

Danville-Alamo and the American Association of University Women

AAUW was founded over 125 years ago to combat the quaint notion that education was bad for women's health. But it's now a very 21st century organization with deep roots in our local community. With its strong focus on education, it's no surprise that the Danville-Alamo branch of AAUW has been very active in our San Ramon Valley school district since its formation in June 1969.

In fact, the branch was a prime mover in the campaign to unseat the existing school board in 1990 and replace it with the board that has (with personnel changes over the years) restored our school district to educational excellence and fiscal health. Trustees Joan Buchanan, Marianne Gagen, and Chris Kenber were all active AAUW members when they served on the Board. Joan Buchanan has gone on to represent Assembly District 15 in the California State Legislature.

Danville-Alamo AAUW also worked hard to turn around the San Ramon Valley Educational Foundation in the early 90s, led by Jan Geahry and Leslie Vilhauer. The Foundation has grown to the point that it has a major impact on programs that support learning in our school district

AAUW has also worked in many other ways to support our local community. Every year, the branch raises money for local scholarships through our Holiday Home Tour, last year raising over \$8000.00. Applicants must have resided in the San Ramon Valley Unified School District boundaries whether attending local or private schools. Applicants must be a college junior or higher as of September 2009, at an accredited four-year college or university. Graduate students may also apply. Applicants will be evaluated on the basis of scholarship, educational goal, financial need and campus or community involvement. Completed scholarship applications must be postmarked by April 1. Applications are online at www.aauw-da.org. Any questions, call Phyllis at 939-4814 or Margaret at 838-2368.

Out of 1000 branches, Danville-Alamo was honored for raising the eighth highest contribution in the nation to AAUW's Educational Foundation which provides funding to doctoral and post-doctoral women researchers nationwide. The fundraising is driven principally by AAUW's highly successful Mother's Day weekend Garden Home Tour. The branch was also heavily involved in AAUW's Educational Equity initiative that focused public attention on the differing educational needs of boys and girls in the classroom and provided teacher training in skills that dealt with this issue.

All work and no play makes (well in this case) Jill a dull girl so Danville Alamo AAUW offers a whole range of cultural and social programs for its members that connect them to others with similar interests and passions. Ranging from movies to writing to golf to food, there is something for every member to enjoy.

But perhaps more than anything else, our local AAUW branch offers opportunities for community service to busy women (and men). In 1987, after years of complaints from men (mostly spouses of active AAUW women) AAUW opened its membership to men. A number of men joined and some like Chris Kenber became leaders at both the branch and the state level. Without his AAUW experience, Kenber would not have joined the School Board, or the Education Foundation Board or the many other not-for-profit organizations with which he continues to work.

Danville-Alamo AAUW has produced a state president and national association board member in Chris Winter and another association board member (and much-loved leader) in Jo Harberson. We are about leadership, community service and, by all means, having fun together. To learn more, visit the Danville-Alamo website at www.aauw-da.org.