

## The President's Welcome Note (The Haddon Fortnightly)

Welcome to The Haddon Fortnightly Clubhouse, an iconic Haddonfield building and a National Historic Landmark. I'm the current President of The Haddon Fortnightly, a women's club that is approaching its 130th anniversary.

*What is a women's club? What is The Haddon Fortnightly?*

Many people have the misconception that a women's club is an excuse for a group of prim and proper ladies in hats and gloves to sit and drink tea.

I'm not sure that this was ever true, but nothing could be farther from the truth at the beginning of The Haddon Fortnightly, and it certainly isn't true of The Haddon Fortnightly today! Founded in 1894, The Haddon Fortnightly was among the earliest of the women's clubs that eventually formed the NJ State Federation of Women's Clubs, and the international group, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the largest women's organization in the world.

*And what has that impact been?*

Over the past century, women's club members in NJ have founded libraries and Douglass College. They have purchased ambulances. And bought and maintained their own clubhouses, when women obtaining mortgages was almost unheard of! Nationally, the members of the General Federation of Women's Clubs had exhibitions at Worlds' Fairs, and raised money to purchase multiple fighter planes for the U.S. to use during WWII.

You don't raise those kinds of funds sitting around in hats and gloves!

Women's clubs have had tremendous impact and influence. From helping end child labor and setting up child care centers, to saving the Palisades, providing scholarships for women who have escaped domestic violence, and working against human trafficking, the thousands of members have the power of a large and strong national voice politically and socially.

*So what does The Haddon Fortnightly do?*

We meet monthly from September through May, and some committees even during the summer. Our meetings usually include an interesting speaker on a variety of topics. But they also consist of the reporting by our many committees and departments that reflect the diversity of our activities. From fundraising to social services, to arts, literature and education, our members come together with other like minded women to pursue their interests, while at the same time creating projects to improve the community.

We support our local schools through scholarships and mentoring. We raise money for charities like childhood cancer programs and domestic violence and suicide prevention. We donate to more than fifty organizations per year. And we support the maintenance of our beautiful clubhouse, a designated National Historic Landmark.

Which brings us full circle to those twelve women who came together in 1894. They knew that women had brains and talents, and that women could wield

that intelligence and those talents in a powerful way, for both their own satisfaction and the benefit of their community.

This beautiful building, bought and paid for and maintained entirely by our club women since the 1930s, stands as a testament to the power and potential of those women and the women who've succeeded them. For, inside this clubhouse, generations of women have listened, learned, brainstormed, planned, toiled ... and yes, occasionally enjoyed a cup of tea or even a glass of wine... in order to fulfill the dreams of those twelve women of what their club, The Haddon Fortnightly, could achieve.