

## COURT WATCH YEAR END REPORT for 2017

As you already know, back in March 2017, two NYC attorneys from The Center for Court Innovation met with our team in order to obtain more information about our court watch program. Apparently, Denise Kronstadt, from The Fund for Modern Courts in NYC, the organization with whom we had partnered for one year (2016) and with whom we had issued a document to both Family Court and to the Poughkeepsie Journal regarding improvements that could be made in the courtroom, praised our work and told other attorneys in NYC that we might be able to help them with their new court monitoring program. They contacted us and they came up from NYC and spent the day speaking with us, perusing our training materials, and even going to Family Court to observe cases with us. They left with a packet of information that is being used to develop a “toolkit” for their own court watch program not only in NYC, but one that can be used to reform justice systems throughout the U.S. and around the world. One of the attorneys who attended court with us said that it was apparent that our presence in the courtroom “had a real effect on what happens there.” In case you didn’t know, according to Wikipedia, “The Center for Court Innovation creates demonstration projects that test new ideas and works closely with jurisdictions around the U.S. and the rest of the world disseminating lessons learned from innovative programs.... They provide hands-on assistance to criminal justice practitioners interested in deploying new research-based strategies to improve the delivery of justice.” Court Watch Poughkeepsie was proud to assist such a prestigious, international organization!

Our Court Watch team is proud to announce that yet another attorney sought our assistance in developing a court watch program in Kalamazoo, Michigan. In August 2017, Jessica Flynn, Esq., Director of Law & Policy for the YWCA in Kalamazoo, Michigan, called to say she had read about our court watch program and was interested in obtaining more information in order to create her own program in Kalamazoo. She further indicated that she wanted to adapt our program with its focus on domestic violence to also include human trafficking. As a result of her request, we were able to send her guidelines and handouts for a day-long training for monitors and one that will, hopefully, prove to be successful for her in Kalamazoo as it was for us right here in Poughkeepsie.

As a result of Sandy Lash’s talk about our Court Watch program at the AAUW Leadership Conference in Casenovia, NY in July 2016, Sandy was invited to present her talk to AAUW members in Westchester, NY on February 14, 2018. Together with Ann Pinna, Sandy will discuss how AAUW members can set up their own court monitoring program in Westchester. Additional meetings may be planned where information can be shared between our Poughkeepsie and Westchester branches.

In the coming year, AAUW continues to look forward to obtaining more speakers in order to educate our team and give us more information which could benefit our understanding of court procedures. Already, an expert from Family Services is scheduled to speak with more to come.

Our monitors will continue to share our Court Watch program with others and also to monitor throughout the coming year to ensure our mission continues to be carried out and to make sure all who attend Family Court are treated with fairness and equity.

We hope our program will also continue to be noted and praised by others who share our mission and goals for justice.

Ann Pinna, February 7, 2018

### COURT WATCH TEAM:

Ann Pinna, Chair. The Court Watch Team: Elaine Andersen, Susie Blecker, Mary Lou Davis, Joanne Dyson, Mara Goldstone, Liz Graham, Sandy Lash, Flo Mondanaro, Margaret Nijhuis, Sandy Sherman, Rae Slingerland.

*Poughkeepsie Branch of AAUW, Inc.*

*Request for Funding for Community Outreach Programs - 2018*

*Name of Project:* **AAUW Court Watch**

*Contact Name, phone and email:*

Ann Pinna – (845) 462-3140 -ajpinna@aol.com

*Please respond specifically to the following questions. Answers to each question need not be more than 3 – 4 lines.*

*What are the Program's goals?*

Our goal is to document systemic issues in Family Court that result in the re-victimization of women and children who have suffered domestic abuse and to make sure they are treated fairly and justly by the court system.

*How does the proposed program support the AAUW mission?*

The program supports AAUW's mission to provide fair and equal treatment for women and to ensure gender equity. (Our primary emphasis is that women are treated fairly in domestic violence cases in the courtroom.)

*How does the program support community needs, i.e. who is the program's target audience?*

The target audience is women, girls, and really anyone, whose domestic violence cases are litigated in Family Court. Our program seeks to promote greater accountability of the judicial system. Once collected and analyzed, our data is ultimately shared not only with members of the judicial system but also the community in an effort to keep victims safe, bring about improvements in the courts wherever necessary, and to promote fair and equal justice for all.

*Does the program have community partners? If yes, who are they?*

We engage with partners on an "as needed" basis. Ex. For consultation, sharing of information, knowledgeable speakers, and others who might educate us and/or help promote our cause. Our partners are: Family Services, The Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Abuse, The Office of the Public Defender (Dutchess County), The Mediation Center, Child Protective Services, The Center for Court Innovation in NYC, The Fund for Modern Courts in Manhattan, and Her Justice in NYC.

*How many AAUW members will participate in implementing this program?*

We have 12 active members. One other member is on hiatus. We anticipate another recruit this year. We will continue to train interested new members.

*Is the program sustainable for the next 2 – 3 years? Yes.*

*If this is an ongoing program, identify past benchmarks of success.*

This is an on-going program. Our monitors continue to monitor cases every month, make observations, and submit our findings for analysis. We have shared our findings with judges and court personnel and have had our results published in the Poughkeepsie Journal. This resulted in some improvements in the court. In the past, we have successfully worked with The Fund for Modern Courts and received the

Duboff Award for our efforts. We have shared materials with attorneys from NYC and Michigan. We are planning a talk with the AAUW branch in Westchester to help them possibly organize their own court watch program.

*What is the program's budget? Does it have other sources of funding?*

We have no other sources of funding.

The budget is: \$300.00 Survey Monkey ( for data entry and analysis)

10.00 Postage

50.00 Printing/Copying of Handouts

60.00 Food & Beverages for training/speaker sessions

80.00 Training for new monitors

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**\$500.00 TOTAL**

*What is the amount and purpose of funding that you are requesting from AAUW?*

Please see above.