

## **AAUW Las Vegas Branch Report Spring 2021**

The new year was met with great enthusiasm by our branch membership. Our general focus area for us is “Empowering Women” through our various endeavors. The Convention Planning Committee has been working diligently in planning a virtual state convention which I am sure will be a new adventure for many of our AAUWans statewide.

Our annual Girls Can! event has also been in the planning stages for several months now and that too, will be a virtual event. The Girls Can! planning committee has put together a program of five events to be presented virtually to 5<sup>th</sup> grade girls who are either attending school in person or who are still learning virtually from home. We will have professional women in different career paths do videos the girls can watch at home at their leisure or in class with their classroom teacher who will decide how the videos will be shown.

The Girls Can! committee has selected mini projects which can be done in 20 minutes using materials that can be found at home: rocks, vegetables, make up brushes, hammers, plastic baggies, etc. Items for the projects that are not readily found at home will be purchased and delivered to the schools for classroom distribution and for distribution to students who are still learning from home.

The projects that are planned will be fun and educational for the girls. If there are boys at home or in the classroom, they will benefit from the presentations as well. We have a female contractor who will teach the students how to make a pencil box; a policewoman who will demonstrate how to dust for fingerprints; a scientist who will extract DNA from a tomato; a geologist who will do a presentation on different rocks found in Las Vegas, and, we are still in the process of deciding what our fifth event will be. We have so many wonderful ideas, it is difficult to choose for the grand finale of the day!

We do have one confirmed special guest who will welcome the girls to the day’s events: US Representative Teresa Leger Fernandez has confirmed that she will give a brief welcome to the participants. We have invited other special guests and are awaiting their confirmations. We will also have two local young women who have overcome great odds to finish high school and go on to college. One is an aspiring scientist who has earned an internship from the National Institutes of Health and the other is a successful teacher, environmentalist, and mentor at one of our high schools.

We wish we could invite all the girls in our great state to participate in our Girls Can! event. The girls from both Las Vegas school districts and from the Pecos School district will be our participants this year. The pandemic has stymied some of our plans but we are staying positive and focusing on empowering all women—young and old—to be all that they can be. Girls Can!, can and will accomplish our overall goal.

Barbara Casey, Co-President  
AAUW Las Vegas Branch