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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.

Maureen White, AAUW Iowa President 2014-16

This article is by Dev Kiedaisch, Vice President for Program, AAUW Iowa Board member, and Keokuk Branch member.

### **Racism Affects All Of Us**

A mixed group of blacks and whites attending a training conducted by Undoing Racism, were asked what it means to be white. No white person could clearly answer the question because they do not give much thought to being white. Deidre Lacy Blackwell, who is black, said she never noticed how much she thinks about the color of her skin until she realized there are others who do not. "We don't even really think about how much we have to think about being black every day, every minute," she said. "It's sort of sad that you have to live your whole life like that. I was a little jealous that you can just get up and be you and do you." Think how much human power is used up thinking about being black every day, about how to keep your children safe and fed, how to get a job, how to keep yourself safe. Think what we could do with that power.

The average white family earns 20 times what the average black family does. We are learning of the many, many ways implicit bias affects decisions from educational decisions and scholarships, to who is sent to prison and the terms of imprisonment, to who gets shot, to who is made to feel less every day of their lives. Think what we could do with that human power that is used up on surviving and doing the best you can in an unfair society.

Families of color are no more likely to abuse or neglect their children than are white families, but they are more likely to be accused of and investigated for abuse and neglect. Children of color are more likely to be removed from their home, kept in foster care longer, and moved more often while in foster care than white children. In some states, black and Native American children are 3 times more likely to be in foster care than white children. Think how much more human power we would have if those children were left in homes where they are loved,

understood, nurtured, and guided. Think of the loss we all experience, but especially those children, their parents, their families, and their communities.

Blacks and whites use drugs at the same rate. Study after study has shown this. But black men are incarcerated for drug crimes 6 times as often as white men. The US has 5% of the population of the world and 25% of the incarcerated people. Think of the loss of human power not just while they are in prison and their children have no father or mother in the home, but after they get out when they are unable to vote, don't qualify for federal housing, can't get a job. Think of the world we could create with all of that lost human power; people working on finding cures to illnesses, finding a way to live in peace, the best methods to raise and teach children, saving our Earth from our own destruction, keeping our citizens safe while not destroying lives. It takes all of us and we cannot afford to waste a single human being.

We must all stand up and speak out for what is right and fair and just. We must listen and engage and walk hand in hand. As Gloria Steinem said, "Talent is wasted by imaginary limits of race, gender, class, sexuality, etc. When we are separated from our fellow human beings, the whole group loses part of that talent." And we lose part of that humanity.

***At the April 16-17 AAUW Iowa Spring Conference in Des Moines, our exciting speakers will explore many of these ideas that you can explore and discuss with other intelligent, insightful AAUW members.***

***Please join us.***