



The Advocate

December 2024

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"Kindness is like snow. It beautifies everything it covers."

Kahlil Gibran, author



Come, join fellow branch members and friends for some winter festivities and cheer!

Please bring to share –

- A savory or sweet, easy to serve treat
- Your favorite holiday beverage
- Your festive spirit

We'll provide eggnog and some alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages to start the party. We'll have ice-breaker activities and other holiday fun for all. **Guests and "plus ones" are most welcome** and are encouraged to attend.

[Click here to RSVP](#)

We need volunteers to help! If you are interested, please contact Deborah Wechsler at deborah.wechsler@gmail.com.

President's Message

By Deborah Wechsler, President

We enjoyed our first official "Third Thursday" program on November 21 – it was inspiring to learn about wellness policies and practices in the San Ramon Unified School District, followed by a nourishing and energizing physical wellness session for attendees. Read more about it elsewhere in this issue of The Advocate.

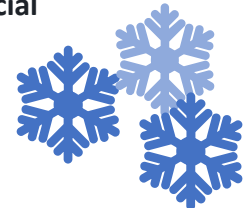
I hope to see everyone at my home for our informal "Third Thursday" Holiday Open House on December 19. We have a couple of small activities planned, but mostly just come to enjoy the company of your fellow DAW members and guests, some tasty finger foods, and holiday beverages.

We are approaching the Winter Solstice on December 21, when we will experience the fewest hours of daylight of the year. Let's lift our spirits by sharing our own lights!



December Checklist

- **December 4, 4:00 pm – AAUW Priorities in Light of the Election Results - webinar**
[Click here](#) to RSVP
- **December 10, 5:30 pm – San Ramon Unified School District Meeting**
[Click here](#) for more information
- **December 19, 6:30 pm – Third Thursday Member Meeting – Holiday Social**
[Click here](#) to RSVP
- **January 8, 7:00 pm – DEI Team Planning Meeting – via Zoom**
[Click here](#) for more information and to RSVP
- **January 14, 5:30 pm – San Ramon Unified School District Meeting**
[Click here](#) for more information
- **January 21, 9:30 am – Member Meeting with OML – DEI Program**
Note the special morning start time and save the date!
- [Donate here](#) to support DAW branch programs



Member Meeting - January



The Perinatal Equity Initiative in Contra Costa County

Tuesday, January 21, 2025, 9:30 am
Lafayette Library and Learning Center

We will be co-hosting the January DAW meeting with the Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette (OML) Branch on a Tuesday morning instead of the usual Thursday evening. An expert panel from Contra Costa Health and the California Maternal Quality Care Collaborative will discuss their work with the Perinatal Equity Initiative (PEI). PEI is a statewide, community-driven and implemented effort to address racial disparities in infant mortality by providing meaningful support and resources to Black families.

Join us to learn about PEI in Contra Costa County and how we can support it!

Please mark your calendars and stay tuned for more information and a registration link.

To learn more about the Perinatal Equity Initiative in Contra Costa, [click here](#).

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Team Update

By Ogie Strogatz, DEI Officer

Hello everyone! Guided by our AAUW California DEI Director, Dr. Lata Murti, the [2024-2027 AAUW CA DEI Strategic Plan](#) sets forth the following vision: "to build an empathetic, supportive, and inclusive environment for the present and sustainable future of AAUW California and its branches". The mission statement to realize that vision is: "to increase the growth, diversity, and relevance of branch membership, activities, outreach, and collaboration with others".

The plan commits to working toward the vision and mission by:

- increasing accessibility for all to participate, as well as strengthening the connection between programs and AAUW's national mission ("to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy"); and by
- increasing knowledge and awareness of DEI practices, allowing members and branches to create welcoming spaces of belonging for all.

The plan goes on to specify goals, strategies, and tactics to act on these commitments. Now that the electoral cycle has come to a close, I look forward to engaging with you all to discuss the DEI Strategic Plan, and how we can bring it to life most effectively in our branch.

I've scheduled a **DAW DEI Team meetup on Zoom** for us to discuss California's plan and build our own strategy for supporting the vision and mission. It will be **on Wednesday, January 8, from 7:00 to 8:00 pm. All are most welcome to participate!** Please contact me at ogstrogatz@gmail.com to RSVP for the meeting.

In the interim, I invite you to:

- **Mark your calendars**, as noted above, to attend our January monthly DAW meeting on Tuesday, January 21 from 9:30-11:30 am at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center. We'll learn about California's Perinatal Equity Initiative to address racial disparities in infant mortality.
- **View "[The IntraCultural Podcast - Episode 1: Monsters Have Fangs](#)"**, a highly worthwhile, 40-minute video about having difficult conversations across political differences. The video is a conversation between two smart, compassionate professors: Dr. Melissa Maceyko, one of our AAUW CA Public Policy Directors, and her colleague, Dr. Lucy Arciniega. Their insights are bound to prove helpful in navigating the holidays and beyond. Now maybe you're wondering, what's with the title, "Monsters Have Fangs"? I assure you it's perfectly relevant, but I won't say more — check it out!

With warmest wishes for a healthy, peaceful holiday season and new year, Ogie

November Member Meeting – Recap

Taking a Breath: Wellness in the Schools and for Us



Jessica Coulson

Over 20 attendees enjoyed an evening focused on wellness. First, **Jessica Coulson, Coordinator, Social Emotional Learning and College and Career Readiness for SRVUSD**, discussed curriculum for mental health in the school district. She made it clear that students need training and support to develop critical social and emotional skills to succeed in school and in everyday life.

After Jessica's informative presentation, local yoga instructor and practitioner,

Praveena Chinthluri, guided us through a

healing chair practice. We all felt grounded and calm after her session that featured gentle movement, stretching, and mindful breathing.

[Click here](#) to view Jessica's slide show presentation.

[Click here to see more](#)



Praveena Chinthluri


Giving for AAUW

By Isabel Lau, Social Media Manager


Giving Tuesday – December 3, 2024

Embrace the power of your generosity! In a world where digital connectivity has reshaped the way we communicate and connect, help us promote cooperation and social connection, and invest in initiatives that directly address systemic issues facing girls and women today.

How? Consider these five ways to give -



Now more than ever
we are called to
make a difference.



#GivingTuesday | December 3, 2024

Attend – Join us at a publicized event and don't forget to bring a friend.

Volunteer – Share your time and talents with us. It can be a one-time event or an ongoing commitment. The choice is yours! [Click here](#) to find volunteer opportunities with our branch. (<https://daw-ca.aauw.net/volunteers-needed/>)

Join AAUW – Become a member, if you aren't already, and invite friends to join. Give the gift of a membership to a new graduate. There is strength in numbers. [Click here](#) for information about joining AAUW. (<https://daw-ca.aauw.net/membership-payment/>)

Share – Share our posts, newsletters, and information with family and friends. Make sure you follow us on social media ([Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)).

Donate – Your generosity is essential in supporting Local Scholarships, Tech Trek, and the AAUW Fund. (Visit us at <https://daw-ca.aauw.net/donate/>)

[Click Here to Donate](#)

Tech Trek Marches Forward

By Kate Waters and Lee Garverick, Tech Trek Co-Chairs

2025 Tech Trek planning is underway! We've requested slots for 14 campers next summer. We have contacted all local public junior high schools and are quickly identifying which teachers will lead school nominations for 2025 campers. In January, the teacher nomination process will take place, followed by AAUW team members interviewing and making final selections.

The Tech Trek Committee will interview camper nominees in March and April. Would you like to get involved? Email Kate Waters at Kwaters6@gmail.com and Lee Garverick at leegarverick@gmail.com. The time commitment is about four hours total as part of a school interview committee, divided between interview and selection efforts focused on three girl nominees from a single school. Interviewers who have participated in the past felt it was a very rewarding and fun experience, helping to guide a first "interview" experience for these promising future STEM professionals and help build their confidence.



We seek your help in enlisting donations from local businesses to help raise funds for the program. Please refer any potential sponsors to us.

What is Tech Trek, you ask? Tech Trek is an exciting week-long summer camp for current seventh grade girls focused on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), with residential camps on several campuses in California alongside a virtual option. Tech Trek camperships are paid for through donations from the American Association of University Women (AAUW). Tech Trek originated in California in 1998, inspiring nearly 15,000 girls over the past 26 years to get excited about STEM!

To learn more about the Tech Trek program, see <https://www.aauw-ca.org/tech-trek/>

AAUW California Public Policy News

After the Election - AAUW Priorities

The recent election will very likely have significant impact on AAUW's National Public Policy priorities. Learn more by attending a Zoom meeting, **"AAUW Priorities in Light of the Election Results,"** featuring Meghan Kissell, AAUW Senior Director of Policy and Member Advocacy. The meeting is hosted by AAUW Silicon Valley and will be held on December 4, 2024, 4:00 - 5:00 pm. To register, [click here](#).

A Successful 2024 Legislative Agenda

By Amy Hom and Missy Maceyko, Co-chairs AAUW California Public Policy

2024 has been an exciting year for AAUW California's Legislative Agenda. There were many excellent bills that were introduced in the legislature early in the year. The Public Policy Committee evaluated over 60 of these bills that were most closely aligned with our Public Policy Priorities. Our committee met virtually over a weekend in March to discuss and vote on the best bills to include in our 2024 Legislative Agenda, prioritizing them into A, B, C, and Watch categories. We selected 41 bills for our Legislative Agenda, not including the Watch bills, and from March through September we worked to educate about and advocate for these bills.

Thanks to the many AAUW members who participated in Lobby Days, to those who called or wrote to their legislators and the Governor through our Action Alert Network, and thanks in no small part to the tireless efforts of Kathy Van Osten, our Legislative Advocate, 29 of the 41 bills on our Legislative Agenda made it to the Governor's desk, and 25 of them have been signed into law!

Excitingly, all three of our A priority bills were signed by the Governor:

- Our signature bill [AB 2843](#) was authored and sponsored by AAUW California. The bill eliminates cost sharing, including deductibles, from being imposed on any rape survivor seeking medical care following a rape. The bill was inspired when Kathi Harper, Public Policy Director, read an

[OpEd piece](#) in the Los Angeles Times by [Dr. Samuel Dickman](#), Chief Medical Officer at Planned Parenthood of Montana, describing the plight of countless rape survivors who do not seek medical care following their assault because of prohibitive costs. AB 2843 removes the cost barrier, ensuring that survivors can receive the care they need following a traumatic sexual attack.

- [AB 2326](#), also sponsored by AAUW California, requires the Chancellors of the Community Colleges and the State Universities, and the President of the University of California, to provide an annual report of their schools' compliance with Title IX. The report will be publicly, orally presented to the Senate and Assembly Budget Subcommittees on Education Finance.
- [AB 2099](#) makes it possible for the District Attorney to pursue felony charges for the posting of information about reproductive health care patients or providers if the posting and subsequent actions result in bodily injury.

Two of our B priority bills were signed into law:

- [AB 1790](#) requires the CSU system to report on the implementation of recommendations provided in the California State Auditor report, to ensure Title IX compliance and protections against sexual harassment.
- [AB 1831](#) expands the law prohibiting the possession and distribution of material depicting minors performing sexual activities to include AI and computer-generated images.

And very significantly, AB 1955 was signed into law. This was a C priority bill only because it was added to our Legislative Agenda later in the process.

- [AB 1955](#) prohibits public schools from notifying parents if their child uses a different name or pronouns or identifies as a different gender than assigned at birth. **California is the first state in the nation to ban forced outing of transgender students.**

For additional details on all the bills on the 2024 Legislative Agenda, see our bill tracking report [here](#).

And if you have not yet signed up for Action Alerts, and would like to be notified about opportunities to advocate for AAUW California's priority legislation in 2025, please sign up [here](#).

AAUW California

NCCWSL Is in Transition

By Susan Bangasser, College/University Committee chair, cu@aauw-ca.org

AAUW National has informed us that they will be outsourcing the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL) beginning in 2025. Although AAUW will have a presence at the leadership conference, they will no longer manage the administrative, financial, and programmatic oversight and planning. It is likely the event will once again be held at the University of Maryland in 2025. After that, the location may change. Details from AAUW National will be announced soon, and at that point, we will share them with our California members

To learn more about AAUW College/University programs - [click here](#)

To learn more about the NCCWSL program - [click here](#).

The Join/Renewal Process Is Made Easier!

By Rebecca Gomez, Director, Membership, branch-development@aauw-ca.org

Recent changes were made to the Join/Renew process of AAUW National's Community Hub to remove the University and degree information because many people could not remember the exact date, or the search feature did not include their academic institution. However, this does not change the membership requirement, which states, "AAUW membership is open to anyone with an associate (or equivalent, e.g., RN) or higher degree from an accredited university. Students enrolled in an accredited university may join as student associates (undergraduates) or graduate students." Be sure to update your education, preferences, and demographics as needed in your National account.

Make Your Voice Shout Out Loud and Clear!

By Elaine Johnson, Nominations and Election chair, nominating@aauw-ca.org

One way that each of us can make our voice heard is to vote for our next AAUW California board of directors. We will be electing a president-elect, treasurer, and three board members. Consider volunteering for a board position and bring your skills to a larger audience! The new application will be available soon, and voting will begin in April.

AAUW National

Programs Enabling Women to Improve Their Economic Future

AAUW National's Women's Economic Empowerment Initiative features programs designed not just to educate but to transform. They provide practical, actionable strategies that will empower women to take charge of their career and financial future. Consider attending a session or recommending the programs to someone you know to enhance career and financial skills and get set for success in the new year. The three programs are:

- **AAUW Work Smart: Know Your Value and Get Paid** – Training for early and mid-career professionals on negotiating for fair salaries, better benefits, and advancement opportunities.
- **AAUW Start Smart** – AAUW Start Smart is specifically designed for college women entering the job market, teaching effective salary negotiation techniques to boost your confidence and negotiation skills.
- **AAUW Money Smart** – The AAUW Money Smart program is aimed at providing all women with the personal finance information they need to ensure their own financial security.

For more information about the initiative and a full schedule of the programs, [click here](#).

The New Administration and Women's Economic Security

Gain valuable insight into what's ahead under the new administration and the 119th Congress by viewing this webinar, held on November 20. Meghan Kissell, AAUW Senior Directory of Policy and Member Advocacy moderated this panel discussion titled "Securing the Future: A Post-Election Conversation on Women's Economic Security". To view the session on YouTube, [click here](#).

Membership Corner

AAUW Art & Garden Interest Group – Field Trips

By Tena Gallagher, Art & Garden Interest Group Lead

Eleven DAW members and one guest went to the Mary Cassatt exhibit at the Legion of Honor on November 19. What a great day we had celebrating Mary Cassatt!!

For our next trip, we are planning to go to the de Young Museum on Friday, January 10, to see the exhibit featuring Tamora de Lempicka, who defined Art Deco painting. This is her first major United States retrospective and should be fascinating. Do mark your calendars and share the date with other AAUW members. For more about the exhibition, [click here](#).

To RSVP for the January field trip, ask any questions, or volunteer to drive, please contact Tena Gallagher at mstena@gmail.com. Keep the group in mind and let me know when you see an activity that you think the Art and Garden group might want to do.



Art & Garden group at the Legion of Honor Nov 19

DAW Branch Website

By Joanne Quijano, Webmaster

Our DAW website has a new look! Thanks to the AAUW National web team, our site, along with all California branch sites, has been updated to a new “theme” that more closely follows the national site. Please check it out – [click here](#) - we hope you’ll appreciate the clean design and ease of use.

Any questions? Contact me at jtq@sbcglobal.net

Membership Directory 2024-2025

By Joanne Quijano, Database and Directory Manager

Many thanks to all the members who’ve provided updated information and new photos for the 2024-2025 DAW Membership Directory! All the changes are being compiled, and the Directories will be in the mail shortly.

“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 Branch Sponsors

We are proud to acknowledge our loyal branch sponsors. We appreciate their support, which goes directly to fund 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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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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