



Annual Report 2019-2020

AAUW Capital (NV) Branch celebrated our 75th Anniversary/Birthday in May 2019. We have continued and moved forward with our important work remaining an active and vital branch as we progressed through our 76th year! We have achieved a lot and that is because of YOU, our members, THANK YOU for your continued commitment to AAUW and our mission: “To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education and advocacy.” We thank you for your participation in our surveys, for attending our meetings, informal lunches and interest groups and for participating in our fundraisers!! Together, we make a difference!

PLANNING FOR CONTINUED SUCCESS

Membership Input: ALL branch members were invited to share their opinions via Survey Monkey in May/June 2019. Their opinions regarding the previous year’s meetings as well as thoughts about areas in which they would like more info were collected. 73 total surveys were distributed (69 via email and 4 via USPS). 48 responses were received (65.7% response rate). Members could also note their willingness to participate in a number of branch activities. The feedback allowed the Board of Directors to develop a strategic plan which reflected volunteer interests.

2019-20FY Strategic Plan: Our branch goals and objectives are in alignment with the AAUW’s Strategic Plan. Our overall mission and vision are consistent with AAUW’s. Our branch goal was “to earn Five Star National Recognition from AAUW National for aligning our work with the AAUW strategic plan and other National mission-based activities.”

Five main objectives were developed: 1) Membership – to recruit, engage and retain members; 2) Programs – to provide a variety of programs which highlight AAUW’s mission and public policy, while meeting the interests of our membership; 3) Public Policy – to bring awareness of AAUW’s Public Policy; 4) Philanthropy – to provide support for local scholarships, the AAUW Greatest Needs Fund, and other local community projects such as Work Smart and STEM-related projects; 5) Community Collaboration – to collaborate with community groups such as League of Women Voters, Sierra Nevada Forums, Western Nevada College, Soroptimist, Nevada Women’s Lobby, Nevada Women’s Commission, Nevada’s Coalition for Women’s Equity and others to pursue common goals and principles focused on support of women and girls.

IMPLEMENTING OUR PLANS:

Five Star Recognition Received from National: Our Capital Branch was the fourth branch in the nation to receive Five Star Recognition for 2019-20FY! Our work is aligned with the AAUW mission to advance gender equity for women and girls.

1. **Programs:** Our branch programs related to National’s (and our) strategic plan. Our efforts on the implementation of Work Smart and completion of the community resource mapping exercise were especially important in receiving this star.
2. **Advancement:** 90% of our members renewed their membership and our branch giving to National shifted focus to the greatest needs area. And, our branch support exceeded the recommended \$30 per capita.
3. **Communications & External Relations:** Our Branch website and social media accounts (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) were updated on a monthly basis. Work Smart Online is accessible through our website.
4. **Public Policy & Research:** Our Branch Public Policy Chair collaborated with the Nevada State Public Policy chair. Our branch promoted Action Network sign-ups at public events. Our focus on voter registration efforts supported this star as well.
5. **Governance & Sustainability:** Our Strategic Plan aligns with state and National plans. Our branch’s adoption of a succession plan focused on co-chairs for leadership positions with staggered terms was a major step.

Active Membership: The Capital Branch kicked off the 2019-20 membership year with our annual brunch on Saturday, September 14th at the Governor's Mansion in Carson City. "Celebrating Women's Suffrage" was a tribute to female suffrage leaders while testing our knowledge of suffrage leaders. The original suffrage colors were used to create a colorful backdrop for this festive occasion. As always, members enjoyed the opportunity to reconnect after the summer hiatus while prospective members learned more about AAUW. Branch membership increased to 77 members! Profiles of our new members are spotlighted in the monthly newsletters.

One of our branch goals is to increase membership involvement and engagement. Our member involvement numbers continue to be strong this year, despite unexpected challenges (COVID-19). Using a total membership number of 77, we had 61 members who participated in either the Branch Monthly Meetings, Interest Groups and/or Informal Luncheons or both! That is 78% of our membership, an increase from 68% in 2018-19FY. It could even be higher if we tracked volunteer involvement in all AAUW activities.

Membership Dues Increase Voted in: The Branch Membership voted at the March Business Meeting to increase the branch annual dues from \$12 per member to \$20 per member. Private votes were cast and tallied at the meeting. 26 approved and three did not. A follow-up Survey Monkey was emailed to those members who were not in attendance asking for their input as well. 22 responses were received – 20 approved, 2 did not. The annual branch dues of \$20 per member becomes effective for the 2020-21FY.

Educational Programs: Our program co-chairs presented a variety of outstanding speakers and topics for our monthly educational meetings. Using the data from the membership survey, subject matter experts were identified and invited to our monthly meetings for presentations on the priority issues. Thought-provoking, informational, and consistent with our public policy priorities, the speakers and topics engaged our membership. Topics included: "Single Payer Medicare for All," "BlockChain Technology," "The High Cost of Prescription Drugs," and "The Complexities of the Criminal Justice System," Tours of the Stewart Indian School Cultural Center, TESLA and a Backstage Tour of the Nevada Historical Museum were postponed indefinitely due to the Coronavirus COVID-19 shutdowns.

Alternative Methods to Conduct Business Implemented: As Nevada experienced business closures, closing of public spaces and offices, AAUW Capital Branch implemented alternative methods for conducting business. Our Bylaws require an Annual Business Meeting in April to elect officers and to adopt a budget for the next year. Branch members received information about the proposed budgets via email or regular postal mail. The slate of officers was announced in the Branch Newsletter which was also sent electronically or by postal mail. A Survey Monkey was distributed via email or postal mail to all members. 54 responses were received. All 54 voted to elect the slate of officers. 51 voted to adopt the budget, one NO and two abstentions.

Due to the Coronavirus state mandates we implemented new meeting methodologies to both conduct business and stay connected. We educated members and branch leadership on how to use these new tools. Book discussion groups met by conference call and/or Zoom, and over a dozen members attended our inaugural Virtual Happy Half Hour member social via Zoom. Additionally, we implemented an email protocol to distribute Branch news and announcements, including a video message by our co-president.

Public Policy: Our 2019/2020 Public Policy effort was launched with an overview of AAUW national policy priorities at our September membership event. Attendees were encouraged to become Two-Minute Activists and to volunteer for the newly established Voter Registration Team. This non-partisan coalition of women registered new voters, updated registration information and informed the community about AAUW public policy issues. The coalition consisted of members from AAUW, League of Women Voters and other interested community members. From October until the Covid-19 outbreak, volunteers met at the library, grocery stores, personal meetings and wine walks to register numerous voters, disseminate pages of literature regarding AAUW research, provide information and sign-ups for Work Smart, and engage in dialogs with hundreds of citizens. Monthly updates were provided at our membership meetings and in our newsletter. Additionally, our branch collaborated with the Nevada Commission for Women to promote 100th Anniversary of Women's Suffrage as well as to advocate for women's equity legislative proposals. Although our Nevada Legislature was not in session, we advocated for numerous legislative issues with our Federal elected

officials.

Community Collaboration: AAUW Capital Branch continues to collaborate with community organizations. Nevada Commission for Women, League of Women Voters, Sierra Nevada Forums, Celebrating 100 years of Women's Suffrage, Nevada Coalition for Women's Equity, and others. We also had a committee look at ways to increase our involvement with STEM programs for middle school girls.

Scholarship Support: Updated applications were dropped off at all participating schools in February. Plans to pick up completed applications in March were changed due to school closures (Coronavirus COVID 19). Only Carson High School responded with applications. Because the committee could no longer meet as a group, copies of all applications were made and sent to committee members via U.S. Mail. Each committee member ranked her top three students and advised the chair of her decisions. Every member had great insight and was able to study the applications in more detail. All participating students and counselors were informed of the final decisions by email. Scholarships were provided to Gabriela Fernandez and Ava Covington of Carson High School. A scholarship recipient will also receive support through the WNC selection process.

AAUW Work Smart: Several AAUW Work Smart events in 2019 trained over a dozen women in learning to negotiate for salary and benefits. We adhered to a directive from AAUW National and transitioned to organizing "Meet Ups" which are hosted events. We partnered with Carson City Library for a July Meet Up and co-hosted an August Meet UP with Polka Dot Powerhouse at the Western Nevada College Library – Carson Campus. These events were facilitated by our branch's certified Work Smart Facilitators Tera Bisbee, Janice Noble, and Jennifer Verive. Janice and Jennifer conducted an in-person workshop in September. Jennifer highlighted AAUW Work Smart in a keynote address on "Conversations to Open Doors in Your Career" at the Annual Women's Leadership Breakfast in Reno. We staffed a Work Smart booth at WNC's Leadership Summit in November. Additionally, Jennifer collaborated with AAUW Nevada State Council, meeting with Lt. Governor Kate Marshall and Reno Mayor Hillary Shieve to increase awareness of our AAUW Work Smart efforts. And, Jennifer was a guest speaker for the Nevada Commission for Women's Brown Bag lunch on May 21st. Her timely topic, featuring AAUW Work Smart Online, was "Working Smart in the New Normal: How to get paid what you're worth and thrive in the remote workplace."

Local Community Support: The AAUW Capital (NV) Branch sponsored two very successful fundraisers this year. Our annual fall sale of fresh Georgia pecans and our annual February Feast of Chocolate exceeded expectations, providing the branch with funds to sponsor local scholarships, the Linda Hiebert Sekiguchi Honorary Fund and other community activities focused on providing increased educational opportunities for young women and girls. Two scholarships were provided to graduating Carson High School young women and one scholarship to WNC for a woman returning to college.

- **Fall 2019 Pecan Sales:** Our Pecan Fundraiser was very successful. Fifty-three total cases of pecans were purchased from our regular supplier the Schermer Pecan Company. Pecans included mammoth halves, milk chocolate covered, dark chocolate covered, cinnamon glazed, chocolate caramel clusters, and a case of 30# bulk halves. \$12/bag was charged for all varieties of pecans. All 1,272 bags were sold by the beginning of January 2020. The Carson High School Craft Fair, held November 22 and 23, 2019, was a great success. Sixteen members volunteered at the Fair, and one delivered additional pecans. In addition to the Craft Fair volunteers, approximately 35 more individuals sold pecans outside of the Fair. The total net profit was \$4,376.92.
- **February 2020 Feast of Chocolate:** This annual event exceeded all expectations! Over 200 tickets were sold prior to the event at \$20 per person. An additional 9 tickets were sold at the event. As always, the raffle was very popular, with 27 themed gift baskets assembled by our members, 18 gift cards for popular restaurants and/or destinations as well as 8 other items including jewelry. All attendees thoroughly enjoyed the chocolate supplied by the Carson High School Culinary students, John Hurzel with A Catered Affaire, Reds 395, Casino Fandango, Raley's, and Save Mart (North Carson). Beautiful harp background music was provided by Wanda Perschnick. Certificates for thanking these vendors were created and distributed. The total net profit was \$5,359, including \$2,139 from the raffle. The entire success of this event is due to all who attended the event, volunteered, sold tickets, prepared baskets, obtained gift

cards and assisted with the set-up and clean-up of the event.

Support for AAUW Greatest Needs Fund: The Linda Hiebert Sekiguchi Honorary Fund, focused on the Education & Training Fund of AAUW, was officially established with the receipt of the initial \$3000 contribution in July 2019. We hope to have this completed no later than June 30, 2021.

Communication: *AAUW Capital News*, our branch newsletter, is emailed or mailed by post to every member ten days before the meeting date and at least once during the summer. Additionally, current and back issues are available to all members on the branch website <https://capital-nv.aauw.net>. A membership directory is prepared annually and contains contact information and a color photo of each member and photos of member activities during the previous year. Members can purchase a directory for a minimal charge or refer to it in the Members Only section of our website. Our branch website is accessible to anyone wishing to find out more about the branch. It is updated frequently with branch goals, budget, fundraising activities, special events and more. There is a Members Only section which contains our membership directory. This section can only be accessed with a passcode.

Additional communication with our members is handled by our Corresponding Secretary. She sends out thank you notes to our speakers as well as sponsors of our Feast of Chocolate. She also acknowledges members who may be recovering from an illness or surgery, or have experienced a death in the family.

- **Facebook:** The AAUW Capital Branch utilizes Facebook (@aauwcapitalbranchnevada) to communicate a variety of branch-related information to members and other Facebook users. Our posts announce events such as monthly branch meetings, informal monthly luncheons, information related to our fundraising activities and scholarship recipients, as well as awards and recognitions earned by the Capital Branch. We also make use of Facebook to announce national AAUW conferences and programs, along with up-to-date news regarding issues that are central to our mission.
- **Twitter:** Our Twitter handle is @AauwCap which is called CapCityCarsonAAUW in the captioned name. A link to our chapter website is in the Profile. Tweets were sent out about branch events and the NCWSSL scholarship availability. Primary activities include re-tweeting or “liking” events or activities relevant to AAUW Capital Branch or events that are accessible in Carson City/online. Retweets are also sent that are generally AAUW relevant things, such as the State Superintendent's tweets about laptops being made available to Nevada students during the pandemic or some of the Census 2020 tweets.

Overall, The AAUW Capital (NV) Branch has grown substantially over the past few years, not only in the number of members but also the active participation of our members. The attendance at our general membership meetings has continued to grow, indicating the selection of speakers and topics meets their needs as indicated in the responses to the member survey. Our members have continued to support our fundraising activities which in turn support local and national AAUW programs and local community projects. Our branch Board of Directors is actively engaged. Our membership is committed to the mission of AAUW National and to our local purpose to promote equity, lifelong education and positive societal changes.