

# A Call to Service: FAWL Chapters Answering the Call to Serve Their Communities

by Saray Revelo



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To say the COVID-19 pandemic was a difficult time for us all is an understatement. The pandemic was also harder on some more than others, causing financial strain for several communities. One of the silver linings of that time was the reminder of what matters most, including serving and coming to the assistance of others — especially if we are in a position to do so. Now that we are back and better than ever, we wanted to take an opportunity to reflect on some of the excellent service projects completed by several FAWL chapters across the state. Below is a highlight of some of the projects.

In October 2021, the Broward County Women Lawyers Association (BCWLA) held events, fundraisers, and initiatives in furtherance of breast cancer awareness. BCWLA hosted a “Pink Installation” dinner serving as a tribute for breast cancer survivors. Attendees wore pink ribbons and attire while receiving education on breast cancer and early detection. BCWLA also held a “Spooktacular Fundraiser” where board members dressed up as breast cancer superheroes in masks

and capes. Proceeds were donated to the “Boobie Troopers,” a local charity supporting breast cancer patients. BCWLA, you are our heroes for your amazing work to support breast cancer research!

In Fall, 2021, the Polk Association for Women Lawyers (PAWL) held an initiative aimed at combating period poverty. Through a grant received by the Florida Bar Young Lawyers Division, PAWL assembled 1,100 period packs to be provided to teen girls and homeless women. Each pack contained an assortment of pads, tampons, panty liners, and cleansing wipes. The PAWL packs also included an empowering message for the recipients. PAWL members assembled and distributed the packs through Pace Center for Girls and Talbot House Ministries. Thank you, PAWL, for working on a significant issue affecting girls and women across our country and the world.

In December 2021, Central Florida Association for Women Lawyers (CFAWL) partnered with the Angel Tree Program at Rock Lake Elementary. The school has over 90 percent of students on free or reduced lunch. Approximately 100 children were sponsored and received at least two items from their wish list, in addition

to needed clothing items. Members were able to participate in varying ways — either through donations, sponsorships, or giving of their time to organize the gifts. The final aspect involved special delivery of the gifts by CFAWL members and a holiday party with the children. Jolly Old Saint Nick even made an appearance — Santa: CFAWL knows him!

In February 2022, the Hillsborough Association for Women Lawyers Young Lawyers Division (HAWL YLD), held an initiative called “Plant Some Love.” HAWL YLD planted a therapy garden at Tampa Crossroads Rose Manor, a residential treatment facility for women in Hillsborough County. This chapter partnered with Red Wagon Native Nursery and the Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation to bring native plants to the therapy garden. Members of HAWL were provided an Amazon wish list to donate items needed for the garden, including tools, outdoor décor, and other supplies. HAWL YLD committee members worked with Rose Manor residents to plant the garden and brought some Valentine’s treats to the facility. The Plant Some Love program was part of HAWL’s year of Shining Brightly through Electronic Advocacy and Service. We are so impressed with

HAWL's initiative that planted some love in Hillsborough County!

In August 2022, Pinellas FAWL (PFAWL) partnered with the Clearwater Bar Association Young Lawyers Division and Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Community Services to host a Re-Employment and Resettlement Day for Afghan refugees. The event included over 50 adults and 30 children. PFAWL attorneys provided a variety of programming, including an employee rights presentation, resume-building workshop, and mock interviews. Members and volunteers gathered clothing donations through a drive beforehand, which became a shopping area for attendees to take as much clothing as needed. Children attendees received

toy donations gathered from members of PFAWL and the Clearwater Bar Young Lawyers Division. The event also featured transportation for all refugees, breakfast, lunch, and take-home goodies. What an amazing way to welcome and help refugees in your community, PFAWL!

We encourage all FAWL chapters to continue the good work in their communities. Here are some tips for doing so:

- Reach out to local non-profits to learn more about their needs;
- For chapters with Florida Bar Young Lawyers Division Affiliates, apply for grant funding to help with your community service projects;
- Seek sponsorships from local law firms or businesses;
- Join a local initiative such as a food drive for a quick and easy way to help the community. Have local law firms or the courthouse serve as drop-off sites for donations;
- Combine a cause with a social event. For example, host a happy hour and encourage attendees to bring an in-kind donation, like canned goods or school supplies; and/or,
- Partner with another local bar association to increase resources for your project.

We are back, better than ever, and ready to answer the call to service.

*Saray is Co-Chair of HAWL's YLD Committee.*