



Program Meeting

Monday, November 13, at 11:30 am

*The Western Colorado Conservation Corps'
All-Women's Fire Crew
with Marcus Kissner*

The **All-Women's Fire Crew** was born out of a partnership between BLM and the Western Colorado Conservation Corps (WCCC) aimed at diversifying the historically male-dominated industry. It is a unique 10-month program that provides young women with an exceptional opportunity to learn and participate in wildland firefighting. The program is designed to teach young women (age 18-25) about firefighting, the use of firefighting equipment, and how to operate in challenging conditions effectively and safely. While participating in the program the women receive housing and a living wage. After the season, which runs March to November, participants gain their certification—known as their “red card”—and can begin applying for full-time firefighting jobs across the US.

Marcus Kissner is the Associate Director of WCCC, a division of the Mesa County Partners organization. Marcus is passionate about providing real world training and hands-on experience to members of the Corps. As a decorated combat veteran with tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, he is a natural leader for Corps members to look up to. In his free time, he enjoys playing baseball with his son or hunting on the Grand Mesa.



**Meeting to be Held at Mesa County Partners – Conference Room
1169 Colorado Avenue, Grand Junction**

Bring Your Own Brown Bag Lunch

RSVP....to Jane....as a courtesy for room set-up

Branch President Jane Fitzgerald 970-241-9684
VP Programs Karen Pieper Hildebrand 432-312-4747
Secretary Lorealee Kerr 970-523-5510

VP Membership Lori Wood 970-234-5674
Treasurer Carol Airolidi 530-949-4448
Newsletter Jane Fitzgerald 970-241-9684

President's Message from Jane Fitzgerald

We appreciate those who have been attending our meetings and sharing their thoughts. Our AAUW Branch really needs to attract more members to remain viable; so, when you do attend, please ask a friend, relative or spouse to come with you. New faces and thoughts are always appreciated.

One thought I had was to increase our visibility in the community. What would you all think of setting up a committee to make plans for **International Women's Day on March 8, 2024**. International Women's Day is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. Additionally, it's a call to action for accelerating gender parity, recognizing the barriers women face, and celebrating the milestones in women's rights and equality. Some things we could do without too much effort or money are:

- Have this signature **event recognized** by the city, university, school district and local media
- **Pursue** partnerships with other organizations
- **Engage** community members in a conversation about gender equity in the US and around the world
- **Support Women-Owned Businesses:** Make an effort to purchase from businesses owned and operated by women.
- **Educate and Raise Awareness:** Share stories, articles, and resources about women's achievements and the challenges they face.
- **Engage on Social Media:** Use the official hashtags to join the conversation and amplify the voices of women worldwide.
- **Wear Purple:** Purple is the official color of International Women's Day. Wearing it shows solidarity and support.

Coffee & Chat Special Interest Group



This fun and informative group will meet on **Saturday, November 25 at 9:30 am**. We will be trying someplace new...and someplace inside to be warm **Four Winds Coffee and Tea**, 1235 Bookcliff Avenue, Grand Junction. (near corner of 12th Street and Bookcliff Avenue) We should be in the Library Room on the 1st floor. Parking is limited in the lot by the back doors; plan to park along Bookcliff. Come when you can; bring a friend. Call Jane at 970-241-9684 with any questions.

This month's **Discussion Topic** will be regarding what we can do toward the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal #2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

What You Missed Last Month

The meeting with Amy Sue Javernick proved to be very informative. We learned about the function and scope of the Mesa Valley Education Association of which Amy Sue is President. And, we had some healthy and informative discussions about what is going on in Mesa County Valley School District 51. Thanks to Lorelee for arranging and paying the fee for the use of the classroom at Crossroads United Methodist Church.

SAVE THE DATE**MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2023
11:30 AM****“HOLIDAY GET-TOGETHER”****at Jean Yale's new home**

Plan to bring snacks to share and donations for Grand Junction High School's Haberdashery

How AAUW Advances Our Priorities

- Unfortunately, the U.S. Department of Education has missed its own deadline to release final Title IX rules. AAUW [joined](#) 126 gender justice, survivor advocacy, and civil rights organizations in urging President Biden and the Department to take immediate action to finalize the new Title IX rules, which has now been significantly delayed twice. The new Title IX rules is expected to restore protections against sex-based discrimination, clarify protections for LGBTQ+ students, strengthen supports for pregnant and parenting students, and provide clarity on transgender students' participation in athletics. Until the new rules are issued, students continue to go to school under civil rights protections weakened under the Trump Administration. Look for ways to help us elevate this issue in the next few weeks.
- On October 25, the U.S. Senate Finance Committee held a [hearing](#) on "Exploring Paid Leave: Policy, Practice, and Impact on the Workforce." Advocates uplifted the critical importance of enacting a national paid family and medical leave program to support the economic security of workers, women, and families. [Urge your members of Congress to support paid leave.](#)
- [Join AAUW](#) on **November 30 at 2 p.m. ET** for a social media storm for Native Women's Equal Pay Day. #NativeWomensEqualPay
- AAUW submitted comments to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in support of further clarifying and strengthening the [proposed enforcement guidance](#) on Harassment in the Workplace.
- AAUW [joined](#) 17 members and partners of the Postsecondary Data Collaborative in a letter applauding steps by the U.S Department of Education to empower students and families to make informed decisions but providing information about program costs and outcomes for educational institutions.
- AAUW [joined](#) over 80 organizations in opposing a Senate appropriations bill amendment that would prohibit funding for implementation of [Executive Order on Promoting Access to Voting](#). AAUW supports strong implementation of the Executive Order to make voter registration and participation more accessible for Americans.

News from AAUW National Headquarters

We want to start on a note of celebration. Last month, Harvard University economics professor Claudia Goldin, Ph.D., was awarded the Nobel Prize in economic sciences for her extensive research on gender differences in earnings (and she is only the 3rd woman to ever achieve this honor). As Dr. Goldin's research has shown, progress on closing the gender pay gap is stubborn and uneven. For example, Native American women have one of the largest wage gaps in the country, earning only 55 cents per dollar paid to the average white man.

Dr. Goldin's work focuses on long-term change, and we stand with her in the ongoing fight to ensure all women receive equal pay for equal work. We invite you to celebrate Professor Goldin's outstanding achievement by joining our continued fight for gender equity.

Our nation's schools face longstanding challenges in preventing and effectively responding to instances of bullying and harassment. AAUW's research has shown alarming rates of harassment, bullying and assault in schools and on campuses. Research also shows that LGBTQ+ young people experience higher rates of bullying than their non-LGBTQ+ peers. Bullying and harassment interfere with a student's ability to achieve high standards and have a significant impact on GPAs, school attendance, dropout rates, and likelihood of completing college. Simply put, students can't learn if they do not feel safe. [Ask your representative to support the Safe Schools Improvement Act!](#)

The Safe Schools Improvement Act would establish federal standards to protect every student from bullying and harassment in K-12 schools, regardless of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or religion. It would also require states to report data on incidents of bullying and harassment to the U.S. Department of Education.

A number of AAUW-endorsed bills were reintroduced in Congress in September:

- The [Schedules That Work Act](#) and [Part-Time Worker Bill of Rights Act](#) would give workers more certainty about their hours and incomes and strengthen protections and benefits for part-time workers.
- The [Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act](#) would require colleges and universities receiving federal funding to establish anti-harassment policies prohibiting harassment and bullying based on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and more.
- The [Student Loan Deferment for Sexual Violence Survivors Act](#) would create a student loan deferment option for survivors of sexual violence and sex-based harassment who temporarily withdraw from their school for mental and physical health rehabilitation.
- On September 27, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) released [final regulations on the Gainful Employment \(GE\) rule](#) to protect students enrolled in career training programs from unaffordable student debt. The new regulations will also increase transparency about the cost of higher education programs. AAUW has advocated for these regulations to help safeguard students against predatory practices. Under the GE rule, a program loses access to federal funds if it repeatedly leaves its graduates with unaffordable debts, relative to their earnings.

Happy Birthday Peggy Rawlins

Peggy's Birthday is on November 11. Since she is unable to attend meetings as she used to, she would probably appreciate a card or visit from her friends. Her address is The Commons, Room 369, 625 27-1/2 Road, Grand Junction, CO 81506.

Messages from “Mary’s” Scholarship Recipients

Dear American Association of University Women,

I am writing to express my sincerest gratitude for the generous scholarship of \$2050 you have awarded me for my LPN to BSN program. As a student nurse, your support means the world to me, especially as I enter the last half of the semester.

Receiving this scholarship has not only alleviated some of the financial burdens of pursuing my degree but has reinforced my commitment to the nursing profession. I appreciate the investment you have made towards my education; this has given me the confidence to push myself academically and continue to strive for excellence in my studies. Once again, thank you for the generosity and support in helping me pursue my education. I plan graduate this year and look forward to making a difference in the lives of my patients' and the healthcare community..

Sincerely,

Demetria Tan-Torres

Demetria Tan-Torres
Senior
BSN of Nursing: LPN to BSN

Dear American Association of University Women,

Let me please take this time to extend my sincere thank you for being selected for this scholarship opportunity fo the 2023-2024 academic year. My school fees, tuition, books, and commuter parking passes do not look as daunting as they did at the beginning of the semester thanks to your kindness. I can fully engage in my studies instead of worrying so much about working, this could not have come at a better time in my life.

I am going into my Senior year of my Bachelor of Science degree in Outdoor Recreation Industry Studies. I hope to go on to a master’s program in Social Work, with the goal of becoming a wilderness therapist for veterans. As a veteran myself, I have found the outdoors to be the most effective medicine for just about everything, but specifically your mental health. During the past summer I have been volunteering with several nonprofit organizations that offer wilderness experiences for veterans, and it truly solidified that this is what I am meant to do for a career.

I had been working full time and going to school full time to complete this degree, and it didn’t feel like it was going quick enough. I made the tough choice to quit my full time job last year so that I could take more classes to complete my degree faster. With the help of your scholarship, this has alleviated some stress of finding a way to make it all work. I really know I am headed in the right direction to make an impact in the lives of others because of people like you. I can hit the ground running, and start giving back to others just like your organization has done for me.

Sincerely,

Amber Martin

Amber Martin
Senior
BS of Outdoor Recreation Industry Studies

Dear American Association of University Women,

Thank you for your donation of \$2050.00 for my continuing education for the 2023-2024 school year. I am both honored and grateful for your generosity. This will take a great burden off my shoulders financially.

My husband passed in 2020 from cancer. While at Hope West Hospice, I witnessed love and compassion from some amazing nurses, CNAs, doctors, and volunteers. From that point on I knew what I wanted to be when I grew up. I want to do for others what they did for us.

Again, thank you so much for your generosity. I am so grateful for your donation to my education. It cannot be easy picking and choosing who will get the scholarships. I will definitely not let it go to waste.

Sincerely,

Wendy Deuschle

Wendy Deuschle
Junior
AAS of Nursing

Dear American Association of University Women,

There are not enough words I could write to communicate how thankful I am for this award. I have always been determined to become the a nurse; even with all the financial stress that comes from seeking higher education. I lost my daughter during labor and the care I revived impacted me in such a positive way that I became very passionate about nursing. It is people like you that make my dream possible, so that soon I will be able to take care of people in my community. I plan to stay here in Grand Junction and give back to a community that has helped me so much.

During my time here at Colorado Mesa University I have been able to obtain high quality education. The nursing program is truly a wonderful program, and I am blessed that people like you allowed me to finish this program. I will be graduating in December 2023 and will pay forward the generosity I have received. The gift of education is something I will never take for granted. Once again thank you for this award; I could not have asked for more.

Sincerely,

Alejandra Ledesma

Alejandra Ledesma
Senior
BSN of Nursing