

Hi Susan,

Thank you for participating in this interview.

Tell us a little about you and what brought you to Clearwater. How long have you been here?

My husband John and I moved to Clearwater in 2010 when I retired from the Defense Intelligence Agency in Washington DC. John has always wanted to live on a beach with warm water and I wanted to be closer to my family in Louisiana. We looked at Galveston, TX and Destin, FL, but then visited Clearwater. It was no longer a contest. Six months later, I had retired, we had sold our house in VA and moved!

What do you like most about Clearwater?

Not only is Clearwater Beach a beautiful place to live and visit, but the people of the area are also friendly, warm and care about improving the lives of those around them.

Any "hidden treasures" (parks/restaurants/shops etc...) that you like to frequent and are willing to share with us?

I'm pretty much a homebody, but I love Frenchy's Original Cafe--especially on Friday's when fried shrimp is their special! I also frequent the ClearSky on Mandalay and the Palm Pavilion. I love the Clearwater Marine Aquarium, the Pinellas Genealogy Society, the Clearwater Historical Society and Museum and the many nonprofits that do so much good work in Clearwater.

If you could change one thing about Clearwater, what would that be?

I would make sure that the people of Clearwater were aware of the signs of human trafficking and sexual exploitation and give them the hotline number to call if they see something: **1 888-373-7888**

Favorite local sports team?

AH, I'm a Buccaneer's fan--but only after the New Orleans Saints and the Washington (Redskin) Football Team. Being born in Louisiana and working in DC for 30 years, I have remained loyal!!

What do you enjoy doing in your retirement/spare time?

I teach DNA for genealogy and help people find their ancestors, I volunteer at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium each week, and I'm the Anti-Human Trafficking representative for District 14 of the Florida Federation of the General Federation of Women's Clubs. I'm really active with the GFWC Clearwater Community Woman's Club and love the many activities and service projects that they do for our area.

How did you become involved with the General Federation of Woman's Clubs - Clearwater Community Woman's Club (CCWC)?

I met some really nice ladies at a Clearwater Library "Afternoon with the Authors" presentation in 2015. I was amazed to learn how involved these ladies were in the community and impressed with their friendliness and hearts for service. I truly believe that together in a group, you can make a bigger difference than any person can alone. These ladies made me feel welcome and got me involved immediately.

About how many people are involved with the General Federation of Woman's Clubs – Clearwater Community Woman's Club (CCWC)? Age range? Or average age?

Even though the club is open to everyone, we currently have only women in our club. We have about 56 active women and another 54 that we call "sustainers". The sustainers have been active members of the club in the past, but due to age, health or family circumstances, they can't commit to monthly meetings and activities. Our youngest member is in her 20's and our oldest is in her 90's, but if I had to guess, I would estimate that the average age is between 55 & 60, but we have women representing every decade!

You mentioned some amazing stats about how many volunteer hours your members have logged – can you share some of that data?

Our active members have logged an average of 5,000 hours a year, but even during COVID when everything was shut down, we still held "drive-by" food drives, collected clothing and gifts for the Haven, supported the Kimberly Home (Pregnancy Resource Center) by painting a mural on the wall of the daycare center, donating diapers and formula and provided bulletin boards and teacher support to Clearwater Fundamental. We never quit having meetings, just shifted them to Zoom and outdoors. We have ways everyone can be involved- either at home or in a group. Some sew and repair donated clothes, jewelry or toys for distribution. We sponsor Covid shots and blood drives, collect and distribute children's books to Little Free Libraries and children's centers, decorate a tree each year for ARC, do monthly beach cleanup, teach a "Science Rocks" class for 4-6-year-old children, and so much more.

I know that CCWC has identified Human Trafficking as their signature initiative for the next 3-5 years – tell us about that?

Even though we have traditionally given \$10,000 - \$20,000 in Daisy Grants to local non-profits each year, we decided in 2021 that we wanted to tackle something big that might require multi-level partnerships, involve a lot of money, and make a huge difference in Clearwater. Four groups did research on a variety of issues and needs and brought their results to our SEP meeting. The club overwhelmingly voted to tackle Human Trafficking. Our research showed that the issues are not well understood and that there was much that we could do in the areas of education, legislation, and housing in Pinellas County. In NOV we held an educational forum to learn more about human trafficking in general and specifically what the issues are in the Clearwater area. We were shocked to learn that there was no safe house in Pinellas County dedicated to providing the survivors a place to live where they could receive the trauma therapy and the job and life skills training, they would need for a successful future. The agencies we contacted indicated that housing was the #1 need. We have begun raising funds and interviewing those that provide housing for HT survivors to entice one of them to come to Pinellas and run a program here. We need someone to donate a house with at least 4 bedrooms, or partner with us to rent or buy a house that could be used for this purpose. We have some great support so far but need so much more! Our co-chairs, Pat Dalton and Kay Estock are tireless in their efforts to spread the word!

If someone wants to learn more, join or help out, how should they connect with the CCWC?

Please contact me at skluce@gmail.com or the CCWC Human Trafficking Team at HTTeam@CCWCFlorida.org. Check out our website at <https://www.cwcflorida.org/> for more information!

Quote or philosophy you like to live by? Two poems my mom gave me long ago:

Whatever is worth doing Is worth doing well.

It might be important, you never can tell.

So if you must do it, then straight from the start

Do it, yes do it, with all of your heart.

Anonymous

AND

When you begin to think you are indispensable, put your finger in a bowl of water and see the hole it leaves when you pull it out.