

AAUW Howard County Branch NEWSLETTER



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

November 2025 Message from your Co-Presidents

Hello Members and Friends,

Welcome to the Holiday Season!

The days are colder with pumpkins, chrysanthemums, and spooky goblins all around our neighborhoods. Our Branch had a fun meeting last Tuesday with Kathy Silks sharing her passion for reading. Thank you, Kathy for a great interactive program. Thanks to everyone who attended and made a cash contribution to the Howard Community College's Food Pantry for students. A total of \$356 was collected which should provide 7 Thanksgiving dinners for students' families.

Our next all-Branch activity will be our annual Holiday Party Luncheon on Sunday, December 7th starting at 11:30 a.m. at Union Jacks Restaurant in Columbia. Look for an email providing details and request for an RSVP. Also at the luncheon we will have a silent auction that has been very successful in the past to raise scholarship funds. Baskets of goodies/wine/spa items, gift cards, and tickets to events tend to be the most popular, so please consider bringing an item or two.

While we don't have a Branch meeting in November or December, that doesn't mean we are not busy! Dine with the group on November 4th at Elliott's Craft Kitchen in Columbia. Meet with the Readers group on November 20th to discuss "Frozen River" by Ariel Lawhon. Serve on the Education Committee to help Cindy Graham (Cugraham@gmail.com) plan our Girl Power event. We are always looking for volunteers.

We are just starting to put together a directory of our branch members that will include a photo as well as some profile information so that we can get to know each member better. If you'd like to help, please notify Beth (BHayden52@aol.com) and start looking for that perfect photo!

Maryland Legislation Agenda for Women (MLAW) held its annual conference November 1, to present 21 initiatives. As a partner, our Branch will be called on to vote on the proposals which will determine the 6-8 top ranking bills MLAW will propose to the 2026 MD General Assembly. Watch your email for the MLAW ballot.

If you have ideas of activities or programs for our Branch, please let Beth and me know. We welcome your input in making our Branch an active supporter of the AAUW mission.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Beth Hayden and Suzanne Soules, Co-Presidents

February 2026 Branch Meeting “We Need Another (S)hero!”

We Need Another (S)hero!

For this year's Book Bash, our theme is **(S)heros**, because in these contentious times, we're all in need of stories about women who took risks, spoke out, or lived lives that inspire and challenge us.

These don't need to be household names (although they can be). Books can be biographies, memoirs or historical fiction centered on real women. Think about what you've been reading or promised yourself you would read and let me know if you'd be willing to make a 3-5 minute presentation on a new favorite!

**Book Bash is Saturday, February 7, 2026, 11:30 AM-2:00 PM
at Union Jack's.**

Mark your calendar. More to come! Stay tuned!

“WELL BEHAVED
WOMEN RARELY
MAKE HISTORY.”

-ELEANOR ROOSEVELT-

Education Committee Cindy Graham VP

Education Committee Report

Branch Donates \$356 to Fueling Dragons Holiday Meal Kit Drive

Students facing hunger or food insecurity at Howard Community College are not alone. The Fueling Dragons Food Pantry provides resources to overcome food insecurity and develop lifelong healthy habits and skills. Students who wish to participate in this program must verify their current student status by registering with their student ID. After a brief orientation by someone from the pantry team, they are welcome to visit the pantry once per week to select up to 12 food or personal care items.

During the past years, our branch collected non-perishable food items at our Holiday Luncheon to donate to the Fueling Dragons Food Pantry. This year, in lieu of collecting cans and other non-perishable food items, we participated in the Fueling Dragons Holiday Meal Kit Drive. At our October Meeting, we collected \$356. This will feed seven students and their families.



I have reached out to Elise Buckley at APL to confirm the date and time of the 2026 Girl Power Conference. This annual one-day event for elementary and middle school students



is held in early March at the APL Campus in Laurel. Our branch has sponsored an activity table at the conference for many years. Last year, we presented a Workshop,

“The Math Detective”, which was very well received. We hope to present a similar math-themed workshop at the 2026 conference.

We are having our first planning meeting this month and are calling on all current and former Math Geeks, creative minds, and members who like working with children to participate. Please contact me at 214-912-5656 or cugraham@gmail.com if you would like to be involved with the planning or presentation of this event.

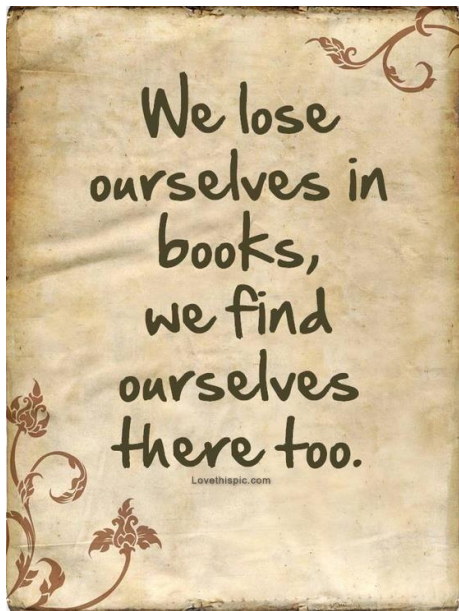
Cindy Graham, Education VP

Membership Suzanne Soules, VP

At the moment we do not have any new members. In anticipation that we will have new women joining us, Kathy Silks and I are developing a “Buddy Program” to ensure a new member feels welcome and connected right from the start. The experienced member will meet and get to know the new member, going with her to meetings or interest group activities so she has a good orientation to our mission and activities. If you would like to be a “Buddy”, please let me know. Also, please be on the lookout for women new in town or newly retired who could be a potential new member. If you want a few brochures to hand out, let me know and I will get some to you. Have a wonderful holiday season.

Suzanne Soules Membership VP (410) 872-8603

CREATING A LIFELONG LOVE FOR READING



Creating a Lifelong Love For Reading

Notes From the October Branch Meeting

What can you do to encourage literacy and promote the love of reading in young people?

If you're a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, mentor, or caregiver for children, create opportunities for the children in your life to focus on books:

- Read to them in their earliest years.
- Make sure they have a personal library of books.
- Turn off the TV and read instead.
- Schedule family reading time.
- Sign them up for a library card.
- Take time to talk with them about what they've read.
- Share your favorite childhood books with them.
- Write stories together or separately and then share them.
- Take them to literacy-focused events at public libraries, book stores, and other locations.
- Be a role model. Make sure they know that reading is an essential and rewarding part of your daily life.

Your actions will give them a gift that will enrich the rest of their lives.

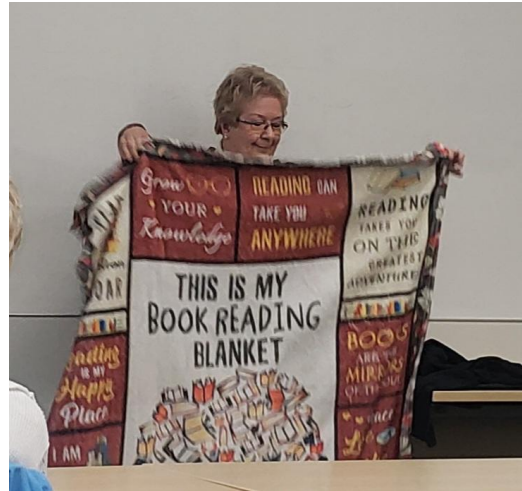
Kathy Silks, *Program Presenter*

Photo Gallery

October Branch Meeting



Member Kathy Silks amused the audience telling about her life as a "Bookaholic."



Kathy Silks displayed her "book reading" blanket.



TITLE IX: ITS HISTORY, USE, ABUSE, AND IMPACT

A Report on an AAUW Washington Webinar

In 1972: Congress passed Title IX, which was signed into law by President Richard Nixon. Title IX states: “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

This past September, AAUW Washington Online Branch presented an outstanding webinar exploring the historical evolution, current landscape, and future implications of Title IX, with a focus on its impact on gender equity in education, athletics, and beyond. The panel, featuring scholars in the fields of political science, athletics, and student affairs, provided attendees with a deeper understanding of the legal, cultural, and political dimensions of Title IX from its origins to recent developments. Panelists shared insights on enforcement trends, lived experiences, and strategies for upholding gender equity in the face of evolving interpretations and challenges.

Here are just a few insights I gained from the session:

In 1970 (prior to Title IX’s passage), women earned just 11% of bachelor’s degrees (compared to 57% today), and the gender pay gap was 40%.

Current statistics:

- 94% of female C-suite executives played collegiate sports.
- 40% of collegiate teams are coached by women.
- Nationally there are one million more male student athletes than female athletes.
- Only 6% of sports research focuses on women.
- Title IX has often been enforced begrudgingly.

Long-term benefits of women participating in sports at a young age:

- Better overall health
- More total years of education
- Higher income and accumulated wealth
- A more collaborative approach to work

What AAUW branches can do to monitor Title IX:

- Know the law
- Download local Title IX statistical reports

- Offer branch support to schools by engaging school boards and administrators and supporting student-led efforts
- Partner with advocacy organizations (National Women's Law Center, Girls Inc., LWV, ACLU, Women's Sports Foundation, etc.)
- Monitor and report non-compliance

I encourage you to download the Title IX webinar recording and PowerPoint at <https://wa-online.aauw.net/>. I believe you'll find it fascinating and eye-opening.

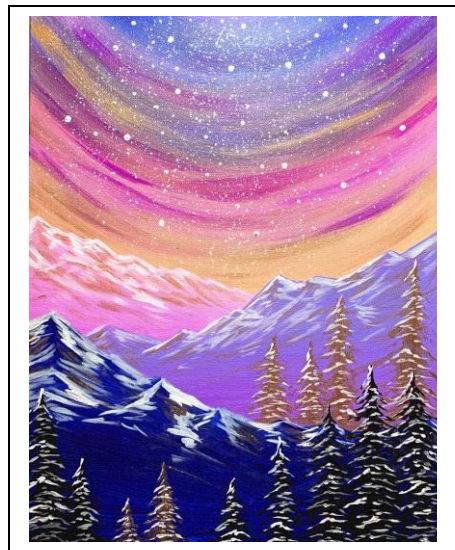
Kathy Silks

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; invite family and friends.



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 below. It's not too soon.

The link below 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.

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

Interest Groups

ADVENTURES IN DINING

We will be meeting at Elliott's Craft Kitchen on Tuesday, November 4 at 5:15pm. The address is 8330 Benson Drive, Columbia, MD 21045.

Please respond to carollphelps@gmail.com if you will come.

Contact: Carol Phelps

GREAT DECISIONS

The Great Decisions group has finished discussing all of the 2025 topics. The 2026 discussion books have been ordered and are expected to arrive in late December. First meeting of the new year will be January 20.

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, January 2 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 Lawhorn

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

No Lunch Bunch in November due to the Thanksgiving holiday.

We will meet on Thursday December 18 @ 11:30am. An email reminder will be sent.

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

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; 5:15 pm; Elliott's Craft Kitchen, 8330 Benson Drive, 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

2 – Help at Howard County Food Bank; 10 AM -12 noon

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;
11:30 AM-5:00 PM; Universities at Shady Grove, 9630 Gudelsky Dr, Rockville, MD 20850

FEBRUARY

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

3 - Help at Howard County Food Bank
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

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

JULY

7 - Adventures in Dining; 5 pm; location TBD
10 – Help at Howard County Food Bank;

SEPTEMBER

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