

FOUNDING OF THE BRANCH – 1981-2009

The Ballwin-Chesterfield Branch was founded in 1981 as the Lafayette Area Branch with 41 charter members and the plan to meet during the day. We have grown steadily, averaging over 200 members.

PROGRAMS AND MEETINGS

At each branch meeting, the Program Committee is committed to presenting speakers on mission-based topics that capture the interest of our members, while focusing on the goals that reflect the mission statement of AAUW. Diverse programs and speakers for topics related to social justice, health care, economic well being, diversity, gender and educational equity, human rights, international affairs, and public policy are featured.

In September, the branch hosts a complimentary Fall Welcome Brunch for the members and their guests. In December, a festive luncheon party raises funds to support branch activities. The May meeting is a celebration/installation luncheon, currently held at an area country club. In July, members meet for a summer picnic potluck to meet new officers and renew acquaintances.

ACTIVITIES/NON-FUNDRAISING

Throughout the year, members participate in a variety of interest groups, such as bridge groups, book groups, a Play Readers group, a Movie group, Creative Expressions, Out-to-Lunch, Genealogy and Golf.

ACTIVITIES – FUNDRAISING

Supporting the AAUW Fund and awarding local scholarships for mature women returning to college traditionally is an important part of branch efforts. Our successful program, [*Dollars for Scholars*](#), raises scholarship funds through member-sponsored activities. Through these efforts, money is contributed to the AAUW Fund, and scholarships are provided to women attending University of Missouri-St. Louis, Pierre Laclède Honors College at UMSL, and Maryville University. In 2015-16, the branch began a “continuing book sales fair” to raise funds. This successful project received a ten-star award from AAUW MO.

In 2004, the branch completed an AAUW Research and Project Grant Endowment in the amount of \$35,000; in 2005, we began the AAUW Silver Anniversary Research and Project Grant, with a \$75,000 goal, which was completed well in advance of its goal date in 2015.

Ballwin-Chesterfield Branch supports the AAUW Fund through education and fundraising. In 2008, the committee decided to emphasize Individual Giving, setting a goal of \$25 or more from each member. February and November were designated as Individual Giving months and participation has increased each year. In addition Ballwin-Chesterfield sponsored successful Trivia Nights, which raised thousands of dollars for LAF.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Under the leadership of the Issues and Diversity Committee, between 1997 and 2005, a series of Woman-to-Woman Dialogues on Social Justice were presented on topics such as Women’s Health, Economic Security, and Community Issues. Organizations such as Coalition of One Hundred Black Women and National Council of Negro Women co-sponsored these events and members from a wide range of metro women’s groups attended.

From 2005 through 2009, the Public Policy Committee organized public forums on such topics as Stem Cell Research, Immigration, and Financing Health Care. Eight metro organizations acted as co-sponsors and sent members to the half-day events, which featured physicians, professors, attorneys, and other experts in fields related to the topics. (These forums were awarded 21st Century and Galaxy awards from AAUWMO.)

PUBLICITY

Our newsletter, recipient of an AAUW Award, is published 10 times a year, and includes articles from the co-presidents and all major committees.

In 2002, Joyce Katz became the first Chair of Technology and Ballwin-Chesterfield began sending the newsletter by email, established member email correspondence and launched its first website. In 2010, Ballwin-Chesterfield became the first Missouri branch to be represented on the national AAUW calendar.

In addition to the branch newsletter and website, branch meetings and special events are publicized on social media sites and community publications.

STEM SUPPORT

In keeping with AAUW's emphasis on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education and careers for girls and women, Ballwin-Chesterfield has long made STEM a focus. Each year we award cash prizes to young women at the Greater St. Louis Science Fair. For many years we have supported the Expanding Your Horizons (EYH) conference. We provide registration scholarships for a number of middle school girls, and members serve on the board and assist at the conference.

In 2009, the branch received a \$7,000 AAUW Community Action Grant. In the Each One Teach One grant project, members tutored small groups of sixth and seventh graders at Curtis Bishop Middle School (Wellston district) on science fair projects. We helped sponsor a continuation of this project in 2010, contributing funds and workers. Also in 2010, we continued our support of Wellston students and STEM by taking a group of girls to the Expanding Your Horizons Conference at SLU.

In addition, the branch sponsors the WHY So Few? Traveling Tool Kit, developed in 2010 by branch members. It includes a 15-minute video directed at parents and teachers of elementary and middle school girls based on the AAUW publication Why So Few?. It explains how to encourage interest in STEM and includes a parent brochure, "How to Raise a STEM Girl." In 2011, both the Why So Few? toolkit and the Each One Teach One project were finalists for the AAUW Breaking Through Barriers award.