

# GET WITH THE PROGRAM

March 2006 Volume II, Issue 6

## SHARE A PROGRAM IDEA

One of the goals I had when taking office was to try and create a database of branch programs to serve as a resource for incoming Program Vice Presidents and other interested parties. This has proved to be a more difficult task than I could have foreseen. I have tried a few different ways to solicit program ideas from branches and a few programs are posted on the state website—mostly my own contributions.

In another attempt to solicit program ideas I have decided to appeal to the masses by posting some information on the website about how

one can go about sharing their program idea. Under the Program section of the website you will find a template worksheet (Document name - Blank Program Worksheet) which lists the relevant information that should be submitted with a program idea. An explanation of each section of the worksheet template is also provided. Once the worksheet is completed, I request that it be sent either electronically or in the mail to the AAUW-PA Program Vice President

I am asking that you branch Program Vice Presidents please take a look at this information and see if you can con-

tribute a program idea. Also, if you know anyone else in your branch that might like to share a program you could mention this opportunity to them. I also hope this provides a chance for those members who just come across this section on the website to share their ideas.

Thanks for your consideration in this effort.

Dot McLane, PVP  
AAUW-PA

### Regular Features:

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- AAUW-PA News
- Program Ideas
- Public Policy Priorities
- EF/LAF Corner
- Adelante Book Club
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## Important Dates to Remember

March 18-19, 2006	MAR Conference, Bethlehem PA
March 31, April 1-2, 2006	77th PA State Convention, Johnstown
June 7-10, 2006	National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL)

## Girls and Technology—Association Research/Resources

One area in which girls lag behind boys is in computer technology. AAUW EF did a study published in 2000 which is described below.

**Tech Savvy: Educating Girls in the New Computer Age.** According to this report more and more girls are turned off by violent electronic games and dull programming classes. Schools need to change the way information technology is used, applied, and taught in the nation's classrooms to interest girls.

The AAUW Educational Foundation Commission on Technology, Gender, and Teacher Education conducted a two year study to investigate why girls are underrepresented in computer science and technology fields. The report combines the insights of its 14 commissioners (researchers, educators, journalists, and entrepreneurs) at the forefront of cyberculture and education, findings from the Foundation's online survey of 900 teachers, qualitative focus group research with more than 70 girls, and reviews of existing research.

"The commission makes it clear that girls are critical of the computer culture, not computer phobic," said Sherry Turkle, professor of sociology at MIT and co-chair of the commission. "Instead of

trying to make girls fit into the existing computer culture, the computer culture must become more inviting for girls."

"The same reasoning applies to computer games," argued Sharon Schuster, then president of the AAUW Educational Foundation. "When it comes to computer games and software, girls want high-skill, not high-kill."

Some of the findings from the report include: 1) Girls represent 17 percent of the Computer Science "AP" test takers, and less than one in 10 of the higher level Computer Science "AB" test takers. 2) Women are roughly 20 percent of IT professionals. 3) Women receive less than 28 percent of the computer science bachelor's degrees, down from a high of 37 percent in 1984. 4) Computer science is the only field in which women's participation has actually decreased over time. 5) Women make up just 9 percent of the recipients of engineering-related bachelor's degrees.

Among the report's major conclusions: **Computer technology**—Girls find programming classes tedious and dull, computer games too boring, redundant, and violent, and computer career options uninspiring. **Electronic games**—Girls

have clear and strong ideas about what kinds of games they would design: games that feature simulation, strategy, and interaction. **Computer fluency**—Gender equity cannot be measured by how many girls send e-mail, use the Internet, or make PowerPoint presentations. Rather, gender equity means using technology proactively, being able to interpret the information that technology makes available, understanding design concepts, and being a life-long learner of technology. **Teacher education**—The "drive by" approach to teacher training focuses on the technical properties of hardware; it does not emphasize educational applications or innovative uses of computing for each subject area. **The high-tech workplace**—When women, who make up half the workforce, account for only 20 percent of those with information technology credentials, it is a clear sign that we have to make computers and technology relevant across the job market to nontraditional users.

The commission made a number of recommendations for schools and communities. 1) Software for both classroom and home should focus on the many design elements and themes that engage a broad range of learners, including both boys and

girls, and students who don't identify with the "computer nerd" stereotype. 2) Curriculum developers, teachers, technology experts, and schools need to cultivate girls' interest by infusing technology concepts and uses into subject areas ranging from music to history to the sciences in order to interest a broader array of learners. 3) Professional development for teachers needs to emphasize more than the use of the computer as a productivity tool so that they are empowered users. 4) Educate girls to be designers, not just users. Engage girls in "tinkering" activities that can stimulate deeper interest in technology; provide opportunities for girls to express their technological imaginations. 5) Change the public face of computing: Media, teachers, and other adults need to make the public face of women in computing correspond to the reality rather than the stereotype. Girls tend to imagine that computer professionals or those who work heavily with information technology live in a solitary, antisocial world. This is an alienating—and incorrect—perception. . 6) The new benchmark for gender equity should emphasize computer fluency: : girls' mastery of analytical skills, computer con-

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**Girls and Technology—Association Research/Resources (Continued)**

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cepts, and their ability to imagine innovative uses for technology across a range of problems and subjects.

To obtain a free copy of the report with a video and viewers' guide, produced by the AAUW Reston-Herndon (VA) Branch, Fairfax County Public Schools, and Fairfax County Commission for Women, with the assistance of an AAUW Educational Foundation Community Action Grant, go to the AAUW Website ([www.aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org)), Programs, Tech-Savvy.

**Tech Check.** AAUW Tech Check for Schools is a guide to help schools assess the technology opportunities they offer female students. The guide helps schools and AAUW branches identify strengths and challenges of school programs in addressing gender equity and suggests ways that schools and community groups such as AAUW attract more girls to high-tech fields and narrow the IT gender gap. For a free copy call 800/326-AAUW or e-mail [elpline@aauw.org](mailto:elpline@aauw.org).

**Signposts.** Based on the

AAUW EF publication *Gender Gaps: Where Schools Still Fail Our Children*, Signposts: A guide to Creating Gender-Fair Schools suggests gender equity goals for schools in nine topics: math education, science education, instructional materials, technology, professional development, sexual harassment, dropout prevention, athletics, and school-to-work. Schools that meet criteria in at least five can get a certificate and other recognition from the local branch. To get involved e-mail [program@aauw.org](mailto:program@aauw.org).

**Educational Foundation (EF)/Legal Advocacy Fund (LAF) Corner**

**LAF**

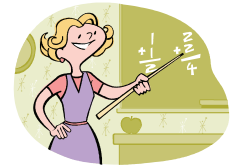
LAF has a new webpage on sexual harassment and the law which includes information on both Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This information is located at [www.aauw.org/laf/](http://www.aauw.org/laf/)

[library/harassment.cfm](http://library/harassment.cfm).

The Winter 2005 issue of *LAF Update* features an interview with LAF-supported plaintiff Professor Russeell who has sued Princeton University for sex discrimination in the denial of her tenure. This issue also includes an article about the female

wrestlers from the University of California-Davis who sued UC-Davis under Title IX for the denial of equal athletic opportunities.

You can read both those articles from the *LAF Update* on the website at [www.aauw.org/laf/updates/Winter2005.pdf](http://www.aauw.org/laf/updates/Winter2005.pdf).



**National Girls Collaborative Project**

The Educational Foundation continues to support the work of the National Girls Collaborative Project (NGCP). The NGCP's purpose is to advance the agenda in gender equity for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). Their objectives include fostering collaborations among organizations, institutions, and businesses committed to expanding participation

of women in STEM, maximizing access to these organizations and institutions, sharing research and program models, outcomes and products, and investing in long-range planning for addressing gaps and overlaps of services in support of STEM for girls. Their activities include implementing, training and mentoring regional participants in how to create STEM-related collabora-

tions that encourage girls to enter STEM-related fields.

Elena Silva of the AAUW Educational Foundation is a Board member of this organization.

For more information about this organization and to download a brochure go to [www.pugetsoundcenter.org/ngcp/](http://www.pugetsoundcenter.org/ngcp/).



**AAUW Pennsylvania Newsletter  
for Branch Program VPs**

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**The American Association of University Women promotes equity for all women and girls, lifelong education, and positive societal change. In principle and in practice, AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or class.**

**State Website [aauwpa.org](http://aauwpa.org)**

**Association Website [aauw.org](http://aauw.org)**

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## **Get With the Program**

### **Adelante Book of the Month Club**

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The Adelante Book Club selection for March (Women's History Month) is ***Founding Mothers* by Cokie Roberts (2004)**. While the "fathers" were off founding the country, what were the women doing? Running their husband's businesses, raising their children plus providing political information and advice. This will be the story of some of those women, as learned through their seldom seen letters and diaries, and the letters from the men to them. It will be a story of the beginnings of the nation as viewed from the distaff

### **Public Policy Priority**

The featured association priority is:

To achieve economic self-sufficiency for all women, AAUW advocates:

"Strengthening programs, including welfare and vocational education, to improve postsecondary education access, career development, and earning potential"



***"Founding Mothers"***

**By Cokie Roberts**