



American Association of University Women
Southeast Valley (AZ) Branch
Chandler, Gilbert and the Greater Southeast Valley
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The Prickly Pear Newsletter



September 2025

October General Meeting



Make Plans to Attend Our First
Meeting
of the Fall!

Date: October 20, 2025

Time: 5:30 - 7:00 pm

Location: Poolside at Ironoaks

Happy Hour Fun!

Our members enjoyed the August happy hour at Ironwood's Grill on the Green. Branch happy hours are held the third Thursday of each month, 4:30-6:00 pm, at Ironwood's Grill on the Green. Members and anyone interested in

joining AAUW are invited to join us.

Location: Grill on the Green at Ironwood

Time: 4:30-6:00 pm

Next Happy Hour:

September 18



A Big Thank You From

San Marcos Elementary School


The request to fulfill the San Marcos Elementary School wish list during Amazon Prime Days in July was a big success. These donations support a school-wide initiative called "Pawsitive Paws". When a child is observed doing something above and beyond that is kind, safe, responsible, or respectful they are given a special chit with a bear paw printed on it, representing the school mascot.

Those chits are collected and entered in a weekly drawing with a prize, many of which were donated by SEV members, chosen by the winner as the reward. This weekly recognition has proven to be effective positive reinforcement and is a big deal for students as the winning ticket is drawn by the Principal and announced over the PA system.

A big thank you to all of you for generous donations of great prizes from Transformable Fidget Spinners to special What's Cookin' Squad mini Squishmallows!

Your Ideas in Action

As a result of brainstorming sessions at the Education focused table during our April 2025 branch meeting, we are excited to introduce a new cooperative SEV Branch STEM initiative with San Marcos Elementary School. A Lego League Robotics Program will begin October 15 and include eight to ten fourth and fifth grade girls in an after school robot building and underwater focused mission achieving adventure. Our SEV



Branch provided the special Lego robot building kits along with the ocean themed "SUBMERGED" field kit and the special table built for robot assembly and testing.

With the support of Principal Becky Henderson, the Program is led by fourth and fifth grade teachers at San Marcos Elementary who will serve as mentors. SEV members are encouraged and expected to be part of the Wednesday afternoon (3 pm-4:30 pm) sessions to provide volunteer assistance to teacher mentors and students throughout the fifteen week program.

SEV members need NO experience with robotics to participate. The goal is to have two or three SEV members – the more the merrier – participate each week the girls meet. All that is required is your curiosity and ability to encourage the girls as they form their teams, plan, strategize, build, test, compete, and celebrate over the fifteen weeks of this exciting program.

This program is a cooperative arrangement with San Marcos Elementary and to get started **SEV Volunteers are needed Wednesday, October 22, October 29, and November 5.** The Robotics Room at San Marcos Elementary is close to the parking lot and stair-free for easy access.

Are You a Two-Minute Activist?

We have made it even easier (Thank you, Webmasters!) to use the Two-Minute Activist link at AAUW.org with a new link from the SEV AAUW website. Here are the steps:

- Go to <https://southeastvalley-az.aauw.net/>
- Place the cursor on the "Public Policy" tab at the top of the page and see the dropdown menu.
- Click on **Two-Minute Activist**.
- Scroll down to the blue letters, "AAUW's Two-Minute Activist" and click.
- You will now be able to sign up for alerts and see the current priorities for AAUW which you can easily comment on to the appropriate entities. These change as needed to be timely.
- Also, click "Websites of Interest" on the dropdown menu from the Public Policy tab for links to other organizations who are working toward equality for women and other vital issues.

Become an activist for AAUW! It's so easy.

Vice-President of Public Policy

AAUW National News

AAUW in the Press

According to the July 23, 2025 article by the National Women's Law Center (NWLC), two bipartisan federal bills were reintroduced to help schools support parenting students pursuing their education goals. Both bills, **Understanding Student Parent Outcomes Act** and the **Helping Student Parents Succeed Act**, are supported by the Coalition for Pregnant and Parenting Students Advocacy, of which AAUW is a member.

The **Understanding Student Parent Outcomes Act**, according to the NWLC article, "aims to address an underlying issue that colleges often have an incomplete picture of student parents."

AAUW's CEO Gloria L Blackwell was quoted in the article expressing our organization's support of the bill. "Too many student parents—especially mothers—are navigating higher education without the support they need to succeed. By finally collecting consistent data on parenting students, this legislation will help policymakers and institutions design smarter policies and programs that reflect the realities of today's students. AAUW proudly supports this bill because we know that investing in women's education means supporting their families, too."

While **Helping Student Parents Succeed Act** "strives to help pregnant and parenting students get connected with child care, leave options, and other accommodations that are available to them at their schools," the article explained.

AAUW's support of this important federal bill was captured in Blackwell's comments in the article: "Student parents are among the most determined learners in higher education—but determination alone isn't enough when policies and systems ignore their needs. The Helping Student Parents Succeed Act addresses a critical gap by ensuring that pregnant and parenting students know their rights and have access to the resources that make college completion possible. AAUW is proud to support this bill because when we support student parents, we unlock opportunity not just for them—but for their children, communities, and the future of our workforce."

The complete article is available from the National Women's Law Center and on the AAUW's website. Here is the link:

<https://nwlc.org/resource/advocates-for-pregnant-and-parenting-students-rights-applaud-the-reintroduction-of-supportive-federal-legislation/>

**Calendar of
Events**



BOARD MEETINGS:

September 10, 2025
October 8, 2025
November 12, 2025
December 10, 2025
January 14, 2026
February 11, 2026
March 11, 2026
April 8, 2026
May 13, 2026
June 10, 2026

BRANCH MEETINGS:

October 20, 2025 - Welcome Back - Poolside Oakwood
November 17, 2025
January 19, 2026
February 16, 2026
March 16, 2026
April 20, 2026

Happy Hours:

September 18, 2025
October 16, 2025
November 20, 2025
December 18, 2025
January 15, 2026
February 19, 2026
March 19, 2026
April 16, 2026
May 21, 2026
June 18, 2026

EVENTS:

November 1, 2025 - Fall Forum
December 13, 2025 - Holiday Funds Luncheon
March 13, 2026 - Scholarship Fundraiser

SEV Branch Special Interest Groups

Bridge Group
Mon., Sept. 1

It meets on the first Monday of the month at the Poolside in Oakwood. This is fun, not competitive, bridge.

Movie Group

Thurs., Sept. 4

1:00 pm

(movie starts at 1:30)

Harkins Chandler Fashion 20 at the mall

Movie: The Roses

Afternoon

Book Club

Mon., Sept. 8 - 1:30 pm

Book: *Heart of Fire*

by Mazie Hirono

Lunch Bunch

Tues., Sept. 9 - 11:30 am

Nando's Mexican Cafe, Chandler

Happy Hour

Thurs., Sept. 18

4:30-6:00 pm

Location: Grill on the Green at Ironwood

No reservation required

Evening Book Club

Tues., Sept. 30 - 6:00 pm

Location: Grill on the Green

Book: TBD

Dinner Group

Next meeting in Oct.

Great Decisions

Next Meeting in Oct.

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