



Corpus Christi (TX) Branch

American Association of University Women

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

Vision: Equity for all.

December Edition 2024

Kick Off the Holiday Season with Fun and Merriment at Annual Branch Luncheon

What: Annual Branch Luncheon and Silent Auction
When: Saturday, Dec. 7, at 11 am
Where: All Saints Episcopal Church, [3026 S. Staples](#)



This is a friendly reminder about our annual holiday luncheon and silent auction is scheduled for Saturday, December 7, at the All Saints Episcopal Church, starting at 11:00 am. Remember to let us know if you are coming and if you are bringing a side dish or dessert. An accurate headcount is needed for table set up and purchasing ham.

Update on the raffle tickets: Diana Reyes has received a donation of three \$100 gift cards, one each for Amazon, Target, and Walmart. Tickets are \$10 each, or 3 for \$25. We will have three containers to collect tickets, and you can decide if you want to place one ticket in each container for a chance to win each of the gift cards, or you can place all your tickets in one container, which will increase your odds of winning that gift card. If you buy the 3-pack bundle, you will receive a fourth BONUS ticket applicable for a \$100 gift card to the Blue Clove, the restaurant where we met last May. So, for a \$25 donation, you will get FOUR tickets for chances to win these four great prizes. We thank Diana Reyes for her ingenuity in obtaining these donations for prizes, which means that members will be donating only once rather than twice for the raffle.

For those who are unable to attend the luncheon: You can still buy raffle tickets by mailing a check to Vickie Natale, Finance Officer, before December 7. Please indicate which container(s) you wish your tickets to be placed. REMEMBER: this is a fundraiser, as well as a fun activity for the group, so please plan to buy tickets.

Silent Auction: Don't forget to bring your silent auction items. The variety of items available has

continued on page 2

President's Message

Finding Hope in Troubled Times



Kelly Gonzalez, President

I am reading a couple of little books that I picked up at the last book sale. The first one, *America Looks Up*, is from one of my favorite authors, Max Lucado. Written after 9/11, it's about *Finding Hope in Troubled Times*. It seemed to be a timely topic for where we are now. The other one is *Rules of Civility: The 110 Precepts That Guided Our First President in War and Peace*. Civility seems like something our country could use more of anytime, but especially now.

As I am reading through these short books, I am reminded that our country, like each of us, has been through some good times and some really tough times. But we have always come through as a united country. While it might seem like that is not possible right now, I encourage you all to not lose hope, and do what you can do when asked to help.

I will leave you with Rule #6, one I am working hard to be better at.

Sleep not when others speak, sit not when others stand, speak not when you should hold your peace, walk not on when others stop. The author translated this as "Before you can tell whether others are speaking, standing, or stopping you must be aware of them first." I know I am guilty of not always being present and I am working on not having my mind somewhere else when I am with others.

As we wind down another year, let's all remember what's important and find time for yourself. Not sure George Washington had a rule for this but it's definitely one we should have. *Happy Holidays!*

Annual Branch Luncheon *Continued from p. 1*

always provided interest and entertainment, as well as raised donations for the branch.

Christmas Ornament: Be sure to bring a Christmas ornament that you already have for the ornament exchange. Ornaments should be wrapped so that everyone is surprised with their new treasure. Add a gift tag to your package and write "From: (your name)" on it so that the new owner will know who to thank.

Update on payment capability: We will bring the Square terminal so that members can opt to use charge cards to pay for tickets and auction items. However, if you are able, we would prefer cash or checks, since fees are always deducted from credit card purchases.

Del Mar College AAUW Students Thrive at University of Maryland Leadership Conference

By Diana Cardenas

At our November 2, 2024, branch meeting members were engaged by the creative, well-organized presentation of AAUW Del Mar College students, who shared their out-of-the-ordinary experiences at the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL) gathering at The University of Maryland.

Two of the travelers—Kaila Cavazos Guerra and Arianna Rios—were present at our branch meeting, along with another group member, Alyssa Silva. Four member-travelers participated at the Maryland University conference: Arianna Rios, Veronica Rivera, Kalia Guerra, and Sofia Jimenez. Their PowerPoint presentation was cleverly structured as a spiral binder with color tabs that divided each student's individual contribution. Each student responded to the three key items:

- What I Appreciated Most.
- Favorite Session Attended.
- Why do I feel that it is important for student leaders to attend this type of conference?

As an example, Arianna Rios, Secretary, Hometown Corpus Christi, who majors in Advertising, Public Relations, identified her favorite session attended: "Claim Your Power: Skill for Stopping Harassment, Abuse, and Assault."

Veronica Rivera, Member, Hometown Orange Grove, who majors in Sociology, noted that it is important to attend these sessions to meet and "experience like-minded peers who promote leadership."

Kaila Guerra, President, Hometown Corpus Christi, who majors in Physical Therapy Assistant,

avored the session "Reproductive Health, Rights and Justice Activism on Campus and Beyond."

Sofia Jimenez, Member, Hometown Aransas Pass, who majors in Addiction Studies, Mental Health, and Organizational Management and Leadership (BAS), singled out "Financial Literacy" as her favorite session attended.

To end their presentation, the students offered a tribute to three outstanding national women who received the NCCWSL "Women of Distinction Award" by providing their names and photos.

The AAUW Del Mar College students considered the audience's needs and enjoyment, inserting colorful images that represent their majors and key items. Essentially, the presentation of Arianna, Veronica, Kaila, and Sofia informed and cheered the audience with their imagination and enthusiasm. The students, polite ladies, thanked AAUW members for the donation to help them attend the meaningful, rewarding conference.



(Left to Right) Kelly Gonzalez, Kaila Cavazos-Guerra, Alyssa Silva, Arianna Rios, Diana Cardenas and Cheryl Sanders.

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Endowed Scholarship Banquet

By Vickie Natale

On November 12, 2024, Kris Conlan and Deb Wilkins, co-chairs of Book Finders; Kelly Gonzalez, President; and Vickie Natale, Finance Officer, had the honor of attending the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Endowed Scholarship Banquet as representatives for the Branch. This event is held each year to give loyal donors the opportunity to meet the students who have received their scholarships. Not all of our scholarship recipients were able to attend this year, but we had the pleasure of meeting one of our recipients and two other students who received scholarships from organizations that were unable to send a representative to the banquet.



Seated at our table was Dorothy Barringer, our Sue Stanford Scholarship recipient for 2024-25. Dorothy is a senior at TAMUCC and will graduate in May with her teaching degree. She is currently doing her residency teaching at King High School in the 11th grade history classes. Most notable, Dorothy also attended Del Mar College where she earned her associate's degree, graduating Summa Cum Laude, and where she participated in the AAUW student organization. We were thrilled to hear about the connectivity of our organization across the two higher education campuses in town.

Dorothy is also a mother of three children. Her goals are to be a good role model for her children and to motivate all her students to dare to pursue their dreams, just as she has done. This event was a wonderful opportunity to meet Dorothy and hear more about her life story.



There were two additional female student scholars sitting at our table that we had the pleasure of meeting. Daisy Lopez – a Moody High School graduate – is pursuing a master's degree in Chemistry, and McKenzie Cole is a senior pursuing a bio-medical science degree, with plans to continue for a master's degree in public health. Both women received scholarships from organizations that were unable to send a representative to the banquet.

What a joy it was to have the opportunity to meet these young women and to hear about their experiences in the STEM fields. Getting to attend an event like this truly underscores the impact that our Branch is making for women in our community who are working hard to pursue their educational goals.

AAUW Book Finders Participate in All Saints Episcopal Church Festival

By Vickie Natale

The AAUW Book Finders set up a table on Saturday, Nov. 9, 2024, at the All Saints Episcopal Church Festival, from 11 am to 4 pm. The Branch also had a table with information and registration forms for becoming a member of AAUW, and we distributed advice pamphlets from our Peace of Mind workshops. The outdoor event was blessed with perfect weather – no high winds, sunny skies, and plenty of shade under the trees. It was a great opportunity to get our name out in the community, as well as sell a few books. Several Branch members hosted their own tables with specialty items for sale. We had between 10 to 15 Branch members either working or attending the festive community event. Thank you to all who participated.





Supporting an AAUW Partner: West Oso State of the District

By Diana Cardenas

On November 20, 2024, AAUW members supported a STEM partner by attending the West Oso State of the District gathering, held at the Harvin Center, Del Mar College. Hundreds of Corpus Christians, representing a cross section of community groups and businesses, listened intently to members of the West Oso ISD Education Foundation, Board Members, and Superintendent Kim Moore explain the initiatives, activities, challenges, collaborations, and achievements that shape a positive identity for the school district and ensure that it carries out its crucial purpose and mission: to support its teachers, inspire and guide all students to apply their skills, and provide opportunities for them to reach their potential. AAUW members—Shirley Selz, Nancy Wesson Dodd, Leslie Peart, and Diana Cardenas—attended to learn as part of the interested audience.



Kimberly Moore, Superintendent,
West Oso ISD

The mingling among individuals from various groups created a cheerful mood for breakfast, made festive by the familiar songs of the West Oso High School Mariachi musicians, led by Gabriel Davila. We four were moved by the sight of hundreds of Corpus Christians, standing proudly for the colors by the high school ROTC; singing to the emotional “Star Spangled Banner,” sung by Dawn Marshall; and reverently holding hands to hearts as the teachers of the year, Kimberly Hamling and Alexander Turner, recited the honored “Pledge of Allegiance.”

Enhancing the positive atmosphere was the presentation by the key speaker, Mr. Lance Harper, who excelled academically and athletically at West Oso, a 1988 graduate, whose illustrious career includes 25 years as an educator/coach, 27 years with the Dallas Mavericks, and as the Mavericks’ Academy Skills and Camp Director.

Mr. Harper credited his West Oso teachers, principals, and coaches, some seated in the audience, for encouraging, guiding, and inspiring him to achieve by giving him confidence. For them he developed respect, admiration, and trust. We AAUW members were delighted to know that our educator Leslie Peart knows Mr. Harper and her mother taught the speaker.

Zakyra Stafford described numerous school activities that she supports and organizations that she helps lead. She detailed her plans for further development and a profession. Following Zakyra, senior Benjamin Molina detailed his involvement in helping fellow students address their needs, analyzing an issue that they identify, and collectively generating solutions to involve in problem solving to improve

continued on page 7

Changes to our Scholarship Agreement Forms at TAMUCC and DMC

By Vickie Natale

As a follow-up to the approval of our 2024-25 budget, we have successfully updated our scholarship agreement forms with Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMUCC) and Del Mar College (DMC). On October 22, 2024, we signed a new agreement form at TAMUCC for the Sue Stanford Memorial Scholarship, increasing the annual amount to \$2,000, and for the Betty Maroney Scholarship in Education to be increased to \$1,000 annually. Then, on November 13, 2024, we signed the agreement form at DMC for the two direct scholarships to be increased to \$1,000 each annually, meaning that recipients will receive \$500 in the fall semester and \$500 in the spring semester. In addition, on both the DMC direct scholarship agreement form as well as the DMC endowed scholarship agreement form, we finetuned the language on the criteria to better ensure that our scholarship recipients are active members of the AAUW student organization. We thank AAUW member Cheryl Sanders for helping us identify the need to make this change.

West Oso State of the District *Continued from p. 6*

the school life of peers.

Superintendent Moore spoke positively of partnerships with community entities to obtain opportunities for students and seek scholarships to mitigate the district's lack of resources. Also, she proudly recognized two graduates whose achievements demonstrate paths for the school body to follow. As an example, Lucero Escutia, a 2015 graduate, majored in elementary instruction at TAMUCC, graduated, and now teaches at West Oso's John F. Kennedy Elementary, demonstrating enthusiasm, regard, and guidance for the children. D'Schon Simmons, who was enthralled by robotics in the 4th grade, graduated and was accepted at Princeton, where, as a sophomore, he functions as class president.

Members of the West Oso Foundation, its

board of trustees, district administrators, school personnel, and Superintendent Moore thanked everyone for their support: the city of Corpus Christi, public schools, health institutions, service-oriented agencies, higher education, businesses, and individual families. Ms. Moore is an AAUW member.



Shirley Selz, Nancy Wesson Dodd, Diana Cardenas, and Leslie Peart

Community Outreach Committee

YW Teen Christmas Shopping Event



The Community Outreach Committee invites you to join us at the YWTeen Christmas shopping event. The event will be on Saturday, Dec. 14 from 1-3 pm at the YWCA.

We invite you to help us by volunteering at this wonderful event. Volunteers are needed to help the girls with shopping, gift wrapping, coloring activity and refreshments.

YWTeen is a character development program for girls in the fifth and sixth grades provided by the YWCA Corpus Christi.

You also have the opportunity to donate gift bags, tissue paper, bows and scissors. Please bring items to the Y or at the December luncheon meeting.

You can help by buying raffle tickets. Tickets are \$10 each or a bundle of 3 for \$25. When you purchase the bundle you will get an extra ticket and have the opportunity to enter a special raffle. Raffle prizes are gift cards to Walmart, Amazon, Target and the Blue Clove Restaurant. Next committee meeting is on Thursday, Dec, 5th at 12:15 at YWCA.

Special Committee News

Bookfinders are Back



The Bookfinders are very excited to learn that the renovation project at Neyland Library is now completed. We are looking forward to holding four book sales to support our mission to serve women and girls in our community.

The book sale schedule for 2024-25 follows:

- January 23-25
- March 27-29
- June 12-14

For more information, contact Kristin Conlan.

Interest Group News



Wine and Cheese

Sunday, Dec. 8th

at 5 pm



From Susan Birchfield

Wine and Cheese is scheduled to meet at on Sunday, Dec. 8th, at 5 pm, and is being hosted by Debby Wilkins and Kris Conlan. We will be meeting at Debby's home.

Please RSVP to Susan Birchfield if you plan to attend.



From Susan Birchfield

The Lunch Bunch will be meeting at 12:30 pm on Tuesday, Dec. 17th. We will be meeting at Catfish Charlie's, located at [5830 McArdle Rd. #12](#).

Please RSVP to Susan Birchfield if you plan to attend.



[\(1\) AAUW-CC | Facebook](#)

We would love to have pictures and short video clips from your AAUW activities! Please send them to either Lara or Kay at aauw.cc.social@gmail.com. Also include what the picture or video is, the date, and who is in the picture or video. We would like to showcase our members! Our social media email address is aauw.cc.social@gmail.com



Kate Kuhlmann provides an introduction to the 89th legislative session.

AAUW Texas is inviting you to a Public Policy Zoom meeting

AAUW TX policy analyst, Kate Kuhlmann of Hillco Partners, assists us in identifying legislation to support or oppose on issues that will impact the women of Texas. During this Zoom meeting she will present perspective on issues that will likely see traction in the upcoming session. She will also provide suggestions on how AAUW TX members can be most effective in our public policy efforts.

Time: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 at 7:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6542612876?omn=82234997601>

Meeting ID: 654 261 2876