



## Iowa Branch Connector

July/August 2010

### A Monthly Electronic Bulletin for AAUW Leaders in Iowa

Prepared by Sandra Keist Wilson, AAUW IA President

***By joining AAUW, you belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women have a fair chance.***

***Welcome to this monthly electronic publication. You are invited to share this information with other branch leaders and members by forwarding it to them, or providing a hard copy.***

By joining AAUW you belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women have a fair chance

Welcome to this monthly electronic publication. You are invited to share this information with other branch leaders and member by forwarding it to them or providing a hard copy.

Even in summer our work on equity cannot stop. It is time to turn up the HEAT for Paycheck Fairness Act (S182, HR 12). Please take part in the **"Get it Done, 21 days of action campaign"** beginning August 15. Remember Lilly's talk to us this past spring, why equal pay is so vital to all women and men. **THE TIME IS NOW!**

I know that you and your fellow officers have been working on your branch program and goals for the year. There is an abundance of equity issues concerning women and girls. I encourage you to select a couple that your members are most interested in to focus on this year. I am suggesting a few that may trigger ideas for study or activity.

Gender Balance in all state government subdivisions. Our Impact Grant year has ended but our project has not. Your branch can help tremendously if you look on the website and check the data posted on your county. Your branch can update and add data about municipalities. The database will lose value if it is not kept current. Hold discussions to help women understand the need for them to take part in local government so that gender balance is realized. There are resources on AAUW.org to assist and guide you with programming such as "Elect Her" and "How to talk to government officials." Of interest considering gender equity, did you read that AAUW has been selected to lead a delegation to Cuba for the purpose of studying "Gender Equity and the Role of Women in Cuban Society?"

**Paid Sick Leave.** I took part in an AAUW conference call last week about this issue. Around 22 states are working on paid sick leave legislation and Iowa is one. State Senator Courtney from Burlington introduced a bill this past session to require paid sick leave for all employees. It will take vocal and written support to get it passed. Many employees, particularly in the service industries, do not have paid sick days which causes tremendous economic burdens besides health issues. They often come to work or send their children to school rather than risk the threat to either their continued employment or reduction of income. AAUW IA has co-signed a letter of support for this issue.

**Elect Her.** AAUW has guides on the website to help us hold events with high school, college and adult girls and women about becoming active in government from student council to elective political office. Look at the "Elect Her" resources and see if this might be an activity that your members would enjoy. It is a good networking activity with other women's groups.

Looking ahead, there may be opportunities for our branches to assist with the “Lets Start the Conversation, an effort to reduce unintended pregnancies” chaired by Christie Vilsack. It is a pilot family planning education initiative in Iowa and Colorado targeting young adult women. It is a fact that women who begin a family prior to finishing their education never fair as well economically as their educated sisters. An AAUW IA ad hoc committee will be meeting with “The Initiative “staff to discuss how AAUW IA branches might host some conversations across the state. You will be kept posted.

The webpage (aauwiowa.org) is in the process of change and growth so check it out. Laura and Lois have been working hard at making it a better tool for all of us. They will welcome feedback from you too.

## **Reminders:**

Our state directors can assist you with programming on equity, diversity, public policy, and international issues, college/university relations, AAUW philanthropy, and communications (a branch webpage). Our contact information is on aauwiowa.org. Contact us via e-mail, leave a phone number so we can call and have a conversation about what you would like to do and together we might find a way to achieve your objective.

I need officer lists for Algona, Ames, Charles City, Clinton, Keokuk, and Marshalltown. Send them to me at [skw1937@yahoo.com](mailto:skw1937@yahoo.com) and I will add them to the AAUW branch officers list.

Send dues to Sharon Vana, 1620 Bilgarie Ct NE, Cedar Rapids IA 5204. The webpage under membership, has the dues listed for national and state.

Town Hall Meetings will be happening soon. It is a good time to ask elected officials how they stand on equity issues. You can find dates and places of these events by going to their websites. Get a group together and ask questions about issues you care about.

Jan Heinicke has sent me a list of books that she highly recommends as informative reading on tough issues. These are good books to begin a discussion.

**“Half the Sky” by Nickolas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn**

**“Three Cups of Tea” by Greg Mortensen**

**“Stones into Schools” by Greg Mortensen**

**“The Natasha’s” by Victor Malrick**

**“The Johns” by Victor Malrick**

**“The Trafficking in Persons Report” published by the US Dept of State**

**“African Friends and Money Matters” by David Maranz**

**“ What is the What” ( The autobiography of Valerino Achak Deng) by David Eggers**