

WILLMAR BRANCH AAUW

Advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.
JANUARY 2017

*****PLEASE JOIN US!*****

**Saturday, January 28 – 9:30 A.M. (note change of date/time)
Bethel Church (use south door)**

This is the time of year that we combine January/February for one meeting on a Saturday morning. We have booked KASEY BAKER, Director for Community Outreach at Safe Avenues, who will give us an update on the anti-trafficking programs currently underway. Topics include Safe Dates, local efforts to curb trafficking, a new curriculum for elementary students, and work with youth and families. Kasey is also a Steering Committee member of the West Central Minnesota Human Trafficking Task Force.

Here are a few statistics from Safe Avenues:

- *1,452 men, women and children assisted in 2016*
- *1,240 victims of domestic violence*
- *212 victims of sexual assault*
- *228 women, children, and men needed emergency shelter*
- *2,605 crisis calls where answered through a 24-hour crisis line*
- *337 children and families served at Harmony Visitation Center*

*This is a meeting you won't want to miss! And bring a friend!
Refreshments will be served by Marion Nordin and Le Lucht*

THANK YOU!

A big thank you to our generous members for making possible a successful Bingo night in December! Each girl received two gift bags containing a variety of fun and useful items. In addition, each girl was given a \$10 gift card to Target. And there were enough funds to provide a board game and a poinsettia plant for the group home itself.

We are sorry to report that BECKY ROMOSZ is leaving the community and will no longer serve as the LAF chair for our branch. We are looking for a volunteer to take her place and to take charge of the LAF Silent Auction at the state AAUW convention in Willmar the end of April. Contact Jeanette or Beverly if you are able to fill this position.

FEBRUARY ----- BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Our branch member who was to review a novel at our January 28 meeting to honor Black History Month is unable to do so. Thus, the following novels are recommended reading for you to consider:

Miss Hazel and the Rosa Parks League by Jonathan Odell

Set in pre-Civil Rights Mississippi, this is the story of two young mothers, Hazel and Vida---one wealthy and white and the other poor and black---who have only two things in common: the devastating loss of their children and a deep and abiding loathing for one another.

Embittered and distrusting, Vida is harassed by a racist sheriff and haunted by the son she lost to the world. Hazel, too, has lost a son and can't keep a grip on her fractured life. Hazel's husband hires Vida to keep tabs on his unpredictable wife and to care for his surviving son. Forced to spend time together, the two women find they have more in common than they thought, and together they turn the town on its head.

The House Girl by Tara Conklin

Lina Sparrow is an ambitious young lawyer working on a historic class-action suit seeking reparations for the descendents of American slaves. Josephine is a 17-year-old house slave who tends to the mistress of a Virginia tobacco farm---an aspiring artist named Lu Anne Bell. Alternating between antebellum Virginia and modern-day New York, this novel is a searing tale of art, history, love, and secrets that intertwines the stories of two remarkable women. Be prepared for a surprise ending!

The Underground Railroad by Colson Whitehead

Cora, a teenage slave on an antebellum cotton plantation in Georgia, escapes, kills a white boy and turns fugitive. Aided by strangers, pursued by a ruthless slave catcher and navigating an underground network of ghost tunnels and secret passageways, Cora treks north in search of "the greatest currency of all"---freedom. A deft fusion of grounded, hard-hitting reality and far-flung fantasy, this electrifying adventure, winner of the National Book Award, shines a bold, fresh light on America's dark history.

Small Great Things by Jodi Picoult

Ruth Jefferson is a labor and delivery nurse at a Connecticut hospital with more than 20 years' experience. During her shift, Ruth begins a routine checkup on a newborn, only to be told a few minutes later that she's been reassigned to another patient. The parents are white supremacists and don't want Ruth, who is African American, to touch their child. The hospital complies with their request, but the next day, the baby goes into cardiac distress while Ruth is alone in the nursery. Does she obey orders or does she intervene? Ruth hesitates before performing CPR and, as a result, is charged with a serious crime. The case goes to trial with Ruth dealing with a white lawyer. Here is a tale about race, privilege, prejudice, justice, and compassion. The title comes from a quote by Martin Luther King: "If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way."

These novels will be for your taking at our January 28 meeting. (Jeanette Carlson)