

---

## 2020-21 Branch Officers

### President:

Suzanne Hagen 715-425-1471  
[Suzanne.hagen.1@gmail.com](mailto:Suzanne.hagen.1@gmail.com)

### President-Elect

Elaine Baumann 715-425-5727  
[Elaine.baumann1@gmail.com](mailto:Elaine.baumann1@gmail.com)

### Program CO-VP:

Catherine Flowers 651-329-3215  
[artemesia25@gmail.com](mailto:artemesia25@gmail.com)

Gwen Paulson 715-425-0250

[gepaulson@comcast.net](mailto:gepaulson@comcast.net)

### Membership VP:

Kendra Morgan 715-450-6870  
[Kendra.morgan@edwardjones.com](mailto:Kendra.morgan@edwardjones.com)

### Secretary:

Gretchen Toman 715-425-2034  
[gretchentoman@gmail.com](mailto:gretchentoman@gmail.com)

### Treasurer:

Tina Kelly 715-307-4120  
[tk36698@gmail.com](mailto:tk36698@gmail.com)

## PROGAM LEADERS

### Public Policy:

Barbara Peterson 715-425-5638  
[lbpeters@dishup.us](mailto:lbpeters@dishup.us)

### International Relations:

Yolanda Dewar 651-459-3843  
[yolandadewar@gmail.com](mailto:yolandadewar@gmail.com)

### Communications/Newsletter:

Cheryl Maplethorpe 715-307-8036  
[cheryl.kay.maplethorpe@gmail.com](mailto:cheryl.kay.maplethorpe@gmail.com)

### Facebook Coordinator:

Kendra Morgan 715-450-6870  
[Kendra.morgan@edwardjones.com](mailto:Kendra.morgan@edwardjones.com)

### Book Sale Chairs:

Lorraine Davis 715-629-7392  
[Ldavis4762@aol.com](mailto:Ldavis4762@aol.com)

### Scholarship:

Jeanne Zirbel 715-425-2669  
[jeanne.zirbel@gmail.com](mailto:jeanne.zirbel@gmail.com)

### University Liaisons

Maureen Olle-LaJoie 715-222-7384  
[Maureen.olle-lajoie@uwrf.edu](mailto:Maureen.olle-lajoie@uwrf.edu)

Karla Thoennes 715-425-4666  
[Karla.Thoennes@uwrf.edu](mailto:Karla.Thoennes@uwrf.edu)

---

# FALLS NOTES



AAUW-River Falls, WI

[aauwrf@gmail.com](mailto:aauwrf@gmail.com)

**Branch Newsletter:**

**JULY - AUGUST 2020**

**Our next regular AAUW meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 8 when Kendra Morgan, branch member and Financial Advisor with Edward Jones, will speak on Financial Security for Women. The business meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. with program at 7:00. Elaine Baumann will send the link to join the zoom meeting sometime at the beginning of September. The meeting will not be recorded for later viewing, so be sure to join us!**

## **PRESIDENT' S COLUMN**

**Suzanne Hagen, Branch President**

As this information-packed newsletter shows, our branch continues good work and planning through these unusual summer months. Let me give you some key updates.

➤ Our meetings through Dec. 2020 will be via **Zoom** unless the health and safety situation improves significantly. Please see details below of our first program year meeting on Sept. 8 with financial advisor Kendra Morgan speaking on "A Woman's Retirement Outlook." Further Zoom login information will be sent in later August.

➤ **Cancellations and Reschedules:** Moose Brunch canceled; Girls in Science canceled for fall (may be reconfigured at later date); Book sale moved to spring; NCCWSL scheduled for May 26-29, 2021; WI state spring convention to be in Madison

➤ Creative strategies are being planned to reach potential new members thanks to the work of Kendra Morgan and Phyllis Jaworski

- AAUW-Wisconsin's Public Policy team is scheduling important informational events the evenings of August 25 and 27 via Zoom; see the Public Policy section below for more details

Please do take time to read the information that follows. In addition to news about programs, public policy, member recruitment, and the Ethel Johnson literacy fund, there are detailed notes on the briefing we received from National AAUW's CEO, Kim Churches. The briefing, a "perk" of our 5 Star Branch status, gave us good information about national issues, priorities and advice. We also shared more about our work and asked questions particularly relevant to our branch. I know meeting minutes aren't exciting reading, but also do review the July 24 branch board meeting notes for additional background on plans for the fall.

Finally, I want to acknowledge our board members (elected officers and committee leads) for their work throughout the year: Elaine Baumann (Pres. Elect), Catherine Flowers and Gwen Paulson (Co-Program VPs), Gretchen Toman (Secretary), Tina Kelly (Finance VP), Kendra Morgan (Membership VP/FaceBook coordinator), Cheryl Maplethorpe (Communication/Newsletter), Lorraine Davis (Past president/Book sale lead), Barbara Peterson (Public Policy), Jeanne Zirbel (Scholarship), Kay Montgomery (Fund Development), Maureen Olle-Joie (Campus/university rep), Yolanda Dewar (International Women's Issues) and Ann Gustafson (Legacy Circles). Thanks to them – and to you, our dedicated members – who keep us moving forward toward equity!

Take care, stay safe, be well—

## SEPTEMBER PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Catherine Flowers

As we know, financial security is all-important when it comes to empowering women, especially as we age. Edward Jones financial advisor, Kendra Morgan, will address this issue at our next AAUW zoom meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 8 - Business Meeting @ 6:30; Program @ 7:00. In this program, titled "A Women's Retirement Outlook", Kendra shares perspectives on financial concerns specific to women. She will discuss retirement income strategies, Social Security withdrawal and reliance rates. She will also address how to prepare for the unexpected, including market and inflation risks, and the rising cost of healthcare and long-term care.

**Elaine Baumann will send the link** to join the zoom meeting sometime at the beginning of September. The meeting will not be recorded, so be sure to join us!



5 Star Success! Our branch was recognized as one of 11 branches in the US that achieved AAUW's national recognition in 2019-20. Please see us featured on the national website:

**Hot link to AAUW Membership Matters: [HERE](#)**

Also check out several excellent webinars at AAUW's [Equity Network](#). Scroll down on the Equity Network page for webinars on such topics as 2020 Election-Voter Access and Education and Effective Advocacy During Covid-19. No login is required unless you are managing your member account.

### **AAUW NATIONAL CEO Zooms with River Falls Branch**

At 2:30 p.m. on July 16, 2020, as one of the first 11 Five Star branches in the country, the River Falls branch was invited to have a zoom meeting with National AAUW CEO, Kimberley Churches, and Nichia McFarlane, AAUW Engagement Associate whose responsibilities include overseeing the 5 star program. River Falls members in the meeting were Cheryl Maplethorpe, Gretchen Toman, Kathleen Dial, JoAnn Prout, Magdalena Pala, Gay Ward, Suzanne Danielson, Suzanne Hagen, Elaine Baumann, Ann Gustafson, Lorraine Davis and Barbara Peterson.

Ms. Churches explained that the 45 national staff are working from home at this time. AAUW is involved in critical discussions and advocacy for cash for families, safe and better work conditions, and paid sick leave for all employees.

Research grant money has allowed National to rewrite the *Simple Truth* brochure based on pay equity research across categories including race, ethnicity, gender identity, age, etc. A new study on women in manufacturing is also underway, focusing on a variety of variables.

After sharing our triumphs and challenges in Wisconsin, Ms. Churches complimented our work on student leadership and student debt. We noted the effects of gerrymandering and redistricting and the importance of having a voice in this issue. Ms. Churches noted that AAUW is emphasizing Get Out The Vote, eliminating barriers to voting, and supporting voting by mail. We also discussed taking a regional approach to issues that go beyond our state borders. Ms. Churches suggested that we could or should approach AAUW leaders in Minnesota on issues of mutual concern.

Suzanne Hagen shared that an opportunity Covid distancing presents is creative ways to attract new members. Our branch is exploring virtual methods to reach younger women in business, STEM, health care and education to expand and achieve more diversity in our membership.

Ms. Churches addressed AAUW's work on anti-bias, anti-racism by responding to an article in *The Lily* [a women's issues blog published by the *Washington Post*] that alleged systemic racism in three organizations – The National Organization for Women, the Feminist Majority Foundation and AAUW. She noted that, although not everything in the article was accurate, it did appropriately highlight the need for work in our 140 year old organization. The headquarters' staff are 52% people of color. However, the majority of AAUW members are white and the average age of members is over 72 years old. Ms. Churches noted that AAUW's education requirement of a bachelor's degree has become outdated and will be reviewed for bylaw revision. She noted the importance of recognizing associate degrees. She also noted that AAUW needs to focus particularly on the needs of young women of color so that racial equity is upfront in all our work including STEM and youth leadership initiatives.

Ms. Churches stated that the national AAUW budget has dropped from \$24.8 million to \$16 million and that she has had to lay off some staff.

**August 11 Election - Fall Partisan Primary**  
**November 3, 2020 - General Election**

**August 11, 2020** - Fall Partisan Primary to select candidates for the General election.

**November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020** - Presidential Election

**There is ample time for you to get out the vote for candidates that represent your issues. Volunteer to make calls to remind voters of the election.**

Do you have your absentee ballot for August 11<sup>th</sup> and November 3<sup>rd</sup>?

The world keeps changing and we must be ready to vote. **TODAY, AUGUST 6** is the last day to request your absentee ballot for the August 11<sup>th</sup> election. So if you don't have an absentee ballot, please take your mask and vote in person if you can. You can find voting information on the website <MyVote.WI.gov>.



[Vote Absentee](#)



[Where Do I Vote?](#)



[What's On My Ballot?](#)



[Register To Vote](#)

Request a ballot for the next election, see who is on the ballot for your address, check to see if your last ballot was counted and know that our government keeps working on your behalf. You can only vote for candidates in one party for the Aug. 11<sup>th</sup> primary and your absentee ballot **MUST** be witnessed. **Ladies, mail those ballots NOW!**

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**Non-Members are also welcome**

Public Policy Day is going virtual this year. **August 25<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-8:30** we can Zoom in for essential information. No driving to the meeting; just sit at your computer to hear some great speakers on key issues for our State. We can agree that this November's election has special importance. The persons elected to our State legislature will determine how redistricting will be handled. AAUW feels it should be non-partisan and fair to ALL citizens. Majority parties should not be

drawing districts behind closed doors. Legislators should not be picking their constituents; voters should be picking their legislators.

**August 25<sup>th</sup>, 6:30-8:30 pm** -- Issues discussed will be Fair Redistricting and Public Education. Get online a few minutes early so you don't miss a thing. Carlene Bechen from Fair Maps WI will discuss how this issue has gained bipartisan support across the state and how we can assist in changing the way district maps are drawn. Heather DuBois Bourenane of the Wisconsin Public Education Network (WPEN) will tell us how we can influence great public education without offering vouchers to private institutions.

**August 27<sup>th</sup>, 6:30-8:30 pm** – The discussion will center on how you can be an informed voter when so much information comes at you without credibility. How can we differentiate between “fake news” and “real facts”? Secondly, how can we Get Out The Vote (GOTV) in the midst of a pandemic and cruel and bitter vitriol?

In recent years AAUW-WI has been unsuccessful in encouraging our legislators to adopt issues that improve the condition of women and children in this state. It is unlikely to change until and unless we change the way our state divides legislative districts. Wisconsin ranks as the worst for gerrymandered districts. There are two excellent videos that explain how redistricting was handled in WI in 2011. I suggest you view them prior to Public Policy Day 2020 so you can better understand the unfairness of our current situation. Here is how you can do that:

1. The WI Farmers Union has published a 3-minute video that briefly describes how gerrymandering took place in WI. I am giving you the page that leads to the video. That page has some prime ideas for how to change the way redistricting is done. Click on the video at <https://www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/fairmaps>
2. A documentary titled *Slay the Dragon* gives a very thorough history of how redistricting in WI was achieved behind closed doors in utter secrecy in 2011. It also follows a successful grass-roots challenge to redistricting done in Michigan. There is hope for change! This documentary is approx. 2 hours long though it exposes the culprits who drew “election safe” districts in WI. I paid \$4.99 to watch it (rental for 1 month) on Amazon Prime. I heard that it will be offered “free” on Hulu in August but I don't have dates. It is worth \$5 and your time.

In the past about 50-60 AAUW members from across the state have attended Legislative Day in Madison. Some, like River Falls members, have driven hundreds of miles to attend. Let's set a goal to have 50 River Falls members online for the Public Policy Day this year. Our future may depend on it! **Barbara Peterson will give you the Zoom meeting link in a future email.**

**Women's Right to Vote: It's Been 100 Years**

**August 13<sup>th</sup>, Thursday night at 7:00 pm**, PBSWisconsin will air *Wisconsin Women Vote: A Here and Now Special* which considers the right to vote from the perspective of Wisconsin women who have trail-blazed a path for women in politics here in the Badger State. Includes U.S. Representative Gwen Moore, D-Milwaukee.

## **RIVER FALLS BRANCH MEETING MINUTES BOARD MEETING (Virtual via Zoom)**

July 24, 2020

By Suzanne Hagen

**Present via Zoom:** Elaine Baumann, Barbara Peterson, Cheryl Maplethorpe, Kendra Morgan, Lorraine Davis, Tina Kelly, Ann Gustafson, Suzanne Hagen, Gwen Paulson

**Minutes of June 15, 2020 board meeting**, with correction noting that Wisconsin spring 2021 convention will be in Madison, approved by consensus. **June 30, 2020 finance report** approved by consensus (approximately \$4000 remains in operating expenses).

**Updates:** Branch profile will soon appear on AAUW.org Membership Matters page acknowledging our 5 Star branch achievement; news item on that award will be submitted to local media in early August (Suzanne's task)

**Literacy Fund proposal** from Lorraine Davis and Jean Johnson to rename as Heritage Fund which encompasses gifts memorializing any branch member or friend; proposal also clarifies funding (\$200 annually from branch as our budget permits; grant applications to be invited when fund balance reaches \$2000.) Lorraine to draft motions on renaming and funding for member approval at Sept. branch business meeting. Names of those memorialized to be published in newsletter and in annual directory.

**Programs for 2020-21. All programs through Dec. 2020 will be on Zoom, with no in-person format unless the safety/pandemic situation significantly improves.**

Oct. program on pandemic with Alison Page to potentially include Pierce Co. Public Health Director, AZ Snyder (Suzanne to contact her.) Should have a moderator. Guide questions to be prepared by Catherine Flowers and Gwen Paulson; guide questions may be different for each given their different positions; also ask speakers what they would like to be asked as panelists

Nov. program recommended to be on systemic racism with Dr. Cyndi Kernahan, UWRF Psychology Prof. and that Community Action/Organizing program with C. Mottaz be shifted to Feb. (*Subsequent follow up – this is okay with both speakers.*)

Dec. program on Using Your Voice will be on Zoom with no in-person format (*Subsequent follow up – this is fine with Katharine Grant.*) There will also be an "un-auction" encouraging members to make a donation to the branch in lieu of our usual Dec. auction fund raiser.

### **Cancellations/re-schedules:**

Moose Brunch canceled; Girls in Science canceled for fall (may be reconfigured at later date); Booksale moved to spring; NCCWSL scheduled for last weekend in May (no information on registration timeline or state scholarship applications as yet). WI state spring convention to be in Madison.

**Member recruitment:** Kendra Morgan and Phyllis Jaworski are making plans to reach potential members via presentations at area women's groups, e.g., St. Croix Valley Girls, Power of 100, Women in Business. Reminders



will be sent to non-renewing members mid-August; Tina sending thank you's to those who have renewed. Ruth Lee and Sue Danielson will invite selected lapsed members to consider renewing.

**Public Policy:** State Public Policy group has been meeting via Zoom. Two Zoom sessions are planned for 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. on August 25 (Topics: Gerrymandering and School Choice/Vouchers)) and August 27 (Topic: Get Out the Vote). Barb Peterson has been working as part of this group; detailed information will be in next newsletter. Cheryl notes there is a 3 minute video on gerrymandering which might be sent out; *Slay the Dragon* is a longer video on issue available through Amazon at \$4.99.

**Other Business:** Observations from National Briefing on July 16. Valuable session. Would be good to pull out AAUW positions on key issues and inform/monitor our WI legislators on those issues. Good suggestion to reach out to Minnesota and collaborate with adjoining branches on issues of common interest. Karen Kirkwood suggested as contact; Ann Gustafson knows her and will reach out. Ann and Suzanne will discuss more about the goals and focus of that conversation.

Likely newsletter publication in first two weeks of August, with reminders of Public Policy events and our Sept. program coming closer to those scheduled dates. Barbara asks that Public Policy event information placed early in newsletter so readers see and attend to it.

Meeting adjourned at 3:15.

## FINANCE REPORT

Tina Kelly, Finance Chair

### AAUW-River Falls Finance Report May 31, 2020 – July 2, 2020

<b>Checking balance 5/31/2020</b>	<b>\$ 8639.23</b>
Receipts	
AAUW Membership Dues	\$ 225
AAUW Credit	114
Refund from State	13
<i>Total receipts (5/31/2020-7/2/2020)</i>	<b>\$ 352</b>
Disbursements	
Membership Dues to AAUW	\$ 149
Refund dues overpayment	59
Payment to State	13
<i>Total disbursements ( 4/28/2020 – 5/31/2020)</i>	<b>\$ 216</b>

### Balances 7/2/2020

Checking: \$8775.23  
Savings: \$2282.47  
Total: \$11057.70

## UNIVERSITY REPORT

By Karla Thoennes

There will be a public town hall meeting about UWRF and our plans for fall. It is being sponsored by the Chamber. <https://tourism.rfchamber.com/events/details/university-of-wisconsin-river-falls-update-webinar-14082>



The poster is divided into several sections. On the left, there are two headshots: the top one is of Connie Foster, Interim Chancellor, and the bottom one is of David Travis, Vice Chancellor. To the right of these photos, the text 'UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN RIVER FALLS UPDATE' is written in large, bold, red letters. Below this, the date and time 'Thursday, August 13 2:00 pm' are displayed in white text on a dark blue background. At the bottom, the 'UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN River Falls' logo is on the left, and the 'River Falls Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau' logo is on the right.

**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN  
RIVER FALLS  
UPDATE**

*Thursday, August 13  
2:00 pm*

**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN  
River Falls**

*River Falls*  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
AND TOURISM BUREAU

Some general information:

- Yes, we will be open this fall.
- Residence hall students will begin to move-in starting August 26.
- Classes start September 2.
- Classes will be offered face-to-face, on-line, and hybrid (instructors interact with students in the same physical space for less than 75% of the instructional time, with the remainder of the instructional time provided online or through other distanced methods).
- The Falcons Forward website has been created to provide updated information on several topics regarding our plans for fall: <https://www.uwrf.edu/Falcons-Forward/Index.cfm>.

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 2020-21

Unless you are a life member, joined as a first time member after March 1, or renewed this spring, your current membership expired June 30, 2020.

Membership dues are:

\$59.00 – national dues (\$56 of which are tax deductible)

\$13.00 – state dues

\$11.00 – branch dues

**\$83.00 - Total**

You may renew on line at [aauw.org](http://aauw.org).



Or with a check for \$83, payable to AAUW-RF, and mailed to:  
Tina Kelly  
W9908 State Rd 35  
Hager City, WI 54014-8343

## **ETHEL JOHNSON MEMORIAL**

Submitted by Jean Johnson, Committee Chair of **The Ethel Johnson Memorial Fund**

The Ethel Johnson Memorial honors a woman dedicated to learning. AAUW wishes to remember Ethel for her many roles of service to our organization and the community. Her life is an example of what education and a spirit of giving can inspire in all of us. The fund will be used for grants that promote literacy. By sustaining this memorial, AAUW continues the values by which Ethel lived as a teacher, mentor, traveler, and friend.

Please send your monetary support to Tina Kelly, W9908 State Rd 35. Hager City WI 54014 or donate at our monthly AAUW meetings.

## **AAUW T-SHIRTS**



**Attention AAUW Members:** AAUW t-shirts are in! Please mail cash/check made out to Kendra Morgan at 229 W Charlotte St #3 for \$10. As we are not having any events or meetings, Kendra will bring the t-shirts when we are able to hold meetings in person.

## **More From Kendra Morgan :**

### FINANCIAL FOCUS - Tax-deferred Accounts Get (Temporary) Boost from CARES Act - April 14, 2020

You need to primarily rely on yourself to protect your health during the coronavirus. But from a financial standpoint, you may have gotten some relief – or at least some flexibility from the recently passed \$2 trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

Retirement account holders, including owners of IRAs and 401(k)s are usually required to start taking distributions from these accounts once they reach age 72. The CARES Act waives these required minimum distributions (RMDs) for all employer plans and IRAs in 2020, with the exception of defined benefit plans. If you've already taken your distribution for 2020, you can put the funds back in your retirement account if you meet certain requirements.

Of course, if you needed – or will need – the money from the RMD for your cash flow needs, you won't have to return it. But if you don't really need the money, avoiding an RMD in 2020 or returning an RMD to your retirement account will give the funds more time to grow on a tax-deferred basis before the RMDs are once again required in 2021.

Another CARES Act provision allows for the 10% early withdrawal penalty to be waived for withdrawals up to \$100,000 from qualified retirement accounts, including IRAs and 401(k)s, for individuals who qualify for COVID-19 relief. Qualifying individuals include those who are diagnosed with COVID-19, have a spouse or dependent who is diagnosed with COVID-19 or experience adverse financial consequences as a result of COVID-19, including quarantines, layoffs, business closures or child care responsibilities. Income tax on the distribution would still be owed but could be paid over a three-year period. Employer plan participants also may increase the amount that can be taken as a loan from a qualified retirement plan from \$50,000 to \$100,000 for 2020. While the CARES Act allows these penalty-free withdrawals and increased plan loan amounts, you will need to contact your plan administrator to determine whether these options are available in your plan.

Even though you may be able to access these funds penalty-free, it doesn't necessarily mean you should do so. Try to exhaust some of the other provisions in the CARES Act first, such as the mortgage or student loan relief, or using the direct payment to bridge the gap on current expenses before taking a distribution or loan from your retirement account. If you decide to take a withdrawal or loan, work with your financial advisor to consider developing strategies to contribute/pay back these funds over time to reduce any long-term impact to your retirement goals.

Please consult with your tax professional before making any CARES Act-related moves with your retirement accounts. Partnering with your tax and financial professionals can help in the decision-making process. In the meantime, stay safe, stay healthy and keep looking forward to brighter days ahead.

**FACEBOOK PAGE** - Kendra Morgan is the administrator for our AAUW branch Facebook Page. Our new page has the URL: <https://www.facebook.com/AAUW.RiverFalls> . Please **"like it."** by clicking at the top left side under the title. Also, if you have any events or information which are relevant, please send your postings to [moke1202@outlook.com](mailto:moke1202@outlook.com). Thank you, Kendra, for assuming this responsibility.

## INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Yolanda Dewar, Chair

### JULY 2020 INTERNATIONAL NEWS

**Coronavirus: Afghan girls make ventilators out of car parts,** By Sodaba Haidare, BBC News, 20th May, 2020

**Afghanistan's all-girl robotics team has turned its focus on coronavirus patients - by making affordable ventilators out of car parts.**

The teenagers made headlines in 2017 when they won a special award at an international competition in the US. Now they are racing against time to deliver ventilators, at a fraction of the market price.

Afghanistan, reeling from years of war, has a maximum of just 400 ventilators for a population of 38.9 million. So far, more than 7,650 coronavirus cases and 178 deaths have been confirmed, but the authorities fear the situation could get worse and overwhelm an already fragile healthcare system.

Known as the "Afghan Dreamers", the girls come from the western province of Herat, where Afghanistan's first case of Covid-19 was reported.

It's the nation's hotspot for the pandemic because of its close proximity to Iran, the region's epicentre of the outbreak. The girls, aged between 14 and 17, have built a prototype using a motor from a used Toyota Corolla and a chain drive from a Honda motorcycle.

The global shortage of ventilators is a problem and their hefty price of \$30,000 (£24,000) to \$50,000 (£40,700) on the global market means many poorer countries can't afford them. But the teenagers say they are building the much-needed device for less than \$600 each. With shops closed and the city of Herat under lockdown, the challenge that the girls are facing is travelling outside the province to source parts. They're about 70% finished. The only thing they lack is the air sensor, which they're trying to source rather than build from scratch as it takes time.

The first phase is complete and it was tested in a hospital. The team are working on phase two, which once completed can be introduced to the market. With a **less than 30% female literacy rate** in the country, the teenagers hope their project will inspire others and change the perception of women in the engineering industry. Being able to make ventilators shows the importance of teaching girls at a young age and the role of women as active citizens in their society. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/amp/world-asia-52738668>

### GWJ World Youth Skills Day 2020 Infographic and Advocacy

With the aim to raise awareness of the importance of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) to reduce youth employment, the United Nations General Assembly adopted at the end of the year 2014 a resolution declaring 15 July as World Youth Skills Day (WYSD). The observance day insists on the role of Member States and civil society in meeting the needs and aspirations of youth, particularly in developing countries, where many young women and girls are left behind and drop out of school. This year again, GWJ joins the global community in celebrating WYSD with the release of an **impactful infographic**, in line with its longstanding commitment to the promotion of women's and girls' access to education and vocational training up to highest levels. In times of pandemic, investing in youth skills, and particularly women's and girls' skills, will have to be a high-priority concern to build resilient countries. [gwi@graduatewomen.org](mailto:gwi@graduatewomen.org)

## **The coronavirus pandemic needs to bring reforms to upend the systems that hold girls and women back.**

The world will never be the same after the COVID-19 crisis. Along with the devastating impact on individuals, families, communities and countries, the pandemic has also exposed gaping cracks in our social, political and economic systems.

**The most pervasive of those cracks is discrimination against women, which persists in every country in the world. Not one single country has yet reached gender equality**, and even worse, many countries are moving slowly or even backtracking on key gender issues. The social and economic aftershocks from the COVID-19 pandemic **could set women back by decades**.

Crises on the scale of COVID-19 bring devastation, but they can also provide a platform for radical social change and the chance to "build back better." COVID-19 could be the watershed we need to upend the systems that hold girls and women back. It brings a chance to make health care and education truly universal, to improve conditions and pay for millions, and to strengthen safety nets.

Even looking at just five key "bellwether" gender equality issues, we can see how the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to take progress even further off course:

- Women's access to safe, voluntary family planning services is likely to worsen. COVID-19 has already brought practical concerns of contraceptive supply shortages, and several U.S. states moved quickly to try to **declare abortion services as "nonessential" during the coronavirus pandemic (but have since been blocked from doing so by federal courts)**.
- Girls' education is already being set back by the COVID-19 crisis, with over 188 countries implementing nationwide school closures that impact over 89% of the world's student population. Turning to online solutions will negatively impact access for girls, especially those with disabilities and in poor households.
- A key indicator of gender equality is whether women are represented in leadership positions in government and other powerful roles. We've already seen women less prominently featured as commentators and experts on COVID-19 than men. The White House was criticized because its Coronavirus Task Force was initially made up of all men.
- **One of the hardest issues to track is women's safety and gender-based violence**, because the data is difficult to collect and to compare, especially on a global scale. Anecdotal evidence points to a rise in domestic violence linked to COVID-19 lockdowns: patterns of increasing abuse are already being reported in countries including in Brazil, Germany, China and Greece. Women already facing violence and abuse will also have less access to the services and support and are more likely to be financially tied to abusive relationships.

If the COVID-19 crisis response is gender-blind, we risk setting back already sluggish progress on gender equality by a generation or more. With women's rights at the center of our response to COVID-19 we can catalyze – not compromise – progress toward gender equality and a fairer world for all.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) has been accepted by the United Nations (UN) Geneva and is now available on the [UN website](#). Co-signed by the Canadian Federations of University Women (CFUW) and Women Graduates-USA (WG-USA), the statement calls on governments worldwide to urgently combat domestic violence in the context of COVID-19. [gwi@graduatewomen.org](mailto:gwi@graduatewomen.org)

### **MALALA YUSAFSZAI GRADUATES FROM OXFORD 8 YEARS AFTER SURVIVING TALIBAN GUNMEN**, by Lee Morgan, Huffington Post, June 19, 2020

Malala Yousafzai, who was shot in the face by Taliban gunmen eight years ago as she campaigned for girls' rights to education, is now an Oxford graduate. The Pakistani-born activist, now 22, completed her degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics at England's prestigious University of Oxford.

Yousafzai, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 for her fight against the suppression of children.

[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/malala-graduates-oxford-university\\_n\\_5eec8c73c5b69d4e087665a9](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/malala-graduates-oxford-university_n_5eec8c73c5b69d4e087665a9)

### **UWE (University Women of Europe) complaints to the European Committee of Social Rights – Gender Pay Gap**

In August 2016, UWE lodged collective **complaints against 15 European countries** regarding the inequalities of pay between women and men and the lack of women in decision-making positions to the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) of the Council of Europe. On 29 June 2020, the ECSR has **acknowledged violation** of the right to equal pay and the right to equal opportunities in the workplace in 14 out of 15 countries which apply to the European Social Charter: Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and Slovenia. Measures taken by some States in recent years have led to some progress in reducing the gender pay gap, but the progress is slow. The ECSR's decisions clearly demonstrate that problems and practices, such as segregation in the labor market, lack of pay transparency, secrecy regarding pay levels, obstacles to access effective remedies and retaliatory dismissals continue to exist and prevent full realisation of the equal pay principle. GWI commends UWE for their remarkable action of policy influence towards the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. To learn more, [visit the UWE website](#)

### **Exploring GWI Policy Resolutions 5&6: Gender and Migration /Asylum Webinar, 3 June, 2020**

Around the world, people are on the move. They are migrating to escape poverty, conflict and devastation in their own countries in hope of a better future for them and their families. **Women represent almost half** of the 244 million migrants and half of the 19.6 million refugees worldwide (Source: UNWomen).

In this exclusive webinar, speakers presented the multilevel stakes, challenges and opportunities highlighted by the GWI 2019 Policy Resolutions 5 (Fair and Non-Discriminatory Management of Refugees and Asylum Seekers) and 6 (Human Rights for Refugees and Migrant Women and Children). Regional differences were examined and recommendations were made for NFA actions. To learn more follow: [gwi@graduatewomen.org](mailto:gwi@graduatewomen.org)

## **GWI Marks World Day against Child Labour**

Launched in 2002 by the International Labor Organization (ILO), World Day Against Child Labor draws attention to the global problem of child labor and the actions needed to eliminate it. According to ILO, more than 152 million children globally ages between ages 5-17 are child laborers, with almost half of them, 73 million, in hazardous child labor. Concerningly, the current COVID-19 health pandemic is exacerbating the root causes of child labor and forced labor, including poverty, social marginalization, discrimination, the lack of universal quality education, the prevalence of the informal economy and weak social dialogue. GWI calls for global ratification of ILO conventions as a mean to end this blatant violation of children's fundamental rights. GWI launched a social media campaign of impactful information and advocacy ideas to raise awareness about child labor and the organization's pursuit to end this injustice. Follow GWI's social media campaign on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram The 2020 World Day Against Child Labor high level virtual debate took place on 12 June 2020.

## **Other information and events**

9 August	International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Global
12 August	International Youth Day, Global
8 September	International Literacy Day, Global
14 Sept-2 October	Human Rights Council, 45 <sup>th</sup> session, United Nations Office, Geneva
18-20 September	Centenary of the French Association of University Women (AFFDU)
21 September	International Day of Peace, Global
5 October	World Teachers Day, Global
11 October	International Day of the Girl Child, Global

## **Articles of Interest:**

Talk about women in STEM! This young woman solved a 50 year old math problem that no one had been able to figure out! See the article [HERE](#) (put cursor over the word and hit CONTROL+click).

Talent is wasted because of race and gender bias. Click [HERE](#).



## People you may not know about, but probably should

When **Frances Perkins** was a little girl, she asked her parents why nice people could be poor. Her father told her that poor people were poor because they were lazy and drank. Eventually, she went to Mount Holyoke College, and



majored in physics. In her final semester, she took a class in American economic history and toured the mills along the Connecticut River to see working conditions. She was horrified. Eventually, instead of teaching until she married, she earned a masters degree in social work from Columbia University. In 1910, Perkins became Executive Secretary of the New York City Consumers League. She campaigned for sanitary regulations for bakeries, fire protection for factories, and legislation to limit the working hours for women and children in factories to 54 hours per week. She learned how to lobby.

On March 25th, 1911, Frances witnessed one of the worst workplace disasters in US history. The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire was devastating, killing 146 people, mostly young women and girls. She watched 47 workers leap to their deaths from the 8th and 9th floors.

Poignantly, just a year before these same women and girls had fought for and won the 54 hour work week and other benefits that Frances had championed. These women weren't just tragic victims, they were heroes of the labor force. Frances at that moment resolved to make sure their deaths meant something.

Perkins helped draft the most comprehensive set of laws regarding workplace health and safety in the country. Other states started copying New York's new laws to protect workers.

Perkins continued to work in New York for decades, until she was asked by President Elect Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933 to serve as Secretary of Labor. She told him only if he agreed with her goals: 1) 40-hour work week, 2) minimum wage, 3) unemployment and worker's compensation, 4) abolition of child labor, 5) federal aid to the states for unemployment, 6) Social Security, 7) a revitalized federal employment service, and 8) universal health insurance. He agreed. Similar to what she had worked for in New York, her successes became the New Deal, and changed the country and its workers forever.

So while you may not know her name, you certainly know her legacy.

## **River Falls Branch: PRELIMINARY 2020-21 CALENDAR OF EVENTS – SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

Monthly meetings are usually the second Tuesday of each month September to May with business meetings at 6:30 and programs open to the public at 7:00 p.m. Our meetings through Dec. 2020 will be via **Zoom** unless the health and safety situation improves significantly.

**September 8** – Kendra Morgan, branch member and Financial Advisor with Edward Jones, will speak on **Financial Security for Women**. The business meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. with program at 7:00. **Elaine Baumann will send the link** to join the zoom meeting sometime at the beginning of September. The meeting will not be recorded, so be sure to join us!

**October 13** – Alison Page (CEO of Western WI Health; previously chief safety officer for Fairview Health Services) on health care issues/responses/projections in pandemic era

**November 10** - Prof. Cyndi Kernahan, UWRF on Systemic Racism

**December 8** – Katharine Grant, Music Focused program, “Using Your Voice”

**January 16 or 23, 2021** (Saturday) – Business Meeting at 1:00 p.m. Program at 1:30 - STEM program & present awards to Middle School essay contest winner(s)

**February 9** – Carole Mottaz on strategies for community action

**March 9** – Jane Hoffmann, River Falls educator/Historical Preservation Committee member - “**Down on Main Street: A Historical Tour**”. Local History/Video presentation (& model unit for engaging elementary students)

**April 13** – Gay Ward & Margaret Phinney (UWRF Education Dept. faculty) “**And Justice for All**”: **Exploring Social Justice and Social Responsibility through Children’s Literature** (Also our annual business meeting to elect officers & approve next budget)

**April 23-24** – State Convention

**May 11** – Final gathering of program year and installation of officers. Details to be determined.



### **AAUW's MISSION STATEMENT**

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

### **AAUW's VALUE PROMISE**

By joining AAUW, you belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women have a fair chance. AAUW empowers all women and girls to reach their highest potential.

### **VISION STATEMENT**

AAUW empowers all women and girls to reach their highest potential.

### **DIVERSITY STATEMENT**

AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or class.