

AAUW Howard County Branch NEWSLETTER



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

October 2025 Message from your Co-Presidents

Hello Members and Friends,

There's a chill in the air signaling Fall is here and we'll soon be raking leaves or sipping cider by the fireplace. The Board has been busy planning and discussing some new ideas for the Branch and we hope you are part of the activities and commitment to help women and girls in some innovative ways. We've approved a budget and have mapped out a number of activities in our calendar that can be found at the back of this newsletter. Please take a moment to review it.

Here are a few highlights. With regard to membership, we are instituting a “**Buddy Program**” to help new members feel welcome and engaged right from the start. Kathy Silks has developed an action plan which could help integrate newcomers socially to the membership. This program is described in more detail in this newsletter. **Anyone who would like to volunteer to be a “buddy,” please contact Suzanne. (Suzanne.Soules@gmail.com).**

Another new endeavor is the formation of a committee to develop a plan to understand issues related to **diversity, equity, and inclusion**. The committee will use many of the tools laid out by AAUW to determine ways to strengthen the branch's ability to address social justice issues. Check for more details in this newsletter and **contact Kathy Silks (kms107@outlook.com) or Peggy Wong (my_nest@verizon.net) if you are interested in serving on this committee.**

We awarded six Howard Community College students with a \$1,000 **scholarship** for each. These students are in the Parent Scholars Program and have to juggle parenting with going to school.

Already we have started working on the **AAUW Five Star Program** that helps us to align our Branch's programs with AAUW's strategic priorities and advance our mission of achieving gender equity for women and girls. These priorities are: (1) to fund higher

education; 2) remove barriers to success in education and the workplace; and (3) strengthen AAUW's reach. We will keep you up to date as our plan progresses.

The **AAUW MD State Fall conference** will be held October 18 from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in Severna Park. A separate email was recently sent to members encouraging attendance to learn more about Native Americans in Maryland.

Our next Branch meeting will be held October 28th at the East Columbia 50+ Center at 2:30 p.m. Please plan to join in this interactive program of "Hooked on Books" to be led by Kathy Silks. The meeting is open to the public and friends and relatives are welcome.

Twenty people have signed up to see *Saturday Night Fever* matinee at **Toby's** Dinner Theater on Sunday, October 12 raising over \$400 for scholarships.

Three other important dates to mark on your calendar: December 7 – **Holiday Luncheon and Silent Auction**; February 7 – **Book Bash** with "Sheroes" theme; and February 22 – **Pinot's Palette**.

Beth Hayden, Co-President with Suzanne Soules

Help the Fueling Dragons Food Pantry at HCC



We will be collecting money at our October Branch Meeting to make a donation to the Howard Community College Fueling Dragons Food Pantry instead of collecting non-perishables at our Holiday Lunch. Collecting a nominal amount of money, say \$5 to \$10 per person, would enable us to sponsor at least one meal kit. For every \$50 we collect, our branch can give an HCC student and their family a full holiday meal kit which includes a voucher for a ham or turkey and all the side dishes. Your donation will help make sure no student worries about having enough to eat this holiday season. It's easy for us to give the gift of food without having to cart around cans and boxes. Donations will be by cash only.

October Branch Meeting “Hooked On Books”

6610 Cradlerock Way, Columbia, MD 21045



Explore the joys of reading for pleasure and the roles that reading plays throughout our lives in our upcoming interactive branch program, "Hooked on Books," on Tuesday, October 28, at 2:30 p.m. at East Columbia 50+ Center, Columbia. Branch member Kathy Silks will share humorous memories of her lifelong addiction to reading. Group discussion will

focus on personal experiences with reading, symptoms of “biblioholism,” factors that influence our reading habits, and favorite books and authors.

Join us for a fun time focused on something we all love – reading – and bring along family members and friends who are “hooked on books,” too.

Free Public Event

Education Committee Cindy Graham VP

Education Committee Report

Six Howard Community College (HCC) students were awarded AAUW – Howard County Branch scholarships of \$1,000 each for academic year 2025-2026.

- Zakia, the single mother of a son, is preparing herself for a career as a catheterization laboratory (cath lab) technician.
- Lauren, the single mother of two girls, is a nursing student. After she completes her degree at HCC, she plans to further her education and earn a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.
- Aniya, a 27-year-old mother; is a nursing student and works at the Kennedy Krieger Institute in autism. She plans to earn an associate's degree in nursing, followed by a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, ultimately becoming a Nurse Practitioner specializing in psychiatric care for people with mental illness.
- Aisha is a Surgical Technologist, mother, and nursing student. After completing her degree, she plans to work as a Registered Nurse, providing compassionate care while also mentoring and supporting families in my community.
- Abimbola is in her final semester of her nursing program. Upon completing her degree, she plans to give back to the society by helping and supporting the elderly in her community.
- Cris, the mother of three girls ranging in age from 1 to 12, is finishing her pre-requisites to apply for the Nursing Program at HCC.

All six scholarship recipients are in the HCC Parent Scholars Program. At our May meeting, program director Brooke Barrick shared the challenges facing students who are juggling academics, parenting, and work and described the support the Parent Scholars Program provides these students. Visit the [HCC Parent Scholars website](#) to learn more about these valuable services.

HCC President Daria Willis Ph.D. wrote the forward to the Center for Community College Student Engagement Annual Report published in September 2025. This year's report was entitled [Multiple Responsibilities, Single Mission](#) and focused on the experiences of community college parenting students. In the forward to the report, Dr. Willis, who was a single parent when she attended college, reflected on the kindnesses shown to her as well as the challenges she faced. She observed that the higher education sector has evolved significantly in the last twenty years but acknowledged that more recognition of and support for individuals who are both parents and students are necessary.

A key example is childcare. During the pandemic, campus child-care learning centers across the country, including the Children's Learning Center at HCC, were closed due

to insufficient funding. Many remain closed today. HCC was able to reopen its Children's Learning Center in August 2024 with support from a CCAMPIS grant from the United States Department of Education and the Howard County Community Action Council. More than 30 children are enrolled in the center today while their parents pursue their education at HCC. Watch this short film by the Aspen Institute, ['Raising Up'](#), to learn more about HCC's efforts to reopen its campus children's learning center.

HCC is a leader in providing support to its parenting students. We as members of AAUW – Howard County Branch are pleased to be able to help them help these students reach their educational goals.

Membership Suzanne Soules, VP

Our members are a social group. We enjoy each-others' company while focusing on our AAUW mission. To that end, we want any new members to feel welcome and engaged right from the start. Kathy Silks has suggested to the Board an action plan which could help integrate newcomers to the membership. It is a "Buddy Program," matching current members with a new member. The buddies would attend branch meetings together for a while, introducing the new member to others, and sharing their experiences as a member of AAUW, determining common interests and activities. Buddies could also encourage new members to join a special interest group where a newcomer may feel more comfortable in a smaller group, making it easier to get to know other members.

If you are willing to be a buddy, please let me know. The matches could be made based on college affiliation, background, work history, shared interests and hobbies, or living proximity. We would like to have a "pool" of buddies so that when a new member joins, we are ready to match her up if she would like a buddy.

We want everyone to feel they belong!

Suzanne Soules Membership VP (410) 872-8603

NEW! - Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Committee

Kathy Silks and Peggy Wong, Co-Chairs

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING COMMITTEE

The branch board is creating a committee to develop a plan to build members' understanding of issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and to guide us in taking action against systemic racism and other forms of social injustice. The committee will:

- Prepare a branch mission statement to communicate what we stand for
- Develop a plan to increase branch members' understanding and cultural competence through a variety of learning experiences
- Determine ways to strengthen the branch's ability to address social justice issues
- Explore potential partnerships supporting community learning, dialogue, and change

Please join Peggy Wong and me in this important effort. To find out more and/or to volunteer, contact:

Kathy Silks, Co-VP, Meetings/Social
kms107@outlook.com
717-315-5440 (phone/text)

Fun in the Afternoon for our HCC Scholarships

Paint and Sip at Pinot's Palette

February 22, 2026

On a winter afternoon, February 22, 2026, come and share the fun of painting together at Pinot's Palette as we raise money for our scholarships given to Howard Community College students. We will be led by a professional painter to create the colorful scene below *Magical Winter Wonderland*. This event is open to the public. Maximum seating is 36 people. If 12 people mention AAUW when they sign up, the owner will give our organization 20% of the income for the event. Sign up now and invite family and friends to join you.

DATE: Sunday, February 22, 2026

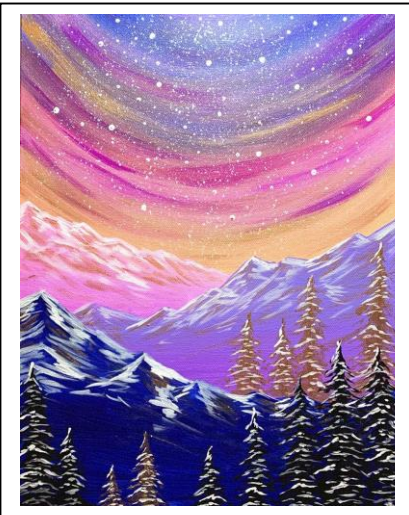
TIME: 2:00 – 4:00 PM

PRICE: \$44.00

LOCATION: 11105 Resort Road, Suite 105, Turf Valley Towne Square, Ellicott City
Refreshments provided.

Sign up here. It's not too soon.

<https://www.pinotspalette.com/ellicottcity/event/862978>



The link above will take you directly to our painting and sign-up area. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** As you sign up, you will see a box on the lower left of the screen "Click to Enter Seating Requests" where you can name people you want to sit with AND mention "AAUW Member" or "AAUW Guest" to ensure our contribution from Pinot's Palette.

Diane Roca dbroca@comcast.net
443-255-1628

Interest Groups

ADVENTURES IN DINING

We will be meeting at the Rathskeller at 5782 Main St., Elkridge on Tuesday, October 21 at 5pm. Since parking is limited there, anyone who wants to carpool is asked to meet at my house around 4:15. There is Great Decisions earlier that afternoon, but we should have plenty of time for those of us wanting to go to dinner to get there OK. Please respond to carollphelps@gmail.com if you will come and ALSO if you would like to carpool.

Contact: Carol Phelps

GREAT DECISIONS

Great Decisions will be meeting at Brightview on Tuesday, October 21, at 2:00 pm. We will be discussing topic 8, "*American Policy in the Middle East*." Also will be taking reservations for next year's book. Orders will be placed last week of October to receive the 20% discount.

Contact: Diane Roca
dbroca@comcast.net

FOOD BANK

AAUW Volunteers for the Howard County Food Bank

Join a fun AAUW group to help stock and wrap local fresh produce. Mark your calendar for Friday, November 7th from 10 AM -12 noon. For any questions, please reach Laura Violand at 410-733-5732. lvioland123@gmail.com

The Food Bank is set up to look like a regular food market and is located close to Snowden River and Broken Land Parkway on Gerwig Lane.

AAUW READERS

All meetings will take place at the East Columbia Library in the 50+ Center. Starting time is 10:30 a.m. followed by an optional lunch at a nearby restaurant. **All Branch members are welcome.** If you would like to be added to the distribution list, please let Debbie Munley know via email debbiemunley@verizon.net.

Nov 20, 2025 **Frozen River**

By Ariel Lawhon

Jan 15, 2026 **The Art Thief**

By Michael Finkel

March 19, 2026 **James**

By Percival Everett

May 21, 2026 **Chesapeake**

Requiem: A Year with the Watermen of Vanishing Tangier Island

By Earl Swift

July 16, 2026 **Clara and Mr. Tiffany**

By Susan Vreeland

Contacts: Jean Salkeld (410) 992-4198

jesalkeld@gmail.com and

Debbie Munley (301) 776-7388

debbiemunley@verizon.net

LUNCH BUNCH

Here's the schedule for the rest of the year:

Thursday, October 30

November- No lunch bunch due to Thanksgiving

Thursday, December 18

We meet for a casual lunch @ 11:30 am, Nordstrom Cafe, Columbia Mall. No RSVP needed. Join us!

Caroline Tunison

301-346-1750

2025 – 2026 AAUW Howard County Branch Officers

Co-Presidents: Beth Hayden (410)-707-2018 and
Suzanne Soules (858) 775-1942

First Vice President: Position open

Financial Officer: Bea Dane (410) 299-8403

Programs Vice President: Susan Hailman (443) 994-5453
Asst. Peggy Wong (410) 997-7019

Philanthropy Vice President: Position open

Meetings/Social Co-Vice Presidents: Carol Phelps
carolmcauliffe@verizon.net and Kathy Silks (717) 315-5440

Secretary: Debbie Munley (410) 381-6351
Alt. Caroline Tunison (301) 346-1750

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: carollphelps@verizon.net

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

Howard County Food Bank: Laura Violand (410) 733-5732

Great Decisions: Diane Roca (443) 255-1628

Lunch Bunch: Caroline Tunison (301) 346-1750

Website Manager: Position open

AAUW Howard County Branch Calendar 2025-2026

2025

OCTOBER

- 7 -- Board Meeting; 2:30 pm; Miller Library
- 12-- Toby's Dinner Theater fundraiser; 10:30 am – Saturday Night Fever Matinee
- 18 – AAUW Maryland Fall Conference; host--Anne Arundel Branch
- 21 -- Great Decisions; 2 p.m. Brightview Senior Living, Columbia
- 21 -- Adventures in Dining; 5 pm; Rathskeller, Elkrige
- 28 – Branch Meeting; 2:30 pm; “Getting Hooked on Books”; East Columbia 50+ Center, Columbia; Public welcome.
- 30 - Lunch Bunch; 12:30 am; Nordstrom Cafe

NOVEMBER

No Branch Meeting

No Great Decisions

No Lunch Bunch

- 1-- MLAW Fall Legislative Conference; 9am-1pm, The Meeting House, Columbia
- 4 --Adventures in Dining; 5 pm; location TBD
- 7 -- Help at HoCo Food Bank; 10 am to 12 pm; Columbia
- 17 – HCC Luncheon for Scholarship Donors; 12 noon
- 18 – Board Meeting, 2:00 pm; location TBD
- 20 –AAUW Readers; 10:30 am; 50+ Center East Columbia Library

DECEMBER

No Branch Meeting

No Great Decisions

- 7 — Holiday Lunch and Silent Auction; 11:30 am; Union Jack's
- 18 ---Lunch Bunch; 11:30 am; Nordstrom Café

2026

JANUARY

No Branch Meeting

3?-- League of Women Voters Legislative Breakfast; location TBD
? ? -- AAUW MD Winter Board Meeting
6 – Board Meeting; 2 pm; location TBD
15 --AAUW Readers; 10:30 am; 50+ Center East Columbia
20 -- Great Decisions; 2 pm; Brightview Senior Living, Columbia
29 —Lunch Bunch; 11:30 am; Nordstrom Café
31 – Women’s Legislative Briefing, by the Montgomery County Commission on Women; location TBD

FEBRUARY

6 - Help at HoCo Food Bank; 10 am to 12 pm; Columbia
7 -- Book Bash and Branch Meeting; 11:30 am – 2 pm; Union Jack’s restaurant, Columbia
17- Great Decisions; 2 pm; Brightview Sr. Living (?)
22 – Pinot’s Palette “Paint and Sip” Fundraiser for scholarships; 2:00-4:00 pm; Turf Valley
26- Lunch Bunch; 11:30 am; Nordstrom Café

MARCH – Women’s History Month

3 –Board Meeting; 2 pm; location TBD
1/8?– Girl Power; 2-5 pm; Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab; Laurel
3 -- Adventures in Dining; location TBD
10 – Branch meeting; 2 pm; location TBD
17 -- Great Decisions; 2 pm; Brightview Sr. Living (?)
19 – AAUW Readers; 10:30 am; 50+ Center East Columbia Library
26 -- Lunch Bunch; 11:30 am; Nordstrom Café

APRIL

7 -- Board Meeting; 2 pm; location TBD
7- Adventures in Dining; details TBD
14 -- Branch Meeting – Diversity Program
21--Great Decisions; 2 pm; Brightview Sr. Living (?)
24 – Lunch Bunch; 11:30 am; Nordstrom Café
? — AAUW Maryland Annual State Convention

MAY

1 - Help at HoCo Food Bank; 10 am to 12 pm; Columbia
5 -- Adventures in Dining; 5 pm; location TBD
6 -- Board Meeting, if needed; 2 pm; location TBD
12 – Last Branch Meeting, Potluck, New Officers; location TBD

19 – Great Decisions; 2 pm; Brightview Senior Living (?)
21– AAUW Readers; 10:30 am; 50+ Center East Columbia Library
28 – Lunch Bunch; 11:30 am; Nordstrom Café

JUNE

2 -- Adventures in Dining; 5 pm; location TBD
16 -- Great Decisions; 2 pm; Brightview Senior Living, Columbia
25 -- Lunch Bunch; 11:30 am; Nordstrom Café

SEPTEMBER

26 – 28 - Mid-Atlantic Regional meeting, Lancaster, PA