**AAUW Chicago, Inc. Branch 2024-2025 year-end recap**

The Steering Committee members met at the home of Paula Purdue in 2024 to plan programs for the coming year was on Tuesday, June 25 at 6:00pm. Our second program planning meeting was on Tuesday, July 23 at 6:30pm via zoom. After these meetings, the branch was able to start planning our events, programs, and outings for the year. Thank you to the ladies who attended these program planning meetings.

Our programs continue to promote the AAUW mission and values. Our mission-based programs also earned the branch a star in the national 5-star program. We were engaging members both virtually and in person as there are benefits to both formats.

AAUW celebrated Equal Pay days by spreading awareness on social media throughout the year. The Chicago branch is part of the Equal Pay Day Chicago Coalition. Moms' Equal Pay Day was held on **August 7th**. This important day shed light on the wage gap experienced by mothers in the workplace. The statistics are stark and revealing for moms working full-time, year-round, the wage gap is 71 cents for every dollar earned by fathers in similar roles. When considering all working moms, including those working part-time or part-year, this gap widens to 63 cents on the dollar compared to all working fathers.

On **August 28**, Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander (NHPI) Equal Pay Day, was a critical opportunity to reflect on the persistent wage disparities that affect NHPI women in our communities. In 2022, NHPI women working full time, year-round earned just 66 cents for every dollar earned by white, non-Hispanic men in the same conditions. The situation is even more stark when considering all NHPI women earners, including those in part-time and seasonal roles, who bring home only 60 cents on the dollar.

**September 18** marked a significant milestone as we observed the first-ever Disabled Women’s Equal Pay Day. This day serves as a powerful reminder of the ongoing struggle for equitable pay and recognition for disabled women in our workforce. For every dollar earned by non-disabled men, disabled women earn just 50 cents.

On **October 3rd,** Latina Equal Pay Day, the Equal Pay Chicago Coalition (EPCC), hosted a powerful virtual event in collaboration with Mujeres Latinas en Acción, the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR), Women Employed, and Chicago Federation of Labor. Latinas are disproportionately represented in underpaid industries and often lack basic workplace protections. Farmworkers, domestic workers, and immigrant women, in particular, face exclusions from essential employment safeguards, leaving them vulnerable to wage theft, sexual harassment, and exploitation.

**November 18** - Native Women’s Equal Pay Day—was a day to reflect on the stark economic disparities Native women face. Native American women working full-time, year-round earn, on average, only 58 cents for every dollar earned by non-Hispanic, white men. When we look at all Native women earners, that drops even further to just 52 cents, one of the most significant wage disparities in the U.S. Alarmingly, for some Tribal Nations, the gap is even wider.

On **March 25, 2025**, we promoted Equal Pay Day, the first Equal Pay Day of the year, when white women equal men’s earning from the year before. White women earn 85 cents compared to white men. Women’s Equal Pay Day, a reminder that the fight for fair wages is far from over. According to 2023 Census data, women working full-time, year-round earn just 83 cents for every dollar earned by men. When considering all earners—including part-time and part-year workers—the gap widens to 75 cents. These disparities have real consequences, affecting women’s financial security, career growth, and the well-being of their families.

Branch members met for the Lunch Bunch interest group. The group met at various restaurants for brunch or lunch. It is informal and friends and guests are welcome. Last fall, the group met on August 24 at the Meli Cafe in the historic old Blake Hotel at 500 S. Dearborn St. More outings will be planned for this summer/fall. Thank you to Megan Moser to hosting this group.

On Sept members and guests met at the home of Paula Purdue for our fall kick off meeting on September 28 for Table Talk. Our public policy co-chairs lead the discussion with information on the first Chicago elected school board election. They shared information on how to find who is running for the CPS school board from your ward. We also discussed the upcoming national presidential election and how to talk to neighbors and friends about the election. Members shared how they were promoting getting out the vote and sending postcards to key states. Also, members were given information regarding the national AAUW Get Out the Vote campaign to use to promote voting. Thank you to Paula Purdue and Megan Moser for hosting the meeting. Thank you to Paula for baking her famous cinnamon rolls and to Charlaine Reynolds for also bringing food for our brunch.

Our October 25 outing was to the National Museum of Mexican Art in Pilsen. We had a guided private tour with a docent for Día de Muertos, Where the Past is Present, dedicated to Ray Patlán (1946-2024), a Chicago muralist and painter. The 38th annual exhibition commemorated the celebration of our departed loved ones through beautiful ofrendas. Members and guests also met for lunch before the tour. Thank you to Anne Foley for organizing the outing and planning lunch before the tour.

The Chicago branch, in partnership with the Jane Addams Branch, once again hosted a virtual meeting to showcase two AAUW Fellows and Grantees on Saturday, November 9th. AAUW awarded its largest amount EVER in Fellowships & Grants—$6.3 MILLION to 285 deserving fellows and grantees to pursue academic work and lead innovative community projects that empower women and girls for the 2023-24 academic year. We had about 30 members attend from around the state. This year's presenters included:

* Thallyta Laryssa P F Cavoli received an International Doctoral Degree Fellowship in 2023-2024 to study law at the University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign with a specialization in poverty law, law and economics, and labor and employment law. Her project, entitled “Excusing Legal Requirements on Claims Based on Poverty Status” is an interdisciplinary and comparative study of Brazil and the United States.
* Tonya Carter received a Community Action Grant for 2022-2023. Her project “S.T.E.P.S-n-STEM (Search, Try, Experience and Prepare 2 Succeed in STEM)” is a program to improve the connections to and opportunities for young people to connect to the world of STEM.

The webinar is available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzH3oj2f-Iw>

A big thank you to Ruth Holst and Helen Elkiss of the Chicago branch and Kate Skagg and Elaine Fisher of the Jane Addams branch for organizing and hosting the zoom webinar and moderating the discussion. We are so glad this Chicago branch long standing tradition is still so popular.

17th Annual No Dinner Dinner was held in the fall of 2024. Thank you to everyone who participated and donated to our annual fundraiser. We raised $2500 for AAUW national greatest need fund. Only 17% of members donate nationally. We hope to increase our branch participation so that we can earn a star from national for advancement. We hope in increase donations in the next fiscal year. The branch donated $1000 to national greatest need fund as well for 2025. Thank you to Lori Switzer for organizing the fundraiser.

We started off 2025 with a mission-based program on financial security. Our program, “Navigating Your Retirement Journey: Key Strategies” from Sage Financial Group and our speakers branch member Kris Wano and Christina Castrejon. Comprehensive Financial Life Planning is more than the active management of investments. It is more than the creation of a retirement plan and it goes well beyond regular portfolio checkups. Thank you to branch member Kris Wano for speaking to the branch and Lori Switzer for planning the webinar.

On February 8, members and guests went to the DuSable Museum of Black History for a docent lead tour. Members and guests toured the museum were able to enjoy its diverse holdings that number more than 15,000 pieces and include paintings, sculpture, print works and historical memorabilia. After the tour, attendees went to the Valios Diner for lunch. Thank you to Pamela Sanner for planning and organizing the tour.

On Saturday, March 15, the branch held a webinar with Polly Poskin, retired Executive Director of the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault. Polly Poskin recently retired as the Executive Director for the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault, a statewide non-profit association of community-based rape crisis centers. https://icasa.org/. Members and guests learned from Polly the options of crisis intervention services, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual assault and their significant other after assault. Thank you to Paula Purdue for inviting our speaker and thank you to Megan Moser for hosting the webinar.

The branch sponsored the 20th SWAN Day Movie Screening on March 29 at the Evanston AMC Theatres. We had a private Screening of “Ghost” with Demi Moore, Whoopi Goldberg, and Patrick Swayze. The brainchild of FF2 editor-in-chief Jan Lisa Huttner and WomenArts’ founder Martha Richards, SWAN Support Women Artist Now Day represents a haven for film lovers all over the world! The annual event strives to link women artists and women audience members. Each year, film buffs come together in community for screenings and powerful conversation. Those in attendance were able to hear from the executive director of Rebecca Martin Fagerholm from Cinema Femme discuss the career of Demi Moore. Thank you to Jan Lisa Huttner for planning and supporting the event which was also held in New York City in Times Square. Thank you to Megan Moser, Dorthea Juul, and Lori Switzer for hosting the event in Evanston, helping with check in, and welcoming our speaker and guests.

On Saturday, April 12, members and guests met at the Newberry Library - D’Arcy McNickle Center for American Indian and Indigenous Studies. We had a private presentation from Analú López, the Edward E. Ayer Librarian. She gave presented from the American Indian and Indigenous Studies Collection. The Newberry's Edward E. Ayer collection is one of the largest collections of books and manuscripts on American Indian and Indigenous Studies in the world. In 1911, the Newberry received more than 17,000 items related to Indigenous peoples from collector and trustee Edward E. Ayer. Members and guests met for lunch after the program Thank you to Loretta Pearson for planning the meeting and organizing lunch after the program.

In March, as part of the Equal Pay Day Coalition we helped to promote the Barb Yong Scholarship Contest. Barb Yong, Chicago Branch member, founded this coalition in 2009, laying the foundation for our collective fight to eliminate the wage gap. To honor her incredible contributions, the contest was named after her, ensuring her legacy lives on by supporting the next generation of changemakers. The $1,000 scholarship, awarded by EPCC, was designed to empower college students from Chicago who are passionate about advancing social justice, gender equity, racial justice, education access, and workers’ rights.

Seven branch members attended the 100th AAUW-IL convention for Illinois and held at the Northfield Inn in Springfield, IL. The members were Ruth Holst, Jeane Lindeke, Jenni Purdue, Paula Purdue, Pamela Sanner and Lori Switzer.

The convention started Friday with a social hour to mix and mingle with new and old friends from across the state. After dinner, those in attendance heard from Dre Duvendack, M.A., from the Gender & Sexuality Student Services and Women’s Center, University of Illinois-Springfield and her assistant Emerson Krasnican, BSW. They presented a short video on the literary history of pronouns sharing how language has changed over time. The two speakers explained the need for the correct use of pronouns for LGBTQ+ folks. The takeaway was we need more training and understanding.

Our national AAUW CEO, Gloria Blackwell started off our Saturday convention. She explained what AAUW national is doing on a variety of issues but with a smaller staff than in years past. Ms. Blackwell discussed the different issues AAUW national is working on in DC that align with our mission.

Charlotte J. Warren, PhD and President of Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield, shared with us the changing needs of students as well as the long impact of COVID on all students from learning loss, lack of socialization, and lack of purpose. She strongly believes in education and trade programs, associate's degree programs and bachelor programs. She believes colleges must work closely with high schools and give students the education/training needed to excel in tomorrow’s economy.

Karen Kortsch and Ken Olsen presented Jenni Purdue, the AAUW-IL lobbyist. With all the confusion at the national level, not a lot is happening in the Illinois legislature. The budget is the major bill this year, but because the federal funding is “up in the air,” both representative and senators are not sure how to proceed. Also, with the retirement of Senator Durbin, there will be changes all the way down depending on who runs for his seat. This change will then open seats for others to move up. Senator Durbin has been a good ally for AAUW and AAUW-IL.

AAUW-IL always introduces an update to the Equal Pay Day resolution. In the past all female senators and representative have supported our resolution. This year, none of the republican women are voting for the resolution because this year the resolution includes LGBTQ+ women.

Members were able to choose from four breakout sessions – AI, 5-Star Program, using social media to promote your branch and the Diversity Index. At lunch, AAUW-IL awarded the Agent of Change award to Karen from the Rockford branch due to her commitment to promoting women in her position of alderwoman.

After lunch, new board members were installed. Lori Switzer and Danielle Byron were reelected state membership chairs and Carol Heisler was elected secretary. We heard from Al Llorens, President, Illinois Education Association, on the state of education in Illinois. He thanked all the teachers in the audience and praised the importance of public education. The convention wrapped up with an address from AAUW state president Laura Demeras and then a call to action from Gloria Blackwell our national CEO.

A committee of three members researched and wrote a letter to all congresspeople regarding cuts to higher education. Thank you to Paula Purdue, Anne Foley and Jackie Kirley for their time sending out the letter. The letter was also shared with all branch members to share with their alma maters and local universities.

On June 7, Chicago branch members and guests will celebrate our branch 135th Anniversary at Ostero Via Stato for a three course Italian lunch. We will have branch member Dr. Yesya Yastrubestska who will present her program “From Support to Impact: The Role of AAUW in Promoting Global Awareness of Ukrainian Women Leaders.” We also will be joined by our AAUW-IL state president, Laura Demeris as well as other state branch members. Chicago Inc branch was founded in 1889. We are proud of our history and look forward to many more years promoting equity for women and girls. Thank you to Lori Switzer and the Steering Committe for planning the luncheon.

Members and families will cheer on the Chicago Sky and watch Angel Reese, Brianna Turner, Lindsay Allen, and Kamilla Cardoso! We are planning a branch outing to the August 23 Chicago Sky vs. Connecticut Sun at 3:00pm at the Wintrust Arena.

**Branch Steering Committee**

All are welcome to attend. We are looking for more members to join our steering committee. You can be as involved as your schedule allows. We meet the second Monday of each month. Please join the next meeting or email chicagoaauw@hotmail.com We will meet on Monday, June 9 at 6:30pm via zoom

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81297426120?pwd=C9eJyebaNVuxQkN6VmyqJbFloEbPUZ.1

***Financial Report – Megan Moser, Treasurer***

Our Branch has stayed financially stable and maintained our bank accounts with no issues. It is quite easy with the mobile app and Zelle to deposit checks and receive Zelle payments with fewer visits to the physical bank. (Makes it easier on the treasurer!) We had two events at local museums, the Mexican Museum of Art and the DuSable Museum of Black History, that collected money through Zelle. The Chicago Inc. Branch raised $2500 from our No Dinner Dinner fundraiser in Fall 2024. This amount was an increase from 2023, where we collected $1992. We also withdrew $1500 from our endowment at Fidelity. $1000 was sent to the Greatest Needs at AAUW National for our branch donation. The other $500 was used towards our annual end-of-the-year luncheon, as our Branch is celebrating our 135th anniversary with AAUW.

***2024-25 Public Policy Report - Megan Moser and Paula Purdue, Public Policy chairs***

Our first branch meeting in September 2024 was to discuss how AAUW members could chat with our neighbors, family and friends about the candidates we would vote forn the 2024 Election. Because we are a nonpartisan organization, we do not endorse. But we do have a list of values that have been a part of AAUW forever. Those values include women’s rights in every area, strong public education and a strong democracy for our nation. We encouraged our members to use the AAUW Values to share our reasons for voting.  
  
Megan Moser sends out information and requests from the AAUW-IL Public Policy co-chairs regularly. We encourage everyone to share that information and encourage our members to participate when asked to send witness slips and messages to our legislators in Springfield.

With all the changes being made at the federal level, we are worried about the future of AAUW values. Additionally, last year AAUW added to our Pay Equity Resolution the date that gay women attained Pay Equity. Last year, there were some Republicans that did not support the resolution. We asked why and we were given no reason. This year, the Resolution received no Republican votes. This was distressing.   
  
Because the state legislature in Springfield has no idea what is coming from Congress, it has been difficult to set up a budget. Additionally, very few major bills are going through the Illinois legislature. Our bill to develop an insurance program to fund health and medical leave or families is not being considered this year.  
  
Senator Durbin has decided to retire. There are several folks running for that position. Those folks that are running are opening their seats to bring in new and younger folks into the state and federal legislatures. At least one congressperson is also retiring and that opens new opportunities for new folks to serve.

**Communications/Website/Newsletter - Lori Switzer, editor**

Our branch has excellent communication through our continually updated webpage, which is connected to the AAUW national website and the AAUW-IL website. Make sure you check the website often to see what is new with the branch and AAUW

Our newsletter is sent to 99% of our members electronically each month. The current and past newsletters are also available on our website. We also use Constant Contact for most of our branch communication so make sure you are signed up or contact [chicagoaauw@hotmail.com](mailto:chicagoaauw@hotmail.com) to be added to the distribution list.

The Chicago branch as a continually updated Facebook page. We have 488 followers (an increase of 38 fans from last year) Become a fan of the “Chicago Branch of AAUW” on Facebook to see what is happening locally and nationally with AAUW.

The branch also has an Instagram page. This page is gaining followers and has 122 followers (increase of 19 followers) and has 319 posts. Check it out AAUWCHICAGO

**Membership – VP of Membership Charlaine Reynolds**

We ended the year with 55 paid members, up from 54 last year. The had 5 new members join this year. Charlaine sent out interest emails to women attending AAUW events. As of June 1, from our AAUW community branch roster, we have 20 renewed members and 35 members still to renew. AAUW national increased national dues $2 for the 2025-26 year. Thank you to Charlaine for serving as our VP membership this past year. She will continue for the 2025-26 year.

**2025-2027 Slate of Officers**

Thank you to our members who will be elected to our Executive steering committee.

Admin - Lori Switzer

Treasurer - Megan Moser

Membership - Charlaine Reynolds

Programs – run by planning committee

Secretary – Ruth Holst

Director at Large – Barbara Harris

Director ad Large – Loretta Pearson

**Daytime Book Club 2024-2025 – Lori Switzer and Ruth Holst, chairs**

The Daytime book club met over zoom all year long. The accommodated attendees as well as included newer members from other AAUW-IL branches. As are welcome to attend. The groups met on the third Wednesday of every month at 1:00pm. A big thank you to Ruth Holst for hosting the zoom meetings each month. Thank you to the members who have suggested books and led our thought-provoking discussions.

* July 17 – *The Art Thief*
* Aug 21 – *The Book of Fire: A Novel* by Christi Lefteri
* Sept 18 – *The Heaven and Earth Grocery Stor*e by James McBride
* October 16 – *Agent Josephine: American Beauty, French Hero, British Spy* by Damian Lewis
* November 20 – *The Women They Could Not Silence* by Kate Moore
* December 18 – *The Expatriates* by Janice Y.K. Lee

No meeting in January

* February 19 -*The Sisterhood: The Secret History of Women at the CIA* by Liza Mundy
* March 19 – *Women in the Valley of the Kings: The Untold Story of Women Egyptologists* by Kathleen Shephard
* April 16- *The Cliffs* by J. Courtney Sullivan
* May 21 – *By Any Other Name* by Jodi Picoult
* June 18 – *The Women* by Kristin Hannah
* July 16 – *The Wilds: A Novel in Five Acts* by Louis Bayard
* August 20 – *The Covenant of Water* by Abraham Verghese

**Program Planning meetings for 2025-2026 year**

Our first program planning meeting will be held

The second planning meeting will be in July over zoom at 6:30pm