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

**March 2021**

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

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

Meet Our Latest Five-Star Awardees

Kudos to the AAUW-North Carolina on becoming a 3-star state! We look forward to seeing them cross the Five-Star finish line. And your state could be next! Reach out to Fivestar@aauw.org and let us know how we can help you get your state’s application started.

Also, join us in celebrating the following branches for their [Five-Star](https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/initiatives/5-star-program/) achievement this month: (Colorado) Aurora; (Florida) Sarasota; (Hawaii) Honolulu; (Illinois) Crystal Lake Area, Waukegan; (New Mexico) Los Alamos; (Pennsylvania) Bethlehem, Lansdale, West Chester-Chester County; (South Carolina) Charleston, Horry County; (Texas) San Antonio, Tyler; (Virginia) Mt. Vernon, Springfield-Annandale; (Washington) Stanwood-Camano, Washington Online Branch.

Finally, a huge congratulations to AAUW West Harris County (Texas) and AAUW Alexandria (Virginia) for achieving all five stars! Read their stories to learn the secrets of their success.

**Success Stories**

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

tudents, staff and AAUW-WHC members at a Start Smart Event at Texas Southern University

**AAUW WEST HARRIS COUNTY (TEXAS)**

**Get Creative and Competitive**

“Until recently, the West Harris County branch was so busy meeting Five-Star goals that we didn’t take time to apply for the program. Then COVID came, and suddenly we had time. Our competitive spirit kicked in and we realized that, if neighboring AAUW branches could receive the award, we could, too!

One our most rewarding achievements is our Start Smart program at Texas Southern University. Our branch received a $1,500 grant from Texas AAUW. With the help of branch member Dr. Michele Taylor, assistant dean of the graduate school and Positive Perspectives Mentors & Educational Services, we held a Start Smart workshop on the TSU campus. Applying for the Five-Star program kept us focused on gender equity work at TSU.

Our branch was generous to start, so increasing donations by another 25% was a stretch for us. But we got creative. Our Funds Chair made COVID masks for all members. During our fund drive, donors giving $100 or more were invited to a post-COVID luncheon. Still, we came up $1,300 short. That’s when our membership stepped up and gave four times that amount for the Greatest Needs Fund.

We’ve found working toward the Five-Star Award a positive way to keep focused and vital during trying times.”

―Carolyn Morris, president

**AAUW ALEXANDRIA (VIRGINIA)**

**Stay Focused**

“The Five-Star program helped us to focus our attention and resources, and we kept it in mind when programming our budget. For example, when we have our program planning meeting, we concentrate on issues-based programing. There are so many worthwhile causes, but our branch cannot be all things to all people. Of course, during COVID we love having good news to celebrate with our members.”

―Lane Stone, president

**News & Resources**

Congratulations 2021 Art Contest Winners

Thank you to everyone who participated in the 2021 art contest! You all submitted and voted on over 400 entries this year, and we’re proud to recognize the following members for their winning entries. Congratulations! We look forward to having their art featured on this year’s spring notecards. Meanwhile, [check out their winning work online](https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/initiatives/art-contest/).

Ann Echols, treasurer of AAUW State College (Pennsylvania)–*Indian Paint Brush*

Arlene Goch, president of AAUW Atlantic County (New Jersey)–*Hidden Women*

Andrea Laudate, president of AAUW San Francisco (California)–*Mushrooms in the Mist*

Mary Ellen Segraves, member and past president of Batavia-Geneva-St. Charles (Illinois)–*Bridge to Peace*

Janice Arrow Smith, member and past newsletter editor of AAUW Lansdale (Pennsylvania)—*Ebullience*

Nancy Willis, communications officer, Wytheville (Virginia)–*Blue Bottles*

Webinars to Watch

We hope you’ll register for the April 1 [webinar about the member vote on the education requirement](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMudu-pqT4sE9x-ANin6bD-1KTaEl8W1KP1) and the April 22 [Diversity Equity and Inclusion Webinar: How to Have Difficult Conversations.](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_y_Q6s7SlQF2QwNyJ4dOrpw) In addition, you can catch up on past webinars, including our conversation with AAUW fellowship alumna Dr. Shanna Benjamin, on our [archive page](https://www.aauw.org/resources/programs/webinars/).

Reminder: AAUW Election Opens April 7

Starting April 7, AAUW members will be asked to vote to elect members to the national board of directors and on amendments to our Public Policy Priorities and bylaws, including a proposal to eliminate AAUW’s longstanding membership degree requirement. Get up to speed on the issues by reviewing the [election page](https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/governance-tools/national-election/) on the AAUW website, and register for our April 1 [webinar about the education requirement.](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMudu-pqT4sE9x-ANin6bD-1KTaEl8W1KP1)

Welcome New Legacy Circle Members

We gratefully acknowledge these visionary AAUW members and supporters who have recently joined the Legacy Circle: Ruth A. Werner (California) and Carol A. Tempel (South Carolina). By making a [planned gift](https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/support-aauw/leave-a-legacy/) to AAUW National, each has embraced equity for future generations of women and girls as part of her personal legacy.

If you have included AAUW National in your estate plans, please contact AAUW Director of Advancement Heather Miller at 202.785.7766 to let us know so that we may celebrate you, too!

Help Us Help You Find Speakers

Want someone from AAUW national to speak at your next branch meeting or state convention? Use [this form](https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/governance-tools/state-branch/request-a-speaker/) to request a speaker for your upcoming event.

Advocacy Toolkit

There are lots of creative ways branches and individuals can use their power to advocate on behalf of women and girls. Check out [AAUW’s Advocacy Toolkit](https://www.aauw.org/resources/policy/advocacy-toolkit/) for tips and resources that can guide your work to achieve gender equity.

Dues Processing for FY22 Now Open

Finance officers are ready for fiscal year 2021-22. Those who use the Membership Payment Program (MPP) for online payment processing, you can invoice members to pay online themselves or allow them to pay by check! Choose the option that works best for your branch! If your branch still writes checks to mail in national dues, please email connect@aauw.org and ask about opting in to the MPP.