



IOWA INITIATIVE

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Getting Things Done

Karen Agee, AAUW Iowa Co-President

Our AAUW goals are not going to accomplish themselves, are they?

- We want Iowa “to promote a strong system of public education and lifelong learning that promotes gender fairness, equity, diversity, and inclusivity,” in the words of our public policy program, but public education’s mandate in Iowa has been challenged in multiple ways lately, from elementary to higher education and from social studies to sports.
- We strive “to achieve economic security for all women,” but prevailing forces weaken the labor unions, hold down the minimum wage, and threaten the health care and Social Security systems that make economic security possible.
- We are trying “to guarantee gender equality, individual rights, and social justice for a diverse and inclusive society,” while the Equal Rights Amendment is stuck in the courts and White supremacists threaten death in the streets.



Let us explore these issues in our branch programs and activities. At the April conference, AAUW of Iowa will engage speakers with new perspectives, new options for us to try. And we will take action to accomplish our shared goals.

Lobby Day—Save the Date

Mark your calendars. Our Lobby Day 2023 will be Wednesday, February 8, from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.



November 2022

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Mark Your Calendar

Spring Conference April 21-22, 2023
Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale

Our Time Is Now

Karen Kedrowski on the 19th Amendment at 100
 Mary Jane Cobb on Supporting Public Education
 Laurie Schipper on Creating Beloved Communities
 Break the Cycle 200— to End Human Trafficking
 Handling Difficult Conversations
 Diversity
 Gun Safety



Iowa Initiative

Math Magic in Indianola— Joint Project with Simpson College Staff and Students

Jackie Brittingham, Indianola Branch

On Saturday, November 5, the Simpson College Diversity in STEM--a student-led organization--and the Indianola branch of AAUW joined together to host the AAUW biennial STEM workshop for fourth and fifth grade girls. Thirty-six girls from a dozen different elementary schools across Central Iowa gathered on campus at Simpson College in Indianola for "Math Magic & Science Secrets."

Dr. Jackie Brittingham coordinated with the Simpson College organization to create the classes, assign roles, and practice presentations. Twelve Simpson College undergraduate volunteers gained experience in teaching, planning and working together, alongside faculty and friends of the college, as they created and led seven different STEM-tastic activities: *Chemical Reactions in Action*, *Awesome Anatomy*, *Mathematics in Art*, *Fine-feathered Friends*, *Code Games*, *What Comes Up Must Come Down*, and *What Bugs a Veterinarian*.

Enthusiastic fourth- and fifth-graders each participated in four of the activities offered. Girls made "bath bombs" and bird treats. They coded their own computer games. They undertook an investigation into the human body that included seeing a real human brain.

Each girl took home a snack, a custom Math Magic & Science Secrets t-shirt, a packet of at-home activities, and a newfound confidence in their abilities to tackle

the exciting world of science and mathematics.

AAUW members helped with planning, providing supplies and folders with related pencil-and-paper activities. Members also provided a smooth registration and check-in as well as supervision of the young students throughout the event.

The Indianola AAUW Branch has hosted STEM workshops for pre-teen girls on a biennial basis since 2012. Thanks go to everyone who contributed to the success of this event, specifically: The Indianola AAUW; Simpson College faculty, staff, and students; The Diversity in STEM Leadership Team, and Keller Designs.



It was a great day. The girls had a wonderful day sampling seven classes. The college students did a great job.



Pictures from left: During snack time two girls were interviewed for the local newspaper. Working on a math project, the girls even learned about exponents. Several groups also worked on computers. Here the girls are helped by An AAUW member and

a Simpson student. Simpson College students planned all 7 classes which included the physics class here. The girls built protection for eggs then dropped them to see if they were safe.

Sister to Sister—Stravropol State Program, 1990

Rowena Hardinger, Cedar Falls-Waterloo

Rowena Hardinger and Janet Heinicke travelled to Russia in 1990, but their trip seems pertinent today, so we are posting her memories of the friends they made. Janet recalled the Russian women saying, "We are more alike than different. We care about the same things."

The plane landed in Stavropol, Russia, on August 3, 1990. Peering from the window, we viewed a large group of people, and as we descended from the plane, they greeted us in the usual Russian tradition. The women, dressed in long flowing skirts, carried a fresh baked circle of bread. On the tray was a dish of salt! We were instructed to break off a hunk of bread, dip it into salt and take a bite. We became accustomed to this procedure each time we met a new group. What an intimate way of sharing two necessities to begin the week's tour of our sister state.

The AAUW Iowa Division International Chair, Ann Bock, and committee worked for over a year to exchange Iowa representatives with those from Stavropol, our sister state, on August 1-10, 1990. Six Iowa AAUW members elected to participate— Sarah Beane, Garwin; Randy Ellefson, Waverly; Mary Ann Erb, Charles City; Janet Heinicke, Indianola; Sheila Sidles, Centerville; and Rowena L Hardinger, Albia.

Each of us was assigned to a family for the night, some of whom spoke English. The group assembled each day and visited interesting locations: factories, farms, hospitals, senior homes, parks, museums, churches, and historic sites.

An electronic plant produced crystals of silicone that sold to US and Japanese markets. The 2,000 employees had access to a swimming pool, gymnasium, and medical facilities. The manager served us ice cream and coffee in their dining room. Another plant exhibited care for employees' children. Workers could spend coffee breaks with their nursery school children, and an educational program was provided for older ones.

Some of the farms were collective farms owned by the state. Farmers owned their own livestock and pooled funds for equipment. Profits were divided among themselves. The farm has eleven schools with 300 students.

As we became more acquainted, we shared concerns of common interest. Women admitted their difficulty marketing. They stood in lines for selecting, packaging, and paying for food. Private markets were less expensive than government ones. Meals planned at private homes were elaborate, ample, and elegantly served.

Of common interest were childcare, children's developmental needs, promoting cultural traditions, literature, music, and the arts. We found many common concerns among women who lived half a continent apart.

Some admitted discouragement in dealing with alcoholic problems that upset family life. Others were interested in cutting their workload – home and career, higher wages for women, access to entrepreneurial skills, possible business ventures, and restaurant management.

Our hosts presented amazing gifts of mementoes. As we left the Anatoli home, Mary Ann and I each were presented a bottle of cognac and a hand-tanned fox fur, acquired on one of the host's hunting trips. My displayed treasure here in Cedar Falls continues to be admired by each of my seven great grandchildren.

Viktor Lindquist, our translator and guide, said Doumbia's name means "buffalo killed"; this special vacation region is not available to all. We enjoyed the beautiful gardens, our comfortable hotel, and the scenic mountain drive. We asked a Russian governmental official, Anatoli Lukyanov, and his wife we met hiking to share our evening meal. He spoke English well and enjoyed American poet Robert Frost.

Later that year, Russian women shared time at AAUW locations in Iowa. Sharon Schuster, National AAUW President, conducted a trip to Russia in 1991 to affirm Russian women becoming members. They did for a few years; however, both US and Russian organizations have left the International Association, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.



The Iowa travelers were given flowers, and posed for a picture with their Russian hosts. Janet Heinicke is in front in purple, and silver-haired Rowena Hardinger is behind her in the top row.

Girl Power on Display: Celebrate Your Strengths

Mary Ann Kuhr, Loess Hills Branch

The Loess Hills Branch of AAUW held its second annual *Girl Power on Display* forum for middle & high school girls on Saturday, Sept. 17, 2022, from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., at the Salvation Army chapel on the Midlands Boys and Girls Club campus, in Council Bluffs.

This Year's focus was "*Celebrate Your Strength!*" Three speakers shared stories from their backgrounds related to making positive choices and the strengths resulting from them. Speakers included DeMeria Bruce, CEO and owner of Fulton Homes Education Center; Malena Rousseau, Ph.D., Program Officer from the Iowa West Foundation; Viridiana Almanza, Director of Programming at the Latino Center of the Midlands; and Barbara Sanford, Relaxation Specialist, Mount Zion Refuge Center.

Our SWOT analysis from last year revealed to us that that we needed to network more. If we wanted to reach the girls through our forums, additional community sources were needed. So we set out to find other resources we might use to reach our goals. We also applied for a grant from the Community Foundation of Western Iowa; they, too, recognized that we needed to reach out to diverse communities. With their suggestions and some terrific help from branch member, Vergarie Sanford, the branch was awarded a grant for \$1000 to help fund the forum's needs.

To reach out further, we contacted all rural school districts in Pottawattamie County and all school districts within Council Bluffs Community School District. We have learned that the more our branch communicates our goals to school counselors or district administration that relationships are built and schools are more likely to

spread the word. Additionally, we contacted the Boys & Girls Club, worked with the newspapers in rural and urban Pottawattamie County, to get out our flyer and articles. We also participated in the local Farmers' Market several times. We have recognized that reaching additional non-profits and organizations will be needed for next year.

As we looked toward future growth, we made contact with Iowa Western Community College in Council Bluffs to learn if we might work together on some diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) efforts in the future. They were very receptive and also impressed with the tools that were available to them through the National AAUW. We believe that we may look forward to future events together. The IWCC recruiter attended the forum and the girls attending seemed receptive to his message. One family member shared that this was the first time that her daughter considered a career that involved college.

At lunchtime, speakers and AAUW members moved to the tables where the girls sat, and the discussions that ensued proved very rewarding for all.

Branch effort to make this happen was terrific! Everyone pitched in and cooperated with the tasks at hand. Now we are headed to the next challenge!



A getting-to-know-you activity.



Viridiana Almanza spoke about immigrants' experiences.



Melena Rousseau spoke about learning from other cultures.



Speakers were well received.

Spring Conference Featured Speaker – Laurie Schipper 2022 Hall of Fame Inductee, Iowa Office on the Status of Women

Kim Folkers, AAUW Iowa Membership VP

As previewed in last month's Initiative, Iowa AAUW is pleased that Laurie Schipper will be one of our keynote speakers at the 2023 State Conference in April. Her presentation will be entitled, "A Retrospective on Milestones and Lessons Learned: Working to Create Beloved Communities Where We Can All Thrive." It will take its inspiration from the theme: "We're going to win this war not by fighting what we hate but saving what we love." – Rose Tico, *Last Jedi*

Laurie was inducted into the 2022 Iowa Women's Hall of Fame by the Office on the Status of Women at the Iowa Department of Human Rights. Her decades of work exemplify the importance of focusing on the needs of women, specifically survivors of domestic abuse.

Originally from Shell Rock, IA, Laurie graduated from ISU in Social Work. She first worked as Director of Assault Care Center Extending Shelter and Services (ACCESS), a victim service agency in Ames serving five central Iowa counties. Then from 1993-2021, she served as Executive Director of the Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV). In 1995 she was Iowa's first domestic violence advocate to serve as an expert witness in the trial of a survivor.

During her years with ICADV she earned a reputation as an advocate who ensured the most vulnerable and marginalized communities were served with equitable,

culturally relevant services. Her accomplishments include: hosting Iowa's first AmeriCorps programs focused on housing and economic justice; coordinating the MUNA Legal Clinic to support undocumented survivors and help them apply for immigration remedies; organizing Leadership Institute for Tomorrow (LIFT) to mentor and support leaders in the Black community; working to have the Coalition incubate culturally-specific victim advocacy programs supporting the Latino/a and Hard of Hearing communities; and spearheading efforts to change Iowa's delivery model for survivors from shelter to Housing First, a first of its kind in the country.



In 2021, Laurie stepped down from ICAV and joined GALvanize USA, a national non-partisan, non-profit that works to bring women together for civic empowerment.

Roxanne Conlin, a well-known Iowa attorney and women's activist had this to say about Laurie:

"Mrs. Schipper has proven to be a local, state, and national leader within the anti-violence community. From her start as the director of Assault Care Center Extending Shelter and Services (ACCESS) to her work as executive director of the state's leading nonprofit against intimate partner violence, ICADV, she has stood firm with the belief that everyone should be safe in their relationships and have the ability to thrive."



Spring Conference Speaker Mini-Preview—Mary Jane Cobb

Mary Jane Cobb will be one of our speakers at the spring conference. Mary Jane has served as the Executive Director of Iowa State Education Association since 2008. Before becoming ISEA Executive Director, she worked with college students in work-study placements and job search skills. She worked for many years on the staff of

Alabama Education Association and the National Education Association in government relations. She holds a BA degree in government from Campbell University in North Carolina, and a master's degree in Public Administration from Auburn University, Montgomery, Alabama. She will be speaking with us on the state of public education in Iowa.



Making the Fundamental Shift from Diversity to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Anne Kische, AAUW Iowa Diversity Director

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is a recent phenomenon that has been a topic of discussion in all spheres of life as people strive to understand what each of the words mean. It is imperative that we come up with a common definition to help us understand each word before we can apply them in AAUW, Iowa Chapter. In simple words, diversity means all the ways we differ. These differences must be acknowledged and appreciated. Diversity alone does not address issues of equity and inclusion. To demonstrate that you acknowledge the differences among people, and their importance in a society we must seek a different approach. In other words, “diversity” as an organization requirement is weak.

I recently attended a collaborative initiative of inclusive education at the University of Iowa, and this is how the presenter defines diversity, equity and inclusion:

Definition: Diversity refers to all aspects of human difference, social group differences, including but not limited to [race, ethnicity, creed, color, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual identity, socio-economic status, language, culture, national origin, religion, / spirituality, age, \(dis\)ability, military/veteran status, political perspective, and associational preferences.](#)

Definition: Equity refers to fair and just practices and policies that ensure all members can thrive. Equity is different than equality in that equality implies treating everyone as if their experiences are the same. Being equitable means acknowledging and addressing structural inequalities – historic and current – that advantage some and disadvantage others. Equal treatment results in equity only if everyone starts with equal access to opportunities.

Definition: Inclusion refers to a community where all members feel respected, have a sense of belonging and can participate and achieve their potential.

I define “diversity, equity and Inclusion” as an opportunity for a diverse group of people to sit at a table, to be heard, and be treated equally.

Many organizations and institution struggle and do not realize the full potential of diverse and inclusive membership or workforce. Many have diverse members and/ or only to comply with certain guidelines. Compliance is necessary, but is it sufficient? We need to move from compliance to shared understanding of DEI as an approach that is critical to save AAUW from being seen as implicitly discriminating and biased.

DEI is necessary in approaching everyday policies, program, practices, and climate in AAUW branches in Iowa. Do leaders give each member a chance to talk? What are the implications of not giving someone a chance

to talk? Do you properly address each member’s concerns and answer their questions? Lack of inclusion can affect both individual feelings and lead to failure in achieving the goals of AAUW.



to talk? Do you properly address each member’s concerns and answer their questions? Lack of inclusion can affect both individual feelings and lead to failure in achieving the goals of AAUW.

How do we shift from diversity to diversity, equity, and inclusion?

For us to successfully implement DEI, we need to consider the following: First, we can start with utilizing the AAUW DEI tool kit ([diversity@AAUW](#)), which is readily available to everyone free of charge. The DEI tool kit has wealth of information from which we could all benefit. The tool kit has DEI resources which identify best practices for promoting diversity, equity and inclusion as stated in the previous newsletter. I challenge each member to access the tool kit and evaluate the extent to which the tool kit is helping members understand and implement DEI across board.

Second, each branch needs to consider seeking the opinion of members regarding their own experiences and DEI. You are the only expert of your experiences. No one can describe your experiences better than you.

Third, while it is imperative to have a diversity officer, it is equally vital to collaborate with each other to set DEI goals and strategies of achieving them.

Fourth, it is important to consider training on DEI issues to help us understand multicultural and intergenerational issues.

Karen Kedrowski Presents on “The History of Title IX on the 50th Anniversary”

Roberta Hersom, Palo Alto County Branch Co-President

AAUW Palo Alto Branch hosted Karen Kedrowski, Professor of Political Science and Director of the Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics at Iowa State University. Ms. Kedrowski was invited to speak on the topic of Title IX which is celebrating its 50th anniversary. The presentation was held at the Emmetsburg campus of Iowa Lakes Community College.

Dr. Kedrowski spoke on Title IX’s intention, impact, and what still needs to happen. Attendees learned that the law has enabled more women to attend college and to participate in sports. However, there is still much work left to do to enforce the law. All women, and particularly, women of color and LGBTQ+, face challenges of equality and equity in education.



Left: Dr. Kedrowski discusses the history of Title IX.

Right: Co-Presidents Roberta Hersom and Anne Johnson with Karen Kedrowski.



Des Moines Branch to Study Nikole Hannah-Jones’ *The 1619 Project*

Joanne Page, AAUW Des Moines Membership Vice President

All Iowa AAUW members are invited to join the Des Moines Branch this winter for an intensive study of historian Nikole Hannah-Jones’ pathbreaking *The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story*. Described as “visionary,” “sweeping,” and “up-to-the moment,” this 2021 book builds on the original research published in *The New York Times Magazine*. Beginning on January 3, 2023, we plan to meet weekly on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. for an hour via Zoom.

Race and the role it has played in American history is at the forefront of politics in America now. The tragic deaths of George Floyd and many others have led to a long-overdue reexamination of many deeply held beliefs and biases. The current controversy over “critical race theory” is only one way the topic is being addressed. AAUW’s emphasis on the importance of an educated and diverse citizenry provides another perspective to frame the conversation.

We plan to follow the rules adopted by Grand View University for all classes that deal with issues of race, gender, and other such topics. The rules provide a background for valuing other viewpoints and learning from them, even when you might disagree.

On January 3, we will review the Grand View rules, select discussion leaders for each session, and discuss the book’s preface. Each subsequent session will cover two chapters in the book. Discussion leaders will be asked to come prepared with several open-ended questions for discussion. This will *not* be a lecture series, and everyone’s opinions will be solicited. If the group is large, we will use the “Raise Your Hand” function in Zoom to ensure everybody can speak.

Please consider joining us. If you would like to participate, please contact branch membership VP Joanne Page at page@dwx.com. She will send you the Zoom link for the meetings, the meeting dates and chapters to be covered, and the rules for participation.



Keokuk Branch Hosts Candidate Forum

Diane Kearns and Dev Kiedaisch, AAUW Iowa Public Policy Co-Directors

The Keokuk Branch of AAUW held a candidate's forum Wednesday evening, October 26, in the City Council chambers in Keokuk.

Candidates for Iowa House District 100, Representative Martin Graber, Republican, and challenger Rebecca Bowker, Democrat, were invited to attend and given the opportunity for their input for dates. Ms. Bowker attended and answered questions from AAUW and the public in attendance. Representative Graber notified the sponsors he would be unable to attend due to a prior commitment in Des Moines.

The issues brought before Ms. Bowker revolved around AAUW Public Policy priorities which are of concern to the membership. However, of interest to all was equitable funding of education and opposition to the use of public funds for private schools; increase in the minimum wage; collective bargaining rights for the public and private sector; pay equity and protection for pregnant workers. The public's questions were varied and predominantly subjects of local and state importance.

Although we were disappointed that Mr. Graber was

absent, we did appreciate the succinct and informative answers Ms. Bowker provided to the crowd in attendance at the forum.



Branch Co-President Louise Orozco and Diane Kearns served as moderators. Audience members were given cards to write questions, and the moderators used audience questions and their own.



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Membership Renewal Grace Period Deadline Near

Katrina Sun Breese, Senior Director of Institutional Advancement

I'm reaching out to remind you that the grace period for AAUW branch members with June 30, 2022, expiration dates ends on **November 30, 2022**. Renewing members before the deadline will allow them to keep their current expiration month and day, which many affiliate leaders prefer when managing membership rosters. AAUW's priority is ensuring that members who paid their dues for Fiscal Year 2023 remain in good standing.



To that end, please take one of the following actions prior to the November 30 deadline:

- If you have collected membership dues, but have not been able to process the memberships online with a

debit or credit card, please email connect@aauw.org with NEED TO PAY DUES in the subject line.

- If your branch does not have a debit/credit card to pay dues online, please use an [Affiliate Dues Report Form](#). Please send your checks as soon as possible via certified mail. In addition, let us know you've done so by emailing connect@aauw.org using the subject line CHECK PAYMENT SENT. In the body of the email, provide the check number and amount if it has not been cashed.

Please be sure to review our [Community Hub resources](#), join us for [Office Hours](#), or reach out to connect@aauw.org if you need support.

The Impact of Plastic Upon Asian Elephants

Elaine Kresse, Davenport Bettendorf Branch

Rasika Mudalige-Jayawickrama and Lalith Jayawickrama will do a live presentation on the impact of plastic on Asian elephants on Saturday, January 14, at 1:00 p.m. at the Koning Center at Ridgecrest Village in Davenport. The presentation will also be available for remote viewing using Zoom. This presentation is hosted by the Davenport-Bettendorf branch of AAUW, and all AAUW members are invited to attend. There is a snow alternative of Sunday, January 15, at 1:00. Please mark your calendars and watch the weather reports in Dubuque and Davenport.

Dr. Rasika G. Mudalige-Jayawickrama is a professor of Plant Biology employed at the University of Dubuque. She is teaching Plant Biology, Genetics and Molecular Biology at UD. Her main research interest is orchid molecular genetics.

Lalith Jayawickrama is an assistant professor of Environmental Science at the University of Dubuque. He teaches Environmental Science, Animal Nutrition and Human Nutrition classes. His research is focused on human and animal nutrition and environmental impacts of plastic pollution.

Rasika and Lalith did research on Asian elephants last summer. Elephant fecal samples were analyzed for macroplastics and microplastics. Dietary change can lead to drastic changes in the quality and quantity of gut microbiome. They evaluated gut microflora of wild elephants that forage in the forest and those who use garbage patches with lots of plastic waste. Comparison of gut microflora showed that the plastic eating elephants have a completely different microbial profile in their gut compared to that of normal wild elephants.

Members of the Davenport-Bettendorf branch have heard firsthand about the heartbreaking story of the Asian

elephants. Working from a remote research station in the jungle this summer, Rasika and Lalith saw first hand how much plastic the unfortunate elephants were eating. It was a mix of biological and environmental studies and they have many pictures and clear data.



Dr. Rasika G. Mudalige-Jayawickrama



Lalith Jayawickrama



Rasika and Lalith took pictures of elephants foraging for food in garbage dumps.

More Math Magic and Science Secrets

(see page 2)



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