

Women's mental health discussion set at Erie Cancer Wellness Center

Erie Branch will gather in March to hear Beverly Keep, LPN, NCC, the Chair of the Board of Directors for the Erie Cancer Wellness Center since May 2023, talk about **"Women's Mental Health or Just Day to Day Life?"**

With her impressive credentials as a National Board-Certified Counselor and a Licensed Professional Counselor, along with a master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, Bev has made a remarkable impact in her role as the center's Grief Support Group Facilitator and as a dedicated board member.

After a successful career as the Chief Operating Officer of Erie Homes for Children and Adults, Inc., Bev has retired and is now bringing her wealth of experience to the Erie Cancer Wellness Center. Her expertise includes consulting, private practice counseling, and serving as the Regional Director for Abraxas.



Beverly Keep

Come on down to Erie Cancer Wellness Center on Saturday, March 8, at 10 a.m. to hear Bev. It's going to be a great discussion! The address is 2212 West 15th Street, Unit 4, Erie, PA 16505.

The parking lot is on the other side of the West 16th Street side of the building. Hope to see you there!

Learn more about Erie Cancer Wellness Center at <https://eriecancerwellness.org>

Mardi Gras celebration is set for March 1

The Food & Friends study group invites all members to a Mardi Gras Party on Saturday afternoon, March 1, 2 to 5 pm at 3226 Rustic Lane (Barb Hutzelman's house). Husbands are welcome.

We have masks, food, music, games, beads and drinks (pop, tea, wine, virgin punch with spiking available!)

Just bring yourself and \$10 to help fund the next Sunday Supper for those in need. Let Barb know that you're coming via phone or text 814-881-7339.

President's Message

Dear Erie Branch Members,

I wish to start with gratitude for the responses to the so-called "stepping up" letter, composed by our State Board, with the intent to forward it to the National Board. The overwhelming majority of you who responded were in favor of the message. This message is best summarized in the sentence "We must speak loudly and confidently. We will not sit by quietly, accepting the negative impacts of these decisions on women and girls for decades to come."

However, current events at the national and the local level seem to raise concern that taking a position on issues (that challenge our mission) may be stepping outside the 501(c)3 tax-exempt non-profit status limits.

Among the five requirements of tax-exempt status, the two that relate to this concern are:

1. that we cannot engage in support of or opposition to candidates running for political office, and
2. that while we can engage in lobbying for our cause, it cannot be our central activity...

Therefore, based on #2 above, the letter is asking the National to be vigilant in lobbying to preserve the gains for women and girls recorded thus far - not launch new battles. The National organization has always done the lobbying job to "advocate" for women's issues with the tools at their disposal. Advocacy is part of our mission at the state and local levels, too, hence our input was valued.

As for partisanship in #1: The prohibition is strictly about candidate support. Any person or group with a goal which works towards that goal is engaged in "political" activity, be it at the workplace or within the family/friends' circles or city or county or state or national governments. By that definition, any engaged and thinking person is a political entity, and his/her actions are political.

A group whose goals are strictly to vie for powers of governance (as per the Constitution) is a political party. Members/supporters of a political party seeking governing powers is a subset of political actors and its members' actions are then defined as "partisan."

There is the difference between being political and being partisan...
We can each select the level at which we wish to be political and how to



Asuman Baskan

Public Policy Highlights

Recently AAUW Erie Branch members were asked for feedback regarding a letter written by Sandra Miller, AAUW Pennsylvania Public Policy Chair. The letter was addressed to Gloria Blackwell, AAUW CEO, and requested a strong AAUW response to escalating assaults on equity as a result of recent changes put in place by the new administration. This important effort led me to review our AAUW priorities including Removing Bias from Education, Fighting for Fair Pay and Economic Equity and Advancing Women in Leadership. These issues are discussed in detail on the AAUW National website. I found a review of the priorities to be a great reminder about the AAUW Mission, Value Promise and Diversity Statement. A brief outline of the priorities follows.

As early as Elementary School, young girls may be exposed to subtle messages about academic ability and future potential. Girls often face barriers in math and science that are reinforced throughout Middle and High School. They may encounter attitudes and expectations about career paths they should or should not pursue. Because of such stereotypes, women are underrepresented in the highest paying majors (particularly in STEM fields) which are dominated by men.

Workforce and Economic equity issues affect women, their families and communities. American women make up nearly half of the United States workforce. Two thirds of women are their families' primary or co-breadwinner. However, men continue to outpace women in earning power and wealth accumulation. AAUW advocates for all women to achieve self-sufficiency.

The workforce pipeline is filled with qualified women ready to move into leadership positions. However, barriers, biases and outdated workplace models present challenges. Women remain underrepresented in the highest levels of almost every employment field. Negative stereotypes about women in leadership continue to keep women out of top spots. Companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on executive teams outperform others in profitability. More women in leadership is essential for diversity but also because diversity in leadership benefits a company's bottom line.

My review of our AAUW priorities confirmed the importance of the AAUW Pennsylvania letter and strengthened my commitment to continue our focus on these important issues.

President's message

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organize to reach political goals, but not everything we do as political agents is partisan...

This is especially true if we, as individuals (or organizations) oppose an illegal activity, a violation of the rule of law, an act that ignores the Constitution, etc. To oppose these, individually or as a group, is far from partisanship, and must be resisted as they threaten our civil society...

Finally, no individual activity can cast doubt on the tax status of non-profit organizations of which these individuals happen to be members...

Non-profit organizations such as AAUW may pursue goals, may thus be political, without being partisan.

Hope this helps the conversation about the "stepping up" letter...



Food & Friends cooks to support Sunday Supper

Food and Friends study group issues a big thank you to all the incredible volunteers and generous donors who made the Sunday Supper volunteer effort at Church of the Covenant a success!

Sunday Supper is an outreach to underserved individuals in our community and is held at First Presbyterian Church of the Covenant.

The supper is held on Sundays because no other free meals are available in Erie on that day. Meals are offered to individuals and families in need.

This initiative serves up to 200 individuals each week. Various Erie community organizations and groups are invited to shop for, prepare and serve the meal.

Food and Friends responded to that invitation and purchased, prepared and served Sunday Supper on Jan. 26. The proceeds of the upcoming Mardi Gras celebration will go towards funding the group's next Supper.





Global Friends gathered at Tandoori Hut for lunch on Sunday, Feb. 2nd. The group was happy to support our Global Friends' member Amrita Gueung, who is the owner of the restaurant.

National issues info on education issues

AAUW national recently issued the following:

We face significant challenges for equity and attainment in education. As advocates, our resolve will be tested like never before.

Our reality: Across the nation, laws and policies hinder equal access to quality education. From budget cuts to legislative rollbacks, the road ahead is tough.

Our resolve: Our efforts to advance women's economic security through higher education remains critical. The progress we've made is at risk — and we must be vigilant in fighting back.

Our advocacy: We are ramping up our efforts to influence policy surrounding enforcement of Title IX civil rights protections and supporting essential college-access programs.

Our support: Our Fellowships & Grants programs will continue to support women scholars globally.

Our community: We will strengthen our network to create a united front for change.

AAUW's foundation is unwavering and rooted in strength, courage, and purpose. Side by side, we will continue the fight—for the women, girls and communities we cherish, the impact we elevate, and the legacies we create.

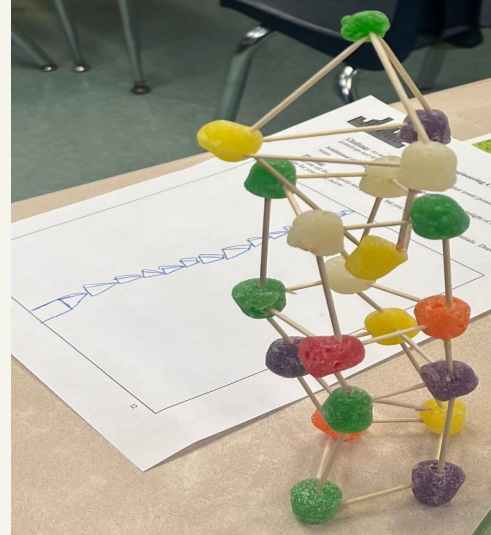
Branch Tech Savvy fund activities wrap up at Harding Elementary School

Harding students used gumdrops to learn about stressors in a recent STEAM (science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) program, which our branch helped to fund.

Branch member Sharmin Khundker was among those who took up Harding Community School Director Shanna Potter's invitation to members to get involved and volunteer to support initiatives planned for the students this year and attended the program.

"The picture doesn't do justice for the process," she said. "They had to do draw their idea of the tower on a piece of paper first, then had to build the tower and consequently had to do some testing like whether the tower will hold up against tornadoes, wind gusts and earthquakes."

The program was conducted by the ExpERIENCE Children's Museum staff.



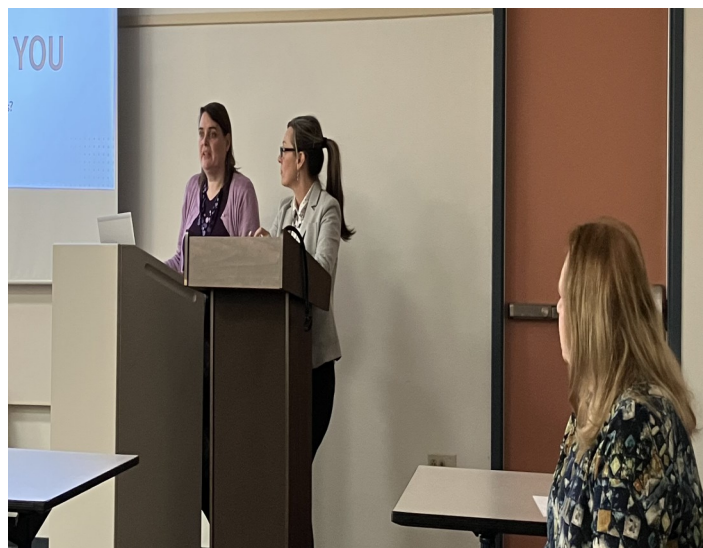
By Sharmin Khundker

Branch members enjoy in-depth look at library

AAUW's February meeting featured guest speakers Jessica Spitulski, (right) the Executive Director of the Erie County Public Library, and Rachel Stevenson, the Programming Librarian.

Spitulski discussed the evolving nature of libraries and how the Erie County Public Library bridges the divide between honoring the past and preparing for the future. She also addressed the essential function of a public library and touched on some of its challenges.

Stevenson spoke about the importance of programming for all ages.



Branch Study Groups

Book Discussion

Book Discussion will meet on Thursday, March 6 from 1-3 p.m. at Springhill 317.

Food and Friends

Food and Friends invites you to an afternoon of fun, music, and celebration as we bring the spirit of New Orleans to life on Saturday, March 1, from 2-5 p.m. at 3226 Rustic Lane (Barb Hutzelman's house.) The group's next event will be on April 22.

Global Friends

Global Friends will meet Monday, March 24, at 7 p.m. at Edie's Home, 638 Vermont Ave.

Program: Turkish Baking

Gourmet

We will meet at Colony Pub and Grille, 2670 W. 8th St., at 5 p.m. on March 28.

They have many specials Friday and Saturday night, including live music.

Please call Nickie Azicri to reserve your place. Call my home phone, 814-835-3780, or cell, 814-504-8258. Please do not text due to tech problems.

Politalk

Politalk group will meet on March 20th, at Asuman's home 3838 State St.

1 - 3 p.m.

March 2025

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Food & Friends 2 p.m. at Barb Hutzelman's
3 Board mtg. 6:30 p.m. Zoom	4	5	6 Book Club 1-3 p.m. Springhill 317	7	8 Branch mtg. 10 a.m. Cancer Wellness Center
10	11	12	13	14	15
17	18	19	20 Politalk 1-3 p.m. at Asuman's	21	22
24 Global Friends 7 p.m. at Edie's	25	26	27	28 Gourmet 5 p.m. at Colony Pub & Grill	29
31					



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.

Published by: American Association of University Women — Erie Branch, Inc.
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Facebook: @AAUWEriePA
Web page: <http://www.aauwerie.org>

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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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