

OCTOBER BRANCH MEETING PROGRAM: DR. TOKEYA GRAHAM AND *THE BLACK HEALING PROJECT*

On Thursday, October 16th, we will welcome Dr. Tokeya C. Graham to talk about her recently released book, *The Black Healing Project*. Dr. Graham will be interviewed by her daughter, Keilani Graham, and will read sections of the workbook, which received a warm reception when it was introduced to the Rochester community in May at Writers & Books. The author describes the book: "More than a collection of exercises, *The Black Healing Project* is a testimony of overcoming, rooted in the wisdom of Black resilience."

Tokeya C. Graham is Professor of English at Monroe Community College. She holds an Ed.D. from the University of Rochester Warner School in Higher Education Leadership. In addition to her academic work, Dr. Graham offers equity and inclusion workshops, personal and leadership coaching, and strategic planning through her consulting business, Soulustainable Living.

Join us on October 16 to hear a fresh voice in the Rochester literacy and cultural scene as she introduces us to: ... *a love letter to Black people—a sacred space where healing is honored, Black joy is uplifted, and our voices take center stage. In a world that asks us to shrink, we choose to expand. Here, we reclaim our wholeness through culture, connection, and community care.*

Note: Branch meeting programs are open to the public, and members are welcome to invite friends and family. There is no charge for program-only attendees, but they are asked to register and to indicate that they will not be staying for the meal portion of the meeting.

A Zoom link for the program will be sent out to members the morning of the branch meeting.



Dr. Tokeya C. Graham

Schedule:

5:00 PM Arrive & sign in
5:30 PM Branch Meeting
6:30 PM Dinner

Dinner menu:

Beef tips on egg noodles, candied carrots, marinated potatoes and green beans, rolls and butter, home made cookies, beverages. Vegetarian option available upon request.

Cost of dinner: \$25

Reservations:

Call, text, or email Julie Cotraccia by **October 9** with your reservation.

☎ [585-370-2235](tel:585-370-2235)

✉ 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.

OCTOBER 2025

FROM THE (ACTING) PRESIDENT'S KITCHEN TABLE

Here's a few thoughts on topics serious and less so:

AAUW on social media.

Did you know that national AAUW offers information and policy statements via Facebook, Instagram, X, and LinkedIn? I am personally acquainted only with two of the Facebook groups; I follow AAUW, and AAUW: Advancing Gender Equity. On the other platforms, National posts as @AAUWnational.

National website.

If you haven't looked at the national AAUW website lately, I suggest you spend some time there exploring. There are links to webinars on financial literacy, descriptions of fellowship programs, and opportunities for activism.

Public Policy and Action.

National AAUW adopted a set of priorities for action in May of this year. (See page 7 of this newsletter.) If the statements inspire you, go to the Two Minute Activist section of the national website. It suggests easy, quick ways to make your voice known.

How about some fun?

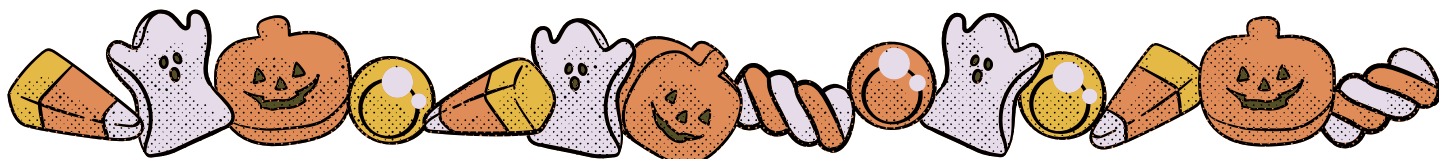
Those of us who attended the Friday and Saturday game fundraisers had a good time relaxing with friends and just being silly. Should we do it again? I'm proposing that we get out the board games, cards, and puzzles every so often on a Friday evening or Saturday and just have some fun together. Family members and friends would be welcome to join us. I'm open to suggestions of day, time of day, and frequency. Let me know what you think.

Calling all newbies.

Are you a member who's joined since Covid restrictions were lifted and the world started coming back to life? We'd love to meet you at the New Member Wine and Cheese gathering on Wednesday October 22nd. All members are invited, but we're especially reaching out to members we haven't had a chance to talk with. There will be a short program, but most of the time will be "getting to know you" conversations. Please read the newsletter article and put it on your calendar.



Judy Trabert



WELCOME EVENT FOR NEW MEMBERS: PLEASE JOIN US ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22ND

Are you relatively new to GRAB AAUW? Or maybe a seasoned member who'd like to meet the "newbies"? In either case, please join us on Wednesday, October 22, 5-7 PM for wine, cheese, and good conversation.

There will be a short program: how we got here and what's going on today. Then, you'll have a chance to weigh in on our plans for the future.

Before and after the program, we'll just have fun: talking, touring the Perkins Mansion (in case you've never seen it), enjoying some munchies and beverages.

Please let us know you're coming. Text Susan Motten, Vice President for Membership, [520-302-7098](tel:520-302-7098), or email her: susan.motten@gmail.com.

We're looking forward to seeing you!



Rebecca Fuss

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: REBECCA FUSS

By Lynne Mitchell

Rebecca Fuss recently joined us last Fall thanks to an invitation from Mary Myers. She has become active in the branch by serving as a Reading Buddy with the second graders at Innova Girls Academy.

Rebecca is a graduate of St. John Fisher University and SUNY College at Oneonta, New York. Her daughter is currently a student at the University of Rochester. She enjoys working with local women's organizations and non-profits, such as the Friends of the Rochester Public Library Foundation, as an independent fundraiser. Rebecca lives in the Beechwood neighborhood. Her favorite and (brave) means of transportation is via bicycle. She is a Finger Lakes Opera fan and enjoys Concentus Women's Chorus and Prism concerts. She volunteers with the Rochester Educational Foundation and is currently studying the German language.



Lynne Mitchell

If you see Rebecca at a branch event, introduce yourself and share your story. Make a new friend!

RECAP:**SEPTEMBER MEETING TAUGHT US TO BECOME ROOTED AND RESILIENT**

By Faith Walter

Dr. Aaliyah El-Amin-Turner, the speaker at our September branch meeting, shared insights about how resilience can help women to cope with the stressors of daily life.

“Think of resilience as being rooted. A tree sways in the storm but doesn’t break, because its roots are deep. Resilience doesn’t mean the storms don’t come. It means you have the tools and supports to withstand them.”

Stress affects women disproportionately through systemic inequalities and the everyday mental load of caregiving. Resilience is important to our health and wellbeing as women because it allows us to cope and grow through challenges. Resilience is about building habits, support systems, and new perspectives that allow us to stay grounded even when life feels overwhelming. Resilience is like a muscle and can be built up with practice over time.

Our beliefs influence feelings, feelings shape our thoughts, and our thoughts impact how we behave and respond to situations. Being resilient means interrupting negative thoughts and reframing your outlook on the situation. Some helpful emotion-focused coping could be seeking social support, emotional expression through journaling, art, music, or mindfulness, and grounding practices.

Three tools that can strengthen our resilience are: setting emotional boundaries, reframing our thoughts, and using grounding techniques to self-regulate. Setting emotional boundaries allows us to protect our energy and set limits to focus on what is ours to carry. Resilience begins in the mind, so shifting our thoughts from self-blaming to empowering will help change our behavior. Self-regulation through grounding techniques allows us to calm down after a stressful experience and restore our internal balance. Grounding practices like deep breathing, counting, and focusing on your surroundings using your five senses, help take our nervous systems out of fight or flight mode and signal safety to our bodies.

By the end of Dr. El-Amin-Turner’s program, we were feeling more grounded, relaxed, and resilient—all good things.



Dr. El-Amin-Turner with Dr. Miller Smith



Dr. El-Amin-Turner



Faith Walter

Intern

NEWS FROM THE PERKINS MANSION

October 2025

Dear Friends,

I'm so excited! This is my favorite time of year. It begins with new program themes, goal setting and action plans. Our major action plan for the Mansion this year is again very large. In 2024, our year of fund raising for the new roof money started with the Francie Wilcox Fundraiser weekend; that netted \$20,000. Then came our jewelry sale, which earned over \$20,000 and our fine art sale, which brought in over \$5900. Many thanks again to Dr. Nora Wilcox, Kate Cerulli, Lorie Seagren and the many generous donors who contributed to the roof fund.

This year, the proceeds from **Francie Wilcox Game Weekend** will support a new major project. The Perkins Mansion Board of Directors has given its blessing to invest in a full kitchen upgrade! This work will outfit the kitchen with capabilities to operate as a licensed catering site and to feed large numbers of people. The upgrades will also increase our property's desirability and value. In time, we plan to have our own catering and culinary teaching facility. What fun and what an important time with so much food insecurity in our city. Please, if you plan on giving at all this year, do it NOW. Every dollar will be matched twice, once by Dr. Nora Wilcox in memory of her mother and once by me in memory of my chosen Mother, Dr. Myrtle Merritt. Myrt has bequeathed \$25,000 to the Mansion, and that money will all go to the Mansion kitchen fund. Myrt would have been 100 years old this September 23 (born in 1925). In honor of her birthday, I am having Sam and Ben, two high school students, plant 50 tulip and 50 daffodil bulbs under the Beech Tree. Myrt will like that come spring! Happy Birthday, Myrt. PLEASE GIVE NOW AND MAKE MYRT SMILE.

Thank you!!

Onward and Upward,



Marilyn Tedeschi

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LATE BREAKING NEWS: Thanks to some early donors to the kitchen fund: Laurie Ditzel, Ruth Fisher, Anne Miller, Susan Motten, Aggie Perry, and Dorothy Pecoraro. To donate, make checks payable to The Perkins Mansion, Inc, or go to our website www.theperkinsmansion.org. I will keep you informed as the project goes forward.

THE HISTORY PAGE: A SPOOKY ROCHESTER WRITER FOR HALLOWEEN

By Garcelle Carter

The season of Autumn has often been a character in American literature, especially in the genre of *Gothic Literature*. Writers such as Edgar Allan Poe and Stephen King have used horror, mystery, and the supernatural to criticize the social structures of their times. We can add to this list Shirley Jackson, a writer with Rochester connections. Jackson was a graduate of Brighton High School and had a short stint at University of Rochester. Her writing explores the social construct of sexism, especially in her memoir, *Life Among the Savages* where she writes about the horrors and triumphs of suburban domestic life as a wife and mother in 1953 Vermont.



Shirley Jackson

Jackson is best known for her short story, *The Lottery*, featured in the June 1948 *The New Yorker* magazine. The story, in which inhabitants of a small town blindly follow a tradition of ritual murder, received strong public reaction to the events in this otherwise mundane fictional town. Some readers were horrified; others wanted to visit the town, to look and even partake in the ritual.

Jackson's family home in Brighton, just a few miles away from the Perkins Mansion, was far less haunted than the houses she describes in her novels. One, *The Haunting of Hill House*, became a success in recent years when Netflix brought the beloved novel back in the form of their (television) streaming service.

Jackson is seen as a leader in 20th century gothic-feminist writing. Her peers are women with gothic literature backgrounds: Toni Morrison, Barbara Comyns and fellow New Yorker, Edith Wharton.

The University of Rochester has wonderful archives of newspapers and other documents of Jackson's time at the University and her publications thereafter. If you want to find out more about one of Rochester's best regarded authors, check out the UofR library's private collections.



Garcelle Carter

Archives Intern

AAUW PUBLIC POLICY PRINCIPLES & PRIORITIES 2025-2027

Adopted May 2025

AAUW's Public Policy Principles

AAUW's mission to advance gender equity through research, education, and advocacy is grounded in these bold principles:

AAUW opposes all forms of discrimination on the basis of age, disability, race, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, geographical location, national origin, religious beliefs, pregnancy or parental status, or socioeconomic status, and supports constitutional protection for the civil rights of all individuals.

We Stand for Education

- **Higher Education:** Support affordable, inclusive higher education that yields high-quality credentials or degrees; reduce barriers to completion; and address the student debt burden, especially for women and borrowers of color.
- **Public Education:** Invest in strong public K–12 systems and oppose the use of public funds for nonpublic schools.
- **Inclusive Curriculum:** Ensure curricula are accurate, science-based, and free from censorship or bias.
- **STEM Opportunities:** Close the gender gap in STEM and expand access to vocational and technical training.
- **Strengthened Civil Rights Protections:** Support safe, harassment-free learning environments by strengthening and enforcing protections to prohibit discrimination based on sex, race, and disability.

We Stand for Economic Security

- **Pay Equity:** Ensure equal pay for work of equal value through salary transparency, fair wage laws, and anti-discrimination enforcement.
- **Support for Caregivers:** Expand access to paid sick and family leave, and affordable child and elder care.

- **Retirement Security:** Protect and strengthen Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.
- **Reproductive Freedom:** Ensure access to contraception and abortion care.

We Stand for Social Justice and Civil Rights

- **Constitutional Rights:** Vigorously enforce civil rights, including recognition and publication of the Equal Rights Amendment, and improve disaggregated data collection.
- **Expanding Voting Rights:** Promote equitable political participation and ensure all Americans have full access and the right to vote.
- **Freedom from Harassment and Violence:** Guarantee legal protections from harassment and gender-based violence, and support efforts to combat human trafficking and reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act.
- **International & Civil Rights:** Support U.S. advancement toward gender equity in education and the economy through the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and ratification of CEDAW.

AAUW's 2025–2027 Federal Action Priorities

To support equitable access to higher education—and to reduce the barriers that hinder women's advancement, especially women of color—AAUW advocates for:

- **Reinstating Title IX rules** that strengthen and clarify protections for student survivors of sexual harassment and assault, ensure accommodations for pregnant and parenting students, and affirm protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.
- **Defending inclusive education** from attacks on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- **Reducing barriers to postsecondary success**, including increased financial support and manageable student debt.
- **Addressing non-tuition barriers** such as paid leave, childcare, and access to contraception, and abortion care.

FUN AT THE GAME WEEKEND

Members and friends gathered Friday and Saturday, September 26 and 27, to have fun and raise money during the Francie Wilcox Memorial Game Weekend. On Friday evening, we played Scrabble and Yahtzee, assembled a jigsaw puzzle, and watched movies. On Saturday afternoon, we played Bunco, the fast-moving dice game. Everyone enjoyed snacks and drinks; winners walked away with wine and candy treats as well. Thanks to everyone who attended, to our student interns who organized all the fun, and to 50/50 raffle winners Midge Pia and Dawn Beaser, who donated their winnings back to the kitchen fund.



RECAP: INNOVA TEA PARTY



Innova Girls Academy held its first-ever tea party fund raiser at the Perkins Mansion on Saturday, September 21st. The event was hosted by the school's board of trustees. Branch members Julie Holtzbach, Susan Motten, Mollie Wolf, and Barbara Hoffman attended. A welcome by Co-Principal Brittany Rumph was followed by a Girl Scout Bridging Ceremony; four fourth graders made the transition from Daisy Scouts to Brownies. Ms. Rumph then described the equipment that will be needed to support the technology portion of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) activities for fourth graders. Funds raised at the tea will be used to purchase that equipment.

Attendees then moved to the dining room for tea, tiny sandwiches, dessert and lively conversation. They also surveyed the prize baskets offered in the silent auction and made their bids. At the end of the tea, auction winners were revealed and they claimed their baskets. As the old society columns used to say, "A good time was had by all."

UPCOMING EVENTS

OCTOBER 16

October branch meeting

OCTOBER 22

New Member Welcome Event

NOVEMBER 20

November branch meeting



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Submissions

We welcome suggestions or contributions to include in future newsletters. Please email items to judy.a.trabert12@gmail.com

Deadline for November: October 15, 2025

Newsletter Staff

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Articles submitted are printed at the discretion of GRAB.