



BONFIRE

San Jose Branch

Empowering women since 1881



Give the Gift of Education Online Fundraiser - December 6 - 10 Local Scholarship Holiday Campaign Committee

Last year we raised \$19,000 in the first-ever online fundraiser for our Local Scholarship Program, and we were sure that in 2021 we'd be back at Headquarters enjoying our joyful and inspiring Holiday Boutique. Alas, the masks are still on and the restrictions are still in force, but we refuse to abandon the deserving college women who need us! By participating in this year's online campaign, we can experience the same satisfaction of joining together to fulfill our AAUW mission: To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, advocacy, and education.

More than ever, women students need a four-year college degree that can lead to wider career opportunities, future professional success, self-confidence, economic stability, and a lifetime connection to AAUW. The cost of a college education has more than doubled over the past generation, and women take, on average, two years longer than men to repay student loans. The more we give in scholarships, the less these students will need to borrow.

Special features this year include:

A matching fund that **doubles** your donation up to \$5,000

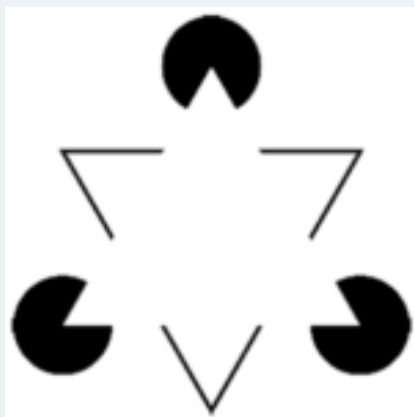
Outstanding raffle prizes: two nights in a luxurious Santa Cruz Harbor vacation home, a diamond- and ruby-chip necklace and earrings, high-end wines, fused glass jewelry and hand-woven scarves, Sharks tickets, an iPad, gift certificates to local eateries, and more!

Celebrate the holidays and ring in the New Year by supporting exceptional women in 2022 who, against all odds, are determined to obtain a college education. Join the **fund**raising and invite friends and family members to join you -- donate with just one click! Details of how to access the Campaign page on our Branch website will be published in the December BONFIRE. Remember to share the campaign on your favorite social media platform and let's give the gift of education!



President's Corner

I love this! Below is an image. What do you see? Triangles? Circles? How many?



Sonia Wright
President

This is the [Kanizsa Triangle](#). Most people see a solid white triangle pointing upwards, an inverted triangle pointing downwards, and a set of black discs. But the fact is, none of these shapes are actually present in the figure. In fact, this image is of “pac-men” and V’s, not triangles and circles. This is an example of our unconscious mind using familiar information to try and make sense of what it sees. Because, in the absence of complete information, our mind needed to rely on something to help us figure it out. That is unconscious bias! Perhaps now you can see why unconscious bias doesn’t make you bad inherently, but once you realize it exists, you are empowered to take action.

So, what can you do?

1. Self-awareness is the first step.
2. Create safe spaces to have open discussions about the biases you have
3. Increase your contact with people who are dissimilar
4. Set realistic expectations

We’re not going to be able to change our unconscious mind over night, but with some hard work and dedication, we will be able to make progress. Only when we confront our biases are we able to truly recognize the value diversity brings to an organization like AAUW. It’s important for our continued growth and sustainability as an organization to make a concerted effort to be inclusive and create spaces where everyone feels welcome.

On another note, I want to send condolences from all of us at AAUW to Linda Snashall for the recent loss of her husband. Linda was the past president I called when deciding whether I could work full-time and be AAUW Branch president at the same time.

AAUW Member Gloria Stern Memorial—

<https://mountainviewhse.com/obituary-of-gloria-stern-1931-2021-san-jose-ca/>

2020-21 Legislative Session Winding Down – How Did AAUW California-sponsored Bills Fare?

Kathi Harper, Co-Chair Public Policy, AAUW California

Not particularly well, as it turns out! We started the year off with 39 bills we selected for varying degrees of support. We chose one bill to co-sponsor, AB 92 (establishing a sliding scale for family fees for childcare through 2023), with four additional bills for top-priority attention ("A" level), five bills for "important" status ("B" level), twenty-two bills for low ("C" level) attention, and seven bills to "watch."

Over-all, 28 of our 39 bills have been designated "2-year" bills, which means they are dead for this year and likely will be taken up again in 2022. Our advocate, Kathy Van Osten, has explained that this is because Senate and Assembly leadership set a limit of just 12 bills that a member could move to the second house, so members had to pick and choose what would they wanted to move forward.

Some of our bills did not make the cut. Four of our five top priority bills, along with our co-sponsored bill, and four of our other bills, did not make it through. These include AB 22, AB 92, AB 737, AB 966, AB 1361 (all promoting varied preschool and transitional kindergarten issues), and SB 245 (no cost-sharing for abortion services). However, several of them were converted into the Budget and Budget "trailer bills," which will provide funding for childcare. Although we were not entirely successful in getting our top bill AB 92 passed, the state budget includes \$60 million for one year of relief for all families using subsidized childcare, increased reimbursement rates for childcare providers, and funding for 206,000 new childcare slots.

Several bills have passed and been sent to the Governor, and we are working hard to secure his signature on these bills: AB 62 (upgrade garment worker wages) and AB 367 (free menstrual products), as well AB 123 (paid family leave), AB 1074 (rehire displaced workers), and AB 1461 (health services for non-citizens).

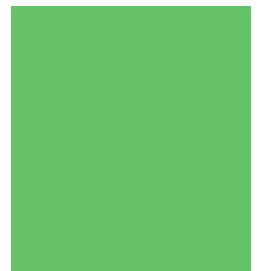
Thanks again to all our members who participated in Lobby Day and/or weighed in at critical junctures on social media. For descriptions of each of these bills and information on their status, visit our AAUW CA Bill Tracker on the website, [Public Policy/Legislative Advocacy/Bill Tracking](#).

Reproductive Rights March - San Jose

Susan Karlins, Public Policy Committee



Eight of us participated in the Reproductive Rights March at San Jose City Hall on October 2, including new members Michelle and Ruth (and Ruth's mom.) We ranged from 20's to 80's age groups. We met up with the Morgan Hill branch and marched with them. It was inspiring to see hundreds of people in the City Hall Plaza in support of women's right to control our own bodies.





An Update on Reagan Beers, Past Local Scholarship Recipient

Cheryl Markman, Local Scholarship

Reagan Beers was awarded the Edie Kerr Founder's Scholarship from AAUW Local Scholarship in the spring of 2020. Shortly afterwards she completed a remote summer internship in the Building Energy Science Department at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, a department that focuses on renewable energy technology for commercial buildings. For her project, Reagan worked with an engineering team to evaluate material compatibility for an energy efficient heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system. Aside from doing literature searches, designing experiments and analyzing data, she was expected to give oral presentations and written reports. At weekly meetings, she presented their data to the engineering team and answered their questions. These weekly meetings gave her practice for when she showcased her research at a virtual poster symposium and submitted a comprehensive report of her findings and progress to the U.S. Department of Energy.

The knowledge and skills Reagan gained from her internship prepared her to join the Sailor Research Group last fall at the University of California-San Diego and begin her undergraduate research. The data from her first project was then delivered to their industrial partner to be safely translated to an industrial scale. Although she spent most of her time repeating experiments and troubleshooting instruments, she used that as an opportunity to practice her lab techniques and problem-solving skills and to gain experience working in a professional research setting.

During the summer, Reagan worked with two graduate students in her research group on a process to deposit catalysts into silicon nanostructures to degrade chemical warfare agents. These nanostructures will then be integrated into fabrics, lotions, eye drops and contact lenses to offer dermal and ocular protection. She has also been researching full time and mentoring an undergraduate participant in the Sailor summer research immersion program. In this new academic year, Reagan continues to take classes and work on her research project. She expects to graduate with a B.S. in Chemistry in Spring 2022 and ultimately intends to get a Ph.D. in Materials Science and Engineering.

When she's not studying or working, Reagan "loves to cook, dance and enjoy the sunshine."

Nominating Committee

Linda Goldberg, Parliamentarian

A Nominating Committee to choose officers for the 2022-23 fiscal year will be approved at the December Board meeting. Please be aware that any Branch member may propose names as potential Nominating Committee members. If you, or someone you know, would like to serve on the committee, please contact [Linda Goldberg](#).



A Special Update on Christina (Long) Duarte, Past Local Scholarship Recipient

Cheryl Markman



Christina was awarded a Local Scholarship in 2013 while attending Evergreen Valley College, where she received an AA degree in Paralegal Studies. Christina credits her career advancement at least in part to receiving this scholarship. At the time she had been considering leaving the program to work full time if she couldn't get a scholarship to help cover costs. Instead, she was able to complete her AA. In 2014 she was granted a second scholarship while at UC Santa Cruz. Upon graduation in 2015 with a degree in philosophy, she immediately started working for a small estate planning law firm. Subsequently she relocated to San Jose and started working for a boutique family law firm.

A few years ago, Christina took a new position at a much larger family law firm and worked as a legal administrative assistant until her twins were born in September 2020. The twins were born six weeks early so she had a brief NICU stay right in the middle of COVID. She had an extended maternity leave, but thanks to the paralegal certification she earned at Evergreen, she was qualified to work as a paralegal. She was offered a promotion at her current law firm before even returning from maternity leave and started in her new position as soon as she returned to work.

Christina credits her moving up over the last few years in large part to being a Local Scholarship recipient. She adds that she is now in a position to pay that forward and intends to donate to the scholarship fund. She hopes that sharing her story will help attract future donors for future scholarships! She adds that, due to the promotion and higher income level, her husband was also able to return to grad school and is currently working on his Master's in materials engineering, while also staying home with the babies part time.

Commenting that they've done things a bit unconventionally, Christina notes that it's amazing to know that she can be a mom (to two at a time!) and still have a flourishing career that's both fulfilling to her and supports a family of four. With one-year old twins, her for-fun activities have been relatively limited lately, but she and her husband are eager to get back to their outdoor activities as the babies get older. They enjoy hiking, trips to Santa Cruz to walk along West Cliff or hike trails along the beach, or explore the hidden gems in small cities and downtown areas.



Warm Hearts Drive

Bobbie Baker, Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Neighbors Helping Neighbors' (NHN) traditional "Warm Hearts" drive for Santa Maria Urban Ministry will be held on Saturday, November 6, from 11 am to 1 pm.

New and gently-used warm clothing of all kinds will be collected. Just pull into the Headquarters parking lot and a NHN volunteer will help unload your donations. Winter is coming ... let's help keep our neighbors warm!

Resource for seniors

Mary Barry shared the Age Friendly Santa Clara County website which may be of interest to some of our senior AAUW members. They have a monthly newsletter that has some great resources and things to do. <https://socialservices.sccgov.org/seniors-agenda>



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

Sonia Wright, former College/University Committee

Yanet Gutierrez is our third featured NCCWSL recipient. She graduated from San Jose State in May 2021 with a bachelor's degree in political science (cum laude). She is working through the learning process of applying to law schools. Like so many first-generation students, she didn't have any guidance and has been learning the process for a successful application to law school.

As she said, "After reflecting and thinking how hard I have worked to obtain an education, and the support of many people and organizations that have helped me, I decided to give it another chance and not to think about these rejection letters as an obstacle; instead, these should give me courage to give my everything. Also, I thought about my father, and what he would like me to do. I'm sure he wouldn't be happy, he would encourage me to try again, again and again."

She got lucky and learned that UC Davis offers a program called King Hall Outreach Program. It provided great tools and knowledge on how to prepare a resume, personal statement and how to find the schools that fit her skills, test scores and financial aid. She's preparing for her LSAT and will apply to the schools that are a right fit.

In the meantime, she's gaining experience doing volunteer work. Prior to our Fall Gathering she was doing volunteer work for the California Fire Relief Program through a non-profit called All Hands and Hearts, an organization that focuses on disaster relief work. Additionally, she's also focusing on helping other students by connecting them with resources.



Knitting Know-How Interest Groups

Margaret McCartney

Would you like to learn to knit or improve your knitting skills? The Knitting Know-How interest groups are seeking new members. Both groups meet at Headquarters from 1 to 3 pm. The first group meets on the first Thursday of the month and the second group meets on the third Tuesday.

If you are interested in joining either group, please send an email to [Margaret McCartney](#).

Welcome to Our Newest Members

Claire Campodonico



RUTH McMASTER lives in Monterey, CA and is looking forward to being a dual member with us. She earned her BA at Sacramento State and her MA in Education Administration from the University of the Pacific in Stockton. Ruth and her family recently relocated to Monterey after she retired from her positions as school teacher and school principal in her hometown of Lodi, CA. She was referred by Peg Carlson-Bowen and Leticia Cowan.

LORI HARAKAL resides in Cornville, Arizona. She will be an out-of-state dual member with us. She was referred to our Branch by her longtime friend Leticia Cowan. Lori received her Bachelor of Fine Arts from JFK University in Orinda, CA. Having a degree in Interior Design, she has her own business, Sedona Soul Spaces. During Covid-19, she was thrilled to join some of our Zoom meetings and became a devotee of AAUW. She has also recently joined her Branch in Prescott, Arizona.

NOVEMBER 2021

Submitted by Tynka Dees, Calendar Editor

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.

Tue Nov 2	10:30-11:30 am	German Conversation ZOOM (RSVP Barbara Snyder)
Wed Nov 3	6:30-7 pm	AAUW Board Social Hour ZOOM (Sonia Wright)
	7-8:30 pm	ZOOM AAUW BOARD Meeting (Sonia Wright)
Thu Nov 4	1-3 pm	Knitting Know How (RSVP Margaret McCartney)
	7-8:30 pm	Public Policy Committee ZOOM (RSVP Susan Karlins)
Fri Nov 5	11am-1pm	Back Porch Sale Judy Ohland paintings (Marilyn Jackson)
Sat Nov 6	11 am-1 pm	Neighbors Helping Neighbors Parking Lot Drop off (MaryJane Vitkovich)
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Mon Nov 8	6-8 pm	Neighbors Helping Neighbors (RSVP Bobbie Baker)
	6-9 pm	Light Gourmet (RSVP Cheryl Markman)
Tue Nov 9	10-11:30 am	Book Discussion (Lida Kluzek)
	10:30-11:30 am	Conversacion Espanol ZOOM (RSVP Barbara Snyder)
Wed Nov 10	10 am-2 pm	Art Appreciation (RSVP Jan Bartolotta)
	7-830 pm	Wednesday Night Book Group ZOOM (RSVP Margaret Bard)
Sat Nov 13	6:30-9:30 pm	Couples Dining (RSVP Cheryl Markman)
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Sun Nov 14	11:30 am-2 pm	Film Fans (RSVP Linda Snashall)
Mon Nov 15	9:30-11am	Exploring World Literature ZOOM (Diana Taylor)
	6:30-9 pm	International Gourmet ZOOM (RSVP Jan Bartolotta)
Tue Nov 16	10:30-11:30 am	French Conversation ZOOM (RSVP Barbara Snyder)
	1-3 pm	Knitting Know How (RSVP Margaret McCartney)
Thu Nov 18	10 am-12 pm	Family History ZOOM (Susan Brundage)
	7-8:30 pm	Mystery Lovers ZOOM (Sharon Shephard)
Fri Nov 19	1:30- 3 pm	Local Scholarship ZOOM (Ruth Dusan)
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Mon Nov 22	9:30-11 am	Building and Properties Committee ZOOM (Pamela Dougherty)



San Jose Branch BONFIRE (USPS 857-400)
Published monthly except for July by AAUW
San Jose Branch, 1165 Minnesota Ave. San
Jose, 95125-3324

Periodicals Postage Paid at San Jose, CA
Postmaster: Send address changes to AAUW
San Jose Branch, 1165 Minnesota Avenue,
San Jose, CA

President: Sonia Wright
BONFIRE Editor: Sonia Wright
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Distribution: Sonia Wright & Linda Guyer

Change of Address: Katherine Oven

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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Another Successful Gifts for Teens Assembly Cheryl Markman, Gifts for Teens

Last month, Gifts for Teens completed another successful assembly session for the holiday giving season. In preparation, toiletries and school supplies were gathered together in cellophane bags; sweatshirts, tee-shirts and socks were rolled; knit scarves, caps and gloves were bundled; fast food and store gift cards were sorted and sealed in can't-be-missed red envelopes. On the assembly days, the early morning set-up crew came in and put up canopies and tables for the assembly line in the AAUW headquarters parking lot. Then the volunteers arrived and the fun began. Volunteers were mostly National Charity League (NCL) members and students from Pioneer, Bellarmine and Mitty High Schools. Teens helping other teens, less fortunate than themselves, kids they don't even know. Over 500 bags and totes were filled this year. The first Saturday was spent filling duffel bags for the boys; the second Saturday was devoted to filling sturdy tote bags for the girls. A third day was allotted to finishing the girls' totes and taking inventory, already gearing up for next year!

Thanks to all of you who donated items, gift cards and cash to make this another successful year for Gifts for Teens and a more joyful holiday season for the underprivileged youths in our community.



Empowering Women Since 1881

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