

**January 2026**

Vol. 84, No. 4

**Meeting at 10:00 AM on**

**Saturday, January 24, 2026**



**Mission:** AAUW advances gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.

**Vision:** Equity for all.

**Diversity Statement:** AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in the organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or class.

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Send articles for next newsletter by Feb. 4  
to editors Ardelle Brown & Karen Agee



**Stephanie Leon-Quetzecua**

Identification Specialist

Iowa Migratory Education Program

**Providing Supplemental Education and Supportive  
Services to Migratory Children**

**January 24, 2026**

YWCA Black Hawk County

425 Lafayette St, Waterloo, IA 50703

Gather 10:00, brunch 10:15, program 10:45

Members of the Waverly Branch have been invited to our January and February meetings. We welcome all who can attend and hope for excellent weather!

Sengun Bulur, personal chef, will cater the brunch, offering ham and cheese breakfast sliders, egg casserole with roasted vegetables, fresh fruit bowl, yogurt, and cookie tray, with regular coffee, juice, and water.

To reserve a brunch meal (**only \$20 at the door**), RSVP to Mary Ellen Beckman at [AAUW.CFW.RSVP@gmail.com](mailto:AAUW.CFW.RSVP@gmail.com) or 319-269-1893 by **Friday, January 16.**

## January 2026 Calendar

Maureen White, Co-President

In the communications survey conducted last October, members suggested we include in the newsletter a calendar of upcoming events for the month.

January 5 – monthly board meeting

January 12 – CV3D, *The Small and the Mighty*, 4:30 CF library

January 18 – MLK Banquet, Waterloo Convention Center (NAACP)

January 23 – Fourth Fridays with Friends, CF HyVee

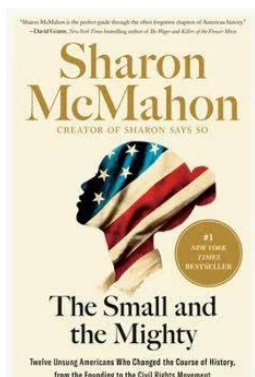
January 23 – Cedar Valley Legislative Public Forum, 5:00-6:30 PM, Van G. Miller Adult Learning Center, 120 Jefferson St., Waterloo – topic: Quality of Life in Iowa

January 24 – brunch (\$20) at the YWCA, 425 Lafayette St., Waterloo. Our speaker, branch member Stephanie Leon-Quetzecua, works with the Iowa Migratory Education Program as an Identification Specialist. Consider inviting others who may be interested in attending, whether they are members or not.

January 27 – Great Decisions discussion group, 7 PM CF library

## Cedar Valley Discuss and Discover Diversity (CV3D)

Judy Beckman, Ardelle Brown, and Mary Dove



On **Monday, January 12, 4:30-5:30**, CV3D will gather to discuss *The Small and the Mighty* by Sharon McMahon. We will gather at the Cedar Falls Public Library conference room and via Zoom. The author will Zoom with us for the first half of our discussion.

What if history isn't really driven by the loudest voices or the biggest names—but by ordinary people who refused to give up?

In *The Small and the Mighty*, Sharon McMahon pulls us away from the marble monuments and into the lives of overlooked Americans who shaped the nation in quiet, determined ways. These are people who didn't

have power handed to them, who weren't always famous, and who often failed before they made progress—but they kept showing up anyway. McMahon reminds us that history isn't just something that happened—it's something made by people not so different from us.

We look forward to hearing your thoughts as you join us to discuss *The Small and the Mighty* on January 12, even if you haven't read the book. All are welcome.

We would like to thank Maureen White, who led the discussion of *Girl in the Tunnel: My Story of Love and Loss as a Survivor of the Magdalene Laundries* by Maureen Sullivan and *Small Things Like These* by Claire Keegan. Seventeen of us shared our thoughts about truth, responsibility, and the small but vital acts that challenge silence.

## Action in a New Legislative Session

*Nancy Henderson, Director of Public Policy*

The Iowa state legislature is set to convene on **Monday, January 12<sup>th</sup>**. We are already hearing about some of the issues legislators will be considering: property taxes, state budget, crime, education. Our branch will monitor all proposed legislation affecting women and girls in particular. A weekly list of the latest bills, and actions taken on those bills, is compiled. That list is then shared with the branch board members as well as other members who want to take action by contacting their state representatives to advocate for women and girls. If you would like to receive this weekly list, let me know at [nancyhenderson2023@gmail.com](mailto:nancyhenderson2023@gmail.com).

## Bridge for Education

*Ardelle Brown*

Bridge players will gather on Thursday, **January 15, 12:30-3:00**, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Prairie Wind Western Communities, 5413 Caraway Lane, Cedar Falls. Each of us donates \$2 to play, and the money goes to the scholarship fund. I will be phoning or emailing regular participants to see if you can play, and new players are always welcome. Interested? Just let me know!

## Literature Group Meeting

*Joan Bunkofsky*

We will meet on Monday, **January 19, at 1:15 PM** at 1706 Cottage Lane. Linda Morgan will share a book. Gloria Tollefson will be hostess. All are welcome to join us. Call 319/290/9089 if you have a question.

## Fourth Friday With Friends

*Ardelle Brown and Linda Morgan*



Fourth Friday with Friends will meet at 10:00 AM on **Friday, January 23**, near the coffee area at College Square HyVee in Cedar Falls. Hope to see you there. We do laugh a lot and hope you can add to this great morning. We predict lovely weather.

## Stephanie Leon-Quetzecua, January Program Presenter

Stephanie Leon-Quetzecua serves as an Identification Specialist with the Iowa Migratory Education Program, supporting the identification and recruitment of eligible migratory children and families across the state. In her role, she conducts outreach in schools and communities, builds connections with families, and collaborates with educators to ensure smooth educational transitions for students.

A bilingual educator with a Bachelor's in TESOL Teaching and a minor in Spanish, Stephanie also holds an Associate of Arts degree and a Master's in Higher Education Administration. Her professional experience spans K-12 and higher education, including roles as a Migrant Coordinator, graduate assistant for International Support Services, and TRIO Student Support Services intern. She is passionate about advancing educational equity and empowering students to thrive in every stage of their academic journey.

## Cedar Valley Legislative Public Forums—and Lobby Day

*Nancy Henderson, Director of Public Policy*

The 2025 Cedar Valley Legislative Public Forums schedule has been announced, and the first is scheduled for **Friday, January 23, at 5:00**. Our branch is one of several organizations supporting these forums, led by Black Hawk-Bremer County League of Women Voters. All state legislators representing voters in Black Hawk and Bremer counties are invited. The forums are on Fridays, 5:00-6:30 PM. at Hawkeye Community College's Van G. Miller Adult Learning Center, 120 Jefferson St., Waterloo, and topics have been announced:

**January 23 (quality of life in Iowa)**

February 13 (education)

February 27 (fiscal policy)

March 13 (health care)

March 27 (water quality)

April 10 (wrap up)


Please mark your calendars to attend these forums, hear from legislators and community members, and seek answers to your questions and concerns related to the announced topic and the current legislative session.

Also, remember to reserve **Wednesday, February 11**, for AAUW-Iowa Lobby Day at the State Capitol Building in Des Moines. More information will follow about Lobby Day. Stay tuned!

## Promoting Global Awareness /Great Decisions

*Gloria Tollefson, International Affairs Director*

Our 2026 Great Decisions books have arrived! If you ordered a book, I will work hard to get your book to you! Call me (319-266-4075).

We will begin our monthly discussion on January 27, one week later than our usual third-Tuesday meeting because the woodworking group reserved our usual room ahead of us! How dare they!  So instead we will meet **January 27, 7:00-8:30**, at the Cedar Falls Library. Our topic will be America's Global Role: America First vs Liberal Internationalism. The topic of this DVD should evoke an interesting discussion! Join us; you really don't need a new book for this topic!

## Cedar Valley Discuss and Discover Updates

*Judy Beckman, Ardelle Brown, and Mary Dove*

CV3D now has multiple copies of each month's reading selection available for checkout at the Cedar Falls Public Library 2<sup>nd</sup>-floor help desk. Checked-out books may be kept for one month.

To meet the needs of our discussion leaders, we have adjusted the reading calendar: on **February 9**, we will discuss Sara Seager's memoir, *The Smallest Lights in the Universe*. And on **March 9**, we will discuss *Fearless: A Novel of Frances Perkins and Social Security* by Jonna Higgins-Freese.

## Branch Highlights July 1—December 31, 2025

*Maureen White, Co-President*

In the communications survey conducted last October, a member suggested that we periodically provide updates on board and branch happenings. Here are some highlights so far:

- The branch 2025-2029 Strategic Plan was revised prior to the start of the 2025-26 membership year.
- The board adopted a fundraising plan that includes scholarship donation pledges, frozen meals for purchase, sale of Butter Braids, collaboration on a spring semester 2026 project with UNI students, and the annual plant and garden sale. We also promoted donations for the Gotcha Covered. Period. project to provide period products for Cedar Falls and Waterloo public schools.
- Several sections of the Board Handbook were revised for 2025-26; review and revision continue.
- AAUW Cedar Falls-Waterloo, along with co-sponsors UNI Student Government and Women of Action, hosted debates in September and October for Cedar Falls and Waterloo municipal candidates.
- The board approved up to \$200 in grants to assist girls with payment to attend the November 15 Society of Women Engineers (SWE) at UNI. Branch member volunteers also assisted with check-in for the event.
- The board purchased one year of liability coverage for claims arising from branch events, effective January 1, 2026. This decision will be reviewed in a year.
- A Holiday Tea was hosted on December 13 by Sharon Walker.
- So far in FY 2026, from July 1, 2025, through the end of November (the latest month data is available), our members contributed \$1,685 to AAUW.

**Do you have an idea for a project for our branch?** Let us know! If there is a cost involved, we can apply for a grant from AAUW Iowa, up to \$500.

### Upcoming Webinars From AAUW

[AAUW Work Smart: Know Your Value and Get Paid](#)

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 | 1:00 - 2:00 pm CT

[The Future of Higher Education](#)

Thursday, January 15, 2026 | 1:00 - 2:00 pm CT

[AAUW Start Smart](#)

Wednesday, January 21, 2026 | 3:00 - 4:00 pm CT

[AAUW Money Smart: Smart Foundations](#)

Tuesday, January 27, 2026 | 3:00 - 4:00 pm CT

[Advocacy in an Election Year: Staying Nonpartisan While Taking Real Action](#)

Thursday, January 29, 2026 | 2:00 - 3:30 pm CT

## **An Excellent AAUW Webinar**

*Nancy Hasenwinkel, Co-President*

I want to tell you about a webinar I attended on November 6, entitled Working in Coalition: Building Power Through Partnerships. I was drawn to this webinar because of AAUW Iowa's emphasis on this topic. Also, the 5 Star Program features this concept.

Meghan Kissell, Senior Director of Policy & Member Advocacy, led the webinar. There was a panel of five branch leaders giving real life examples of coalition building:

- The Illinois group talked about their work with the Dignity in Depth group, especially talking about conversations with difficult people.
- The group from Missouri stressed that you have to evaluate what your own branch is comfortable with. For example, Iowa is a red state, and you can't cite what New York and California are doing to have a chance of success with your coalition.
- The Minnesota group also emphasized tackling issues with which your branch is comfortable. In their case, they worked with the EPA. They also promoted the 2 Minute Activist and writing postcards.
- In New Jersey, they collaborated on a menstrual products project.

In general, all agreed that the key is getting your branch started on collaborating, and then they can expand. They listed the following advantages:

1. There is no progress without coalitions.
2. AAUW is well positioned to know who is effective in politics.
3. AAUW is seen as "grass roots."

And they listed the following challenges:

1. How do you find balance with many different views? Give and take is key.
2. We must integrate minority voices into our coalition.
3. Trust takes time.
4. Be willing to admit your mistakes.

The last takeaway is that we can be political, but not partisan. Be sure to check out this webinar on the AAUW [website](#)!

## **Ready to Take Action?**

*Nancy Henderson, Public Policy Director*

Have you signed up for AAUW's [Two-Minute Activist](#) yet?

<https://www.aauw.org/act/two-minute-activist/>

Join AAUW advocates in the fight for equity in education, equal pay, paid leave, protections against sexual harassment, and more. Sign up to get regular alerts on when and how to engage, including sending letters to your legislators, writing letters to the editor, and responding to other timely calls to action.



## Scholarship News

*Marilyn Drury, Scholarship Committee Chair*

Lindsey Stabenow (in top photo) is currently at UNI taking five courses, and working part time at two different businesses. She is president of the UNI Psychology Club! She was headed to Barcelona, Spain, during winter break to improve her Spanish-speaking skills. She plans to graduate next year.



Naomi Macke, one of our recipients this past year (on the right in the photo below), passed her LPN boards and accepted a nursing position at Western Home. She has been dealing with several family issues but states that school is going well. She hopes to graduate from Hawkeye Community College this year.

Shelby Jenkins, another of our recipients this past year (on left in photo), has become a member of Alpha Sigma Tau at UNI. The organization's philanthropic mission is "woman's wellness." She is also employed on campus in the Community Engagement Office which focuses on giving back to the community. She explains, "I am a facilitator between local



nonprofits and the university in relation to volunteer opportunities; I also have the pleasure of overseeing our Pack the Dome event, and a new opportunity launching this year called 'Campus Wide Day of Service—Cats Who Care.' Because of my service with the University, I am gaining their minor certificate for Non-Profit Leadership. All very exciting opportunities and I'm having a blast!" All of this while maintaining excellent grades and working part time as a CNA. Shelby says to all of us: "Thank you so much for awarding me a scholarship earlier this year. I truly could not have done it without the help of you all."

Please keep up your contributions to our scholarship fund, as our recipients truly appreciate the help and encouragement. Thank you!