



Catherine Cox, President



## President's Message

**January/February  
Edition 2023**

**Happy New Year, Members of AAUW!**

Many members have told me how much they enjoyed our Winter Holiday Luncheon. Our silent auction earned approximately \$625 and the raffle \$550 for our coffers. Money from the raffle goes to support Community Outreach. A thank you goes to all who helped to make the luncheon a success!

Now, I'd like to address two different issues. The first pertains to participation. I want to encourage all of you to come to our monthly branch membership meetings and to take part in our committees and other activities. This active participation helps us to bond as a community and supports our AAUW colleagues who are tasked with chairing committees (Book Finders, Community Outreach, and Stem), inviting speakers, and promoting membership. Participation also helps to groom members for leadership roles. Our slate of officers is typically drawn from members who are actively involved in the branch. Finally, and most importantly, without broad and in-depth participation, it is difficult to support our very important missions. We need your energy and creativity, your participation and leadership. I realize that this is not possible for everyone, but where and when it is, I encourage you to take part in the activities of AAUW. No one, of course, is expected to do everything!

I also hope that you will carefully read the recommendations for national bylaw amendments, their rationales, and then vote. Concerns have been raised by some branch board members that some of these proposed changes will place too much power in the National Board of Directors. Deleting the rule for giving 60-days' advance notice to membership before voting on changes in dues is especially concerning. The new wording does not specify a length of notice. Also, the Board will select its own officers under the new plan. Currently AAUW members have a say in officer selection.

The rationales given for some of these changes also seem weak. Why, for example, should we want to alter our purpose statement. Currently it reads: "to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research." The recommendation is to delete the phrase "through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research," which has been an important part of our purpose statement for years? The rationale begins:

This rewrite is not a substantive change, but more accurately reflects IRS regulatory language and uses a more general description of AAUW's specific purpose – to advance equity for women and girls – moving the language related to how the purpose is implemented out of the description of purpose, although continuing to indicate in a subsequent sentence, in language similar to the current bylaws provision, ways in which the purpose may be carried out."

If the IRS requires a change in our purpose statement, the National Board should say so. Apparently, this is not required. "Flexibility" is also mentioned as a reason for the desired change. Do we want this flexibility, or do we like some focus to our energies? Also, I would argue, our current statement seems to reflect our identity as educated women. Please review the recommended bylaw amendments, the rationales given for these changes, and vote your conscience. Voting opens on April 5. Online voting ends at 5:00 pm ET on May 15.

I look forward to seeing you at the YWCA on Saturday, February 4, to hear Alyssa Barrera Mason discuss her work for the Downtown Management District. The meeting begins at 10:30 a.m., but do come early for refreshment and conversation.



## Corpus Christi Branch Meeting

Saturday, February 4, 2023

10:30 a.m.

**YWCA, Community Room**

**4601 Corona Drive**

**Topic: Downtown Management District: What Is It,  
What Does It Do, and Why We Should Care**

**Speaker: Alyssa Barrera Mason, Executive Director**



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



**Alyssa Barrera Mason**, a native of Corpus Christi, will discuss the mission and activities of the Corpus Christi Downtown Management District (DMD) as well as her personal journey to leadership of the organization and her commitment to Corpus Christi. She has led the Corpus Christi DMD as Executive Director since early 2018. Prior to leading the downtown team, Alyssa worked for the City of Corpus Christi for seven years, serving as the City's first Business Liaison for the City Manager's Office. Her duties included internal coordination for economic development, downtown redevelopment and tourism efforts as well as coordination with partner agencies.

Alyssa earned her Bachelor of Business Administration in 2010 and Master of Public Administration in 2012, both from Texas A&M University Corpus Christi. Alyssa was honored as Corpus Christi Under 40 in 2013. She is a graduate of Leadership Corpus Christi Class 42 and has served on Leadership Corpus Christi Alumni Board, Young Business Professionals of the Coastal Bend Board and TAMUCC Alumni Board. She is an Economic Development Finance Professional, a Certified Economic Developer (CEcD) through the International Economic Development Council and an Emerging Leader Fellow through the International Downtown Association.



# Congratulations Kelly Gonzalez

## An Honoree of the Prestigious 2023 Y Women in Careers Award

By Catherine Cox

Chief Operations Officer of ValueBank of Texas, Kelly has led the way in modernizing local banking. While holding this very demanding job, Kelly has carved out time to serve our community. An active member of AAUW and dedicated to advancing educational opportunities for women and girls, she has served on the branch board of directors for many years. Formerly our Finance Officer, Kelly now chairs the Community Outreach Committee. Most impressive has been Kelly's creative approach to outreach during the severe outbreak of Covid-19. When there were no vaccines, and we were near total lock-down, Kelly was persistent in continuing our branch's various outreach projects. To celebrate and award scholarships to twenty graduating senior girls of Miller High School, she planned a drive-through ceremony at ValueBank. She also altered the way Y Teens received Christmas gifts for their families to assure that the girls felt valued and that everyone was protected from the virus. I have the highest respect for Kelly for her compassion, commitment, persistence, and creativity in her long and successful career.

Kelly now joins five other branch members as part of the Y Women in Careers Hall of Fame: Shirley Selz (1984), Mary Sherwood (2010), Mary Jane Hamilton (2011), Carie Roach (2015), and Sharon Trott (2016). Congratulations to all of you for your outstanding careers and service. This is indeed an impressive honor roll for our branch.



Pictured with Kelly at the announcement of 2023 winners are Dottie Ewing, Nancy Wesson-Dodd, and Catherine Cox.





## YW Teen Holiday Shopping Event

By Kelly Gonzalez

Saturday, December 10, was a busy day at the YWCA. Members from the Outreach Committee along with staff from the YWCA and some special volunteers were getting ready for the Annual YW Teens Holiday Shopping Event.

While the girls and their families waited their turn, they were treated to Christmas ornament making fun along with hot chocolate and other goodies. This was the first year the Y has hosted the ornament making event, which was a big success. The event was organized to offer a place for the girls and their families to wait as well as promote family bonding during this special time of the year. The room was full of excitement as families sat and decorated the ornaments and had some quality time together. One of the family members told the Y staff she had stayed during the entire event and had so much fun working on them with her family. She was looking forward to having their ornaments on the tree this year as a special reminder. This was the goal of the event!

There were 32 girls who attended the event and, while it was less than the 75 expected, they kept the volunteers busy. It was a great event and a wonderful way to prepare for the blessings of Christmas.

I am sending a BIG Thank You to all of the AAUW Members who donated gift wrapping items along with the members gave so much of their time: Dottie Ewing and Diana Cardenas for being the shopping Santas; Shirley Selz, Amy Rose, Kris Conlan, Janet Blanke, Diana Reyes and Dottie Ewing for helping the day of the event; Vickie Natalie for bringing the 25 gift bag sets. These took care of most of the wrapping for the day and to all others who generously gave wrapping items.

Another BIG Thank you to the YWCA staff and volunteers: Nancy Wesson-Dodd, Lorri Doubrava, Ann Kornhauser, Tammy Kollanda and Trini Jimenez for their help with planning and on the day of the event.

A special thanks to my co-worker, Ashley Sherman, for coming to my aid when she knew I was looking for volunteers. She loves wrapping gifts and had a blast.





## Corpus Christi Branch 2022 Holiday Luncheon

The AAUW Corpus Christi Branch held its Holiday Luncheon on Saturday, December 3, 2022, in the Retama Room at the Del Mar College Heritage Campus. We had 38 members who attended and enjoyed the festivity and comradery. Lunch, catered by Jason's Deli, was a preselection of sandwiches and specialty salads. Members also brought tea, water, and extra desserts to share. Tables were decorated with festive centerpieces, courtesy of AAUW President Catherine Cox. Program Vice President Mary Sherwood hosted the meeting.

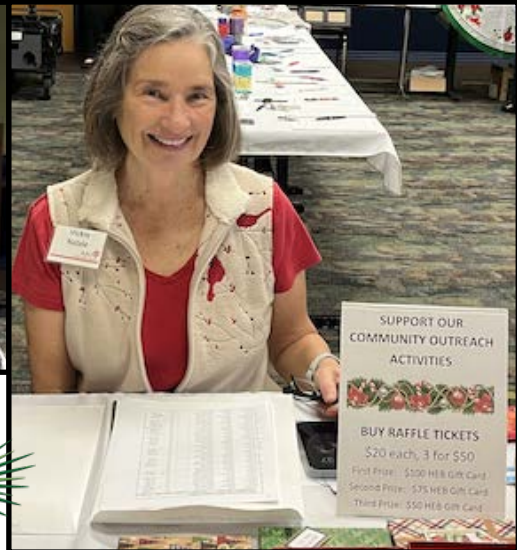
Raffle tickets were sold to support the Community Outreach programs. The winners of the raffle drawing were Cheryl Sanders, who won a \$50 HEB gift card; Jan Hilton, who won a \$75 HEB gift card; and Mary Sherwood, who won a \$100 HEB gift card. Thank you to all members who purchased raffle tickets to support our community outreach programs. We raised over \$550.

Members also had a good time perusing multiple tables of items for the Silent Auction. We had two Tiffany-style lamps and a Tiffany-style table on display, plus jewelry, a Levenger writing pen, pictures, quilts, a Russian tea set, books, and much more. The highest bidders were delighted to take their new treasures home. We raised \$625 at the Silent Auction for the branch.





# Holiday Luncheon Smiles



## AAUW Community Outreach Committee

From Kelly Gonzalez

The Community Outreach Committee strives to put the AAUW mission into action in the community through various community projects.

The YW Teens Holiday Shopping Event was a big success thanks to the many AAUW members and volunteers and staff from the YWCA.

We are working with the YWCA on the Equal Pay Event coming up in March. This year the Equal Pay Day is March 15.

Coming up in May is the Miller High School Senior Celebration and we are looking towards the Second Annual Peace of Mind Seminar in October.

### **Meeting Schedule (Second Monday of the month at 6:00)**

**February 13**  
**March 13**  
**April 10**

**May 8**  
**June 12**

**Be sure to read the article in this newsletter about the Community Outreach Christmas event.**







## BOOK FINDERS

Hello, everyone. The Book Finders are very busy handling the deluge of book donations that arrived over the holidays. All available workers are greatly needed to help price and shelve these new arrivals.

We are looking forward to the next book sale which takes place March 9-11. Please come, and bring a friend or two. See you there.

Kris Conlan

### Girls Discover STEM event – March 1, 2023

Our next Girls Discover STEM event is scheduled for March 1 from 10am – 2pm at Del Mar Windward Campus. This year we are partnering with Del Mar to provide a day that will introduce 100 High School girls from the Coastal Bend to a few of the STEM majors that Del Mar offers including the Natural Sciences, Computer Science and Engineering. Women faculty and current Del Mar students will provide interactive breakout sessions that will help the participants understand where these STEM majors can lead! There will also be women speakers who will share their educations and career journeys with the girls.

A special thanks goes out to Cheryl Sanders, Jennifer Gonzales, and Nina Fisher for all their work in organizing this event and engaging the key resources from Del Mar!

SCIENCE

TECHNOLOGY

ENGINEERING

MATH

From Janet Blanke





## INTEREST GROUP NEWS



**The Lunch Bunch** will be meeting on Tuesday, February 21st, at 12:30 pm at The Cheesecake Factory, located in La Palmera Mall.

From Susan Birchfield



From Dottie Ewing

**Page Turners** will meet February 20 at 7 p.m. at the home of Lessie Hoffman. Kristin Conlan will review *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini. Co-hosts are Michelle Balis and Olivia McDonald. Please join us for another interesting review by Kris! RSVPs are welcome but not required.



From Agnes Hamilton

**The Gardening Divas** will meet

- Feb. 15** at 3pm for a presentation by Kevin Gibbs, the CEO of Horticulture Nueces County Agrilife Extension.
  - March 15** at 3pm for a presentation by Renee Brown, a Nueces Master Gardener on propagation.
  - April 19** is our last date with speaker and topic TBA.
- The members will be notified by email and are asked to RSVP to either Joanie Whitmire or Agnes Hamilton.



For more information on the interest groups of AAUW CC Branch, refer to the Branch 2022-2023 Yearbook. Members will find descriptions of interest groups, gathering days and time, and contact information for interest group chairs. The yearbook is a valuable tool for information about our Branch.





### CHRISTMAS CLASSICS AT KATZ 21

Good friends, Good food, and a discussion of *The Moon and Sixpence*  
by W. Somerset Maugham.



### Wine & Cheese



From Susan Birchfield

**Susan Birchfield and Josefina Villarreal are the new Co-chairs of Wine and Cheese.** At the January gathering, Wine and Cheese members voted to continue meeting in members homes, but rather than having one person responsible for food and wine, we would do a cooperative approach with everyone bringing either a bottle of wine or an appetizer. This month we will be meeting at Josefina Villarreal's home at 5 pm, Sunday, February 12th. The theme for this month will be "love". Members are asked to bring a bottle of wine or an appetizer that reflects this theme.



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**FREE  
ADMISSION**

## Food Concessions

**9AM-4PM American Bank Center**

<https://tbfbay.org/>

[Teen Bookfest by the Bay: Your guide to the free reading event \(caller.com\)](#)