, stated that her Club will be collecting board games.

Speaker, Debbie Cibelli, NJFWC Financial Secretary, spoke about the Treasurer's duty to file the 990 Form, the Legacy Program, endowments and **FUND**-raising. She referred us to the State President's Handbook for 10 ideas which we can utilize to raise money.

Speaker, Randi Quilici, NJFWC Historian, gave a very informative presentation regarding the history of GFWC and it will be provided to chapter presidents to share with their members.



FEDERATION SECRETARY

Maria Dorsey



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Speaker, Tina Ree, NJSFWC Fall Conference Chair, provided information regarding the Fall Conference at The Lobster Shanty on October 20th. President Fran, Elaine Hossfield and myself will be attending. There will be 15 vendors exhibiting and personal hygiene and toiletry items will be collected.

Other notes of interest:

SSP Fundraiser (our Club donated a basket) - 99 baskets were donated and over \$11,000 was raised for Special State Project.

Holiday stocking donation to cover emailing will be \$5.00 next year.



REPORT WRITING WORKSHOP

Maria Dorsey

Yes, ladies, it's that time of year again where we can be proud to report all of our accomplishments as a Club! Presidents have now received their packets containing your report forms. You can also go on to the NJSFWC website (NJSFWC.org) to print them out so you can start gathering your information. By looking at these forms, you can also see items that you might not know you could include in your report and don't forget to include a narrative with the form. If you haven't done so, please submit your Project Report Forms to the appropriate chairperson in our Club for any projects that you were a part of so that they can include them in their reports. The reporting period runs from January 1 through December 31 and are due to President Fran in January so she can prepare her Leadership Report to the State by February 1.

This year, NJSFWC will be holding report writing workshops via Zoom and I have listed them below. If you are interested, we can get together as a Club to complete these reports.

September 23—HYBRID 10:00 am—11:30 am

Workshop Topics

Performing Arts	-	Ann Brown
Civic Engagement	-	Dawn Pogosaew
Special State Project	-	April Shoemaker
Arts and Culture	-	Kathleen Reddick

September 23—ZOOM only 7:00 pm—8:30 pm

Advocates for Children	Marie DeMatties
Women's History	- Randi Quilici
Membership	- Patricia Dahl
Communications	- Shelley Rothstein
Legislation/Public Policy	Jacqueline Wisner

Check NJSFWC.org website for further information.

Register for an in-person or Zoom Report Writing Workshop:

- Tuesday, September 23—10:00 am—11:30 am In-person or Zoom
- Tuesday, September 23—7:00 pm—8:30 pm ZOOM only

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.

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

They are found on
soda cans, pet food,
soup cans, etc.

Children's
DVDs
For DASI



Just for You Bags

Some items needed: Towel sets, pillows and pillow protectors, full sized toiletries and specialty feminine hygiene items and dish towels.



Greeting Cards



Valerie Seufert volunteers for the Senior **Earth Angels** in Sussex County. One of the projects she works on involves putting together packages of assorted greeting cards for each homebound senior for them to use throughout the year. All types of greeting cards are needed **except for Christmas**. We often get cards in the mail from organizations — these are great. Also, the Dollar Store has 2 cards for \$1.00 and packages of cards can also be purchased there. Any donations are appreciated!

This is an ongoing project.