

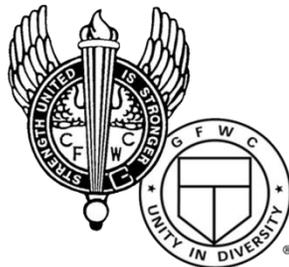


GFWC Danville Women's Club

**Celebrating more than a Century of
Community Service to the Tri Valley**

1911 - 2019

"By working together we make a difference"



More than a Century of Community Service

to Danville and the Tri Valley 1911 - 2019

In 2011, the Danville Women's Club celebrated one-hundred years in service to the community. It all began in 1911 when a new teacher, Miss Hazel Arthur (later Mrs. Edward Wiester) came to the one-room Danville Grammar School on Front Street, and saw a need for closer relations between parents, teacher and school, and invited the mothers to meet for this purpose. From this meeting a Mothers Club was organized, which became the nucleus of the present club. As community interests developed, the club later became the San Ramon Valley Welfare Club, and at the instigation of Mrs. Claude Leech of Walnut Creek, Alameda District President of the California Federation of Women's Clubs, the Welfare Club united with the State Federation in 1919, then the General Federation in 1939 as the Danville Women's Club.

In the beginning, meetings were held in the Grammar School building which was located where the San Ramon Valley Mortuary now stands, but over the years members met in various places such as the new Grammar School building, now the Community Recreation Center on Hartz Avenue, in homes, the Grange Hall, the Odd Fellows building which later became the Village Theater, the Sunday School unit of the Presbyterian Church, the Fire House on Hartz Avenue, and eventually the present clubhouse on W. Linda Mesa Avenue in Danville.

Early activities centered around local community needs, Red Cross, Boy and Girl Scouts, the Detention Home in Martinez, Crippled Children's Society, history and land marks, music, art, drama, conservation, health, and better homes and gardens. Projects included supporting a tuberculosis preventorium called Sunshine Camp, providing the school with milk/orange juice and graham crackers for the children's mid-morning snack, giving a decorated Christmas tree and gifts to the women's ward at the County Hospital in Martinez, (also providing a party), supporting the county health nurse, supporting Saving the Redwoods of Humboldt County (helping to raise thousands of dollars to buy forests of virgin redwoods to be set aside as a state park), helping preserve the sugar pines in Yosemite Valley, saving walnut trees on the Danville Highway, protesting the cutting of trees on Grammar School grounds, opposing billboards on the highway and many other worthy projects. Arbor Day was observed with the planting of trees for many years. For example, five Monterey Jack pines were planted on the San Ramon High School grounds at the corner of Love Lane and Hartz Avenue to honor the five local servicemen who lost their lives in World War I

Supporting all of these many projects meant raising money. In the early years, with transportation and communication limitations, card parties seemed to be a favorite way to make money. Other popular sources were food sales, flower shows, musical teas, dances and smaller unique projects. In 1938 an idea of the Club owning its own home came into being, and a housing fund was started. As it grew, the funds were invested in government bonds. War activities in 1941 kept members busy with support of the Red Cross, each member serving two days a week. Many servicemen were entertained in member homes at that time.

In 1945 a committee was appointed to look for a lot to purchase for the club home. It was successful in 1947. The following year, the Club incorporated and in 1949 the deed for one-half acre on W. Linda Mesa was received. The total price was \$1,650.00, financed by bonds, gifts and loans from members and finally payments of \$ 50.00 per month, plus interest – a real undertaking, but with hard work and faith, the goal was reached. In 1955, the present building was dedicated, at a cost of \$9,939.89, which, added to the cost of the lot, totaled an investment of \$11,586.89. William Diehl was the building architect, and Shiveiley Construction Company built the Clubhouse. Many hours of donated work and materials helped lower the cost of construction.

Over the years the Club has contributed to scholarships for high school seniors, an Alameda District medical student, a nursing cadet, aid to an Indian boy, and currently maintains five generous scholarships for worthy students. In addition to the scholarships, the Club contributes to local, national and international projects maintaining the status of a service club.

In 1919 the Club joined the California Federation of Women's Clubs and celebrated fifty (50) years with that Federation in 1969, with a series of events, the first being that of host to the Mount Diablo District Meeting. Many members, past president and guests were honored during the year. Danville Women's Club has been active in encouraging the preservation and restoration of historical sites, such as the Eugene O'Neill Home, known as "Tao House", located on Las Trampas Ridge. An award-winning picture of the John Muir home, painted by Past President Mrs. George (Carolyn) McMullen, was donated by Danville Women's Club, and hangs in the Ranger Station at the John Muir historical site. In 2019, the Club Celebrates 100 years with the California Federation.

Authentic information by member and local Historian, Inez Butz kept the club informed through reports and programs each year. One such program in 1983 was a complete history of the founding of our school district in the early 1900's. A tape recording was made of this history and presented to the twenty-three (23) schools in the District as well as the San Ramon Valley Library.

"Whitegate" was made a historical site of San Ramon Valley in 1976, with plans for it to become a Contra Costa County site, and eventually a State monument. Mrs. Ruth Donahue, mother of Raymond Donahue, (who lived in the house in '76), was active in the Club, as were members of the family of the original builder and previous occupant of the home, Nathaniel Howard. His daughter Kate Howard Wood was active and her daughters-in-law, Mrs. George Wood and Mrs. Waldo Wood, both have served as presidents of the Club.

The years have provided interest and opportunity for members to broaden the base of Club activity. In 1980, after a disastrous fire at the Los Cerros School, the Club, working with the P.T.A., raised over \$3,000.00 from one House and Garden Tour/Luncheon. This was presented to the library of the school, with which the first computer was purchased. The club years 1981-84 culminated into increased cooperation with community events.

During the 1980s, the Club also raised significant funds for the San Ramon Valley Historical Museum Fund, gave additional trees for Osage park, contributed to the Danville's first emergency ambulance and generously supported the Library.

In the spring of 1982, the Club sent the first young man, a sophomore from San Ramon High, to the Hugh O'Brian Leadership conference. For many years three (3) students each year, one from each of our area high schools were sent to this Leadership Conference. Currently, scholarships are presented annually to a senior student from the four high schools and a donation is made to the alternative high school. The first Fashion Show with Luncheon at San Damiano was added to the benefit events in 1982, and has been presented every year since then. The location changed to Crow Canyon Country Club in 2005 and to Blackhawk Country Club in 2014. Proceeds from the event benefitted local charities.

April 24, 1983 was proclaimed. "Federation Day" by Danville's first Mayor, John May, in recognition of the service given to the community by the Federated Clubs. 1983-84 was a banner year. The Club's first cookbook was published. Proceeds from benefit events provided contributions of more than \$10,000.00 to the community. Under the leadership of President Patty Hart, the new town of Danville was presented with funds for a twenty station Para Exercise Course to be installed in the Osage Station Park and three (3) trees were donated to the Town. One was a Redwood seedling, given at the 1982 State convention and nurtured 2 years, the second was a Chinese Pear planted in the children's Playground in Osage Station Park. It was purchased with a \$50 award the Club received from CFWC for recycling. The third tree is a gift, through the club, for our member Mrs. Eileen Hooper, in memory of her husband Doug Hooper. In mid to late 1980s the Club adopted the popular Entertainment books as a fundraiser, held "Carnival of Crafts" days at the clubhouse and sponsored Home and Garden Tours.

The club began annual garage sales in the early 1990s as additional fund raisers for the high school student scholarships. In 1993, Hospice of the East Bay became the major recipient for the Annual Spring Fashion Show .

In 1994, the Club adopted a fourth grade class at Baldwin Grammar school, donating a newsletter titled "Kindness News". The newsletter dealt with kindness to animals with the hope that children learning to deal gently with animals will become inherently gentle in their behavior with people. 1994 was also the year a second Cookbook was published (containing 400 recipes) which sold over nine hundred (900) copies for the scholarship fund. Since 1994, the Club members have held an annual **Bake-less Bake Sale**. What is that you ask? Members and friends provide a donation to the scholarship fund in an amount that approximates the cost to make a cake, pie, cupcakes, brownies, candy, cookies etc.; much more healthy for the waistline. However, the Club sold "real" baked goods at the Garage Sales, and Holiday Boutiques.

Through the last twenty-plus years the Club has settled into a steady rhythm of meetings, projects and fundraisers. Club members provide hundreds of hours of volunteer time each year to a variety of local charities.

Members have used their sewing, quilting, crafting, and other artistic talents to make gifts such as knitted hats for cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy, newborn kits for Mothers and Babies, Turtle Pillows for Paul Newman's Painted Turtle Camp, Super Hero Capes for Capes4Heros, Smile Dolls and No - No arm bands for Operation Smile (for children who have had cleft palate surgery), key chains for Teen Esteem, and quilts, just to name a few of the many projects. Our talented Club members also participate in the annual Mount Diablo District (CFWC) Arts and Crafts Festival. Many members have won awards at the District level and have gone on to win at the State Competition. The Club has sponsored a Student Art for grades K - 12 and special education art students at the District Festival. The participating students are honored by the members at reception in the Clubhouse.

In 2005 Members turned a monthly casual day of Bridge into a fall fundraiser for the student scholarships. In 2006 it was expanded to twice a year (October and February). These Scholarship Bridge Luncheons are a sell-out and one of the Club's best fundraisers. The Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays are always a special opportunity for members to reflect on the beauty of season, celebrate good fortune and share gifts with those in need such as the Bay Area Crisis Nursery, Monument Crisis Center and support the local county food drives. A Holiday Boutique started in 2012 featuring handmade crafts by clubwomen and other local artisans. The Club took over the 9th and 10 annual "Tinsel and Treasures Folk Art Shows" in 2016 and 2017 with entry fees going to Down Syndrome Connection of the Bay Area and Bay Area Crisis Nursery. This event was a partnership with the town and supports our local merchants, by bringing in many visitors. Other proceeds went to support the Town Library, Museum of the San Ramon Valley, and Role Players Ensemble. These are all long standing beneficiaries of our fundraising.

Our community service project "Shredding for Scholarships" started in 2013. For a mere \$10.00 per box residents from all over the tri-valley can bring their documents and hard drives to the Clubhouse to be shredded. We bring a mobile shredding truck onsite on a Saturday morning in April. We not only raise money for scholarships, but we help people combat identity theft and declutter their homes and businesses.

In 2016 the Club took over local sponsorship of the Hospice Tree of Lights in November. One of our members had been a Hospice volunteer and Chairman of the event for five years. A talented member also started line-dancing classes at the Clubhouse in 2016. The \$3.00 "drop-in fee" goes the scholarship fund. The classes have been very successful. Dancers have performed a "Flash Mob" event at two Chamber/Town events: Summerfest in 2017, and Fallfest in 2018, raising over \$2,200 for the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano Counties.

Some of the many recipients of our volunteerism and fundraising are: Hospice of the East Bay, Teen Esteem, Friends of the Danville Library, Museum of the San Ramon Valley, Discovery Counseling Center of SRV, Diablo Valley Foundation for the Aging (Valley Oak Respite Care), Child Abuse Prevention Council, Pennies for Pines, Meals on Wheels, Blue Star Moms, Sentinels of Freedom, Troops Direct, Guide Dogs for the Blind, Canine Companions, and other service related groups, Bay Area Crisis Nursery, Monument Crisis Center, Shepherds Gate, and many others.

Scholarships are awarded to four High School Seniors in the San Ramon Valley and Del Amigo Continuation High and at least one student to attend the EDGE (formerly NCYLS) Leadership Seminar. In addition, A scholarship or grant is awarded in fine arts, music or writing. Donations vary from year to year and are based on the needs of the community.

GFWC Danville Women's Club is part of the GFWC Mount Diablo District which includes clubs from Contra Costa, Alameda, Napa, Mendocino, and San Joaquin counties; GFWC California Federation of Women's Clubs (CFWC); and General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC). Members are a part of hundreds of thousands of women from all fifty (50) states and a dozen countries dedicated to the promotion of Education, Philanthropy, Public Welfare, Moral Values, Civics, and Fine Arts. Our Club members serve at the District and State level, holding offices and chairmanships.

The club meets monthly, generally the third Thursday (September to May) and the first Thursday in June at 11:00 am at the Clubhouse 242 W. Linda Mesa Ave. in Danville. We are a small club with a lot of heart. Currently seven (7) of the members have supported the Club for twenty-five (25) years or more. The Club's motto is: "By working together we make a difference". If you are interested in joining this dynamic group, please call 925.837.1165, to make a reservation to join us for a luncheon meeting, or email us at danvillewc@gmail.com for membership information. See us on the web at www.danvillewomensclub.org, and Facebook.

The original Club Logo was designed in 1983-84 by Brett Hillard, a senior at Monte Vista High school. The Oak Tree — Symbol of Danville; Mount. Diablo — A Historical Site and the Club District; and the California Poppy — Danville Women's Club Flower. The Logo was updated to its present form in the Spring of 2019.

