

**BONFIRE**

San Jose Branch

Empowering women since 1881



**2021 AAUW San Jose Fall Gathering
For Members and Friends**

Saturday, September 25

10 am - 11:30 am

**Willow Glen United Methodist Church - Kohlstedt Hall
1420 Newport Avenue, San Jose (corner of Minnesota and Newport,
across the street from Headquarters)**

Due to Covid restrictions, packaged breakfast treats, coffee and tea will be served outdoors only, starting at 9:30 am. Because of fast-changing pandemic conditions, we will plan for a hybrid meeting: in-person AND Zoom-based. We certainly hope we can meet in person, but will persevere with a Zoom-only format if needed. Watch for late-breaking information in email or on our Facebook page.

If needed, the Zoom link/info is:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89385778024?pwd=T2ZLdk1MRHN2RVZOZUFMUDZ5aXMxZz09>

Meeting ID: 893 8577 8024

Passcode: 343900

Dial-in (only) is: +1 669 900 6833 US

Drawing from the deep well of the expertise of AAUW San Jose members, this year's keynote speaker is Katherine Oven (our own Membership Treasurer), who spent her career as a civil engineer specializing in water issues in the Bay Area. Our state is facing drought conditions, so this topic affects us all. Come learn about California's complex water supply, and how to be water wise.

Come and meet new members! Catch up with familiar faces. Bring a friend or two who might be interested.



Flexibility, flexibility, flexibility. That's our continuing mantra. We'll either have an in-person event, a hybrid event, or a virtual event for September's Fall Gathering. With the help of a lot of people, we're preparing for whichever format we're able to provide. I look forward to meeting you in whatever way we meet.

SAVE the DATE: It's also that time of year when we meet our Fund Awardee fellows (this is where some of your AAUW Funds money goes). Hearing from our awardees is such an inspiration and the personification of our mission. California has 37 scholars studying here this year. The talks are split over three days of virtual presentations on Saturday, October 23, Saturday, October 30, and Sunday, November 7 each from 10 a.m. to noon. More on registration next month.

(My apologies to Elaine Benoit, Gifts for Teens Chair, for leaving her off the Board positions last month.)

I'm giving the rest of my space to a story about one of the NCCWSL attendees we sponsored.



**President's Corner
Sonia Wright**

Keeping Our Members Safe at Headquarters

Pamela Dougherty, Building & Properties Chair

At this point, regardless of vaccination status, all persons must wear face coverings at all times when indoors except: (1) working in a closed room or office alone or with members of their household; (2) when they are actively performing an activity that cannot be done while wearing a face covering (e.g. actively eating or drinking); and (3) as specifically exempted from use of face coverings under the guidance of CDPH (e.g., to communicate with someone who is hearing impaired or where a face covering poses a safety risk).

Please remember to fill out the vaccination form when you first visit Headquarters again. The forms and instructions are available in the kitchen and on the postcard cart. Forgot your mask? Masks are available on the postcard cart.

“Spread love everywhere you go. Let no one ever come to you without leaving happier.”

- [Mother Teresa](#)

AAUW San Jose Financial Activity Reports for 2020-2021

Pat Diamond, Finance Officer

Below are the Branch's final General Fund (operating) and Building Fund (maintenance of Headquarters) financial activity reports for the 2020-2021 fiscal year. The information is summarized as follows:

GENERAL FUND

Pat Diamond, Finance Officer

Income: \$11,224:

Dues and Roundup \$7,060

Donations, Interest, and Other \$4,241

Expenses: \$7,621:

Membership \$151

Fall Gathering \$1,314

Programs \$675

Women's Equality 2020 \$1,960

BONFIRE and Handbook \$1,210

Operating Expenses \$1,404

President/Board/Treasurer \$379

Computer/Internet/Equipment \$528

Net Income: \$3,603 (deposited to General Fund reserves)

The full General Fund report is available upon request; contact Finance Officer [Pat Diamond](#).

BUILDING FUND

Pamela Dougherty, Chair of Building & Properties Committee

Income: \$77,854

Rental Income: \$22,450

Donations and Interest: \$55,404

Expenses: \$78,679

Taxes and Insurance \$4,329

Utilities \$4,225

Cleaning/Janitorial \$1,540

Gardening and Landscaping \$2,730

Repair and Maintenance - Short Term \$2,787

Repair and Maintenance - Long Term \$62,853

Miscellaneous: \$215

Deficit: \$825 (excess of expenses over income will be taken from Building Fund reserves)

The full Building Fund report is available upon request; contact [Pamela Dougherty](#).

NCCWSL San Jose's Leadership Scholarship Recipient (part 1 of 3)

Alyce Athanasiou, member of College-University Relations Committee



Each May, at the University of Maryland, AAUW has sponsored the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL) where over 800 women from the United States meet to learn how to enhance their leadership skills and make changes towards improving their communities. This year, the leadership conference was held virtually. Our Branch sponsored Raquel Garcia, Lauren Chun, Yaneth Gutierrez.

Raquel Garcia graduated from San Jose State University (SJSU) in December 2020 with a major in Public Health and a minor in Chemistry. She is a pre-med student, currently applying to medical schools, who plans to use her public health knowledge to increase health equity and decrease health disparities in underrepresented populations.

As a high school student, she received the National Hispanic Scholar Award, and as a freshman, and later as a junior at SJSU, she earned the Principal Scholar Award for obtaining a 4.0 G.P.A. She earned the SJSU Public Health Department Academic Achievement Award in Spring 2020 and their Excellence in Leadership Award in June 2020 and December 2020. Raquel worked to encourage student involvement on campus as a member of the student government's Committee of Programming and Affairs.

Raquel interned with SCOPE, a Stanford based group, and worked as an accountability director, keeping track of volunteers in a Level I trauma center, while maintaining attention to detail, organization and time management. She co-developed Virtual Companions a national non-profit that fosters virtual relationships between older adults and youths to build community and decrease loneliness during and beyond the pandemic.

The virtual NCCWSL Conference gave Raquel the opportunity to learn more about civic engagement, improving cultural competence and how to improve health care access. Several speakers were designated "women of distinction" and she gained insight from their stories of struggles and perseverance. During the virtual workshops, Raquel met pre-med students and students in STEM programs and she is confident she will carry these connections into her career as a physician.



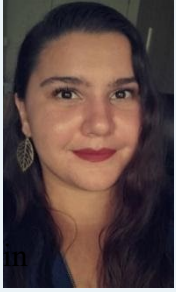
Gifts for Teens Grateful for Gifts

Cheryl Markman, Gifts for Teens

Gifts for Teens is gearing up to fill 504 duffel bags and sturdy totes for underserved teen boys and girls in the downtown San Jose area. As always, each bag and tote will be filled with sweatshirts and other warm apparel, school supplies, snacks, personal hygiene items and so much more.

At this time, we are asking for donations of \$25 store gift cards from Target and Walmart. The teens can use these cards to purchase things they want or need, including food. For more information on gift cards, contact [Beverly Bassett](#). Cash donations which we can use to purchase additional gift cards are also welcome. No gift is too small. Please make checks payable to ISPF – AAUW – GFT, or simply to ISPF – AAUW with Gifts for Teens in the memo line. Please mail gift cards and/or checks, to be received no later than September 15, to AAUW San Jose, Attn: Jan Giroux, 4633 Blue Ridge Dr San Jose, Ca. 95129.

Gifts for Teens is grateful to you all. Thank you for your continued support! For more information about Gifts for Teens, visit our website www.Gifts4Teens.org or contact Elaine Benoit at (408) 268-9654.



An Update on, Sofia Vartanian, Past Local Scholarship Recipient

Cheryl Markman, Local Scholarship Committee

Sofia Vartanian received a Local Scholarship award in 2020. After successfully completing her academic studies at West Valley College in the spring of 2020 with an AS in Chemistry and an AA in Liberal Arts (Math), she began the transition to her academic journey at UCLA in the fall of 2020. But, as for many of us, the COVID-19 pandemic brought many changes and challenges to her personal, academic and financial situations. She was laid off from her job, lost her grandmother to cancer, and at the same time had to scramble to find housing near UCLA because campus housing could not be guaranteed.

As she settled into her new life as a junior in Biology at UCLA, Sofia earned her certification as a medical scribe in the hopes of getting a new job. When classes began, she joined the Bruins Public Health and UCLA Timmy Global Health clubs. These two clubs helped her to further her knowledge about public health and to serve the community at large. In addition, she began volunteering during the pandemic at the Hollywood Food Coalition to help those who were and are facing food insecurities.

Unfortunately, during the winter of 2021, Sofia and her family were diagnosed with COVID-19. But working as a team and helping each other stay mentally positive while dealing with the virus, she was able to complete her junior year at UCLA. In keeping with her career goals of becoming a medical health professional, she enrolled in summer classes at UCLA and is working on completing her Phlebotomy Certification.

Now entering her senior year at UCLA, Sofia has secured a non-paid internship with a start-up company called Health Care Transformation. As a digital marketing intern, she is able to interact and help improve the healthcare system through improving patient knowledge via asynchronous videos, while minimizing healthcare costs and preventing miscommunication.

During her free time, Sofia enjoys taking nature photos, weightlifting, swimming, hiking, and interacting with a personal website she made for fun during the pandemic. To see her creative side, she invites you to check out <https://www.hyeonespresso.com/>.



Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Mary Jane Vitkovich

A great big "thank you" to all the members who helped make our donation drive for HomeFirst so successful in June. We collected 1,443 laundry pods and 255 pieces of women's underwear. Way to go, AAUW!!

Our first meeting for 2021-2022 will be held on Tuesday, September 7. We will begin at 6 pm with some bubbly beverages and light appetizers, and the meeting will start shortly after. We will meet in the AAUW parking lot; please bring a mask. We will do budget and project planning for the coming year. Questions? Contact Mary Jane Vitkovich or Bobbie Baker at neighbors@aauwsanjose.org.

Virtual Tech Trek 2021

Karelle Cornwell

The fact that university campuses were closed was not going to stop a group of very dedicated, hardworking and amazing AAUW women from holding Tech Trek during the summer of 2021. Tech Trek is a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) camp run by AAUW that is held every summer at university campuses throughout the country. California universities were not allowing summer camps on their campuses due to COVID-19. As a result, a group of determined women banded together and made the seemingly impossible possible. With a pilot program of 40 campers in 2020 under their belt, they created Virtual Tech Trek 2021, a hands-on virtual STEM program open to all AAUW branches in California.

Three one-week camps were held during the summer with over 600 campers from 72 AAUW branches in California. Over 250 adult and junior coaches from 52 branches participated. Junior coaches are high school students who had attended Tech Trek in previous years and are a testament to the success of Tech Trek. They continue to be excited about STEM and were eager and enthused to share their love of STEM with this new crop of middle school girls.

AAUW San Jose sponsored 10 students this year. Five of the students were selected in 2020 and five were selected this year. Three members of our Branch, Peg Carlson-Bowen, Katherine Oven and Karelle Cornwell, volunteered as adult coaches, and Mi Nguyen, a high school student and a 2018 Tech Trek camper sponsored by AAUW San Jose, was a junior coach. It was wonderful to work with Mi at Tech Trek this year and to see what an enthusiastic, intelligent and confident young woman she has become. It's hard to say just how big of a role Tech Trek played in this, but I'd like to think that we made a positive difference in her life. Here is what Mi had to say on the last day of camp: "This week was one of the best weeks of my entire summer!"

There was a robotics class in the morning, in which the students created "Wearable Tech" which involved designing and creating a wearable item (most made hats) and incorporating a blinking LED light and a spinning motor, both of which required computer programming and electrical engineering. There were five inspirational speakers who spoke on Astrophysics, Neuroscience, Engineering, The Future of Food, and Climate Activism, and there were hands-on workshops in the afternoons and optional evening workshops. Yes, it was a very packed week!

Renew your membership

Looking for how to renew online? You can renew your membership online 1. Go to www.aauw.org 2. Click on 'Membership' (top right), then Membership Services Database. 3. At this point, you will be asked to Log In or Create an Account if you are a first time user. 4. (If you need to look up your member ID, it's very easy to do—just click on 'Forgot Member ID?') 5. After you log in, you should see a screen with the option to renew your membership online (bottom left on the list of options). If you want the screenshot version, email Sonia.wright.59@gmail.com and it will be sent to you.

Applications Open for 2022-23 Fellows and Grantees

The application period for AAUW Fellowships and Grants is open for the 2022-23 academic year. Follow in the footsteps of award-winning authors, scientists, scholars and trailblazers by applying for educational funding through AAUW. Deadlines run from November to December 2021. [Help spread the word!](#)

SEPTEMBER 2021

Submitted by Tynka Dees, Calendar Editor

AAUW is open for meetings and events based on the following guidelines which have changed because of the changing Covid environment:

Organizer of the meeting must request a certification of vaccine status form from each attendee. Details August Bonfire. Everyone needs to wear a mask indoors regardless of vaccination status, unless alone in a private office with the door closed. Open windows to increase air flow when meeting indoors. If you or a member of your group have symptoms or tested positive for COVID, please do not enter the building. Please report such instances if you have been associating with AAUW members so we can file the necessary reporting. Some meetings this month may change whether they are meeting in person or not so please check with organizer.

Wed Sep 1	6:30-7 pm	AAUW Board Social Hour ZOOM (Sonia Wright)
	7-8:30 pm	ZOOM AAUW BOARD Meeting (Sonia Wright)
Thu Sep 2	1-3 pm	Knitting Know How (RSVP Margaret McCartney)
	6-8:30 pm	Public Policy Committee (RSVP Susan Karlins)
Tue Sep 7	10:30-11:30 am	German Conversation ZOOM (RSVP Barbara Snyder)
	6-8 pm	Neighbors Helping Neighbors Parking Lot (RSVP Bobbie Baker)
Wed Sep 8	10 am-2 pm	Art Appreciation (RSVP Jan Bartolotta)
	7-830 pm	Wednesday Night Book Group (RSVP ismant@aol.com)
Sat Sep 11	6:30-9:30 pm	Couples Dining (RSVP Cheryl Markman)
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Sun Sep 12	11:30 am-1:30 pm	Film Fans (RSVP Linda Snashall)
Mon Sep 13	6-9 pm	Light Gourmet ZOOM (RSVP Cheryl Markman)
Tue Sep 14	10-11:30 am	Book Discussion (Lida Kluzek)
	10:30-11:30 am	Conversacion Espanol ZOOM (RSVP Barbara Snyder)
Thu Sep 16	10 am-12 pm	Family History ZOOM (Susan Brundage)
	7-8:30 pm	Mystery Lovers ZOOM (Sharon Shephard)
Sat Sep 18	All Day	Gifts for Teens Parking Lot (Elaine Benoit)
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Mon Sep 20	1-4 pm	Interbranch Council Margaret Bard)
	6:30-9 pm	International Gourmet ZOOM (RSVP Jan Bartolotta)
Tue Sep 21	10:30-11:30 am	French Conversation ZOOM (RSVP Barbara Snyder)
	1-3 pm	Knitting Know How (RSVP Margaret McCartney)
Fri Sep 24	1:30- 3:30 pm	Local Scholarship ZOOM (Ruth Dusan)
Sat Sep 25	10-1130 am	Fall Event 1420 Newport Ave across from headquarters
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Mon Sep 27	9:30-11 am	Building and Properties Committee ZOOM (Pamela Dougherty)
Tue Sep 28	12-1:30 pm	Lunch Bunch ZOOM (Diana Taylor)
	7-8:30 pm	Great Decisions PM ZOOM (Sharon Shephard)

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**BONFIRE ARTICLE SUBMITTAL
RULES:**

The sole purpose of this publication is to
convey the association's business to its
membership. Only articles and
announcements related to Branch business
will be considered for inclusion.

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**PERIODICALS
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AAUW San Jose Branch *Established 1909*



Strong Start - September 2021

Santa Clara County (SCC) Office of Education sponsors Strong Start to strengthen SCC early childhood education. AAUW CA priorities advocate for these actions: “adequate and equitable funding for high quality public education for all students, including preschoolers.” As a local advocate among many, the seven SCC AAUW branches have been apprised of the actions being taken by Strong Start for three years. You can go to the website [here](#).

The “American Rescue Plan,” the current federal budget being negotiated, and California’s 2022 budget give strong support to early childhood care and education. It has become obvious during the pandemic of the need for affordable, high-quality care so that first responders and hospital workers could do their job while at the same time facilities were shut down to stem the virus spread.

To make amends, California legislative goals are to provide universal 4 year old Transitional Kindergarten regardless of income, full affordable daycare for working families, and increase the capacity of childcare centers.

The most innovative is the Transitional K program for 4 year olds in regular public schools to be completely available by 2025. Besides (from Census date) getting an accurate count of children ready for the program, facilities at the current schools need to be built to accommodate the classes, after school care for all children needs to increase, enough T-K teachers need to be recruited, and a curriculum needs to be designed for 4 year olds to prepare them for the Kindergarten updated curriculum.

If you have relatives, friends, or co-workers with children 4 or younger, tell them about the legislation. Send them to the Strong Start website.



Empowering Women Since 1881

See the San Jose Branch Website at www.aauwsanjose.org for more information