

Advocate

JUNE 2026

Together Making a Difference...

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SEPTEMBER ADVOCATE

The deadline for each issue of the Advocate is the 5th of the previous month. Please submit articles to the editor via email by August 5, 2026 to:

newsletter@AAUWBuffalo.org

AAUW
Buffalo (NY) Branch

AAUW SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS CELEBRATION

Please join us on Thursday, June 25, 2026 at

Sean Patrick's Restaurant

3480 Millersport Highway, Getzville, NY 14068

6:00 pm Check-in

6:30 pm Dinner Buffet:

Cream of Potato Soup

Carved Beef, Carved Pork, & Chicken Piccata

Penne Pasta with Garlic and Olive Oil

Green Beans

Cheesy Mashed Potatoes

Rolls & Butter

Vanilla Ice cream with Caramel Sauce

Freshly Brewed Coffee, Tea, Decaf Coffee

7:30 pm Scholarship Award Presentations



Please register on or before Monday, June 15th

Registration: [Click Here](#) to register online and pay \$22 per person, via Credit Card or mail the completed form below, along with a check for \$22 per person to:

AAUW Buffalo, PO Box 894, Buffalo, NY 14225

Name: _____ Allergy: _____

Phone No.: _____ Email: _____

If interested in carpooling, please indicate your area (O.P., Williamsville, Amherst, etc.)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

- Pat Miceli

"Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end."
- Seneca the Younger

The fiscal year's ending in June marks the end of some officers' term and the beginning of others.

The Buffalo Branch is deeply **grateful** for the service of:

- ❖ Diane O'Brien, VP Membership Recruitment,
- ❖ Judy Huber, Secretary /Parliamentarian,
- ❖ EAP Treasurer, Ruby Williams,
- ❖ Jennifer Hoffman, Fundraising Treasurer, and
- ❖ Melissa White, Scholarship Director.

These officers served well and tirelessly during their terms. New officers were installed at the Annual Meeting on May 16, 2026, and will begin their terms on July 1, 2026.

We **welcome** the following new **Board** members:

- ❖ Andy Smith as she begins VP Membership, combining the previous Membership Recruitment and Membership Retention VP positions,
- ❖ Kathy Tepas, Secretary/Parliamentarian,
- ❖ Nan Scinta, Fundraising Treasurer, and
- ❖ Mary Bashore, Scholarship Director.

Shirley Joy will continue her position as CFO into 26-28. We extend our **thanks** to the new officers for their assistance in fulfilling the mission of the Buffalo Branch.

As we look back on the 25-26 year of **AAUW Buffalo Branch**, we are particularly **proud** of the many **successes**. Of particular note, is the successful **70th Annual Scholarship Book Sale**, the well-chosen **2026 Scholarship Recipients**, the well-planned **Monthly Programs**, the attractive newsworthy **Advocate**, revised **rack card** and **membership forms** and the successful **Public Relations Committee**.

Of course, we are most proud of our **resolute members** who work tirelessly to fulfill the mission of our branch. **Congratulations** to all who assist in making the Buffalo Branch successful.

This summer, a new event is planned for **The Nickel Plate** on July 13 at 5:30. Also the **Welcome Back Dinner** in September is being planned. Stay tuned for the details which will be emailed to you.

In conclusion, have a great summer, mark your calendars, and plan to attend the upcoming events. And of course, as always, **THANK YOU**.

ADVOCATE

Published monthly, September to June, as a bulletin of events for members and as an update on AAUW issues and programs.

The opinions expressed within the newsletter are those of the individual writers and may or may not reflect those of the Branch.

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President: Pat Miceli
Publisher/Editor: Karen May
Assistant Editors: Betty Preble
Judy Weidemann

For prospective or new member questions, please contact:

VP Membership: Andy Smith
Membership@aauwbuffalo.org

Send address changes to:
Mary Crocker
375 Parkhurst Blvd.
Buffalo, NY 1422
mlcrock@msn.com

MEMBERSHIP REMINDERS

-Andy Smith

June is membership renewal time for the majority of our members. Most members have already received their renewal via email from me [aasmith12@yahoo.com] on May 15th, 2026.

I am available to help with the renewal process. Just email or call me at 716-228-9540.

NEW MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

-Andy Smith

I am still in need of members to join the newly formed membership committee. Details are on page 7 of the [May 2026 Advocate](#).

MEMBERSHIP GET TOGETHER

-Andy Smith

Membership Social (see p. 11) ...July 13th at 5:30 pm at the Nickel Plate located at 1500 Clinton Street, Buffalo, NY 14206.

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

- Mary Bashore

We succeeded in getting a **record number of truly outstanding applications** for our scholarships this year. It is no surprise that for the **Women Entering College (WEC) Scholarship**, many young women found out about our scholarship from their high school guidance counselor. Some schools do an excellent job of pointing students to resources. Also, the WEC scholarship is listed on the website of the **Western NY School Counselors Association**, as well as on the **Buffalo Public Schools** website.

For our other scholarships, internet searching was often cited as the way they found us.

But I was surprised to find that the second most common way students found out about us was through word of mouth – a relative, friend, co-worker, previous award winner, book sale volunteer or AAUW member, a few even mentioned by name.

A hearty **Thank You** to all who have supported our scholarship program in any way, shape, or form. Our tag line is **Making a Difference**, and you certainly have.

2026 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

– Mary Bashore

Congratulations to our 2026 Scholarship Winners!

Women Entering College: Scholarships for \$5,000 each will be awarded to:

- 🌀 Frances Teaman
- 🌀 Karrington Mann
- 🌀 Jessica Dennehy
- 🌀 Peyton Langworthy

Olga Lindberg: Scholarships for \$8,000 each will be awarded to:

- 🌀 Samantha Dispenza
- 🌀 Gianna Minnuto
- 🌀 Katrina Mueller
- 🌀 Jessica Williams

Catalyst for Change: Scholarships for \$5,000 each will be awarded to:

- 🌀 Avery Blaszak
- 🌀 Hemali Gauri
- 🌀 Elnara Karadzhayeva
- 🌀 Sophia Olsinski

Jacquie Walker: Scholarships for \$5,000 each will be awarded to:

- 🌀 Constance Yap
- 🌀 Marissa Tresch

Adult Learners in Transition: Scholarships for \$5,000 each will be awarded to:

- 🌀 Emma Jones and
- 🌀 Shalese Price

Swift-McClennan Public Affairs Scholarship: Scholarship for \$1,000 will be awarded to:

- 🌀 Taneisha Ortiz

Remember to register for the June 25, 2026, Scholarship Awards Dinner (page 2) to meet these accomplished women and be part of the celebration of their achievements. Our special guest is Jacquie Walker, who will be presenting the scholarships given in her name.

Governor's Exemplary Volunteer Service Award

Kathleen Collins has been nominated for the **Governor's Exemplary Volunteer Service Award** by the York State Office for Aging. Kate, a retired teacher, was nominated by the staff of the **Seneca Street Community Development Corporation** near Babcock St., where she volunteers by tutoring underprivileged children. She recently received her nomination award from Erie County Commissioner of Senior Services, Randall Hoak. Kate is now invited to attend Older New Yorkers' Day on May 26 in Albany, where the Volunteer of the Year award will be selected from the nominees. The event celebrates healthy aging while overcoming stereotypes about aging. Kate spent 49 years as a teacher in geometry, physics, and AP Biology at St. Francis and Mt. Mercy high schools. When asked for comment, Kate said, "The job is its own reward. I was working with one kindergartner who was having trouble with the numbers 2 and 5. When he finally got it right, it was a big deal. Or someone who got seven out of ten spelling words right, but only four last week. Those are the successes we celebrate."

Congratulations to Kate on this well-deserved award.



East Aurora resident **Kathleen Collins** (in blue) was presented with her nomination for New York State's Volunteer of the Year by Erie County Senior Services Commissioner, Randall Hoak (left).

PRESIDENT
Pat Miceli

VP PROGRAM
Lilyen Mascellino

VP MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT
Diane O'Brien

VP MEMBERSHIP RETENTION
Alexandra Smith

OPERATIONS TREASURER
Mary Crocker

SECRETARY/PARLIAMENTARIAN
Judy Huber

**CHAMBERLIN/FUNDS FOR
EDUCATION TREASURER**
Kathleen Collins

EAP TREASURER
Ruby Williams

FUNDRAISING TREASURER
Jennifer Hoffman

SCHOLARSHIP DIRECTOR
Melissa White

CFO
Shirley Joy

Public Policy

Dr. Marian Deutschman, Public Policy Chair

What is the post-pandemic status of American Public Schools?

According to the *Center on Reinventing Public Education*, American public schools, as of early 2026, are experiencing a "slow, uneven decline" as they transition into a "new normal" marked by persistent learning gaps, structural financial challenges, and significant staffing shortages. The long-term aftershocks of the pandemic—including chronic absenteeism, declining academic performance, and increased student mental health needs—remain deeply embedded in the nation's schools.

Recent data from the Center on Reinventing Public Education show that student performance in both math and reading remains below 2019 levels. Higher-performing students are recovering more quickly while low-income and disadvantaged students continue to fall further behind. Younger students, in particular, missed foundational skills development during shutdowns.

Chronic absenteeism—defined as missing 10% or more of the school year—remains about 50% higher than pre-pandemic levels. Student wellness has also become a major concern with elevated levels of anxiety and depression among teens. Many students no longer view regular attendance as essential.

As of mid-2025, more than 400,000 teaching positions are either vacant or filled with underqualified staff. Shortages are especially severe in special education, science, math, and bilingual education. Stress, burnout and politicized scrutiny continue to drive experienced teachers out of the profession. Meanwhile, public school student enrollment remains more than 1 million below pre-pandemic levels, a trend expected to continue because of declining birthrates. The pandemic also accelerated shifts toward homeschooling, private schools and voucher programs.

The U.S. Department of Education establishes policy and administers most federal assistance to education. The department was created in 1979 when President Jimmy Carter signed the Department of Education Organization Act to elevate education to a cabinet-level priority, consolidate federal education programs, and promote equal educational access. In 1982, President Ronald Reagan proposed dismantling the department. Today, its stated mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

Linda McMahon is one of only three members of Donald Trump's original Cabinet to return for his second term. When asked to lead the Department of Education, she acknowledged having no background in education. President Trump said he wasn't looking for an education expert. According to Zach Helfand in the April 27 issue of *The New Yorker*, McMahon recalled President Trump saying, "The goal is that you'll be successful when you fire yourself."

Plans to close the department were included in the GOP campaign platform and outlined in Project 2025, the Heritage Foundation's policy blueprint for a second Trump presidency. The very first sentence of the education section says: "Federal education policy should be limited and, ultimately, the federal Department of Education should be eliminated" (*NEA Today, Feb. 2025*). Stripping the Department of resources and responsibility, critics argue, will be catastrophic for millions of students in low-income communities.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

DINNER BY THE BOOK

When: Wed., June 17th, at 5:30 pm
Where: Family Tree Restaurant
4346 Bailey Avenue, Amherst

Book: *Hamnet*, by Maggie O'Farrell
Discussion Leader: Lisa Casey
Facilitator: Mary Bashore

RSVP: Judy Malamas 716-632-0461
Email: tsagewood@aol.com

LET'S TALK PUBLIC POLICY!

When: Thursday, June 25th - 1:30 pm
Where: Dash's, 1770 Hertel Ave – 2nd floor
Discussion: Current Public Policy
R.S.V.P. Marian Deutschman 716-634-2412 or
mardeu15@verizon.net
Please call or email Marian to let
her know you will be attending.

CLUELESS MYSTERY BOOK CLUB

When: Wed., June 24th, at 12:00 pm
Where: Family Tree Restaurant
4346 Bailey Avenue, Amherst

Book: *The Briar Club*, by Kate Quinn
Discussion Leader: Pat Miceli

RSVP: Barbara Libby at
716-836-8303
or bplibby1@verizon.net

SCRABBLE CLUB

When: Tuesday, June 30th, at 5:30pm
Where: Home of Pat Miceli
Contact Lisa Casey below
for Pat's address for the next gathering.

RSVP: Lisa Casey 716-957-2136
Email: lisamcfail@gmail.com

MASTERING LIBRARY ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

(Including Libby, Hoopla, Kanopy &
Flipster)

Paula Salamone, a retired librarian will help
one or two people at a time learn how to
take advantage of all these "perks" at the
library using your own mobile phone, tablet
or laptop. We can meet by Zoom initially or
in person

RSVP: Paula Salamone – Please call or text
716-479-1088

THE HAPPY WANDERERS

We will take advantage of the Program
Committee's planned visits

Contact Judy Huber
716-529-9881 or
judyhuber62@yahoo.com

2026 ANNUAL MEETING



A wonderful time was had by all at the annual meeting at Ellden's Restaurant. Together we made a difference by recognizing Judge Penny Wolfgang as the AAUW Buffalo Branch 2026 Achievement Award Winner. The 2026-28 Branch officers were also installed.

70th Annual Book Sale

THANK YOU FOR ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR!



YOU'RE INVITED
TO AN AAUW BUFFALO



MEMBERSHIP SOCIAL



Monday, July 13, 2026
5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

The Nickel Plate
1500 Clinton Street
Buffalo, New York 14206

Whether you are interested in joining or are already a member, join us for an evening of socializing with members and learning more about our organization's leadership, bylaws, scholarship opportunities and programs.

Meet like-minded women for social, educational and advocacy opportunities through AAUW.

Advance your career.
Enhance your leadership skills.

Light appetizers and dessert will be served with punch.
Other beverages and food are available for purchase.

RSVP by Wednesday July 8, 2026
Email: membership@aauwbuffalo.org
or text 716-228-9540.
Please include names of those attending and their phone numbers.



NYS Celebrating 250 Years



AAUW Buffalo Branch Honoring 136 Years
AAUW National Honoring 145 Years



American Association of
University Women Buffalo Branch Inc
PO BOX 894
Buffalo, NY 14225-0894

Return Service Requested

Moving? Please contact Mary Crocker 716-838-2796

DATES TO REMEMBER

JUNE

Wednesday, June 10, 6:00 pm — Board Meeting at The Grape Vine Restaurant

Wednesday, June 17, 5:30 pm — Dinner by the Book

Thursday, June 25, 1:30 pm — Public Policy Discussion

Thursday, June 25, 6:00 pm — Scholarship Dinner at Sean Patrick's

JULY

Monday, July 13, 5:30 pm — Membership Social at The Nickel Plate

Please note:

*All events are possibly subject to change or cancellation.
Please check our website for last minute information.*

AAUW

AAUW has been empowering women as individuals and as a community since 1881. For over 140 years, we have worked together as a national grassroots organization to improve the lives of millions of women and their families.

Mission: *Gender Equity & Economic Security*

Vision: *Equity for all*

Values : *Intersectional
Inclusive
Intergenerational
Empowering*

In principle and practice, 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.

