

AAUW advances gender equity for women and girls through research, education and advocacy.

President's Message

May 2025

It's been an excellent and rewarding year. Congratulations on the many things our branch has done, from awarding our high school scholarship to an outstanding student to our branch's 10 Star Award from the state. This newsletter is full of congratulations for hard-earned awards, recognitions, and achievements. Read all about them!



I'm looking forward to the coming months. I'm excited to welcome Kelley Reetzke to serve as Co-president with me. Please plan to attend our branch's gathering on June 7 at Café Verona. It's a celebration of our community and our branch's 85 years as an organization. We'll be honoring our Woman of Achievement and welcoming two prominent women in the community as our guest speakers. This is a great opportunity to invite friends and guests.

In April we started an important conversation with the other metro branches (Kansas City, Northland, and Parkville) on how we can better work together to accomplish our goals in AAUW. This summer we are going to build on this partnership and collaboration. Planning meetings are scheduled for June 10 and June 21. Please plan to attend one or both!

Thanks to each and every one of you for a successful year. It is an honor to serve as president for such a wonderful group of women!

Stronger together!

Karol

Upcoming Events:

~ **June 7 ~ Woman of Achievement Celebration and Gathering** ~ 3-5 pm, Café Verona, please see [flyer](#) for further details, as well as the next section of this newsletter.

~ **June 10 ~ AAUW Book Club ~ The Women** by Kristin Hannah. Led by Patty Chadwick. Home of Jane Campbell.

~ **June 10 ~ Board and Planning Meeting** ~ Independence and Kansas City AAUW members meet to plan upcoming joint programs. See details on page 3 of this newsletter.

~ **June 21 ~ Metro Meetup** ~ The next Metro Meetup will be on June 21, 2025. It will be hosted by the Parkville and Northland branches. Details will be announced later.

~ **June 30 ~ AAUW Dues Deadline to National** ~ Karen Johnson, Membership VP, sends this dues reminder.... **AAUW dues are \$98.00. They need to be sent in to National by June 30. Please send to Patt Braley before this deadline or bring to the June 7 meeting.** Patt Braley's address is 308 NW Murray, Apt. 214, Lee's Summit, MO 64081.

AAUW Independence Celebration and Gathering

Please plan to attend our Independence Branch end of the year gathering as we celebrate our community and our 85 years as an organization! We will be honoring our 2025 Woman of Achievement, Barbara Hale Koirtyohann. We are also excited to welcome Angie Judy and Cindy McClain as our guest speakers.

June 7, 2025
3:00 – 5:00 PM

Café Verona
206 W. Lexington Ave.
Independence, MO

\$25 per person
Hors d'oeuvres Buffet
(Cash bar available)

Make checks payable to
AAUW Independence

Mail to
Patt Braley
508 NW Murray Road, Apt. 214
Lee's Summit, MO

Planning Meeting

A board and planning meeting will be held on June 10, 2025, at 6:00 PM at the First United Methodist Church. EVERYONE is encouraged to attend. We will be planning programs and events for the upcoming year. Please bring your ideas. If you are unable to attend, email Karol with your ideas. We also will have representatives from the Kansas City branch to collaborate on planning for joint programs. As before, you are welcome to bring a snack or light meal for yourself since this is during the dinner hour. Karol will provide a dessert.

Congratulations to Patt Braley for her recognition from AAUW National as an Honorary Life Member for her 50 years of membership and service in AAUW!



High School Scholarship Recipient ~ Karol Palmer

Congratulations to Deryan Banks, recipient of our AAUW High School Scholarship in the amount of \$1,000. Deryan is a graduating senior at William Chrisman High School. She is planning on attending the University of Missouri at Columbia and majoring in Computer Engineering. Deryan was honored at our branch meeting on April 22 with a card and monetary gift. She told our members about her background, high school achievements, and future plans. Also in attendance with Deryan were her mother, father, and stepmother. Deryan was presented with her AAUW scholarship award at Chrisman's Senior Awards Ceremony by Karol Palmer on May 7. Other honors Deryan received that evening were the WCHS Electronics Department Scholarship, the Billie Wilson Memorial ISD Foundation Scholarship, the Presidential Award, and recognition in the Arts and Education and the STEM Academies.



Meet Our NCCWSL Scholarship Recipients

Meet Our NCCWSL Scholarship Recipients

Two students from Park University are the recipients of Kansas City Metro Interbranch Council Scholarships to attend the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL). They are Amelia Britting and Makayla Artis. Amelia's Major is Business Administration with a Minor in Psychology, and Makayla's Major is Political Science with Minors in Leadership and Legal Studies. The total for the two scholarships was \$2,107 which included registrations, airfares, and travel costs. These scholarships are provided with funds from all four of the metro area AAUW branches: Independence, Kansas City, Northland, and Parkville. Thank you to Deb McArthur from Parkville for her leadership in making these arrangements. NCCWSL will be held at the University of Maryland, College Park on May 28-30, 2025. This is a conference that unites college women from across the nation for a meaningful experience in leadership, development, networking, and inspiration. We are hopeful that these two young women will be able to report about their experiences at NCCWSL at a future KC IBC meeting. Congratulations to Amelia and Makayla!



Deb McArthur, Parkville Branch, and Makayla Artis



Amelia Britting and Makayla Artis

Financial Report ~ Patt Braley, Financial Officer

April and May statements will be combined into one Financial Report, to be presented at a later date.

STEM and Literature Link



Elementary students at Proctor Elementary are enjoying hands-on STEM activities in their library classes. After reading the book Whoosh, about the inventor of the Supersoaker, to her 3rd grade class, Ms. McHenry had the students design a prototype for a new toy.

To another group she read Ricky the Rock Who Couldn't Roll and had the students find a way to make a rock roll down a hill, not slide, using materials such as foil, playdoh, rubber bands, pipe cleaners, etc.

With her kindergarteners she read I Have a New Toy and had them design a fidget spinner top. First graders got to create an idea to go along with the book If I Built a School using Legos or other choice of building materials. Ms. McHenry has found a unique way to encourage both reading and STEM activities to excite her students about learning.



Public Policy ~ May 2025 ~ Kelley Reetzke, Chair

This May, AAUW is hosting a series of impactful webinars on strategy, advocacy, and equity. Join us to explore our new strategic plan, policy priorities, and ways you can help advance gender equity.

Strategic Plan Launch Event | Tuesday, May 13, 2025 | 7:00 p.m. ET

Join us to discuss AAUW's new strategic plan — our roadmap for the future.

We'll cover:

- Strategic objectives and key initiatives
- How we're meeting this moment
- What you can do to advance equity for women

[Register Now](#)

Our Voice, Our Future: AAUW's Public Policy Principles and How to Take Action | Tuesday, May 20, 2025 | 7:00 p.m. ET

With equity under attack, our new Public Policy Principles light the way forward.

This session will highlight:

- Our 2025–27 federal policy priorities
- Updates on threats to inclusive education
- How to mobilize and advocate effectively

[Register Now](#)

Public Policy ~ May 2025 (Continued)

Grassroots Feminism in Higher Ed: Building Coalitions for Women's Rights | Wednesday, May 21, 2025 | 2:00 p.m. ET

This timely panel explores the intersection of education, activism, and feminist leadership.

Topics include:

- Navigating challenges to women's rights under a new administration
- Higher education as a tool for systemic change
- Building coalitions through research and solidarity

[Register Now](#)

Inclusion & Equity Committee Town Hall | Wednesday, May 28, 2025 | 7:00 p.m. ET

Join us for a candid conversation on advancing inclusion and equity at AAUW.

You'll take part in:

- Honest dialogue around DEI challenges
- Inclusive branch practice insights
- A shared vision for equity and belonging

[Register Now](#)

Open Enrollment (aka "School Choice").

Open Enrollment would allow students to attend a Missouri public school of their choice, without residency restrictions. There are a number of considerations raised by Open Enrollment; allocation of tax dollars, ethics of educating all students, transportation concerns, and classroom size, to name a few.

The current versions of legislation supporting Open Enrollment in Missouri are [SB 215](#) and the main bill on Open Enrollment, [HB 711](#).*

Attached is an informative email to the employees of Blue Springs School District from Dr. Bob Jerome, Superintendent. The message outlines the damages of "Open Enrollment" to public schools.

* Update: HB711 (Open Enrollment bill) The Senate discussed HB 711 but didn't vote. It's never too late to contact your senators and representatives to express your concerns!

GOOD NEWS!



Public Policy ~ May 2025 (Continued)



UPDATE!

SJR 33 ~ Overturns the Reproductive Freedom Amendment that voters approved by majority vote on November 5, 2024

The bill was passed out of the Families, Seniors, and Health committee on March 3, 2025. It will come up for a state-wide vote in November, 2026.

The First 100 Days of the Trump Administration; Executive orders cannot override existing law

AAUW has created a fact sheet that breaks down policy shifts and explains their collective impact on gender equity, civil rights, and access to education.

<https://www.aauw-ca.org/documents/2025/05/aauw-first-100-days-fact-sheet.pdf/>



Reminder: AAUW Election 2025

Stay strong my sisters.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelley Reetzke

Pizza Ranch ~ Joyce Gillespie

Hello ladies.....Our Branch is scheduled for Monday, July 14, 5–8 pm to raise monies for our scholarship fund benefitting women in the greater Independence area...

Please consider including this important date in your busy summertime schedule...

Seven volunteers are always needed to work this three hour event...

Thanks for your time and attention...

Build the Branch.....Work the Ranch...

Sincerely, Joyce Gillespie, joyceannegillespie@yahoo.com



Congratulations to our AAUW Independence Branch on receiving 10 Stars on the Missouri Star Award and Branch Action Plan for 2024-2025.

Karol Palmer, President



AAUW Century Club ~ Lois Domsch

Congratulations to all DONORS to AAUW Century Club!

Branch Century Club

- Patt Braley*
- Jane Campbell*
- Lois Domsch**
- Joyce Gillespie
- Jan Keeler*
- Christine Nagel
- Gail Schartel*
- Sue Shineman**
- Ruby Smith*
- Judy Tucker*
- Judy Tyson*

In addition to being part of the Branch Century Club, these members were recognized at the State Conference:

- *Indicates AAUW-MO Century Club
- ** Indicates AAUW-MO Century Club Plus

78% of our branch members (21 members) donated a total of \$2051 to the National Fund, 2nd highest for Missouri!

What a fantastic showing of support from our branch for the important work of AAUW within our branch and our state! THANK YOU!

AAUW Independence Branch April 22, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Patt Braley, Jane Campbell, Patty Chadwick, Lisa Cox, Lois Domsch, Karen Johnson, Karol Palmer, Kelley Reetzke, Gail Metcalf Schartel, Sue Shineman, Judy Tyson, Jan Keeler, Kathy Vest

Guests: Deryan Banks, Dorian Banks, Bridget Banks, Amber Downey

Karol Palmer called the meeting to order at seven o'clock and welcomed all. She introduced the AAUW Scholarship Award winner, Deryan Banks and asked her to introduce her guests and tell the group about her background, high school achievements and future plans. Deryan introduced her mother, Amber Downey, her father Dorian Banks, and stepmother, Bridget Banks. She noted that she is a senior at William Chrisman High School, plays Varsity Basketball and Varsity Soccer, was a member of the National Honor Society and had received the McCoy Award. The McCoy Award is named after William McCoy, the first mayor of Independence and is given to students who have excelled during their first four semesters of high school. She has volunteered in Relay for Life and works part time to earn money for college. Her plan is to major in Computer Engineering with hopes to develop items to assist people in their daily lives. She will attend the University of Missouri at Columbia in the fall. She will be recognized with the AAUW scholarship on May 7th at Chrisman's awards ceremony.

After being presented with a gift from the Branch members, Deryan and family left and the Branch business meeting ensued.

CENTURY CLUB RECOGNITIONS: Lois Domsch reported on the Branch members who achieved Century Club status for the year. Christina Nagel and Joyce Gillespie attained Branch level; Jan Keeler, Patt Braley, Judy Tyson, Judy Tucker, Jane Campbell and Gail Metcalf Schartel attained both Branch and State Level; Sue Shineman and Lois Domsch achieved Branch and State Plus level Century Awards. Each member present received a certificate from Lois. Lois noted that 74% (21) of Independence Branch members contributed to the funds.

Karol noted that she received word that Patt Braley was recognized as a Life Member by National in recognition of her 50 years in AAUW.

FINANCES: Patt Braley reported that as the fiscal year draws to a close, members with receipts for expenses needed to submit them to her for reimbursement. She also noted that dues for the coming year were \$98 and could be paid on-line or by giving her a check.

NCCWSL: Karol said that due to not having awarded a Re-entry Scholarship, that the Interbranch Council had agreed to support a student to attend the NCCWSL (National Conference for College Women Student Leaders) conference to be held at the University of Maryland, College Park at the end of May. She noted, too, that NASPA (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators) would be leading the conference. A motion (Chadwick/Braley) to give \$400 to support a student attending this conference was approved unanimously.

MISSOURI STATE MEETING: Members are encouraged to attend the Missouri State Meeting via Zoom on May 3, 2025 from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Karol invited those who would like to watch as a group to meet at her home between 8:30 and 9:00 that morning. Sue Shineman said the speakers were excellent. Dr. Amber Bengé will speak on DEI and education and Katrina Sun Breese would discuss national membership and fundraising.

OFFICER ELECTIONS: Karol reported that a quorum of members voted to elect Kelley Reetzke and Karol Palmer as co-presidents and Gail Metcalf Schartel as Recording Secretary via e-mail. She noted the Program Coordinators: Lois Domsch, Karol Palmer, Sue Raymond, and Sue Shineman) ask that all members make suggestions for programs, events and outings. A board meeting scheduled for June 10 at 6 p.m. was one everyone should attend to discuss program ideas.

AAUW Independence Branch April 22, 2025 Meeting Minutes (Continued)

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY: Karol reported that she and Gail had been at Blue River Community College to promote pay equity in March. Gail said that they would be at Blue River on April 23rd to share information about Denim Day and Sexual Assault Awareness Day with a display and another quiz game about issues related to the topic from 10:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

FUNDRAISER: It was reported that the March 24th Pizza Ranch fundraiser had been quieter than in the past but a total of \$352.89 had been raised through tips (\$240.92) and a percentage of sales (\$111.97). Joyce Davenport will share information on the next date for the fundraiser. It was suggested that a handout be developed to distribute to people prior to the fundraising date to encourage them to dine at Pizza Ranch to support AAUW.

INTERBRANCH MEETING: Karol thanked those who attended the April 5th meeting of the Independence, Kansas City, Northland and Parkville branches. She said a good discussion had occurred and it was agreed the four branches would work to offer group programming. The Parkville and Northland branches will plan Metro sessions for October and April; the Independence and Kansas City will plan Metro sessions for November and March. In September, each branch will plan their own programs; in December a Metro Christmas project and gathering will be held; in January and February, Pathway Programs from the state with Watch Parties are planned. The idea is for the jointly planned meetings will be open to all four branches to attend. In April other events are planned: Waggy Awards in Kansas City and High School Scholarship Awards in Independence. All branches will participate in the State Meeting held in Columbia in May and a 'New Year Celebration' will be held in July. As this is a Parkville and Northland tradition, they will take the lead in planning it. The next Metro planning meeting is set for June 21, 2025, from 10 a.m. to noon and will be hosted by the Parkville and Northland branches. Times, places, and topics are to be determined for all described above.

WOMAN OF ACHIEVEMENT: On June 7, 2025, from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. members are encouraged to attend a celebration of our Woman of Achievement at Café Verona. Cost is \$25 per person for 'heavy' Hors d'Oeuvres. There was discussion of who to invite to the event with several suggestions made.

NATIONAL AAUW ELECTIONS: Sue Shineman reminded members to vote in the National AAUW election. Each member should have received an e-mail with instructions. All votes must be cast by 4:00 p.m. CST on May 13.

NEWSLETTER: Lisa Cox requested that items for the newsletter be submitted by May 10th.

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE DAY OF THE CHILD: The Day of the Child event has been rescheduled for September 6, 2025 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. More information will be forthcoming.

MEMBERSHIP: Karen Johnson suggested that the Branch pursue putting information in the publication of community classes published and distributed by the Independence School District. She will follow up on this.

HOSPITALITY: Jane thanked Lisa Cox and Karen Johnson for providing refreshments for the evening and for those who brought food for the Metro meeting on April 5th.

DOOR PRIZE: Karol Palmer won the door prize. Karen told everyone to take home purple pansy plants she had provided.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Metcalf Schartel