

Cary Woman's Club

Education and Libraries Report 2023

The Cary Woman's Club focused its efforts in the Education and Libraries CSP this year on improved literacy—literacy for students in one “adopted” Title I elementary school, literacy for students across Wake County through support of the Read & Feed Program, and literacy for our members through the CWC Book Club and a field trip to a local historic site.

Childhood Literacy at Kingswood Elementary School

As a Title I school located near our CWC meeting place in Cary, Kingswood has been informally “adopted” by the Cary Woman's Club for several years, where we have developed rapport and credibility with the principal and teachers. After donating more than \$1000 worth of hard copy library books and digital books (during COVID), the request this year was for educational playground supplies. With a \$250 grant, the CSP Chair and committee members ordered supplies from Amazon and delivered them to the school on December 8, 2023.

4 members also continue to tutor students weekly at elementary schools and Homework Haven tutoring programs throughout the school year. (92 hours)

The Education and Libraries CSP also partnered with our Environment CSP to plant 100 Heritage Daffodils (rescued from a construction site) in highly visible areas at the Kingswood Elementary school entrance around the carpool lane. Twenty five 4th and 5th grade students and their teachers were instructed on the proper planting methods and care of the daffodils which will bloom each year at the end of winter to welcome spring at the school. A small Brown Garden Snake was also encountered during the planting giving the opportunity to teach about “residents” the students might find in the garden that are beneficial because they eat harmful insects and slugs.

Volunteer hours: 124 Dollars donated: 250 In-Kind donations: 100 Members: 39

Childhood Literacy with Read and Feed

Read and Feed is a nonprofit organization in Cary that aims to bridge the reading gap by providing children with the resources they may not have access to at home. Their mission is to strengthen literacy skills among underserved elementary school children and provide meals in a nurturing neighborhood environment. Their slogan is “Giving kids an appetite for Reading”!

The Cary Woman's Club supported their efforts to provide meals, tutoring and books to children from low-income families in Wake County through a book drive which accumulated 374 children's books and by supplying 22 cases of packaged snacks in November 2023. Seven volunteers also encouraged the students by providing snack bag decorations—adding encouraging phrases and cute décor to inspire the children's reading experience.

Read & Feed delivers its services in a colorfully decorated van that travels to low-income areas to provide children there with a snack or meal, tutoring, and their choice of a free book to take home to add to their own “library” after each tutoring session.

Volunteer tutors are trained by Read & Feed, to ensure that the children receive high quality instruction.

Volunteer hours: 163 Dollars donated: 250 In-Kind donations: 424 Members: 39

Adult Literacy – CWC Book Club

The Book Club coordinator curates the books to read and offers members their choice of books and genre for each month’s selection. She also develops the discussion questions for each of the 10 month’s meetings of the book club where members discuss the plot and characters of the selected book, with the discussion often expanding to current events. Book club members say they always learn at least one new thing. The meetings and discussions are described as “quite energetic, and always enjoyable”! This is an area of the CWC that fosters closer friendships of members and has been a recruitment tool for new members.

Volunteer hours: 600 Dollars donated: In-Kind donations: Members: 12

Educational Field Trip and Hike to Yates Mill County Park

The Education & Libraries and Environment CSP’s partnered on a field trip to Historic Yates Mill County Park in early November 2023. 16 members attended. Yates Mill is a fully restored 1756 gristmill that is the last of 70 gristmills that once served farmers in Wake County. Yates Mill Park hosts a monthly corn grinding exhibition and sells the resulting corn meal, providing attendees with hands-on history lessons. There is also a museum with actual grist stone artifacts for both wheat and corn, which were processed at the mill daily from the late 1700’s through the early 1900’s. Members’ understanding of Wake County’s farming history were improved while watching the video in the museum, followed by an enjoyable nature hike led by the park naturalist on a beautiful fall day.

A recent addition to the park is a NCSU freshwater mussel research project which purifies the lake water so that Yates Mill is the only County park where fishermen can safely keep and eat the bass, crappie, and catfish they catch there. The mussel research project is also aimed at learning how best to preserve and protect freshwater mussels to improve water quality in other NC waterways.

The Cary Woman’s Club approved a \$1000 grant for the preservation of this unique local treasure in our now-urban Capitol County.

Volunteer hours: 92 Dollars donated: 1000 grant In-Kind donations: Members: 39

Scholarships

The Cary Woman’s Club awards two high school student scholarships each year to local Wake County students who plan to attend a NC college or university, funded by our Scholarship

Investment Account. The recipients, interviewed and selected by our Scholarship Committee in 2023 were two young men, who attended our end of year May luncheon with their mothers, where they were recognized and congratulated on their achievements during high school. Both plan to attend UNC Chapel Hill. One scholarship was for \$2500 and one was for \$1000.

In addition, the club awards a Mature Woman Scholarship for a woman (often a single mother) going back to school to complete an Associates degree at Wake Tech in order to enhance her employment opportunities. The scholarship awarded in 2023 was for \$1600. Wake Tech determines the recipient for this scholarship. We have been impressed by the outstanding quality of these scholarship recipients over the past several years.

Volunteer hours: 63

Dollars donated: 5100

In-Kind donations:

Members: 39