

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



Corpus Christi (TX) Branch

American Association of University Women



Vision: Equity for all

January 2026 Edition

Editors: Diana Cardenas and Deanne Purcell



Kelly Gonzalez,
President

President's Message

This time of the year I think most of us are thinking about the New Year and possibly resolutions! I know I am, but I don't typically make any as I never keep them. One that I will make to all of you is to keep you more informed on the happenings of the State and National AAUW offices. But only the most important ones, I promise!

At the top of the list is the **National's Initiative on Defending Higher Education & Public Service.**

The new Public Service Loan Forgiveness rule opens the door to targeting nonprofits doing critical equity work. AAUW is speaking out. Lawsuits have been filed against this rule, and AAUW is closely monitoring this. They also just wrapped up the second session of the RISE Committee negotiations and are tracking expected January proposals that could cap graduate and professional loans and limit access to advanced degrees. And they not going to be quiet, and neither should we. [Add your voice by signing AAUW's Pledge for Equity and stay ready for what's next.](#)

Equally important is their It's My Vote Initiative, highlighting the importance of off-year elections. This year, AAUW is leveling up its [It's My Vote!](#) campaign with new Partner Spotlights, kicking off with the League of Women Voters and the Unite and Rise 8.5 initiative. Watch for tools, stories, and co-branded resources to help your branch register voters, fight disinformation, and keep equity on the ballot all the way through 2026.

Please make sure you are signed up to receive communications from AAUW national as they always provide great ways for us to be involved and make a difference.

I hope your Holidays were great and wish you all a very Happy New Year! See you in 2026!

Kelly

AAUW December Luncheon

AAUW members congregated at All Saints Episcopal Church on Saturday, December 6, to celebrate the holiday season.

The joyful gathering included a delicious meal, a duet of Leslie Peart and her singing partner from the Church of the Good Shephard, Monica Andaverde, who beautifully sang Christmas carols and led the members in a sing-along, a fun Christmas carol puzzle activity, four raffles, a silent auction, and lots of fun and laughter.

The Christmas raffles were wonderful successes. Thank you to our sponsors: Jessica Arredondo, Financial Advisor with Edward Jones, who sponsored three of our gift cards and Kelly Gonzalez, who sponsored a gift card. Thank you to all the members who supported this event by purchasing raffle tickets. These proceeds, along with those from the silent auction, sponsor community outreach projects.



December Luncheon



Continued on next page

December Luncheon



Community Outreach

YWTeen Holiday Shop: Unwrap the Magic

By Diana Reyes

The 2025 YWTeen Holiday Shop: Unwrap the Magic was a success thanks to all the work everyone did to make this event memorable for the girls. We had 38 YWTeens, 22 volunteers, 11 AAUW members and 6 YWCA staff members participate this year.

A special thanks goes out to the following AAUW members: Diana Cardenas for helping to count all the gifts we had from last year and going to buy all the gifts we needed for this year; Kelly for helping us get volunteers, making the volunteer certificates and sponsoring the Christmas ornament activities; Alka for helping us get volunteers and assisting us get the names of volunteers for the certificates; Jennifer and Cheryl for getting us the Del Mar volunteers and getting us their names for the certificates; and Carie for sponsoring our refreshments.

Thanks to Vickie, Diana C, Shirley, Jennifer, Cheryl, Alka, Jo, Catherine, Kelly and Sylvia for helping the girls select gifts, wrap them, help with the activities and refreshments, and taking pictures.

We are grateful to all the members who contributed gift bags, wrapping paper, tape and bows.

We appreciate YWCA Staff-Esmeralda Herrera-Teran CEO for her support and leadership, Mayra Zamora Director of Operations for helping us plan the event, Rolando Garza Program Coordinator for making sure all the rooms were set up, and everything was ready for the event, YWTeen staff-Deandre Washington, Anne Kornhauser and Angie Cuevas for helping on the day of the event by assisting us with registering the girls, setting up rooms with tables and chairs, helping to set up the gifts and being available to help as needed. Our partners at the YWCA were very helpful, supportive and a pleasure to work with.

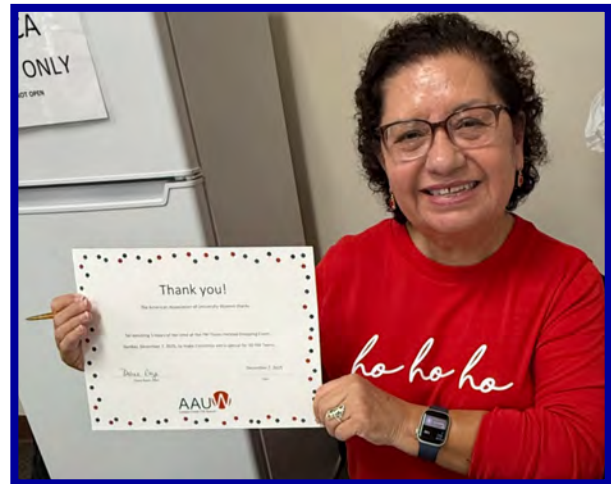
The YWTeens had a wonderful time at this year's Holiday Shop. They enjoyed selecting and wrapping gifts for their family and pets, making Christmas ornaments while visiting with their friends and having refreshments. The volunteers, AAUW members and YWCA staff had the pleasure of giving the YWTeen girls a fun and joyful experience.



YWTeen Holiday Shop: Unwrap the Magic



YWTeen Holiday Shop: Unwrap the Magic



STEM

by Jennifer Gonzales

On December 17, the DMC AAUW girls and STEM Committee members hosted a fun Christmas party with 15 girls from the West Oso Girls Junior High in STEM group. Jennifer Gonzales and Cheryl Sanders gave a short overview on mentorship and shared the importance of having a good mentor.

The rest of the evening was filled with Christmas music and festive games with prizes. Anai Austin, Natalie Morales, and Jasmin Vasquez led the games and handed out gift bags filled with Christmas goodies. The girls had a blast playing the games and listening to Christmas music.

Next visit to the West Oso Girls In STEM group is January 14, 2026.





AAUW National News

AAUW's Commitment to Education

How can you be a part of the movement to defend higher education and equity for women and girls?

Register for the AAUW Webinar on “The Future of Higher Education”
January 15, 2026, 2:00-3:00 pm ET

In light of recent legislative and governmental actions, this important webinar provides space for leaders to discuss the future of higher education. The panel will explore current realities, and the long-term impacts and pathways forward. Panelists will provide insights from their own positions and experiences as leaders in higher education. [Register here.](#)

Civil Rights & Congressional Oversight

The Department of Justice (DOJ)'s new Title VI “merit” rule eliminates disparate-impact protections, making it harder to challenge “neutral” policies that consistently harm communities of color, women and girls of color, immigrants, and disabled students. [Read AAUW's full press release for details.](#) At the same time, the administration is hollowing out the U.S. Department of Education, scattering key K–12 and higher-education programs across other agencies and raising serious questions about how students' rights will be enforced. [Join us in urging robust congressional oversight of DOJ's civil-rights rollback and the efforts to gut the Department of Education.](#)



Book Finders

By Kristen Conlan

The November book sale was quite successful. Thank you to the Bookfinders who generously donated their time to work as cashiers at the sale. It is always fun to meet our customers and learn about their reading interests.

The Book Nook is to be renovated with new shelving. We are in the process of boxing up all the books left on the shelves after the last sale so the old shelving can be removed. We are in need of additional volunteers to help with this huge job. Also, we need more boxes. If you can help, call Kris so we can arrange a day and time for you to come to Neyland Library to assist.

The library will be closed on December 25, 2025. They will not reopen until January 2, 2026. We wish all the library staff a wonderful holiday season!

Finally, the next scheduled book sale will be held March 12-14. Come by and help us get the “new” Book Nook stocked and ready for this sale.

Happy holidays to all,
Kristen Conlan



New Member Spotlight

Doris Wills

I am a native Texan, born in Dallas and have lived in the Dallas area almost all my life except for the seven years I spent in Roswell, NM, where I began my teaching career. My education includes a BS from East Texas State University (now East Texas A&M) with a major in elementary education and an MLA from Southern Methodist University. I taught for a total of 27 years, retiring from the Richardson ISD in 1998. After retiring I began a second career as a substitute teacher for the Frisco ISD. My husband passed away in November 2018 and that is when I began my water aerobics and was delighted to find classes in Corpus Christi at the YWCA.

I have a son and daughter-in-law who now live in Corpus Christi along with my granddaughter and her husband and their four children. I also have a grandson who lives in Addison, just north of Dallas. It is family that prompted me to sell my home in McKinney and downsize to a one-bedroom apartment here in Corpus. I am settling in and enjoying life here in the Coastal Bend.





Interest Groups

Out-to-Lunch Bunch: Susan Birchfield, chair. Enjoy a delightful lunch on the third Tuesday of the month at local restaurants. This month they will meet at 12:30 pm on Tuesday, January 20th at U&I Steakhouse and Seafood located at [309 S. Water Street](#). Please RSVP to Susan.

Bridge: Lessie Hoffman, chair. This group meets at Silverado Smokehouse, 4522 Weber Road at 12:30 pm on the second and the last Friday of the month from January through November as well as the second Friday in December. Lessie also offered to teach newbies how to play if you contact her personally. RSVP

Classics: Annie Huckabee, chair. This group meets on the last Wednesday of the month at local restaurants. On January 28th, members will discuss *The Jewel in the Crown* (1966) by Paul Scott. Location and time to be determined. RSVP

Playgoers: Michelle Balis, chair. If you have signed up for this group, Michelle will email you one week before a performance. RSVP.

Poetry Appreciation: Leslie Peart, chair. This group meets on the second Wednesday of the month. RSVP. This month they will be discussing works by Lin-Manuel Miranda.

Wine and Cheese: Susan Birchfield and Josefina Villarreal, co-chairs. The group meets on the second Sunday of the month, 5 pm - 7 pm (October through September) at different homes. This month, members will be notified of the meeting date and location by email. Please RSVP to Susan.



Upcoming Events Calendar

January

6 Book Finders
7 STEM Committee
7 Poetry Appreciation
9 Bridge
11 Wine & Cheese
13 Book Finders
14 STEM @ West Oso
20 Book Finders
20 Out to Lunch Bunch
27 Book Finders
28 Classics
30 Bridge

February

3 Book Finders
4 STEM Committee
7 Branch Meeting
8 Wine & Cheese
10 Book Finders
11 Poetry Appreciation
11 STEM @ West Oso
13 Bridge
17 Book Finders
17 Out to Lunch Bunch
24 Book Finders
25 Classics
26 Community Outreach
27 Bridge

March

3 Book Finders
4 STEM Committee
7 Branch Meeting
8 Wine and Cheese
10 Book Finders
11 Poetry Appreciation
12-14 Book Sale
13 Bridge
17 Book Finders
17 Out to Lunch Bunch
18 STEM @ West Oso
24 Book Finders
25 Classics
26 Community Outreach
27 Bridge
31 Book Finders

April

1 STEM Committee
4 Branch Meeting
7 Book Finders
8 Poetry Appreciation
10 Bridge
12 Wine & Cheese
14 Book Finders
21 Book Finders
21 Out to Lunch Bunch
24 Bridge
28 Book Finders
29 Classics
29 STEM @ West Oso
30 Community Outreach

May

2 Branch Meeting
5 Book Finders
6 STEM Committee
8 Bridge
12 Book Finders
13 Poetry Appreciation
17 Wine & Cheese
19 Book Finders
19 Out to Lunch Bunch
26 Book Finders
27 Classics
27 STEM @ West Oso
28 Community Outreach
29 Bridge

Happy Birthday Wishes

January

Lessie Hoffman.....January 6
Nancy Wesson-DoddJanuary 8
Vickie NataleJanuary 14
Cheryl Sanders.....January 14
Judy Potts.....January 20
Joanie Whitmire.....January 21
Sharon Trott.....January 24
Deanne Purcell.....January 28
Mary Hamilton.....January 30

January Interesting Facts

Birthstone

Garnet

Birth Flower

Carnation

Zodiac Signs

Capricorn - December 22 - January 19

Aquarius - January 20 - February 18

