



ATLANTA BRANCH NEWS

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN
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2016-2017 Leadership

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Co-President's Message

Mary Lynn Merkle

What's Next for the Atlanta Branch?

The answer to the question above is up to us—the membership. You see, the Philanthropy Committee and the Finance Committee met recently to set the Community Fund budget for 2016-2017. The discussions centered around two facts: (1) Our hard work for the past year led us to a successful Bookfair and a healthy addition to our Community Fund budget; and (2) We have completed our five year liaison with Cool Girls, Inc. and their Cool Scholars program. Thus we have extra philanthropy dollars to spend.

One thought was that the Branch could plan and present a Community Event to showcase AAUW's mission and investment in our community. The Atlanta Branch has presented some outstanding community programs in the past (see the history page in our handbook), but none recently. Current affairs might well provide ideas for such an undertaking.

Another thought was that we could carefully select a new Signature Project—one that reflects our mission of working toward equity for women and girls and that captures the imagination of our membership so that we would create sustained member involvement and wide participation.

A third thought was that our Bookfair endeavors are our Signature Project. But we could initiate other Branch mini-projects, working with non-profits who share our mission goals but presently lack funds to expand their work. An example of this would be the funds we have sent to Blink Now, a program for women and girls in Nepal. Another example is the Women's Global Empowerment Initiative, which was approved by the December meeting (see related article on page 2). Such projects would be brought to the Philanthropy committee by an interested member, and if the concept is approved, funding would be approved by the membership. This process would continue with additional projects until that budget line is spent.

So the bottom line is this: Branch members, what are your thoughts? Do you have an idea for a Community Event, and are you willing to be part of a leadership team to plan it? Do you know about area or international organizations that could make even more of a difference if they had our additional funds? Is there an idea for a new Signature Project that you would like to present to the Philanthropy Committee and then to the general membership?

We work very hard for our philanthropy monies. Now we want our philanthropy monies to work hard for us. Please help us decide. What's next for Atlanta Branch?

Please contact Cele Convatta, Philanthropy Committee chair, or committee members Dana Gordon, Wendy Venet, Billie Collier, Ingrid Reinhard, and Blondie Chitunya-Wilson. Let them know what you're thinking.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS AAUW ATLANTA !

— Riana Smith, Communication Intern



Introducing The Women's Global Empowerment Initiative

By: Samantha Grayman

In *Women, Culture, and Politics* (1983) political activist and scholar Dr. Angela Davis eloquently speaks of the importance of solidarity: "We must strive to 'lift as we climb.' In other words, we must climb in such a way as to guarantee that all of our sisters, regardless of social class, and indeed all of our brothers, climb with us...the overall battle for equality can be profoundly enhanced by embracing this principle."

While studying abroad on a Fulbright Fellowship, I reflected on how I wanted to give back to my own community. To do this, I decided that I really wanted to help provide educational opportunities, much like the ones I had, to young women who might otherwise not have access to them. Returning home, I founded the Women's Global Empowerment Initiative (WGEI). At WGEI, we take Dr. Davis' words to heart and seek to provide women from marginalized backgrounds the opportunities that all women should have. Our team of college-educated community activists is dedicated to promoting women in education regardless of race, culture, or class. We provide global educational opportunities to women and girls from working class communities through language literacy, financial literacy, and intercultural exchanges abroad.

Our Workplace Education Program provides free English as a Second Language (ESL) tutoring classes to women at Lucky Premium Treats, a small business in Doraville, GA. This program emphasizes bilingual literacy, providing on-site courses which gives working women the chance to study under the guidance of a tutor during their lunch breaks. This flexible schedule allows women who may be the primary caregivers of their children to leave at the end of the work day. This program will be expanded throughout the spring of 2017 to other small businesses; courses on financial literacy will also be added. **We are currently seeking volunteers for this project.** If you are interested, please contact **Cele Covatta** philanthropy@aauwatlanta.org

A Summer Exchange Program will be launched in the summer of 2017. This project focuses on providing young working class women from different cultural backgrounds the opportunity to travel to a foreign country and connect with other young women. This year's exchange is due to take place in Morocco and will focus on literacy and community activism surrounding human rights and environmental justice.

Our team includes Rachel Kirk, Program Coordinator; Kwadwo Sarpong, Fundraising Coordinator; Elizabeth Neyman, Recruiting Coordinator; and me, Samantha Grayman, founder of WGEI.

Our mission, to advance working class women through education, is critical in disrupting the cycle of poverty and ending gender-based violence. We are excited to begin a partnership with AAUW Atlanta Branch and look forward to your active participation in our projects.

Report of the Philanthropy Committee Distribution of Funds for 2016

By: Dana Gordon

The Philanthropy Committee announces the following distribution of \$13,000 to AAUW Funds for this year: \$3,000 to the AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund; \$4,000 to the AAUW Public Policy Fund; \$3,000 to the Eleanor Roosevelt Fund; and \$3,000 to the AAUW Educational Opportunities Fund.

Distribution of these funds is made possible by the money raised from our annual Bookfair. Thanks to everyone who works in the Book Room and donated their time to work Bookfair shifts.

A Wonderful Holiday Party!

By: Dana Gordon

Our annual holiday party, held on December 11, 2016, was a great success! We are grateful to the hospitality of Mary and Darwin Womack who generously offered their home once again for this special gathering. We had a large turnout, with many members and AAUW Fellowship winners present. Thanks to the Board for providing a great selection of dips and sandwiches, plus many delicious desserts. The punch was delicious and some added a secret ingredient.

The Fellowship winners who attended were Priya Paul, Nursing, Georgia Perimeter College; Faizat Badmus-Busari, International Women's Rights Law and Religion, Emory University; and Cleyana Mayweather, Marketing, Emory University. We learned about their academic work and plans for the future.

A great variety of Silent Auction items were available and members took advantage of the wide selection. As a result of their purchases, the Branch contributed \$448 to the AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund was \$448.

Another highlight was the announcement of this year's Named Grant Honorees. They are:

Myra Carmon, President 2014-2016, in recognition of her exemplary leadership of the Atlanta Branch

Wendy Venet, Program Vice President 2014 - 2016, in recognition of her significant contributions and support of the Atlanta Branch

Deborah Karvey, AAUW Cobb Branch, in recognition of chairing the successful 2016 AAUW Book Fair

Lou (Louise) King Mitchell (in memoriam)

Atlanta - Fulton Public Library - Buckhead Branch, in recognition their support by making their facilities available for Branch meetings and being a book collection site

Whole Foods Market Inc. - Briarcliff, in recognition of their Team's generous help with the collection of book donations for our annual Book Fair



Travel Group

By: Betty Arden

The AAUW Travel Group will meet at 10 am on January 12th at the Ansley Mall Kroger to carpool to the William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum at 1440 Spring Street NW, Atlanta; phone is 678.222.3700.

The group will tour the recently opened exhibit, "Atlanta Collects: Eighteen Artifacts-The Story of Jewish Atlanta." The show includes paintings, sculptures, glass and non-traditional art held in private collectors' home across Atlanta. Lunch will follow. Call Betty Arden for more information.

Contemporary Literature

By: Kay Collins

The Contemporary Lit. group will meet Monday, January 2 at the home of Mary Hanson. Join us at 10:30 AM to discuss "Our Souls at Night" by Kent Haruf. Questions? Contact Kay Collins.

Thank you AAUW Atlanta

By: the Womacks

The Branch gifted the Womacks with a restaurant gift certificate at the holiday party and we received this thank you note:

Dear Ones,

Each year AAUW Atlanta Branch causes us to focus on the true meaning of Christmas. Preparing for and enjoying the Holiday celebration at our home extends the number of days we can celebrate. It is a pleasure. We anticipate a nice evening—eating out in the near future. You have made this possible.

Thank you,

Mary and Darwin



Congratulations Jenniffer!!!

We congratulate Jenniffer Stetler, President of AAUW Georgia State University Chapter, who gave birth to a baby daughter, Jennasia, on December 16! Jennasia weighed seven pounds and eight ounces and is 19.25 cm long



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Calendar

Board Meeting — Jan 28 at 10am at Buckhead Library

Title IX Program— Feb 4 11am at Neiman Marcus Cafe