AAUW

Buffalo (NY) Branch

American Association of University Women
Buffalo Branch Inc.

SCHOLARSHIP CELEBRATION!



Thursday, June 25, 2026

6:00 p.m. Registration

Sean Patrick's Restaurant

3480 Millersport Highway,

Getzville, NY 14068



Program

6:00-6:30 Registration

6:30 Welcome
Patricia Miceli, *President*

6:45 Dinner Buffet

7:30 Scholarship Presentations
Melissa White*, Scholarship Director*

Jacquie Walker Scholarships*, presented by Ms Walker*
Constance Yap
Marissa Terech

****Olga Lindberg Scholarships*** *- Melissa White*
Samantha Dispenza
Gianna Minnuto
Katrina Mueller
Jessica Williams

***Olga Lindberg** was a long-time AAUW member who passed away in 2000, leaving funds for an ongoing scholarship program in her name. An author, historian and scientist, she was an authority on the early history of Buffalo.

Women Entering College Scholarships *- Melissa White*

Frances Teaman

Karrington Mann

Jessica Dennehy

Peyton Langworthy

Catalyst for Change Scholarships *- Mary Bashore*

Avery Blaszak

Hemali Gauri

Elnara Karadzhayeva

Sophia Olsinski

Adult Learners in Transition Scholarships *- Nan Scinta*

Emma Jones

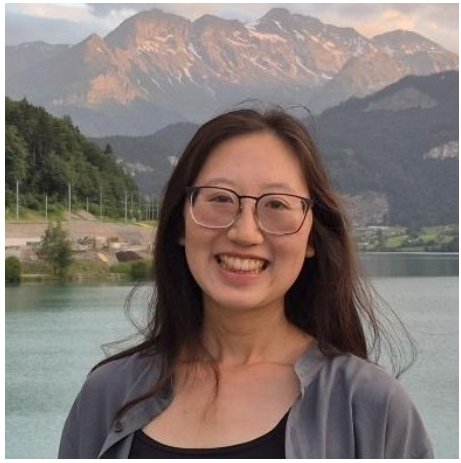
Shalese Price

Swift-MacClennan Scholarship *- Carol Griffith*

Taneisha Ortiz

Closing Remarks

Constance Yap



Constance graduated from the University at Buffalo Honors College as a Presidential Scholar in May 2025 with degrees in Health & Human Services: Child & Family Studies (BA) and Biomedical Sciences (BS) with a cumulative 4.0 average. Before that she graduated from Clarence HS. Most recently, she has been in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain as a Fullbright Scholar. In August 2026 she will begin studies at the Warren Alpert Medical School at Brown University.

Constance's community activities at the university level began in 2020 where she volunteered at Oshei Children's Hospital. She organized a donation drive for the Family Resource Center and collected over a thousand books, toys, and snacks. From there she volunteered in the Child Life Department in the NICU. She served as a TA in her BIO 200 class and focused on monitoring struggling students. On a different level, she taught piano since 2017 and was a violin teaching assistant at Buffalo Strings Work (BSW) from 2019 to 2022. In 2021 Constance joined Aspire of WNY and worked with two children who have physical and developmental disabilities. While she was in Spain recently, she worked in a Special Education classroom and started a recreational cultural exchange in music, dance, games and toys.

Constance's letters of recommendations also show her dedication to others. Through Vision Possible beginning in 2023 she organized a number of events benefitting the Seneca Babcock community. She received the Gary George, Jr. Unsung Hero Award from SABAH, and shadowed and assisted at the Buffalo Psychiatric Center. And this essay is concluded with Constance's own words: "All these experiences taught me to keep an open mind and stay flexible."

Marissa Terech

Marissa is currently a Service Scholar and Honors student at St. John Fisher with a double major in Inclusive Childhood Education and Spanish and maintains a 3.97 GPA. After graduating, she will pursue a Master's degree. Her student activities and volunteer work is extensive. At Williamsville South HS she was SADD president, Orchestra president, and varsity golf captain. At St. John Fisher she was a Service Scholar Peer Mentor and founder and president of the Language and Culture Club, and a Spanish tutor. While she was in Granda Spain in 2025 for a study abroad program, she participated in a Culture Exchange program in both Spanish and English.



A very brief list of her community involvement includes the Rochester Education Foundation (improve student literacy), Starbridge Community Partnership (working specifically to improve a student's academic experience), Gandhi Non-Violence Institute (local food share), Trillium Health (served as a Spanish interpreter at a food pantry), Habitat for Humanity (organized furniture donations), and RGA Vitalia in Spain (played viola so nursing home residents could sing their favorite songs). In addition, she has a business called Pigtail Publishing. She donates copies of her book *Pigtales and Poemas with Mia la Cerdita* wherever she is volunteering. Marissa states "Community involvement is about believing the best in others and providing moments of connection that bring joy. Sharing my love of learning is one way I have been able to make a difference."

Samantha Dispenza



Samantha has spent 7 years as a data analyst. She has decided on a career change and will be pursuing a Masters of Science in Nutrition on her way to becoming a Registered Dietitian. During her undergraduate career Samantha was Vice President of Finance for Canisius's chapter of the American Marketing Association Club. She served as Vice President then President of the Math Club. She has volunteered at the Mercy Kitchen at St. Luke's Mission of Mercy. She has given presentations at her former high school regarding college and careers. She received numerous scholarship and awards during her undergraduate career and she graduated summa cum laude with a double major in Economics and Mathematics. She is planning to share science backed nutritional advice in underserved areas. She wants to work with community organizations to support women needing assistance with nutritional guidance. Her recommendation letters were strong and she had a 3.9 GPA.

Gianna Minnuto



Gianna is a second year medical student at the SUNY Jacobs School of Medicine. Her letters of reference were glowing. For her undergraduate career she graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Science in Biology. She has been chosen for numerous research projects. She has collaborated on a published article. She has been chosen to attend numerous conferences. She is a Peer Mentor to first year medical students. She has served on numerous committees and has served as treasurer for two different student groups. She has numerous honors and awards. She is a member of numerous interest groups. She was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes as a child which showed her how effective compassionate, whole-person care is for a patient. She is the Director of Administrative Affairs for Medical Student Policy. She co-leads D-Link, which is a support group for young teens living with Tyle 1 diabetes.

Katarina Mueller



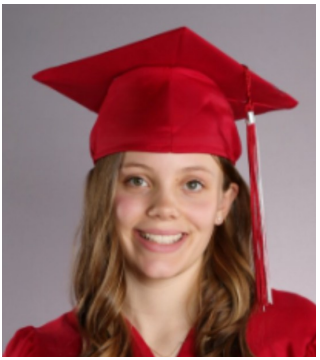
Katarina is a 4th year student at SUNY Buffalo. She is graduating this spring with a Bachelors of Science in Neuroscience. She will start medical school in the fall. She has been a teaching assistant with wonderful feedback and a STEM tutor. She was chosen for a year long research project. She volunteers at the VIVE shelter. She also volunteers for WISE (Women in Science and Engineering) and she has previously volunteered at a pediatric urgent care. She was a summer intern with a Neurosurgery Team in Mannheim Germany. She has made the Dean's List each semester with a 4.0 GPA. She was a summer camp counselor for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. She is a mentee in the DoctHERS mentoring program.

Jessica Williams



Jessica is a 4th year student at SUNY Buffalo, she is graduating with a BA in Law and Political Science. In the fall she is starting a dual graduate program for a Masters in Social Work (MSW) and a Juris Doctor (JD). She wants to practice public interest law. She has received numerous honors including the Oberlin Social Justice Award. She is the President of UB Mock Trial. She is also the co-founder and President of UB's chapter of the Friends Committee on National Legislation. She is the Undergraduate Student Director at the Buffalo Human Rights Center. This Spring she will receive a "Be the Impact" award for completing over 500 hours of community service at UB. She was a Social Work Intern at Project Mona's House which is an organization that helps victims of human trafficking get back on their feet and reintegrate into society. While there she worked on a 200 page curriculum to help women get jobs, bank accounts and mental health services. She is currently serving as a Teaching Assistant for Judicial Politics.

Frances Teaman, City Honors



Frances Teaman was selected for the AAUW Buffalo Branch Women Entering College Scholarship because she exemplifies exceptional academic excellence, leadership, and community-minded commitment. A full International Baccalaureate diploma candidate with a rigorous AP course load, she has maintained stellar grades while excelling in advanced STEM coursework and earning numerous distinctions, including recognition as an ISEF Finalist, Yale Science & Engineering Award recipient, National Merit Commended Student, and RIT Women in STEM Award honoree. Her extensive research at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, where she has contributed to multiple projects, presented high-level work, and even co-authored scientific publications, demonstrates maturity, perseverance, and genuine passion for scientific discovery. Equally impressive is her leadership beyond the lab: she has served as Co-President of her school's Science Research Program, mentored younger students, represented her school community as a Foundation Board member, and captained multiple varsity athletic teams. Frances's integrity, resilience, and dedication to uplifting others make her not only an outstanding scholar but a young woman whose impact already reflects the mission and values of AAUW.

Karrington Mann, City Honors

Karrington Mann was chosen for the AAUW Buffalo Branch Women Entering College Scholarship because she embodies the values of leadership, resilience, service, and academic commitment that the award seeks to recognize. A dedicated IB and AP student, she has excelled in a demanding curriculum while leading across numerous school organizations, including serving as Captain of the African Dance & Drum Troupe and Varsity Softball Team, President of the Prom Committee, and Treasurer of Willow Club, where she supports and empowers younger girls. Her deep commitment to community service is evident in more than five years of volunteer work with the Prevention Council of Erie County, Meals on Wheels, APS Foreclosures' Thanksgiving Dinner Giveaway, and post May 14 tragedy relief efforts, service consistently described as compassionate, reliable, and transformative for the community she serves. Karrington's leadership is further distinguished by her advocacy and empathy, including organizing a tribute to honor the Buffalo 10, an effort that brought healing and unity to her school community and left a powerful impression on victims' families. Academically recognized with honors such as the LeMoyne College Heights Award and the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. "Keeping the Dream Alive" Award, she is known by her educators as fearless, determined, and a positive influence among her peers, someone who lifts others through her presence and character. With her intention to study biology and pursue a career in orthodontics, Karrington represents a young woman of integrity, compassion, and purpose, an emerging leader whose impact will continue to strengthen both campus and community.



Jessica Dennehy, Williamsville East



Jessica Dennehy was selected for the AAUW Buffalo Branch Women Entering College Scholarship because she exemplifies outstanding academic excellence, remarkable leadership, and a profound commitment to service, qualities that reflect AAUW's mission of elevating women and girls through education and advocacy. A top student at Williamsville East High School with an exceptional academic record, including 13 AP courses and a cumulative average above 98, Jessica demonstrates intellectual rigor and a deep passion for STEM, particularly chemical and biomedical engineering. Her research experience at the University at Buffalo's Division of Hematology and Oncology, where she excelled in both laboratory and administrative tasks, earned her praise as one of the strongest rotation students the department has hosted, showcasing her initiative, technical skill, and curiosity-driven approach to science. Jessica's leadership extends across numerous school organizations: she has significantly expanded engagement as President of the Engineering Club, served as Vice President of her HOSA chapter, leading Stop the Bleed trainings and statewide competitions, and co-captained the Mock Trial team to county finals, all while mentoring peers through her work as Digital Manager of the school newspaper, which reaches over half a million readers annually. Her dedication to community impact is equally profound; as CFO and Regional Director for the youth-led nonprofit CuringwithCARE, she manages major fundraising initiatives supporting families affected by cancer, a mission deeply rooted in her personal experiences, and she contributes globally through her editorial leadership at an international STEM publication. With a compassionate spirit demonstrated through her extensive volunteer work in hospital settings, supporting patients, assisting staff, and training youth volunteers, Jessica embodies empathy, resilience, and a commitment to helping others that will continue to amplify her impact in college and beyond. She represents the very type of emerging STEM leader AAUW is proud to support.

Peyton Langworthy, Tonawanda High School



Peyton Langworthy was selected for the AAUW Buffalo Branch Women Entering College Scholarship because she exemplifies exceptional academic achievement, remarkable leadership, and an unwavering commitment to service, qualities deeply aligned with AAUW's mission. Ranked second in her graduating class with a cumulative weighted average of 99.59, Peyton has consistently excelled across a challenging academic program that includes multiple AP courses and independent study, demonstrating intellectual curiosity, discipline, and a passion for learning. Beyond the classroom, she is a standout leader whose breadth of involvement is extraordinary: from serving as Secretary of the National Honor Society to progressing from bailiff to judge in Tonawanda Youth Court, where she contributes to meaningful restorative justice work, and competing in numerous school sports, including soccer and cheerleading, earning distinctions such as Scholar-Athlete and team captain honors. Peyton's most defining leadership, however, emerges through her elite-level success in rugby, a sport in which she has captained numerous teams, competed across the U.S. and internationally, and earned repeated selections to high□level squads including the All□Midwest Thunderbirds and USA Rugby's High School Pathway program, all while using her platform to champion the message that female strength is powerful and worthy of celebration. Her deep dedication to community service is equally compelling: she has fostered more than 20 rescue dogs through Nickel City Canine Rescue, volunteers weekly at Danceability Inc. supporting dancers with disabilities, and works extensively with children as a trusted and highly regarded teacher's aide, earning praise for her maturity, empathy, and initiative. Peyton's integrity, compassion, and drive to uplift others, whether on the field, in the courtroom, or within her community, make her an inspiring young woman whose future impact in sociology and law enforcement promises to be transformative.



Avery Blaszak

Avery is an outstanding scholar, on a path to degrees in neuroscience and medicine. Her choice of school for the fall had not been determined as of the application date, as she applied to 15 schools and had not heard back from some of them. Ms. Blaszak has been in a gifted math program at UB, earning 22 college credits while still in high school, is in a Health-Related Careers Program at Oishei Children's Hospital, and works as a Research Apprentice on an all-female team at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center.

In addition to outstanding academic performance and career-related work, she is President of the Student Council, President of the Math & Science Development program for tutoring students in math and science, has volunteered for two summers at Millard Fillmore Hospital in the Patient Enrichment Program, played field hockey for 4 years, coached ice skating and hockey, and is a champion figure skater. Her essay and letters of recommendation were excellent and spoke to her commitment to improve the health outcomes and equity for women by blending "scientific inquiry" and "compassionate and informed care."

Hemali Gauri



Hemali is in her second year studying bioengineering with a minor in public policy at Stanford University. Her plan is to become a physician/scientist with MD and PhD degrees, to research immunology/autoimmunity and eliminate or reduce immunological conditions that significantly impact quality of life. She is a Clinical Research Intern at Stanford and is particularly concerned about children in underserved communities who do not have access to proper health care and autoimmune diseases that primarily affect women. Ms. Gauri has already started a nonprofit, raised funds and has a website for education and awareness for parents and children.

The letters of recommendation were excellent and detailed. A professor of medicine stated “Hemali is a star in the lab”, and a “dedicated advocate committed to making a difference”. He ended the letter by stating “She will change the world”.

Her essay spoke to the philosophy of the AAUW movement and explained the AAUW principles have been a guiding force in her academic and professional journey. A Senior Policy Fellow at the Partnership for Public Good wo is also an instructor at UB Law School wrote: “In sum, Elnara is already a proven Catalyst for Change... and I can’t imagine a more worthy recipient for the scholarship.”



Elnara Karadzhayeva

Elnara Karadzhayeva graduated from Canisius in political science and international relations before enrolling in law school at UB. She is interested primarily in immigration or criminal defense law, has volunteered at St. Luke's Mission of Mercy, worked at Journey's End Refugee Services and Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo. She is currently a law clerk at a local firm working on immigration cases assisting clients facing deportation and fear of removal. Ms. Karadzhayeva expects to work as a student attorney at UB's Immigration Clinic next year. Her many school activities are related to her career path.

Sophia Olsinski



Sophia impressed the committee with her detailed and well-written application. An accomplished scholar, she is pursuing a PhD in Sociology at UB to be completed in 2029. She has an extensive track record of community service. Ms. Olsinski goal is to foster equality for women and girls by improving childcare access and support for those who have experienced sexual abuse, but she also spoke about embodying AAUW's mission for women of all ages through her paid and volunteer work.

While enrolled full-time, she worked as a Grants Manager for a non-profit focused on early childhood education. Quoting from a letter of recommendation, she "managed 44% of a $3.7 million annual budget, secured and maintained funding for programs that impact over 4,000 children and 300 early childhood educators every year. Many of these educators are women seeking to advance economically, precisely the individuals AAUW seeks to empower."

Emma Jones



Emma has excellent letters of referral. She is a full time employee and is planning to re-enroll at UB to complete her degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Finance. She learned about this scholarship through a coworker.



Shalese Price

Shalese is a student at Daemen University and plans to continue her degree work in Accounting.
She learned about the scholarship opportunity through the AAUW Buffalo website and Dr. Lisa Rafalson.

Taneisha Ortiz



Taneisha Ortiz is a passionate, Puerto Rican senior at Clarence High School who will study Journalism in the fall. Taneisha challenged herself academically through college-level courses, while maintaining an A average in both high school and college classes. Alongside her academics, Taneisha played guitar for her youth group, works two jobs, and enjoys volunteering. Through Star Throwers, National Honors Society, and Teen Missions International, she completed more than 100 volunteer hours. Taneisha will attend the University at Albany to major in Journalism and minor in Psychology. She hopes to make a lasting impact in the media, and offer fresh perspectives through her personal background and secondary education.

BUFFALO BRANCH AAUW LOANS/SCHOLARSHIPS/GRANTS 2025-26

Details on our website – https://aauwbuffalo.org

Education Program/Name	Audience	Criteria	How Much	Method of application	Dates	Comments
Chamberlin Loans and Grants	Western New York woman, Sophomore in college and beyond	Financial need Progress in Degree Preference to Cornell	$5000 max renewable up to 4 times	Application/ Interview W/Financial Review	Applications due Dec 1 & May 1	Endowment from Sara Chamberlin. Several awards per year
Funds for Education Loans and Grants	Western New York student, Sophomore in college & beyond. Men may apply.	Financial need Progress in Degree	$5000 max renewable up to 4 times	Application/ Interview W/Financial Review	Applications due Dec 1 & May 1	Funded annually by Board from the Book sale funds. Several awards per year
Swift-MacClennan Public Affairs Scholarship	WNY woman HS senior, undergrad, or grad school	Participation in campus newspaper or television productions	Up to one $1000 scholarship	Application, transcript, essay, 2 recommendations	Applications due Feb 13, April announcement	Endowment from the families of Paul MacClennan and Patricia Swift MacClennan. Established 2025-26
Women Entering College	Erie & Niagara Counties, Graduating High School Senior girls	Scholastic and extracurricular excellence, 95 GPA min	Up to four $5000 scholarships	Application, transcript, essay, 2 recommendations	Applications due Feb 13, April announcement	Funded annually by Board from the Book Sale funds Established 2017-18
Catalyst for Change	Western New York, Two categories - • Undergraduate students • Graduate students	Actual and potential activist accomplishments, at least ½ time student	Up to two $5000 awards in each category	Application, transcript, essay, 2 recommendations	Applications due Feb 13, April announcement	Funded annually by Board from the Book Sale funds Established 2004-05
Olga Lindberg	Western New York Women in 4th year of college or above	Scholastic excellence, full-time student, 3.7 cum or above	Up to two $8000 scholarships	Application, transcript, essay, 2 academic recommendations	Applications due Feb 13, April announcement	Endowment from Olga Lindberg Established 2005-06
Jacquie Walker	Western New York, undergrad or graduate student	Merit based: Community Service and Academic Achievement	Up to two $5000 scholarships	Application, transcript, essay	Applications due Feb 13, April announcement	Funded annually by Board from the Book Sale funds Established 2008-09
Adult Learners in Transition	Western New York women on a non-traditional educational path	Varies by application. Merit based.	Up to two $5000 scholarships for full-time students and up to two $2500 scholarships for part-time students	Application, transcript, essay	Applications due Feb 13, April announcement	Funded annually by Board from the Book Sale funds Established 2025-26
Clarine Radt educational mini-grants	Public School Teachers	Project supporting the AAUW mission	Up to $500	Application, approval	Ongoing	Endowment from Clarine Radt Established 2018-19

THANK YOU TO OUR OUTGOING BOARD!
BUFFALO BRANCH BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2025-26

ELECTED OFFICERS

Position	Name	Phone/Email
President 2025-2027	Pat Miceli	716-626-0234 pwmiceli@gmail.com
VP Programs 2025-2027	Lilyen Mascellino	716-912-4523 lilyenm@gmail.com
VP Membership Recruitment 2024-2026	Diane O'Brien	716-689-9442 obnfam@roadrunner.com
VP Membership Retention 2025-2027	Alexandra Smith	716-592-0469 aasmith12@yahoo.com
Secretary/Parliamentarian 2024-2026	Judy Huber	716-529-9881 judyhuber@yahoo.com
CFO 2024-2026	Shirley Joy	716-693-6106 sjjoy4@hotmail.com
Branch Treasurer 2025-2027	Mary Crocker	716-838-2796 mlcrock@msn.com
EAP Treasurer 2024-2026	Ruby Williams	716-837-5903 rubywill@buffalo.edu
Fundraising Treasurer 2024-2026	Jennifer Hoffman	716-692-0947 padpaws@hotmail.com
Chamberlin/Funds for Education Treasurer	Kate Collins	716-655-1166 27kcollins@gmail.com
Scholarship Director 2024-2026	Melissa White	716-984-3592 mkwhiteaauw@gmail.com



The American Association of University Women has been empowering women as individuals and as a community since 1881. For more than 140 years, we have worked together as a national grassroots organization to improve the lives of millions of women and their families. The Buffalo Branch was founded in 1890 and has been working tirelessly towards those goals since then.

Mission: *Gender Equity and Economic Security.*
Vision: *Equity for all.*
Values: *Intersectional. Inclusive. Intergenerational. Empowering.*

AAUW
Buffalo (NY) Branch

Buffalo Branch Purpose:

- *To promote gender equity, lifelong learning, and positive societal change through community programs for continuing education, scholarships, and interest-free loans;*
- *To provide a forum for graduates of different educational institutions to promote intellectual growth, individual worth, and development of opportunities for all people, especially women and girls;*
- *To contribute to the growth and advancement of the educational policies and programs of the American Association of University Women; and*
- *To promote AAUW philanthropic initiatives for the public good, focusing on quality of life.*



Thanks to our Committees

Scholarship Chairs

Adult Learners in Transition—Nan Scinta
Jacquie Walker—Susan McClary
Catalyst for Change—Mary Bashore
Woman Entering College—Anne Marie Haumesser
Olga Lindberg—Melissa White
Swift-MacClennan—Carol Griffith

Committee Members

Kathy Tepas
Judy Malamas
Pat Miceli
Carol Griffith
Judy Huber
Marilyn Carmichael
Chris Offutt
Andy Smith
Shirley Joy
Kate Collins
Kennette Carlson


Women Making
a Difference