

News from the Northwest

March/April, 2023



Newsletter of the Northwest Suburban Branch

Our Mission: To advance gender equity for women and girls

through research, education, and advocacy.

Our Vision: Equity for all.

March is here – soon ‘twill be spring.

Here’s news of all that it will bring!

We know that winter is not quite over, as the very cool nights and mornings tell us, but we hope that the bleak days will soon be past and we can put away the heavy jackets. As we look ahead, we want to be sure that you have included some very important dates in your calendars – activities that you certainly don’t want to miss.

Begin with two March programs:

Thursday, March 23, 7:30 p.m., Pay Equity & Workplace Fairness: How Are We Doing? Sponsored by the Jane Addams Branch via Zoom, the program will answer the question of how we are doing on pay equity. Panelists will share their experience in the workplace, how they overcame challenges, and share resources that women can use to overcome workplace inequity. In conclusion, we’ll focus on what we need to do next.

Advance registration required:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZckd-uorT4sH9ZCkF6obXHRLtVHNKLfilyU>

Saturday, Mar. 25, 10:30 a.m., Madame Curie: Scientist, Nobel Prize Winner. Join storyteller Lynn Rymarz for a dramatic portrayal of Marie Curie, co-sponsored by the Des Plaines Public Library and AAUW Northwest Suburban Branch. Follow her life’s journey from her childhood in Poland where she showed an early curiosity in science, to her years as a determined student studying in Paris. It leads to her Paris laboratory where she tried and failed at countless experiments before making her scientific breakthrough. She earned the honor of becoming the first woman to win a Nobel Prize. Be sure to register: <https://desplaines.libnet.info/event/7847123>

In Memoriam

***Northwest Suburban Branch lost a longtime, true friend
with the death of Vaiju Dunung on February 19th, 2023.***

***Vaiju was a faithful member and participant in the activities of our branch until
failing health would no longer allow it.***

Memorial information is found elsewhere in this newsletter.

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

In March, some folks think about marching, like in a St. Patrick's Day Parade. Others might think about marching to the polls to elect new municipal officials and school or park board members. (Early voting has started already.) Maybe you are ready to go outside and walk for some exercise since March days are nicer than those wintry days. It certainly is a time to be active!

In February, branch members met with League of Women Voters to form an activism group to share concerns about school board members and prepare for the upcoming election. We shared our AAUW Values (see values below) with the coalition group. The League of Women Voters of Park Ridge is surveying their local candidates and sponsoring Candidate Forums. See details later in the newsletter about LWV Candidate Forums. Judy Fregetto and Karen Heckman attended school board meetings in Des Plaines to observe board members and gather firsthand impressions. We will survey Des Plaines school board candidates and publish the responses on our branch website. For the candidates' answers to the LWV survey, go to Vote411.org

We have two interesting March programs coming up - one March 23, an evening online panel presentation on Pay Equity and another on March 25, a Saturday morning program in person at the Des Plaines library on a woman of historic achievement, Madame Curie. Marie Curie has a special connection to AAUW in that we supported her research by raising funds to purchase radium.

Space is limited for attendance at the library due to health concerns, so register early! I will be at the library to greet people since we are co-sponsors of the program. Perhaps you know someone who is a prospective AAUW member - invite them to join you for this Women's History program! To register:

<https://desplaines.libnet.info/event/7847123>

Hope to see you in March,

Elaine

IL AAUW SCHOOL BOARD ACTIVISM GOAL

Share AAUW Values as they relate to public schools and support school boards and library boards to implement these values.

AAUW VALUES:

We support healthy, medically correct and age-appropriate sex education and we support school districts teaching sexual health and education in their curricula. We support implementation of the *Keeping Youth Safe and Healthy Act* in Illinois.

We encourage all children to learn tools and strategies to show respect and care for others and themselves. This is regardless of the students' or their families' sexual orientation or family composition. We support Social and Emotional Learning Curriculum.

We support libraries which represent the diverse viewpoints and peoples in our society. We oppose book bans, book check-out monitoring, and segregation of select titles into certain parts of libraries. We ask that all schools will have certified school librarians at each location and also support adding librarians to the school code, as teachers are.

We support a curriculum which helps children of all races, ethnicities, and backgrounds to learn truthful and accurate U.S. and World history, humanities, and literature.

We support a clear and absolute separation of church and state in public schools. There must be no bias toward or against any religions in public schools.

MORE PROGRAM INFORMATION

THURSDAY, MARCH 23 7:30 p.m., Pay Equity & Workplace Fairness: How Are We Doing? Zoom program sponsored by the Jane Addams branch. These panelists will share their experience in the workplace, how they overcame challenges, and share resources that women can use to prepare for workplace inequity. In conclusion, we'll focus on what we need to do next.

Elizabeth Leiba, author of *"I'm Not Yelling: A Black Woman's Guide to Navigating the Workplace"*, Professor of American Literature, Director of Instructional Design and Innovation. Published a Social Justice Advocate Op-Ed piece with CNN as well as a featured interview in the New York Times in 2020. Leiba created Black Power Moves, her podcast.

Lizzy Diaz-Ortiz, Vice President, Governance & Inclusion for BMO Harris Bank N.A. in Chicago, subject matter expert for affirmative action, equal employment opportunity, and federal civil rights laws. She is also past national president of the law student division of the Hispanic National Bar Association.

Toni L. Dupree is a retired military member of the US. Navy. She retired with 21 years of Honorable Service. She is employed at the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency in St. Louis, MO, as Security Specialist. She has been a federal employee and a federal contractor. She is Regional Manager of Federal Employed Women.

Corinne Kodama, Senior Research Analyst, Women Employed. She is a former Research Specialist for the Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISI) project and Visiting Lecturer at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Dr. Kodama was the founding Associate Director of UIC's Asian American Resource and Cultural Center.

Advance registration required:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZckduorT4sH9ZCkF6obXHRLtVHNKLfilyU>

Any questions, contact Kate Skegg by email aauwjaneaddams@gmail.com

SATURDAY, MARCH 25 10:30 a.m., Madame Curie: Scientist, Nobel Prize Winner

Register now! Program co-sponsored by the **Des Plaines Public Library** and **AAUW Northwest Suburban** branch. Join dramatist Lynn Rymarz for a portrayal of Marie Curie. [More info on our webpage.](#)

Be sure to register as space is limited. <https://desplaines.libnet.info/event/7847123>

THURSDAY, APRIL 20 7:00 p.m., Raising Awareness of Diversity and Inclusion. Deanie Brown, presenter, is an attorney and the Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer for the Illinois Supreme Court in Springfield. She has been an associate chancellor, chief of staff, and director of HR and internal relations at universities in Illinois, California, and New Orleans, and serves on several boards supporting equity, education, the community, and the arts. A member of AAUW Springfield, Deanie was honored as the 2022 AAUW Agent of Change at the AAUW Illinois State Conference. In addition to speaking about raising awareness, Deanie will explore the concept of "allyship": how to become an ally and developing the skills for responding to a situation that requires a "Stand Up, Speak Out" response. Deanie will also highlight the harms that persist when we don't prioritize diversity, equity, inclusion, and opportunity. Please plan to participate in this important program, co-sponsored by the Downers Grove Area AAUW, Elmhurst Area AAUW, Naperville Area AAUW, and Jane Addams AAUW Statewide Branch. Register to receive the program Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwode6rqTlqGNTNzT1f6948EAez9XEEKzjW>

MAY 5-6, IL AAUW Convention: Be a Leader, East Peoria Embassy Suites. Reserve a room now at convention rate

May 16 or 20, Year in Review, Program planning and Annual Meeting. **We need your input for this meeting, our annual branch business meeting. Would you prefer an evening Zoom or a Saturday face-to-face lunch? Please contact Elaine Fisher with your opinion (elainefisher128@gmail.com).**

SUNDAY, JUNE 11, 2:00 p.m., Des Plaines History Center, Women in Des Plaines History (Tentative)

LOCAL ELECTIONS MATTER!

Our communities will be holding local elections in April. Be sure that you know your candidates and VOTE. Of special importance are school board elections, as we know some of these will be quite contentious.

Mt. Prospect Dist. 57: A forum has already been held by the LWV; the recorded forum can be found on YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/@lwv-ah-mp-bg839>

Des Plaines Dist. 62: Our branch sent questionnaires to the candidates. Responses were received from three candidates; these are posted on our website: <https://nwsuburban-il.aauw.net/>

Park Ridge Dist. 64: Forums have already been held by the LWV for candidates vying for three four-year terms. The LWV will hold a Meet-and-Greet for *all* local election candidates on Saturday, March 18, 10:00 a.m. until noon, at the Park Ridge Public Library.

Results of the LWV survey of all candidates can be found online at vote411.org

AAUW PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES

Continuing the Fight for Pay Equity

We've long known that on average, women who work full-time take home less than men – currently about 84 cents on the dollar – and that women of color are often paid far less. When we expand how this is calculated to include a broader cross-section of women, including those who work part time or seasonally, we represent a more accurate picture of how pay inequality impacts diverse communities: the pay gap widens even further to 77 cents. This month, take a stand for pay equity:

1. **Contact your members of Congress:** The Paycheck Fairness Act was reintroduced! This crucial bill will address the historic inequities that perpetuate the gender pay gap.
2. **Join us on social media: March 14 is Equal Pay Day!** Build power around critical issues impacting the economic security of women, including the Paycheck Fairness Act, raising the minimum wage, expanding paid leave policies and more. (Check out the full **2023 Equal Pay Day Calendar** for more information.)
3. Urge your friends and family to act now: This step is critical-- we must build momentum to get this bill across the finish line.

Women cannot wait for equality any longer. Urge Congress to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act!

· Two paid leave bills are expected to be introduced in Congress in late March: the **Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act** and the **Healthy Families Act**. The FAMILY Act would create a national self-funding family and medical insurance leave program, and Healthy Families would provide full-time employees up to seven days of paid, job-protected sick days a year—critical supports for workers' lives and livelihoods.

· The **Women's Health Protection Act**—the bill intended to finally codify protections for people seeking and medical professionals providing abortion care— is expected to be introduced in the House and Senate in early March. Act now: tell your members of Congress that every person should have the ability to make their own informed decisions regarding their reproductive life!

· Sign up as a **Two-Minute Activist** today and keep up to date on our policy work with our **letters, comments, testimony and legal briefs** to learn more about AAUW's positions and advocacy efforts.

IN MEMORY OF VAIJU DUNUNG

Vaiju was a beloved mother, grandmother, sister, aunt, cousin, and friend. A celebration of her life will be held on Saturday, April 15, 2023, at 11:00 a.m. at Oehler Funeral Home, 2099 Miner Street, Des Plaines IL 60016. Her family would be so pleased if those who knew Vaiju would attend. Memorial contributions to her favorite causes would be appreciated. (Karen Heckmann can give you information, if you wish.) Northwest Suburban Branch has made a contribution to AAUW in her memory.