



1 MAY 2026



AAUW National Mission: To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.

AAUW California Mission: AAUW California facilitates California branches in meeting the vision and mission of AAUW by providing programs, education, and resources.



President's Message:
by Kathi Farber

Happy May Day! I hope you're all enjoying the spirit of the season—perhaps even dancing around a Maypole.

As I write my final President's message, I find myself reflecting on the past four-plus years and all that we have accomplished together as an organization. It has truly been a time of growth and impact. We expanded our identity by changing our name from Palm Springs to Coachella Valley, making our mission more inclusive of the entire valley. We achieved 501(c)(3) status, strengthening our foundation and ability to serve.

Together, we have sent approximately 70 girls to camp, continued to grow our Tech Trek Alumnae Group (TTAG) program, and supported students attending NCCWSL. These milestones represent meaningful opportunities created for young women in our community. And beyond these, there are countless other contributions and successes that each of you has helped make possible.

Our final gathering of the season will be on May 15, when we come together to celebrate the year and welcome the summer ahead. While we'll say goodbye for now, it is only temporary—I look forward to seeing you all again in September at our Welcome Back Meet and Greet Mixer. Your new President, Andee Steinman, will be sharing more details soon.

Wishing you all a wonderful summer, and I hope to see you on May 15.

Kathi Farber



Month of: May 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4 Judicial Candidate Forum @ CSUSB PD	5 Book Club 2pm 	6	7	8	9
10	11	12 Board Mtg 4-5 PM ✓ @ RAP Foundation Room 101	13	14	15 End-of-Year Mixer 4:30pm @ Grapfruit Basil	16
17	18	19	20 Lunch Bunch 12 PM @ Porta Via	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Make sure your membership status is updated!

Make sure you have renewed your membership for the new term! Dues are \$151 because National and State raised their dues.

Ways you can renew:

1. Send a check to AAUW CV at PO BOX 11423, Palm Desert, CA 92255
2. Zelle: aauwcoachellavalley@gmail.com 3. Online at aauwcoachellavalley.com BUT you would need to add \$4 to your \$151, so \$155 because we pay fees when it's a credit card.

Message from our Future President!



Dear Friends,

As Kathi transitions out of her role as President, I want to take a moment to celebrate her and everything she has brought to our branch.

Kathi, your time leading AAUW Coachella Valley has been nothing short of transformative. Under your steady guidance, our branch has grown, modernized, and planted seeds that will bear fruit for years to come.

Just look at what you've accomplished together with your branch: a brand-new website that keeps us connected and puts our story front and center for potential new members; a community presence that has opened doors to a wider audience; and significantly, our 501(c)(3) status, which opens exciting new doors for fundraising and community impact.

And then there's the Strategic Plan. By laying the groundwork for a financially stable, community-responsive branch, you've given us something invaluable: a clear path forward. That's the kind of leadership that echoes long after the tenure ends.

We are so grateful, Kathi, for your vision, your dedication, and your heart for this organization. The foundation you've built is one we'll be proud to build on.

Here's to you, and to everything still ahead for AAUW Coachella Valley!



Thank you!

Andee Steinman

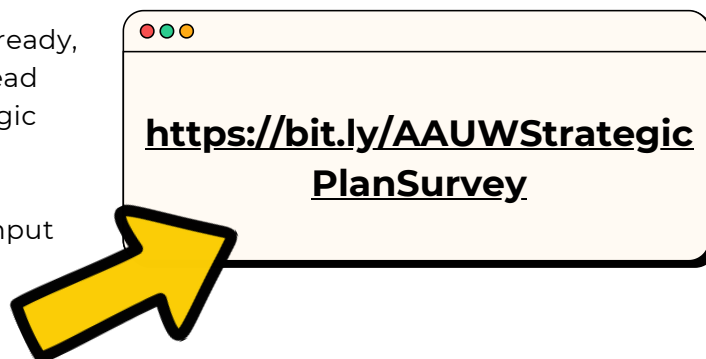


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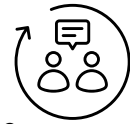
If you have not done so already, please take a minute to read and respond to the strategic plan survey!

We would love as much input as we can get!

Thanks in advance!



4/18 Luncheon Re-Cap



Our luncheon featuring Deputy Chief Kyle Stjerne of the Palm Springs Police Department was a wonderful and engaging event. Attendees were highly attentive and interested as he spoke about the role of women in law enforcement and the growing impact of technology in policing, drawing from his extensive leadership experience and commitment to mentorship.

During the gathering, voting was also held, and we were excited to introduce our new cabinet for the upcoming term. Overall, it was a meaningful and successful luncheon that brought members together for connection, learning, and a strong sense of momentum moving forward.



END OF YEAR MIXER!



Our End of Year Mixer is happening at Grapefruit Basil, and it's the perfect way to wrap up another fantastic year together! Come enjoy a fun evening filled with great food, laughter, and lively conversation as we gather to celebrate all that AAUW has accomplished this year.

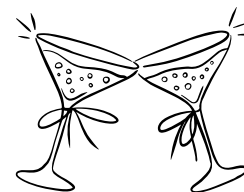
We'll raise a toast to Kathi as we celebrate the end of her wonderful term as president, recognize the many achievements of our organization, and enthusiastically welcome our new cabinet as they begin an exciting new chapter. It's a wonderful chance to mingle, reconnect, and celebrate everything that makes our branch so special—we hope you'll join us for this memorable evening!

Time: May 15th @ 4:30pm

Address:

45000 Indian Wells Ln, Indian Wells, CA 92210

- located inside the [Tommy Bahama Miramonte Resort & Spa](#)



Lunch Bunch



Hey everyone,

Get ready to mark your calendars because our next fabulous Lunch Bunch is just around the corner! We're so excited to announce that we'll be gathering on ****May 20th****.

This time, we're treating ourselves to a truly special experience at the absolutely gorgeous ****Porta Via****! You know, that beautiful spot with the wonderful ambiance? It's the perfect place for us to unwind, enjoy some delicious food, and catch up. It'll be a fantastic opportunity to relax, share some laughs, and simply enjoy each other's company.

Can't wait to see all your lovely faces there for some good food and great conversation.

Time: 12pm

73100 El Paseo Ste 1-2

Palm Desert

Please RSVP to me no later than May 18 email - sheilawarren25@yahoo.com
or 818-422-9560

Warmly,
Sheila Warren

Book Club



At our April meeting, Gail Miller led a very lively and thoughtful discussion of *The Briar Club* by Kate Quinn. In her novel, Quinn created a post-World War II boardinghouse in Washington, D.C. and then populated it with characters who arrived carrying not only their luggage but also many compelling vulnerabilities and secrets. During our discussion, we found the McCarthy Era setting very powerful for both an understanding of Quinn's characters and for our own personal memories.

This month's Book Club will be Tuesday, May 5 at 2 p.m. at my home. Susan Golden will lead the discussion of the novel *The Ghostwriter* by Julie Clark. The story revolves around the 1975 tragic murder of the brother and sister of Vincent Taylor, a teenager who goes on to become a bestselling horror novelist. Now, fifty years later, amid the still lingering speculation and gossip surrounding his involvement in his siblings' deaths, Taylor has hired his estranged daughter to ghostwrite his memoir.

Upcoming Book Club Selections

We chose books for Fall 2026 through Spring 2027 at our April meeting. I will list those titles in the first Fall Newsletter.

May 5 Location: Pam Jennings, 5 Varsity Circle, Rancho Mirage

To RSVP: Contact me at 310-944-0076 or psjennings@gmail.com




Hope to see you on May 5!!



In Other News...

The GFWC Woman's Club of Indio, in partnership with CSUSB Palm Desert Campus and the Desert Bar Association, is hosting a Judicial Candidate Forum May 4th.



Site opens at 4 pm. Forum begins at 5 pm. Free and open to the public. The forum will be moderated and will feature the three female judicial candidates from Riverside seeking to serve the desert region. See the flyer, please.



  



Judicial Candidate Forum

The community is invited to attend a Judicial Candidate Forum, providing an opportunity to hear directly from candidates seeking judicial office. The forum will be moderated and will feature the three female judicial candidates from Riverside seeking to serve the desert region.

- Hear directly from the candidates
- Learn about their experience & qualifications
- Connect with your community



 Monday, May 4, 2026  4:00 - 7:00 PM

 CSUSB Palm Desert Campus  Forum Begins at 5:00 PM

 37500 Cook St, Palm Desert  Free and open to the public.

This is a forum - not a debate.
Come, participate, and stay informed. It's free.

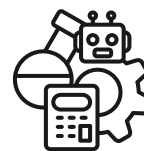
This event is hosted by GFWC Woman's Club of Indio in partnership with CSUSB Palm Desert Campus and is sponsored by the Desert Bar Association.

 president@womansclubofindio.org
 www.WCIndio.org

Our future president will be attending this event to represent AAUW and maintain our presence in the community. We encourage fellow members to join us in showing support through their attendance.

TECH TREK 2026

From Selection to Orientation — Here's Where We Are!



The Results Are In!

We are absolutely thrilled to share that the 2026 Tech Trek selection process is complete — and what a process it was! This year, our committee reviewed applications, essays, teacher recommendations, and interviews for 31 outstanding 7th-grade girls from across the Coachella Valley's 13 middle schools. After careful scoring and deliberation, we are proud to announce that 19 girls have been selected to attend Tech Trek this summer:

- 10 campers heading to University of San Diego (USD)
- 9 campers heading to Whittier College
- 1 camper attending virtually

Every single one of these young women earned her place. The competition was intense, the essays were inspiring, and the interviews reminded all of us exactly why we do this work.

Save the Date: Orientation is Coming!

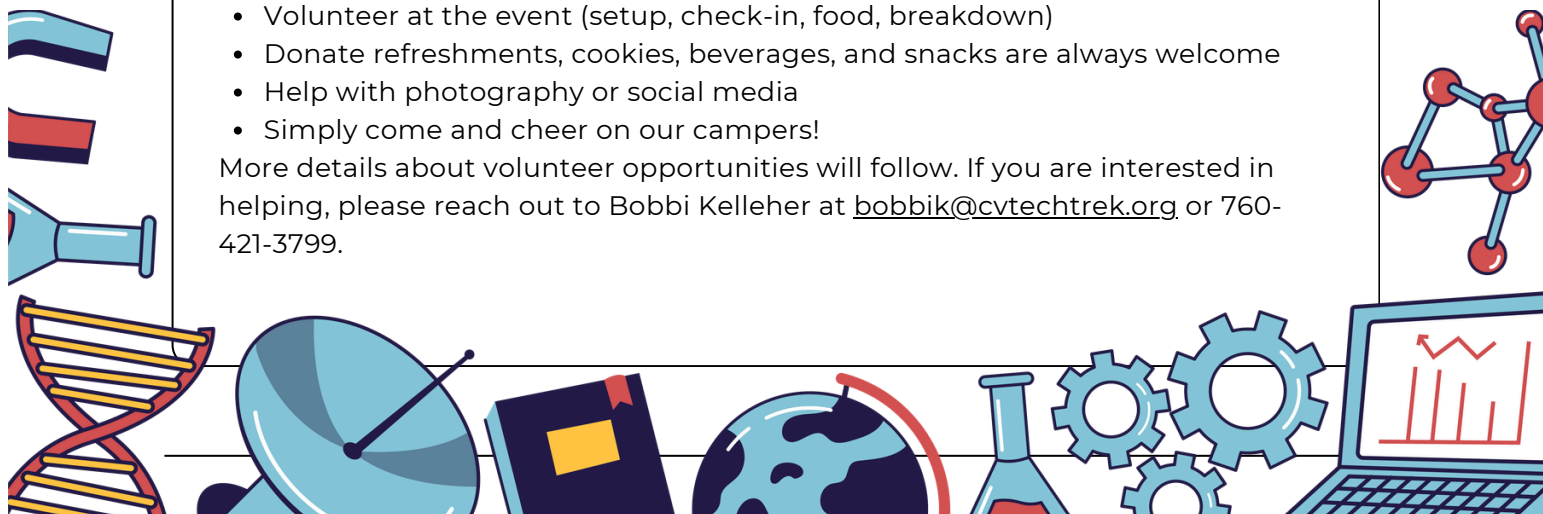
Mark your calendars! The 2026 Tech Trek Orientation will be held on Saturday, May 30, 2026, at the RAP Center in Palm Desert at 2:00pm. .This is one of the most meaningful events of the Tech Trek year — the moment our campers and their families truly begin to understand what lies ahead. If you have attended an orientation before, you know the energy in that room is something special. We are deep in planning mode, and the committee is working hard to create a warm, welcoming experience for our girls and their families, including Spanish-language support for our Coachella Valley families.

How You Can Help

Orientation is a community effort, and we would love your support! Here are some ways AAUW members can get involved:

- Volunteer at the event (setup, check-in, food, breakdown)
- Donate refreshments, cookies, beverages, and snacks are always welcome
- Help with photography or social media
- Simply come and cheer on our campers!

More details about volunteer opportunities will follow. If you are interested in helping, please reach out to Bobbi Kelleher at bobbik@cvtechtrek.org or 760-421-3799.



Thank You to Our Volunteers and Schools

None of this would be possible without the dedication of our branch members, school counselors, teacher recommenders, and interview volunteers. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who gave their time and energy to the selection process this spring.

Special recognition goes to the counselors and administrators at all 13 Coachella Valley middle schools who champion Tech Trek year after year and encourage their brightest girls to apply.

Passing the Hat for Gas Cards!

As we wrap up our branch year, we are passing an actual hat at our May 18 Mixer meeting — because our Tech Trek campers need gas cards to get to camp this summer, and we all know what gas costs these days! Bring some cash, dig through your purse, raid the cup holder in your car — whatever you can spare. Every dollar puts a girl one step closer to an experience she will never forget. Come ready to give and ready to celebrate a wonderful year!

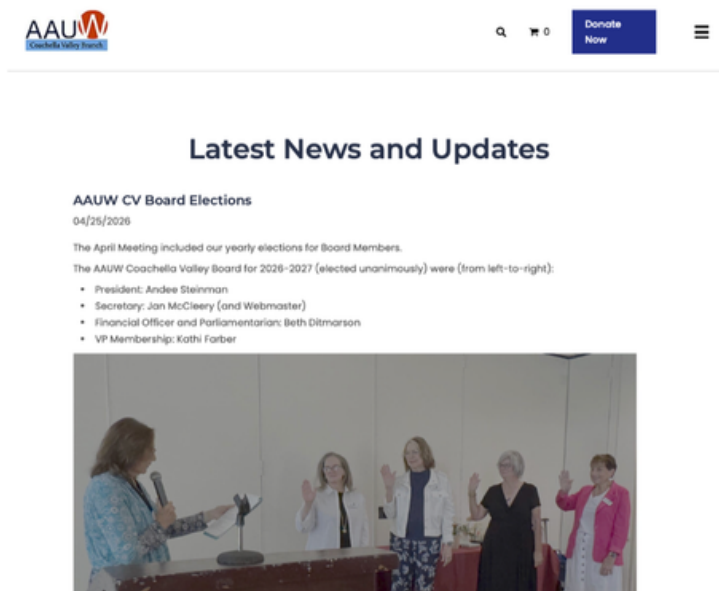


Report from your Webmaster: By Jan McCleery



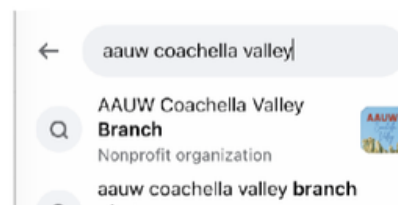
More ways to stay informed: www.aauwcoachellavalley.com

Helpful Hints: If you want to know who the new 2026/27 Board or Chairpersons are, you can sign on www.aauwcoachellavalley.com, go to “News” (from the pull-down menu top right). We post new “News” regularly so if it isn’t the first news item, just scroll down.



Also, if you’re like me and after you read our Newsletter, then you go “Hmm – where was the Lunch Bunch again?” we’re now posting the latest newsletter on both the website and Facebook each month. Handy, yes?

On Facebook, search for “AAUW Coachella Valley”.



“Follow” our web and Facebook pages to spread-the-word and stay informed.

Tell your friends about it too. Help get our message out. Spread the word.

Learning More About Human Trafficking Can Help You Save A Life

By Nancy Major, Member AAUW California Public Policy Committee

Human Trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery, defined as the use of coercion, deception or fraud to hold a person against their will for purposes of labor, sex (e.g. exploitation, prostitution), or commercial sex acts (e.g., pornography, sex tourism).

Human trafficking is a huge global business, generating an estimated \$236 billion in illegal profits each year. Because of the underground nature of human trafficking, exact numbers are sometimes hard to pin down; however, according to 2022 data from the United Nations' International Labor Organization, there are an estimated 27.6 million human trafficking victims worldwide, with most exploitation occurring in the private sector, where 63% of victims are involved in forced labor and 23% are involved in sex trafficking, including commercial sex acts. Estimates of the number of people living under human trafficking in the United States today vary widely, with estimates ranging from 100,000 to 1 million people, depending on methodology.

Some studies also suggest that California is one of the largest sites of human trafficking in the United States. We see it in the news every day: in February of 2026, a Bay Area-wide enforcement sweep yielded 29 arrests and the rescue of 73 people suspected of being forced into sex work. Among the 73 sex-trafficking victims found by authorities were 10 minors, including a 12-year-old being trafficked in Oakland.

As indicated by the news story above, what we do know for sure about human trafficking is that it occurs everywhere. We also know that it tends to be invisible and that women and girls tend to make up the majority of trafficking victims (estimated at 61%). While women are still overwhelmingly trafficked for sexual exploitation, they are also exploited for forced labor, especially in domestic work.

The exact nature of what constitutes human trafficking today has been in flux, with significant shifts occurring during the pandemic when researchers and direct service providers saw a massive surge in forced labor trafficking. In 2021, for the first time since widespread record-keeping on human trafficking began, forced labor trafficking numbers exceeded sex trafficking numbers. According to the National Human Trafficking Hotline (2024), labor trafficking in the United States largely happens in construction, agricultural, and food service industries, but it can also appear in other sectors, such as hospitality and retail. **However, the most common venue for labor exploitation in the United States remains domestic work-the industry outside of sex exploitation that most commonly targets women.**

With so many people being trafficked it is important to know how trafficking begins and persists: by exploiting relationships and vulnerabilities. For adults, trafficking tends to begin when an individual trafficker offers promises of things like a job, money, luxury goods, a romantic relationship, protection, or drugs. These offers are intended to deceive, manipulate or force a potential victim into believing that the trafficker is offering a better life or relief from poverty, abuse, financial precarity, lack of housing, or fear of political or domestic violence. Systemic issues like gender discrimination or racism can increase the risk of being trafficked, especially for marginalized groups; however, any existing vulnerabilities, such as needing to make extra money to pay for college, can create a vulnerability for exploitation. We also see recruitment strategies for children and adults moving toward new forms of digital exploitation.



Learning More About Human Trafficking Can Help You Save A Life (continued)

As is common in instances of domestic violence, traffickers often build a relationship with a victim before trapping them into cycles of emotional exploitation and debt bondage, creating different kinds of dependencies. In debt bondage, traffickers require victims to pay them back for "expenses" (e.g. travel expenses, room and board)--a process which can take years. Children are often recruited by family members, sometimes even sold to traffickers or forced into marriage. Threats of arrest, violence, deportation, threats to family, and withholding pay, food or medical care loom large, frequently leaving victims too afraid to speak out or get help.

For all of these reasons, we know that education, awareness, and stability are key components that play a critical role in fighting human trafficking: learning to set boundaries and build healthy relationships; learning more about the prevalence of exploitation in our own communities; educating ourselves, as well as educators and healthcare professionals, on how to identify and support victims; and creating more financial and social security, overall.

Although it is difficult to identify victims of human trafficking, **you, too, can play a role in helping to liberate victims by learning the signs of trafficking and exploitation and by taking action, locally.**

- To learn more about how to identify victims, attend a [free "fundamentals" of identifying human trafficking](#) webinar and/or access free resources through the [U.S. National Human Trafficking Hotline](#). Some key questions to ask yourself include: What assumptions do I make about those who engage in prostitution, drug use, or gang activity? Those who are financially unstable or those who feel pressured to stay in a job they hate? Am I missing an opportunity to intervene in trafficking because I assume that an individual, especially a young person, is responsible for their own behavior, including engaging in potentially illegal behavior? In other words, by checking our assumptions, we can be better equipped to help a person who is being exploited.
- If you identify a potential victim, call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888.
- If you identify a potential child victim, you can find resources at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, which specializes in support for underage victims of trafficking.
- If you want to engage in direct services, local shelters for trafficked women and girls are in need of financial resources. Organize a fundraiser. Ask one or more victims to talk to your branch.
- If you want to learn more about your area, your branch can contact your local District Attorney's office to give a talk on human trafficking in your area and suggest additional ways to help.
- Some counties also have independent working [human trafficking commissions](#) who work in concert with academic researchers. Contact commissions and Non-Governmental Organizations who work in the field to ask what your branch can do to help.

And of course you can also help by supporting our A level priority legislation in 2026 (AB 1766 and AB 1845), which aims to help prevent human trafficking among children and young people in California.



By supporting meaningful prevention legislation, identifying victims, and reporting tips, you might help save a life.

AAUW California 2026 Legislative Agenda is Set!

By Amy Hom and Missy Maceyko, Co-chairs AAUW California Public Policy

The AAUW California 2026 Legislative Agenda is set! This agenda reflects two months of thoughtful, rigorous work by the Public Policy Committee to evaluate newly introduced legislation and identify the bills most closely aligned with our Public Policy Priorities - Economic Security for All Women, Equal Access to Quality Public Education for All Students, Social and Racial Justice for All Members of Society, and Increased Representation of Women in Leadership.

We are fortunate to be in California, where many legislators share our values and consistently introduce a strong - and often nation-leading - slate of aligned legislation.

This year, in January and February, committee members reviewed 95 bills. In early March, we convened for an intensive two-day session to discuss and carefully consider each one. From this process, 34 bills were selected for inclusion in our agenda based on their alignment with AAUW priorities, the urgency of the issues they address, their likelihood of passage, and their potential for meaningful impact.

The three A priority bills - AB 1766, AB 1845, and AB 1876 - will receive the highest level of support and advocacy. This includes shaping bill language, negotiating amendments, providing testimony in committee hearings, and coordinating closely with stakeholders.



AB 1766 and AB 1845 form a legislative package focused on human trafficking education and prevention. These bills are authored by Assemblymember Maggy Krell, whose office approached AAUW California to ask if we would be interested in sponsoring these two bills. The issue of human trafficking is an increasingly urgent one as traffickers continue finding new ways to exploit social media to target vulnerable youth. We were proud to step into a co-sponsorship role and help advance solutions to protect and educate young people across California.

AAUW California 2026 Legislative Agenda is Set!

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AB 1766 requires the Instructional Quality Commission to consider inclusion of curriculum to educate students in grades K - 12 about human trafficking in order to protect children from predators that would exploit them. While current law provides for similar education for grades 7 - 12, we know that children younger than 12 are often vulnerable targets for human traffickers, so this bill calls for annual, developmentally appropriate lessons for grades K - 12 about how to prevent exploitation for labor and sex trafficking, how to stay safe from sexually exploitative materials and deepfakes online, how to develop foundational digital citizenship skills, and how to build skills that are critical for self-protection, including building healthy relationships.



AB 1845 requires postsecondary educational institutions to include human trafficking within the Title IX umbrella of sex-based harassment. This means that human trafficking and exploitation would be included in the topic-areas covered in annual mandatory training currently required for employees and mandatory reporters, and that institutions adopt policies regarding identifying, reporting, and tracking human trafficking incidents that occur at the institution. Because human trafficking and exploitation is hiding in plain sight on many college campuses, the provisions of AB 1845 are critical for raising awareness of the issue on campus, which will aid prevention, as well as for providing necessary support for survivors.

AB 1876, our third A priority bill, prohibits a health plan or a health insurance provider from denying coverage, benefits, or limiting healthcare services to a person based on their race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. Sex, here, includes sex assigned at birth and sex characteristics such as intersex traits, pregnancy, and gender identity. Passage of AB 1876 will strengthen protections against discrimination in healthcare coverage, benefits, and services in California in the face of federal shifts away from equity, inclusion, and nondiscrimination.



A similar bill, SB 418 (an A priority bill on our 2025 Leg Agenda), was vetoed by the Governor due to cost concerns. The provision that led to that veto has been removed from AB 1876.

Follow the progress of our A priority bills, as well as all bills on our 2026 Legislative Agenda by accessing the [bill tracking report](#) which can be found at the top of the [Public Policy web page](#). This is a living document that will continue to be updated as the bills progress throughout the legislative session.

Our Donation Letter:

American Association of University Women (AAUW) Coachella Valley is excited to kick-off our 2025-2026 fundraising campaign with the goal of raising \$50,000 to send Coachella young women and girls to STEM Camp as well as provide supplemental STEM-related educational and mentoring opportunities throughout the school year. In addition, these funds will provide young women and girls the opportunity to participate in National Conference for College Women in Student Leadership (NCCWSL) to pursue careers in public service and elected office, as well as scholarships at the college level.

AAUW Programs are focused on creating inspiration, excitement, and confidence for young women interested in science, technology, engineering, and math. Fostering a love of learning for young women through these key areas is necessary to cultivate a more diverse, inclusive, and robust workforce with the potential to create impact and change for years to come. We work to pair program participants with a variety of online and in-person learning opportunities as well as find mentors who will support and challenge them through formative educational years in junior high and high school. Our Tech Trek program provides these young women with additional resources and tools for continuing education in college and on into a professional environment.

AAUW Coachella Valley (AAUW CV - Tax Id # 33-2078532) is a 501c3 which makes YOUR DONATION tax deductible! You can review all our programs at aauwcoachellavalley.com

We are asking for YOUR SUPPORT to help make a difference in the lives of our Coachella Valley young women and girls. Throughout the year, AAUW is writing grants and holding fundraising events—our 76th Anniversary, a Purse Auction, and smaller networking silent auctions — to generate funds for our Tech Trek STEM, Tech Trek Alumnae, Gov Trek, NCWSSL (college) programs and the AAUW National Fund. We appreciate donations of gift cards, merchandise, experiences and more. If you are interested in providing cash support for our programs, please contact our vice president of fundraising, Amy Dailey (betterthanbutter@mac.com) or Kathi Farber (farberkathi@gmail.com) for more information.

We thank you for your consideration and appreciate your support in helping us achieve our fundraising goals so we can elevate the next generation of Coachella Valley young women and girls looking to lead the way in STEM, leadership, and government careers.

Sincerely,

Amy Dailey
Vice President of Fundraising – AAUW Coachella Valley

Kathi Farber
President AAUW Coachella Valley

Advocating for women & girls since 1881 and into the future!

AAUW - CV Branch Board Roster

ELECTED OFFICERS: (Voting Members)

President: KATHI FARBER, 209 404-7659, farberkathi@gmail.com
President-Elect: ANDEE STEINMAN, 310 850-4120, andee.steinman@gmail.com
Vice President-Fundraising: AMY DAILEY, 760 554-0685,
betterthanbutter@mac.com
Vice President- Membership: VACANT
Vice President-Program: AURORA WILSON, 760 333-9707, wilsonpl@verizon.net
Secretary: JAN McCLEERY, 925 978-6563, janmccleery@yahoo.com
Financial Officer: BETH DITMARSON, 503 701-7948, dndbkp@yahoo.com

APPOINTED OFFICERS: (Voting Members)

Grant Writer: CAROL MARCUSE, 707 337-5905, cmarcuse@aol.com
Branch Coordinator Tech Trek: BOBBI KELLEHER, (760) 421-3799,
roberta.kelleher52@gmail.com
TT Tea Chair:
TT Orientation Chair: Lynn Merritt 408 205-9065, lynnmerritt@yahoo.com
Public Policy/Gov Trek Coordinator: FRANCESCA MCELHATTEN, 310 570-7271,
frespiritphotos@yahoo.com
Communications Coordinator / Newsletter: LESLIE MARTINEZ, 760 222-7917,
leslie.j.m29@gmail.com

APPOINTED CHAIRS / OFFICERS: (Non-Voting Members)

STEM (TT) Treasurer: PHYLLIS DUNN, 760 851-5678(c) 760 200-2821(h),
pndunn@verizon.net
TTAG Co-Chair: AURORA WILSON, 760 333-9707, wilsonpl@verizon.net and Jill
Hartley (425) 301-0038, jill_hartley@yahoo.com
Mtg Coordinator Chair: VACANT
College /University Co-Chairs: SHELLEY MITCHELL, 707 496-8689
shelleydmitchell@gmail.com
Parliamentarian: BETH DITMARSON, 503 701-7948, dndbkp@yahoo.com
Interest Groups Coordinator: VACANT



Thank you for reading!

WEBSITE:
https://aauwcoachellavalley.com/
SOCIALS:
Facebook: AAUW Coachella Valley Branch Instagram: @aauw.cv