

AAUW in a COVID-19 Year

Plans for the 2020-2021 general meetings and study groups will depend on New Mexico State guidance and on the confidence of our membership in the safety of in-person meetings. Both book groups, Great Decisions, and branch meetings will be conducted using Zoom until it is safe to meet in person.

All officers will retain their positions with the addition of Judy Prono, who will fill the public policy role. The duties of facilitator will be shared among all the branch officers.

Fall Meeting Saturday, Oct. 3, 1:30pm Zoom Meeting

Harshini Mukundan is currently the deputy group leader for the physical chemistry and applied spectroscopy group at the Los Alamos National Laboratory. She is also the team leader for the chemistry for biomedical applications research team, and mentors and leads several scientists, technologists, students and post-doctoral fellows in this capacity.

Harshini will tell us about herself and the life journey that brought her to Los Alamos. She will describe her research and share with us how she helps women to be successful in science.

Harshini received her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in India, and her PhD in Biomedical Sciences from UNM.

She was chosen to serve as one of 125 AAAS IF/THEN STEM ambassadors by Lydia Hill Philanthropies and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

Lydia Hill Philanthropies was founded by Lydia Hill, a former businesswoman and venture capitalist, and now a full-time philanthropist. Hill says, "We firmly believe that if we support a woman in STEM, THEN she can change the world." Girls cite a lack of role models as a reason for not going into STEM. The problem is: Girls are not "seeing" cool women doing real jobs," as Nicole Small, the CEO of Lydia Hill Philanthropies and co-founder of the IF/THEN initiative says. The STEM ambassadors demonstrate just how fun and interesting STEM can be.

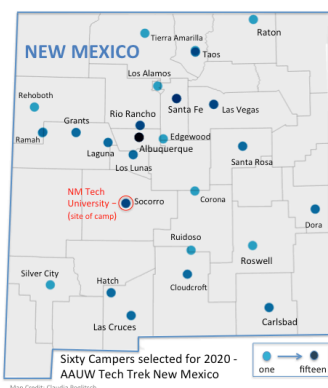
The zoom meeting invitation will be sent via e-mail.

Tech Trek NM 2020 Update

Tech-Trek-in-a-Box: Taking STEM Camp to Campers across New Mexico

Last April, sixty 7th grade girls from across the state were selected to attend AAUW's STEM camp to be held at New Mexico Tech in June. This was to be the seventh year that the AAUW in New Mexico ran Tech Trek NM to nurture girls' interests in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). So when Covid-19 made holding camp impossible, AAUW decided to try a new approach: take (literally mail) the camp to the girls. Thus was born Tech-Trek-in-a-Box.

Tech Trek is usually a week-long residential camp where girls participate in STEM classes, workshops, and field trips. Although it was not feasible to run classes online, instructions and supplies for workshop activities could be boxed and mailed. With permission from parents and guardians, campers received a box that included a backpack, a Kindle tablet loaded with apps, a graphing calculator, workshop supplies and instructions, and a journal. Since at camp, the girls meet women STEM professionals, the Kindle also included videos from the PBS series "Ask a Scientist," highlighting NM women in STEM careers, and an e-book, *Women in Science: 50 Fearless Pioneers who Changed the World*.



The boxes were mailed in early June, arriving just before Tech Trek was scheduled to start. Girls were encouraged to forge a virtual community of Trekkers by sharing information and experiences even while apart. One workshop involved conducting a hop test, a diagnostic tool used in physical therapy. The girls were asked to measure how far they could hop on one foot and then the other, repeating the exercise three times and submitting their data. All data was compiled and then sent back to them, with guidance on how to model the data with their graphing calculators.

Another workshop involved participation in NASA's Cloud Observation Citizen Science program. With their Kindles, girls took photos of the sky, recording the date, time, city and zip code on a cloud chart form, which they sent to Tech Trek or to the NASA website. A chemistry workshop included a series of experiments exploring the effects of temperature, time, and catalysts on chemical reactions. A biology workshop included assembling and creating insect models and studying pollinators such as bees and butterflies in their neighborhood.

In a summer marked by cancelled activities and programs, Tech-Trek-in-a-Box was designed to engage Trekkers in exploring STEM concepts as a group, while still at home. A key aspect was that all workshops could be completed without internet access.

Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. One enthusiastic Trekker wrote: "Thank you so much for the Tech Trek in a box! I love it and can't wait to do the experiments and use everything. Thanks for thinking of me this summer!" A mother wrote: "[My daughter] received her Tech Trek box yesterday—and was wow! Was she ever oh-so surprised and delighted ... Kudos to the Tech Trek team for knowing how to hook a teen—and quickly!"

Next year AAUW plans to run two separate sessions of Tech Trek: one for the girls who would have attended this year and one for the girls who will be selected next year. In the meantime, AAUW is pleased to be fostering Trekkers' STEM curiosity by bringing fun camp activities to them this summer. Special thanks go to Honeywell and Facebook, as well as to AAUW members and other donors across the state, for the funding that made Tech-Trek-in-a-Box possible. Additional information is available on the camp's website: (<https://techtrek-nm.aauw.net>)

Book Group

Daytime Zoom meetings will be hosted by Rozelle Wright, and Denise George will host the evening meetings. All group members will receive meeting invitations to both meetings. Other branch members who wish to be invited should contact Karin Roberts, karinroberts875@icloud.com, to be added to the group mailing list. Evening meetings are on the first Monday of the month at 7pm. Daytime meetings are on the following Tuesday at 1pm. The September book is Ordinary Grace by Kent Krueger. Rozelle Wright will lead the discussion at both the Sept. 7 and Sept. 8 meetings.

The October book is Where the Crawdads Sing by Della Owens. Christine Cloyd will lead the discussion at both the Oct. 5 and Oct. 6 meetings. A complete schedule is under the **study group** tab of our web site at: [2020-2021 Book Group Schedule](#)

Great Decisions

These groups will begin to meet after the Foreign Policy Association publishes the books, usually in February.

Nonfiction Book Group

The next ZOOM meeting is Oct 19, 7:00pm. The book is Biased by Jennifer Eberhardt. Denise George will lead the discussion.

Los Alamos AAUW Scholarship

The branch collected over \$1000 this year to fully fund our scholarship. The 2020-2021 scholarship winner has been selected. Learn more at our Fall Meeting. If you wish to make a contribution, these funds will be used to fund the 2021-2022 scholarship.

Make out your check to,
University of New Mexico Foundation
and write in the memo line,
for UNM-Los Alamos AAUW Scholarship
mail it to,
Margaret Gibson
120 Rover Blvd
White Rock, NM 87547

Branch News

The branch lost lifetime member Pat Mendius on August 13 at the age of 96. Pat served on the coordinating council for many years. As an English teacher, her participation in our book groups was valued. She enjoyed hosting study group and council meetings with style and grace. In 2012, a named grant to AAUW Funds was made in her honor.

To read the complete obituary:
<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/name/patricia-mendius-obituary?pid=196704032>

Calendar

Sept 7,8	Book Group
Oct 3	Fall Meeting
Oct 5,6	Book Group
Oct 19	Nonfiction Book Group

Coordinating Council 2020-2021

Alahna Weller	Facilitator The duties of facilitator will be shared among the council members	672-9539	acweller@comcast.net
Carol Neal	Secretary	662-7256	the_neals@prodigy.net
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Judy Prono	Public Policy	662-2691	djprono@msn.com
Appointed positions			
Helena Whyte	STEM	672-9153	mozden08@aol.com
Marilyn Minshall	Historian	672-3499	mjbminshall237@q.com
Mary Ann Lindahl	Hospitality	662-0995	moonbeamx@comcast.net
????	Nominating Chair		