

## BOUNTIFUL AND BEAUTIFUL ANNUAL FALL BRUNCH

Linda Pearson was the lucky winner of the beautiful and colorful quilt that was raffled off at the brunch.

If an exciting hum and a bustling buzz mean that folks are enjoying themselves, certainly our first event of the season, the Annual Fall Brunch, was an outstanding and delightful success.

The First United Methodist Church's Cole Hall was filled with enthusiastic new, seasoned and wannabe members Saturday, September 28 from 8:30 to 11:00 a.m.

Members brunched on a cornucopia of quiches, fruit salads, tiny muffins, juice, coffee and tea and had a chance to connect after the summer season. Fall colors and decorations were everywhere and Branch AAUWers even wore clothing with autumnal colors.

The business of the meeting consisted of the passing of the branch budget -- much easier to do than in the American Congress. Co-presidents Linda Pearson and Marylouise Bailey repeated this year's theme: Keep the mission alive. They helped us remember what that was with the letters:

A(Advocacy); E (Education); P (Philanthropy) and R (Research).

New members all got a yellow rose -- and there were quite a few of them. Younger members, who started college recently, were not able to make the brunch because of academic commitments. Each new member was assigned a seasoned member to ease them through their first year in the branch.

Randy Fewel talked about the scholarship program and its importance in realizing our mission in AAUW. While many of this year's winners could not be present, 2012 scholarship winner Tracy Yang came to salute all the good work that AAUW has done. She won a \$1,000 scholarship that has helped her in her studies as a business major at UC Berkeley.

Jo Szeto told the assembly the Tech Trek story. Four of the six Tech Trek attendees told their stories as well at the meeting. The girls went to several campuses and each of them loved the experience. Emily Shilling learned a lot about "forensics, blood and structures." She had an unforgettable week. Pari Srivastava talked about her time at UC Davis. "I especially enjoyed the field trips and barely missed my family," she enthused. Ruchika Mahapatra went to Sonoma State and called her Tech Trek experience "the most fun and memorable trip of my life." And Desiree Nunes, who also went to Sonoma State, became best friends with her dorm mates and learned about some phenomenal careers in science and technology. "I can envision this as a good career for me or any girl," she concluded.

Allyson McAuley (right) received flowers from Genevieve Angelides and Alice Alfaro for her delightful and meaningful presentation about her STEM program at Irvington. The piece de resistance was a presentation by Allyson McAuley. Genevieve Angelides, who heard her talk at an AAUW get-together, was impressed with her enthusiasm and the good work she is doing at Irvington High School in Fremont that earned her a \$7,000 community action grant from AAUW.

Allyson asked for the money for a program to increase the number of STEM (Science, technology, engineering and math) texts and ebooks. She articulated the problem: as Library Media Teacher at Irvington she knew that the library was very busy but the number of up-to-date and relevant books were few compared to the interest. The library, she knew, needed more resources.

She, with the help of other STEM teachers, conducted a survey that showed that girls were not as comfortable as boys in STEM classes. They suffered, Allyson concluded, from a lack of community. She also discovered that girls in technology classes were also uncomfortable and didn't want to be classified as a "nerds." When there were more girls in a class, they felt more at ease.

The \$7,000 not only allowed Irvington to buy more books, it also started a whole series of programs to form that sense of community for girls. Allyson and her colleagues and the girls as well brought speakers into the classroom, took the girls on many field trips and ended with the students starting a STEM girls club with aggressive plans to continue building that sense of community.

"Thank you AAUW," said Allyson, "Because of you our STEM program for girls have made such great progress."

Members stayed after the presentations to check out all the programs that our branch offers: the book club and exchange programs, travel presentations, Women's History Tea, scholarships, etc. "This," said one of our members, "was such a delightful start to the year."