



**February Branch Meeting**  
**First Born Program**  
**Presentation by Ellen Specter**  
**by Zoom**  
**Wednesday, February 21, 2024, 7pm**

Ellen Specter, Executive Director of the First Born Program of Los Alamos will be our guest speaker.

First Born Program of Los Alamos is a nonprofit organization that provides parents and primary caregivers with education and support to encourage normal growth and development of happy, healthy babies in positive, nurturing families.

FBPLA provides free home visitation services to all families in Los Alamos County. Services may be requested at any time during pregnancy or after the birth of the baby and can continue until the child is five years of age or until the family no longer requests program services.

Along with home visits, the program provides lactation counselors, infant massage and CPR training, and holistic sleep coaching.

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81304195752>

Reminders of meeting with the link will be e-mailed to members before the event

## Los Alamos Schools Science Fair Report

We selected 7 interesting, well executed, elementary-level projects that clearly demonstrated the scientific method. Each project scientist was awarded \$25 and received a note of congratulations and encouragement to 'stay curious'. We spent \$175 of the \$200 budgeted. The committee members were Mary Ann Lindahl (lead), Marilyn Doolen, Denise George and Esther Hessong.

Awarded projects in no special order are:

- Paper Plane Aerodynamics* by Mason Garcia
- The Robotic Arm* by Adrian Garcia
- Magic Crystals* by Chu-So Ritter
- Water Balloon Eggs* by Natalia Griego
- How Geometric Shapes Scatter Light* by Benjamin Tondreau
- Making Crystals with Pickle Juice* by Chevelle Parsons
- Does a 3-Legged Rabbit Eat the Same Amount of Food as a 4-Legged Rabbit* by Zora Allbach

## Book Group

The February book is The Collectors Apprentice by B.A. Shapiro. Marilyn Thayer will review at both meetings.

The Feb. 5, 7pm meeting will be hosted by Mary Ann Lindahl at 928 Circle Dr., LA. Please let Mary Ann know if you will attend (505-660-2259, [moonbeamx@comcast.net](mailto:moonbeamx@comcast.net))

The Feb. 6, 1pm meeting will be hosted by Carol Neal at 451 Urban St., LA. Please let Carol know if you will attend (505-662-7256, [the\\_neals@prodigy.net](mailto:the_neals@prodigy.net))

## Nonfiction Book Group

The next meeting will be on February 12, 7pm; the book is Susan, Linda, Nina, & Cokie: The Extraordinary Story of the Founding Mothers of NPR by Lisa Napoli. Cynthia Biddlecomb will lead the discussion.

Karin Roberts, 415 Cheryl Ave, WR will host. Please let Karin know if you are coming

([karinroberts875@icloud.com](mailto:karinroberts875@icloud.com), 505-709-8930). Zoom on request; please let Denise know if you would like to attend via Zoom ([denisegeorge@icloud.com](mailto:denisegeorge@icloud.com), 505-690-3534)

## Great Decisions 2024

Great Decisions meets on alternate Thursday afternoons at the White Rock library at 2:00pm. Visitors are welcome.

Remaining scheduled meetings are:

Feb 1	High Seas Treaty	Carol Neal
Feb 15	NATO's Future	Karin Roberts
Feb 29		
Mar 14	Climate Tech and Competition	Judy Prono
Mar 28		
Apr 11	U.S.-China Trade Rivalry	Marilyn Doolen
Apr 25	Mideast Realignment	Carroll Thomas

Topics remaining to be assigned:  
Understanding Indonesia  
Pandemic Preparedness

## Roundhouse Update

Since this is a 30-day Legislative session (Jan. 16-Feb. 15), the focus is on passing a budget. However, the Governor has added other calls, such as public safety issues, including gun legislation, to the docket. Along with the LWV, AAUW-NM is following bills to establish paid family medical leave, to create an independent redistricting commission, and to ban/limit certain gun sales. Our own Rep. Christine Chandler is a sponsor for the Paid Family Medical Leave legislation.

- **HB6 and SB3. Paid Family Medical Leave legislation, (Chandler, Stewart, Serrato, Caballero)**

These bills would give up to 12 weeks of partially paid leave to care for a newborn or a family member with a serious medical condition. The leave would be paid for through employee and employer contributions to a state-run fund. HB6's first committee stop is

with the House Health and Human Services Committee.

- **SJR7, Constitutional Amendment to Create an Independent Redistricting Commission, (Senator Jaramillo)** Amends the state constitution to create an independent redistricting commission to develop and adopt redistricting plans after the federal government's census every 10 years. The 9-member commission would consist of 3 members each from the Democratic and Republican parties and 3 members who are members of neither party. The LWV has been a strong proponent of independent redistricting. The resolution's first stop is the Senate Rules Committee, of which Sen. Jaramillo is a member. Information on the bill is available on the Fair Districts for NM website (<https://www.fairdistrictsnm.org/>).
- **HB 27, Extreme Risk Protection Order Changes (Garrett & Chandler)**  
Strengthens NM's ERPO law, which temporarily prevents a person in crisis from accessing firearms. It greatly improves a law which, passed in 2020, is missing key provisions. These changes by our own Representative are supported by the Office of the NM Attorney General, numerous law enforcement agencies, and many members of the judiciary.
- **HB114, Firearm Industry Accountability Act (Representative Chandler)**  
Requires firearm sellers to implement reasonable controls and comply with state laws regarding gun sales. It also mandates certain procedures regarding the sale, manufacturing, making, importing, distribution, use, advertising, and marketing of a firearm product.
- **HB127, Age 21 for Firearm Purchases (Sczepanski & Hochman-Vigil)**

Establishes 21 years of age as the minimum age to purchase or possess an automatic, semiautomatic firearm, or large-capacity ammunition feeding device and would make it a misdemeanor to knowingly sell or transfer ownership of a firearm to a person under the age of 21. States with similar laws have seen significant reductions in gun-related injuries and deaths.

- **HB129 & SB69, 14 -Day Waiting Period for Firearm Sales (Cervantes, Romero, Serrato, Hochman-Vigil)** These bills create a waiting requirement of 14 business days for all firearm sales and transfers unless an exception applies. The bills are identical except for the exceptions they allow. SB69 includes exceptions for buyers who hold valid federal firearm licenses or NM concealed carry licenses and law enforcement officers and certain family members and is the version supported by Courts, Corrections, and Justice Committee. Each party to an unlawful sale under the statute may be charged separately for the same sale.
- **SB5, Firearms Near Polling Places (Senator Wirth, Representative Sczepanski)**  
Prohibits the carrying of firearms within 100 feet of a polling location during an election and 50 feet of monitored secured containers. Exceptions are for certified law enforcement officers in performance of official duties or security personnel with written authorization.

You can track any legislation on the NM Legislature's website ([nmlegis.gov](http://nmlegis.gov)). As the session proceeds, we will send out email requests for members to support our legislative priorities.

## Thank you from LA Cares

### LA Cares

PO Box 248  
Los Alamos, NM 87544  
505-661-8015  
lacaresnm.org

AAUW  
c/o Denise George  
411 Cheryl Ave.  
White Rock, NM, 87547

January 5, 2024

Dear Friends of LA Cares,

The LA Cares Board of Directors would like to thank you for partnering with us in addressing poverty and hunger issues in Los Alamos County. We are very grateful for your generous donation of \$328 in January, 2023, and for your continuing support in December with the beautiful fruit bags. We had a very successful year, as we helped more families than ever before. It is only because of donors like you that we can continue our mission.

Here are some of the highlights of 2023:

*\*1,024 households served with food boxes (in December, 2023, we had more than 100 families come to us for groceries.)*

*\*90 households helped with utility payments (\$42,600 total)*

*\*66 households helped with rent payments (\$43,308 total)*

*\*We launched a new website: lacaresnm.org. Please check it out. You can register for distribution, find distribution dates, volunteer, or make donations from this site.*

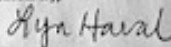
*\*We participated in Giving Tuesday, along with 27 other non-profits in Los Alamos. It was great to see how many people support those in need in our community. We raised \$760 by 13 donors! Amazing for our first venture with this opportunity!*

*\*Many groups in town held food drives for LA Cares. These food drives help fill our storage shelves and enable us to use our funds for other things, such as rent or utility payments, or to purchase fresh produce, eggs, bread, and meat each month. The most recent and largest food drive was held in November, sponsored by the US Postal Workers. Thanks to all who helped make it a success by putting non-perishable items by your mailbox for pick up.*

We are 100% staffed by volunteers, and 100% supported by donations like yours. Since 95% of our funding goes directly to client assistance, you can be assured that your support will fill a need. It may help to prevent an eviction or keep utilities turned on; it may supplement donations to the food pantry, filling in shortages or providing specialized food for a client with dietary restrictions; it may help purchase fresh items that are given away at each distribution.

On behalf of those many families in need, thank you!

Sincerely,

  
Lyn Haval

AAUW's Advocacy Day at the Legislature  
Monday, Jan. 29, 10 am-noon  
NM Land Office, Morgan Hall, 310 Old Santa Fe Trail  
In person and by Zoom  
Strengthening Education and Career Pathways

Zoom Link for AAUW NM Advocacy Day, Jan 29, 2024, 10-Noon. Click here:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84107659060?pwd=ekJSWCtmVnUrUTN5UotQRSs5TEFvUTo9>  
Or enter in Zoom: Meeting ID: 841 0765 9060; Passcode: 069196.

This year we have a short session where only budget items and items on the governor's call will be germane. Education spending accounts for over **half** of our state's budget, so we know it is always germane. This year we are honored to have four professional women share their perspectives on the challenges, opportunities, and policy recommendations with us. Here's a snapshot of the program.

At 10 am, State Land Commissioner **Stephanie Garcia Richard**, former state representative, math teacher, and district curriculum director, will briefly explain how the distributions from NM's immense Land Grant Permanent Fund and the Severance Tax Permanent Fund support our early childhood programs, pre-K-12 education, and other designated state beneficiaries. At 10:15, **Dr. Lina Germann**, SFCC Board Member, founder and former STEM Santa Fe Director, and AAUW-Santa Fe member for 18 years, will talk about ways to engage youth in STEM careers and develop partnerships with community groups, parents, volunteers, scientists, businesses, and higher ed. At 10:30 **Dr. Kersti Tyson**, LANL Foundation's Director of Research and Evaluation, will discuss legislation and programs aimed at improving math instruction and learning outcomes.

Handouts about math instruction, dual credit, and the Foundation's vision that were presented at the Legislative Education Study Committee's July meeting are available here: [https://nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts\\_List?CommitteeCode=ALESC&Date=7/26/2023](https://nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts_List?CommitteeCode=ALESC&Date=7/26/2023). Kersti will share her insights on math methods instruction from her experience as a Teacher Education faculty member at UNM and NNMC, and her former administrative position at PED.

At 11 am, **Kristina Fisher**, Associate Director of **Think NM**, will discuss their legislative proposals to reduce elementary class sizes, improve teacher education training, require school board candidates to report significant campaign contributions, and require school board members to get more annual training in budgets, student performance, educator accountability, and other matters. First in her UNM Law School class, recipient of a national Truman Fellowship, Kristina is known for her thorough research and expertise on education policy.

We will continue to advocate along with Think NM to oppose misguided legislation to reduce graduation requirements from 24 to 22 credits and eliminate Algebra 2. Knowing how essential Algebra is for STEM careers and competitive colleges, we believe that schools can offer relevant, rigorous options, including practical math and/or financial management, foreign languages, civics, and career pathways.

For more information, please contact AAUW State Public Policy Chair, Meredith Machen, [Meredith.Machen@gmail.com](mailto:Meredith.Machen@gmail.com), 505-577-6337.

## Calendar

Jan 29	AAUW Advocacy Day
Feb 5,6	Book Group
Feb 12	Nonfiction Book Group
Feb 21	Branch Meeting
Feb 1,15,29	Great Decisions

## Coordinating Council 2023-2024

Carroll Thomas	Co-Facilitator	505-662-7617	<a href="mailto:carrthom58@earthlink.net">carrthom58@earthlink.net</a>
Judy Prono	Co-Facilitator/Public Policy	505-662-2691	<a href="mailto:djprono@msn.com">djprono@msn.com</a>
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Mary Ann Lindahl	Membership/Treasurer	505-660-2259	<a href="mailto:moonbeamx@comcast.net">moonbeamx@comcast.net</a>
Maryjane Giesler	University Representative	505-662-5574	<a href="mailto:mgiesler@unm.edu">mgiesler@unm.edu</a>
Marilyn Doolen	Diversity,Equity,Inclusion/Historian	505-672-3571	<a href="mailto:mtdoolen@aol.com">mtdoolen@aol.com</a>
Alahna Weller	<b>Member at large</b>	505-672-9539	<a href="mailto:acweller@comcast.net">acweller@comcast.net</a>
<b>Appointed positions</b>			
Helena Whyte	STEM	505-690-7824	<a href="mailto:mozden08@aol.com">mozden08@aol.com</a>
Nina Thayer	Hospitality/Pubic Policy	505-231-6312	<a href="mailto:gnthayer@cybermesa.com">gnthayer@cybermesa.com</a>
Bev Cooper	Publicity	505-672-9696	<a href="mailto:bcooper@cybermesa.com">bcooper@cybermesa.com</a>
Denise George	Newsletter/WEB	505-690-3534	<a href="mailto:denisegeorge@icloud.com">denisegeorge@icloud.com</a>
<b>Open</b>	Nominating		