

## ELLEN SMITH OF KEEPING OUR PROMISE WITH UPDATES: WOMEN IN AFGHANISTAN AND REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

A few years ago, Ellen H. Smith spoke to us about the situation of Afghan refugees who worked for the American government in their country before it was taken over by the Taliban in 2021. Smith is the founder and CEO of Keeping Our Promise (KOP), a Rochester-based organization which resettles those men and their families, who have been targeted by the Taliban for reprisals since the US pulled its troops out of Afghanistan.

Since Ellen first talked with us, the situation of women in Afghanistan has steadily deteriorated and the Trump administration has moved to block immigration and resettlement efforts. We've asked Ellen to come back to update us on both of those important topics.

Before beginning her work with refugees in 2014, Ellen was a credentialed journalist for 29 years, with 37 top journalism awards including those from the National Press Club, Society of Professional Journalists, the Investigative Reporters & Editors Inc., and the Edward R. Murrow Award. She has been honored by the National Council of Jewish Women of Rochester with their Humanitarian Award for her work in refugee resettlement.

This is a timely and important topic. We hope that you will join us.

Make your reservation for dinner by phone, text or email to Julie Cotraccia ([585-370-2235](tel:585-370-2235) or [perkinsmansiondirector@gmail.com](mailto:perkinsmansiondirector@gmail.com)) by **April 12**.

A Zoom link will be sent to all members with email the morning of the meeting.



### Schedule:

**5:00 PM** Arrive & sign in  
**5:30 PM** Program  
**6:30 PM** Dinner

### Dinner menu:

Chicken French with wild mushrooms, roasted potatoes, zucchini au gratin, garden salad, rolls, dessert, beverages. **Cost of dinner: \$25**

### Reservations:

Call, text, or email Julie Cotraccia by **April 12** with your reservation.

**CALL OR TEXT**  
[585-370-2235](tel:585-370-2235)

**EMAIL**  
[perkinsmansiondirector@gmail.com](mailto:perkinsmansiondirector@gmail.com)

*AAUW is a powerful advocate and viable leader in equity and education through research, philanthropy and measurable change in critical areas impacting the lives of women and girls.*

*In principle and in 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.*

APRIL 2025

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S KITCHEN TABLE

### This month I'd like to spotlight our relationship with Innova Girls Academy.

We're starting slow and building, but I think it's a great opportunity for the branch to build a long-term relationship with a school which is growing the Little Leaders, as Innova calls its students, that AAUW aims to nurture.

### First, Marilyn to the rescue.

Marilyn helped solve a problem for Innova's Girl Scout program. All of the girls are Daisy or Brownie Scouts, depending on grade level, and each Scout has a sash with troop identifiers and, eventually, badges as they are earned. Last year, the first year of the program, adult leaders attached the badges with superglue. Unfortunately, everything fell off after a trip through the washing machine. Innova challenged GRAB to come up with a better plan, and Marilyn came through. She arranged for a friend with a strong sewing machine to attach 10 IDs pieces to each of 165 sashes—that's a lot of sewing! The sewer asked to be paid in Girl Scout cookies, which Marilyn was glad to purchase from Innova Scouts. The original win/win.

### And, second, the Innova "Readees" are having a blast.

We thought that we were going to the school to read to the students. Nope, they're practicing their skills by reading to us, so I'm calling us "readees." We've finished our fifth week. Each student picks one or more easy-reading books, and reads aloud to her partner. We offer coaching on hard words and cheers for their accomplishments. We're at the school at the end of the day on Wednesdays, from 2:45 to 3:45 PM. That gives us time for two reading sessions. So far these GRAB members are reading buddies: Marilyn Tedeschi, Karen Sue Brown, Julie Cotraccia, Karen Cox, and Judy Trabert. If this sounds like something you'd like to try, let one of us know. There's still quite a few second graders who'd like to have a reading partner.



Judy Trabert



## MARCH MEETING RECAP

# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATION

MARCH 8, 2025

We joined the UR Susan B. Anthony Center and women from around the community to celebrate International Women's Day on Saturday, March 8, at Hattie's Place at the Strathallan Hotel. Marilyn Tedeschi represented GRAB as part of a panel on local organizations that support women. She was joined by Jaime Saunders of United Way, who chaired, Meaghan de Chateauvieux of Willow Domestic Violence Center, and Krystle Ellis of the Women's Foundation of the Genesee Valley. Each panelist described the activities of her organization. Marilyn also reviewed the history of Greater Rochester AAUW in supporting education and economic progress for local women for over a hundred years.

GRAB and TPMI members attending included: Maureen Mulley, Sue Lione, Rebecca Fuss, Jill Stolt, Cathy Dayan, Vickie Fumia, Marilyn Tedeschi, Laurie Ditzel, Kate Cerulli, Barbara Hoffman, and Judy Trabert.

The branch also had a display table which included newsletters and membership materials and historical materials about Women Helping Girls and the Perkins Mansion.

Thanks to Dr. John Cullen and Sebastian Szczebiot of the Anthony Center for organizing and hosting the event.



*L to R: Jamie Saunders, Meaghan de Chateauvieux, Krystle Ellis, Marilyn Tedeschi.*



*Marilyn Tedeschi and Vickie Fumia.*



*Rebecca Fuss, Marilyn Tedeschi, Vickie Fumia, Katie Hahn, Sue Lione, Maureen Mulley, Chris Whites, unknown.*

# GRAB AAUW BOARD ELECTIONS: NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE SEEKING CANDIDATES

## SEE POSITION DESCRIPTIONS BELOW

GRAB members will vote at the annual meeting in May to fill several board positions. Positions with two-year terms include President, Treasurer, and Recording Secretary. Positions to be filled for one-year terms include Vice President for Program, Vice President for Membership, and Assistant Treasurer for Membership.

The board has appointed a Nominating Committee. The branch bylaws specify that the committee will comprise two board members and three branch members who are not members of the board. Chair Marilyn Tedeschi and Barbara Stevens are board members. Three other non-board members are Cynthia Herriott, Laurie Ditzel, and Mary Myers. Arlette Miller Smith has also agreed to serve as an advisor to the committee. Please contact a member of the committee to volunteer or suggest other members who would be a good fit for these jobs.

**Note to new members: Please consider taking on one of the positions described below. Participating in the board is a great way to get involved in the branch, get to know your fellow members, and make a contribution. There will always be experienced members around to help you learn your job and lend a hand in accomplishing your goals.**

Brief summaries of each position follow. Positions to be elected for two-year terms at the annual meeting are described first, and those to be elected for one-year terms follow:

### Two year-terms

#### President:

The President guides the branch in accordance with the vision and mission of the national, State, and local AAUW. She represents the branch in activities of the Association at all levels. She presides at meetings of the Board of Directors and of the branch, and names chairs of committees. She updates the branch bylaws as needed so that they conform to the national and State versions. She plans the annual meeting of the branch, a organizes a planning meeting for the new board after elections are held.

#### Treasurer:

The Treasurer is responsible for maintaining a fiscally sound branch. Using accounting software as appropriate, she maintains checking accounts, and generates financial reports for the branch Board. She makes bank deposits for funds collected in a timely manner, and makes sure that bank signature cards are up-to-date for all accounts. She chairs the budget committee and presents a budget proposal to the Board at its May meeting. She ensures that financial data is submitted to the branch's tax preparer in a timely manner at the close of the fiscal year.

#### Recording Secretary:

The Recording Secretary keeps an official record of Board and branch actions and distributes the information appropriately. She records minutes of Board meetings and submits them at the next board meeting for review and approval. She maintains a file of corrected and approved minutes. She records and transcribes minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Branch.

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## One-year terms

The positions below are normally filled for two-year terms in even numbered years. At this year's election, they will be filled for one year, and elected for regular two-year terms in 2026.

### **Vice-President: Program:**

The Vice-President for Program recruits a program committee from the membership; the committee plans programs for the year. She contacts speakers, and arranges for room usage and catering. She writes up a program description for the branch newsletter, and coordinates with the Events Manager to register and check in attendees at programs. She presides at Board meetings in the absence of the President.

### **Vice-President: Membership:**

The Vice-President for Membership works to recruit and retain members. She coordinates all membership recruitment activities, which may include: outreach to non-member attendees at programs, contact with persons who express interest in the branch through the website, updating and distribution of membership materials in print, such as a brochure, recruitment events. She works closely with the Assistant Treasurer for Membership to maintain membership records. She may write a membership article for the branch newsletter. She develops a recruitment budget for inclusion in the branch budget for the coming year.

### **Assistant Treasurer for Membership:**

This position keeps records of current membership and collects dues and forwards them to the treasurer, the State, and the national organization. She sets up and implements the membership renewal process, sending out letters in the Spring and reminders as necessary. She keeps a paper file of membership applications. She works with the President, Membership VP, and Treasurer to modify the dues structure and policies as needed.

## **ANNUAL MEETING**

**TUESDAY, MAY 22nd**

Come to review our program year, look ahead to the year that starts July 1, and vote.

# MENTOR FOR A DAY APRIL 22

## SIGN UP NOW

The Young Women's College Prep Mentor for a Day event is scheduled for 10 AM to 1:30 PM on Tuesday, April 22 at the Perkins Mansion. Branch members and friends are invited to serve as mentors to the Senior girls as they get ready for their post-graduation life. New and returning mentors are welcomed. An orientation session for mentors will be available but is not required. Sign up using the link below. Please also let Julie Cotraccia know you will be coming, so we'll have a count of GRAB participants (phone and text [585-370-2235](tel:585-370-2235) or [perkinsmansiondirector@gmail.com](mailto:perkinsmansiondirector@gmail.com)).



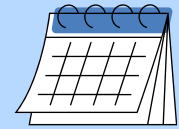
Use this link to sign up: <https://forms.gle/mLXsusQwgNuXovH6>

### Mentor For A Day Training for review and updates:

April 15, 2025 at 10:00  
April 16, 2025 at 12:00pm  
April 16, 2025 at 4:30 pm

### Mentor for A Day Training Google Meet joining info:

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/vyk-wfue-eow>  
Or dial: (US) +1 712-318-2559 PIN: 796 334 645#



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**APRIL 9**

GRAB board meeting

**APRIL 22**

Mentor for a Day

**APRIL 22**

Branch meeting

**MAY 14**

GRAB board meeting

**MAY 22**

Annual Meeting



### Greater Rochester Area Branch

494 East Ave.  
Rochester, NY 14607

Phone: [585.244.8890](tel:585.244.8890)

### Submissions

We welcome suggestions or contributions to include in future newsletters. Please email items to [judy.a.trabert12@gmail.com](mailto:judy.a.trabert12@gmail.com)

**Deadline for May:** April 20, 2025

### Newsletter Staff

**Editor** J. Trabert  
**Design** B. Pietrzykowski

Articles submitted are printed at the discretion of GRAB.