



Vantage

Celebrate the Season with AAUW!

Celia Mejia and Erin Murphy, Program Co-Vice Presidents

Join fellow AAUW Long Beach members and guests as we kick off the holiday season with warmth, good company, and festive cheer. Guests are warmly welcome! We ask you to make this holiday celebration extra special by introducing a friend or neighbor as a potential new member to AAUW in a relaxed and festive setting. Please note that the cost of your guest(s) will be covered by our branch! **Holiday Brunch Gathering – Saturday, December 6 | 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

This year's annual holiday brunch will be graciously **hosted by Deloris Mayuga**—thank you, Deloris, for opening your home to us! Her address can be found in the AAUW Yearbook.

To simplify catering, we kindly ask each member attendee to contribute **\$20** to help cover the cost of food and beverages. You can send your contribution via **Zelle** to aauwlongbeach@gmail.com, or pay at the door via Zelle, check, or cash.



Expect a delicious spread, including **vegetarian and vegan-friendly options**, along with our traditional seasonal favorite: **wassail**, a warm spiced drink served by our presidents. Don't miss the chance to try it—it's a holiday classic!

We also welcome **volunteers** to help make the event run smoothly. If you didn't already sign up at the November branch meeting, please contact **Erin Murphy** at emurphy@lbcc.edu if you are interested.

We look forward to celebrating with you!

Thank you for an RSVP at the November branch meeting but if you missed that and plan to attend, reserve with Charlotte Joseph by November 29.

aauwlongbeach.reservations@gmail.com

Visit our Website for more info: <https://longbeach-ca.aauw.net/>

AAUW Mission:

To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.

AAUW Vision:

Equity for all.

AAUW Values:

Nonpartisan.
Fact-based.
Integrity.
Inclusion and Intersectionality.

AAUW Diversity Statement:

In principle and in practice, AAUW values and seeks an inclusive membership, workforce, leadership team and board of directors. There shall be no barriers to full participation on the basis of age, disability, gender, location, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status.



From the Co-Presidents

by Jane Hansen and Barbara Hall , Co-Presidents

Building Power through Partnerships — WONDER Tech Fest, November 5-6

Casual partnerships, such as volunteering to support the Wonder Tech & Innovation Festival (WTIF) in downtown Long Beach, are the first step for building stronger collaborations. The mission of the non-profit **Wonder Women Tech (WWT)** is “to highlight, celebrate, educate, and amplify women, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color), and the underrepresented in Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, Math (STEAM) and innovation”. Led by its dynamic founder, Lisa Mae Brunson, this event marked its ten-year anniversary.

In the lead up to November 5, it seemed to check many of the AAUW boxes:

- Target audience. A gathering of educated women with technical interests.
- High-level women speakers. Leaders willing to share their best practices and experiences.
- Diverse and inclusive community of local women with participants from all over the country.
- Non-partisan. Discussions over two days focused on developing careers and networking.

Even the best-laid non-partisan plans could not escape our political world. This year WWT, as a DEI-type non-profit, lost essential Federal Government funding. Then the Federal Government shutdown impacted travel, and many speakers and attendees cancelled reservations. The Convention Center cost became unfeasible for WWT, and all participants and volunteers were notified the event had to be downsized. WWT leadership took quick action to salvage their event by moving to more affordable space in downtown City Place. Ticket holders and volunteers were notified, and all communications were straightforward and considerate. Wonder Tech Fest became a more intimate gathering with a packed line-up of presentations and discussions.

Since the event was now split between two buildings, it was a 5-minute trek from our branch table to main stage sessions, which may have decreased the foot traffic for us; however, the advantages to having an AAUW branch presence far outweighed disadvantages:

- AAUW brand visibility to a wider audience. Most attendees had never heard of AAUW.
- Low stress volunteer roles and stimulating interactions over the course of a few hours.
- We enabled another women’s organization achieve their career event in the face of extreme adversity.

If you see the following members at our Dec 6th holiday gathering, ask about their experience at Tech Fest: Faye Alperin, Valerie Armstrong, Frances Rozner, Dawn Ide, Mary Ann Takemoto, Judy Willis, and Lynne Katz supported our branch table. Seema Nanda and Juliet Wurr escorted attendees and speakers, as well as the branch table. Gay Witten supported the Tech Fest registration table both days. All these volunteers deserve a big thanks for representing us well!

Calendar Dates to Note

November 27	Thanksgiving Day
December 6	Holiday Event
December 2	Giving Tuesday
December 14	Hanukkah begins
December 25	Christmas Day
December 26	Kwanzaa begins
January 10	Branch meeting

Contact Us

Mail: aauwlongbeach@gmail.com

Web: <https://longbeach-ca.aauw.net/>

[www.facebook.com / aauwlongbeachca](https://www.facebook.com/aauwlongbeachca)

For Vantage Editor: Rebecca Low
rlow1@hotmail.com



Public Policy

by Juliet Wurr, Public Policy Director

AAUW: Non-Partisan but Political

After viewing AAUW-CA's excellent webinar, "Project 2025 Impacts on AAUW Values – One Year Later," I was aghast at how the current Administration's policies and initiatives undermine AAUW's Mission and programs central to AAUW's Policy Priorities. As a non-partisan organization, how, for example, can we turn a blind eye to eliminating the Department of Education, defanging Title IX, and extracting DEI programs from all Federal Government entities?

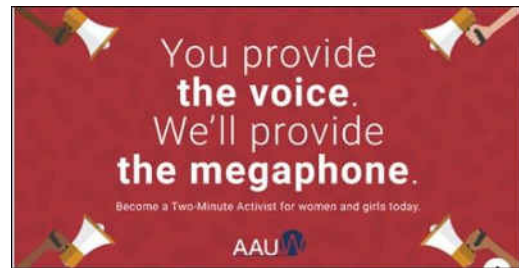
These actions, outlined in the Heritage Foundation's Project 2025, and adopted as policy by the current Administration, contradict AAUW's vision of equity and equality for women and girls, among other things. From AAUW's inception, education has been the bedrock of our efforts to even the playing field for women and girls.

In their webinar, AAUW-CA's Public Policy Co-chairs Missy Maceyko and Amy Hom examined how Project 2025 represented a "...creeping authoritarian effort[s] to undermine fair representation, trusted information, and democratic norms in our country." California's Proposition 50 energized AAUW, and other like-minded organizations, to protect our state from such Federal encroachment. A get-out-and-vote campaign and information about Prop 50, including potential benefits, were consistent with our Mission and nonpartisan commitment. In advancing a pro-democracy message, AAUW contributes to preserving and advancing democracy and our public policy priorities, they explained.

In the conclusion of the webinar, California's Public Policy team offered non-partisan actions we can engage in to support AAUW's Mission and Public Policy Priorities. In a hostile political environment, we mustn't be complacent. The team suggested two activities in which AAUW members could participate.

- ⇒ Advance legislation by participating in AAUW's spring Lobby Days.
- ⇒ Use Bluesky, Resistbot and respond to Action Alerts.

By January 2026, AAUW-CA will be reviewing bills in the California Senate and Assembly in preparation for our Lobby Days. Next month, I'll report on legislative initiatives AAUW-CA is following, and how we can respond to Action Alerts.



Tech Trek Update

by Valerie Armstrong, Tech Trek Branch Coordinator

Please join us in celebrating our Tech Trek campers, teachers, and volunteers on Saturday, January 10, following the business meeting in Room 0-2 at Long Beach City College. A panel of former campers will share their experiences and favorite memories from Tech Trek, as well as answer questions from members and guests. In the spirit of celebrating education, we invite everyone to wear their college T-shirts or school colors.

Tech Trek is a unique opportunity for seventh grade girls to experience a week of college life while participating in hands-on STEM lessons and activities. We should be proud of our branch for providing this opportunity to over 100 deserving students since 1998. This would not have been possible without the generous donations from AAUW Long Beach members.



The January 10th meeting will be our annual Tech Trek fundraiser. We hope to raise enough money to send 12 students to camp at Pepperdine or Whittier College this summer. Tech Trek costs \$1200 per camper. For those who would like to donate to Tech Trek, checks should be made out to: AAUW – CA SPF with Tech Trek Long Beach on the memo line. By donating to the SPF fund, your donation will be tax deductible. Checks should be mailed to Tech Trek Treasurer Pat Ferrer at the address in the Yearbook.

I would like to thank our wonderful Tech Trek Committee members: Nicole Gracie, Tech Trek Alumni Coordinator; Pat Ferrer, Tech Trek Branch Treasurer; Tobi Balma, who has served as Asst. Camp Director and Dorm Mom at Whittier College; and Lynne Katz, who has brought so much wisdom and insight during her first year on our committee.

We look forward to seeing you (with your check book) in your college colors on January 10th!

**Wear your college t-shirt or colors
to the meeting on January 10th!**

Branch Business

by Cacia Kim, Secretary

The following motions were passed during the October 20, 2025 Board Meeting:

Motions

1. Motion to Approve Spending of NCJW \$2,500 Grant Award – Jane Hansen

Amended as follows:

“I move that the Board of Directors approves spending the NCJW \$2,500 grant award for scholarships for AAUW Long Beach – Tech Trek Campers.”

Seconded by Barbara Hall Motion passed as amended

2. Motion to Approve Request to Send Up to 12 Campers to Tech Trek – Valerie Armstrong

“By the direction of the Tech Trek Committee/Special Project, I move that the Board approve the Tech Trek Committee’s request to send up to 12 campers to Tech Trek STEM Camp in June/ July of 2026.”

Motion passed

Local Adventures

The International Dining group tried out a delicious "thali," a specialty of VR, Appu's Turmeric Cafe's owner.

L-R Harriet McDonald, Mary Riddick, Dee Dee Catalano, Juliet Wurr, Amy La, Faye Alperin, and Jane Hansen.

International Cuisine committee is looking for new suggestions for our dining experiences.

Please contact **Faye Alperin** with your new ideas. A committee meeting will be held in January for members. All are welcome.



Many thanks to the November branch meeting panel of Speakers.
From left - Ann Nacino - VA Long Beach and Elizabeth Dole Foundation Fellow; Kristin Camacho—Navy Veteran, general contracting business owner; and Daisy Tate - Marine Corps Veteran, Co-Founder of Veterans Supplemental Support Network (VSSN).
Not to mentionour member Denise Montoya.



Branch Business

by Cacelia Kim, Secretary

Motion from November 17, 2025 EC meeting

Make One-time Branch Donation to Two New AAUW Funds – Ginny Baxter

Amended as follows:

"I move that the Executive Committee approve the transfer of \$500 from 0050 AAUW Long Beach Reserve Fund and donate \$250 to the AAUW 4513 Higher Education Fund and \$250 to the AAUW 4514 Public Policy General Fund."

Seconded by Jane Hansen Motion passed as amended

*Note: Pre-amendment, motion called for Branch to donate \$100 to new Public Policy Fund to meet 5 Star Program requirements; Committee decided to donate \$500 given that Reserve Fund has over \$56,000 currently & bylaws allow spending up to \$500 without Branch approval.

AAUW Fund

By Tobi Balma, AAUW CA Fund Committee and Barbara Hall

The Many Facets of AAUW's Five-Star Program

Our branch is working towards achieving five stars a second time this fiscal year. This article will focus on the most challenging of the five criteria – Advancement. In the month of November there was a fundraiser for AAUW's 9110 Greatest Needs Fund, a vital source of unrestricted support that allows AAUW to respond quickly and effectively to emerging challenges and opportunities. Donations made by branch members prior to December 1st were matched by AAUW National, resulting in double the impact. Our Branch will also make a "branch contribution" to national-level funds via the motion passed during the November 17, 2025 Executive Committee meeting. (See page 5)

The two funds that are highlighted are:

4513 – Defend Higher Education

The Defend Higher Education Fund will enable AAUW to elevate the critical higher education issues impacting women, mobilize advocates across the country, provide strategic resources to students, staff and faculty on campus, and fuel investments in the infrastructure and technology necessary to move our mission forward. Your support ensures AAUW can effectively fight on behalf of women on campuses across the country and ensure that AAUW remains a trusted and powerful voice for equity.

4514 – Public Policy General

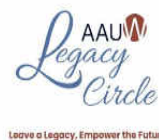
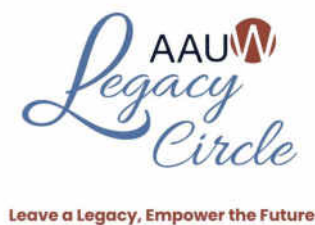
The Public Policy Fund is focused on increasing the impact of our Action Network through growing the number of advocates across the country and providing timely, accurate, and actionable information about our key issues. This fund helps equip branches across the country with timely, customized talking points on core policy issues like Title IX, student debt, and pay equity. Support to this fund enables AAUW to reach and energize new advocates—strengthening our collective impact in the fight for gender equity in education and the workplace.

A third potential Advancement goal is to increase our **Legacy Circle** by just one member.

Benefits of Joining the AAUW Legacy Circle:

- Flexibility – Choose a giving option to fit your financial goals.
- Tax Advantages – Potential savings on estate, income, or capital gains taxes.
- Financial Planning – Some planned gifts provide income to you or your loved ones.
- Enduring Impact – Sustain our work on advocacy, education, and economic security for years to come.

December is a great time of year to donate via a Charitable Gift Donation from one's RMD. Contact Tobi Balma for more Legacy Circle info.



There is no minimum gift requirement to join the Legacy Circle, and the benefits are many. For example:

- Planned gifts afford you flexibility to provide for your family and support AAUW.
- Certain planned gifts may reduce estate or capital gains taxes.
- Planned gifts need not affect your cash flow during your lifetime.

BRANCH INTEREST GROUPS

Joining an interest group (or several) is a great way to get to know other members on a more personal level. Make new friends while participating in fun, informative and educational activities.

Interest groups are for the benefit of AAUW members only; guests may attend meetings a maximum of 3 times before they are required to join. To start a new group, submit a description to the Co-Presidents. They will help you move forward with your idea.



The Book Chat group is off to a fresh start. Lamis is kind enough to have all the meetings at her home. We will meet again on Tuesday October 7, 2025. We share about a book we have read, and tempt other group members to read it also. We try books one might not have considered. If a member prefers, she can share about a recent trip instead. Contact Lamis and join us for our Bookchat gathering at 10:00 am.

Contact: **Lamis Hashem** at 562-221-9361 / theHashemFamily@gmail.com



Cultural Adventures & International Cuisine Group plans trips to museums and other points of interest several times a year. It is usually a mid-week tour with lunch scheduled.

We also plan meals at different ethnic restaurants, usually dinner with an easy drive. Join a group that checks out museums, other interesting locations, and special restaurants.

Ideas for both groups are welcome!



Contact for Adventures: **JoAnn Kuroda** at 562-429-6973 / sojoinlb@aol.com

Contact for International Cuisine: **Faye Alperin** at 562-659-0051 / fayealperin@gmail.com



Great Decisions Groups are self-moderated groups that meet to discuss issues of world importance, guided by the Great Decisions book published annually by the Foreign Policy Association. This short-format publication highlights eight thought-provoking foreign policy challenges currently facing America. The program provides materials that help members share opinions and ideas on critical global issues.

Each person pays for their own copy of the Great Decisions book. Books for 2026 will be ordered NOW and will be available in January. Please contact Rita Powell, chair, for additional information. Two groups meet starting in February: One group meets in person every other Friday afternoon. Contact: **Deloris Mayuga**
Second group meets on Zoom every other Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. Contact: **Carol Clanton**



Literary Ladies Group meets to discuss and compare thoughts on a selected book, fiction or non-fiction. The group comes together to hear thoughts and insights from others in the group. Each member takes a turn recommending and leading the group. The book selection for December is *The Frozen River* by Lawhon.

We share this information so even if you aren't able to join us, you have reading suggestions.

When: meets the second Monday of each month from 12:15—2:15 p.m. at a local restaurant

Contact: **Sharon Westafer**, 562-493-4749.



Public Policy members prepare for our Branch's participation in state Lobby Days 2026. We meet with local and State elected representatives to learn their priorities for the coming year. We stay abreast of AAUW California's legislative agenda, and after three bills are identified for Lobby Days branch committee members research the issues. Our branch participates in Lobby Days either via Zoom or in Sacramento.

An authorized member of the LA County Interbranch Council, AAUW may collaborate with approved partner organizations to work toward common local and state goals. The group passes on knowledge and information to all branch members. Contact: **Juliet Wurr** at 202-716-4145 / jwurr@hotmail.com



The Residential Rentals group started in 2009! We discuss topics relating to residential rentals – things of interest/importance/concern. We keep each other informed.

When: the 3rd Wednesday of odd-numbered months, 10-11:30 a.m.

Where: at the dining room table in our homes or ZOOM

Contact: **Ellen Mathis** epmathis@verizon.net or **Joan Gustafson**, jwg221@aol.com



NOTE:

The **2025-2026 Yearbooks** will be available for pick up at each branch meeting for September-December. Unclaimed Yearbooks remaining after our December 6th holiday gathering will be mailed to home addresses.

NEW! Please RSVP by email to Reservations Chair Charlotte Joseph to let us know how you will attend. Use this email address !

aauwlongbeach.reservations@gmail.com

Deadline to RSVP is November 29

You can pay the \$20 catering fee at any time—online or at the door. Guests are free!

Need some resources to share with others that highlight the AAUW mission and goals?

<https://www.aauw.org/resources/policy/advocacy-toolkit/>

AAUW BRANCH MEETING
Saturday, December 6, 2025
10:00-12:00 Holiday Brunch

Volunteers to help are welcome to come early!

Place: Home of Dolores Mayuga

Guests and /or Potential Members are welcome to RSVP and attend.



AAUW Long Beach Branch

Send address changes for AAUW Vantage to P O Box 15023,
Long Beach, CA 90815

PLEASE
PLACE
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