



Cedar Rapids AAUW Branch

Greetings from Linda Armitage

Hello, All!!
Another September sped by with lots to do, and some success getting out our supporters and members. Remember Sarah Swayze as a member? Her group called Empowering Youth of Iowa received *Gazette* coverage on Friday, Sept 23rd- a very good article about her attempts and success in getting young people to graduate from high school.

I joined a Webinar sponsored by AAUW National about "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion," Our Branch began the "inclusion " process about 8 years ago, way before the George Floyd murder in the Twin Cities. More about the Webinar later in the newsletter. What did you do to mix and mingle or to support our AAUW goals and vision? We all know that our goals are to get girls and women educated and into management positions and take their place as leaders.

We invite you to join us for the luncheon on Oct. 11th at the Coe College campus after the morning sessions end for OPEN MINDS/OPEN DOORS. I believe Susie is still looking for a few volunteers to assist that day. I notice the NAACP will be having their Gala Sept. 29th, and would be interested in one

of our members to share some highlights of their honorees recognized for achievement which is given annually to amazing members of the community.

NOTES on DEI WEBINAR

The DEI Webinar was sponsored by AAUW National, with 200 attendees. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are part of the continued efforts by AAUW to eliminate racism, injustice and exclusion in our organization.

All branches are advised to have a DEI officer/Director in every Branch and at the State level.

Iowa has had a DEI officer for about the last 4 years, and our Branch has included those duties in the Policy Director, but just recently Anne Kiche, one of our newer members, agreed to be the Branch DEI officer. Thank you, Anne!!

We all have to more "intentional" about speaking out about anti-racism, anti-black, and be against injustice and prejudice at ALL levels.

We should have a table at all ethnic celebrations and festivals in our communities, promoting our organization as inclusive and making sure all persons feel a sense of belonging. (Latino Festival and Asian Festival and Juneteenth celebration and the

Coe sponsored international Day.)

Look at the AAUW.org website and let's all take a look at the TOOL KIT Conversations that were designed for each branch to use. Our leadership team will discuss at the next meeting.

AAUW has identified 16 diverse groups: we all need to know these so we can work and think SMARTER...

I so appreciate all of you for continuing to be members and supporters of our Branch AAUW.

Linda Armitage

Calendar

OCTOBER

- 4 Board Meeting
- 6 Prep for Open Minds
- 11 Open Minds, Open Doors



"Open Minds, Open Doors" Takes the Next Step

Our branch had a virtual program featuring Letia Blanco in December 2020. This month we were honored to have her for our in-person program on September 20, 2022. Letia focused on how our STEM conference impacted her career path, the challenges for a woman in a non-traditional career, and ways to inspire girls to learn more about exciting careers.

Letia Blanco, the keynote speaker for "Open Minds, Open Doors: 2022," attended our STEM conference when she was a student at Taft Middle School. She said that she has goose bumps when she recalls the moment when she was in the session with a pilot and she realized that she could be a pilot too! That experience changed the course of her career and her life. Her story is validation of the impact that "Open Minds, Open Doors" had on her success!

Letia Blanco excelled in high school and went on to major in mechanical engineering and then to become an engineer at Raytheon in Dallas, Texas. While at Raytheon an annual STEM conference for girls called "Design Your World" was implemented. Hundreds of girls have attended this conference which is very much like ours.

Four years ago when Letia had her first child she moved back to Cedar Rapids to be near her

family. She is now a Value Stream Leader with Collins Aerospace for the Bombardier Global 5/6. Previously she was the technical project manager for the Viking Water Bomber, an aircraft for fighting forest fires. In September she traveled to other locations for Collin's business and requested accommodations for her to take her 8 month old baby and a caregiver with her. That was granted and in addition there were arrangements for her to have an appropriate space for breast feeding her baby at each location. What a monumental step for women!

At her keynote address on October 11, 2022 Letia will coach the girls on how to take the next steps toward learning about careers. She will then encourage them to shadow people in careers of interest, to join local STEM focused clubs and to own their future by pursuing training online.

Letia has won several prestigious awards for her achievements. On October 20, 2022 she will receive another award at an elegant banquet. This award is from the Corridor Business Network and is called "Forty Under Forty". The AAUW Cedar Rapids Branch can take a bow for being the spark that started Letia Blanco on an exciting career!

GRANTWOOD AEA
**OPENMINDS
OPENDOORS**

Open Minds, Open Doors

Volunteer Information

We still need 5 volunteers for this event on October 11. Contact: Sue J. or Susie (319-399-6775)

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?tab=rm#inbox?projector=1>

AAUW Book Group Reading List 2022-2023

DATE	BOOK	AUTHOR	LOCATION
Sept. 26 7:00 PM	Steinbeck night Pick a Steinbeck book of your choice.	John Steinbeck	Gisela Steffe's 1125 13th St NW #302
Oct. 24 6:30 PM	Quiet, The Power of Introverts	Susan Cain	Panera West 2665 Edgewood Rd., SW
Nov. 28 6:30 PM	The Island of Missing Trees	Elif Shafak	Hiawatha Library 150 W. Willman St.
Dec. 12 6:30 PM	State of Terror	Louise Penny, Hil- lary Clinton	Vino's Restorante 3611 1st Ave. NE
Jan. 23 7:00 PM	The Overnight Guest	Heather Gudenkauf	Barb Going's 990 Grey Wolf Ct. Hiawatha
Feb. 27	We Are Not Like Them	Christine Pride, Jo Piazza	Mandarin Spice 1412 Twixt Town Rd. Marion
Mar. 27 7:00 PM	The Lincoln Highway	Amor Towles	Sharon Vana's
Apr. 24	Secret History of Food	Matt Siegel	TBD
May 22	To the Bright Edge of the World	Eowyn Ivey	TBD
June 26	Burying the Lede	Joseph Levalley	TBD
July 24	West with Giraffes	Lynda Rutledge	TBD



IOWANS FOR
RESPONSIBLE
GUN LAWS

Join us to **DEFEAT** the **RECKLESS GUN AMENDMENT** on **November 8!**
iowansforresponsiblegunlaws.com

Proposed Iowa Constitutional Amendment Language

The right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed. The sovereign state of Iowa affirms and recognizes this right to be a fundamental individual right. Any and all restrictions of this right shall be subject to strict scrutiny.

Why do responsible gun owners and gun dealers oppose the RECKLESS GUN AMENDMENT?

It could prohibit reasonable safety measures that they support like firearm safety training, universal background checks, and a license to carry a gun in public.

How will gun safety laws be impacted if the RECKLESS GUN AMENDMENT passes?

The amendment will give easy access to guns for those with mental health concerns who may be a risk to themselves and others. Already 79% of gun deaths in Iowa are suicides.

In 2020, homicides by gun increased in Iowa by 80%.

The amendment will make the work of law enforcement more dangerous and Iowans less safe at a time of rising crime. It will give dangerous and violent criminals access to guns and will mean more untrained people carrying guns in public. That is why law enforcement opposes this proposal.

The RECKLESS GUN AMENDMENT is not the Second Amendment!

Most states that have gun rights language in their state constitution mirror the Second Amendment. The proposed amendment goes beyond the Second Amendment. It puts the right to possess and carry a gun without any infringement above the right to public safety for our communities and children. The Reckless Gun Amendment could lead to the invalidation of any reasonable gun safety measures that keep Iowans safe.

Iowans believe in common sense gun laws including:

- 91% support banning carrying a firearm while under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- 85% support prohibiting felons from possessing firearms
- 85% support requiring background checks on all gun purchases
- 83% support requiring gun safety courses before the purchase of a handgun

YOU CAN HELP BY...

Use the coalition's messaging!

Use the name of the Amendment and tell your friends and family...

- Vote NO on the **Reckless Gun Amendment** on **November 8!**

DO NOT use or amplify the messaging of our opponents. You don't need to counter them or use their words. Talk about the impact of the Reckless Gun Amendment.

Link to our website & social media.

Share all social media posts throughout the campaign.

Challenge friends to Like, Follow, and Share all social media.

DONATE to Iowans for Responsible Gun Laws PAC so we can educate Iowans!

- Online at www.iowansforResponsibleGunLaws.com
- By check:

Iowans for Responsible Gun Laws
c/o Janet Carl, Treasurer
14142 N 39th Ave E
Grinnell, IA 50112

**Vote NO on the
RECKLESS GUN AMENDMENT
on November 8!**

YOU CAN FIND US AT...
iowansforresponsiblegunlaws.com
FB: [@iowansforresponsiblegunlaws](https://www.facebook.com/iowansforresponsiblegunlaws)
TW: [@ResponsibleIowa](https://twitter.com/ResponsibleIowa)