



# UPCOMING EVENTS



## STATE LEGISLATIVE DAY

Wednesday, February 25

9:15 to 2 P.M.



## AAUW ARIZONA SPRING CONFERENCE

Saturday, March 28

**More Info . . .**



*Vision: Equity for all*

*Values: Nonpartisan, Fact based, Integrity, Inclusion & Intersectionality*

**AZ – AAUW STATE BOARD  
2025-2026**

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- Amy Perlick, Branch Special Projects
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***AAUW advances gender equity for women and girls  
through research, education, and advocacy.***

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Happy New Year to all Arizona AAUW members! I hope all of you had a great holiday season whether here or traveling. The New Year brings many opportunities for us to meet with other members across the state. It's an exciting time with many opportunities and challenges. We have a State Board meeting coming up on January 24 where we will discuss AAUW Arizona business and set some goals for the coming years.

February will include our annual Legislative Day at the Capitol. Once again, we will meet at the Capitol Museum to learn about issues in our State and how we can get involved and take action. Our Public Policy Directors, Betsy Flaten and Mary Linnemann are working with Jodi Liggett to plan the day. More details will come soon.

The AAUW Arizona Spring Conference will be March 28<sup>th</sup> at Scottsdale Community College. Our focus at this meeting will be ***education issues and human trafficking***. We will learn about the current situation and ways we can improve public education in our State. We will also have a virtual visit from Tremayne Parquet, Deputy Director of Advancement at AAUW National. Tremayne will give us information about the 2026 5-Star Program and answer questions.

2026 will bring us opportunities for Advocacy and I hope all of you have signed up for the Two Minute Activist on the National website. This is a way for all of us to take action on a number of issues including School Vouchers, Department of Education changes and Civil Rights rollbacks – just to name a few. You can sign up at <https://www.aauw.org/act/two-minute-activist/>

Our AAUW Arizona website has recently been brought up to date by Sara DeRouchev, a member of the Green Valley Branch, while we are making efforts to fill the empty Webmaster position on the Board. Please check out the website at [www.aauwarizona.org](http://www.aauwarizona.org). Many thanks to Sara for helping us bring the website up to date.

**Once again, Happy New Year . . .  
and I look forward to seeing many of you in the upcoming months!**

Karen Ramos  
President, AAUW Arizona



## Hands Off Our History and Our Future! - Fall Forum Recap

“**Advocacy**” was the focus of the statewide Fall Forum held Saturday, November 1, at the Cottonwood Country Club in Sun Lakes. The theme was “**Hands OFF Our History and Our Future.**”–Keynote speakers in the morning addressed the vital importance of sharing past stories of advocacy for gender equity to inspire continued advocacy. Throughout the day, AAUW members discussed and gave examples of their roles as change agents. Bonnie Boyce-Wilson spoke on “**Pushing Forward with DEI,**” and a panel composed of a state legislator and several citizen activists gave a detailed report on their successful lobbying effort in the AZ legislature.

**Dr. Mary Rothschild**, founder of the ASU Women’s Studies Department and a nationally prominent women’s history scholar, addressed the topic “**No Going Back: Women’s History in Today’s World.**” She began by declaring, *“I truly believe that only when we know our past can we understand the present and only then can we work for a better, improved future for our children and grandchildren and the world.”* She then provided a lively summary of the amazing advances made in the status of US women since passage of the 19th amendment.

Her conclusion was powerful: *“Feminism opened new paths for my generation and all of those to follow, and those paths, difficult as they may be to follow and sustain, will never be erased. There truly is no turning back and we can only imagine now how many new vistas will open to our daughters and granddaughters, our sons and grandsons. In my life the personal has truly been political and I’ll bet that is the same for most of you as well. There really is no turning back, for which we can all give many, many thanks!”*

**Dr. Melanie Sturgeon** addressed the topic “**Saving the Past, Present and Future: Documenting Women’s History.**” She shared essential tips on how to conduct oral histories. She showed photos of the newly-erected Francis Willard Munds bronze statue on Wesley Bolin Plaza by the AZ State Capitol. Dr. Sturgeon directed the project as president of the Arizona Women’s History Alliance.

Both **Dr. Rothschild** and **Dr. Sturgeon**–offered to serve as consulting scholars to the AZ AAUW “We Made History!” Project, funded in part by a two-year grant from the AAUW state board

During the lunch hour, members shared ideas for effective advocacy. Following lunch, six AAUW members shared personal advocacy stories including **Debbie Hansen** (NW Valley), **Elaine Kennedy** (Scottsdale), **Sharon Hettick** (NW Valley), and **Sharon Anderson** (Green Valley). **Judy Neigoff** (NW Valley) gave a humorous account of how she challenged unfair swimming pool regulations.

**Jody Liggett**, lobbyist for AZ AAUW organized and moderated a panel that recounted their successful efforts to persuade the AZ legislature to provide funds for caregivers of patients with disabilities. Panelists included **Nancy Gutierrez**, AZ State Representative; **Brandi Coons**, executive director of Raising Voices Coalition; **Amy Haley**, parent caregiver, and **Jaime Ketley**, parent caregiver. (Continued on page 6)



## Public Policy 2026

by Betsy Flaten and Mary Linnemann  
Public Policy Co-Chairs



Fellow AAUW Advocates,

New Year's is a time for making—and taking action on—our New Year's Resolutions. In 2025 we updated AAUW Arizona's Resolution on Gun Violence. As we enter 2026, it is time for us to act on that Resolution. Let you and your branch create and commit to an action plan based on the list below...

Take a public stand in support of common-sense strategies to combat gun violence through open dialogue and advocate for legislation at the state and branch level, including utilizing existing relationships with legislative advocates.

Make an effort to gain greater knowledge, understand the critical nature of gun violence and advocate for strategies to address gun violence. These efforts shall include communication to various media outlets, including editorials, social media, opinion pieces, and letters, to reinforce AAUW's position on gun violence and to advocate for common sense legislation, including firearm registration (including permit-to-carry), background checks prior to registration, removal of semi-automatic weapons, bump stocks and weapons with high-capacity magazines.

- ✚ Join with like-minded organizations to share our commitment to safe and supportive environments for all citizens, including advocacy for increased counselors and mental health professionals in Arizona public schools.
- ✚ Advocate for the enactment and implementation of firearm removal laws such as Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPO's) and Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPO's).
- ✚ Advocate for continuing research into the effect of violence on children, as recommended by the American Psychological Association, particularly the causal link between violent video games and violent behavior.
- ✚ Request Arizona's elected officials and public office candidates to support measures to decrease gun violence.

To find support for your action and the opportunity to collaborate with existing organizations that focus on ending gun violence go to

<https://giffords.org/>

Led by former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, our team brings decades of political, legal, and policy expertise to the fight for gun safety. Our efforts shift culture, mobilize voters, and challenge injustice.

<https://www.everytown.org/state/arizona/>

Every Town for Gun Safety is a movement of parents, students, survivors, educators, gun owners, and concerned citizens fighting to end gun violence and build safer communities.

To view the updated AAUW Gun Violence Resolution see

<https://www.aauwarizona.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Gun-Violence-Resolution-2025.pdf>

## BRANCH SPECIAL PROJECTS

by Amy Perlick



**AAUW Arizona** encourages branches to support their local communities while furthering the mission of AAUW. If branches become aware of a need in their community that will advance equity for women and girls, they are encouraged to apply for a Branch Special Project grant.

- ✦ A Branch Special Project grant supports a project, activity, program, sponsorship, or worthwhile opportunity that a branch feels would benefit the community and advance the mission of AAUW.
- ✦ Branch Special Project grants are for a maximum of \$1000.
- ✦ Branches may apply for one grant per fiscal year (July 1-June 30) and may not apply for the same grant more than once.
- ✦ The AAUW Arizona Board of Directors will evaluate submitted proposals according to the approved criteria and determine the amount of funding.
- ✦ Applications must be submitted to the Branch Special Projects Chair no later than two weeks prior to an AAUW Arizona Board of Directors meeting, to be considered at the upcoming Board meeting.
- ✦ Meetings are held the third Wednesday in July, September, November, January and March.
- ✦ No applications are considered at the May meeting.
- ✦ For more information on Branch Special Projects, to see a list of past projects, and to access the application, click [here](#).

For additional questions, please contact the  
Branch Special Projects Chair  
Amy Perlick, at [branchspecproj@gmail.com](mailto:branchspecproj@gmail.com)

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### **Hands Off Our History and Our Future! - Fall Forum Recap (Continued from page 4)**

This semi-annual forum had the best attendance in several years. AZ AAUW deeply appreciates the many state and local members who organized and supported the Forum. Mary Linneman of Southeast Valley branch, and Debbie Hansen and Bonnie Boyce Wilson of NW Valley branch provided excellent leadership.—Special thanks to the Southeast Valley branch members for being outstanding hostesses for the event. They warmly greeted attendees and planted signs and balloons at the venue directing us to the less than obvious parking location! The inspiring day concluded with a rousing rendition of the song **“AAUW Women Rise and Shine”** and President Ramos’ admonition to keep up our good work!



## East Mesa

by Janice Dill, President

Our December meeting put us in the Christmas spirit, as we enjoyed hearing a choir of spirited 4th and 5th grade students from **Franklin Academy** in Mesa, directed by **Gavin Rittehouse**.



We donated \$1,000 to the choral program and hope to hear them again in the future. In addition, we collected monetary donations and needed items for **A New Leaf**, an organization in Mesa that helps families and individuals overcome homelessness, domestic violence, and more. A representative from A New Leaf spoke at our November meeting.

Our Public Policy special interest group is very active and some issues they will focus on include education in Arizona and vouchers, immigration policy and mutual aid.

On **Saturday, January 10**, our branch will host a panel discussion on sex trafficking. January is Human Trafficking Month, and we have put together a panel of four to address the issue and to educate participants about this critical issue.

Presenters include: Stefanie Calens – Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research, ASU; Lt. Christopher Parese – Phoenix Police Department; Lacey Lyons Murphy – Author, “Echoes of Destiny”; Liliana Simpson – BSN, RN. This will also be an opportunity to invite women to join AAUW.

### For the AAUW Woman

From desks of old, a thirst for light,  
For knowledge sought with all her might,  
You stand today, a beacon bright,  
Where wisdom blooms, and futures ignite.

You lift the voice that once was hushed,  
Through halls of learning, bravely rushed,  
With equal pay, your path uncrushed,  
A legacy of hope, in truth, you've flushed.

For Title IX, a steadfast plea,  
For every girl, for you, for me,  
To break the chains of what can't be,  
And rise to meet humanity.

Like Angelou, you're strong and grand,  
A "Phenomenal Woman" in this land,  
With every step, you understand,  
The power held within your hand.

So, raise a glass, you trailblazers true,  
For goals achieved, and dreams anew,  
With AAUW, forever through,  
Empowering women, me and you!

*--Author unknown*

## Green Valley

Gerry Peterson, Co-President

We are well into our membership year here In Green Valley. Our interest groups, among them four book groups, Public Policy, Mah Jongg, Exploring Women's Culture, Out to Lunch Bunch, and Needles and More, have been active. These groups bring together our members over shared interests and experiences—and shared fundraising ideas.

Our membership committee hosted a lively and engaging New Member Tea in November to introduce new members to the workings of the branch and to encourage their participation in these interest groups.



**NEW MEMBERS AT NEW MEMBER TEA**

Our Keeping Girls in School Project, funded through a State Community Action Grant, continues to provide personal hygiene care products for girls in our local Title One Continental Elementary School, addressing a significant need.

We continue our longstanding program of providing lunches one day each month for children from Mexico being treated at St. Andrew's Clinic in Nogales, AZ. Funding for this project is provided by a successful online sales program of member-donated, unused costume jewelry.

A November visit to the Clinic was unfortunately postponed due to US/Mexico border issues related to the government shutdown. The trip is now planned for this Spring.

Our monthly meeting presentations have been a success. Our speakers have included a representative from **Youth on Their Own, a Tucson program keeping homeless and unaccompanied youth in school—a program with an astonishing . . .**

**93 percent success high school graduation rate last year.**



We also heard from two staff members of the ACLU of Arizona. who described ongoing projects defending citizen and immigrant rights.

Most recently, Dr. Janet Spooner, principal of a local elementary school and dyslexia coordinator for the Sahuarita United School District, presented on the causes and therapies for treating children with dyslexia. And when a speaker canceled the afternoon before her scheduled talk because she had Covid, two branch members stepped up to save the day.

One member presented her experiences and challenges as a teacher of English as a Second Language. The second described her deep dive into family genealogy to discover the story of an ancestor with a very interesting history. Both presentations were enthusiastically received by members.

Beginning in January we will be meeting at a new time in a new place, a move that provides significant relief for our budget. We are excited and thankful that our membership is so flexible.

Our branch is poised for a successful year in 2026, thanks to the commitment and dedication of our members.

## Northwest Valley

**Shelby Merwin, President-Elect**

We are looking forward to great things in January 2026. In keeping with January as Human Trafficking Awareness month, our January 20 speaker Sherry Lopez, Founder of Pearl at the Mailbox, will share her own survivor's story along with the work her nonprofit does to combat sex trafficking.

On Saturday, January 24 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m., everyone is invited to our annual Fashion Show Fundraiser at Briarwood Country Club. Funds raised go to our Scholarship funds; providing GED vouchers used at Rio Salado College as well as local college tuition scholarships.



**Saturday, January 24  
10 a.m.-3 p.m.,  
Annual Fashion Show  
Fundraiser  
Briarwood Country Club.**

This year's theme is "AAUW's Sapphire Celebration of 45 years and still going strong!"

Shopping of fashions and accessories by Calle Rose begins at 10 a.m. and ends at 3 p.m. Luncheon and a Fashion show by our very own members, begins at 11:30 a.m. Raffles and Auction items round out the event. Reservations can be by contacting **Rosemary Dougherty** or **Jeanie Pennington**.

On Saturday, January 31 from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m., everyone is invited to a workshop at Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise (reservations at the door accepted) sponsored by our **AZ We Made History Project**. Many of you have already attended some versions of this at your own branch meetings and we are happy for all to come again (or for the first time) to this fun day of story writing and reading. Reservations can be made with Bonnie Boyce-Wilson and Deb Hansen.

Our Public Policy Committee of 19 members has broken down into three subcommittees and continues working in the areas of **Caregivers, Constitutional and Civil Rights**, and **Public Education**. Members have been sharing their work and Call to Actions during 5-min reports at our monthly General Meetings.

We all look forward to these informative briefings. We will be collaborating with League of Women Voters in January 2026 to register voters, and look forward to encouraging membership to attend Legislative Day in February 2026.



**Grassroots Feminism in Higher Ed:  
Building Coalitions for Women's  
Rights**

## Scottsdale

### Laraine Rodgers, President

AAUW Scottsdale closed the year with a truly mission-focused and celebratory month. Our members gave generously in response to our Red Letters appeal and through donations and ticket purchases at our Holiday Fundraising Luncheon. The luncheon itself was a joyful showcase of member generosity and creativity. Members donated items and supported the wine pull, baskets and raffles, while also purchasing beautiful jewelry, scarves, purses, and more—even our poinsettia centerpieces sold quickly!



Doris Leinach with Jacquie Sasser, Program coordinator, at the branch's Holiday Luncheon and Fundraiser.

Many thanks to our Program Coordinator, Jacquie Sasser, who planned the event with Sue Jaros. Kudos to our Scholarship Award winner, Anya McDonnell, Scottsdale Community College student! She is very impressive person and quite a good ambassador for the college.



Seated on left - Scottsdale Branch's Scholarship recipient, Anya McDonnell. In the front and Anya's right: Joan Gold and Jennifer Quinn, our Scottsdale Community College leadership team. Others are part of our jewelry, scarves and purses fundraising team.



Thanks to Jane for the high tea served with her family's china, silverware, linens and more—even tea cozies!

The month was also filled with holiday gatherings, including High Tea following the North Scottsdale Book Club discussion of *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen, prepared by Jane and Barb were gracious, sparkling hostesses who provided family china, linens and plates and Barb who made all the authentic food. After the Books Etc. Book Club, *The Frozen River* discussion, we enjoyed a festive potluck with delicious home-made cookies at Renae Bates' home, beautifully appointed and decorated for the Holiday Season.



Deb Anderson and Karen Ramos, AAUW Arizona Board President, and a member of our Scottsdale Branch.

Each January, we renew our commitment to our mission and look ahead with intention. Education, workplace equity, and civil rights are AAUW priorities for 2026. We will align with National and State efforts as we develop and activate detailed initiatives, including participation as Five-Minute Activists and other advocacy initiatives.

## Southeast Valley

### Mary Kenny, President

The Southeast Valley Branch opened its programming year in October with a social for members while hearing about coming events and programs, including a presentation in November by the Senior Development Officer at Chandler-Gilbert Community College, Paul Sanders. Members also learned about upcoming activities, interest groups available to members, and special events being planned for the 2025-26 year.

Several members volunteered to participate in the Branch's Lego Robotics Project, now underway. Eight fourth and fifth grade girls at San Marcos Elementary School, a Title 1 school in Chandler, are participating in the weekly afterschool STEM program that began on October 15. The girls are learning about team building, creativity, problem-solving and more through this interactive project. Divided into two teams, each team is designing its robot to accomplish a variety of defined tasks. Our members are on hand each week to provide volunteer assistance to teachers and students throughout this 15-week program.

Plans are now underway for our annual fundraiser on . . .



**Saturday, March 21,  
4:30-7:00 p.m.**

**Ballroom of Cottonwood Country Club  
Sun Lakes.**

This year's theme is **Spring Fling** with raffles, silent auction, entertainment, and more.

Before 2025 came to a close, our Branch held its annual Holiday Funds Brunch mid-December. In addition to raising funds for our national organization, members enjoyed a bit of holiday time together.

The Brunch featured an AAUW Fellowship Recipient, Laura Wilkinson Sinton, as our keynote speaker. While Laura's presentation was about sustainability, she began by first describing the valuable impact of her AAUW scholarship had on her as she began on a new professional path later in life. She offered an emotional message of gratitude for AAUW's support of women like herself.



AAUW Fellowship Recipient,  
Laura Wilkinson Sinton, was the keynote speaker at the  
Southeast Valley Branch's Holiday Funds Brunch.

## Education

Education powers equity.  
AAUW removes barriers so  
women and girls can access  
learning, unlock opportunity,  
and lead in their communities  
and beyond.

## Tucson

### Dawn Armstrong, President

We enjoyed a Fall full of activism, education and partnership!

Thank you to our Board and AAUW Members who helped organize or took part in these recent activities supporting the AAUW mission:

- ✚ **Running and Winning** – an interactive leadership workshop hosted at Cholla H.S. by The League of Women Voters to encourage young women to run for public office
- ✚ **The No Kings Rallies** – supporting public education and women’s equity
- ✚ **AAUW Tucson Branch Meeting with UA Survivor Support Services** – information was provided about these important services at the University of Arizona and a donation drive was held to provide needed supplies
- ✚ **AAUW State Fall Forum** – four of our Board members attend ed “Hands Off our History and Our Future!”



**Photo from Running & Winning**

Pictured (L to R) are Immediate Past President Ana Nygren, VP Programs Diana Charbonneau, Current President Dawn Armstrong, and Advocacy Chair Mindy Gomez who coordinated with Pima County JTED Culinary Students to provide food for the event’s attendees.

At our combined **Holiday Party and Branch Meeting** members brainstormed to create a program slate for the Spring that will further develop our advocacy initiatives and engage membership.

We will start off February 5 with a panel discussion focused on **The Sandwich Generation!** All are welcome to attend.

Join us for an evening focused on the realities facing women across the "sandwich generation" who are balancing adult children, aging parents, careers, retirement planning, and health transitions like menopause — hear practical strategies, local resources, and real-life stories to help you regain control and plan with confidence.

**When:** Thursday, February 5, 2026

**Time:** 5:30-7:00pm

**Where:** Junior League, 2099 E River, Tucson, AZ

**Cost:** \$20 + optional \$5 raffle ticket

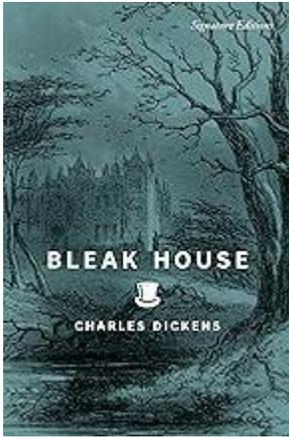
**Registration Link:**

[lp.constantcontactpages.com](http://lp.constantcontactpages.com)

## Fellowships & Grants

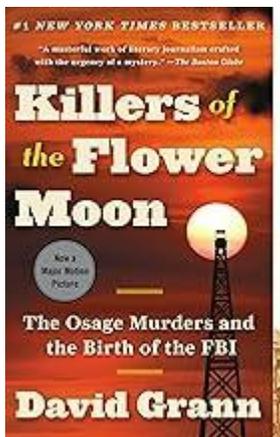
**Since 1888, AAUW has been one of the largest funders of women’s graduate education, research and community projects, investing in women who go on to change the world.**

## AAUW SUGGESTED BOOKS



### ***Bleak House by Charles Dickens, 789 pages***

Widely regarded as Dickens's masterpiece, *Bleak House* centers on the generations-long lawsuit Jarndyce and Jarndyce. Focusing on Esther Summerson, a ward of John Jarndyce, the novel traces Esther's romantic coming-of-age and, in classic Dickensian style, the gradual revelation of long-buried secrets,



### ***Killers of the Flower Moon by David Grann***

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • A twisting, haunting true-life murder mystery about one of the most monstrous crimes in American history, from the author of *The Wager* and *The Lost City of Z*, “one of the preeminent adventure and true-crime writers working today.”—*New York Magazine* • NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FINALIST • NOW A MARTIN SCORSESE PICTURE.

### ARIZONA SUN

Four issues—Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer—of The Sun are published each year.

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#### USEFUL LINKS

AAUW Arizona State - <https://www.aauwarizona.org/>

AAUW National - <https://www.aauw.org/>