**Membership Matters: A News Hub for Leaders**

**August 2021**

*Resources, tips and tricks for AAUW state and branch leaders*

**Bragging on Branches (and States!)**

Save the Date to Celebrate

Join us on to celebrate all that we’ve accomplished together through the [Five-Star Recognition Program](https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/initiatives/5-star-program/) and get excited for a new year of Five-Star success. The virtual festivities take place on August 26 at 3:30 p.m. [Register today](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_mq96YwRsT9uAR9L2R8N0Zg)!

Memorial Fund Completed to Honor Capital (Nevada) Branch Member

We are pleased to announce the completion of a special honorary fund, established by the[AAUW Capital (Nevada) branch](https://capital-nv.aauw.net/) to memorialize beloved member Linda Hiebert Sekiguchi in Nevada.

The Linda Hiebert Sekiguchi Memorial Fund is now fully funded and will support AAUW’s education and training programs. Linda was a life member with the San Jose (California) and Capital (Nevada) branches. She was a longtime state chair of international affairs who served on the national International Affairs Committee. Linda and her late husband Christopher Stewart also have an International Fellowship in their names. We are deeply grateful for the generosity of all who contributed to the fund.

Cheers to Five-Star Success

Congratulations to the following branches for their [Five-Star Recognition Program](https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/initiatives/5-star-program/) achievements this summer and for helping close this term of the program with a bang: (Colorado) Longmont, Littleton-South Metro; (Virginia) Arlington; (West Virginia) Mingo-Pike.

And a special shout-out to the following Texas branches for achieving all five stars: Tarrant County, North Harris County.

Check out these branch and state success stories for tips on how to reach your goals.

**Success Stories**

Get inspiration and advice from this month’s five-star branch leaders.

AAUW of Washington: Collaborate to Succeed

“AAUW Washington decided in 2020 to try to become a Five-Star state. We realized that attempting this in the midst of the pandemic would be a challenge, but we also knew we could do it with hard work, resourcefulness and creativity.

A major highlight for us was learning about and expanding on the fantastic collaboration taking place among branches across the state. Like most states, we have branches in urban areas with many members, and small branches in rural communities. These branches often came together to jointly sponsor mission-based programs. Larger branches became ‘sister branches’ to smaller ones that were struggling or had more limited resources.

Another highlight was our transition from an in-person to a virtual Lobby Day. AAUW of Washington supports our branches by bringing them together annually for this day for training and advocacy. Our Public Policy team pivoted flawlessly to deliver an event that was successful and attended by more people than ever.

The Five-Star program is a great way to learn more about what is happening across your state, and to increase collaboration and cohesiveness among branches.”

Mary Williams, president

From left: Kesare Mowrer, our community college scholarship (CCS) winner, Pam Schleif, chair, CCS committee, Aye Kalle, our second CCS winner, holding her daughter.

**AAUW LANSDALE (PENNSYLVANIA)**

**Commit to the Process**

“The success of the Lansdale Branch in attaining Five Stars is attributable to three major factors—leadership, programming and community outreach.

When the program was announced, our co-presidents set the tone by announcing we would go for it! We started with a commitment to do this. The leaders reached out to the branch board to complete the process. The leaders of the branch were confident that our branch met the goals of the program and engaged the board members to identify required information and compile it onto our website for easy transmission to National.

Our programs were all mission-based. We have a program committee that generates ideas while keeping AAUW’s mission in mind. Our initiatives include diversity and equity with almost every meeting. Our speakers are diverse, and the topics at our meetings support STEM opportunities for girls.

Our website enhanced our internal and external communication. Our Facebook presence has expanded to promote branch activities, AAUW-PA, and equity for women and girls. This past year our posts have aligned with social justice issues.

We are proud of our efforts to support gender equity as individuals and as a group of strong women. We knew we could do it, and one star at a time, we did.”

—Karen Holmes and Suzan Leonard, co-presidents

From left: Janet Black, Malinda Gaul, Ann Marie Rehner, Cheryl Fuller, Pat Sanford, Kate Vetters, Mynda Holman McGuire

**AAUW SAN ANTONIO (TEXAS)**

**Poised to Pivot**

“The Five-Star Program helped us meet our objectives in a challenging year. We had to “pivot,” and Five-Star enhanced our focus in completing and documenting our achievements.

We broadcasted our goals and accomplishments to members in our meetings and monthly newsletters, and we engaged our board at every step. Our theme of “Economic and Physical Well-Being for All” reflected our mission of advancing gender equity for women and girls.

National mission objectives helped us frame our selection of monthly speaker forums, providing rare opportunities to attract major local county officials and leaders covering timely topics such as voting challenges, inclusion, and gender equity. Our branch’s strategic plan aligns with those of National and Texas, and our succession plan ensure that our future leadership is focused and has access to needed information. We posted both these documents on our website.

Our increased member donation levels and fundraising initiatives (including the new and very popular virtual Bingo) helped us to exceed our goal of a 25% increase in donations over last year. It was also a banner year for our scholarship awards. We retained more than 90% of our members and increased our Legacy Circle by 50%. Five-Star inspired these results!”

—Cheryl Fuller, president

**AAUW NAPERVILLE (ILLINOIS)**

**Ignore Geographical Limitations**

“The Five-Star program affirmed and inspired Naperville Area (Illinois) in 2020-2021. We were pleased to discover that we already met many of the criteria. Five-Star also gave us stretch goals.

To increase public policy impact, we created an “I-ACT” (Issues Action) team. Our strategy was to focus on a few key AAUW priorities. We surveyed our members to learn which issues were most critical to them and then built public policy and programming goals. We educated members and the public and provided clear action steps — such as becoming Two-Minute Activists, signing legislative witness slips, and contacting officials.

The necessity for virtual meetings inspired us to ignore geographical limitations and seek experts to present educational and motivating webinars. We marketed everything on social media and posted the webinars on our YouTube channel for repeat viewing.

A highlight of the year was working with a coalition of organizations and policymakers on state legislation for paid family leave. With support from AAUW Illinois, we hosted an expert panel and virtual screening of the documentary “Zero Weeks” about America’s family leave crisis for all the branches in the state. This work is ongoing as the legislation is still needed. Five Star encouraged us to think bigger.”

—Sue Topp, president

**News & Resources**

AAUW Welcomes New Legacy Circle Members

We gratefully acknowledge the [30 visionary members](https://www.aauw.org/resources/article/support-aauw/leave-a-legacy/aauw-celebrates-2021-legacy-circle-members/) who joined AAUW’s Legacy Circle in Fiscal Year 2021 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021). There are now 692 members of the Legacy Circle. By making a planned gift to AAUW National, Legacy Circle members embrace gender equity as part of their personal legacy and advance AAUW’s critical mission. If you have included AAUW National in your estate plans, please contact AAUW Director of Advancement Heather Miller at 202.785.7766 to enroll in the Legacy Circle so that we may celebrate you too!

State and Branch Resources for New Volunteers

Access the [AAUW Membership section](https://www.aauw.org/membership/) of the website for a host of [resources and tools](https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/governance-tools/state-branch/) for state and branch leaders. Create an account and login to access the [Member Services Database](https://ww3.aauw.org/login/?redirect_to=/aauw_redirect/wp_redirect_msd.php) (MSD) to manage your state and/or branch!

Report Membership Dues

Branch finance officers should submit membership dues for fiscal year 2022 using the Membership Payment Program (MPP) located within the [Membership Services Database](https://ww3.aauw.org/login/?redirect_to=/aauw_redirect/wp_redirect_msd.php) (MSD). For those unable to use this online payment method, please use the Additional Dues Report Process also located within the MSD.

AAUW Gatherings: Put Safety First

Many members are understandably eager to return to in-person affiliate gatherings, but it’s important to follow all city, state and county guidance and be mindful of the risks. The pandemic isn’t over, and many of us regularly engage with young people and others who do not yet have access to the vaccine. It’s also worth remembering that virtual gatherings bring flexibility to your branch and allow you to expand your reach to new groups.