



The Advocate

September 2024

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*“In truth, we don’t know which of our acts in the present will shape the future.
 But we have to behave as if everything we do matters. Because it might.”*

Gloria Steinem, journalist and activist

DAW General Membership Meeting and Brunch



Kick off our exciting 2024-25 year with DAW branch members and friends!

The 2024 Membership Brunch's program will feature plenty of topics to pique your interest. Many of the **Tech Trek campers** sponsored by our branch this year will be present to share highlights of their experiences. We'll be inspired by our **guest speaker, Dr. Kendra Carr**. Her talk, titled "**Racial Equity and Social Justice in Contra Costa County**", will be about her office's work in our county and actions we can take to support their mission and priorities. We'll also learn about plans for **coming DAW branch events and talks** so you can schedule your calendar accordingly.

Dr. Carr is the **co-director of the Contra Costa County Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ)**. ORESJ supports the County's efforts to strengthen and expand equity, access and inclusion for all county residents and communities, especially those most impacted by racial and socioeconomic disparities. The vision of ORESJ is that all Contra Costa County residents achieve positive health and well-being and are able to access the resources they need to thrive.



Dr. Kendra Carr

Make your reservation today!

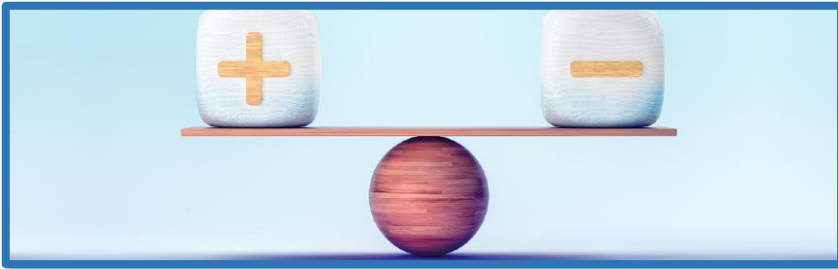
The cost is \$48 per person; note that a service fee will be added for reservations made online. Please make your reservation by September 1.

- To make reservations and pay online – [click here](#)
- To make reservations and pay by check – [print this form](#) and mail it with your check.

There's also an important duty for branch members to perform in conjunction with the brunch meeting – **approving the branch's budget** for 2024-25. To view the proposed budget – [click here](#). To vote on the Budget, [click here to vote](#).

California Ballot Propositions (Pros and Cons)

Thursday, September 26, 2024
4:00 pm – 5:30pm, online



Get the lowdown on propositions that will be on the California ballot in November, 2024. Join in this informative webinar that's sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley and of West Contra Costa County along with Contra Costa County

Library and Contra Costa TV. You'll learn about the propositions in depth through a non-partisan lens.

Every election cycle the League of Women Voters presents pro and con information based on research about the propositions as well as provides information about major funding sources for and against the propositions. **Janet Hoy** and **Sue Brandy** of the League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley will moderate this important webinar as well as answer your questions about the upcoming California ballot propositions.

To learn more about this free webinar and to RSVP – [click here](#)

To learn about the League of Women Voters Diablo Valley – [click here](#)

To learn about the League of Women Voters West Contra Costa – [click here](#)

President's Message

By Deborah Wechsler, President

So hard to believe that autumn is here! Especially when we are still experiencing the extra heat!

I hope you saw our recent email about the Membership Brunch on September 14. We will be trying an exciting new venue. Please join us to socialize with your DAW buddies and prepare to be wowed again by some of our 2024 Tech Trek campership recipients. In the same email was a request to review and vote on the 2024-25 budget to support our many activities. Speaking of which, later in this issue of the Advocate is a superb summary of some of our plans for educational events about the coming election, thanks to our Programs VPs Monika Witte and Ogie Strogatz and our Public Policy Chair Laurinda Ochoa.



We also are committed to continuing our presence at the San Ramon Valley Unified School District meetings, advocating for excellence and equity in our public school system. Consider attending these meetings; the next one is on September 10. Remember to proudly wear your "Equity for All" t-shirt! I am so grateful to our DAW board and committee members who have started this year with so much energy and enthusiasm, planning some excellent learning opportunities for our branch members and

the public. And I am also grateful for the hard work done by Joanne Quijano, who not only edits this Advocate newsletter, but also is our Webmaster and maintains our DAW membership database.

See you soon at the upcoming brunch meeting or one of our programs.

September Checklist

- **September 10, 5:30 pm – San Ramon Unified School District Meeting**
[Click here](#) for more information
- **September 14, 10:00 am – Membership Brunch at The Greenery, Walnut Creek**
[Click here](#) for more info and to RSVP
- **September 26, 4:30 pm – California Ballot Propositions (Pros and Cons)**
[Click here](#) for more info and to RSVP
- **Oct 1, 10:00 am - SRVUSD School Board Candidate Forum** at San Ramon Community Center
Save the date!
- **October 15, 5:30 pm – San Ramon Unified School District Meeting**
[Click here](#) for more information
- **Oct 16, 6:30 pm - SRVUSD School Board Candidate Forum** at Iron Horse Middle School
Save the date!
- **Oct 17, TBD - AUHSD School Board Candidate Forum**
Save the date!
- [Donate here](#) to support DAW branch programs



DAW Branch's 2024 Election Education Programs

By Monika Witte, Programs Co-VP

Election season is underway! During this important and historic cycle, Laurinda Ochoa, Public Policy Chair, Ogie Strogatz, Programs Co-VP, and I are working with the League of Women Voters, the PTA, and with our neighboring branch, AAUW San Ramon, to hold non-partisan school board candidate forums for the San Ramon Valley Unified School District (SRVUSD) and the Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD). These sessions will provide a great opportunity to meet the candidates and hear directly from them about their positions on critical issues facing the school districts.

Save the dates for these informative events –

- **Tuesday, Oct 1, 10:00 am** - SRVUSD School Board Candidate Forum at San Ramon Community Center
- **Wednesday, Oct 16, 6:30 pm** - SRVUSD School Board Candidate Forum at Iron Horse Middle School
- **Thursday, Oct 17**, time and location to be determined - AUHSD School Board Candidate Forum

Making a Difference – “Get Out the Vote” Postcards

By Monika Witte, Programs Co-VP

Nearly two dozen DAW members (plus a few friends) gathered at Judy Lauper’s home to write postcards to get-out-the-vote (GOTV) on August 19. Ogie Strogatz was the organizer; she brought packets of postcards and addresses from [Reclaim Our Vote](#), a non-profit and non-partisan project that focuses on increasing BIPOC (Black, indigenous, people of color) voter turnout. Reclaim Our Vote is run by the Center for Common Ground – an organization which works to educate and empower voters of color in voter suppression states.

Attendees made a difference while having fun. Jan Geahry said, “I feel so virtuous! It’s fun to do this in a group, there is a lot of energy in working together. I feel a part of the movement of getting people out to vote.” Lee Garverick said, “What a great feeling to be able to make a real difference! I learned that sending postcards can increase voting by about 2%, which can swing many elections.”

Many thanks to everyone who participated and to Judy for hosting!

If you would be interested in organizing another DAW GOTV postcard event before October 10, please contact Monika Witte (aauwmonikawitte@gmail.com) before Sept 15. We have an opportunity this fall to help drive voter turnout in a critically important and historic election. This is one way to help.



Meet Our 2024 Local Scholarship Recipients!

By Ann Willoughby, Local Scholarship Co-Chair, and Monika Witte past Local Scholarship Chair

We are very impressed by this year’s recipients of our DAW Local Scholarships. You already read about Alexa Chamorro, awardee for the new Single Parent Scholarship, in the [June Advocate](#). Here are brief updates about the other nine scholarship winners.

In addition to these summaries, each of the scholarship recipients has created a one-minute video; please take a look – [click here](#) - these are wonderful to watch. We hope you agree that all of these women are a group we can be very proud to support!

The DAW LS Committee is grateful for our new partnership with the Diablo Valley College Foundation for our Single Parent scholarship and our continuing partnership with the Cal State University East Bay Renaissance Scholars Program for former foster youth. To learn more about our branch's scholarship program and the types of scholarships we support, [click here](#).

And now, introducing the scholarship recipients -

Isabel Gervis - *Community Local Scholarship*

Isabel is headed to graduate school at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, pursuing an MS in Chemical Engineering and an MBA. She has a BS in Biochemical Engineering from the University of California, Davis. For the past five years, she has worked to improve access to medicine and develop sustainable food systems. Isabel is currently a Process Engineer at Rubi Labs, a startup developing carbon-negative textiles. For the recent two years she has also volunteered in a leadership capacity for Odyssey of the Mind. Isabel aspires to a career in Operations Management and Process Engineering.

Julia Karczewski - *Community Local Scholarship*

Julia is working towards an MS in Occupational Therapy at Dominican University of California. She has a BS in Child and Family Development from San Diego State University. While at SDSU, she was on the Executive Board of Dance Marathon, the largest student-led philanthropic organization at the university, benefiting Rady Children's Hospital, was an occupational therapy volunteer at the hospital, and also worked as a registered behavioral technician and intern at an Adaptive Fitness Clinic. On top of all that, she was a cardio-dance teacher for SDSU facility, students, and community members. Throughout her graduate school, she has worked more than 35 hours a week at a local Danville business, as a nanny, and a JV cheer coach at San Ramon Valley High School.

Molly Neach - *Community Local Scholarship*

Molly is working toward an MA in Counseling at Saint Mary's College, with a specialty in Marriage and Family Therapy and Professional Clinical Counseling. She has a BA in Psychology from UC Berkeley and has an extensive history of volunteer service and working in the mental health field particularly with individuals who have intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Outside of her academic pursuits, Molly is deeply involved with the Down Syndrome Connection of the Bay Area in Danville where she serves as the Program Manager for the Mental Health Alliance. This fall, she will be working as a trainee at Oak Creek Counseling Center in Pleasant Hill, offering pro bono and affordable mental health services, with a focus on the low-income and I/DD populations. Molly aspires to be a Marriage and Family Therapist specializing in the I/DD population and female athletes.

Bethany Pavel - *Community Local Scholarship*

Bethany graduated from the University of Washington with a BA in Public Health and a minor in Data Science. She is headed to graduate school at Yale University this Fall to obtain a Masters in Public Health. As an undergraduate, Bethany worked as a research assistant for the Global Center for Integrated Health of Women, Adolescents, and Children and as a health and benefits consultant at Mercer, LLC. She was president of Delta Gamma Sorority and vice president of Member Education of Delta Gamma Sorority. Bethany also volunteered with Northwest Association of Blind Athletes and was a member of the university's Green Greeks Sustainability Club and GlobeMed Global Health Club. Bethany aspires to be a public health practitioner and researcher.

Devyn Donovan-Stauder - *Community Local Scholarship*

Devyn will be a junior at Willamette University in the Fall, majoring in Exercise and Health Science. Devyn is a teaching assistant and tutor at Willamette, works for RISE Physical Therapy, and assists with the Diablo Ballet's Dance for Parkinson's class. She loves teaching with Diablo Ballet witnessing the special magic in using movement as therapy and witnessing the awe-inspiring transformative power on the lives of Parkinson's patients. Bethany plans to pursue a PhD in Physical Therapy, specializing in Neurological Rehabilitation, and aspires to be a physical therapist.

Emma Wright - *Community Local Scholarship*

Emma is in graduate school at Utah Valley University pursuing a Masters in Social Work. She has a BS Neuroscience from Brigham Young University. Emma has worked as a residential counselor with adolescents and with advocacy groups related to the wellness of LGBTQ+ individuals in Utah. She has also worked as a therapist intern, a grant writer and activities volunteer for a LGBTQ+ support organization, and a teaching assistant in the Neuroscience and Psychology Departments at BYU. Emma aspires to be a clinical social worker.

Francis McDonald - *Renaissance Scholarship*

Francis is a single mother of two who will be a junior in the Fall. She is a first-generation college student who has persevered through numerous hardships and significant barriers to go to Folsom Lake College, where she obtained her AA with honors, and then transferred to CSUEB where she is now majoring in Recreational Therapy. While at Folsom Lake College, Frankie participated in various social support programs. She consistently went over and above program requirements while also taking classes and raising her two daughters. Frankie aspires to a career in recreational therapy working with children.

Camisha Nettles - *Renaissance Scholarship*

Camisha is a graduate student at CSUEB majoring in Public Administration: Public Management and Policy Analysis. She has a Bachelor's in Adulthood and Gerontology from CSUEB. Camisha is a single mother of three children who works full-time as a nutrition assistant at the Alameda County Public Health Department and is a board member on the Friends of Alameda County Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA). She aspires to be a program director with Alameda County Public Health with an ultimate goal of pursuing a career in the legislature to help combat homelessness of foster youth.

Nicole Silliman - *Renaissance Scholarship*

Nicole is a first-generation college student at CSUEB working towards a Masters in Social Work. She was the first in her family to graduate from high school and has a Bachelors in Sociology from CSUEB. Nicole has worked full-time while attending school full-time. She has devoted her entire adult life to working for various nonprofits that serve women, children, and families experiencing various forms of oppression. Nicole aspires to be a child welfare social worker to support children, youth, and families who have experienced adversity similar to her own.

DAW 2025 Garden Tour – Help Needed!

Our ever-popular Garden Tour is at risk of cancellation in 2025! We can't run the tour without someone taking on the role of Garden Tour Chair. We had this same challenge for the May 2024 tour, which only took place thanks to the dedication of a couple of board members who assumed the role in addition to their significant other responsibilities. This approach just isn't tenable.

The annual Garden Tour is our main source of funding for DAW's Local Scholarship and Tech Trek programs. The 2024 tour attracted over 500 visitors, who delighted in this annual event, and raised over \$23,000. If we don't hold this event, it will severely limit both the number of scholarships we are able to offer to deserving local women in the future, and camperships we can offer to send students to Tech Trek.

The success of our branch depends on the willingness of members to volunteer. The DAW Board asks one or more members to volunteer as 2025 Garden Tour Chair. The role can be shared, and there's always a great committee to help in the planning and execution of the tour. The Garden Tour Chair is a voting member on the DAW Board of Directors. There is plenty of information from past tours to work from, and former chairs are only a phone call away if you have a question.

If you are willing to serve as chair or would like to share this role, please contact Deborah Wechsler at Deborah.Wechsler@gmail.com.

AAUW California Public Policy News

2024 Legislative Agenda Updates - CA Governor Signs 3 AAUW California Supported Bills

Although the 2024 legislative session won't end until this fall, the governor has already started to sign bills. We are excited to let you know that three bills on our agenda have already been signed, AB 1955, AB1790, and AB2608. Hooray!

AB 1955 will prohibit school districts from requiring staff to notify parents if a student uses a different name or pronouns or identifies as a different gender than what is on their birth certificate. California is the first state in the nation to ban forced outings of transgender students.

AB 1790 will strengthen protections against sexual assault and harassment at California State University (CSU) campuses by requiring two reports from CSU on the status of their implementation of the State Auditor recommendations.

AB 2608 will require the California Community Colleges and the CSUs, and request the University of California, to provide educational and preventive information on sexual violence and harassment, including how to recognize if someone is at risk of drug-facilitated sexual assault.

Reducing Polarization Through Talk – A Guide for Finding Common Ground

In the midst of another election cycle in the United States, the American public is inundated with the narrative that Republicans and Democrats are fundamentally different kinds of people. Political parties seemingly represent lifestyle brands that are chosen by groups with different kinds of beliefs. This perception of difference is both the reason for and the result of increasing political polarization—and political polarization's radiating impacts in our homes, workplaces, and communities.

Longstanding social science research shows that our perceptions of the world are socialized. Our socialization shapes big things, like how we experience time or imagine the cosmos, as well as smaller more mundane things, like what we label as appropriate clothing for a particular event or how we show someone care and respect. Socialization research shows that we can be socialized to perceive and experience the world similarly, or very differently. The socialization of difference can keep us from understanding one another and achieving common ground and, over time, we may even develop the

perception of specific kinds or groups of humans as fundamentally and irrevocably different from ourselves.

Regardless of our differences, longstanding research also shows that all humans have the capacity to understand one another and to translate between realities if and when we are willing to do so. Together, we can also shift problematic conventions, including those that perpetuate polarization. Check out [THIS GUIDE](#), written by Missy Maceyko, to learn more about how you might approach difficult conversations during election season. Dr. Maceyko co-chairs the AAUW California Public Policy Committee. She is Professor of Linguistics at California State University Long Beach and holds a Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Virginia.

Membership News – Recognizing Honorees

New 50 Year Honorary Life Members

Congratulations to three loyal AAUW members who have become our newest honorary members after 50 years with the organization! They set a great example for all of us. Cheers to:

- Carmen Curtis
- Carol Kennedy
- Particia McCain



Carmen Curtis, Tena Gallagher, and Carol Kennedy

2024 AAUW Fund and Branch Honorees

At the Installation and Member Recognition event in June, we honored several members who have gone above and beyond in support of the branch and of AAUW. Please join us in thanking them for their wonderful service!



Chris Winter, Roseann Krane, Chris Ritter

Chris Winter – was nominated as a **2024 AAUW California State Honoree**. We recognized Chris for her years of service in state leadership positions including President and positions on the board. She’s also been active with DAW leadership and has carried her advocacy into her community in Danville and San Ramon.

Chris Ritter – was nominated as a **2024 AAUW California State Honoree**. We thanked Chris for her work with the state Finance Committee developing best practices for branch treasurers and supporting a much-needed Tech Trek finance project. She’s also served many positions within our branch and continues using her skills as our treasurer

along with other key support roles.

Joanne Quijano – was recognized as an **AAUW Fund Honoree**. Joanne has given extraordinary support to AAUW over many years, serving in multiple roles from webmaster to Advocate editor to database manager, keeping the DAW branch functioning smoothly.

Deborah Wechsler – was recognized as an **AAUW Fund Honoree** for her excellent work in support of the AAUW mission. She wears numerous hats for the branch, including leading the communications and operations teams, co-chairing the Tech Trek group, and managing as treasurer for our SPF funds.

Laurinda Ochoa – was recognized as an **AAUW Fund Honoree** because of her strong commitment to public policy work for both our branch and AAUW California. She has established the DAW presence at school board meetings gaining local visibility for our branch and our mission. She also actively participated in developing AAUW California’s School Board Project.

“Stay Home” Policy Statement

While we understand that people want to participate in person at our branch events, we also want to foster consideration for all members in creating a safe environment for everyone. Please consider this direction when you plan to attend a branch meeting.

If you are feeling ill in any way, or have been in close contact with someone known to have tested positive for COVID in the last 10 days, please do not attend any meeting!

Remember that COVID exposure remains a serious issue and that we need to be constantly vigilant. If you plan to attend a branch event, please stay home if you feel ill or if you have been exposed to COVID or any other significant communicable disease. We encourage you to be considerate of everyone attending a function, some of whom might be more susceptible than others. If you have any doubts, test, wear a mask, and err on the side of caution.

While there are inherent risks in attending an in-person event, with your help we will do our best to keep everyone safe at our meetings.

From the Editor - *Joanne Quijano*

Contribute to the Advocate - Send ideas, articles, and pictures by the 23rd of the month to appear in the next issue. Please use the [Submittal Form](#) on our website to direct your contribution to the Advocate, or other DAW social media, to our communications team.

Submissions are preferred in the following format:

- Articles in a .doc or .docx file, or in the body of an email
- Calibri font, size 12
- Pictures in .jpg format
- Permissions set to enable editing

Find contact information about people mentioned in the Advocate on our [branch website](#) and in your directory. If you do not have a directory, [click here](#) to send us a request.

Comments about the Advocate? – I’m always interested in making improvements to the newsletter to better meet our members’ needs. Please let me know your comments and suggestions at jtq@sbcglobal.net.

From the Treasurer – *Chris Ritter*

Handle money matters here - Please send expense vouchers or deposits to our AAUW mailbox at: P.O. Box 996, Alamo, CA 94507 for expedited processing. Refer to our branch website for specific forms and instructions – Click on [Members Page](#)

From the Corresponding Secretary - *Julie Grisham*

Know someone who needs a note? - Julie Grisham, our Corresponding Secretary, sends cards on behalf of our branch. If you know of an AAUW-DAW member in need of a get well, condolence or congratulations card, contact Julie via email at juliegrisham@sbcglobal.net.

Our Wonderful Sponsors

We are proud to acknowledge our branch sponsors. We appreciate their support, which goes directly to DAW projects that include scholarships for local college students, Tech Trek camperships, and community education programs. For more information about becoming a sponsor, please visit our website at <https://daw-ca.aauw.net/sponsorships-2024/>



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* DAW AAUW members are marked with an asterisk

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) is the nation's leading voice promoting equity and education for women and girls.

Mission: AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research.

Value Promise: By joining AAUW, you belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women and girls have a fair chance.

Vision: AAUW empowers all women and girls to reach their highest potential.

The Danville-Alamo-Walnut Creek branch promotes and supports our AAUW mission through local scholarships, AAUW program support, panel discussions, Tech Trek, AAUW Fund, and topical guest speakers.



The Advocate

Online at <https://daw-ca.aauw.net/newsletter/>

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