

 AAUW Iowa Branch Connector

November 2011

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 branch leaders and members by forwarding it to them, or providing a hard copy.

Sandra Keist Wilson, AAUW IA President 2010-12

“WOMEN are the great UNTAPPED RESOURCE that can help the GLOBAL ECONOMY RECOVER and EXPAND.”

Secretary of State Hilary Clinton, 9/16/11

Hello to all Branch Leaders,

I hope your branches enjoyed a full autumn season and have plans for the end of year meetings. How fast the days pass. I am writing this month to update you on the activities of the state board.

Membership Vice President, Mary Ann Ahrens, and C/U Affairs Director, Kim Macheck planned an ambitious institutional membership drive in light of the 130th Anniversary special membership rate. We are extremely excited, as there has been a verbal commitment to join from SEVEN institutions to date. There are more visits planned. This is an awesome result. We are very grateful to those of you who have committed to calling upon a C/U President to tell them about the advantages of AAUW membership. Just think of the potential for gaining new members from faculty, student memberships, and collaborative projects that will be possible.

As state president, I have had two opportunities this past month to attend events that **put added emphasis on women’s issues that we have been working on in Iowa, gender balance in public life and reproductive health care and family planning.**

The first was the **Iowa Women’s Foundation Awards Luncheon** in Iowa City. Seven impressive programs designed to help girls and women of all ages were awarded grants. One of our partners, **50-50 by 2020** was a **grant recipient** to fund a multi-day conference for women candidates running for the Iowa Legislature and the U. S. House of representatives in 2012, it is titled the **“Blueprint for Winning Academy.”**

To help with gender balance across the state, please appoint one or two members **from your branch to gather current statistics** on gender balance in your wider community for appointive positions as well as a list of available openings. Find ways to distribute this information to women in your community. This is a **valuable community service project.** Look for the fall Initiative Newsletter for **ideas from the Wright County Women’s Coalition.**

The **keynote speaker was Tuti Scott**, a woman very active in expanding sports opportunities for women and girls as a pathway for advancing women’s leadership. She said building self-esteem and self-image in women is vital to build confidence. She talked about the importance of Title IX and Gender

Balance as tools that help women succeed as leaders. She challenged us to lead with our voices. She also asked, “what did you do this morning to boost your self esteem?” Each morning when we look in the mirror, we need to note something we like and feel good about ourselves.”

The second event was the one of the “**Issues Speaker Series**” presented by the Iowa Initiative, to help prevent unintended pregnancies. **Ellen Goodman, syndicated columnist** who speaks out loudly on women’s issues, gave the keynote. Her talk was titled “**Healthy Families, Healthy Communities, Working toward a Common Goal.**” She hopes that society can find common ground and to see that birth control and family planning equal’s prevention; prevention of un-healthy families and unhealthy communities. **A panel moderated by Sally Pederson** followed. The panel **consisted of professionals from Wellmark Insurance, DMACC Student Services, Workforce Development Center, United Way, and Visiting Nurse Services.** They responded to Goodman’s remarks. The audience was a mix of elected officials, educators, social service providers, healthcare professionals, and the media.

During the afternoon session Laura Riordan and I presented the concept of the “Community Conversations: Encouraging Ongoing Dialogue in Iowa about reproductive health and family planning.” AAUW IOWA was praised for our participation in hosting the “conversations.” It was a good opportunity for visibility and telling a little of the AAUW story. Each attendee was given a copy of Goodman’s book co-authored with Patricia O’Brien, “I Know Just What You Mean: The Power of Friendship in Women’s Lives.”

I believe that all of these **projects offer opportunities to raise women up.** That is what AAUW has been doing for 130 years and we can be very proud to be members. **So keep speaking up and supporting women as you know best.**

PS: I want to call your attention to important events that have been sent out from national. I send them as I hope you will consider using them for programming.

The AAUW Action Fund has developed a new voter education program. It is titled, “**My Vote**” and is designed to educate and to get out the vote for the 2012 election. Consider collaborating with other groups and hold a **voter-ed seminar** next year. The complete program is offered on AAUW.org.

Crossing the Line 2011. AAUW has just released the latest research on bullying and harassment in schools. You can get the Executive Summary and Full report from the AAUW website. A national priority is to ask Congress to strengthen federal protection for all students, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex disability, perceived gender identity, or religion.

On Tuesday, Nov 15, **AAUW will host an event at the National Press Club** on the **topic** featuring Rosalind Wiseman, an AAUW fellowship recipient. She is the author of the book “**Queen Bees and Wannabes**” and is an expert on youth

In Equity, Sandra

