



## Monday, January 8, 2024

### PROGRAM: Riverside Education Center

Riverside Education Center's goal is to provide Mesa County Students with high-quality academic and extracurricular experiences during out-of-school time to foster individual growth and to create community with a safe, diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment. How do they do this? Come and learn!

Speaker **Jessica Prussa, Grand Junction High After-School Program Manager**, is from southern California where she graduated from the University of California Irvine with a bachelor's degree in Psychology and Social Behavior and a minor in Education. With a background in marketing,



communications, public relations, and non-profit management, Jessica looks forward to using her experience to make a positive impact at REC. For nearly 15 years, Jessica has also coached high school track & field and has mentored many teenagers as a youth leader for her church. She and her husband have also served as foster parents and adopted their son in 2020. Jessica is passionate about building positive self-esteem and confidence in youth and is excited to help students reach their fullest potential as the Program Manager at Grand Junction High School.

Speaker **Rebecca Thye, Palisade High School After-School Program Manager**, was born and raised in the Grand Valley, attended District 51 schools, and is the mother of two D51 students. She came to REC from the district, where she worked mainly with kindergartners and in the Special Education Department. Since joining REC she has worked at Dos Rios Elementary and Nisley Elementary in a variety of positions, giving her a valuable perspective on the many facets of REC programming. Serving as the temporary program manager at Nisley, Rebecca fell in love with the role and the experience. A graduate of Palisade High School herself, she is excited to help REC start a new chapter at PHS.



### LOCATION: REC Warehouse at 1177 Winters Avenue

(from Riverside Parkway, turn west onto Winters Avenue.....just south of the Rock Shop) Look for the large REC sign over the front door.



### MEETING TIME: 11:30 AM

### REFRESHMENTS: Bring your own brown bag lunch ..... and a friend or two

### RSVP's (Yes or No): by January 5

Remember this is a courtesy for those setting up the space. Contact Jane at [mjfitz2cats@gmail.com](mailto:mjfitz2cats@gmail.com) or 970-241-9684.

**Branch President** Jane Fitzgerald 970-241-9684

**VP Programs** Karen Pieper Hildebrand 432-312-4747

**Secretary** Loralee Kerr 970-523-5510

**VP Membership** Lori Wood 970-234-5674

**Treasurer** Carol Aioldi 530-949-4448

**Newsletter** Jane Fitzgerald 970-241-9684

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## WHAT YOU MISSED LAST MONTH

We had some really, really tasty treats at our annual potluck brunch.  
Thank you, Jean Yale, for sharing your beautiful new home  
(and its wonderful lake view) with us.

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### Coffee & Chat Special Interest Group



This fun and informative group will meet on **Saturday, January 27 at 9:30 am**. We will again be at **Four Winds Coffee and Tea**, 1235 Bookcliff Avenue, Grand Junction. (near corner of 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Bookcliff Avenue) We have reserved the Meeting Room on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, which has a door that closes for privacy and restaurant sound blocking. 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 "Should the Fairness Doctrine of 1949 regarding broadcast journalism be reinstated".

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## NO MORE INEQUITY

As the rights of women remain under attack, AAUW members took to the streets of our nation's capital recently — as we did nearly 50 years ago — to demand equal rights for all. AAUW members came from Maryland, Virginia, New Jersey, and the District of Columbia in a strong demonstration of women's power and our refusal to be dismissed or denied our rights.

We joined U.S. Rep. Ayanna Pressley (MA-7), the ERA Coalition, and fellow advocates calling for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) be recognized as the 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, 100 years after its first introduction in Congress.

As we share [in this video with fellow fighters](#), the U.S. is the only modern democracy that does not include sex equality in its Constitution. AAUW is happy to be a founding member of the ERA Coalition's National Strategy Task Force. This recognition will be a powerful step toward dismantling systemic inequalities and ensuring that the rights of women and girls are safeguarded.

### IMPORTANT

Click the link above for an inspirational message about **THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT**.

## AAUW National's Recent Accomplishments

- In November, Congress negotiated a continuation of funding for federal programs to early 2024 (January 19 and February 2). The U.S. House and Senate continue to be deeply divided and many of the current proposals coming from the House have harmful cuts and policy restrictions that are in direct contrast with AAUW's public policy priorities, including Title IX and reproductive health. AAUW is working with coalition partners to oppose [cuts to education and other harmful policy riders](#) in Fiscal Year 2024 appropriations bills.
- In November, the AAUW Lobby Corps visited about 40 congressional offices in support of the Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act. [Click here](#) to send a letter to your member of Congress. If you are in the Washington, DC metro area and are interested in joining Lobby Corps, [learn more here](#).
- Data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) is a powerful tool to gain vital information to identify and quantify inequities in access and opportunities across social and economic institutions. The data is used to allocate trillions of dollars in funding, enforce civil rights to protect people from discrimination, and develop policies and programs to advance equity. Last month, AAUW [joined](#) 70 gender justice organizations in support of a test of sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) questions in the American Community Survey (ACS) in 2024. You can learn more about the ACS, how it impacts LGBTQ communities, the process for adding questions to the ACS, and the unique privacy protections for these Census Bureau-collected data in a [series of fact sheets here from our partners](#).
- The Social Security Administration has proposed an [AAUW-supported rule](#) to expand and simplify the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program, which provides monthly cash assistance to people who are age 65 or older or are disabled. Women account for 65% of all SSI recipients aged 65 or older.
- Representative Bobby Scott (D-VA-3) reintroduced the AAUW-supported Protecting Older Workers Against Discrimination Act in the House with bipartisan support on December 4. The bill will give older workers the tools to battle age discrimination and continue to take home a fair wage.
- Sign up as a [Two-Minute Activist](#) today and keep up to date on our policy work with our [letters, comments, testimony and legal briefs](#) to learn more about AAUW's positions and advocacy efforts.

## Welcome New Branch Member

**Bonnie Kosanke** has recently joined our AAUW family.

She is a graduate of Michigan State University with a major in Zoology. She can be contacted at 970-245-0692, 970-589-1320, or [bkosanke44@gmail.com](mailto:bkosanke44@gmail.com).

Her address is 1775 Blair Road, Whitewater, CO 81527.



## Public Policy Day Hot Topics in Education

Sat. Feb. 3, 2024 9:00 - Noon  
Zoom Webinar

**REGISTER HERE**

### From Early Childhood Education...

#### KEYNOTE



**State Senator Janet Buckner**

#### PANEL

(Moderated by Hon. Nancy Todd)



**Dr. Rebecca Vlasin**  
State Director of Early  
Childhood Workforce  
Development



**State Rep. Eliza Hamrick**

### ...to Higher Education

#### KEYNOTE



**State Rep. Brianna Titone**

#### PANEL

(Moderated by Hon. Nancy Todd)



**Dr. Angie Paccione**  
Executive Dir., CO Dept. of  
Higher Education



**Lilly Thomas**  
Ft. Lewis Student and  
NCCWSL Delegate

#### Featuring:

- Gemma Lockhart, Filmmaker, Lakota member of Rosebud Sioux Tribe
- Legislative Update: Su Ryden, Public Policy Co-Director & Hon. Betty Boyd
- Meghan Kissell: AAUW National Public Policy Director
- AAUW of Colorado Updates

**....Also Plan to Attend....**

**AAUW Annual State Convention**  
May 3-4, 2024  
at the Antlers Hotel in Colorado Springs

**SAVE THE DATE****NEXT GENERAL PROGRAM MEETING****MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2024****11:30 AM****CONFERENCE ROOM, DOWNTOWN ALPINE BANK***Featuring Amber Creek of St. Mary's Community Connections Program***2024 AAUW Annual Art Contest: Empowering Women in Art***To the artists in our branch: please consider submitting an entry.*

Only a third of artists represented by commercial galleries are women and women working in arts professions are paid on average 74 cents to every dollar paid to men. This is what motivates AAUW to host an annual art contest—to give women artists the attention they deserve.

The AAUW Art Contest is an excellent way to showcase members' talent while also supporting AAUW's mission. The winning art will be featured on notecards that are mailed to members and supporters every spring. The next [AAUW Art Contest will begin on January 8!](#) Be sure and check out the Art Contest page at this link to learn how you can participate.

**from Branch President Jane Fitzgerald**

The Branch is planning to do a media blitz celebrating **International Women's Day on March 8**. This will be tied to the AAUW Mission and more specifically to our Branch, hopefully to increase our visibility in the community, increase membership, and establish our "brand". .... See November Newsletter for more information. For this endeavor to be a success, we hope that all branch members will participate in some way...even if it just writing some letters.

**1st Planning Meeting to Organize Tasks****Saturday, January 13.....10 am****at the home of Jane Fitzgerald  
2327 Eagle Point Court, GJ****Please Come .... We can use Everyone's Thoughts and Ideas.**