



IOWA INITIATIVE

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The Mission: A Better Place for Women

Kathie Farris and Karen Agee
Co-Presidents AAUW of Iowa 2022-2024

Be kinder than necessary because everyone you meet is fighting some kind of battle. - J. M. Barrie

AAUW is here to make women’s battles easier together. From its beginnings, AAUW organized to advance women’s rights to a higher education and careers. And then each state and branch joined for its own reasons. For example, the Indianola branch formed to protest the fact that Simpson College had no women as full professors on its faculty. Other branches will have different beginnings, but all center around the theme of advancing equity for women and girls.

Whether we address

Adequate funding for public education from preschool through college

or

Putting an end to human trafficking

or

Ensuring equitable wages

or

Disparity in college debt

or

Vigorous enforcement of Title IX

or

Self-determination of one’s reproductive health decisions,

we aim to make life better for all women and girls on whichever battlefield they need our help.

Your AAUW of Iowa board of directors encourages every branch to help. The board has committed thousands of dollars this year to fund branch projects aimed at addressing disparities, inequities, and unacknowledged rights. Branch presidents have received application forms for submitting projects for consideration.

With kindness and ingenuity, we work to make the world a better place for all women and girls.



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October 19-21, 2023
St. Louis, Missouri

Some highlights:

- Karen Kedrowski on Pay Equity
- Lisa Maatz on Organizational Structure and Strategies
- Deanie Brown on Unconscious/Implicit Bias
- AAUW CEO Gloria Blackwell
- Missouri Library Association on Censure, Cancellations, and Bannings
- Rachel Gonzales on United Against Gun Violence
- Janai Harris on Period Poverty
- Meghan Kissel on Title IX, AAUW Public Policy
- Zenobia Harris on Giving Birth in America

AAUW MIDWEST REGIONAL CONFERENCE



Early Bird Registration before September 16—\$200/person, \$225 thereafter
(registration includes conference meals)

Conference Details:

Welcome 1:00 pm (cst) on Thursday, October 19
Farewell: Noon on Saturday, October 21
Venue: Drury Plaza Hotel, St. Louis at the Arch
Room Rates: \$221 per night for 2 queen beds
Covered parking, \$27 per night
Drury Inn Phone: 314-231-3003, or visit
DruryHotels.com for more information.

Plenary and breakout topics:

- Voting Rights and Issues
- Reproductive Rights and Women’s Health
- Equity and Inclusion
- Succession Planning and Leadership
- Women’s Economic Security
- Pay Equity, AAUW and the Future

See full tentative conference schedule on p. 7 in this newsletter.

Swap Shops

Get in on Exciting “Swap Shops.” These small group sessions will take place during the conference where ideas and dreams will be shared (swapped) in a casual setting. [Get an application form now!](#) **The Swap Shops application deadline has been extended to September 1, so you still have time, but act soon!**

How to Register

The registration form is available as a pdf file, a Word document, or in Word 97. Print any of them, fill it out, and send it in with a check to Lois Domsch 3349 S. Scott Ave. Independence, MO 64052-2720.
Lois@Domsch.com

[Registration form pdf.](#)

[Registration form in Word](#)

[Registration form in Word 97](#)

Or you may register online using the PayPal link:
https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/aauwcsrc?country.x=US&locale.x=en_US

Making Hotel Reservations

Important: Make your hotel reservation with the Drury Plaza Hotel at the Arch by calling 314-231-3003. Room rates are \$221 per night for 2 queen beds. Covered parking at the hotel is \$27 per night. Use the Group Code 10046618 for the AAUW rate.

Carpooling

Carpooling to St. Louis is a great idea. If you would like to connect with others as a driver or a rider, please contact Karen Agee at karen.agee@uni.edu, and she will try to match drivers and riders from the same area.

Human Trafficking Information Reaches Iowa Legislators

Branch Member Contact Opportunity

Mary Ann Ahrens, Project Chair

Since our spring state conference, human trafficking brochures and accompanying information have been shared with our members at large, honorary life members, life members, college-university institutions, the entities consulted during our preparation, the Canadian Federation of University Women, the Canadian Women's Foundation and AAUW public policy division. Project Vice Chair Maxine Lampe and I submitted an application form for Swap Shop at the October 19-21

AAUW Regional 11-state Conference in St. Louis. If approved, we will conduct a workshop on human trafficking entitled: **STOP TRAFFICKING NOW! SAVE LIVES!** We will share our educational brochures/information and the Iowa Network Against Human Trafficking and Slavery brochures.

Diane Kearns, Public Policy Director, and I sent an informational letter/brochure to the home of each Iowa Legislator on August 1. Because we do not have branches in every county, we thought it was important to reach all of Iowa with the information. If you will remember, during this legislative session our members contacted legislators in a variety of ways. We were very visible on Lobby Day and Equal Pay Day at the Capitol.

During this session, several human trafficking laws were passed which appeared in the May issue of *Iowa Initiative*. Those laws were HF 630, SF 562, HF 176, and SF 84. The passage of these laws means that fewer lives will be ruined or lost when people succumb to being illegally trafficked sexually or working as slaves. This is a non-controversial issue that both parties can support. The letter distributed to Iowa legislators included AAUW information and an important thank you to each of them for their support of the legislation. We also reminded them there is still work to do around Safe Harbor laws.

Our first goal is to provide a basic understanding and create awareness of human trafficking along with simple actions individuals/organizations can take to build interest and stimulate involvement in prevention within

our communities. **Our second goal** is to encourage continued local advocacy for human trafficking issues and stronger legislation to reduce it. **This is an opportunity for our members** to contact their local legislators (house, senate) and ask if they received the information, if they had questions or any suggestions for distribution to groups, etc. Their feedback could help you or your branch pursue people or groups you hadn't thought about. Brochures are available to them or you if needed.



Are you familiar with your legislator? **This is a good opportunity** to introduce yourself, get acquainted, and reduce anxiety in dealing with legislators. The first time for me was anxiety producing but after getting acquainted I realized they were human beings with concerns and a willingness to help. At this time of year legislators are at the fairs, community

events and celebrations, sporting events, and political fundraisers. Go for it! **Fall programming is approaching** and there will be many opportunities to network and distribute our information. **Don't lose sight of this critical issue this year. We are making a difference.**

Speaking of fairs and other events, Jane Nettleton from the **Algona branch** indicates:

The branch has been busy distributing brochures in several places after brainstorming ideas for use of the Human Trafficking brochures at our May meeting. Some that we have employed are having the brochures in both the Republican and Democrat booths at the Kossuth County Fair and distributing them to houses of worship in our community. Others that we should have carried out had we known about them in time would be having them available after the movie *Sound of Freedom*, since it is a popular movie with a human trafficking theme, and having them available at our two high schools after talks given about human trafficking by guest speakers. Perhaps other branches can make use of those ideas.

Public Policy in a Difficult Time

Diane Kearns, AAUW Iowa Public Policy Director

Where has the summer gone? I hope everyone had an enjoyable one. This month's article will be brief and just touch on a few points.

On June 22, 2023, I listened to the AAUW Webinar which focused on Public Policy Priorities for the coming year. I am listing some bullet points from the webinar.

- Public policy priorities are used to review new legislation and provide guidance.
- Specific legislation is chosen to increase chances for passage.
- State public policy should be in line with the National.

What can members do?

- Contact legislators.
- Join the two-minute activist.
- Talk to elected officials (materials are available to assist with this).
- Write letters to the editor.
- Use the [Advocacy Toolkit](#).
- Lobby the legislature on state and federal level.
- Hold Lobby Days.
- Attend Town Halls

Organizing a Candidate Forum

- Plan ahead.
- Invite the candidates.
- Select a format.
- Keep your forum non-partisan.

Working with the Media

- Compile a media contact list.
- Set a time frame with clear goals.
- Determine your key message.

Writing a Letter to the Editor vs. Op Ed

- Research your message.
- Identify yourself as a member of AAUW.
- Avoid form letters.

Next year will be an election year. I encourage the membership to pay close attention to where the various candidates stand on issues that are important to AAUW and that follow our Public Policy priorities.

I joined a Zoom presentation on August 9 presented by AAUW. The topic was Advancing the Equal Rights Amendment During August Recess. Partners at the ERA Coalition participated in the meeting as well. This was an excellent presentation which stressed the importance of contacting Senators and Representatives to move HJR 25 and SJR 4 out of their respective committees. It was mentioned that Chair of House Judiciary, Republican Jim Jordan, may not move the resolution out of committee. Democratic Senator Schumer put SJR 4 up for a vote this spring and left the door open for the resolution to be revisited. If anyone wishes to follow the work of these committees you can by pulling the resolutions up and reading the dialogue. It was stressed by those presenting that it is necessary to target those that vote outside their party, such as independent voters. An example of progressing legislation was given with the recent events in Ohio and the Reproductive Rights legislation that was passed. The August recess is a good time to contact your elected Senators and Representatives. The presenters indicated there will be Talking Points and sample letters available later.

This legislative year has been a very difficult one. We need to continue to focus on our issues and hold those elected officials accountable. If you have any questions or issues of concern, please do not hesitate to contact me.



Save the Date

**Reproductive Rights
October 24 at 7 pm
Grand View University**



Presenters

**Carolina Ramos and Gabriella Fuentes
with Planned Parenthood of Iowa**

This will be a hybrid program hosted by the Des Moines and eNetwork branches of AAUW. The public is invited. You may participate by going to Grand View University or join in on Zoom.

Connecting with the Arts

Diane Edwards, Clarion

The Clarion Branch of AAUW's annual summer outing theme, Connecting with the Arts, was enjoyed by 13 members of the branch. The first stop was at the home of Margaret Askelson where we viewed 15 amazing, large, framed drawings using a special pastel chalk media. Margaret's art work has been accepted and shown at the Iowa State Fair and the Iowa Pastel Artist Society .

After coffee at the Dutch Oven Bakery in Ames, we proceeded to the Creative Artists Studio of Ames (CASA) founded in 2001 and located in a 10,000 square foot building a block south of the ISU campus. CASA is a community of more than 30 amateur and professional artists who rent studio space, share clay equipment and kilns, learn, and collaborate by sharing their expertise with the public and each other in pottery, fiber, metal, paper, ink and watercolor. Our group was excited to be given a tour of the facility in addition to a lecture and demonstration by Greg Lamont, one of the founding member artists.

The next stop was lunch at Wallaby's where the chef came out to greet us afterwards. In the seven years she has been there, no group had ever ordered six Beet and Goat Cheese salads. They were wonderful! The final stop for the day was the Octagon Center for the Arts now located in downtown Ames across from the Ames Public Library. In the 1960s, four local women came up with the idea to create a nonprofit that would foster the arts in Ames by offering classes and outreach, a retail gallery shop of local artists, and the annual Octagon Art Festival. After a lecture on the history and tour of the two-story renovated Masonic Lodge, we had time to look at the art on display and for sale in the retail shop.



Greg Lamont at CASA



One of Margaret Askelson's pastel portraits



Margaret Askelson shows her work in pastels in her home studio



At the Octagon Art studio in Ames

A Handbook for C/U Recruitment in Iowa

What Do I Do to Recruit and What Do I Do After Recruitment?

Elaine Kresse, College/University Director

We realize that many members would like to work more closely with a school near them but would like some helpful suggestions or AAUW background and information to help them make that connection.

We hope to provide a few links to website resources and a few strategies that have helped others in Iowa.

AAUW national leadership programs include the following.

- NCCWSL: “Each year AAUW invites hundreds of college women from around the country to two days of leadership training, inspiration, and networking at our National College Conference for Women Student Leaders” and staff. <https://www.aauw.org/nccwsl-branch-information>
- COMMUNITY ACTION GRANTS: \$3000 TO \$10,000 awarded each year to project that promote education and Equity. <https://www.aauw.org/resources/programs/fellowships-grants/current-opportunities/community-action/>
- START SMART AND WORK SMART: “Learn to successfully advocate for yourself—and help close the pay gap for women everywhere.” Start Smart programs are available to colleges for workshops and Work Smart is available on line. <https://www.aauw.org/resources/programs/salary/>
- LAF (LEGAL ADVOCACY FUND): \$5000 to \$20,000 for defense in sex discrimination or education. <https://www.aauw.org/resources/legal/laf/legal-case-support-grant/>
- GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS: Since 1881 AAUW has been one of the largest funders of women’s graduate studies. <https://www.aauw.org/resources/programs/fellowships-grants/>
- ADVOCACY: In addition to lobbying for equality, AAUW provides a toolkit for advocacy. <https://www.aauw.org/resources/policy/advocacy-toolkit/>



- RESEARCH: AAUW has been leader in research and lobbying on bullying, pay equity, and student debt. Women hold two-thirds of the 1.54 trillion dollar debt. <https://www.aauw.org/issues/education/student-debt/> and <http://aauw.source4.com/b2c/Category.asp?Category=8547>

Partner schools have free e-memberships for students. This is very helpful if they have students who want to band together to form a student group at the member college, or if they are in a related mission-oriented student group and would like the support of also being AAUW for the advocacy outreach.

Often, joining is not the problem if the President or department head thinks it’s a good idea. Having a good relationship with the secretary in that office can help make that happen. The challenge is making it an active membership. That requires having representatives that are sold on the mission and vision of AAUW and have or

are willing to take the time.

Volunteering to work with student members or meeting a faculty member who cares about AAUW’s issues is the best avenue to a good working relationship with a partner school. A representative who will respond to a member’s email by offering to help

plan something or by asking an AAUW branch for involvement is ideal. That only happens with contact. I have several member-at-large (MAL) contacts at the University in Iowa City. But the one that kept the membership alive was in an office. Because of her, they are reassigning the two representatives to areas that relate well to the students and to AAUW. I was so lucky to have her on my list of contacts and to have talked with her on the phone. Another MAL faculty member at the University of Iowa helped at the Way Up Conference. Another just met me for lunch to talk. Contact is everything. Find out who is a member nationally if the branch is not the source and reach out.

I hope you find this helpful. Don’t hesitate to call on me.

AAUW Central States Regional Conference

October 19-21, 2023 - St. Louis, MO

Tentative Conference Program Schedule

THURSDAY, October 19, 2023

- 1:00 Conference Begins; Welcome; Overview
- 1:30 KEYNOTE: Challenges Facing Member-Driven Organizations, Lisa Maatz, Gender Equity Expert, Indep. Consultant
- 2:30 Women's Health and Reproductive Rights, Yamelsie Rodriguez, CEO Planned Parenthood, St. Louis Region
- 3:15 EITHER: A) Public Policy – Strengthening Advocacy: Working Across Generational Lines
Lisa Maatz, Gender Equity Expert, Independent Consultant
B) Unconscious Assumptions and Implicit Bias: We All Have Them – Now What Do We Do With Them?
Deanie Brown, Attorney, Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Illinois Judicial Branch (via Zoom)
- 4:15 SWAP SHOPS (Branch Sharing)
- 5:30 Informal Dinner via Drury Kick Back buffet
Performance: HERstory - Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Sojourner Truth
Taste of St. Louis Treats

FRIDAY, October 20, 2023

- 8:30 KEYNOTE: This is Your AAUW, Gloria Blackwell, AAUW CEO (in person)
- 9:25 SWAP SHOPS (Branch Sharing) 10:30 Town Hall with Gloria Blackwell (Q&A session with attendees)
- 11:10 It's Complicated: The Causes and Consequences of the Gender Pay Gap, Karen Kedrowski, Director of Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics; Professor of Political Science, Iowa State University
- 12:00 Lunch and Panel of National AAUW Board Members
- 12:45 Membership and the Degree Requirement Vote in 2024; and Leadership and Succession Planning
- 1:45 TRENDING TOPICS – Attend one of the four
LGBTQ+: TransParent
Censure, Cancellations and Book Bannings
Social Justice for All
Indigenous Cultures
- 2:35 TRENDING TOPICS – Attend one of the four
Period Poverty and the Pink Tax
Title IX in a Changing Landscape
Gen Z to Millennials Advocacy
Giving Birth in America
- 3:40 SWAP SHOPS (Branch Sharing)
- 4:40 AAUW Fund – What's In It For ME? Fundraising Basics! Sue Barley and Diane B. Ludwig, AAUW Fund Enthusiasts!
- 6:45 Legacy Circle Recognitions
- 7:00 Conference Dinner; AAUW of the Future – Panel of National Committee Members

SATURDAY, October 21, 2023

- 8:45 1619 Freedom School Project, Sheritta Stokes, VP of Freedom School Project and Co-Director of Curriculum ("Liberation through Literacy") Waterloo, Iowa
- 10:00 SWAP SHOPS (Branch Sharing)
- 10:30 Voting Rights and Challenges, Denise Lieberman, Director and Legal Counsel of MO Voter Protection Coalition
- 11:15 Lessons Learned and Great Ideas to Take Home
- Noon Conference Ends

Mixed in will be FUN breaks, Inclusion-Infusions, displays, and LOTS of networking opportunities!

Missouri Website has Info and Forms: aauw-mo.aauw.net

Questions? Contact: Karen Francis, MO State President, at karenbitzafrancis@yahoo.com or 314-223-4235