

East bayfront issues are topic of February 10 branch meeting

Does the history of Erie's Eastside Bayfront area interest you?

Erie Branch will be holding its February meeting at the Church of the Nativity, the Russian Old Rite Orthodox Church, at 247 East Front St. We will gather in the church's Community Center on Saturday, Feb. 10, at 10 a.m.

At that time Parish Rector Archpriest Pimen Simon will guide our group on a 45-minute tour of the iconic church that has graced Erie's bayfront since 1919.

After the tour, Jeremy Bloeser, Executive Director of Bayfront East Side Taskforce (BEST) will complete our program by describing that organization's efforts towards maintaining and improving one of Erie's oldest and most historic neighborhoods.

B.E.S.T. assists with owner-occupied home construction, home renovations, and blight removal. It is also involved with neighborhood beautification including increasing community desirability and livability through new signage, gateway gardens, streetscaping, care for parks, and other community building events.

The group also partners with the East Bayfront Neighborhood Watch group, law enforcement, and provides summer employment opportunities.

Collaboration with grant and financing organizations further bolsters meaningful financial partnerships, and investment in East Erie's future.

Understanding the concerns of residents, businesses, politicians, landlords, developers and others to spur a collective conversation, BEST serves as the point of contact on neighborhood issues with local government, agencies and departments to ensure residents are well heard.

Parking is plentiful and easy to access. Looking forward to seeing you all on Feb. 10. Need a ride? Call a friend. Have a ride? Call a friend.



President's Message

I wish everyone a wonderful 2024!

First and foremost, I want to thank AAUW Erie Branch members for your generosity! Since September, so many of you have supported students at Harding School by donating school supplies, warm clothing and gifts to fill Christmas Bags for each student. Members have also volunteered their time to assist with school events.

AAUW members continue to attend monthly Global Friends Meetings at Edie Cultu's home. At these meetings we meet women who have settled in Erie and learn about their native countries. In addition, we continue to explore opportunities to assist refugee families as they transition to a new and unfamiliar environment.



Loretta Seigley

Our outreach efforts have a positive impact on Erie residents.

Beyond responding to local needs, many members have also generously contributed to the AAUW Legal Aid Fund either individually or at our Holiday Luncheon. This fund directly supports the AAUW Mission to advocate for gender equity.

Exciting events continue in 2024! Programs at monthly meetings in February, March and April focus on Erie History, on how the Bay-front Eastside Task Force works to improve our community and on services available through The Crime Victim Center to assist women who have been victims of crime. Remember that non-member friends, family members and co-workers are invited to attend monthly meetings as guests. This is a great way to grow our membership!

One of AAUW Erie Branch's annual efforts to support women's education is the awarding of scholarships. The Scholarship Committee will be hard at work during the upcoming months. In 2023, AAUW awarded scholarships to both non-traditional female students and to Refugee and Immigrant female students. Once again, it will be very exciting to congratulate Erie women who are scholarship recipients at our May, 2024 Annual Meeting and Banquet.

We have much to look forward to in 2024.
Loretta

Open membership comment period under way

This Spring, the AAUW Membership will vote on proposed amendments to AAUW by-laws.

One proposed change is Open Membership, meaning that the current education requirement will be removed from membership requirements.

Members received emails asking for comments on this issue. If you have not already done so, please review and comment on the proposal. Comments can be submitted until Friday, Jan. 26, at 5 p.m.

AAUW National will present a webinar regarding this issue, titled "Inclusion and Equity," on Jan. 31 at 7 p.m. Watch for an email invitation to register.



Members enjoyed the January Program, Yoga for Seniors. Our speaker, Solveig Santillano, Associate Professor of Dance at Mercyhurst University, told us a little about her own yoga journey, described the benefits of yoga for aging bodies, and demonstrated simple exercises focusing on good alignment to cultivate joint stability, muscular strength for enhanced mobility, and balance.

Public Policy Highlights

Act: Be an informed voter

This year promises to be eventful, with many of our key policy issues impacting gender equity being decided in Congress, in statehouses, and at the ballot box. Start this year off right by making your own commitment to be a well-informed and engaged activist and voter. Here are three ways to do it:

1. Invite three friends to become a Two-Minute Activist! Share this message to help AAUW build momentum for positive change in 2024.
2. Engage on the state level! Throughout the year, states and branches engage on key AAUW issues at play in their state legislatures. Elected officials work for you, the voters.
3. Make sure you are ready for elections this year, including upcoming state primaries and caucuses. Confirm your voter registration to ensure its accuracy.

Learn: Occupational Segregation Continues

New data released in December from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2022 American Community Study (ACS) illustrates two distressing trends: 1) Higher education is not enough to solve the gender pay gap and 2) occupations dominated by men usually pay better than female-dominated fields, even when those jobs require the same level of education and skill. This new data is consistent with previous AAUW research documenting occupational segregation and its impact on women of color.

Despite women's educational gains over the past several decades, men with a bachelor's degree or higher continue to earn more than women with the same education in all fields. For example, in electrical engineering, women earn 85 percent of what men were paid (\$123,800 vs. \$105,200).

Additionally, the data demonstrates that degrees with a higher share (at least 60%) of women had relatively lower earnings than those with higher share of men. In 2022, women held 90 percent of elementary education degrees and were still paid 84 percent of what men were paid, working in the same field with the same education (\$54,070 vs. \$64,380).

AAUW is addressing many of the causes of these inequities, including fighting to expand paid leave, access to affordable childcare, and elder care. In addition, AAUW works directly to end occupational segregation through programs like STEMed for Girls, our free online program to inform and inspire girls in grades 9-12 who are interested in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields.

Our grants and fellowships, including career development grants and selected professions fellowships, are also used, in part, to reduce the impact of caregiving responsibilities for women seeking degrees and make higher education and career opportunities more accessible to women.

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Engage: Share the important work we're doing

December 13 marked the 100th anniversary of the Equal Rights Amendment's (ERA) first introduction in the U.S. House of Representatives. As a founding partner of the ERA Coalition's National Strategy Task Force, AAUW marched alongside the ERA Coalition and partners in Washington, DC, to call on Congress to affirm the ERA and for President Biden to instruct the Archivist to publish the ERA as the 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Watch the Task Force's video featuring AAUW CEO Gloria L. Blackwell.

Congress continued funding of federal programs through early 2024 but the fiscal year 2024 appropriations process is still underway. AAUW continues to urge Congress to reject a year-long continuing resolution, which would result in catastrophic cuts to federal programs that serve the public and strengthen our economy, and to finish the appropriations process through a bipartisan approach.

January 28 marks the 15th anniversary of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. Learn more about Lilly's fight and our continued work on the Paycheck Fairness Act. Look for the 2024 Equal Pay Days (which highlight the impact of ongoing pay inequities) dates to be released in early January.

Federal pay data collection is a critical tool for identifying pay discrimination and working to close pervasive gender and racial pay gaps in the United States. AAUW joined coalition partners in urging the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to swiftly reinstate EEO-1 pay data collection, which requires employers to report employee pay information disaggregated by sex and race.

When Congress temporarily expanded the Child Tax Credit (CTC) through December 2021 to include millions of families previously ineligible because the parents made too little, child poverty in the U.S. was reduced by almost half. Today, 19 million children are again excluded from the full benefit. AAUW joined over 350 organizations in urging Congress to prioritize expanding the CTC to strengthen families' economic security and assist with basic needs like housing, groceries, and care.

Public Funds Public Schools, a national campaign founded by the Southern Poverty Law Center, Education Law Center, and Munger, Tolles & Olson LLP has released an interactive bill tracking tool to monitor voucher and related legislation across 50 states and in Congress. Users are able to conduct searches by state, year, voucher type, eligibility criteria, and more. Learn more about AAUW's position on school vouchers.

For decades, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) has published crucial studies that provide comprehensive insights about how students pay for college, progress through college to degree completion, and how they experience employment and loan

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Public Policy Highlights

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repayment after graduation. AAUW has previously used this data to illustrate the disproportionate impact of debt-financed higher education on women. In December, AAUW joined the Institute for Higher Education Policy and nearly 50 other organizations in a letter to ED urging the continuation of these vitally important postsecondary sample studies, including the Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study (B&B). At a time when policy-makers want more information about the return on investment for postsecondary education, we need to strengthen, not eliminate, tools that answer critical questions about graduates' experiences.

In December 2023, ED released the new streamlined 2024-25 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form, which will help 1.5 million more students be eligible to receive the maximum Pell Grant amount. However, experts have raised concerns about how the delayed timing for FAFSA could impact low-income students' college enrollment, since students may not have financial aid decisions prior to schools' acceptance deadlines.

U.S. Dept. of Education releases school equity data

Recently, the U.S. Department of Education released the Civil Rights Data Collection which provides key data and analysis pertaining to educational equity.

The latest findings show that Black students are more likely to attend schools staffed with law enforcement, but without counselors, social workers, nurses, or school psychologists. Law enforcement in schools doesn't lead to safer schools, it leads to students with disabilities and students of color being disproportionately criminalized.

Look at the numbers: Black girls make up 16% of the female student population but were 39% of girls arrested in school; Native American girls had a school arrest rate 3.5 times that of White girls; Students with disabilities were arrested at a rate 2.9 times that of students without disabilities. The Counseling Not Criminalization in Schools Act establishes a \$5 billion grant program to invest in school districts that remove law enforcement so that schools can provide adequately trained personnel and trauma informed services to improve the learning environment.

In memoriam

Honorary Life member Jo Anne Sandbower Enterline passed away on Jan. 8.

JoAnne was preceded in death by her husband of 59 years, Dr. Robert H. Enterline, and is survived by her four children, Randall H. Enterline (Alex) of Neshanic, NJ, Bradley K. Enterline (Lauri) of Erie, Dr. Barry A. Enterline (Lisa) of Rochester, NY, and Sandra E. Enterline (David Walker) of San Francisco, CA She also leaves ten grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren.

Branch Study Groups

Book Discussion

We are reading "There is Nothing for you Here" by Fiona Hill. Please note our meeting date has been changed from Feb. 1 to Feb. 8.

Global Friends

Global Friends will meet Monday, Feb. 26, at 7 p.m. The location has yet to be determined.
Program: TBD

Gourmet

Gourmet will meet at Osaki Japanese Sushi and Steakhouse, 970 Millcreek Mall Blvd., at 5 p.m. Friday, Feb. 23. Please call or text Nickie Azicri at 814-835-3780 or email speedyzeek8@gmail.com to make your reservation.

Politalk

Politalk will meet on Feb. 15 at 2 p.m. at Asuman's home.

February 2024

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
	5 Board mtg. 6:30 p.m. Zoom	6	7	8 Book 1 p.m. Millcreek Branch	9	10 Branch meet- ing 10 a.m. Church of Na- tivity
	12	13	14	15 Politalk 2 p.m. at Asuman's	16	17
	19	20	21	22	23 Gourmet 5 p.m. Osaki	24
	26 Global Friends Time, location TBD	27	28	29		



Erie Branch ♦ Founded in 1902

P.O. Box 9264 Erie PA 16505

AAUW's Mission

AAUW advances equity for women and girls through education, philanthropy, and research. By joining AAUW you belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women have a fair chance. In principle and in practice AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in the organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability or class.

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