



Iowa Branch Connector April, 2014

A Monthly Electronic Bulletin for AAUW Leaders in Iowa

The Value of Affiliation with AAUW: *By joining AAUW, you belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women have a fair chance.*

Welcome to this monthly electronic publication. You are invited to share this information with other members and branch leaders by forwarding it to them, or providing a hard copy.

Maxine Lampe, AAUW IA President 2012-2014

This month's guest editor is Jan Mitchell, web technician for AAUW-IA and president of the eNetwork Online Branch.

Connecting across the branches is an opportunity to share thoughts about AAUW. If you will indulge me, I'd like to share what membership in AAUW has meant to me....

AAUW = ACCESS: Think of the interesting women with whom you have been able to network because of AAUW—not only those in your own branch but also those you have access to when you attend the state conference, Lobby Day at the state capitol, or invitations to meetings with neighboring branches.

I remember attending new-teacher guest night at an AAUW meeting during September, 1966, my first year of teaching in Estherville, Iowa. As a young teacher, I remember feeling awed to be among so many college-degreed women (remember that was 1966!) and especially impressed that the school superintendent's wife sat and chatted with me about empowerment of women. Access to women passionate about AAUW's mission has made me feel connected to strong women of the past century as well as many of you who also work to advance equity for women.

AAUW = ADVOCACY: There are some who suggest that women have it all, that there are no more issues to work toward; but then I hear Lily Ledbetter's name mentioned or I see the latest evidence of the wage gap between men and women. At all levels, AAUW gives us the opportunity to advocate for women. A recent guest presenter for our eNetwork Online Branch was Anne Hedgepeth, National AAUW's Government Relations Manager, who told about her typical week in Washington, focusing on public policy priorities including paid sick days, paid leave, the Family and Medical Leave Act, career and technical education, workforce training, community colleges, higher education, nontraditional occupations for women, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and the Violence Against Women Act.

AAUW-IA members from across the state—literally from Council Bluffs to Davenport—recently met in Des Moines for Lobby Day at the Capitol Building to discuss proposed legislation with legislators and advocate for positions aligned with AAUW public policy. On the local level, as so many AAUW-IA members know, there are opportunities for advocacy, too, with participation in public forums, letter-writing campaigns, and one-on-one conversations.

AAUW = UNLIMITED APPLAUSE FOR ACHIEVEMENT: Celebrating the accomplishments of one woman is a way of celebrating all women and stretching possibilities for ourselves. I think of the many local branches who host community events to applaud women—the panel of women leaders to talk about their choices, challenges, and successes; the cemetery walking-tour (a May meeting for one branch) to hear stories about selected women at their gravesites; the book discussions featuring strong female protagonists from AAUW's ¡Adelante! Book Club List; and the ways branches give public support to celebrate a community woman's accomplishments.

AAUW = WIDER VIEW FOR EMPOWERING YOUNGER WOMEN & GIRLS: When we are empowered, we see new ways to nurture younger women to make decisions and discover new paths toward a future to match their strengths. Many branches provide recognition for girls, STEM Camp support, or exposure to mentors from occupations of interest. A few Iowa branches are involved in *¡Al Exito!*, now a nonprofit, which began as an AAUW-IA project, *Latinas al Éxito*, which empowers Latinas in Iowa schools.

AAUW has never been just a club to me. Forty-eight years of membership has exposed me to strong and interesting women while also providing paths to discover latent strengths within me.

Yes, AAUW's about **Access**, **Advocacy**, **Unlimited Applause for Achievement**, and a **Wider View for Empowering Others**.

If you would like to share what AAUW means to you, please email me [jan.mitchell@nexgenisp.com] and, with your permission, I can post your message in a Linked-In discussion group designated for invited AAUW members.

Jan Mitchell