

AAUW Howard County Branch NEWSLETTER



OUR

MISSION: *To advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.*

April 2025

Hello Members and Friends,

The cherry blossoms are in full bloom with the daffodils and tulips right behind. It must be spring! And with spring comes new members. Welcome to Suzanne Ryan. Please welcome her to our branch. A brief profile can be found on page 5 of this newsletter.

The Book Bash had a small attendance but was one of the best one's I can remember. The variety of books presented was terrific. Girl Power was a great success where over 50 elementary students and their parents used math and code deciphering in a fun way to detect and find "the bad guy." We may have a follow-on activity that Cindy Graham and her Education committee are exploring. See page 3.

Susan Hailman has made arrangements for our **April 8th Branch Meeting** to hear a presentation on **Human Trafficking** with a focus on Howard County. Come and find out about how prevalent it is and how we might help support its prevention as well as the victims. More details are in the next article.

We have raised enough funds to give a \$1,000 scholarship to each of six students and a \$2,000 scholarship to one student transferring from HCC to a 4-year college for a degree in a STEM field. This is one of the largest amounts we have provided in any given year.

Starting April 1, 2025, National dues will increase to \$74, and to \$76 the year after.

The National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL) is being organized by an outside organization and is off to a very slow start. So the Board has decided to skip this year and use the scholarship funds for an HCC student.

Mark your calendar for our May Branch Meeting on May 13th in a location to be determined. It will be a potluck, installation and recognition of officers, and a speaker.

I encourage you to sign up for the 2025 AAUW Maryland Annual Convention that will be held Saturday, April 26th in Gaithersburg. [Learn more and register](#)

Beth Hayden
Bhayden52@aol.com

APRIL PROGRAM

Human Trafficking

Branch Meeting: Tuesday, April 8

Time: 2:00 – 4:00 PM

Speaker: Ashton Petta, Manager, Howard County Office of Human Trafficking Prevention

**Location: East Columbia 50+ Center, Classroom 2, 6610 Cradlerock Way
Columbia, MD 21045, next to East Columbia Library**

We see it depicted on the TV or in a movie. It seems remote, and slightly not real. Unfortunately, it is real, and it hits very close to home here in Maryland. According to our state government website, we are in a high-risk area, being between two major cities and on major roads, rails and airports. Maryland's **central location** has facilitated its development as both a **pass-through state** and a **destination for human traffickers**. Data from the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) suggests that **approximately 70 percent of human trafficking incidents occur in our nation's truck stops**.

Forced labor, either for sex or labor such as domestic service, nail shop services, or construction work is all part of human trafficking. There are a lot of misconceptions about sex trafficking. Sex trafficking may include, but does not require, movement of the individual. A person may be trafficked out of their own bedroom. Victims of sex trafficking in Maryland have many different faces. They may be foreign-born, domestic, minors or adults and they may be male, female, or transgender.

Please attend our **April 8th meeting** to hear Ashton Petta, manager from our Howard County Office of Human Trafficking Prevention (OHTP). This office works with multiple partners to prevent trafficking and improve the outcomes for victims. Light refreshments will be served.

Suzanne Soules, Membership and Diversity VP



Education Committee News Cynthia Graham, Education VP

Scholarships For the 2025–26 Academic Year

The Howard Community College (HCC) Educational Foundation AAUW – Howard County Branch Scholarship Fund balance has reached \$9,050! This money was donated by our members and friends directly to the HCC Educational Foundation and earmarked for AAUW - Howard County Branch Scholarships. In addition, we have raised almost \$1,000 for scholarships from our Holiday Auction and Toby's Dinner Theatre Fundraisers. Our branch also has received more than \$1,000 in unrestricted donations this year.

At the March Board Meeting, the Board approved awarding six \$1,000 scholarships to HCC students in the Parent Scholars Program (previously Career Links) who are pursuing STEM fields. Each scholarship is for \$500 per semester and supplements federal and state grants and loans. The balance of our HCC Educational Foundation AAUW – Howard County Account will be held in reserve for future awards. You can read more about the Parent Scholars Program in our March Newsletter which is available on the members only section of our website.

In addition, we will award one \$2,000 scholarship to a student transferring from HCC to a 4-year program in a STEM field. Thank you all for your hard work and generosity that has made it possible for us to support seven students.

Math Detective Seminar at APL Girl Power

AAUW members Suzanne Soules, Sethanne Howard, Debbie Munley, and Beth Hayden presented a Math Detective Seminar for second through fifth graders at the APL Girl Power Conference this year. Suzanne's daughter, Kate, and Cindy Graham's daughter, Christine, assisted.

The participants used math exercises and a cipher disc to decode five clues that allowed them to solve a crime wave perpetrated by a rogue super-hero in the fictional city of Mathhatten. We reached approximately 50 second through fifth grade students.

The seminar was well-received, and parents asked us how they could access more programs like it. The Board authorized the Education Committee to research the feasibility of partnering with the Howard County School District, Columbia Association, Library System, County Park System or other community organizations to offer a limited scale after school AAUW Math Stars Program on a pilot basis.

This project would directly align with AAUW's mission to advance gender equity through education. By targeting elementary school girls, we can help build the foundation for lifelong confidence and competence in mathematics, addressing the gender gap in STEM before it widens. The program would offer an opportunity for us to increase our visibility in the community and attract a younger and more diverse membership while creating meaningful volunteer opportunities for our members to directly mentor the next generation.

Cynthia Graham, Education VP, cugraham@gmail.com

Girl Power Photos

MATH DETECTIVES



Branch members Sethanne Howard (third from left), Debbie Munley (in black,) and Suzanne Soules (on the right) had a very successful day at APL's Girl Power. The team included Christine Graham and Alexandra Crawley (Cindy Graham's daughter and granddaughter on the left) and Liz and Kate Killian (Suzanne's daughter and granddaughter) behind Debbie. Not pictured - Beth Hayden, who took the photos.



The Book Bash



Presenters at the Book Bash displaying the books they recommended.
From the left: Debbie Munley, Suzanne Soules, Phyllis Cook, Peggy Wong, Bea Dane. In front, Susan Hailman, Program VP, who made the arrangements for the meeting.

Here are the titles of the books that were presented at the Book Bash. Choose one to enjoy this month.

Woman of Troublesome Creek by Kim Michelle Richardson
The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store by James McBride
The Invisible Woman by Erika Robuck
Frozen River by Ariel Lawhon
All the Colors of the Dark by Chris Whitaker
We Do Not Part by Han Kang



On the left, Bea Dane talked about *The Invisible Woman* and to the right, Phyllis Cook described *Woman of Troublesome Creek*.



Welcome to Our New Member!

Suzanne Soules, Membership and Diversity VP

Meet Suzanne Ryan, our new branch member!

I am delighted to be a new member of AAUW and look forward to participating in many of its activities. My husband and I moved to Columbia in Oct. 2020 (height of the pandemic) to be near our soon-to-arrive grandchild. Our son and daughter-in-law have since graced us with another grandchild. During my 35-year career, I taught Middle School and High School. I enjoyed every minute of it, well, maybe not all the paperwork:) As for my interests, they are quite varied and can be influenced by those with whom I hang out. Some of the ones I initiate for myself are: travel, reading, genealogical research, scrapbooking, cultural events (art, music, theater, exhibits, ...).

Suzanne Ryan

AAUW Dues News

Bea Dane, Treasurer

The National AAUW office has announced an increase in dues.
New national dues: \$74 starting starting April 1, 2025, and \$76 starting April 1, 2026.

(Following is a summary of an email sent by national office to members.)

Why it matters: Member dues are an important funding source for AAUW. While costs for member support increase annually, dues have not kept pace. The \$2 adjustment is a modest increase and keeps pace with inflation.

Member dues fund member services such as

- **Administrative Support:** dues processing, Community Hub management and toolkits.
- **Website Support:** Update and manage over 500 branch and state websites including ours at <https://howardcounty-md.aauw.net/> Check it out!
- **Member Trainings:** Virtual member gatherings and training programs.
- **Member Engagement:** Organize groups like Archives Corps and Lobby Corps.
- **Speaker Engagement:** Offer National speakers for branch meetings and state conventions.

Interest Groups

ADVENTURES IN DINING

Adventures in Dining will be meeting at Seasons 52 at Columbia Mall on Tuesday, April 1, at 5:00 pm. Please RSVP to me by Friday, March 28, at carolmcauliffe@verizon.net if you plan to attend. Hope to see you then! Carol Phelps

GREAT DECISIONS

The Great Decisions Discussion Group will meet Tuesday, April 15, at 2:00 PM at Brightview Senior Living. The address is 6670 Martin Road in Columbia. We will discuss Topic #4 *"India: Between China, the West, and the Global South."*

Contact: Carol Phelps,
carolmcauliffe@verizon.net

FOOD PANTRY

AAUW Volunteers for the Howard County Food Bank-
Our next session is next Friday, April 4 from 10am-noon. In July, we meet Friday, July 11.
Join us. The two hours involve working with Food Bank staff and other group volunteers. The Food Bank is closed to shoppers to allow stocking shelves and bagging fresh vegetables. Come out for one session to try it out. It is set up to look like a regular food market and is located close to Snowden River and Broken Land Parkway on Gerwig Lane.
Contact: Laura Violand
lvioland123@gmail.com
410-733-5732

AAUW READERS

Meetings are held every other month on the 3rd Thursday at the East Columbia 50 Plus Center and will begin at 10:30 AM., followed by an optional lunch at a nearby restaurant. The schedule is as follows.

May 15, 2025 The Missionary's Pledge: A Novel of India
By Kathy Schofield

July 17, 2025 The Violin Conspiracy: A Novel
By Brendan Slocum

Contacts: Jean Salkeld (410) 992-4198
jesalkeld@gmail.com and
Debbie Munley
debbiemunley@verizon.net
(301) 776-7388

LUNCH BUNCH

LUNCH BUNCH
Join us on Thursday, April 24 @ 11:30 a.m., at Nordstrom Cafe Columbia Mall. It's an informal lunch, no RSVP needed. If you can't make it this month, join us when you can!
Caroline Tunison
301-346-1750

2025 – 2026 AAUW Howard County Branch Officers

President: Beth Hayden (410)-707-2018

First Vice President: Position open

Financial Officer: Bea Dane (410) 299-8403

Programs Vice President: Susan Hailman (443) 994-5453

Philanthropy Vice President: Position open

Meetings/Social Co-Vice Presidents: Carol Phelps carolmcauliffe@verizon.net
and Bobbie Brooks (443) 545-5642

Secretary: Debbie Munley (410) 381-6351
Alt: Bobbie Brooks (240)-888-5231

Education Vice President: Cindy Graham (214) 912-5656

Public Policy Vice President: Position open

Membership and Diversity Vice President: Suzanne Soules (410) 872-8603

Communications Vice President: Diane Roca (443) 255-1628

Adventures in Dining: Carol Phelps carolmcauliffe@verizon.net

AAUW Readers: Jean Salkeld (410) 992-4198 and
Debbie Munley (301) 776-7388

Food Bank: Laura Violand (410) 733-5732

Great Decisions: Diane Roca (410) 964-3523

Lunch Bunch: Caroline Tunison (301) 346-1750

Website Manager: Position open

AAUW Howard County Branch Calendar

2025

APRIL

1 – Board Meeting; Postponed

1— Adventures in Dining; 5:00 PM; Season's 52 at Columbia Mall

4 — Help at HoCo Food Bank; 10am to 12pm; Columbia

8 – **Branch Meeting**; Diversity Program; 2:00 -4:00 PM; 50+ Center next to East Columbia Library

15 – Great Decisions; 2 pm; Brightview Senior Living

24 - Lunch Bunch; 11:30 am; Nordstrom Café

26 – AAUW MD Meeting and Annual Convention

MAY

6 -- Adventures in Dining; Mexican restaurant, details TBD

2 -- Help at HoCo Food Bank; 10am to 12pm; Columbia

6 – Board Meeting if needed; 2pm; location TBD

13- **Branch Meeting**, Potluck, New Officers; location and time TBD

15 - AAUW Readers; 10:30 am; 50+ Center, East Columbia Library

20 - Great Decisions; 2 pm; Brightview Senior Living ?

22 — Lunch Bunch; 11:30 am; Nordstrom Café

28-30 – NCCWSL, U of MD, College Park, MD

JUNE

3 -- Adventures in Dining; Seafood restaurant, details TBD

6 - Help at HoCo Food Bank; 10am to 12pm; Columbia

17 - Great Decisions; 2 pm; Brightview Senior Living ?

26 - Lunch Bunch; 11:30 am; Nordstrom Café

JULY

NO Adventures in Dining

NO Great Decisions

11 - Help at HoCo Food Bank; 10am to 12pm; Columbia

17- AAUW Readers; 10:30 am; 50+ Center, East Columbia Library

24 - Lunch Bunch; 11:30 am; Nordstrom Café

AUGUST

NO Adventures in Dining

NO Great Decisions

SEPTEMBER

2 - Adventures in Dining resumes

9 - Branch Meeting – details TBD

16 - Great Decisions resumes