



The Advocate

February 2026

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“I really rebel against this idea that politics has to be a place full of ego and where you’re constantly focused on scoring hits against one another. Yes, we need a robust democracy, but you can be strong, and you can be kind.”

- Jacinda Ardern, 40th prime minister of New Zealand

A graphic with a dark blue central rectangle containing white and orange text, set against a background of orange and blue geometric triangles. The text reads: "San Ramon Valley Unified School District: Two Hot Topics", "Thursday, February 19, 6:00 pm", "Danville Congregational Church", "989 San Ramon Valley Blvd, Danville". Below this, two blue rounded rectangles contain white text for two topics: "# 1 Update on school district funding and finance issues facing SRVUSD. Presented by CJ Cammack, SRVUSD Superintendent." and "# 2 All about the new, mandated Ethnic Studies curriculum offered to ninth graders for the first time in the fall of 2025. Presented by Dr. Hong Nguyen, SRVUSD Director of Student Services and Educational Equity."/>

**San Ramon Valley
Unified School District:
Two Hot Topics**

Thursday, February 19, 6:00 pm
Danville Congregational Church
989 San Ramon Valley Blvd, Danville

1 Update on school district funding and finance issues facing SRVUSD.
Presented by CJ Cammack, SRVUSD Superintendent.

2 All about the new, mandated Ethnic Studies curriculum offered to ninth graders for the first time in the fall of 2025.
Presented by Dr. Hong Nguyen, SRVUSD Director of Student Services and Educational Equity.

Come to our February Third Thursday Community Program to hear about two important, timely, hot topics affecting the San Ramon Valley Unified School District (SRVUSD). All are welcome to attend what's sure to be a very interesting evening!

First, **CJ Cammack, SRVUSD Superintendent**, will give a presentation about funding and financing issues facing the district. With the significant challenges the district has faced recently and the tough decisions the school board has made in response, this is sure to be an engaging topic.

Second will be a presentation from **Dr. Hong Nguyen, SRVUSD Director of Student Services and Educational Equity**, about the new Ethnic Studies course that was offered to ninth graders for the first time this past fall. The course was developed by SRVUSD based on the [Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum](#) that was adopted by the California State Board of Education. Per a new 2021 California state law, an ethnic studies course is required for high school graduation.

[Click here to RSVP](#)

All are welcome and encouraged to attend.
AAUW and Danville CC members are free, \$10 fee for others.

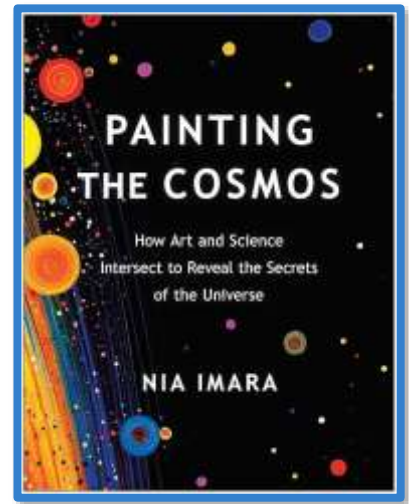
Third Thursday Community Program - March

Author Talk with Dr. Nia Imara

Thursday, March 19, 6:30 pm
at the San Ramon Library
100 Montgomery St, San Ramon

Celebrate Women's Month with Dr. Nia Imara, noted astrophysicist, artist, and author of *Painting the Cosmos: How Art and Science Intersect to Reveal the Secrets of the Universe*, as she talks about the interconnectedness of art and science. Dr. Imara is the first woman of color to graduate with a PhD in Astrophysics from the University of California Berkeley.

Instead of DAW's usual Third Thursday Community Program, all DAW members and friends are invited as guests of AAUW San Ramon to this event that's sure to be fascinating. The San Ramon branch is presenting the program in partnership with the San Ramon Library.



Save the date!

To learn more about Dr. Imara, [click here](#).

President's Message

By Deborah Wechsler, President

On January 19 our branch and the San Ramon branch accepted a significant honor at the Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration, organized by the San Ramon Valley Diversity Coalition. This award acknowledged all the work that has been done by our branch to support and advocate for women and girls and all marginalized groups. Our efforts continue and our presence in our community is being recognized.

We are launching into 2026 and although it seems like we just started this term, we are beginning the process of identifying the elected and appointed board positions for next year. Please contact me with your ideas about how you can offer your talents, experience and skills, either as a board member or on a committee.

Deborah



February Checklist



February To Do's

- **February 5, 6:00 pm – Screening of *The Librarians* with Panel Discussion**
[Click here](#) for information and to register
- **February 10, 7:00 pm – AAUW California College/University Partnership Update**
[Click here](#) to register
- **February 12, 4:00 pm – AAUW National School Board Webinar**
[Click here](#) to register
- **February 18, 1:30 pm - AAUW's Winter Member Gathering**
[Click here](#) to register
- **February 19, 6:00 pm – Third Thursday Community Program – SRVUSD Two Hot Topics**
[Click here](#) for information and to RSVP
- **February 24, 6:00 pm – San Ramon Valley Unified School District Board Meeting**
[Click here](#) for more information
- **March 7 - OML STEM Conference at St. Mary's College**
Volunteers needed – [click here](#) to sign up
- **March 10, 6:00 pm – San Ramon Valley Unified School District Board Meeting**
[Click here](#) for more information
- **March 15, 4:00 pm - WomenSing - International Women's Day Event**
[Click here](#) for more information and to purchase tickets
- **March 19, 6:30 pm – Third Thursday Community Program - Author Talk with Dr. Nia Imara**
Save the date!
- **Volunteer!** We have open positions for FY 25-26 on our branch board and committees.
[Click here](#) to learn more
- **Please donate!** [Click here](#) to support DAW branch programs

Public Policy, DEI, and Advocacy

By Ogie Strogatz, DEI Officer

Honoring Black History Month, I invite you to reflect on the poet and activist Amanda Gorman performing her work, “Old Jim Crow Got to Go”. She wrote the poem as a freshman at Harvard, in response to a request from The New York Times to write a coda to Black History Month. Ms. Gorman initially considered aiming to say something new about race relations or blackness, then decided instead to “repeat and embody something very old. . . that should be heard, and listened to, internalized yet again. So I looked to the archives at the National Museum of African-American History and Culture. . . they have all of these protest banners, flyers, and pins, posters, shirts that were worn. . . any type of text that was used in the civil rights movement. I wrote all of them down and basically

collaged this poem. . .really trying to preserve the units of meaning from those original source materials, but weave them and collage them in a way in which hopefully they embody something kind of new, sonically. I also looked to slavery and even ‘Wanted’ posters, and I looked to the intersectionality of the role of Black women in the women’s rights movement. You’re going to hear a lot of text from multiple sides of social justice organizing and even the words and rhetoric used against African Americans, through slavery and those time periods.”

Please [click here](#) to view Ms. Gorman’s performance.

January Community Program - Recap

By Joanne Quijano, Advocate Editor

January’s Third Thursday Community Program was a lively introduction to the new Freshman Interdisciplinary Cohort Learning model of teaching developed by the San Ramon Valley Unified School District (SRVUSD). Attendees heard from Jessica Coulson, Coordinator of Educational Services for SRVUSD, teacher/librarian Kerry Pike Knapp, and teacher Michelle Wilson about how this interdisciplinary teaching approach is designed to build a foundation for “deep learning” while



Kerry Knapp on left, DVHS students, Michelle Wilson on right

fostering curiosity and a joy of learning in the participating students. They noted that although the program required extra time and work to coordinate classes across subjects, all were very excited about how the approach fostered building a community of students that worked together toward solving problems. Ten students from last year’s cohort were also present to answer attendees’ questions, and clearly showed their enthusiasm for their experience with the teaching model.

Cohort Learning was implemented for the first time during the past school year at Dougherty Valley High School (DVHS) with a small group of freshmen; this school year a freshman group at Monte Vista is experiencing the approach along with a new freshman group at DVHS.

Thanks to the speakers from SRVUSD and the ten DVHS students for an interesting and inspiring evening!

DAW Scholarships – Applications Encouraged

The March 1 application deadline for DAW’s scholarships is rapidly approaching! As of mid-January, there was just one applicant for our six awards of at least \$2,000. The DAW Scholarship Team, along with our branch publicity folks, are working busily to post repeated advertisements, public notices, and social media items to get the word out. You can help by encouraging any qualified students you may know to apply and by posting information about our scholarships wherever you think it may be seen by

potential applicants. For instance, if you are on Next Door, please consider posting a message about our scholarships.

As a reminder, we are taking applications for two categories of scholarships, Community Local Scholarships which are open to all women from our area, and Renaissance Scholarships which are open to women participating in the California State University East Bay (CSUEB) Renaissance Scholars Program. Along with the \$2,000 base award, additional funds are available for Community Local Scholarship recipients who qualify with STEM or with Creative Arts majors.

In addition to the six scholarships awarded directly by DAW, two Single Parent Scholarships are funded by DAW that are awarded by local community colleges. One is available through Diablo Valley College and the other through Los Medanos College.

- [Click here](#) for details about DAW Community Local and Renaissance Scholarships and for application forms and instructions.
- [Click here](#) for information about the Diablo Valley College Single Parent scholarship. (The application deadline is 2/12/26.)
- [Click here](#) for information about the Los Medanos College Single Parent scholarship. (The application deadline is 2/11/26.)

Please spread the word to students who might be potential candidates!

Community Collaboration News

San Ramon Valley Diversity Coalition Award

The DAW members who attended the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebration at the San Ramon City Hall were very impressed by the event, and quite proud to receive the Diversity Coalition's recognition award. There were quite a few speakers including Congressman Mark DeSaulnier, local politicians, SRVUSD board representatives, and from other local organizations. Deborah Wechsler, our DAW President, spoke a bit and shared our AAUW mission and our branch activities with the crowd of attendees. Then Janice Colby from the San Ramon Branch shared information about their work with the community.

We are humbled to be honored by the Diversity Coalition in the company of such a wonderful group.



SRVUSD Superintendent CJ Cammack (second from left) with DAW and San Ramon AAUW members at the celebration



The commemorative plaque

Congratulatory message from the local PFLAG Chapter President:

Dear Danville and SR AAUW Team:

Heartiest congratulations on receiving the MLK Day Award. We are PFLAGProud of you all for the work you do to advance inclusivity, equity and belongingness in the community. We deeply value our partnership.

Anu | Anuradha Gupta (She/Her)

Chapter President

PFLAG Danville-San Ramon Valley | srvpflag.org

Support for Immigrants - from Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch's January Meeting

Our neighboring AAUW Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch (OML) held a very informative and well-attend meeting on January 20. The topic of "Immigrant Rights and ICE Activity in Contra Costa County" attracted a large number of motivated and concerned attendees. With discussion moderated by Ogie Strogatz, the panel covered the challenges that local immigrants are facing, the work that local groups are doing to help, and suggestions for actions we can take to make a difference at this critical time.

Key contacts and resources from the meeting are:

Indivisible ReSisters' immigrant support activities include delivering food, observing immigration court hearings, and supporting a food pantry - for more information and how you can help, [click here](#).

Concord Immigrant Protections Network (CIPN) leads several initiatives to support our immigrant neighbors including Business Know Your Rights, food distribution, and Adopt a Corner - if you are interested in volunteering with CIPN, [click here](#).

East Bay Sanctuary Covenant (EBSC) reaches out to help and defend immigrant neighbors through providing legal aid , community organizing, and sharing reliable information – to learn more about their work and how to help, [click here](#).

Know Your Rights – (from the EBSC) – to learn about constitutional rights related to immigrants, [click here](#).

Real change never comes from silence.



FREE SCREENING

Thursday, February 5, 6 p.m.
Walnut Creek Library



**First responders in the fight for democracy
and our First Amendment rights**

Come to a free screening on February 5 of *The Librarians*, a powerful documentary about **modern-day book banning** across the US and the librarians who are holding the line. The show will be followed by a panel discussion that includes DAW Branch member **Susan Hildreth**, former California State Librarian and director of the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services.

This special program is open to all. To visit the Walnut Creek Library Foundation website for more information and to make your reservation, [click here](#).

WomenSing - International Women's Day Event



WomenSing is hosting a screening of the acclaimed documentary **PICTURE A SCIENTIST**, a powerful look at gender bias and perseverance in the world of science, on **Sunday, March 15 at 4:00 pm**. WomenSing will surround this film with choral works that honor women as pioneers and truth-tellers. Through music and film, this program invites us to consider how women's voices, whether in laboratories, classrooms, or on concert stages, continue to expand what we know and challenge what we assume.

Founded in 1965, WomenSing is an award-winning Bay Area women's chorus renowned for its vibrant and beautifully blended sound. For more information about this intriguing International Women's Day event and to purchase tickets, [click here](#).

Quest Annual Tri-Valley Innovation Fair - Volunteers Needed

Quest's annual [Tri-Valley Innovation Fair](#) returns to the Alameda County Fairgrounds in Pleasanton on **Saturday, April 18**. This free, fun, family-oriented event is the largest celebration of STEM in the area, attracts more than 3,000 people of all ages, and features some 70 interactive STEM activities and exhibits.

Adult and teen volunteers are needed throughout the day.

Several shifts are available:

- Set-up 7:00 am - 10:00 am (most needed)
- Morning 9:45 am - 12:45 pm
- Afternoon 12:30 pm - 3:30 pm
- Closing 3:15 pm - 6:15 pm



All official volunteers need to be ages 16 or older. Youth ages 16-17 who are volunteering without a parent or guardian will need to complete a Guardian Consent Form which Quest will send out after registration is completed. Youth younger than 16 can volunteer if they are accompanying an official adult volunteer. Only the adult volunteer needs to register. Student volunteers will receive certificates for their volunteer hours.

For more information about the event and to volunteer, [click here](#) to visit the Quest website. Once your registration is complete, more details will be provided as the event approaches.

Contact Quest at innovationfair@quest-science.org if you have any questions.

Volunteers Needed for OML STEM Conference

The AAUW Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch (OML) is holding their **tenth STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Conference on March 7 at Saint Mary's College in Moraga, CA**. The conference gives 6th through 8th grade girls interested in learning about STEM the opportunity to participate in three interactive STEM workshops, meet career professional women, hear exciting speakers, and network with like-minded girls.

While registration for students to attend is now closed, volunteers are needed to make this impactful event a success! If you are interested in volunteering, [click here](#).

For more information about the OML STEM Conference, [click here](#).



DAW Branch Board Positions – 2026-2027

By Joanne Quijano, Advocate Editor

It's time to start planning for the branch's 2026-2027 board elections. The process is under way to identify candidates who are interested in running for the Executive Committee positions. There are a few volunteers already, but more are needed, and there is always room for someone who's interested in getting involved on the board. In addition to the positions that will be on the ballot, there are also plenty of opportunities to be a part of our branch's leadership team in an appointed position. Don't worry that you might be new to the board, the current board members are ready to help out or even serve as a co-chair as you learn the ropes. It's a great opportunity to exercise your organizational skills and help DAW support our mission.

The following is a list of all the board positions:

DAW Branch Board Positions Executive Committee (Voted for by Members)

President	Funds VP
Programs VP	Secretary
Membership VP	Treasurer

Appointed Positions

Advertising Sales Manager	Hospitality Chair
Advocate Editor	Local Scholarship Co-Chairs
Advocate Circulation Manager	Local Scholarship Treasurer
Communications Manager	Membership Treasurer
Community Missions Treasurer	Nominating Committee
Corresponding Secretary	Operations Team Chair
Database Manager	Parliamentarian
DEI Officer	Publicity Chair
Directory Manager	Public Policy Chair
Fundraising Chair	Social Media Manager
Garden Tour Co-Chairs	Tech Trek Co-Chairs
Graphic Designer	Web Master

The responsibilities and duties of the branch board members are detailed in the DAW Policies and Procedures document that's available on our website, [click here](#) to see it. If you are interested, or would like more information, contact Deborah Wechsler at Deborah.wechsler@gmail.com, or talk to any current DAW Branch board member.

Membership Corner

DAW 2025-2026 Membership Directories

The latest edition of the acclaimed DAW Directory was mailed to all branch members in early January. With its distinctive lavender cover, you'll find all the latest information about the branch as well as the most recent contact information for DAW members in the handy booklet.

If you didn't get a copy, please contact Joanne Quijano at jtq@sbcglobal.net.

AAUW California

NCCWSL 2026 and College/University Partnership Update

By Susan Bangasser, College & University Partnership Programs

We are delighted to invite you to an upcoming Peer Group Meeting focused on the College and University Partnership Program, taking place via Zoom on Tuesday, February 10, 2026, at 7 pm.

Our distinguished guest speaker, **Dr. Asha Jones from the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)**, will provide an exclusive preview of the upcoming National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL) conference. While you may already know the dates and costs, this session will offer deeper insights into the conference's vision, agenda, and opportunities for leadership development.

In addition to the conference overview, we will explore effective strategies for building connections with local colleges and universities, and highlight valuable resources available to branch leaders. Your perspectives and innovative ideas are highly encouraged - please come prepared to share suggestions that can benefit our community.

We extend this invitation to branch members who are involved with scholarships, NCCWSL, or other student-focused programs. Their participation will enrich our discussion and foster greater collaboration.

Please [click here](#) to register. Feel free to invite colleagues who would benefit from this engaging and informative session.

We look forward to your participation and to a dynamic exchange of ideas!

AAUW National

AAUW's Winter Member Gathering

Please join us for AAUW's Winter Member Gathering on **Wednesday, February 18, at 1:30 pm**. At this special on-line event, we will:

- Recognize outstanding supporters and branches,
- Update you on the impact of our Strategic Plan's 3 key priorities, and
- Provide you with the information you need to answer our 5 Calls to Action!

Don't miss this opportunity to celebrate our achievements and learn about our shared impact! To register [click here](#).

AAUW National and the School Board Project

Want a concrete way to defend education equity in your local schools? **Join us on February 12 at 4:00 pm** to gain practical tools for you or your branch to engage with your local school boards, push back against book bans and curriculum censorship, and protect all students' right to learn.

You'll hear from an ACLU expert on the current landscape and from AAUW leaders in California, Florida, and Pennsylvania on strategies your branch can adapt in your own community. They are:

- **Leah Watson**, Senior Staff Attorney, Racial Justice Program at ACLU
- **Kathi Harper**, AAUW National Policy Committee and Chair of the AAUW California School Board Project
- **Nancy Tray**, AAUW Florida and Co-founder of Families Strong for Public Schools
- **Sandra Miller**, AAUW Pennsylvania and Advocacy Coordinator for Education Voters of PA

This event was organized by members of the AAUW National Policy Committee and AAUW California.

To register, [click here](#).

Dues Update

Reminder: The AAUW Board of Directors voted to increase national dues last February 2025. Beginning April 1, 2026, national member dues will increase \$2 to \$76. To learn more, [click here](#).

Stay in contact with AAUW National

Is your contact information up to date? Access your AAUW National Personal Snapshot and update your contact information and preferences to be sure you stay connected with AAUW National. Don't miss valuable information and timely updates from the national perspective!

Frequent users, click [LOG IN](#) to our web portal, as usual. Non-frequent users, click [LOG IN](#), then below the blue log in button, click FORGOT PASSWORD. Enter your email address and click RESET YOUR PASSWORD to receive and confirm a new password to access your Personal Snapshot. Need help? Email connect@aauw.org and enter LOG IN HELP in the subject line.

“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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marsha888@comcast.net



Estate, trust, and probate specialist serving individuals in the Danville area.

Sarah Nix, Attorney at Law *

snix@gagenmccoy.com



Eliminating barriers and enhancing capabilities to improve the safety, health and wellness of every CC County resident.

Bette Felton, CCRHF Board Chair *

<https://www.ccrhf.org/>



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* AAUW DAW 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/>

Joanne Quijano, Editor
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