**Kensington-Rockville Branch Program**

**Saturday, January 8, 2022, 10:30 a.m.**

**Incarcerated Women in Maryland:**

**Unequal Challenges, Unfortunate Consequences**

Via Zoom

Chances are, most of us in our comfortable lives give little thought to imprisoned women in our state, whether behind bars for avoidable transgressions, or actions taken for lack of viable choices, or simple injustice. What are the predictable, or unknowable, impacts of incarceration? What happens when these women have done their time? Will their reentry be successful? What can we do to help?

We will learn about these and other related issues from Diana Bailey who, when working for the Maryland Department of Education, managed a federal grant for a Prison to Work project that focused on reentry services. For example, teachers worked with Department of Corrections partners to build employment readiness skills and improve reentry planning. Unfortunately, when that grant ended, state funds were cut, too. As a part-time contractor, she has since been a technical assistant coach with federal reentry grants funded by the US Department of Labor.

Diana Bailey is a career, workforce, and organizational development professional. She is also proficient in non-profit management and youth and adult education programs. She is skilled at grant writing and project management and has successfully promoted partnerships among state, federal, and nonprofit agencies.

For most of the past decade Diana has served as the Executive Director of the Maryland Women’s Heritage Center, founded in 2010. She is a member of AAUW Maryland’s Howard County Branch.

Do join us on Zoom, link forthcoming, and invite your friends.

Dian Belanger, co-Vice President for Program

**President’s Message**

Here we are at the beginning of a new calendar year! My sincerest wishes for a happy, healthy, and safe time for each of you and your loved ones.

Due to the COVID resurgence, we will continue with our Zoom meetings. While it means we will not be able to see each other person to person, we will still enjoy our great speakers and the opportunity to exchange ideas and aspirations with each other.

We are organizing a planning session for our branch next week (tentatively Thursday January 6th at 7 PM) – Margie will send out a separate invitation for those of you who would like to attend. We will be discussing a possible branch project, ways to involve our members in the work of AAUW and ideas to keep our monthly meetings energetic and inviting. Hope you will join us!

Food for thought: last week, I heard a poem entitled “Let them not say” by Jane Hirshfield from her latest book “Ledger”. For copyright reasons, I cannot quote it here, but I invite you to find it and to think about whether it speaks to you – and how you will respond. <https://tricycle.org/trikedaily/ledger-jane-hirshfield/>

Take good care! Jeri Rhodes President

**Addendum to our December Holiday Meeting:**

Our International Fellow, Susana Hernandez Martin, who you will recall did not join our holiday gathering. Serious food poisoning struck one of her roommates and dealing with that made her forget, she said with abject apology. I asked her to write a note the membership. Dian Belanger

Dear members of the Kensington Rockville Branch of AAUW,

My name is Susana Hernández Martín, and I am honored to be a 2021-22 AAUW International Fellow pursing my master’s in Women’s and Gender Studies at Towson University.

I am an independent journalist and an activist working for LGBTIQ+ rights in Cuba. I am the founder and co-director of the digital media publication Q de Cuir, the only magazine in Cuba created exclusively for and by queer voices.

Professionally, I aspire to generate a debate on gender from an emancipatory perspective. I want to promote social transformation that positively impacts the lives of people who have traditionally been discriminated against based on sexuality and gender.

As a field, women’s and gender studies is underdeveloped in Cuba, and master's degrees are inaccessible to the public. Even institutions that offer some scholarship in the field of gender and sexuality never consider LGBTIQ+ studies within their programs.

It is only thanks to AAUW that my goal of studying in the US is possible, and I am immensely grateful for this opportunity. As I write this, I am just finishing the first semester of my master’s program. It was an exciting journey for me. I took three classes about fields that I am highly interested, and that connect with the areas I have been working in Cuba during the last years: queer spiritualities, diversity of women, and nonprofit leadership.

Access to resources has been one of the best experiences this semester, not only in campus but in the library system of Baltimore City: it is mind-blowing to me how easy it is here to access valuable, high quality, up-to-date information in my field.

This first semester was an important step professionally and personally because it allowed me to explore and settle into the new reality I am surrounded by now. Navigating that adjustment is crucial to my ability to perform well in school.

Simply living outside of Cuba for the first time is an immense challenge. There have been many new things to learn, sometimes as simple as learning to pay with a debit card and use a mobile banking app, or as complex, and sometimes frustrating, as navigating the US health system.

Although it is an experience that I am enjoying very much, communicating all the time in English is another of the biggest challenges I have faced in recent months, especially in academic spaces where language is undoubtedly more complex.

Adjusting emotionally is another challenge that I have learned to value in fair measure. There are days when feelings of rootlessness or simply homesickness interfere with my ability to concentrate, but little by little I feel more comfortable and confident.

In these months of learning and adjusting, my greatest strength is my chosen family in Baltimore. My local sponsors have provided me with a network of support, love and understanding that has made my journey not only easier but also fun and enjoyable. They have made me feel at home in Baltimore, and that makes all the difference.

One of my hopes for next semester is to become more connected with the local AAUW community. I am so sorry that an emergency at home kept me from speaking at the Kensington Rockville branch holiday celebration, and I hope to have an opportunity to meet you in the new year.

Happy holidays!

Susana Hernández Martín

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**AAUW Maryland Woman of Distinction (NCCWSL) Fund, #4355**.

Donation’s support AAUW Maryland’s commitment to raise $20,000 by April 1, to become a platinum sponsor of AAUW’s annual National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL)’s premier event, the Women of Distinction awards ceremony hosted at the University of Maryland. For 2022, we honor Dr. Pat Stocker, President of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Branch and Maryland co-Program Vice President, as our state’s Woman of Distinction. She, like the nationally selected notable women will share a bit of her impressive story with the hundreds of young student leaders and offer them advice from her experience.

To donate online:

Go to www.aauw.org and click Donate button at top right.

Scroll to very bottom and click Give to Support NCCWSL (tiny print).

Click second box: Maryland Woman of Distinction (NCCWSL) Fund [4355].

Choose $ amount and whether one time or monthly payment.

Click Donate Now to provide ID and payment card information.

To donate by check:

Make check payable to AAUW and indicate Fund 4355, Maryland Woman of Distinction (NCCWSL) Fund on memo line. Mail to AAUW, 1310 L Street, NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20005.

**A Time for Giving:**

**\*Greatest Needs Fund, #9110**. This general fund is for unrestricted gifts, which are used when and where they are most needed, thus providing flexibility to respond to new and emerging challenges facing women and girls. To donate: Start with aauw.org

Then click Donate. Greatest Needs will be at the top of the list of donation choices. Use your credit card, or write a check, as above, designating your preferred fund(s). If you do not state a preference, your gift will go to Greatest Needs.

\***Montgomery College Foundation**. Gifts support scholarships for women returning to school, while supporting themselves and dependent(s).

To donate: Give online with credit card at <https://www.montgomerycollege.edu/alumni-friends-donors/foundation/donate.html/>. Or write check payable to Montgomery College Foundation, with “AAUW Kensington/Rockville Scholarship” in the memo line. Mail to Montgomery College Foundation, 9221 Corporate Blvd, 3rd Floor, Rockville, MD 20850.

**Interest Groups:**

**Great Decisions**

Anita Rosen anitarosen123@gmail.com

 Bobbe Mintz Bobbeandherb@comcast.net

The January Meeting will be held on Zoom Friday, January 21st at 2:00 pm. Hopefully our books will arrive and get distributed

in enough time to read the first Chapter. There is a bonus Chapter this year “Changing Demographics” by Joseph Chamie

that we will read first. If you wish to join the group, please contact Anita Rosen.

Zoom URLs will be sent prior to the meeting for both the meeting and the video viewing

For Information contact: Anita or Bobbe

**Le Groupe Française**

Ruth Spivack **raspivack@gmail.com**

Contact Ruth Spivack for ZOOM link for the next meeting

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**Literature Group**

Margaret Schweitzer margaretfschweitzer@gmail.com

The Literature Group will meet on Tuesday, January 11 at 1 p.m.

Maritsa George will be leading the discussion of "The Night Watchman" by Louise  Erdrich.

The story takes place in rural North Dakota. The night watchman is trying to understand the new Emancipation Bill in 1953 and its effect on the rights of native Americans.

Louise Erdrich provides insights into the life of native Americans.

Margaret will send the link prior to the meeting.

**Deadline for the February Newsletter is January 20.**

**Newsletter Editor Circulation Editor**

Margery Sullivan Ruth Spivack

msullivan@niaid.nih.gov raspivack@gmail.com

**AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.**

***The Afternoon Literature Group***

Judy Burr judyb429@verizon.net

October 17, 2017, the group will be discussing My Brilliant Friend by Elena Ferrante

**AAUW Vision Statement: *AAUW will be a powerful advocate and visible leader in equity and education through research, philanthropy, and measurable change in critical areas impacting the lives of women and girls.***

**AAUW has been empowering women as individuals and as a community since 1881. For more than 135 years, we have worked together as a national grassroots organization to improve the lives of millions of women and their families.**

**In principle and in practice, AAUW values and seeks and inclusive membership, workforce, leadership team, and board of directors. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization based on age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, geographical location, national origin, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.**

**AAUW Kensington-Rockville Branch**

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