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## *connection*

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### **From the President**

Now, more than ever, the mission of AAUW is critical to the health of our nation. Gender and pay equity, supporting more women in the ranks of leadership, whether it be government, schools, corporations, law, medicine, or social services, and making sure women enjoy all the rights and privileges they are owed by society (ERA) are aspects of our mission worth fighting for. However, we are also challenged by diminishing member numbers and fewer women who can take on the challenges of branch leadership.

Please know that AAUW at the national and the state levels are aware of these challenges and are looking for ways to support branches. Nevertheless, we need to acknowledge that the societal changes of the last two decades require us to think differently about what membership and leadership in AAUW mean for us going forward. What worked in the past is no longer going to work for the future. Over the next several months, national and state leaders will be providing ideas and perspectives to branches and members. However, branch leaders will also need to spend some time brainstorming out of the box ideas for continuing to be viable. Do not hesitate to reach out to me, your VPs of membership, and your district directors for assistance. We don't promise to have all the answers. We can however, brainstorm with you to find viability alternatives. In addition, over the next several months, state leaders will be convening affinity groups with their branch counterparts to address questions and concerns and share pertinent information.

Over the past year I have had the opportunity to visit branches across the state. I am constantly in awe of the talent, dedication, and perspectives of the members I meet. Shout outs go to Champaign, Decatur, Lockport, Lombard, Naperville, Riverside, Springfield, and Wheaton-Glen Ellyn. In some cases, I attended significant anniversaries and sadly last meetings. Other branch visits are planned when we reconvene in the fall, and I am looking forward to meeting many more of you.

the information about each program. Please be sure to read these as they are “How To’s” for building similar programs in your branches.

To all of you who are supporting schools and libraries and first amendment rights to read books and study history, thank you!

[Donna Jean Simon](#)

### Central States Regional Conference ~ October 19-21, 2023

- **Registration is now open!** Visit the [AAUW Missouri website](#) for registration forms, hotel details, and schedules.
- AAUW-IL announces the **2023 ARCH Award!** To encourage attendance at the Central States Conference each branch can help send their administrator, president or her designee to St. Louis. The amount of \$400 will be reimbursed after the event is complete. To qualify for the stipend, applicants will need to complete the Illinois request prior to the conference. The request form will be available on the AAUW-IL website after July 30.
- Small-group sessions will take place during the conference where ideas and dreams will be shared (swapped) in a casual setting. These are **Swap Shops!** Each state will be given a time and day to present projects, programs, and ideas from their branches and state - - a total of over 64 new ideas possible from our eleven states! Visit the [AAUW Missouri website](#) for the application and apply before August 15th.



# REACHING NEW HEIGHTS *together!*

**AAUW Central States Regional Conference**

October 19-21, 2023 · St. Louis, Missouri

Drury Plaza Hotel St. Louis at the Arch

*Featuring*

**Gloria Blackwell**  
CEO of AAUW  
Keynote Speaker



**Lisa Maatz**  
Public Policy &  
Organizational Consultant  
Keynote Speaker



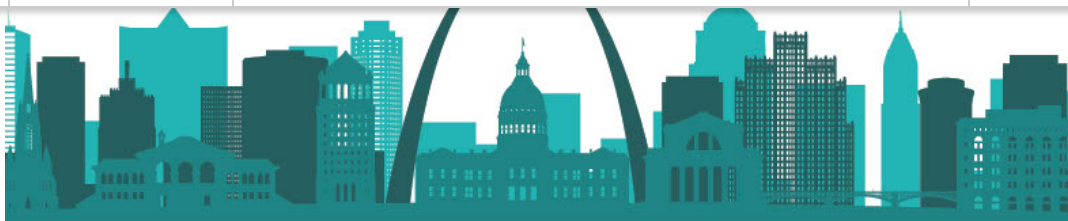
**Plenary and breakout topics:**



- Voting Rights and Issues
- Reproductive Rights and Women's Health
- Equity and Inclusion
- Succession Planning and Leadership
- Women's Economic Security · Pay Equity
- AAUW and The Future!

**Full conference details at [aauw-mo.aauw.net](http://aauw-mo.aauw.net)**

**ADVOCATING UNDER THE ARCH**



# CONFERENCE DETAILS

## AAUW Central States Regional Conference CELEBRATING AAUW - REACHING NEW HEIGHTS TOGETHER!

October 19-21, 2023 • St. Louis, Missouri

Welcome: 1:00pm (Central) on Thursday, October 19th  
Farewell: Noon on Saturday, October 21st

### Venue

#### Drury Plaza Hotel St. Louis at the Arch

Room rates \$221 per night for 2 queen beds (max. occupancy 4).  
Additional \$27/night for covered parking. Call Drury at 314-231-3003 or visit [DruryHotels.com](http://DruryHotels.com) for more information.

### Registration

#### Conference Registration

Early bird registration: \$200/person before September 16th (\$225 thereafter). **Registration forms available July 1st.** Registration fee includes conference meals.

### Bonus

#### Swap Shop Sessions

Casual sessions to network and share great ideas. Branches and states can submit their favorite projects, ideas, and programs. Top selections will be presented at the conference and others shared on websites.

Join your fellow AAUW members from 11 central states for three days of education, inspiration, great ideas, fun, and friendship in exciting *St. Louis!*



Contact: Karen Francis • [karenbitzafrancis@yahoo.com](mailto:karenbitzafrancis@yahoo.com) • (314) 223-4235

**INSPIRE • LEARN • IMPACT • CELEBRATE**

### From the State Board

AAUW-IL has a new **Finance Director**--please update your records.

Ruth Holst, Finance Director of AAUW-IL  
645 N. Kingsbury Street, Apt. 1709  
Chicago, IL 60654  
224-610-9718 phone  
[holstruth@gmail.com](mailto:holstruth@gmail.com)



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program ideas, ask questions and more by becoming an active group member. If you believe you are not receiving the group emails, please notify Sue Topp, [aauwildist@gmail.com](mailto:aauwildist@gmail.com).

## Branch News

### **Morton Branch AAUW: Our GEMS have STEAM! (Why and how we started a STEM education program for girls)**

In 2014, the public policy officer for our branch repeatedly reported on the under-representation of women in STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). The conclusion of most of these reports was two-fold: young women were missing out on careers with opportunities for high salaries and long-term growth potential; and the world at large was missing out on contributions of almost half of the population.

Many of our members are educators and we discussed how this situation begins in elementary schools in our own community. We agreed that was an area where our branch could make a difference. We surveyed our district teachers who made it clear that there was a need for STEM-based programming for girls. [Keep reading...](#)

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### **Creating Issue Action Teams: 6 steps to success!**

By Shoshana Frank, Naperville Area AAUW branch

Have you wondered how to advance public policy efforts within your branch? You've tried appointing public policy directors, but your members do not seem engaged. Maybe you can learn from what the Naperville Area branch did to expand their public policy initiatives. [Keep reading...](#)

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You're invited to the AAUW Jane Addams program: **August 30, 7:30 pm, Teaching Civics: Why It's Important**

Let's talk about the importance of civics education in our US schools! Our national report card shows that we are not doing a good job teaching US history and civics, and that is not preparing our students to be active citizens. Understanding how our government works, our rights and responsibilities as citizens, and the importance of active participation in our democracy is crucial to maintaining a healthy society. An informed and engaged citizenry is the cornerstone of a vibrant democracy. **Join us for the presentation on August 30, 7:30 pm.**

Civics education is the foundation upon which informed and engaged citizens are built. It empowers us to make well-informed decisions, hold our elected officials accountable, and actively contribute to shaping our communities.

That's why we invite you to join us for an enlightening presentation on how we can improve civics education in our schools. **Our presenter, Ed Spire**, looks into these issues and focuses on the newly created Educating for American Democracy Roadmap, which points the way to improving this important area of education.

Ed Spire is co-lead of NWSOFA's Restore our Democracy project, where they focus on issues regarding the effectiveness of the US democracy. Mr. Spire recently retired from a lengthy career in software engineering management, for companies both small and large, public and private, local and international.

Advance Zoom registration is required. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing the link to join the meeting.

[Register](#)



Join us for a fun night at our **Noche Latina!** fundraiser on **Friday, September 22, 2023, 6:00 - 10.00 p.m.** You cannot miss it!

Location: San Marcos Mexican Grill, 5678 Arlington Dr. E 5678, IL 60133

Our annual fundraiser will include good food, music, special guests, a silent auction, and raffle prizes. Reserve your tickets now at Eventbrite! Cost \$60.

Dare to Dream: Get Educated! was founded with the help of an AAUW National Community Action Grant and members from local Chicagoland branches to work with middle school and high school Latinas to encourage and support their efforts to graduate from high school, to encourage college enrollment, and to introduce them to college and career role models. The first annual conference was in 2009 at Elmhurst College with 100 middle school girls & their moms. Since then thousands of girls & mothers have benefited from our organization. The most recent conference was at College of DuPage in Jan 2023, and annual STEM conferences will also resume for the first time since Covid in Spring 2024 at Triton College.

If you would like to donate [please visit our website](#) to donate via PayPal or write a check, payable to Dare to Dream: Get Educated! Please mail to: Dare to Dream: Get Educated! PO Box 328, Elmhurst, IL 60126

Dare to Dream: Get Educated! is a recognized 501(c)(3) organization (EIN 27-1778698)

Submitted by Dare to Dream board member, Kate Skegg.

### Reserve Your Tickets

*If your branch has a program or recognition or an idea you'd like to share, please [email Jennifer Urish](#) by the 14th of each month.*

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Our Values: Intersectionality Inclusive Intergenerational Empowering  
Our Focus: Economic Security Education Advocacy



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