



GFWC International Outreach Newsletter



February 2019

Greetings,

In the midst of preparing your award entries, I hope you take a moment to look at all your clubwomen have accomplished. How exciting it will be when we combine all we have done and see the impact GFWC makes not only in our own communities but throughout the world. It is the intent of the GFWC Chairmen's Newsletters and other communications to be distributed to the clubs and members. I thank you for ensuring this newsletter reaches our members.

Mary Beth Williams, GFWC International Outreach Chairman, 2018-2020 mbw2020@msn.com

News from our Partners



For decades, GFWC has contributed to Heifer projects and Heifer is deeply grateful to have a partner so dedicated to serving others. Tanzania School Milk Project is GFWC's special project for Heifer this year. Through this project, school children in the southern highlands of Tanzania will receive nutritious, packaged milk – empowering them to focus on learning instead of hunger.

Few of the children in Heifer Tanzania's School Milk Program have been lifelong milk drinkers. This is a region where many homes lack both electricity for refrigeration and enough money to buy milk. Dairy products simply haven't been a big part of the daily diet, especially among poorer families. "There are some children here who never tasted milk after breastfeeding," explained Cosmos Mfugale, a dairy farmer and father of three.

And so, before the project began, some people were skeptical. Without the ingrained culture and habit of daily milk drinking, would these children even want to drink milk? It turns out those worries were unfounded. The program was an immediate hit, with universally rave reviews from the students. "I like it so much," said Francis Mlowe, a third grader at Uwemba Primary. "It tastes like sugar." Glesyon Dennis, a student at Itunduma Primary, looks forward to his 10 a.m. milk break every day because, he said, "It's a treat, like a biscuit."

The biggest challenge, it turns out, is not what to do with unwanted milk, but instead how to meet the overwhelming demand. Children, teachers and parents are clamoring to see the project expand so more children can get a taste of the health-giving vitamins and minerals milk provides. Thousands more children are still waiting for Heifer International to expand our School Milk Program to provide good nutrition, improved health, glowing skin and a brighter future to children in need.

GFWC clubs across the United States are fundraising and building awareness to help Heifer International provide milk to more schoolchildren. It takes only \$72 to give a child milk for an entire school year. To make your donation or download free resources, visit www.heifer.org/GFWC.



Far left -Lois Fitzhugh, GFWC member

At the end of February, GFWC clubwomen from 12 different states joined over 120 other Champions in Washington, D.C. to learn more about global childhood immunization programs and how to be better advocates.

This three-day Annual Champion Summit includes a day on Capitol Hill speaking with members of Congress and their staff and is a great learning opportunity for anyone who wants to advocate within their communities.

Through Shot@Life's partnership with GFWC, there are spots saved specifically for GFWC members each year. If you missed out on applying for the 2019 Summit, hopefully you helped amplify the message of clubwomen while they were on the Hill on Tuesday, February 26th! Leading up to the Summit, there was updated information on the GFWC-specific Shot@Life web site:

shotatlife.org/GFWC

After the Summit, the next big moment with Shot@Life is Advocate 2 Vaccinate, which will be throughout the entire month of April leading up to World Immunization Week (April 24 – 30). This is the best time to try out advocacy with Shot@Life, even if you never have before! There are plenty of ways for you or your club to plug in to these national efforts by making calls, writing letters/emails, utilizing your social media accounts, or stopping by your Congressional offices. There are trainings, tools, and templates for everything you need, and there are usually already active champions or GFWC clubwomen in your area!

To find out who is active near you, or to brainstorm ways to include Shot@Life in your upcoming activities/meetings, please contact Rebecca Maxie at RMaxie@unfoundation.org or by calling her directly at 202-340-5867.

As a reminder, you can always access the GFWC-specific donation page of Shot@Life by going or if you or your members are looking for a simple way to stay in the loop, an easy thing anyone can do is text VACCINES to 738674 to receive periodic advocacy updates and actions straight to their phone. If you have a smart phone, it'll send back a link that will enable you to send an email to your members of Congress by simply filling out your voting address. This is an easy way to get involved, and the easiest thing you and your clubwomen can do during April to support our partnership with Shot@Life.



At an Operation Smile medical mission in Puebla, Mexico, screening day had already been long and exhausting before a medical volunteer would announce which patients had been put on the surgical schedule. Questions were asked about Karla's history with her cleft lip and palate, photos were taken for

health records and medical volunteers conducted a comprehensive health evaluation to determine if she was healthy enough for safe surgery. But for Karla and her father, their anticipation would soon become elation. "When they called her name, I didn't know whether to cry, laugh or sing," Ángel said with tears in his eyes, as he reminisced on that special day.

More than two years before traveling to the mission, Ángel and his wife, Julieta, were thrilled to be three months into the pregnancy of Karla, their fifth child. But their excitement soon turned to heartbreak when an ultrasound showed that their baby would be born with a cleft condition. "We felt badly," Ángel said. "Pain, anger. That's how I felt."

But the pain he felt couldn't compare to the love he felt for his daughter. Even when his neighbors blamed him for Karla's condition, Ángel never stopped loving and fighting for her. "My daughter Karla is a pillar of my life and the reason I value life," he said. Her cleft lip and palate caused eating to be difficult. For the first year of her life, Karla had to be fed with a syringe.

Ángel searched for a hospital or organization that would provide affordable surgical care for his daughter, and for months, he was met with disappointment. Feeling strained but determined, he continued his search until he found a local organization that not only connected him with Operation Smile Mexico, but also provided him transportation to the medical mission.

After years of feeling helpless, hope finally returned to Ángel. After the numerous obstacles Karla and her father faced together, Karla's chance at a brighter future had arrived. Karla enjoys singing and playing with local volunteers in the child life area. Through play, these young patients are able to remain calm and happy in this new, and often stressful, hospital environment..

When it's Karla's turn for surgery, her surgeon, Dr. Blas Dominguez of Mexico, and clinical coordinator Rosy Frias take Karla to the operating room. As he watched his daughter walk toward the operating room, Ángel became anxious but had faith in the Operation Smile medical team.

After his daughter's cleft lip surgery, Ángel could not look away from his daughter's new smile. "The feelings I had when I saw her, with the surgery done, I cried inside. I was happy," he said. "I will make it my life's mission to find and help families with clefts.



And today, Ángel is doing just that. At the most recent Oaxaca mission, he volunteered as a patient advocate, comforting nervous parents and letting them know what to expect just as someone did for him his family two years before.

Photo: Jasmin Shah

NOTES and IDEAS

UNICEF USA: January is recognized as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month — also known as End Trafficking Month. In January, UNICEF USA provided us with a toolkit full of information and ideas for how we can take action to raise awareness and combat trafficking in your everyday life. The toolkit is full of information and links to other resources. I did email this to you in January. If you did not receive it and would like it please let me know.

From Operation Smile: The most needed items currently are coloring books and children's toothbrushes. Additional items needed are puzzles, building blocks, pull toys and the game, "Connect 4."

If you enjoy sewing consider making the no-no armbands, kids hospital gowns, blankets or quilts. Patterns can be found on the website. There is a reduced need for the empty smile bags at this point in time. Smile Dolls are no longer used. Instead we are using more realistic dolls for an easier explanation to the children.

Note the needs may change and an update for our current needs please contact our team at gfwc@operationssmile.org or call 877-240-7196.

IDEAS:

For great ideas go to our GFWC FaceBook page where members are sharing the projects their clubs have done.

Recently my club held a Fair Trade luncheon. We had a presentation from a non-profit involvd in working with survivors. A few minutes into her talk she asked us all to put the number for the National Human Trafficking Hotline in our phones to report any suspicious activity.

I ask you to do the same: 888-373-7888.

To learn the signs of trafficking use the toolkit Unicef USA provided to us or ask for your local law enforcement involved with solving human trafficking to come to your club meeting:

*It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.
Eleanor Roosevelt*