

Victoria Gardens women's Club
Meeting Minutes
Sept 2, 2021

Members in attendance: Laura Blackburn, Bonnie Friedman, Barbara Solis, Linda Holmes, Rosie McKenna, Lynn Reim, Joan Neumann, Ellen Haynes, Susan McMahon

Absent: Karla Johnson, Connie Hampton

Treasurers Report and Secretaries report will be posted on the website

President's Remarks-Laura Blackburn

Waived reading of Treasurer's report and minutes, both are available online.

Membership stands at 233, a record number of women for the club. Nametags for the 73 newest members have been ordered and will be available in approximately 2 weeks. I would expect distribution to be via the FT Branch Leaders.

With a new debit card available, the number needs to be updated for WiX (web host and edit services) as well as the 2nd storage unit for the monthly charges.

With regard to finding a sponsor for the Fall Shred event, we want to ensure that our ask is not duplicated with the request for sponsors for the Cruise Week or other fundraisers. I expect to ask realtors, law firms, banks to step up with as much as \$1000.

Terms for all Directors were confirmed to be thru May of 2023. Efforts will continue to stagger terms as covid stabilizes again.

General web site discussion – BOD is asked to edit, navigate, post to the forum, and give feedback about content, future features, and use.

Noted again the importance of Friendship Tree Branches for communication, social, general charity collection etc. Secret Weapon.

Meeting duration was changed beginning to be 3 hours starting at 9:00 AM on Oct 7 in order to better manage the agenda.

Programming: Lynn Reim

Dr. Primrose Cameron is checking to see if she could add a second date on October 20 if we need to open a second date due to smaller size luncheons

December 8

Holiday Luncheon

At this point planning on one date to service a larger group

Entertainment: Handbell Choir still in the works. We will know within the month if it works for their schedules

Shopping Boutique: Walk on Water (clothing & gifts)

Gurrs & Purrs Pet Boutique (Pet treats, collars, leashes etc.)

Handmade Jewelry (necklaces, bracelets, earrings at all price points)

We will book 2 dates for March Field Trip to Mount Dora on consecutive Wednesday and Thursday. Dates need to be confirmed with bus, trolley and restaurant before we announce it.

Lynn was asked to check into other facilities as an option for our luncheons. The Sanborn Center was one that was mentioned. Look at auditorium style seating, with no luncheon served. What is the seating capacity?

Leadership Development Initiative:Rosie McKenna

Leadership Development Initiative Director has been partnering with Directors from Charitable Action, Programming, Membership, Publicity and Branches.

Branch Leaders held their first training for Phase II of the Friendship Trees program on September 1.

Guest speaker, Lucy West, pointed out that many leaders have particular strengths and emphasized various gifts and talents that they are using. She praised their good work and gave everyone an excellent pep talk.

Suzie Hansen taught the leaders about the Branch Interest Survey that will be done at the first branch activity in September. Suzie explained the importance of planning programs that the group will support and enjoy. She suggested that branch members will take on some responsibility for parts of the event but that the leader must lay the groundwork.

Susan McMahon spoke about the enhanced role that branches will play for the charities over the next several months. She stressed the need for coordination of drives and collections so that duplication will be reduced. She also praised the leaders for their interest and involvement in charitable efforts. Susan explained the four areas of focus that will be part of the overall strategic plans for the charities: Families in Transition, Education, Children's Outreach and Seniors in Need. She asked for leaders to be involved with the larger committee and to work on particular projects.

Publicity-Joan Neumann:

The Rack Cards are complete and have been given out to board members. These can be used to welcome new members. 500 were ordered at a cost of \$127.24 "Needs flyer draft was passed on to Susan.

The stand alone website is much easier to navigate. Laura did an excellent job.

Charitable Giving-Susan McMahon:

1. Family Renew Update

1. Susan McMahon reported on recent Back To School support for 13 children currently residing at Family Renew. Outfits, underwear, socks and shoes were provided. A communication Blast is being prepared to share with all members. Special thanks to Rebecca Carpenter for doing the bulk of the shopping and coordination. Below are financials and draft Blast for this effort, funded from VGWC Treasury. \$1,635.59 spent to fund this project.
2. Susan McMahon, Rosie McKenna and Rebecca Carpenter visited Family Renew and conducted a Needs Assessment with Linda, Program Manager. We will continue to meet with them on a regular basis to fully understand their needs.
 - Potential Future Projects identified:
 - Design storage solutions floor to ceiling in FR multi-purpose room. This will assist in keeping supplies organized, off the floor and make the room more conducive for meetings and multi-purpose use. Edie offered to draw up a design concept and we would work with members and volunteers to complete the project.
Timeframe: TBA
 - Raised gardens are in place in shared yard space for residents. Currently the boxes are growing healthy weeks. Rosie has approached the Garden Club on taking this on as a clean-up project and assist residents in learning how to maintain a sustainable garden.

- Parent Education and Financial Literacy may also be an opportunity for volunteers to assist with, sharing their time and talents. Timeframe: TBA

3. Storage Unit

- Visited the storage units and Family Renew (Linda and Dorothy) attended to inventory contents. Both VGWC units are full of furniture at this time. Family Renew assessing need and will be moving out most items.
- Family Renew was unable to gain access to their unit. The key was not available and a locksmith called to open the unit. Waiting to hear on what, if any, contents are still stored in their unit

2. Technology Update

1. Updated the team on new VGWC website. This under VGWC ownership will no longer have a dependency on HOA support for updates or changes to the website. This site is still under construction and will go live to membership soon. This is great news as it will speed up our work on building connections for sign-up, agency engagement and communication around charitable opportunities.
2. Edie Olmedo-Abrams and Maura McKay are heading up tech development of the Charitable elements in the new website. Edie has begun to explore the site, understand its components and capabilities. A requirements meeting to include Laura, Edie, Joan and myself is scheduled. Maura to join when she returns from travel.

3. Shred Events –

1. We would like to host two Shred events this year (fall and spring). Looking for a volunteer for this project to call Shred company contacts to get proposed dates and costs. (Susan has contact names). The company who did it in the past is no longer offering private events. He provided two other companies to contact and we are exploring possibilities. We would also like to find a sponsor once we know the cost.

4. Stetson Latin-American and Latino Studies Aid Funds
 1. Rosie McKenna and Edie Olmedo-Abrams reported on a recent visit to Stetson Latin American and Latino Studies Aid Fund where they met with Prof. Nicole Mottier to better understanding their needs and purpose of the Aid Fund. Full report below. This appears to be an excellent opportunity for us to lend support, contribute to educational development and support diversity within our community. This would fall within our Scholarship/Educational theme.
 2. Ask is twofold:
 - Smaller Effort: Assist with textbook/educational materials for students in need
 - Larger Effort: Assist with experience opportunities that expand their education but are not affordable. The aid fund helps to supplement costs for travel for experiences necessary in their field of study. Supplement seminar/class fees for Adjunct Professors and mentor woman and men of color
 3. Committee voted to continue to exploring this opportunity and bring a recommendation to the BOD on our commitment. Rosie and Edie will remain contacts on this project and provide more insight into their specific short/medium/long term needs.
 5. Annual Giving Tree
 1. VGWC will again sponsor a Giving Tree for Holiday gifts. Joan Neuman and Loretta Ditmars will assist as in the past, but it is the Charitable Committee's responsibility to make sure this is supported and successful. In the past this has supported Family Renew, Rose Manor, Visitation House, GAL and Community Partnership for Children. Our primary role is to be the main point of contact for the project, get the lists from agencies and help manage gift distribution. We have volunteers from past years to assist with tags.
 2. Susan has scheduled a meeting with Rosie, Branch Leader Coordinator, Loretta, Joan, Rebecca and Clubhouse Leaders to discuss next steps.

6. Charitable and Branches

1. We are conducting a survey process with all members, administered through the Branch Leaders to solicit input and interest around charitable charitable and social activities. This information will be compiled and shared with the BOD and members at large.
2. We have agreed to manage monthly “collections” (diapers/personal hygiene/paper products/etc) through the Branch network, ensuring a balanced and ongoing flow of donations. Susan will coordinate the schedule with Ellen Haynes’s assistance.
7. Susan and Rosie suggested that our club consider funding Afghan women. This is obviously a crisis situation. The idea was put on hold because, at this time, our policy is to only fund charities in the city of Deland. Should Afghan families be relocated to our area we have a plan in place to assist in their support.

Friendship Branches-Ellen Haynes

The Friendship Branches are back to a full monthly schedule. Some Branches met this summer but not all.

We had a successful Leader Training Meeting on September 1 which was led by Rosie McKenna. The Leaders were extremely receptive and interactive. More emphasis will be placed on our VGWC charities within each Branch.

There are currently 14 Branches. We have some new enthusiastic Branch Leaders and our number of participants grow every day. We currently have 183 Members. There is room for more growth and a place for anyone who wants to participate.

Special Events: Linda Holmes

Both fundraisers-The Gala and Cruise Week are off to a good start. Larger committee meetings have been put on a short hold observing COVID care. Small committees are still planning and moving forward.

Other Business

Bonnie reported that Nancy Greenfield suggested that we take on a small, easy to manage fundraiser that has been very successful at other club organizations. Nancy, with the assistance of Joan will create a lovely card that VGWC members and residents can send to their friends and neighbors wishing them a Happy Birthday, Anniversary wishes, Get well thoughts, Sympathy, etc. For a small donation to the VGWC in any amount (minimum \$5) this card will be sent out to the intended person letting them know that a donation has been made in their honor or loved ones memory. Nancy has graciously agreed to take on this task. She will attend our October board meeting and present (with Joan) a "mock-up" of the card, explain how this will work and be publicized , as well as take questions.

Bonnie reported that she and Laura will be meeting with Julie to iron out any clubhouse issues concerning the logistics of room usage as well as menus and pricing. We will also be discussing the challenges experienced by the clubhouse and staff in getting us information in a timely manner.

Barbara spoke with the front desk to find out what the final cost of making copies will be. The first ten (10) are complimentary; black & white copies 5 cents a copy; color copies 10 cents a copy.

Barbara told her that only the Women's Club board of directors are authorized to make copies and she will take care of paying with our debit card each month and she will give her a copy of who made copies.