

ERIE PRESSIBLE September 2025



Dr. Arpan Yagnik

We will be hosting Dr. Arpan Yagnik for the **first event of our 2025-2026 program year**. Dr. Yagnik is a renowned expert and coach of Fear and Creativity.

He trains high-ranking generals and officers of the National Defense Forces and senior commandants of special forces in Defeating Fear and Creative Leadership. He was a Commissioner on the Pennsylvania Governor's Advisory Commission and has consulted senior leadership and management of several large corporate houses on Fear, Creativity, and Intergenerational Harmony.

Dr. Yagnik is the author of multiple books. His books are on Defeating Fear, Managing Instability, Enhancing Creativity, and Improving Intergenerational Harmony. He is a columnist, TEDx Speaker, and holds a faculty position at Penn State Erie. He was the Convenor and Chairperson of Initiatives of Change's (IofC) Global Youth Team, which is an advocacy body for youth from 60 countries.

The focus of his talk — Overcoming Fear

Fear is the biggest enemy of success, happiness, and creativity. Defeating fear is the key to unlocking happiness and success. The goal of this program is to take the first step to understanding fear and defeating it.

People love freedom and love to be free. Yet, as long as an individual is living under the influence of fear, they are not really free, argues Dr. Arpan Yagnik, associate professor of Advertising, Media, and Communications at Penn State Behrend.

Fear, both as an inhibitor and a motivator, controls and influences our thoughts, actions, and decisions in ways that we may not even be aware of. What is the relationship between fear and knowledge? How can we defeat our fears? What needs to change in a human being to be able to defeat fear solely with the purpose of not letting fear overwhelm the thoughts, actions, and decisions of an individual, corporate team, or government department? Dr. Yagnik will unpack all this and more. Thank you to Soledad Traverso for organizing this event!

Attend: Monday, September 8th at 6:30 p.m. at the Pavillion at Asbury Woods.

Save the date

Bring a guest or two to our public meeting in October! Share AAUW with your friends! Monday, October 13 at 7 p.m. Lake Erie Underwater Archaeology — Pulling Back the Blue Curtain to Reveal History.

President's Message

Friends,

It is with heartfelt enthusiasm that I welcome you to the 2025 - 2026 year — a year brimming with exceptional programming and countless opportunities to make meaningful connections and lasting impact.

We continue to navigate challenging times as our nation grapples with complex issues regarding the economy and education, along with social issues like immigration and political polarization. Staying hopeful amid constant waves of difficult news can certainly feel overwhelming. And yet, I've found that focusing on simple, intentional acts of support — however small — can be a powerful antidote. Every thoughtful gesture has the potential to uplift, strengthen, and move us toward a better tomorrow.

Recently, I had the privilege of attending the AAUW Pennsylvania Summer Retreat in State College. It was both inspiring and energizing to meet passionate members from branches across the state and to hear the incredible work they're doing in their communities. Their openness, creativity, and shared commitment to equity left me deeply motivated —and even more excited about what's possible for our Erie branch this year.



Sharmin Khundker

We're gearing up for an exciting year at the Erie branch! Our dedicated program committee has been hard at work curating a lineup of thoughtful, educational, and exciting programs for the 2025-2026 year. I invite you to join us at our branch programs and take full advantage of all that your membership offers — from compelling programs to all our study groups and activities that reflect a wide range of interests and fundraising opportunities. Let's make this a year of connection, purpose, and lasting impact. I look forward to seeing you all at the September meeting.

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Food and Friends

Wine Meets Chocolate

Food and Friends presents a delightful evening as we team up with Courtyard Winery who will begin the fun with a special "wine and chocolate pairing experience". Wine trivia with unique prizes will dot the presentation which will be followed by a delicious dinner.

You and your guest are invited to an evening of fun, food, and great conversation — plus plenty of non-alcoholic options as well: perfect for sharing with friends old and new.

Date: Friday, October 3 at 5:30 pm

Place: 3226 Rustic Lane (Barb Hutzelman's House)

Cost: \$25 per person which includes the winery fee and dinner.

Reserve your place by texting or emailing Barb Hutzelman at 814-881-7339 or barbhutz@yahoo.com

Book Club

The summertime of reading among the surf and sand is ending soon. We will soon move to reading in the fall with falling leaves and crackling fireplaces. No matter the season, reading can be more fun if you share it with your friends! Our AAUW **2025-2026 book club season starts in just a few weeks, on September 4, 2025.**

There are no prerequisites to joining, just a love of reading. Our books this year include "All The Colors of The Dark", "Frozen River", "The Love of My Life," and "Animal Farm", to name a few.

We will meet on the first Thursday of every month at Springhill room 316, 1-2:30pm.

September 4, 1pm, our first meeting date, is fast approaching, so everyone start reading! If you have any questions, contact Cindy Belczyk 814-873-5401.



Thank you for your generosity towards our scholarship fund for ERIE GIVES day!

This spring our branch awarded five scholarships totaling \$11,000 dollars.

Erie Gives affords us the opportunity to add to our Adella B. Woods Scholarship Fund, to which all donations are allocated. The unofficial total for this year is \$5,010. We will share the official total once it is announced. **A big thank you to all who gave!**

Branch Study Groups

The **Study Group program** provides opportunities for members to connect with like-minded people on various issues. Each Study Group is managed by a Study Group chair. As an AAUW Erie member, you may attend any Study Group event just by letting the chair of that group know that you will be attending. There will be an opportunity to sign up for Study Groups at the September 8th Branch meeting and your name will be on the contact list for the group.

Meeting times and places are listed in the AAUW Erie Yearbook, although sometimes changes become necessary in which case you will find updates in the monthly Pressible newsletters. Also, new groups can be organized by contacting the Study Group Coordinator.

At this time we have six study groups:

The **AAUW Book Club** meets the **first Thursday of every month, from 1-2:30 PM** at SpringHill, 2323 Edinboro Road, room 316. The current Book Club members choose the books to read and discuss. The list includes fiction, non-fiction, historical fiction, political science, mystery, thriller, fantasy, and of course romance! New members are welcome and everyone is invited to join the first session on Thursday September 4th. The first book is *All The Colors of The Dark*, by Chris Whitaker. Cindy Belczyk is the coordinator for the group (814-873-5401) (BelczykCA@gmail.com).

Global Friends is an outreach program to immigrant women in our community. It is open to both AAUW members and immigrant women. The intent is to understand and respect other cultures. Global Friends **usually meets the Fourth/Last Monday of the month at 7PM** and is chaired by Edie Cultu (814-397-2975). The **September meeting will be September 29th**, the 5th Monday of the month at Edie's home 638 Vermont Avenue. (edie_cultu@yahoo.com)

Gourmet is an opportunity to experience the various menus of our local restaurants while dining with friends. Members take turns contacting the restaurant and taking the reservations. Gourmet **usually meets the 3rd Friday of the month at 6 PM**. Seasons and events may change the date and times of the meetings which will be noted in the Pressible.

The **September event will be Thursday the 26th at 5:30 pm at Bistro 26**, 3557 W. 26th Street. If you'd like to come, contact Sarah Larson at (585-403-1366) (sarahellenlarson@gmail.com). The Gourmet Study Group chair is Candy Brown (814-873-0486) (candycbrown1@gmail.com)

Politalk is an unstructured discussion about domestic and international political events which leads to brainstorming about ways of coping with such events. Politalk **meets the 3rd Thursday of the month from 1-3 PM** at chair Asuman Baskan's house 3838 State Street. (814-282-8277) (irrepressibleturk@gmail.com)

Food and Friends is a development committee, who plan engaging activities designed to bring everyone together at events that involve good food, exploring new experiences, shared laughter, and the joy of friendship through creative gatherings. Plans this year involve a Wine Pairing dinner, a murder mystery, the Art of the Loom, community service, and many more. Everyone is invited to come and enjoy all or any of the activities. Details will be published monthly in the Pressible. Food and Friends is chaired by Anne Marie Kumhera (440-670-5899) (annemarieku@gmail.com).

Computer Knowledge is a developing Study Group to help our members understand and become comfortable using computers, tablets and digital devices both productively and safely. Instructors, locations and times are still being developed. Check the Pressible newsletters for updates. Computer Knowledge is chaired by Loretto Bellicini (814-449-8839) (loretto.bellicini1@gmail.com).

Public Policy

The statement “No matter where you stand on the partisan side of issues, AAUW priorities are facing unprecedented attacks” made by Sandra Miller, AAUW Pennsylvania Public Policy Chair, in the May Keystoner rang true to me. Recently, Loretta Seigley, viewed a webinar titled “Our Victory, Our Voice: AAUW’s Public Policy Principles and How to Take Action” on the AAUW National website. This webinar linked the AAUW Public Policy Principles with the Mission, Value Promise and Diversity statements. Issues raised in the webinar helped me to identify actions that can be taken by all members to address priorities vitally important to AAUW in non-partisan ways.

Currently, the areas of Education, Economic Security, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Social Justice and Civil Rights are all facing unprecedented attacks from multiple sources. Funding cuts, personnel cuts and outright elimination of services are just a few ways these issues are targeted. The webinar pointed out how AAUW members can take action in non-partisan ways to protect our priorities. Considerations include the importance of avoiding personal attacks and partisan language as well as the importance of endorsing legislation (not particular candidates). Additional suggestions helped to define specific actions that can be taken by all members to engage with lawmakers and work to support AAUW priorities

Recommended actions include:

- Use of fact sheets and tool kits available on the AAUW National website to help with exploring options for connecting with legislators
- Connecting directly with legislators-write letters, pick up the phone, attend town hall meetings if offered, engage with legislator’s staff.
- Participate in rallies
- AAUW is non-partisan and must be kept out of partisan displays of support or anger. Of course if you attend an event to support a particular candidate, go as an individual without displaying affiliation with AAUW.
- The webinar ended with an important reminder that our AAUW members are our strength.

Harding Elementary School Collaboration

Shanna Potter, the Community School Director at Harding School, has invited AAUW members to get involved and volunteer at Harding School. AAUW Erie Branch has contributed funds to support STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) projects at Harding in the past and members have volunteered to assist with various activities held at the school.

Once again, members are invited to volunteer and/or contribute school supplies to support Harding students. Shop online using their Amazon Wishlist: <http://bit.ly/4obtMku> or shop local and deliver to Harding Elementary Mon-Fri between 8 AM and 3 PM.

School Supplies Most Needed:

Clear Backpacks (new requirement)	Pencil Cases	Kleenex
Clorox Wipes	Headphones/Earbuds	Expo Dry Erase Markers
Youth Socks	Folders	Crayons
Markers	Colored Pencils	



Erie's Public Schools
HARDING ELEMENTARY, A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

820 Lincoln Avenue Erie, Pennsylvania 16505

Phone (814)874-6550 Fax (814)874-6556

Mrs. Kathleen Farnham, Principal

Mr. Jeffrey Yonkers, Assistant Principal

Mr. Dan Nielsen, Assistant Principal

www.eriesd.org

August 1, 2025

Dear Local Erie Community Business Partner,

We are writing to you on behalf of Harding Elementary School's Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). Our school is home to nearly 700 students in grades Pre-K through fifth and 90 staff members. Our students live within the city of Erie and 89% of our students come from economically disadvantaged households.

Our PTO and school team are working hard to make the school year incredible for our students and families. Each year, our PTO fundraises to support many activities at our school, including Teacher Appreciation, Family Engagement Events, End-of-Year Activities, Grade Level Activities and Celebrations and Field Trips. Our goal is to offer activities and events that are inclusive and open to all families that attend our school, and at no-cost. This is an important part of being a community school. We strive to ensure that all families and students feel welcome here and want to ensure that cost is not a barrier to participating.

This October, we are planning a gift card calendar fundraiser and we are seeking donations from local businesses of gift cards, valued between \$25-\$100. Each day in October, a winner will be selected to win one of the donated gift cards. All donations are due to our school by Friday, September 5th.

On behalf of the Harding Dragons, we would like to thank you in advance for considering a donation to our Harding PTO.

If you have any questions or would like to know more about how you can help, please feel free to contact our Community School Director at 814-874-6561 or 814-440-9734.

Thank you,

The 2025-2026 Harding PTO

Donations can be picked up by our PTO, dropped off to Harding, or mailed to:

Harding Elementary School

Attn: Shanna Potter

820 Lincoln Avenue Erie, PA 16505

AAUW Supports Concert for Students

AAUW is a co-sponsor for a concert for students in Erie County to help promote improved race relations. The performers, Reggie Harris and Greg Greenway, one black man and one white, sing and tell anecdotes about the development of their own friendship. They have performed around the country. It is a free concert, and students from middle school age through college age are being encouraged to attend. You and your own children or grandchildren are welcome to attend. If you would like to attend or want more information, please contact Edie Cultu at edie_cultu@yahoo.com.

Deeper than the Skin Concert with Reggie Harris and Greg Greenway on **Saturday, September 27th at 6:15 p.m.** at Gannon University in the Yehl Ballroom in the Waldron Campus Center.



September 2025

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4 Book Club 1-2:30 pm Springhill	5	6
8 Overcoming Fear 6:30 pm Asbury Woods	9	10	11	12	13
15	16	17	18 Politalk 1-3 pm Asuman's	19	20
22	23	24	25 Gourmet 5:30 pm Bistro 26	26	27 Concert 6:15 pm Yehl Ballroom
29 Global Friends 7 pm Edie's house	30				



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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friends of the erie county library

The Friends of the Erie County Library is a non-profit volunteer organization dedicated to the support and advancement of the Erie library system. Become a member and get involved to be a "Friend" to your library.

facebook.com/EriePAFriendsOftheLibrary
 erielibraryfriends.org

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