



Highlights

Girls' Friendly Society USA

An international, not-for-profit organization affiliated with the Episcopal Church for girls and young women
Founded in 1877



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2015

GFS-LA News

<http://www.gfscalifornia.org/>

by Barbara Harris

Anniversary Service and Awards Ceremony



On Saturday, May 17th the GFS of the Diocese of Los Angeles celebrated the 137th year of GFS. Our theme was "The Power of the Flower" referencing various flowers and herbs of the Bible. The day included Holy Eucharist and a light luncheon. Among the awards and recognitions were the admission of two new members and acknowledgement of 4 new members and two new Sustaining Members. Eight girls received the Blue Ribbon for completion of the Blue level and two of our senior members received the Triquetra - having completed all badges for all levels. We acknowledged five Graduating Seniors. The Ceremony was held at the Pro Cathedral of St. John the Divine in Los Angeles.

2014 Splash Bash

On Saturday, July 21, we met at Robert Cabrillo State Beach and enjoyed a day of tide pools, dolphins, and hotdogs! The small but hardy band braved the cold water, policed the beach for litter and had glitter tattoos to remember the day. Fellowship abounded as the girls helped each other navigate the path to the tide pools and watch the younger members as they braved the waves.



Sponsors' Weekend at Holiday House



Sponsors' Weekend was something special. It was a celebratory time full of wonder, working together and enjoying the company of friends. So many special people gave of themselves and touched the hearts of other people. It's what GFS is all about.

Laura Wilson, my sister, made 10 lap blankets 5 years ago and donated them to Sponsors' Weekend. There were 4 left that didn't sell so Nancy Myshko bought them and stored them away. Nancy brought them to be auctioned off this year 2014. Laura saw them and said I use to make blankets like that. Nancy told her that she had made them.

Laura started bidding, then Nancy, then I myself bid. We intended to buy them and give them back to Laura. Dee Liebold bid \$55 and no one could touch the bids after that. Laura thought they were lost forever because she could no longer use her hands like she used to. However, when Dee won the bid she gifted them to me give back to Laura. Laura cried from the root of her being for the kindness of Dee to make it possible for Laura to give these beautiful handmade gifts to her great-grandchildren. Dee paid \$220 to make Laura's dream come true. The following morning our niece Christine Niebish went in to wake Laura for breakfast and saw she had slept with the bundle of blankets in her arms. This is what the spirit of the weekend was about "Baring burdens and sharing the light". Dee reflects the kindest heart of a GFSer. This was the most beautiful gesture I have ever experienced.

Two quilts made by Po (Pauline) Tassone were donated by Barbara Tassone Trust, Po Tassone's daughter, from the Tassone estate. While Julie Almont, Sponsors' Chair, was talking about Po and reading a note from Vinnie Tassone, a torrential rain came up. When Julie said Vinnie's name, the window in the dining room blew open and a roar from everyone in the room was that Vinnie and Po couldn't stay away. It was beautiful. The highest bid for the queen size quilt was Shirley Griffith, \$140. The highest bid for the Crazy Quilt came from Edith Dersch \$130. Everyone was so pleased that the women who knew Po and appreciated the caring and delicate work that Po put into these treasures won the bidding. Those who knew Po and Vinnie know that they gave their time, talent and treasurer as many of our GFS women do. Vinnie gave \$6,000 toward the new showers before her passing so we could open in the spring of 2012.

Diane Gibson received a door prize of a Sock Monkey Doll Kit. She began to tear up and asked if she could tell her story about the Monkey Doll. The doll brought back memories for Diane who is a nurse. Diane and a group of nurses had brought a terminally woman who had never been to Cape May. It was her wish to see Cape May. The woman was thrilled to get a Sock Monkey from the toy store. Unfortunately, she lost her battle. It was a

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Sponsors' Weekend at Holiday House continued

bitter sweet memory but Diane shared it with us. We cried with her and hugged and celebrated the memory of a friend.

Women who had gone to Holiday House as children, young women and in the fall of their lives still come and give support in so many ways. The fellowship makes it a healing place where the spirit soars. We are re-fueled with this fellowship and sharing. We watched the DVD titled the "How To Make An American Quilt" starring Winona Rider. Based on the films story line, we shared a piece of ourselves that we hadn't talked or thought about. It was sheer fun and enlightening.

There were 30+ women who came to the weekend. Two of our New Jersey sisters also enjoyed the weekend with us. They joined in sharing their handy work and ideas and telling their own personal stories. New Jersey GFS has always been generous with regard to Holiday House.

Amy Newman and Kristine Blakla each had a table. Amy sold homemade candy, handmade cards, Christmas trees and many more things. Kris sold her art work and needle work; lace ornaments and much more. Both ladies donated the money to sponsors.

Bob Siegwarth and Michael Zampi were at Holiday House doing work on our doors. Bob donated \$1,000 in memory of Holly Lockhrey Siegwarth, who loved Holiday House and spent her last days at the house as a WA. Holly had been coming to HH most of her life.

The Banquet was wonderful; Chef's Ginny Layton and Lisa Sheets prepared a delicious menu. We had two wonderful youth servers, Jennifer and Christina Newman. KT Gillison did everything to prepare the house for this event.

Donations are still coming and it looks like we will reach an all-time high of \$4,000. If you were unable to come and want to be a part of this fundraiser we are still accepting donations.

Julie Almont and Amy Newman acted as co-hosts for this year's event. How do you thank Julie for the incredible work she does all year to prepare for Sponsors' Weekend. Thank you for giving the gift of this uplifting weekend. If I forgot anyone, please know it was unintentional and I appreciate everyone's effort.

Your Sister in Christ,
Angie Myshko



Grace-St. Paul's, Mercerville, NJ

By Lydia Kugler

This year our junior group has now grown to 25 members ranging in age from 5 through 20 representing not only Grace St. Paul's but several faith backgrounds. We strive to offer our girls an opportunity to "give back" to our church and community. Our activities revolve around acceptance, tolerance, understanding and sharing. To that end, the girls learn to work together for a common goal. During this year, and in keeping with the Gfs motto "bear ye one another's burdens, and fulfill the law of Christ", our girls continue to be a visible presence at the Roast Beef Dinners, Vendor Fair, Pasta dinner and where ever they are needed. GFS continued to volunteer at Grace-St. Paul's by not only hosting the reception following "The Thirteen" concert,



by transforming Community Hall into a renaissance hall and

servicing the beautifully displayed desserts.

Once again the girls created centerpieces for Stray Catz, a local rescue group for use at their annual fundraiser. We visited Hamilton Grove in Hamilton and entertained the residents with Christmas carols and shared handmade snowflakes before our annual Christmas party. Through the generous support of our GFS families as well our Grace St. Paul's community our Month of Caring was a huge success. We collected and presented the ladies auxiliary of the Trenton Psychiatric Hospital, with over 700 items along with almost 100 decorated tote bags that were used as Christmas gifts for the 500 plus residents. Several animal rescue groups and shelters have reaped the benefit of our year-round collection of gently worn blankets, towels, dishes, bedding, crates, etc. We will continue this as an ongoing project throughout the year. As we continue to acknowledge and thank those in our community for their service, the girls spent an entire evening baking trays of cookies

for our local firefighters. Only the perfect cookies made it to the firehouse, the girls were forced to devour those that were less than perfect!



We were proud to have two of our girls represent GFS and Grace St. Paul's at the NJ Diocesan Convention, serving as acolytes at the opening day service and pages during the election process.



This year, we combined our Service of Induction with our Mother's Day Tea. We were pleased to officially admit 5 new members to our local

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Grace-St. Paul's continued

Chapter.

The culmination of our year is always our annual weeklong camp at our beloved Holiday House in Cape May. In July of 2014, 45 girls and leaders from the 4 chapters in New Jersey came together for a combination of worship, fellowship and of course, beach

time. The lack of air conditioning never seems to drain their enthusiasm – they always eagerly looking forward to this summer event. Our theme was holidays of the church year. It was our goal to combine a deeper understanding of the holidays while still keeping the fun aspect. We decorated the parlor for Christmas, complete

with a Christmas tree and gifts. Each girl received a sand bucket with a GFS bear inside. We celebrated Shrove Tuesday with a pancake supper, distributed ashes and celebrated Easter with an egg hunt filled with a bible clues and much, much more.

It is an exhausting week but a truly rewarding experience!

Teddy Bear Program

for "GFS girls in waiting"
– girls below the age of five –



<http://gfscalifornia.org/teddy-bear-program/>

Teddy Bear Activities Handbook by Lydia Rawlins
has been made available by GFS-USA.
Suggested activities for ages 3-7

To submit future articles and photos email
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GFS NATIONAL BOARD MEETING

Friday, April 17-
Sunday, April 19, 2015
GRAYMOOR SPIRITUAL LIFE CENTER
AT 1320 Route 9 in Garrison, NY

2016 National Assembly

The 2016 GFS-USA National Assembly will
be hosted by the Diocese of Connecticut.
Stay tuned for more information.