

## **Erica Koonmen to Receive YWCA Award**

Erica Koonmen, the La Crosse branch's Communications Chair and AAUW in Action Coordinator, will receive an Empowering Women Award as part of the YWCA's 2023 Tribute to Outstanding Women. The awards event will be held Saturday, October 7, 6:00 – 10:00 p.m. in The Bluffs in the Student Union at UWL. It will include dinner, the awards ceremony, and a guest speaker.

According to YWCA La Crosse, "The Empowering Women Award is given annually to a woman in the Coulee Region who has demonstrated a commitment to empowering women by enhancing women's ability to make choices that impact all aspects of their lives, improving the economic situation of women and girls, and/or working to dismantle systems of oppression that harm women and girls."

Erica has met all of the criteria for the award, through annually chairing the International Women's Day event, serving as Co-Chair of the Artists Committee for AAUW Art Fair on the Green, organizing WINGS (Women Interested in Going Back to School) workshops, establishing Equal Pay Day at UWL, and initiating the Cyberbullying Program. Among her many other accomplishments is leading the AIA Committee in writing a resolution in support of Iranian and Afghan women who face cruel oppression and loss of rights at the hands of their governments. Once the resolution was approved by the La Crosse Branch and by AAUW-Wisconsin, Erica originated Women Supporting Women Globally, through which AIA sponsored two local awareness-raising events in the spring of 2023.

For additional information, please see YWCA La Crosse on Facebook or go to the organization's website: <https://www.ywcalax.org/2023-tribute-to-outstanding-women/>.