



Upstate Update

*AMSTERDAM * GLOVERSVILLE * JOHNSTOWN BRANCH*

The American Association of University Women advances equity for woman and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research.

February 2014

February Branch Meeting

Wednesday, February 12, 2014

5:30 pm at Broadalbin Hotel

Subject: Dancing for the Health and Fun

Buffet Dinner \$19.00

Wear Red for Heart Health

Dance in support of non-violence on women – One Billion Rising for Justice!

Co-President's Message

Thank you for attending our January meeting. Carol Cownie did an excellent job of facilitating our book discussion. We had some great discussions on different aspects of the book. I didn't have a chance to read the book but it is now one that I will tackle this year.

FAMILY Act Would Establish National Paid Family and Medical Leave¹

In mid-January US Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, Rochester Mayor Lovely Warren, and Congresswoman Louise Slaughter announced federal legislation that would create paid family and medical leave. The *Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act* would establish a national paid family and medical leave insurance program, ensuring that American workers would no longer have to choose between a paycheck and caring for themselves or a family member. How do you feel about this? When I first heard of this Act being proposed, I had 2 thoughts – one from the employer's side and the other from the employee's side. Here is some information that I have found and see how you feel about it.

FAMILY Act would create an independent trust fund within the Social Security Administration to collect fees and provide benefits. This trust would be funded by employee and employer contributions of 0.2 percent of wages each creating a self-sufficient program that would not add to the federal budget. The expected cost to the average worker would be similar to the expense of a cup of coffee a week. Benefit levels, modeled on existing successful state programs in New Jersey and California, would equal 66 percent of an individual's typical monthly wages up to a capped monthly amount that would be indexed for inflation. The proposal makes leave available to every individual regardless of the size of their current employer and regardless of whether such individual is currently employed by an employer, self-employed or currently unemployed, as long as the person has sufficient earnings and work history.

Facts about the current Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)²:

Covered Employers - A covered employer is a:

- Private-sector employer, with 50 or more employees in 20 or more workweeks in the current or preceding calendar year
- Public agency, including a local, state, or Federal government agency, regardless of the number of employees it employs, or
- Public or private elementary or secondary school, regardless of the number of employees it employs.

Covered Employees – Only eligible employees are entitled to take FMLA leave. An **eligible employee** is one who:

- Works for a *covered employer*
- Has worked for the employer for *at least 12 months*
- Has at least *1,250 hours of service* for the employer during the 12 month period immediately preceding the leave; [*1,250 hours of service is more than an average PT job*] and
- Works at a location where the employer has *at least 50 employees within 75 miles*.

Eligible employees may take up to 12 work weeks of leave in a 12-month period for one or more of the following reasons [*this also includes intermittent leave*]:

- Birth of a child or adoption of a child
- To care for a spouse, son, daughter, or parent who has a serious health condition
- For a serious health condition that make the employee unable to perform the essential functions of his or her job, or
- For any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that a spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a military member on covered active duty or call to covered active duty status.

An eligible employee may also take up to 26 work weeks of leave during a “single 12 month period” to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness, when the employee is the spouse, son, daughter, parent or next of kin of the service member.

Job Restoration and Health Benefits

Upon return from FMLA leave, an employee must be restored to his or her original job or to an equivalent job with equivalent pay, benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment. An employee's use of FMLA leave cannot be counted against the employee under a “no fault” attendance policy. Employers are also required to continue group health insurance coverage for an employee on FMLA leave under the same terms and conditions as if the employee had not taken leave.

From an employer's perspective, I don't know if some small employers will be able to afford an additional employment expense. With the Affordable Health Care Act, employers will be paying an administrative fee for each employee that is on their payroll. The employer contribution for the FAMILY Act will be an extension of the SSI payments that are now paid. Another area of overhead for the employer is the administrative time and costs of monitoring the time employees are taking under FMLA. Documentation is currently collected from a physician just like in a disability case and then the time off is recorded as to keep within the eligible number of weeks. Some larger employers have outsourced this administrative duty but that is with a cost too.

From an employee's perspective, the FAMILY Act would be a great help for anyone who works for an employer that is not qualified to comply, who may be a self-employed businesses owner, who has less than 12 months on the job for the current employer, or who works part-time (less than the 1,250 hours of service). The employee would

receive a paid FMLA leave. I wonder how much is proposed for payment. Currently, when a woman takes maternity leave, she is eligible for disability payments through the government. If she receives sick/leave time from her employer, then she is saving this time during the whole pregnancy (provided she is able to work 8 of 9 months) and then uses it sparingly to help supplement the small amount of disability payments received.

What do you think? Pros? Cons? We will have to watch the progress of it.

¹ Website: Kirsten Gillibrand – United States Senator for New York: News

² Website: United States Department of Labor / Wage and Hour Division (WHD)

Hope to see everyone at our February meeting!

Co-president Linda Hammond

NEXT “CELEBRATION” FUNDRAISER MEETING
THURSDAY, JANUARY 30th, at 6 PM
JOHNSTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY

February 12 Meeting - Food, and Fun

As is our branch custom, in February, we hold an activity based, health related meeting to get us out of the house and up and exercising. Join us on Wednesday, February 12 for an evening of food and fun at the Broadalbin Hotel. Member Darcelle Winchell will share with us the advantages that can be gained from the wonderful pastime of dancing. We will have the opportunity to learn “Love Repeats” a routine to the song “Love You Like a Love Song” as well as a new routine to the new wave music sound of “Once in a Lifetime”. You can come and provide an audience, but as Lee Ann Womack sings - ...”when you get the choice to sit it out or dance...I hope you dance!” Wear red to celebrate heart health and shoes that can slide as we exercise.

The cost for the meeting is \$19 and includes a buffet dinner of chicken cordon bleu, beef tips, vegetables, salad, coffee and dessert. Eggplant parmesan may be special ordered for those who prefer a vegetarian option. Checks made payable to AAUW should be sent to Catherine Julius, 134 E. Montgomery St., Johnstown 12095. Deadline for RSVP is February 3. (*flyer attached)

At the meeting we will accept monetary donations for the Fistula Fund, monetary donations for the College Survival Basket we will donate to the JPL.

Win a Free Membership Renewal! **Raffle at February 12 Meeting**

The first of three free AAUW membership renewals for the 2014-2015 year will be raffled at the February meeting. Our branch earned the free memberships from National AAUW for recruiting over six members at our fall “Shape the Future Membership” meeting. Raffle tickets will be \$2 each or 3 for \$5. The other two memberships will be raffled at the April and May meetings. Good luck!

One Billion Rising for Justice

Not only will we be dancing for health and fun, but also as part of (if not a couple of days early) **One Billion Rising** for Justice against Violence Against Women. In 2013, one billion women and men shock the earth through dance to end violence against women. The event came out of the realization that one in three women on the planet will be raped or beaten in her lifetime. That is One Billion Women! On February 14, women and men everywhere are being called on to harness their power and imagination to rise for justice. Imagine, one billion women releasing their stories, dancing and speaking out at the places where they need justice, where they need an end to violence against women and girls. **Join us! Rise, Release, Dance!**

Nominating Committee Forming

Thanks to Helen James for stepping up to serve on the nominating committee - just 2 more volunteers are needed!

We have a Voter Education Chair!

We would like to thank new member Ellie DiScioscia for stepping up and volunteering to serve as Voter Education chair, a board position which has been open for some time. Ellie works at the board of elections and is very passionate about the importance of utilizing our right to vote. We look forward to her articles.

"Vote"

According to the Merriam-Websters Dictionary of Basic English the word "vote" is defined as "a formal expression of opinion or choice: to elect, decide, pass, defeat, grant, or make legal". The word "vote" is referenced most often in the process of electing a local, state or federal governmental official within society. A "vote" does not always entail campaigns, slogans, large numbers of voters or a political position. In fact its present is more subtle and indirectly evident within the circle of our daily lives.

When considering the impact of the definition as well as the frequent usage of the word "vote", perhaps the most important place one can appreciate and acknowledge its importance first, would be within realms of one's own mundane life; such as family, home and the work place. Opportunity to "vote" are clearly present in situations of raising a family, buying a home, paying expenses, going to a restaurant and so forth. Couples and families make daily votes on what to eat for dinner, what movie to see, where to go on vacation, what kind of dog or pet to get and so forth. At the work place daily decisions are brought forth in the form of discussions which ultimately resulting in a "vote".

When considering all the areas of our lives in where the process, procedure and impact of a "Vote" has infiltrated, it would be catastrophic to imagine life without the privilege and right in casting them.

Ellie DiScioscia
Voter Education Chair

Watch for the next chapter in our upcoming newsletters. Ellie will be submitting a series of articles or chapters on Voter Education.



Branch Officers:**Presidents***Liz Russo**Linda Hammond***Vice Presidents – Program***Darcelle Winchell**Sandy Maceyka***Vice President – Membership***Catherine Julius***Vice President – Ed Opp Fund***Open Position***Vice President – Legal Advocacy***Open Position***Recording Secretary –***Bonnie Van Wie***Treasurer – Ella Ryder****Public Policy – Jennifer Garren**

**Know someone who would like to
try out AAUW?**

**A half year AAUW membership is
available for \$37**

HELP WANTED

AAUW FUNDS Chair (Co-Chairs)

NEWSLETTER EDITOR (assistant)

January Happenings

January Meeting Follow-up

We would like to thank Carol Cownie for again coming up with a wonderful social justice program for our branch. Carol did an excellent job facilitating the discussion of the book *Language of Flowers* and the exchange of ideas about foster care issue. Thank you also to Paula Lerner for taking reservations and organizing refreshments and to those who provided the yummy desserts!

We had two guests at our meeting and one has joined our branch!

Honoring Ginni Mazur

At our January meeting, we finally got a chance to honor Ginni Mazur for serving as Membership VP in 2012-13. Since Ginni has been off traveling so much, she has missed our meetings. Although the recognition and gift were long overdue, we very much appreciate her dedication to our branch and all that she has done over the years and continues to do. Ginni still serves as Historian for our branch. Thank you, Ginni!

Sharing “A Place at the Table”

We have a follow-up on our showing of “A Place at the Table” in November. As you may recall, Dr. James and wife, Helen, graciously purchased the “A Place at the Table” DVD for the showing and donated it to our branch. The movie, therefore, is now available to AAUW to show to other community groups and to offer to other branches to show in their communities as well. We were contacted by Donna Seymour from the St. Lawrence branch requesting to borrow the DVD to show at campus events at SUNY Canton as part of a Poverty Awareness campaign.

Thanks again to the efforts of Carol Cownie and Helen James, our branch has certainly spearheaded a community education and outreach program that can and is being duplicated!

Book Discussion Update

Lunch Bunch Book Discussion Week of February 24

We will be reading "[Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead](#)" by Sheryl Sandberg. It was the Adelante book for January, National Mentoring Month. Sandberg examines why women's progress in achieving leadership roles has stalled, explains the root causes, and offers compelling, commonsense solutions that can empower women to achieve their full potential. Multiple copies of "Lean In" are available through the Mohawk Valley Library System. They are being reserved at the Johnstown Public Library under AAUW Book Club. We can meet Monday, February 24, Tuesday, February 25 or Wednesday, February 26 at 1:30pm to eat a late lunch and discuss the book. The exact date and place will be determined. For more information or to suggest a specific date and place, contact Liz Russo at 762-9702.

MEMBERSHIP:

Welcome to our new member, Roseanne Doran! We will have an introduction of our new member in the next newsletter.

Catherine Julius, Co-VP of Membership

Fistula Foundation - Last Chance to Give!

Thanks to all who donated at our January meeting, we raised \$114 toward the cost of surgery to repair an obstetric fistula. This is the third year we are raising money as part of My Sister's Keeper NYS AAUW initiative. Obstetric fistulas which occur during delivery as a result of lack of proper medical care result in injuries to the wall of the bladder and bowel leading to incontinence and leakage of wastes. Women with these symptoms are outcasts and often abandoned by husbands and families. Donations help women in 15 countries in Africa and Asia. The Foundation will determine where the greatest need is for our contribution. The first fistula repair hospital was established in Ethiopia. Since then the Fistula Foundation has been able to expand the availability of the surgeries. We are lucky to have obstetric care readily available in this country, let's help our sisters who are not as fortunate.

Those who have not had an opportunity will have one last chance to donate at the February 12 dinner meeting. Those who donate \$10 will receive a raffle ticket for a basket donated by Linda Hammond. Drawing will be at the February 12 meeting.

Anyone interested in donating who cannot attend the February meeting is welcome to use the *attached form and send check to Linda Hammond. Our goal is to reach \$450, the amount needed to repair one fistula.

Calling All Title IX Champions!

National AAUW is looking for nominees for their new Title IX Champion award. Nominees would be members or branches that have done amazing work to ensure that students' rights under Title IX are enforced. This can be done by investigating Title IX compliance in your school district, assembling lists of Title IX coordinators, promoting more just sexual assault policies, and helping to teach students, parents, educators, coaches, and administrators about Title IX's requirements. The US Department of Education simply cannot enforce Title IX alone and the work of AAUW members is crucial to shrinking the enforcement gap. At our recent board meeting, we decided we as branch members can get involved but simply researching who the Title IX representative is in our school district. Please contact Linda Hammond or Liz Russo with information regarding your school district. Let's go for an award!

JPL Basket Donation

Thanks go to Melissa Ackerknecht for assisting in shopping for items for the College Survival theme basket our AAUW branch will be donating for the Johnstown Public Library's fundraiser which will take place in April. Our branch donates to the JPL because we hold several meetings a year including board meetings, committee meetings and occasional regular monthly meetings in the community room of the JPL free of charge. The basket donation is our way of saying "Thank you". In addition it provides visibility for our AAUW branch. Thanks to all who donated at our January meeting to "buy an item" for the basket. We will accept monetary donations to cover the remaining items at our February 12 dinner meeting.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Wednesday, February 12

Dinner Meeting
Dancing for Health and Fun
by Darcelle Winchell
5:30pm Broadalbin Hotel

Monday, February 27

Elizabeth Cady Stanton Women's Consortium
Meeting
5:30 pm JPL

March 17-21, 2014

Ag Literacy Week
Elizabeth Cady Stanton Women's Consortium
Reading at local schools

Saturday, March 29

Spring Brunch
(Fundraiser for local scholarships)
11am -2pm Eccentric Club, Gloversville

April 25 – 27, 2014

2014 NYS AAUW Convention

*A World of Wellness
Stimulating the Mind
Energizing the Body
Inspiring the Soul*

**Honor's Haven Resort
Ellenville, NY**

Watch for details at www.AAUW-NYS.org

Monday, April 28

Dinner Meeting
Speaker: NYS Public Policy VP, Donna Seymour
5:30 pm, FMCC

Free Entertainment in the Community - Foreign films at Johnstown Public Library

For those looking for something to do in these winter months, why not consider attending one of the foreign films being shown at the Johnstown Public Library. There is no charge for the movies.

The next one will be shown on Tuesday, February 18 at 4pm. To find out "what is showing" contact Deb Callery at the JPL 762-8317 x21. The title cannot be advertised due to licensing restrictions.

Our Projects Update

CELEBRATION - March 29 scholarship fundraiser -SAVE THE DATE!

Thanks to the organization of Helen James and Catherine Julius, we will be holding our branch's 1st Annual Celebration scholarship fundraiser. The Celebration will take place at the Eccentric Club, 109 N. Main St. Gloversville on Saturday, March 29 from 11am-2pm.

We will be celebrating the accomplishments of our past scholarship winners and raising money for future awards. The Celebration includes brunch catered by Wine and Roses and musical entertainment by harpist Nancy Murphy Walko and pianist Frank Manning. Past scholarship winners will model hats fashioned by Donna Cerasuolo of Chapeaux de Valse. In addition, there will be an auction and a raffle of theme baskets.

Bob Cudmore, local author and WVTL radio personality will serve as master of ceremonies and auctioneer. Tickets are \$30 each and tables of 8 may be reserved for \$200 dollars. Invitations to the Celebration will be mailed on February 20. RSVP is March 14. **The next planning meeting will be Thursday, January 30 at 6pm at the Johnstown Public Library.** Hope to see you all there with ideas for donors and any other help you can give. As a team, we will make this a very successful fundraiser!

Tech Savvy Summit for Girls - May 20

Planning continues for our branch's annual Tech Savvy Summit for Girls. The conference for middle-school girls in Fulton-Montgomery and Hamilton counties will take place on Tuesday, May 20 from 8am-1:30pm at Fulton-Montgomery Community College.

We are pleased to announce that electrical engineer, Elizabeth Serena (Pynadath) Bentley, has agreed to serve as our capnote speaker. In addition, thanks to the efforts of Darcelle Winchell who has been contacting FM faculty who were past facilitators to invite them to provide workshops again this year, we have 7 returning to provide 6 workshops. Laurie Lazinski will do a chemistry workshop. Charlene Dybas will present a workshop on where jobs come from. Ruth Crammond Scott and Julie Mihalcik will do the Lego competition. Rebecca Cortez, will present an engineering workshop. Jeremy Spraggs will again facilitate the robotics workshop. Sherry Warner and Karlyn LaBate will together facilitate "Join Dr. House", a workshop on medical diagnostics. In addition, Mary Donohue and Audrey Egelston have been approached to present workshops on technology. We are hoping to offer 12 workshop choices for the girls.

Branch member Paula Lerner has joined the Tech Savvy Summit for Girls committee and has offered many excellent suggestions for presenters. Ones we don't use this year will go into the file for the Tech Savvy 2015! Next we will be working on the registration packets which will be delivered to each of the middle schools Hamilton-Fulton and Montgomery counties in March.

Anyone interested in assisting with the Tech Savvy Summit should contact Linda Bumpus.



AMSTERDAM-GLOVERSVILLE-JOHNSTOWN

AAUW

FISTULA REPAIR FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN (Jan – Jun 2014)

This year our branch has chosen to continue raising funds to support a surgical repair at the cost of \$450. We are requesting each of our members to contribute to this fundraising campaign. Below are some reasons why we pursuing this worthy cause. In 2012 we had read *Hospital by the River* by Catherine Hamlin which introduced us to the struggles women in under developed countries experience. Medical care that we have taken for granted for decades. Visit their website – www.fistulafoundation.org – if you would like more information.

PLEASE GIVE WHAT YOU CAN - \$5.00, \$10.00,? OUR GOAL IS \$450.00

Fast Facts

- Fistula used to be present in the U.S. and Europe, but was largely eliminated in the latter part of the 19th century and early 20th century with improved obstetric care in general and the use of C-sections in particular to relieve obstructed labor.
- The World Health Organization estimates there may be as many as 50,000 — 100,000 new cases of fistula each year, yet the global treatment capacity is less than 20,000 cases a year. There is a large unmet need for treatment. Fistula is most prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia.
- For example, in Ethiopia, there are an estimated 100,000 women suffering with untreated fistula, and another 9,000 women who develop fistula each year.
- Less than 6 in 10 women in developing countries give birth with any trained professional, such as a midwife or a doctor. When complications arise, as they do in approximately 15% of all births, there is no one available to treat the woman, leading to disabling injuries like fistula, and even death.
- The root causes of fistula are grinding poverty and the low status of women and girls. In developing countries, the poverty and malnutrition in children contributes to the condition of stunting, where the girl skeleton, and therefore pelvis as well, do not fully mature. This stunted condition can contribute to obstructed labor, and therefore fistula.
- But, fistula is both preventable and treatable. For instance, the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital has treated over 30,000 women over 33 years. Their cure rate is over 90%. Fistula can be prevented if laboring women are provided with adequate emergency obstetric care when complications arise.

✂-----

Mail donation to: Linda Hammond 11 South Clark Ave Gloversville, NY 12078 (229-2058.)

NAME: _____ DONATION AMOUNT: \$ _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ OR EMAIL: _____

The Fistula Foundation is a 501(c)(3) corporation.



AGJ AAUW BRANCH

Buffet Dinner Meeting

February 12

5:30 pm

Broadalbin Hotel

Topic: Dancing for Health and Fun

Instructor: Darcelle Winchell

**Wear RED for Heart Health and Shoes that Slide as we Exercise!
Dance for "One Billion Rising for Justice"**

*You can attend and provide us with
an audience, but
as Lee Ann Womack sings..
"..when you get the choice to sit it
out or dance...
I hope you dance!"*



Buffet Menu:

- Chicken cordon bleu
- Sirloin tips of beef (*Eggplant parmesan - vegetarian option - upon request)
- Vegetables
- Salad
- Dessert
- Coffee

Cost \$19 - (checks payable to AAUW)

*RSVP to by February 3, 2014 to:
Catherine Julius
134 E. Montgomery St., Johnstown 12095

*Please indicate if you want Eggplant parmesan, otherwise we will include you in the count for the buffet.

**AMSTERDAM-GLOVERSVILLE-JOHNSTOWN AAUW 2013-2014
Membership Renewal Form**

****PLEASE NOTE ANY CHANGES AND COMPLETE THE PAGE BELOW****

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Cell: _____

Institution(s), Degree(s), and year(s) of graduation:

Current Email Address: _____

Please Check One of the Following:

_____ I have enclosed \$ _____ * for dues before June 1, 2014. *(\$69)

_____ **I have enclosed \$ _____ ** dues on or after June 1, 2014. **(\$74)**
National \$49
State \$13
Local \$7/\$12

To become a Life Member one pays 20 times the current national dues plus the current yearly state and local dues year-

_____ I have enclosed \$ _____ for dues as a Life Member.

Are you interested in serving on a committee?

Please indicate with an X. Committee descriptions are available from membership chairperson.

- ____ Program ____ Community Outreach ____ Finance ____ Membership ____ Historical ____ Nominating
____ Cultural ____ Public Policy ____ International Issues ____ Diversity ____ Educational Equi-
ty/Scholarship ____ LAF - Legal Advocacy Fund
____ TECH SAVVY/Sister 2 Sister ____ e-student and AAUW College Organization
____ Newsletter

Make your **check payable to AAUW** and send this form along with your check to treasurer:

Ella Ryder
P.O. Box 111
Mayfield, NY 12117

_____ **I am resigning membership in AAUW.**

My reason(s) is/are as follows: ____ Family obligations ____ Moving out of the area ____ Dues amount
____ Meeting topics Other (please specify): _____

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter.