

## AAUW-Colorado Connects

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From: Marcy Jung with AAUW-Durango

It all began when our branch historian said “what if?” And before you know it, it was July, 2019, and a couple of leaders from AAUW-Durango and LWV-La Plata County met for coffee to talk about what a celebration of the upcoming 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment might look like if we worked together. The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment Project grew and grew with exciting ideas and plans that began with a sign making afternoon in preparation for our debut at the Annual 2020 Snowdown (traditional winter event in Durango) Parade in January. We made signs consistent with the Snowdown theme of Rock-n-Roll like “Women will Rock the Vote & Roll with Equity”. We made gold and purple sashes; and many began to plan their suffragist-like attire to walk in the parade.

The parade was fun as almost 40 women, men, and children from the community walked for women’s suffrage in the parade. It was just the beginning of our this important 100 year milestone for up like suffragists and demonstrate our anniversary image came to life! The 19<sup>th</sup> alumna, Hayley Kirkman, to design an exhibit her right to vote, her valued become the symbol throughout our unveiled at the office of our County commemorative year. T-shirts began to sell attendees. Two community events: a Life-White” and a “Fall in Love with Voting Fair” at Fort Lewis College wrapped up a successful two months of kickoff to an exciting menu of educational activities to follow throughout the year.



19<sup>th</sup> Amendment action to educate the community of women. February was busy with opportunities to dress enthusiasm for our right, as women, to vote! First, our Amendment Committee commissioned NCCWSL image that would represent women. It would especially voice, and her collective diversity. The result has indeed county of the centennial celebration. The image was Clerk, who has become an amazing spokesperson for this immediately to the 25+ LWV and AAUW member Long Learning Series talk called “The Women Wore

Instead, a screeching halt that terminated our momentum and planning called: the COVID pandemic. It was June before our seven person committee zoomed together and renewed our commitment to the mission of creating awareness of this very important part of women’s history. After all, we had received a generous local grant, 150 people were wearing T-shirts advertising a rally on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, and we together we were willing to hit the refresh button and move forward. Seriously, would the suffragists have quit before women had the right to vote?

If one has ever played the game: “I’m going on a picnic and I’m taking (fill-in-the-blank)”, that is how our weekly meetings felt. You see, in the picnic game, you are constantly trying to figure out the criteria that will allow you to go to the picnic. The problem to solve for us was, what could we do in the midst of this stay-at-home then safer-at-home and continue to physical distance and wear masks environment? A rally with our plans including speakers and musicians and children and stage and booths and voter registration etc. was not going to happen. We began with canceling the stage, but held the park reservation. We continued with weekly meetings to discuss bringing something to the community that was educational about the passing of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, encouraged voting, and above all was covid compliant.

The solution became increasingly exciting as we went from a rally, to a non-rally rally, to the “Open Air Salute to Suffragists”. We ordered 150 yard signs to give-a-way, printed more T-shirts; advertised on radio, TV, and local newspapers; developed an eleven station gallery of 24”X36” photos with short biographies of suffragists, an archive exhibit, and a recognition of the on-going obstacles to voting for women of color; prepared a special edition newspaper entitled [She Speaks](#); arranged audio of empowering music and narrative; and hired a videographer to capture the essence of the event. The “Open-Air Salute to Suffragists” was a wonderful success that welcomed approximately 200 participants during the hour and a half event, as evidenced by the effort necessary for contact tracing.



Today, the gallery is on tour beginning at the County Building and then on to local libraries. The committee awaits planning of our final event to host Karen Schwabach, author of “The Hope Chest” and “From Seneca Falls”. The book and author event was scheduled as the 2020 Annual AAUW Meeting and is currently in the works for Spring of 2021. At that time, AAUW-Durango will have been through its first ever year of zoom board meetings and virtual webinars; the LWV La Plata County will have completed a busy year with the general election; and the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment Committee of La Plata County will be encouraged by their resolve to make the best of a difficult time. In fact, if there was a diamond in the rough, we found the **Courage** to see this as an **Opportunity** to be **Vigilant, Inspired, and Determined**.