



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

December 2025  
Happy  
Holidays!

Holiday Funds Brunch



**HOLIDAY FUNDS BRUNCH COMING UP. . .  
DECEMBER 13 AT 10:00 AM IN SAGUARO ROOM  
AT COTTONWOOD COUNTRY CLUB**

Message from Gloria Blackwell at AAUW National: "To encourage your generosity at this critical time, a fund has been established that will MATCH your support dollar-for-dollar."

This **DOUBLES** our impact for women and girls! Please return your fund's sheet with your donation ASAP.

Happy Hour Fun!

Branch happy hours are held the third Thursday of each month, 4:30-6:00 pm. Members and anyone interested in joining AAUW are invited to join

**Location: Grill on the Green at Ironwood**

**Time: 4:30-6:00 pm**

**Next Happy Hour:  
December 18**

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### News for the Well-Informed

#### **Update on the Voucher Program from Save Our Schools Arizona**

Recently, "Arizona's ESA voucher program officially reached \$1 billion in annual costs, as enrollment in the program reached 96,802 students. Taxpayer dollars are siphoned away from local public schools to private schools with no requirements for financial reporting, academic standards, or safety oversight. Taxpayers are providing a \$1 billion subsidy for primarily wealthier families who were already choosing (and affording) private options."

<https://sosarizona.org/>

#### **Tell the House: All Workers Deserve Paid Sick Days (from AAUW.org)**

Did you know? There are 25 million working people in the U.S. who lack access to even a single paid sick day. The Healthy Families Act is expected to be introduced in Congress in late November. The bill would allow all workers in the U.S. to earn up to seven paid sick days a year to recover from illness, care for a sick family member, access preventive care, or seek support related to sexual or domestic violence. AAUW is asking representatives to become original cosponsors and show their support for the Healthy Families Act. Use the AAUW **Two-Minute Activist** to write your representatives telling them it's time to support working women and families.

<https://www.aauw.org/act/two-minute-activist/>

Vice-President of Public Policy

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### Membership News

The first meeting of the newly formed Membership Committee took place this month. You may have noticed members of the committee helping welcome new members and assisting potential members at the last meeting. They will assist with all things related to membership and I thank them for their support,

## AAUW National News

### **AAUW Announced Collaboration with League of Women Voters' Unite and Rise 8.5 Campaign.**

The following is AAUW's November 7 news release about the collaboration:

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) is proud to join the League of Women Voters of the United States and fellow women-led organizations as part of the Grassroots Power Partners initiative, a key component of the League's *Unite and Rise 8.5* campaign. Together, these partners are mobilizing women and communities across the country to expand civic participation, foster equity, and build a stronger, more inclusive democracy.

This latest partnership uplifts AAUW's long-standing commitment to open and fair elections that are broadly accessible to all voters, nonpartisan voter education efforts that will promote equitable political participation and expanding voting rights. Launched in May 2025, *Unite and Rise 8.5* is the League's nationwide effort to engage 8.5 million people in defending democracy and advancing voter participation. This next phase — running from November 2025 through January 2026 — focuses on partnership and collective action.

"Education and civic participation have always gone hand in hand," said Gloria L. Blackwell, CEO of AAUW. "For over 140 years, our mission has been to empower women to use knowledge as a catalyst for action — to turn awareness into advocacy and leadership into lasting change. Through this partnership, we're helping women across the country strengthen their voices, mobilize their communities, and shape a democracy that truly represents us all."

AAUW's network of branches and members will collaborate with the League and other partners to promote civic education, increase voter participation, and deepen community connections. Together, these organizations aim to amplify the power of women-led advocacy and inspire civic action in every community.

"Throughout history, women-led organizations have stood at the center of America's progress-shaping the nation's conscience, guiding movements, and anchoring the march towards lasting change," said Celina Stewart, CEO of the League of Women Voters of the United States. "When women come together to lead, we don't just expand participation, we expand possibility. Partnering with organizations like AAUW allows us to harness our collective power to educate, engage, and empower communities



across the country. Together, we're building an inclusive, multiracial democracy that reflects the leadership, strength, and vision of women everywhere."

The partnership underscores a shared belief that when women lead, democracy grows stronger. By aligning missions and mobilizing across states and communities, these organizations are demonstrating the power of collaboration in advancing equity, inclusion, and civic participation.

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## Calendar of Events

### BOARD MEETINGS:

December 10, 2025  
January 14, 2026  
February 11, 2026  
March 11, 2026  
April 8, 2026  
May 13, 2026  
June 10, 2026

### BRANCH MEETINGS:

January 19, 2026  
February 16, 2026  
March 16, 2026  
April 20, 2026

### Happy Hours:

December 18, 2025  
January 15, 2026  
February 19, 2026  
March 19, 2026  
April 16, 2026  
May 21, 2026  
June 18, 2026

### EVENTS:

December 13, 2025 - Holiday Funds Luncheon  
March 21, 2026 - Scholarship Fundraiser

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## SEV Branch Special Interest Groups

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## **Bridge Group**

**Mon., Dec. 1**

It meets on the first Monday of the month at the Poolside in Oakwood. This is fun, not competitive, bridge. Please RSVP by the Friday before the meeting to:

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## **Movie Group**

**Thurs., Dec. 4, 1:00 pm, meet at the theater at 12:30 pm**

**Movie: Wicked For Good**

**Harkins Chandler Crossroads Town Center 12, Germann and Gilbert Roads**

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## **Afternoon**

### **Book Club**

**Mon., Dec. 8 - 12:00 pm**

**This will be a holiday potluck**

**Book: *Remarkably Bright Creatures*  
by Shelby Van Pelt**

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## **Happy Hour**

**Thurs., Dec. 18**

**4:30-6:00 pm**

**Location: Grill on the Green at Ironwood  
No reservation required**

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## **Evening Book Club**

**Tues., Dec. 30 - 6:00 pm**

**Location: Grill on the Green  
Book: TBD**

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## **Mahjong Group - New!**

**Thursdays, 1:00 pm**

**Location: Oakwood Country Club - Poolside**

Lessons for new players will be held at a separate time.

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## **Great Decisions**

**Will resume in Jan.**

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**Dinner Group**  
**Will resume in Jan.**

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**Lunch Bunch**  
**Will resume in Jan.**

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