

AAUW COASTLINES

Palos Verdes Peninsula Branch, September, October 2025

<http://palosverdes-ca.aauw.net> | <http://www.facebook.com/groups/aaupvpv>



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Branch Meeting

**Tuesday, September 9, at 2 p.m.
Fireside Room at Hesse Park**



Our own member, Dr. Fawzia Reza, will be the speaker at the AAUW Branch meeting on September 9th.

Fawzia, a seasoned educator, will be sharing her valuable insights on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). Her presentation will offer a comprehensive overview of the field, highlight her recent publications and research, and provide practical strategies for fostering inclusion and creating welcoming environments.

Additionally, Dr. Reza has authored several children's books, which will be available for display/purchase at the meeting.

Once again, bring up to three books and take home as many as you like at our Book Exchange! There will be a door prize and treats. Please bring your own water bottle.

Save the Date

In person Halloween Bingo Party (costume optional)



**Saturday, October 25
(Details to follow!)**

Thank You for Fueling AAUW's Mission

Summer often invites rest and reflection — and we hope you're finding moments of both. Yet across the country, **AAUW members** are staying energized and engaged, continuing to advocate for equity in powerful ways.

Your voices are shaping communities — and futures.

This month, AAUW awarded [\\$5.3 million in fellowships and grants](#) to 228 women and community-based projects. These investments — made possible by your giving — help break down barriers and open new doors in education, STEM, public service, and beyond.

Your generosity fuels change. Your leadership makes it last.

AAUW's strength is its members. And in this defining moment, you are showing up — boldly, purposefully, and united by mission.

Thank you for your action. Thank you for your alignment. Thank you for making equity real.

With deep gratitude and solidarity,



In Solidarity,

Gloria L. Blackwell
Chief Executive Officer

TWO MINUTE ACTIVIST

Send emails and texts to your legislators to fight for equal pay, family leave, stopping sexual harassment, equality in education and more. Sign up to get regular alerts to be able to take timely action.

When you sign up for Two Minute Activist, you also are signed up for Action Alerts at the state level.

Sign up now!

[Two-Minute Activist](#)



September/October Birthdays

September Birthdays

<i>Kay Odgers</i>	<i>09/01</i>
<i>Hazel Lord</i>	<i>09/02</i>
<i>Marilyn Brashear</i>	<i>09/03</i>
<i>Betty Ettington</i>	<i>09/03</i>
<i>Charlene Pickarts</i>	<i>09/06</i>
<i>June Kagdis</i>	<i>09/07</i>
<i>Nancy Mahr</i>	<i>09/14</i>
<i>Cecilia Rogers</i>	<i>09/15</i>
<i>Paula Bold</i>	<i>09/20</i>
<i>Eileen Bettman</i>	<i>09/21</i>
<i>Mary Watson</i>	<i>09/25</i>

October Birthdays

<i>Patti Kitching</i>	<i>10/07</i>
<i>Virginia Whittier</i>	<i>10/07</i>
<i>Priscilla Wright</i>	<i>10/16</i>
<i>Susan Newman</i>	<i>10/22</i>
<i>Carol Torelli</i>	<i>10/23</i>
<i>Jan Cofer</i>	<i>10/24</i>
<i>Pat Goodman</i>	<i>10/24</i>
<i>Lynn Sakamoto</i>	<i>10/28</i>

If we missed your birthday or a correction needs to be made, please inform Nancy Rayner at nrayner777@gmail.com.



Giving Opportunities

We are fortunate to have caring and connected women at AAUW. Through them, we make a difference for women and girls through Tech Trek, Rainbow Shelter, A Sense of Home, Chemocesseries, Buddy Benches and more.

There are so many worthy organizations asking for contributions, financial and otherwise. Please know that AAUW is pleased to make our members aware of these opportunities. However, everyone has many options and there is no expectation or pressure to contribute. As charities increase their appeals in light of the changing economic scene, we want to emphasize opportunities for giving are just that...opportunities, not requirements. We all work towards our mission in a multitude of ways...



With sadness, we share the news of Muriel Blatt's passing on July 23rd. A wife and mother of two daughters, Muriel also taught English for 34 years in the L.A.

community college system. Active in the Palos Verdes branch of AAUW since 1987, she was a strong and generous supporter of Tech Trek, loved reading and book club, and was an integral member of the Living Room Group. She could find humor in most every situation and will be remembered and missed by many of us.

A SENSE OF HOME

A Sense of Home (ASOH) has an exciting new program being sponsored by Ruth Bloland Women Helping Women. It is an organization that provides furnished apartments and accessories to women and men who have aged out of the County Foster Care Program. Statistics show that without financial resources, these young people often end up homeless and in despair. By providing a safe haven, they are able to work or go to school and build a place in their community.



Last fall, we collected used household goods to furnish homes. This year, AAUW will be sponsoring a Holiday Donation to one of the families in the ASOH program. Gifts will be purchased and provided to the family selected. AAUW members will have the opportunity to donate, more details will be forthcoming in the near future. A representative from ASOH will be speaking at our branch meeting in November about this worthwhile organization and the wonderful work they do.

Women Helping Women



We recognize that this is a busy season for donations, but we want to inform everyone about a mini-project by the Ruth Bloland Women Helping Women group. This effort involves donating holiday stockings to students registered with the CSUDH campus food pantry. Each day during the semester, 40-50 students visit the pantry for groceries, many lacking permanent or stable housing. Susan Grimshaw is leading this project and has already purchased 50 pairs of crew socks as the base for our stockings. We aim to fill these stockings with essential and festive items for students. If you would like to participate or attend the stocking stuff-er party in November, please email Susan Grimshaw. She will provide additional event details and a list of needed items for the stockings.



Two Opportunities to Do Good



Two opportunities to Do Good:

At our next branch meeting, September 9, we will be collecting items for two charitable endeavors—one, to support women locally and throughout the country who are going through chemotherapy, and two, to brighten the day for women in nursing homes and shelters in our local community.

“Chemoccessories” assembles sets of accessories (fashion scarves, jewelry and turbans), and sends them to women who are undergoing chemo. In the words of Iris, the founder of the organization, the goal of the program is to help women feel beautiful as they go through treatment. (See pg. 12 for a detailed list of criteria for donations.) Diane Hembacher will deliver the items to the organization, located in Manhattan Beach.

Elayne Nahman found out that her manicurist collects bottles of nail polish (new or used) and distributes them to local nursing homes and women’s shelters. Elayne will deliver the bottles to her manicurist.

What an easy way to clear our shelves of unneeded items and make the world a little brighter!



TECH TREK SUMMER CAMP

By Leslie Criswell

Congratulations Palos Verdes AAUW! Another successful series of Tech Trek summer camps is behind us. With all of your hard work and generous support, we were able to send nine girls to three different camps - two to UCSB, three to USD and four to Whittier College.

All reports and the hundreds of photos taken at these camps indicate campers (some of whom had never spent the night away from home before) greatly enjoyed their time on a college campus, sleeping in the dorm, eating meals at the Commons (sometimes ice cream was an enormous magnet!), making new friends, taking science-focused field trips and learning new things every day. Wonderful to see them being inspired by each other and the many women in the sciences who taught them, and spoke to them about future schooling, careers, some of the challenges ahead, and the rewards of staying on the path.

Morning core classes included anatomy, coding, forensics, and engineering, and afternoons were filled with nature hikes, experiments, games on the lawn and small group projects where the girls were asked to collaborate on solutions to a pressing problem in our world, and to present their ideas to the entire group. It was really gratifying to watch them grow, gain confidence, and have fun with new friends! Lots of smiles, all around.



“Whittier campers, enjoying ice cream-sometimes at every meal”.



Leslie Criswell conferring with students



Santa Barbara Tech Trek Campers



Santa Barbara campers enjoying the beach.



Celebrate Tech Trek

by Denise DeVenuto, Tech Trek Branch Co-Coordinator and TTAG Advisor

Our annual Celebrate Tech Trek event was held August 17 at Hesse Park. This was our branch members' opportunity to hear from, celebrate, and recognize the girls who our Tech Trek committee selected to spend an exciting week at the University of San Diego, UC Santa Barbara, or Whittier College. Six of nine campers attended the event along with many family members and young siblings, branch members and guests of members. The 44 people in attendance learned many details about the Tech Trek program and the five-year follow on program Tech Trek Alumnae Group (TTAG). Branch members mingled with campers and family members. It was a celebratory ice cream social event, with festively decorated tables and goodie bags for all.

We started with an icebreaker activity wherein campers interviewed branch members Diane Hembacher, Dale Richards, and our Tech Trek Branch Co-Coordinator Leslie Criswell. This was a great way for the campers and branch members to interact and get to know each other, and it was fun to hear what the girls learned about the branch members. A universal theme from the branch members was, that when making a career choice, "Do what you love."

During the panel discussion, audience members asked the campers questions about their camp experience and what they learned there. Several of the campers said that their self-confidence increased as a result of their week at camp. Some girls said they have decided on other STEM careers because of their exposure to science, technology, engineering, and math careers at camp.

As Leslie Criswell and I presented each camper with their Certificate of Completion, a group photo was taken of the camper with her family. The campers were then given their branch gift, the *Smithsonian Knowledge Encyclopedia*.

Two Tech Trek Alumnae Group (TTAG) members described the benefits of Tech Trek camp as well as their participation as a TTAG member. This included improving their high school performance and their applications to colleges. Kira Ornelas-Quiros said that the help she received with the college application process was instrumental in her being accepted at UC San Diego as a Biochemistry major with a full-ride scholarship. Yajaira Ledesma, a 10th grade student at Harbor Teacher Prep Academy, emphasized the leadership experience she has gained and the broadening exposure to STEM careers available as a TTAG member.

Kathy made the donor appeal and received donation checks at the event. At this point, we have enough funds for six camp scholarships, even taking into consideration that camp fees are slated to increase. Our tentative goal is to raise enough funds to send at least 12 deserving girls to Tech Trek camp in 2026. That will mark the 28th year of our branch's participation, which has resulted in making a difference in the lives of 297 girls since 1998.

Special thanks to Tech Trek committee members who made Celebrate Tech Trek possible: Paige Asawa and Martha Maimone for helping with setting up; Dana Gorman, Fran Brown, Kathy Ford and Diane Hembacher for checking in campers and their families as well as branch members; Leslie Criswell for helping me present certificates to the campers; Leann Roque for printing the name tags; Jun Li and Diane Hembacher for keeping the ice cream toppings tray filled. TTAG Co-Vice President Karlie Simon ensured camper siblings were kept busy with crayons and coloring books. Joe DeVenuto scooped ice cream for the sundaes and took photos. We couldn't have done it without you all!

We also thank Mrs. Maricela Rodriguez, who has been our long time Teacher Contact at Wilmington Middle School, for attending Celebrate Tech Trek, as she does every year. She was recognized at this event for making the camper selection process possible at her school, and for being a stalwart Tech Trek supporter for many years.

Donation checks of any amount are tax deductible. Please make checks out to AAUW CA SPF, with Tech Trek-PVP Branch in the memo line. You can mail your check to our Tech Trek treasurer Kathy Ford: 6429 Parklynn Drive, Rancho Palos Verdes, 90275. Email Kathy at kjsford@e.com for further info.



2025 Campers at Celebrate
Tech Trek



Left to Right, TTAG Members
Yajaira Ledesma & Karlie Simon,
Branch Member Dr. Martha
Maimone, TTAG Member Kira
Ornelas-Quiroz



PV Branch Co-Coordinators
Leslie Criswell & Denise
DeVenuto

Tech Trek Alumnae Group (TTAG) Annual Picnic

by Denise DeVenuto, TTAG Advisor

Our TTAG members got together on a sunny Saturday afternoon on August 3 at Delthorne Park in Torrance. Twenty-eight members attended, including three who recently graduated from high school and are starting college next month. One will be attending USC, and two will be bound for Yale. They spoke about how their being board members of TTAG helped them stand out as applicants to selective colleges, and the influence it had on choosing their majors.

The newer members benefited by hearing advice from the older girls about keeping up their grades while balancing other activities. Everyone enjoyed pizza and a bounty of goodies brought by attendees and their families. We look forward to our annual holiday get together in December.



Twenty-eight TTAG members enjoying the annual picnic on August 3

July 9 Branch Meeting

Aspiration and Inspiration...according to Siri, aspiration is the desire to achieve a goal or objective while inspiration is the spark that ignites creativity and motivation. Both were evident at the AAUW annual planning meeting on July 9, 2025.

It started with a brief business meeting; Denise DeVenuto presented an update on TechTrek. Diane Hembacher shared some charitable opportunities, including Chemocessories.

Libby Bergen introduced the featured speaker, Marjam Gallardo, one of our two NCCWSL Scholarship Recipients. Marjam shared her aspirations – to be an elementary school teacher, to start a tutoring business, to become a leader in her field - as well as the inspiration she found upon attending the leadership training conference at the University of Maryland in May. Marjam recently graduated from CSU Dominguez Hills and is now starting her Credential Program in Elementary Education. At the conference, she was impressed with the speakers, was introduced to new ideas, and networked (a key concept). Marjam thanked us for the opportunity to attend, in her words, a “life-changing” event. She will put her new-found knowledge to work starting her own Spanish tutoring business. She impressed many attendees with her drive and ambition, all while she and her husband are raising three pre-teen children.

Our other recipient, Victoria Campos couldn't make the meeting in person but relayed her thanks. The young women made the most of their east coast visit – they rented electric bikes and did a whirlwind tour of the sites in Washington DC!

Following Marjam's presentation, members brainstormed ideas for the upcoming year. We filled the white board with ideas for field trips, presentations, and social events. Several ideas for “giving” were shared, emphasized by anticipated economic challenges for many.

Dale Richards won the door prize and Haagen Daz ice cream treats were enjoyed by all!



Libby Bergen, Joanie Gale, Mariam Gallardo and Diane Hembacher

Summer Social, August 2025

With perfect weather, a table of tasty treats, and approximately 30 AAUW members and friends, the AAUW Summer Social was a success! Held Saturday, August 9, in Joanie Gale's courtyard, people mingled with old friends and met new ones, discussed upcoming interest group activities, travel highlights, and everything else under the sun! Speaking of the sun, it was present but not overbearing for the afternoon...a welcome change from past years! Many thanks to those who contributed food and drink, and everyone who worked to make the Social a summer highlight!



Helen Vakil, Co-chairs Diane Hembacher and Joanie Gale, Joanie hosted the event



Lee Ann Farmer and Susan Newman at the reception desk



Marilyn Brashear, Carol Torelli and Cecilia Rogers



Kay Odgers, Rosa, guest, Dale Richards and Leann Roque



Deborah Case and Marilyn Brashear viewing the sumptuous buffet



Carol Torelli and new member Ellen Cantor



JoAnn DeFlon and Leann Roque



Lynn Sakamoto, Susan Grimshaw and Heather White



Fran Brown, Lee Ann Farmer, Wendy Ard and Shera Dolmatz-Finkel

The 2025-2026 Branch Operating budget has been approved by the Leadership Council and is presented below for the September Branch meeting. Members in attendance will be asked to discuss and vote their approval of this budget. Any questions regarding the budgeting process or any line item on the budget should be addressed to Leann Roque or Dale Richards, Co-Treasurers, before the September Branch meeting.			
	2024-2025 Proposed	2024-2025 Actual	2025-2026 Proposed
Income			
Branch dues	\$2,200.00	\$1,914.00	\$2,134.00
Donations to Branch	\$600.00	\$1,242.00	\$1,000.00
Recognition luncheon	\$1,600.00	\$1,400.00	\$1,400.00
Reserve Withdraw	\$720.00	-\$1,117.00	\$536.00
	\$5,120.00	\$3,439.00	\$5,070.00
Expenses			
Hesse Park /room rentals	\$50.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other Room Rentals	\$150.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Equipment	\$200.00	\$131.00	\$200.00
General Operating	\$600.00	\$396.00	\$600.00
Insurance	\$550.00	\$476.00	\$550.00
Directory	\$175.00	\$187.00	\$300.00
Programs/Honorariums	\$500.00	\$305.00	\$500.00
Hospitality	\$400.00	\$228.00	\$400.00
Games/event expenses	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00
Recognition Luncheon	\$1,600.00	\$1,160.00	\$1,400.00
Memorial/Recognitions	\$220.00	\$75.00	\$220.00
CA Attney. Gen.Charity Renewal	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$50.00
Donations to National	\$300.00	\$309.00	\$500.00
TTAG	\$250.00	\$47.00	\$250.00
	\$5,120.00	\$3,439.00	\$5,070.00

Eating Dinner Out”



A festive group of AAUW members enjoyed our first “eating dinner out”...and agreed we should do it more often! Gathering at Crème de la Crepe at the Peninsula Mall, we enjoyed French cuisine and spirited conversations! Menu highlights included unlimited mussels, a variety of savory crepes, and a flaming sweet crepe for desert!

Right back to front: Sue Nakamora, Myrna Plost, Kay Odgers, Libby Bergen, Eunice McConaughy, Lynn Sakamoto, Nancy Rayner.

Left back to front: Barbara Schach, Jeannie Wilson, Karen Gottlieb, Joanie Gale, Elayne Nahman, Diane Hembacher, Susan Grimshaw

INTEREST GROUP CALENDER – SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2025.

Space constraints or other factors may result in need for a waitlist for new members.

ART APPRECIATION

Leader: Nancy Rayner
Nrayner777@gmail.com
 1st Wednesday 2pm

September 3–Dada Found Objects/
 Surreal Doodles & Dreams
 October 1 – Postmodernism

COOKS' CORNER

Leader: Denise DeVenuto
Dendev88@gmail.com
 3rd Saturday 12N on Zoom

September 20 – Fruit Recipes
 October – no meeting

DAYTIME SCRABBLE

Leader: Libby Bergen
bergenlibby@gmail.com
 2nd & 4th Wednesday 2PM

September 9 & 24
 October 8 & 22



September 23

EVENING SCRABBLE

Leader: Mary Ann Donahue
ma.donahue45@gmail.com
 4th Tuesday 7PM

September 23 – location tbd
 October 28 – location tbd

**THIS GROUP MEETS IN THE
 EVENING AND WELCOMES NEW
 MEMBERS**



NIGHT BOOKS

Leader: Rowie Wolf
rowiewolf@cox.net
 2nd Monday 7pm

September 8 – *All the Colors of the Dark* by Chris Whitaker
 October 6 – *Apeirogon* by Colum McCann

**THIS GROUP MEETS IN THE
 EVENING AND WELCOMES NEW
 MEMBERS**

4TH MONDAY BOOK GROUP

Leader: Fran Brown
franbrown5@cox.net
 4th Monday 2 – 4pm

September 22 – *The Property* by Cynthia Engh McCoy
 October 27 – *Cultish: The Language of Fanaticism* by Amanda Montell

CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

Leader: JoAnn DeFlon
jjdeflon@gmail.com
 2nd Monday 9:30AM

September 8 – *West With Giraffes* by Linda Rutledge
 October 13 – *The Wide, Wide Sea* by Hampton Sides

**THIS GROUP IS OPEN AND
 WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS**

ECLECTIC READERS

Leader: Jan Cofer
jancofer@gmail.com
 3rd Thursday 2pm

September 18 – *Source Code* by Bill Gates

October 16 – *Broken Country* by Claire Leslie Hall

WOMEN IN TRANSITION

Leader: Susan Negrete
 (310) 377 - 0642
 PV Liaison: Rowie Wolf
 (310)373-5970
 1st Wednesday 7PM

September 3 – Summer Travel
 Recap
 October 8 – Topic TBD

FIRST FRIDAY TEA & CONVERSATION

Leader: Helen Vakil
helenvakil@yahoo.com
 1st Friday 2 – 4pm

September 5 – Big turning points in your life
 October 3 – If you were a reporter, what would today's headline be?

**THIS GROUP IS OPEN AND
 WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS**



**HAPPY
 LABOUR DAY**


September 1

COFFEE WITH FRIENDS

Leaders: Fran Brown –
franbrown5@cox.net
 Leann Roque – leannr@cox.net
 Each Wednesday 10am
 Contact Fran Brown or Leann Roque
 for ZOOM link

INTEREST GROUP CALENDER – JULY/AUGUST 2025

Space constraints or other factors may result in need for a waitlist for new members.

<p><u>RUTH BLOLAND WOMEN HELPING WOMEN</u> Co-Leader: Jane Harris harrisjane630@gmail.com Co-Leader: Nancy Rayner nrayner777@gmail.com 1st Thursday 2PM</p> <p>September 4 October 2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">THIS GROUP IS OPEN AND WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS MEETINGS ARE ON ZOOM</p> <p><u>HANDICRAFTS</u> Leader: Joanie Gale joaniekgale@gmail.com 2nd Saturday 3PM-5PM</p> <p>September 13 – location tbd October 11 - Location tbd</p> <p style="text-align: center;">THIS GROUP IS OPEN AND WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS</p> <p><u>WRITERS GROUP</u> Leader: Lee Ann Farmer labfarmer@msn.com Co-Leader – Susan Newman susan_newman1@msn.com 3rd Tuesday 1:00 – 3PM</p> <p>September 16 – location tbd October 21 – location tbd</p> <p style="text-align: center;">THIS GROUP IS OPEN AND WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS</p>	<p><u>FUN AT THE MOVIES</u> Leader: tbd 4th Thursday 1PM</p> <p>September 25- <i>Breakfast at Tiffany's</i> October 23 – tbd</p>  <p><i>Halloween – October 31</i></p> <p><u>READERS THEATER</u> Leader: Cecilia Rogers fafnyr@mac.com (310)293-7071 2nd Monday 6:30PM – Dinner included</p> <p>September 8 - Just how awful was Queen Victoria to her children? October 14 – Revisiting Marie Curie</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NEW MEMBERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME TO HELP STUDY, PLAN, AND PERFORM! NO ACTING EXPERIENCE REQUIRED</p>	<p><u>LUNCH BUNCH</u> Leader: Nancy Rayner Nrayner777@gmail.com 1st Tuesday 1PM</p> <p>September 2 – Green Temple October 7 – Aria's Grill</p> <p><u>WOMEN EATING LUNCH LEISURELY (WELL)</u> Leader: Joanie Gale joaniekgale@gmail.com 3rd Wednesday 1PM</p> <p>September 17 – restaurant tbd October 15 – restaurant tbd</p> <p style="text-align: center;">THIS GROUP IS OPEN AND WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS</p> <p><u>MERRY MONDAY MUNCHERS</u> Leader: Marilyn Brashear Mbrashear3399@verizon.net 2nd Monday 1PM</p> <p>September 8 – tbd October 13 – HT Grill</p> <p style="text-align: center;">THIS GROUP IS OPEN AND WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS</p>
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Materials and Supplies for Chemoccessories, pg.4

YES PLEASE

Lightweight square scarves
Lightweight infinity scarves
Turbans and caps (no logo)
Necklaces
Bracelets
Earrings

No Thank You

Winter Scarves
Winter hats
Accessories like gloves, belts, clips
Damaged or stained scarves
Headbands
Wigs

BRANCH CALENDAR September/October 2025

September 9, Tuesday 2pm

Branch Meeting, Hesse Park

October 25, Saturday

Halloween in-person Bingo Party, details to follow

Council Co-Chairs: Joanie Gale
and Diane Hembacher

Treasurer: Dale Richards and
Leann Roque

Membership Chairs:
Lee Ann Farmer and JoAnn DeFlon

AAUW Mission Statement

AAUW advances equity for women and girls
through advocacy, education, philanthropy
and research.

Editor: Eunice McConaughy
310-530-5847
eunicemc771@gmail.com

Deadline for Nov/Dec CoastLine
articles October 15, 2025

American Association of University Women
Palos Verdes Branch
P.O. Box 2443
Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA 90274