

Bi-Branch Luncheon Held

By Kathy Garfinkle

Members of the Fremont and Hayward/Castro Valley branches, along with guests, embarked on a culinary adventure when they attended the Bi-Branch luncheon at Ghazni Afghan Restaurant on Saturday, February 3. Delicious smells permeated the air, and the long table was carefully set and decorated with artificial flowers and chocolate hearts. There was a feeling of anticipation as those attending visited while waiting for the meeting to begin and Joyce Weaver, recipient of the Career Development Grant, to present her work and discuss her passions.

The group of about 21 attendees was smaller than past years but there was a sense of closeness and intimacy that allowed for an even freer and more comfortable exchange of ideas. Everyone had an opportunity to introduce themselves. The group was even more focused as Linda Slater introduced our guest speaker.



Members of the board of directors stand with Joyce Weaver, third from right, at the bi-branch luncheon. From left are Carolyn Hedgecock, Jennifer Foster, Phie Dai, Kathy Garfinkle, Jo Szeto, Joyce Weaver, Randy Fewel, and Jeanne Delp.

Joyce Weaver is a student at the Academy of Art, where she is working on her master's degree in Game Development. Joyce shared many slides of her sketches and amazing art sculptures. Her goals are to secure an internship, obtain an entry-level job and create her own company. She also hopes to inspire young girls and women especially those who look like her to enter the gaming industry.

Joyce has managed to blend her passions as she pursues her career. She

was always interested in art and was a serious dance student and performer. Joyce went to nursing school but found that she was interested in something more creative. Art is her true love. While completing her master's degree Joyce works as a gymnastics instructor teaching Zumba and she is a florist. She also volunteers as a baby cuddler holding babies whose very lives depend on being held close and having skin to skin contact.

We were very impressed with our multi-talented and ambitious speaker. Fremont President Phie Dai rose to give the closing remarks. She thanked Joyce for speaking to us about her fascinating work. Phie then looked directly at Joyce and with great emotion thanked her for being a baby cuddler. Phie's two children were born prematurely and both were nurtured by baby cuddlers while in NICU. Phie's husband Albert used to work for a video game company, and he has offered to help Joyce secure an internship in the gaming industry. The best news is that Joyce joined our Fremont Branch AAUW that very afternoon before she left!

There was a whole lot of love for and celebration of our aspiring Game Developer at our annual AAUW Funds Luncheon. We will continue to follow and nurture Joyce as she pursues her career goals.