



GFWC-Big Rapids, Inc. Newsletter

April, 2026

It looks like spring has finally sprung. Hopefully no more snow as I have put my shovel and scraper away.

April brings Easter and I hope everyone has a blessed one. Watch for the Easter bunny and don't eat too many jelly beans!

It also brings the GFWC State Convention and I'm hoping many of you have signed up to attend. It's a great time to connect with members from around Michigan, get new ideas, and have fun. As I've said before, GFWC Big Rapids always has a good time. Learning is easy when you are having fun.

Looking ahead to May, our Annual Yard Sale is only 6 weeks away so when you are doing your spring cleaning be sure to save items for the sale. As the old proverb says, "One man's trash is another man's treasure"; in this case, women's. Our Spring Banquet follows where we will celebrate the accomplishments of our past club year and install our new 2026-2028 Board. Another busy and exciting month for GFWC Big Rapids.

Have a wonderful Easter.

Sue

Sue Johnson, President (231)349-5137

Linda Telfer, 1st Vice President

Delores Simpson, 2nd VP(Membership)

Leona Royer, Secretary

Cheryl Tessier, Treasurer

Melonie James, Parliamentarian

Linda Telfer, Newsletter Editor -

231-250-2088

Due date for the newsletter is the 25th of each month.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

April 14—Club Meeting—6:00 Social/6:30 Meeting @ The Elks

April 23-25—GFWC Michigan State Convention—Troy, MI (see pages 5-9)

May 7 & 8—Club Yard Sale—9:00—5:00—Big Rapids Township Hall (see page 4)

May 12—May Banquet—6:00 pm—United Church (see page 4)

CHECKLIST FOR MEETING

A friend who is interested in GFWC

Used Greeting Cards

Can Tabs

Used Batteries

\$35 May Banquet

Used Sneakers

\$ Heifer International

**HAPPY
BIRTHDAY**

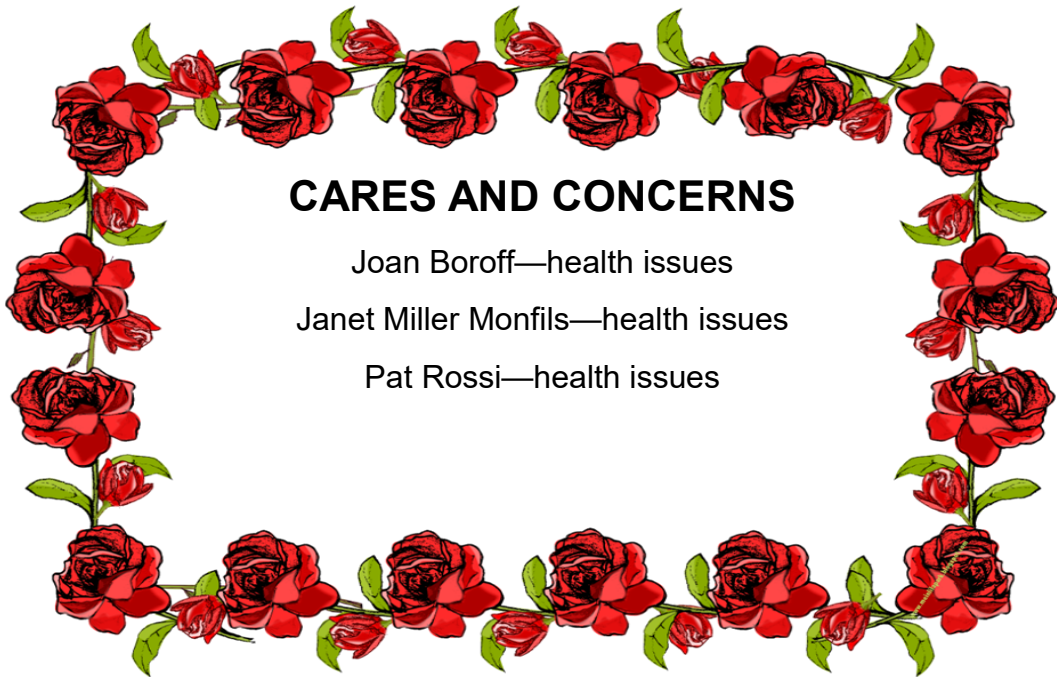


APRIL BIRTHDAYS

13—Delores Simpson

27—Cathy Chapman

27—Ana Davila-Román



CARES AND CONCERNS

Joan Boroff—health issues

Janet Miller Monfils—health issues

Pat Rossi—health issues

UPCOMING EVENTS



NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, April 14, 2026

Elks Lodge

6:00 Social and 6:30 Meeting

Sign up for CSPs and Committees for 2026-2027



MATINEES WITH BARBARA

FEATURING

BALL OF FIRE

(with Barbara Stanwyck & Gary Cooper)

April 11, 2026

2:00—4:00 P.M.

Immanuel Lutheran Church—726 Fuller Avenue—Big Rapids



2026 GFWC STATE CONVENTION

FORMS ARE INCLUDED

IN THIS NEWSLETTER



SIGN UP TODAY!!



ANNUAL CLUB YARD SALE

May 7 & 8, 2026

Big Rapids Township Hall

9:00 am —5:00 pm

Your treasures are needed!

Proceeds will be going toward
the “Fish Project” for Hemlock
Park.



MAY BANQUET

MAY 12, 2026

6:00 P.M.

United Church (Parlor)

120 S. State Street

Big Rapids, Michigan

COST \$35

(payable at the April meeting)

Catered by Pere Marquette Catering

**We will be celebrating 55 years of service to our
community as well as all of your accomplishments this past
year.**

**GENERAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S CLUB-MICHIGAN
2026 CONVENTION INFORMATION**



**131st Annual State Convention
Somerset Inn, Troy, MI
April 23-25, 2026**

THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 2026

Noon-3:00 PM- Tour of Troy Historical Village/Lunch- Attire, GFWC Spirit Wear
4:00 PM- State Board Meeting at the Royal Oak Clubhouse (lower level)
6:00 PM – Southeastern District Welcome Reception-“A Night at the USO”, Attire
1940’s (optional)

Royal Oak Woman’s Clubhouse, 404 S. Pleasant St., RO 48067

FRIDAY, APRIL 24, 2026 BUSINESS SESSIONS – Attire: Business Casual

9:00 AM-Business Meeting Begins
12:00 PM-Guiding Harbor Luncheon
1:15-PM-Business Meeting Reconvenes

**FRIDAY, APRIL 24, WOMAN OF ACHIEVEMENT BANQUET-Attire: Cocktail/Semi-Formal
“Black, White, & Bold”**

6:00 PM- Mix and Mingle (cash bar)
6:30-PM- Dinner
7:30 PM-Woman of Achievement Honoree Program
Reception and DJ/Dancing (Be Brave!)

SATURDAY APRIL 25, 2026- Attire: GFWC Spirit Wear

7:30 AM- First Time Attendee Breakfast-Devonshire Room
9:00 AM- Business Meeting Reconvenes
10:15 AM- “Be Remembered” Memorial Service
12: 00 PM- “Celebrating” GFWC MI President Rae Lynn Hicks
1:30 PM-Business Meeting Reconvenes

SATURDAY APRIL 25-Installation Ceremony-Attire: Cocktail/Semi-Formal

5:30 PM-Mix and Mingle (cash Bar)
6:00-Dinner
7:00- Installation of District Presidents, State Board Members and GFWC MI President Diane
LaBree Campbell (2026-2028)
Reception and DJ/Dancing

***Notes:**

- **District Presidents** don’t forget your “map” of domestic violence support services/centers/shelters
- **Please bring your own refillable water bottle**
- **Club Presidents**-Please bring two \$10 gift cards (statewide merchants) i.e.- gas cards, coffee shops, Meijer, Target
- **Memorial Service**-Club Presidents please email club name, names of members lost since last convention, a few highlights (i.e., how many years, offices/leadership held, what they will be most remembered for, and a headshot) to Laurie Gerald, lbgeralds@yahoo.com by **April 10th**.



**General Federation of Women's Clubs – Michigan
2026 CONVENTION MAIL IN REGISTRATION FORM**

April 23-25, 2026 – Registration Deadline April 6th
Somerset Inn – Troy, 2601 W. Big Beaver Rd, Troy, MI 48084

(Please fill out a form for each member *and* each guest attending)

Name: _____ **Is this your first State Convention?** _____

District: _____ **Club:** _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____ **Badge Name:** _____

DELEGATES

Only club delegates are allowed to vote on officer elections, bylaw changes, and other state business at the convention. A club's number of delegates is based on club membership:

- 1-20 Members = 1 Delegate
- 21-40 Members = 2 Delegates
- 41-99 Members = 3 Delegates
- 100+ Members = 4 Delegates, plus 1 for every additional 50 members above 100

If you are not a Past State President or currently serving on the State Board or Advisory Board, please consult with your club before sending in this form to determine if you will be a Delegate, an Alternate or a Non-Delegate and mark your form accordingly below. Any club member in good standing can be a Delegate, although preference is usually given to club officers if they are attending the convention.

VOTING BODY

Please refer to Article XVIII, Sections 1, 2, & 3 of the GFWC MI Bylaws as noted on the Official Call

NOTE: A member holding two or more offices, chairmanships, or voting privileges carrying a vote shall be limited to voting in only one of the offices, chairmanships, or positions with voting privileges that are held by said member.

Your Highest CURRENT Position- check just one (1) entry below that represents your highest current position:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Past State President | <input type="checkbox"/> State Board of Directors | <input type="checkbox"/> State Advisory Board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GFWC-MI Club President | <input type="checkbox"/> Club Delegate (if not one of the above) | <input type="checkbox"/> Club Alternate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Voting Delegate (Member) | | <input type="checkbox"/> Guest |

REGISTRATION COST:

- REGISTRATION FEE (entire weekend) \$40.00 _____
- DAILY FEE (if attending one day only) \$25.00 _____
- LATE FEE (past the April 06 deadline) \$20.00 _____
- MERCHANDISE (PIN) SEE ABOVE \$8.00 _____
- MERCHANDISE (SHIRT), SEE ORDER FORM \$ _____
- MEAL FEE (total meal selection page) +\$ _____

MAIL REGISTRATION WITH MEAL SELECTIONS TO:

LISA BREUER
4156 AUBURN DR.
ROYAL OAK, MI 48073
gfwcmifinance@gmail.com
C: 248-854-0766

TOTAL (check payable to GFWC MI) = \$ _____



**General Federation of Women's Clubs – Michigan
131st Annual Convention - April 23, 24 & 25, 2026 - Somerset Inn – Troy, MI
MEAL REGISTRATION FORM**

Name _____ **Club** _____ **District** _____

Thursday, April 23 - noon - 3pm - Lunch, Lecture and Tour - Troy Historical Village - lunch includes Detroit Style Pizza, Salad, Breadsticks and Soft Drinks - \$30.00 _____

Thursday, April 23, 6-9PM - USO Party Welcome Reception w/Appetizers Royal Oak Woman's Club - Clubhouse, 404 S. Pleasant, Royal Oak, MI **Attend? Yes** _____ **No** _____

Friday, April 24 Buffet Lunch (Choose 1: check box on left)

() 3 deli wraps, seasonal salad, cold salad, dry snacks, fresh fruit, cookies and brownies \$38.00 _____

Friday, April 24 Evening Banquet – Woman of Achievement (Choose 1: check box on left) Dinners include Somerset Signature Salad, rolls, butter, starch, vegetable & dessert

() Herb Crusted Prime Rib with Au Jus \$60.00 _____

() Herb Crusted Lemon Chicken Piccata with Tomato & Artichokes \$43.00 _____

() Vegetable Lasagna (Veg.) Grilled Vegetables in a spinach cream sauce \$43.00 _____

Saturday, April 24 - FIRST TIMER'S ONLY (No charge for first-time attendees)

Will you be attending the First Timer's Breakfast at 7:30 AM **Attend? Yes** _____ **No** _____

() Breakfast - State Board Members who attend First Timer's Breakfast \$30.00 _____

Saturday, April 25 Celebration of Achievement Luncheon (Choose 1: check box on left)

() Hudson Maurice Salad & Soup, Rolls and Dessert \$31.00 _____

() Michigan Spring Salad & Soup, Rolls & dessert \$27.00 _____

() Broiled Whitefish, Somerset Signature Salad, starch, vegetable & Dessert \$41.00 _____

Saturday, April 25 Dinner – Installation Ceremony (Choose 1: check box on left) Dinners include Somerset Signature Salad, rolls, butter, starch, vegetable & dessert

() Baked Salmon w/ Maple & Cherry Walnut Compound Butter \$50.00 _____

() Chicken Parmesan with Marinara & Provolone Cheese \$43.00 _____

() Gnocchi Primavera (VGN) seared gnocchi, fresh vegetables \$43.00 _____

Dietary Restrictions _____ **\$TOTAL** _____

Please fill out one form for each person ordering meals. Mail with Registration & Emergency Medical Form postmarked no later than April 6, 2026

MAKE YOUR RESERVATION

**GFWCM 131st STATE
CONVENTION
APRIL 23-25, 2026
SOMERSET INN
2601 W. BIG BEAVER
TROY MI 48084**



RESERVE YOUR ROOM BEFORE APRIL 8, 2026
COST: \$139 PLUS TAXES for up to 2 people; \$10 for each additional person
WEDNESDAY – SUNDAY
CHECK IN TIME: 3 PM CHECK-OUT TIME: 12 NOON
RESERVE BY
GROUP BLOCK CODE: **General Federation of Women’s Clubs of Michigan**
CALL – 248-643-7800 Or visit the link in this email to register online
Convention activities will be Thursday noon through late Saturday Night (10 pm)

IN-ROOM AMENITIES

- Complimentary wireless Internet
- Flat-screen TV with accessories
- Large working desk with charging ports
- Blow dryer, Iron and board
- Messages and voicemail
- Same day valet laundry service
- Rollaway, extra towels or extra pillows upon request
- Coffeemaker

HOTEL AMENITIES

- Business Center and Free High Speed Internet
- Sundries Shop
- Fitness Center
- Golf Course
- Crumpets Restaurant
- Flat-screen TV with accessories



**GFWC MICHIGAN STATE WOMEN'S CLUB
EMERGENCY MEDICAL INFORMATION FORM
TROY, MICHIGAN 2026**

Please fill out this form and return it to the registration desk. Forms will be
destroyed after the Conference.
PLEASE PRINT

NOTE THAT MEDICAL FORMS ARE REQUESTED FOR ALL IN ATTENDANCE

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip _____

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY CONTACT:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Hospital Preference: _____

Please list the medications taken daily: _____

Primary physician's name and phone number: _____

Please list any special needs and allergies: _____

Emergency contact in attendance at the convention: Name _____

Cell Phone _____

SIGN UP TODAY USING THE QR CODE BELOW.....



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

**Support your neighbors in need at our
FREE MEDICAL CLINIC coming to**

BIG RAPIDS, MI

Remote Area Medical (RAM®) provides free, quality healthcare to those in need:



DENTAL CARE

Dentists, Oral Surgeons,
Dental Assistants, Hygienists



VISION CARE

Optometrists, Ophthalmolo-
gists, Opticians, Vision Techs



MEDICAL CARE

Physicians, Physician Assistants,
Nurse Practitioners, Nurses



GENERAL SUPPORT

Interpreters, Guides, Data Entry,
and Much More!

**JOIN OUR
MISSION
BY SIGNING
UP TO
VOLUNTEER
TODAY!**

MAY 30-31, 2026

**R.L. Ewigleben Sports Complex
210 Sports Drive
Big Rapids, MI 49307**

Presented By:



**FERRIS STATE
UNIVERSITY**

HELP IS NEEDED

Continued from previous page.....

Please consider volunteering for the RAM (Remote Area Medical) event to be held Saturday, May 30. The Health and Wellness CSP is looking for volunteers to help the entire day from 5:00 am to 6:00 pm

The event is at the Ferris State's Ewingleben Sports Complex, 210 Sports Drive. Faculty and students from Ferris State's College of Health Professions, Michigan College of Optometry, College of Pharmacy, and several from other fields will work alongside professionals and volunteers from across the region to provide health care.

RAM is an organization that bridges the gap in the American health system by providing free healthcare services to those in need. Using large-scale mobile clinics around the country, RAM partners with local organizations like Ferris State to deliver quality healthcare to underserved and uninsured individuals who don't have access to or cannot afford medical, dental or vision care.

Here's what you'll need to do to register with Remote Area Medical:

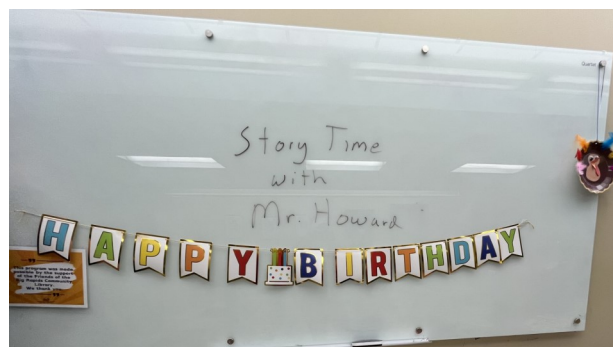
1. Go to the website at RAMUSA.org and click on the red **VOLUNTEER** button at upper right.
2. On the next page, click on the red **REGISTER TO VOLUNTEER** button at the center of the screen.
3. On the next page, complete the registration form
4. When you get down to the **Profession or Volunteer Classification** section be sure to select **General Support (GS)** in the Profession/Classification blank.
5. Under **Events & Assignments** you can ignore the first blank and go to the **Event Category** field. There select **Clinics** or **Telehealth**.
6. The next field, **Events & Assignments**, is very important. There you'll select the **event you plan to attend**. **Below that is where you select the dates that you'll be working at the RAM clinic.**
7. The registration system will give you the opportunity to add a picture of yourself. This could make it easier for you when you show up at the clinic location, but it is not required.
8. In the next section please read and sign off on the **Liability Waiver**.
9. Finally, go to the bottom of the page and click the red **SAVE AND SUBMIT** button.

For questions, please contact Sue Bean (231-580-9546) or Vickie Vogel (231-287-2204).

Aiding in the health of others in our community.

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING.....

DR. SEUSS BIRTHDAY PARTY



Leona Royer (with Dr. Seuss hat), Cheryl Tessier and Joan Boroff assisted with the Library's Dr. Seuss Birthday Party on March 4th. The children watched the "Green Eggs and Ham" video, and Mr. Howard from the library provided a Dr. Seuss book reading for the 15 children that attended. GFWC-Big Rapids provided each child with a Dr. Seuss book and eraser, water and snacks after the story time.

NEW MEMBER INITIATION



At the March club meeting, four new members were initiated. (L-R **Ana Davila-Román**, Leona Royer mentor; Mel James mentor for **Joanna Anderson**; Sue Johnson mentor for **Jen Dempsey**; **Kim Brejcha** and Linda Telfer will be her mentor.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



Joanna Anderson was born in Kansas and lived there until she was around 7 years old. Michigan has been her home for 46 years; living in Big Rapids since 2015 when she moved from Hersey area to work at Corewell Health Medsurge as an RN until 2023. Joanna and her husband of almost 4 years share a home with 5 critters: two longhaired doxies (Cocoa and Georgia Peach aka Peaches and Karlie and Pittie mix; and two cats—TwoDots who is 18 (showing his age) and Baxter. Joanna enjoys sewing, knitting and crocheting with several projects in the works.



Kim Brejcha has lived in Big Rapids on and off for 36 years and during that time she worked in education with both St Mary's Catholic Schools and Big Rapids Public Schools. She enjoyed working with students and being part of the community. Today she works primarily online in the health and wellness space, mentoring others and building a business that allows her to work from anywhere. Outside of work, she loves to spend time with her family, traveling, being on the beach, and getting involved in projects that bring people together and make a positive impact. Kim has a daughter who lives in Washington DC, a son who lives in Texas, and two stepsons who live in South Dakota and with them six grandchildren.

Kim's family is incredibly important to her. Her husband Mark recently retired, and between their kids and traveling to visit family around the country, life stays pretty full and fun. She first learned about GFWC through women in the community who were passionate about service and making a difference locally, and it immediately resonated with her. Kim joined because, "I believe strongly in women supporting women, giving back to the community, and building meaningful friendships while doing good work together. I'm really excited to be part of this group and look forward to getting to know everyone."



Ana Davila Román was born in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico. Ana's schooling (kindergarten to bachelor degree) was completed on the island. Her bachelor's degree is from the University of Puerto Rico-Mayaguez (UPRM) in Spanish literature with a minor in library science, a master's degree in library science from the University of Florida State in Tallahassee, Florida (FSU), and a doctorate degree in Spanish literature and composition. In 1988 after completing her degree, she was hired at Shorter College in Rome, Georgia to teach all levels of Spanish college courses for one year as a substitute teacher. In 1989, she was hired in the Department of Languages and Literature at Ferris State University as a Spanish instructor where she taught basic levels of Spanish grammar. After three years as an instructor, the position of associate professor was granted to her. As an associate professor, she taught all levels of Spanish courses from lower-level grammar to upper-level composition and literature courses until she retired last May 2025.

Ana was married in Michigan to a native man from Muskegon and they had a son, Michael James, who recently had a baby girl named Ana who is now 2-1/2 months old whom she is very proud of and happy in this "new" stage in her life. Ana's hobbies include traveling, reading, walking, cooking and sharing quality time with friends and family. She has a 10 year old Yorkshire dog named Canela who loves to cuddle and watch movies with her.

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Ana heard about GFWC through Colleen Partigianoni and Leona Royer as she was looking for an organization to serve the Big Rapids community. She really is enjoying the group, the service and the programs it provides as well as the solidarity among the members.



Jen Dempsey was born in Seattle. She has spent decades as an on-air radio personality building genuine connections with audiences through storytelling and her ability to make people feel heard. She came to Michigan, not to slow down, but to begin the most meaningful new chapter of her life in a place where she could put down real roots. These days, she's enjoying hiking, yoga, roller skating, ballroom dancing, swimming, snowshoeing, rooting for the Wolverines and golfing every chance she gets. What drives her isn't just exploring and being active, its staying connected. When she found the General Federation of Women's Clubs while looking for ways to contribute locally, something clicked. The Big Rapids chapter wasn't simply busy, it was purposeful. She joined because she wanted to be part of something that mattered, to build lifelong friendships, and to continue doing the work she's always believed in; showing up and making a difference where it counts.

ROCK PAINTING 101



Six members gathered on a Saturday morning to be creative and paint rocks. Yes, I said rocks. These rocks will be placed in various locations around Big Rapids in hopes that it will brighten someone's day. After all this work, the group went to a local restaurant and enjoyed lunch together.



WOMAN OF ACHIEVEMENT LUNCH

Thank you to the 14 club members that attended the Woman of Achievement Lunch on March 12. What a fun time! The sashes, crown, boa, special pen and straw, the sparkle bracelet and cards were very much appreciated by yours truly (Linda). Enjoy the pictures.



THANK YOU COOKIES



Civic Engagement and Outreach delivered cookies to the City of Big Rapids road crew and the Mecosta County road crew as a thank you for plowing the roads this winter. They sure had enough snow to plow and we are very grateful that they are keeping us safe.

THE FISH PROJECT UPDATE



February 23, 2026



March 27, 2026

NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT GATHERING



We had a great turnout at the Northwestern District Gathering on March 14th in Ewart, MI with seven Big Rapids members attending. Unfortunately, due to the weather some could not make it. We sure learned a lot though.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY RECOGNITION



Leona Royer



Cheryl Tessier



Linda Telfer & Pat Rossi



Melanie Henry



Sue Johnson & Joan Boroff



Club members were asked to wear green to the March club meeting for a little extra fun with a prize being given to the best leprechaun. Pictured above is Vickie Vogel, Leona Royer, Linda Telfer and Pat Rossi who was the WINNER. Congratulations Pat!

PINWHEELS IN THE MAKING



Five members met at Delores Simpson's home to put together the pinwheels and place the crisis number stickers on the pinwheels as April is Child Abuse Prevention month . These will be placed in pre-determined locations around town on April 10. If you would like to help, meet at 10:00 a.m. at the United Church on State Street. If you have any questions, Delores Simpson is the person to contact.

THE MORE YOU KNOW

PUZZLED BY AUTISM

Autism Awareness Month, observed throughout April, is a global initiative dedicated to fostering understanding, acceptance, and inclusion for individuals on the autism spectrum. Originally launched in the 1970s and officially recognized by the United Nations with World Autism Awareness Day on April 2, the month serves as a platform to educate the public, dispel misconceptions, and promote the unique strengths and contributions of autistic people. While "awareness" remains a key component, many organizations have shifted toward using the term "Autism **Acceptance** Month" to emphasize the need for genuine inclusion, support, and appreciation for neurodiversity in schools and communities.

The most recognizable symbol of autism is the puzzle piece. The puzzle piece represents the complexity and mystery of autism. It also symbolizes the idea that individuals with autism are like missing puzzle pieces that need to be found and put together to complete the puzzle. Society's growing acceptance and understanding of autism can be the help to find the missing puzzle pieces.

Information provided by Health & Wellness CSP

FROM THE ENVIRONMENT CSP



Name: _____

THINK SPRING

D G D U N S A E P T E E W S N
H C I E E E S N S S U C O R C
N E D R A G N N H S N U D Y S
U D T R N H O L Y T I P C E B
S A D S R W Y C A A E N F W S
S F Y P I I N S C A L I L E S
N F I R B E A L I B R S P E S
P O T I R O B I N S S E N D A
B D I M I D I R T A I S A S I
R I D R R E I T H R M I S T I
R L T O E N I H S N U S F U R
R I I S L S E I S N A P H L N
A I R E S D R O R E O I R I S
I F P S E A A S I T S D A P R
N S O S D E R I L H H R E S A

Daffodil	Tulips	Robins	Iris
Hyacinths	Crocus	Primrose	Sweet Pea
Lilacs	Pansies	Rain	Sunshine
Garden	Dirt	Weeds	