



Hacienda Girls Ranch

In the early 1970's and 80's, GFWC Florida Clubs from all over the state contributed funds to build three homes for abused and neglected girls on 25-acres of donated land in Melbourne, Florida. It was named the "Hacienda Girls Ranch." The cottages – Perkins, Pratt and King-Harris – were named after GFWC Florida Presidents. GFWC Florida ran the Ranch until 1998, when it merged with the Children's Home Society of Florida. A fourth cottage, the Jimmie G. Smith Transitional Living cottage, was built in 2003. The Ranch thrives today as a foster care group home and emergency shelter for up to 18 females ages 12-17 from throughout the state. It also has a transitional home for up to 8 single females ages 18-23 that "age out" of the foster care system with nowhere else to go. *It remains the only statewide project for GFWC Florida.*

For over 45 years, GFWC Florida has contributed funds, time and resources to the girls at Hacienda. Only 82% of the costs of board and room for these "foster children" are covered by the State. The difference, as well as funds for special therapies and extra-curricular activities, is made up through donations and fundraisers. That's why it's so important that we continue to visit the Ranch to do activities with the girls, collect items the staff lets us know the girls need, provide scholarships, and sponsor specific events.

The current "Wish List" for the girls at Hacienda includes:

- ♥ Bed-in-a-Bag (for single beds) and towel sets so each girl can have new bedding and towels when she arrives.
- ♥ Family sized shampoo/conditioner/lotion/deodorant/toothpaste/feminine hygiene products.
- ♥ Gifts cards (\$5 and up) to: Walmart, Target, Barnes and Noble; Applebee's, Chili's, Subway, McDonalds & other fast food restaurants; bowling, ice and roller skating; theater passes and other fun teen activities. (The girls at Hacienda usually have no money of their own, so the staff likes to be able to use the gift cards for special occasions and/or rewards for good report cards, etc.)

If you're in a Club that is in the vicinity, there are opportunities for volunteers at the Ranch. They hold volunteer training for those interested in mentoring the girls, cooking, providing administrative assistance and support for special events.

Another need for "our girls" are birthday celebrations. It costs approximately \$75 to provide: a birthday cake geared to their delight, ice cream and paper products; a \$25 gift card to their favorite store; and a few personal products such as a bottle of nail polish. If your club (or you personally) would like to sponsor one of the 18 birthdays we

will cover during the upcoming year, please send a check payable to GFWC Florida for \$75 to GFWC Florida Headquarters, 4444 Florida National Drive, Lakeland, FL 33813. In the memo section of your check write "For Hacienda Birthdays." I will personally purchase these items and make sure they receive them on their special day.

Juniorette Clubs can raise money for Hacienda through the Children's Home Society (CHS) of Florida's K4K program. Just go www.K4KFlorida.org to find out how they can become involved. All funds raised through K4K Florida directly benefits kids served by CHS of Florida, and can be designated specifically for Hacienda Girls Ranch.

The GFWC Florida President's Project for 2016-2018 is to establish the **GFWC Florida Hacienda Girls Ranch Legacy Fund** (be sure to read the President's Project Bulletin). The Foundation will help cover increased expenses and ongoing challenges at the Ranch like installation of a security fence and gate, upkeep and maintenance on the 45+ year old cottages, and other needs of the Ranch and of the girls living there. We hope to continue to support Hacienda as we have in the past, and establish the Foundation during the next two years. We can...because:

"We helped start Hacienda, and it's our responsibility and our legacy to continue to support it."

Mary Powell, GFWC Florida President 2016-2018.