

JANUARY MEETING

Housing for All in La Crosse

Speakers: Mara Keyes,
*Community Development Manager,
City of La Crosse*

**James Drees, Homeless Response
System Manager, City of La Crosse**

When: Saturday, Jan. 11, 2025

**Time: 9:30am Registration
9:45 Brunch 10:15 Meeting
10:30am Program**

**Where: Viterbo University
School of Nursing, Rm 195**

Brunch: Cost \$12; pay with cash or check
Menu: eggs, selection of pastries,
potatoes, fruit, water, coffee, tea

Please RSVP to email message from Robert

Learn about the progress being made by the Pathways Home team and community partners to build the systems required to end our homelessness crisis. We'll cover what we've learned about our local homeless population and our progress to date on placing people into housing with supportive services. You will also hear about our plans for a temporary surge shelter in 2025 so everyone who needs a shelter bed has access to one and how we plan to grow our specialized housing capacity.

Mara Keyes serves as the City of La Crosse Community Development Manager. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME programs revitalize neighborhoods, address income inequality, and improve the quality of the City's housing. CDBG staff oversee programs to build & rehabilitate homes and fund social service programs. Mara joined the the City of La Crosse in November 2023.



Mara Keyes
Mara joined the the City of La Crosse in November 2023.

Jim Drees serves as the La Crosse County Homeless Response System Manager, overseeing a talented and dedicated team working to build the systems and community network required to achieve functional zero homelessness in our community. He has 30 years of professional experience leading teams to launch innovate solutions to complex problems in business and nonprofit organizations. He has served in many roles including Chief Executive Officer, Executive Director, Vice President of Engineering, Vice President of Service, and Project Manager.



Jim Drees



LA CROSSE (WI)

The Current

a publication of the La Crosse, WI AAUW Branch



VOLUME 64, ISSUE 5

JANUARY 2025



PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE:

A Cold Reality: Addressing Homelessness and Disabilities in La Crosse

by Lema Kabashi, Branch President

As we step into the new year, many of us are still reflecting on the warmth and togetherness of the holiday season. However, for some members of our community, this time of year is marked not by celebration but by survival. Winter is a particularly harsh season for those experiencing homelessness, and for individuals with disabilities, the challenges can be life-threatening.

According to the most recent data from the World Population Review (2024), La Crosse is a city of about 50,878 people. Alarmingly, on any given night, approximately 150-160 individuals, or 0.32% of our population, are unsheltered—one of the highest rates in the state. Behind these numbers are real people, many of whom are individuals with disabilities who face unique and severe challenges in securing safe and stable housing.

The winter months amplify these challenges. Sub-zero temperatures, icy streets, and insufficient shelter accommodations can make survival incredibly difficult. Individuals with mobility challenges may struggle to access warming centers, while those with chronic health conditions or mental illnesses may find traditional homeless services ill-

equipped to meet their needs.

Local organizations and shelters are doing incredible work to support those

in need, but they cannot do it alone. As members of AAUW, we have a role to play. We can raise awareness about this issue, support initiatives that provide housing and services, and advocate for



Continued on Page 2 »

NEXT BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, January 7

via Zoom at 5:30pm
Zoom link available from Lema

Meetings are open to all members
To place items on the agenda or confirm your attendance, contact Lema at LKabashi@uwlax.edu

Get all the CURRENT news at our website: www.aauwlacrosse.org

A Cold Reality ... (continued from page 1)

this issue, support initiatives that provide housing and services, and advocate for systemic changes at the local, state, and national levels.

As we move through the coldest months of the year, let's remember the 150-160 individuals in La Crosse who face these challenges daily. The fight against homelessness is not just a matter of compassion; it is a matter of justice. By standing together, we can help ensure that no one in our community faces the deadly consequences of winter homelessness.

Further Update on NCCWSL

AAUW was home to the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL) for 39 years. Starting in 2025, NCCWSL will move to our trusted friends at NASPA, the professional home for student affairs administrators in higher education.

AAUW will have a presence at the conference as a speaker, exhibitor, presenter and promotional supporter. However, NASPA will be responsible for the planning and execution of the conference moving forward. We'll update this page with information about NCCWSL 2025 when it becomes available from NASPA.

Information on registration fees and the timing for registering students will be decided by NASPA and communicated to branches on this page and in AAUW newsletters when available.

Historically, NASPA stands for National Association of Student Personnel Administrators. However, they have updated the name of the association to NASPA, Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education.

Thank you for your support of NCCWSL and our country's next generation of women leaders!

Enduring Families Project Book Launch

The Enduring Families Project: Children's Stories

is excited to announce the release of our first children's book!

Please join us for a Book Release Celebration, reading, and signing at the La Crosse Area Heritage Center.



Saturday, January 25, 2025

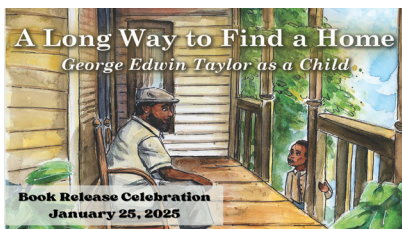
1:00 to 4:00 pm

La Crosse Area Heritage Center

506 Main Street, La Crosse, Wisconsin



RSVP by January 15 at admin@lchshistory.org or 608-782-1980



The Enduring Families Project website is up and running: www.efpcs.org.

Convention Corner

April 25-26, 2025

Keynote Speakers for Convention Announced

The convention planning committee has announced two outstanding keynote speakers for the AAUW-WI 2025 Convention (April 25-26, Stoney Creek Hotel in Onalaska).



One is Amanda Florence Garcia Goodenough of the La Crosse area. Amanda is currently Lead Executive Officer and Founder of Goodenough Consulting, LLC. Prior to assuming

that position, she worked for 17 years as the Director of the Research and Resource Center for Campus Climate at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. Amanda serves on the boards of numerous organizations focused on justice, equity, decolonization, and interconnectedness. Her honors include the Social Justice Achievement Award for the YWCA Tribute to Outstanding Women (2010) and the La Crosse Area Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Leadership Award (2021). The title of Amanda's convention presentation is "Welcome to the Struggle . . ."

Another keynote is Lynda Drews of Green Bay. Lynda is the author of three acclaimed books: The Maid and the Socialite: The Brave Women Behind Green Bay's Scandalous Minahan Trials; Run at Destruction: A True Fatal Love Triangle; and Circle of Innocence. Lynda's keynote address, "Uncovering the Lost Histories of Women," will discuss the true story behind The Maid and the Socialite. The historical nonfiction book, written in the victims' voices, uncovers the truth about the women's abuser, a famous Green Bay surgeon. Midwest Book Review indicates that the book is "written with the drama of fiction and the compelling research of fact." Lynda was employed at IBM for 30 years before retiring to a writing career.



Membership News

by Barb Fischer, VP Membership

Happy New Year

Best wishes to all of our members and their families throughout the New Year.



Address Change

Jean Knorr has moved to unit 3 at at Eagle Crest South. Her address is 622 Bennora Lee Court, Unit 3, La Crosse, WI 54601-6328. Jean joined AAUW in 1956 and is presently an Honorary Lifetime Member.

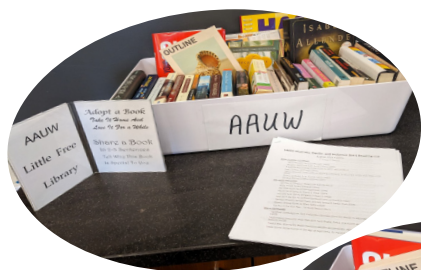
Thank you to all who filled out our 2024 Membership Survey! We will be reporting the results at our upcoming meetings. If you have not yet filled out the survey, here is the link: https://lacrosse-wi.aauw.net/files/2024/05/AAUW_Mem_Survey_La_Crosse.pdf

Membership Committee Meeting

The next Membership Committee meeting will be **January 28 via Zoom**. Everyone is welcome. If interested please contact Barb Fischer at fischerba@live.com or 608-780-1601. Thank you to our Membership Committee members: Annie Allen-Wyman, Cindy Cassellius, Betty Kruck, and Carlene Roberts.

Our Own Little Free Library

Did you know that our branch has our own Little Free Library? It's not a cute, handmade wood structure like you'll see around town --it's actually a nicely covered cardboard box--BUT it has a lot of really interesting books that have been shared by our members. June Reinhert and the DEI committee came up with the idea; Carlene Roberts curated it and made the review forms that are filled out to go with the books and Silvana Richardson found a home for it in the Viterbo University room where we have our monthly general meetings. Everyone is welcome to pick up a book and to leave a book. Check it out at the next meeting! Our Recommended Reading book (pg 5) is there, waiting for you.



Small Group Contacts

AAUW IN ACTION (AIA)

See this page for meeting info

Contact: Erica Koonmen, moogs56@hotmail.com

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION (DEI)

Contact: June Reinert, 608-461-1109

reinert.june@eagle.uwlax.edu

CONTEMPORARY AUTHORS

3rd Tuesday of the month at 2pm

Contact: Alice Ross, 788-4206

SCHOLARSHIP BRIDGE/CARD GAMES

Contact: Sharon DeCicco, 608-452-4571

sharon.decicco@gmail.com

STEM

Contact: Annie Allen-Wyman 608-514-2871

therosyorb@gmail.com

WOMEN SUPPORTING WOMEN GLOBALLY

Joint partnership group with Viterbo and UWL

Contact: Erica Koonmen, moogs56@hotmail.com

AAUW IN ACTION (AIA)

AAUW in Action (AIA) is a study group that serves as a spring-board for community service activities for our branch that promote AAUW's mission.

Next meeting: Wed, January 15, 2025; Zoom

Thank you to our AIA committee and members who provided Thursday evening suppers for SSP this fall. An extra thank you to AIA committee member, Kristie Lonsdorf, who created an online MealTrain sign-up site for us. Tacos, burritos, soup, sandwiches, salads, pasta, stew, and pizza - all were enjoyed and appreciated! Thank you!

As the new year begins, we'll begin focusing on our goal this year of working with WI legislators to remove the tax on period products and diapers. Rep. Jill Billings has expressed willingness to talk with us about next steps and will hopefully be a sponsor. Please join us in this effort by coming to the Zoom meeting on Jan. 15th--email Erica to get the link.

Hearth & Home

Hearth & Home study group meets monthly to explore new ideas, culinary experiences, fun activities and our area through visits to local businesses or in-home happenings.

If you are interested in planning a program for the group or if you would like to head it up, please contact Sharon at sharon.decicco@gmail.com or phone 608-452-4571.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

by June Reinert, DEI Chair

Hello to all. What an up-and-down time diversity issues have had in the last few months. Not to say it hasn't always been an uphill battle. AAUW has promoted inclusion issues in its programming and membership. Much has been done in our branch and the organization nationally. We have made progress, but we still face obstacles with ideas that conflict with our mission.

I have chosen to share with you some quotes promoted by notable people regarding diversity in our world and community.

"One day, our descendants will think it incredible that we paid so much attention to things like the amount of melanin in our skin or the shape of our eyes or our gender instead of the unique identities of each of us as complex human beings."
--**Franklin Thomas (former CEO of Ford)**



"We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color."

— **Maya Angelou, Poet & Civil Rights Activist**

"Until we get equality in education, we won't have an equal society."
— **Sonia Sotomayor, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States**

"Equality is the soul of liberty; there is, in fact, no liberty without it."
— **Frances Wright, Scottish Writer**

"You can't have equity if you don't have large participation in the voting process." -- **Cliff Albright, co-founder of Black Voters Matter**

"There will not be a magic day when we wake up and it's now okay to express ourselves publicly. We make that day by doing things publicly until it's simply the way things are."-- **Tammy Baldwin, first openly gay Senator in the United States**



"Half a century ago, the amazing courage of Rosa Parks, the visionary leadership of Martin Luther King, and the inspirational actions of the civil rights movement led politicians to write equality into the law and make real the promise of America for all her citizens." -- **David Cameron, British Politician for Prime Minister of the UK**



"Women will only have true equality when men share with them the responsibility of bringing up the next generation."

— **Ruth Bader Ginsburg**

"The word 'equality' shows up too much in our founding documents for anyone to pretend it's not the American way."
— **Martha Plimpton, Actress**

"All of us do not have equal talent, but all of us should have an equal opportunity to develop our talent." -- **John F. Kennedy**

Public Policy

by Diana Moran Sanchez Thundercloud, Chair

The next 60 days are critical in the fight for gender equality, and you have the power to take action. As we navigate a new political landscape, the demand for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) is more urgent than ever. Without the ERA in the U.S. Constitution, advances in women's rights that we took for granted are at risk of being weakened or even reversed.

Urge President Biden to do everything he can to publish the ERA to the Constitution by calling the White House now at 202-456-1111. The phone line is operational Tuesday-Thursday 11am-3pm EST. You can submit a contact message (use the category GENDER EQUITY) <https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/now> or through AAUW's Action Network: <https://aauw.quorum.us/campaign/94965/>

Gender equality cannot wait any longer. We need the ERA to strengthen protections against gender discrimination in education, the workplace, access to reproductive healthcare, and so much more.

Call the White House and urge President Biden to act NOW to make the ERA a reality.

U.S. Mint announces 5 women on new quarters for 2025

The U.S. Mint has revealed the five historical female figures who will appear on the reverse sides of quarters for 2025, the last year it will issue American Women Quarters Program coins featuring iconic American women.

The trailblazing women to be featured on the tail side of coins are Ida B. Wells, Juliette Gordon Low, Dr. Vera Rubin, Stacey Park Milbern and Althea Gibson. Images of all the coins can be found [here](#).

2025 will mark the fourth and final year of the program, which will have issued 20 new quarters featuring the images of trailblazing figures from diverse ethnic, racial and geographic backgrounds. The head side of the coins feature Founding Father George Washington.

Past coin issues are:

2024: Zitkala-Sa, Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray, Patsy Takemoto Mink, Dr. Mary Edwards Walker, Celia Cruz

2023: Maria Tallchief, Jovita Idar, Eleanor Roosevelt, Edith Kanaka'ole, Bessie Coleman

2022: Wilma Mankiller, Nina Otero-Warren, Maya Angelou, Dr. Sally Ride, Anna May Wong.

FROM THE TREASURERS

Andrea Hansen & Noreen Holmes

Financial Report as of November 24, 2024

Checking Account..... \$9,474.30

Scholarship Bridge..... \$700.00

Recommended Reading

Stand Up Straight and Sing!

by Jessye Norman



Jessye Norman is not only one of the world's most admired and beloved singers, she is an American icon whose life story is as moving and dramatic as the

great operatic roles she has performed on stage.

Born and raised in Augusta, Georgia, nurtured in a close family and tight-knit community centered around the church, she studied the piano and sang the songs of her childhood, not dreaming that this passion for music might lead to her life's profession.

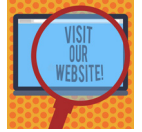
In *Stand Up Straight and Sing!*, Jessye Norman recalls in rich detail the strong women who were her role models, from her ancestors to family friends, relatives, and teachers. She describes coming face-to-face with racism, not just as a child living in the segregated South, but also as an adult out and about in the world.

She speaks of the many who have inspired her and taught her essential life lessons. A special interlude on her key relationship with the pioneering African American singer Marian Anderson reveals the lifelong support that this great predecessor provided through her example of dignity and grace at all times.

This book is in our branch Little Library box; available at every general meeting at Viterbo.

On The Web

by Barb Fischer, Branch Web Manager <https://aauwlacrosse.org>



Please contact me if you need help on the Internet. 608-780-1601 or fischerba@live.com

AAUW History Link on our La Crosse site: <https://lacrosse-wi.aauw.net/2022/03/27/historians-corner/>

Convention Information Link on the Wisconsin site: <https://aauw-wi.aauw.net/convention/>. Note: More information will be continually added.

Exploring the Path Forward for Women's Economic Security on National site: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ku1D3t6g1Lg&t=153s>. This is a Post-Election Conversation on Women's Economic Security. The expert panelists include: Heather M. Boushey, Ph.D., 1997-98 AAUW American Fellow, economist and co-founder of the Washington Center for Equitable Growth Jamila K Taylor, Ph.D., President & CEO of the Institute for Women's Policy Research Gloria L. Blackwell, CEO of American Association of University Women.



Chinese Host Families Needed

Since 2010, the School District of La Crosse and our sister school, Luoyang No. 2 Foreign Language School, in Luoyang, China, have participated in a student exchange. Each winter, Luoyang has chosen students to travel to La Crosse, coinciding with their Chinese New Year holiday break. Our high schools have then coordinated summer exchanges with our sister school over the years as well.

This year, our first student exchange since the pandemic, the school is sending 12 students, all of whom have competed for this opportunity through written and oral English exams and interviews. We are looking for families to open their homes to them from Saturday, January 18 - Sunday, January 26, 2025.

As a host family, you would welcome an exchange student to stay at your home for the duration of the stay, and they would attend school with your student, traveling with them throughout their school day. Some days may include local field trips for the exchange students, where your student would remain at school. The evenings and weekends are your opportunity to share your daily home life and routines, favorite local places and family traditions with your exchange student.

If you are interested in hosting and want more information about this opportunity, contact Mrs. Parkhurst at your earliest convenience at sparkhurelacrossesd.org.

AAUW La Crosse Board Meeting Minutes

by Andrea Hansen, pro-tem for Ann Brice, Secretary

AAUW-La Crosse
Minutes: 12/03/2024 BOD Meeting
5: 30 – 6:30 p.m. via Zoom

Present: Lema Kabashi, Andrea Hansen, Diana Moran Sanchez Thundercloud, Erica Koonmen, Silvana Richardson, Jan Eriksen, Lin Rauch, June Reinert

Gathering: Members invited to share something enjoyed over the recent long weekend.

Meeting called to order at 5:35 p.m. by Lema, President

Updates:

DEI (June): Contacting DEI committee members and recruiting new members. 2025 project: Creating AAUW DEI brochure and bookmarks. Also noted was Amanda Goodenough as speaker for 2025 AAUW State Convention.

2025 State Convention Planning Committee, 4/25-26 (Jan): Jan and Andrea met with Stony Creek staff to talk about meal options offered by caterers. Program is shaping up with nice variety of topics and speakers. Barb created call for design of convention logo. Jan and Barb contacted UWL and Western to solicit student designs.

12/7/24 & Future Membership Meetings

Programs (Lin and Silvana): AAUW-Winona Branch is inviting the La Crosse Branch for their March 8, 2025 meeting, continuing the tradition. Details will be announced. The Polish-American Museum is possible site for this meeting.

12/7/24 Membership Meeting (Lin): Agenda and PP slides reviewed for Saturday's meeting. Thank you, Lema, for your beautiful wintery slides. 2 speakers will be presenting on entrepreneurship.

Communication & the Current

State AAUW Project (Lema): Deb Thiel is asking every branch to identify members who are currently serving in local/state governmental positions, or have done so in the past. Names of past or present members will be generated at the membership meeting on Saturday, 12/7.

The Current (All): We are proud of our monthly newsletter and encourage members to share it widely, to build awareness of AAUW and issues, and membership recruitment. Ideas offered included sending issues to AAUW scholarship winners with added encouragement to join through student e-membership, local branch, or internship. June offered information/list of banned books as future article topic. Andrea will contact the UWL Community Engagement coordinator for possible avenues. All expressed appreciation for Erica's wonderful work as editor.

Submitted by:

Andrea Hansen, pro-tem for Ann Brice, Secretary