**2014 AAUW IOWA MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT PLAN GRANT**

**FINAL REPORT - ONE PAGE SUMMARY**

**EVENT:** Palo Alto County AAUW – “Girls & Grapes” Social Event (Membership Drive) held on

September 25, 2014, 5pm – 7pm

**CONTACTS (for more information)**:

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**SYNOPSIS**: We held a wine/cheese membership drive event. A few of our members got together and brainstormed a list of 110 names of professional women in our local area and we mailed postcard invitations with individually hand-written notes (1-2 short sentences) to these ladies approximately 2 weeks before the event. Jane Nettleton, AAUW State Officer, was invited and agreed to attend and provide a short synopsis of AAUW and why she was inspired to join. Reminder ads were published in the local newspaper, our chapter president was interviewed on the local TV “Chamber Chat”, and our event was listed on the Community Calendar, local newspaper, and on the Chamber of Commerce’s website. We also promoted the event with posters, Facebook, and word-of-mouth.

Our venue, the Country Schoolhouse museum on the Palo Alto County Fairgrounds, was chosen for several reasons: (1) it was a non-threatening (neutral) public venue; (2) the nature of the school fit perfectly with AAUW’s mission of promoting education for women; (3) wine was allowed to be served; (4) there was plenty of free parking available on the fairgrounds; and (5) the rental fee of $200 would go to another non-profit organization promoting education.

Ours was a come-and-go event. We utilized the state AAUW display and handed out membership information after identifying each visitor’s interests and how they correlated with the AAUW mission. After the event, we mailed hand-written thank-you’s to EVERYONE who attended and invited them to our future branch events (we included a copy of our Program Schedule for the year). We increased our membership by 64% (from 18 members to 28 members) for a total of 10 new members! (6 Full memberships & 4 Friends/Student memberships).

**TIPS FOR REPLICATION:** It’s not what you know, but who you know. Brainstorm a list of professional women who you know in your local area. Find a venue, plan your menu, and send out the invitations! Word-of-mouth and personal invitations worked the best for us. We promoted it as an opportunity for smart women to gather, network, and have fun. Follow-up with thank-you’s and an invitation to attend your next event or meeting! Also in 2014, we applied and were awarded a grant from the Palo Alto County Gaming Development Corporation to host screenings of three cultural films (“Happy”, “Iron Jawed Angels”, and “Miss Representation”) at a local movie theater. The grant allowed us to show these films to the public free of charge. We promoted our Girls & Grapes event at the first film screening and then invited those who attended Girls & Grapes to our next two films.