Introducing the new FAWCO Target Program

The FAWCO Target Program has been announced as a four-year program to bring a critical global issue to the attention of the extended FAWCO community and the world. The Program is a strategy for education and fundraising that will highlight a specific problem and look for solutions, thus contributing to the attainment of the UN Millennium Goals. Commitment from all FAWCO clubs and their members is needed to make this program a success. Working together on an issue about which we are all passionate will ensure that we make a significant impact.

The Target Program has two aspects:

1. selecting the Target issue, which includes raising awareness, education, and investigating solutions; and

2. hitting the Bull’s Eye, which will be a FAWCO-wide project, for which we will raise funds over a two-year period.

The FAWCO Target Program was launched at FAWCO’s Vilnius Conference in March 2009. The Task Force Chairs (previously called Global Committee Chairs) have been asked to identify global problems that warrant priority as FAWCO’s Target. Individual members and clubs are also encouraged to alert FAWCO to issues, currently addressed within their club, which could become a FAWCO-wide Target. We have set up a Target Program Discussion Forum on the FAWCO website, moderated by our NGO Director Pam Perraud, to discuss ideas, concerns, and projects. As we work together, we will gradually home in on the ‘all-FAWCO’ Target.

As Task Forces announce their proposed target issue in FAWCO News-In-Brief, The FORUM and on our web sites, clubs are encouraged to use these announcements in their own newsletters to raise awareness of the challenge.

By October 2009, all proposed target issues must be formally submitted to the Target Selection Committee. These proposals will be narrowed down to three by the end of November 2009. The three final choices will be sent to member clubs in December for final selection. Clubs are asked to submit their vote by January 15, 2010. The Target will be announced at the Boston Conference in March 2010.

Between March and June 2010, member clubs, Task Forces and individuals may submit proposals for the Bull’s Eye Project. Again, these will be narrowed down to three finalists, and the member clubs will vote on their final selection by October 2010. The Bull’s Eye will be announced November 1, 2010 and fundraising will begin. Fundraising will take place FAWCO-wide as well as at Club-level. A progress report of results achieved thus far will be given at the FAWCO Conference in March 2011.

For more information, contact FAWCO 3rd Vice President Michelle Miller at target@fawco.org
New Hope For Voting Reforms
Lucy Stensland Laederich, FAWCO U.S. Liaison

In the wake of the memorable election of November 2000, Washington legislators jump-started the Congressional session by introducing several bills aimed at correcting perceived problems in domestic voting procedures and for voters covered by UOCAVA (Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act). The result of that process was the signing into law, less than two years later, of the Help America Vote Act of 2002.

By early April of this year, when FAWCO delegates joined their colleagues from ACA and AARO for Overseas Americans Week 2009, the first three of what looks like another series of promising bills had already been introduced and help was clearly on the way for those overseas voters unable to vote or, worse, convinced that their ballot arrived too late to be counted.

There is no doubt that the surge in voting in November’s historic contest has raised awareness of the need to speed up transmission of ballots to voters, facilitate the voting process, and allow sufficient time for ballots to be received and returned. Because these procedures are set by the state, solutions will differ across the country, but the end result definitely will be good for voters.

Overseas Americans Week delegates had close to forty (out of more than one hundred) appointments that focused almost solely on voting. At a high-profile reception sponsored by long-standing FAWCO supporter Clements International, three Congresspersons spoke about new legislation they have authored, while Bob Carey, Executive Director of the National Defense Committee, and Dr. Claire Smith, Research Program Director for Overseas Vote Foundation, described various hurdles faced by military and overseas civilian voters.

Fortunately, lawmakers on both state and federal levels are trying to fix the system, and that means good news for voters and for democracy. Here is a brief look at some of the current initiatives, which FAWCO can only applaud and support:

On the federal level:
A number of bills have been introduced with provisions that, in some way, benefit UOCAVA voters (respect of necessary time frames, electronic transmission to the voter, etc.) but only one, so far, was specifically written for that population. Representatives Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) and Mike Honda (D-CA) target a number of major obstacles in HR 1739, which prohibits refusal of registration/ballots for failure to meet non-essential requirements (notarization and witnessing, paper size/color/weight, receipt other than through the mail, etc.), requires acceptance of passports/military ID to meet identification requirements (as opposed to documents like utility bills and driver’s licenses not available to absent voters), and allows people who do not meet state residence requirements (e.g., young people turning 18) to vote at the voting address of their eligible U.S. citizen parent.

The first bill to “drop” of interest to UOCAVA voters was HR 1604, by Susan Davis (D-CA). Her Universal Right to Vote by Mail bill also eliminates notarization and witness requirements. Soon after, Zoe Lofgren (D-CA), Chair of the House Administration Committee’s Subcommittee on Elections, introduced HR 1719, the Voter Registration Modernization Act, which helps the UOCAVA population by allowing voters to amend their registration information online, up to and including election day. More recently, there is no doubt that the surge in voting in November’s historic contest has raised awareness of the need to speed up transmission of ballots to voters, facilitate the voting process, and allow sufficient time for ballots to be received and returned. Because these procedures are set by the state, solutions will differ across the country, but the end result definitely will be good for voters.

On the state level:
Bills have been introduced in Colorado, Hawaii, Missouri, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon and Texas to study voting by Internet. Washington and Florida propose to establish Internet voting for military and overseas voters and Virginia may authorize electronic transmission of voting materials to the voter. Alabama, the only state now to require that ballots be received through the U.S. postal system, is moving a bill to allow voters to use commercial express mail carriers and even, for the military, to vote over secure Internet connections. And in recognition that many people simply do not have the time needed to vote, New York extended its deadline for receipt of ballots in the much talked-about election to replace now-Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and California began mailing overseas ballots 60 days before a May statewide election.

Continued on page 11
FAWCO Reps Meet Nobel Prize Winner
by Pam Perraud, NGO Director

A remarkable woman became famous for her simple crusade to plant trees. Wangari Maathai was the featured speaker at a luncheon of the World Affairs Council in Houston on April 17, 2009. Pam Perraud, NGO Director, and Louise Greeley-Copley, NGO Representative, were on hand to meet her and to hear her story.

Born in Kenya, Wangari Maathai began her career as a professor of biology. She started a movement, which not only planted simple trees, but also planted revolutionary ideas that eventually toppled Kenya’s government. She is credited with starting the Greenbelt Movement in 1977 and has since planted over 30 million trees in Kenya and several other African countries. In 2004, she was the first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize.

She spoke about her early days in Africa, explaining that normally she would not have gone to school, as her poor family could only afford to send the boys. However, one of her brothers persuaded her parents to let her go along as well. She excelled, and became the first woman in East Africa to earn a PhD. She also was chosen to go to the United States under a Kennedy-era exchange program, which she says changed her life. She found new freedoms in the US that she had never known before and she brought her new ideas back with her to Africa.

Her work planting trees started when she heard the local women complain about the problems of fetching clean water, of finding firewood, and of poor soil for crops. As a biologist, she realized that the constant clearing of trees for crops and firewood was counterproductive and made the soil open to erosion.

She began by educating local women about the ensuing ecological damage, and encouraged them to re-plant trees to rebuild their own environment. She wanted to empower women who were regarded as second-class citizens.

As her movement grew, she began to challenge the powerful landowners and farmers who had a vested interest in clearing the land. These powerful people were supported by the government. Her simple environmental acts soon challenged the status quo. She and her supporters were regularly threatened, beaten, and jailed for their actions.

Her remarkable story, and the story of the Greenbelt Movement, was shown in a PBS documentary called “Taking Root” by Lisa Meton and Alan Dater. Pam Perraud was asked by the local Houston PBS affiliate to be on a panel at a special showing of the documentary about Wangari Maathai at Rice University on April 21, 2009.
Honoring Eleanor Roosevelt at Last
By Pam Perraud, NGO Director

Almost 60 years to the day after the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Eleanor Roosevelt finally received a memorial plaque in front of the UN headquarters at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

The plaque, showing Eleanor Roosevelt reading the UDHR, was awarded only after a long campaign by several NGO’s in Geneva, including FAWCO, to honor Mrs. Roosevelt for her work as the chair of the Human Rights Commission and as the driving force behind the final adoption of the document.

Sponsored by Manuel Tornane, Mayor of the City of Geneva, the dedication ceremony was held December 5, 2008. Speakers at the dedication included Anne Herdt, Chair of the Eleanor Roosevelt Task Force Project and Micheline Calmy-Rey, Minister of Foreign Affairs for Switzerland. Ms. Calmy-Rey spoke about Eleanor Roosevelt’s great contributions as a humanitarian and leader in human rights. David Roosevelt, grandson of Eleanor Roosevelt, could not attend but sent a lovely note and flowers.

After the dedication, guests were invited to attend the launch of a Swiss initiative, the “Agenda for Human Rights,” which grew out of a research project on the topic. Several notables, who were part of the research team, including Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland and UN Commissioner for Human Rights, spoke. After the launch, guests were treated to a reception sponsored by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the Canton of Geneva and City of Geneva. FAWCO was represented at the dedication by Kathleen Simon, FAWCO President, Paula Daeppen and Pam Perraud, FAWCO NGO Directors, as well as Sara von Moos, NGO representative.

The plaque was part of the culmination of a year-long celebration of Eleanor Roosevelt and the UDHR. FAWCO sponsored a website (www erooseveltudhr.org) celebrating Eleanor Roosevelt’s life, her famous quotes and the UDHR; worked with other Task Force members to publish a bilingual booklet about Eleanor to be used in schools; and gave money for scholarships to the Eleanor Roosevelt Leadership Workshop for Girls.

We trust that Eleanor Roosevelt’s example in fostering human rights and social justice will continue to be an inspiration to future generations.

“...richer – that is the ultimate success.”
Eleanor Roosevelt

Kathleen Simon, FAWCO President (top left); Paula Daeppen (top right); and Pam Perraud, FAWCO NGO Director (bottom right) at the new plaque dedicated to Eleanor Roosevelt.

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Looming Food Security Crisis
by Pam Perraud, NGO Director

The world’s food system is currently in crisis and the situation is only getting worse. Keynote speaker Dr. Hans Herren presented that sobering message at FAWCO’s annual conference in Vilnius, Lithuania, in March, 2009.

According to a recent report, the demand for food will double in the next 25-50 years and the world is not ready to cope with this crisis. Hans Herren is President of the Millennium Institute and BioVision, as well as former recipient of the World Food Prize. Dr. Herren explained to the group that the challenge is huge. When dealing with this problem, he warned, “Business as usual is not an option.”

The cited statistics from a special study entitled the “International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science, and Technology for Development” (IAASTD), compiled by 230 authors in 52 countries with input from national and local governments as well as policy makers from around the world. They studied what had happened in the past, what currently is happening and gave projections on what might happen in the future if current food trends continue. They looked at food issues in light of the challenges of climate change and increased population, as well as shrinking resources and increased energy demands.

The results show that sustained and sustainable growth will be needed across the agricultural sector. Current huge demands are putting pressure to deliver not only nutritious food but also to improve the living conditions of rural farmers and to stimulate growth in many underdeveloped areas of the world, all while meeting higher safety standards, using fewer pesticides and addressing environmental concerns.

Dr. Herren discussed the causes of some of the recent dramatic rises in the cost of basic foods last year, noting that this might be a prelude of things to come. He also mentioned how climate changes might alter food production by reducing yields, flooding low-lying areas and reducing the species diversity of plants available for farming.

He warned that in many countries, small farmers are being swallowed up by larger agro-businesses. While agro-business giants like Monsanto have given the world new super-plants resistant to many pests and diseases, Dr. Herren noted that these companies also seriously limit the variety and quality of the food produced around the world.

Dr. Herren presented a long list of recommendations from the reports which were being sent to high level policy makers in countries around the world in hopes that leaders would begin the difficult task of addressing this global challenge.

Copies of the recommendations and his presentation may be found on the FAWCO web site, www.fawco.org.
FAWCO Honors Reps

FAWCO Representatives shape the relationship and put a face on FAWCO for our clubs and members. Initiated in 2008, the FAWCO Rep Appreciation Award honors Representatives who have shown exceptional leadership and strong support of FAWCO. This year, we honor three Reps for their service to our members.

Ramona Nussbaum, Regional Coordinator for Region 6, praised Anne Cameron-Rutschmann (AWC Zurich). “She’s a very active Rep. This year she organized two Fund Raising Teas for the Eleanor Roosevelt project and arranged various meetings about US issues, including a voter registration day.” Another club member adds about Ramona, “I have never seen such dedication!”

The second recipient, Grace Christovasilis (AWO Greece), always has ideas about how to promote FAWCO. Ann de Simoni, Regional Coordinator for Region 8, writes, “Grace works hard to create FAWCO awareness and to keep information flowing from headquarters to her membership, and her ready-to-print FAWCO News benefits the other Reps in our Region.” Some of her local accomplishments include implementing the “One member, One tree” challenge, initiating an ACE program for children and promoting the Heart Pillow Project.

Of Linda Laval (AWG Languedoc-Roussillion), her Club President said “Linda puts the ‘fun’ in fund-raising. She is very successful at raising funds for FAWCO activities and The FAWCO Foundation. She is creative, enthusiastic, a great organizer, makes sure to disseminate important FAWCO information to club members, and proactively manages the calendar of FAWCO events.”

American Women of Surrey Heart Pillow Project

The American Women of Surrey (AWS) have donated their time and energy to the Ashford and St. Peter’s Hospital Breast Cancer Unit through their contribution of 125 heart-shaped pillows to bring comfort to breast cancer patients. Said Peggy Strode, AWS President: “We are delighted to be involved with the Breast Care Unit at Ashford and St Peter’s Hospital. Directly or indirectly, we have all been touched by breast cancer. We are thankful to the hospital for giving us the opportunity to make a difference to women in our new home country.”

The Heart Pillow Project was recently launched by AWS with the Federation of American Women’s Clubs Overseas (FAWCO) and the American Women’s Club of London. The pillow is designed and shaped to fit perfectly supporting the armpit to ease the pain and increase the comfort for the patient after surgery, as it is not unusual to experience tension where there is swelling of the lymph nodes underneath the arm. AWS held “sew, stuff and package days” over two days in one of the member’s home to produce the pillows. People who want to know more about the heart pillows, or who would like to make one themselves, can visit http://www.heartpillow.dk for more information and a pattern for the pillows.

FAWCO Honors Two Volunteers

The Circle of Honor Award recognizes individuals for their invaluable contributions over the years to FAWCO. This year we honor two FAWCO members, Arline Coward (Barcelona Women’s Network) and Alice Grevet (AAWE, Paris), for their longevity of service to FAWCO, for their infectious enthusiasm and can-do spirit, and for the endless hours they have devoted to making FAWCO what it is today.

Alice Grevet has been intensively involved with FAWCO since 2003 as Web Manager and, until last summer, as Web Manager for the FAWCO Foundation. She has refined the FAWCO website, maintaining it while at all times creatively seeking new solutions. Alice guided us through the long content-management migration process. She’s always enthusiastic, full of energy and incredibly positive. She has been a patient and motivating teacher.

She is one of only 3 women in FAWCO’s 78 year history who then went on to become the President of FAWCO’s philanthropic heart, The FAWCO Foundation. She’s now gone full circle to assume duties as the FAWCO Rep for her club.

Arline Coward has served FAWCO in just about every way imaginable. She has been FAWCO Rep, club president, committee member, 3 times on the FAWCO Board as 2nd VP of Reps (1999), 3rd VP of Committees (2001), and as President (2003-05). During this time, she became known for her positive spirit, her loyalty to FAWCO founder Caroline Curtis Brown, and the initiation of the Founder’s Circle, which allows individuals to make donations to support FAWCO. She closed all her FAWCO emails with her positive mantra “Ever Onward.”

We celebrate Arline’s and Alice’s dedication, loyalty and total commitment to FAWCO.
39th Biennial Conference – Vilnius, Lithuania

by Kathleen Simon, FAWCO President

In March of this year, FAWCO received a warm welcome in Vilnius, Lithuania, on the occasion of the organization’s 39th Biennial Conference and Annual General Meeting. In addition to enjoying the unique Lithuanian cultural experience and taking care of FAWCO’s business, delegates enjoyed listening to outstanding speakers arranged by the Lithuanian Embassy in Germany. Once again, delegates left the conference with a renewed sense of “FAWCO-fever,” anticipating FAWCO 2010 in Boston, MA. During the Conference, delegates heard many excellent speakers, including:

Prof. Dr. Kazimiera Prunskienė was the first prime minister of independent Lithuania and stood as a presidential candidate in their recent elections. Her goals are economic and financial stability, still important given the world financial crisis. She was featured in a film about world leaders at the UN World Congress of Women in 1995 in Beijing and is a member of the Council of Women World Leaders.

Dr. Audra Sipaviciene, head of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), explained human trafficking, like drugs and weapons trafficking, is usually tied to organized crime, but is attractive because a person can be sold several times, initial investment is low, prosecutions are few, and punishments are light. IOM has a comprehensive victim-centered counter trafficking approach focused on the “3Ps” – Prevention, Protection, and Prosecution.

Mary Cloud enchanted delegates with tales of diplomatic life. A registered nurse and a trailing spouse over the past 30 years in Mexico, Poland, Germany, Belgium and Lithuania, Mary stressed the importance of flexibility and good humor to survival. Mary is actively involved in volunteer work, a relatively new concept in Lithuania, and helps bring volunteers to hospitals and is involved with the Big Brother & Big Sister Campaign among others.

Mr. Gabrielius Zemkalnis gave a captivating account of ‘The Fight for Liberty in Lithuania,’ sharing photos of the treatment of partisans during the independence struggle.

Dr. Hans Herren, President of the Millennium Institute and well known to FAWCO members for his malaria eradication work with BioVision, came to Vilnius with the specific mission of raising our awareness of the problem of ‘Food Security in a Changing World.’

Two FAWCO sponsors offered sessions as well. Michael Crossett, Director of Marketing for Clements International, highlighted insurance options for living overseas. All agreed that a FAWCO rate would be ideal. Norah Franchetti, Group Vice-President for Learning & Development with Crown Relocation, engaged attendees with a session titled ‘Being a Woman in a Flat and Shrinking World.’

Talented FAWCO members spearheaded sessions and workshops such as Eric Way’s (American Club of Lyon) “Good to Great.” Always a motivating speaker, Eric offered a thought provoking and practical approach to strategic planning. My-Linh Kunst (AWC Berlin) moderated a panel on ‘The 3Ps – Increasing PR and Profits Through Your Club’s Publications.’ Several clubs with successful publications shared their experiences, giving the audience valuable how-to tips, resource ideas, and inspiration to get started.

Undersecretary for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Evaldas Ignatavicius, was a special guest at the conference opening dinner along with United States Ambassador and Mrs. John Cloud.

FAWCO strives to ensure some support is given to our host countries. Delegates were delighted to welcome Milda Lukauskiene, from the Caritas Mother and Child Care Home, as the representative of the conference charity, presenting her with €1150.

Mr. Evaldas Ignatavicius, Undersecretary for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Lithuania (left) with Celeste Brown, FAWCO President (right)

Dr. Audra Sipaviciene, Head, IOM, Lithuania (left) with Celeste Brown, FAWCO President (right)

Prof Dr. Kazimira Prunskienė (left) with Vilnius Conference Chair Angelika McLaren (right)
FAWCO Club Raised €1 Million for Breast Cancer in the Netherlands

FAWCO is proud to recognize a momentous achievement by the AWC of The Hague, one of FAWCO’s founding clubs. The AWC Pink Ribbon Gala 2008 took place on October 4, 2008, and raised €305,000 for breast cancer initiatives in the Netherlands, bringing the total amount raised so far to over one million Euros. All donations go towards breast cancer research projects, breast cancer educational programs and breast cancer patient advocacy campaigns in the Netherlands.

Pamela Larson and Kylie Bergman, Co-Chairs of the Pink Ribbon Gala, are proud of the impact their event has had on Dutch breast cancer awareness and research. Both were very happy with the turnout and support which this year’s event enjoyed. Kylie Bergman adds: “Thanks to the tremendous support from AWC volunteers, captains of industry, public servants and supporters in the entertainment industry from the Dutch and international communities in the Netherlands, the Pink Ribbon Gala is able to make a valuable contribution towards a disease that affects one out of eight women and one in 200 men in the Netherlands.” Bergman continued to say that, “Breast Cancer research and advocacy is a global issue that affects all of us regardless of our citizenship or ideologies. The AWC Pink Ribbon Gala strives to address this issue on a local level.”
2009 Development Grant Recipients

The FAWCO Foundation is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2009 Development Grants, totaling $31,500. This year, 17 projects were nominated in seven of the eight available categories. The recipients of the Grants in each category are:

**GRANT: EFFECTS OF VIOLENCE**, sponsored in part by The AWC of The Hague.
  *RECIPIENT: Pensión Villa Maria, Bern, Switzerland*, nominated by AWC Bern.

**GRANT: AWG PARIS THE RIGHT TO FOOD AND WATER.**

**GRANT: CRITICAL HEALTH CONCERNS**, sponsored in part by The AWC Basel.
  *RECIPIENT: Kibarani Dump Site Children, in Knebel, Kenya*, nominated by AWC Aarhus, Denmark.

**GRANT: HOPE THROUGH EDUCATION**, co-sponsored by IWC Torino and AWA Vienna.
  *RECIPIENT: The Mercy Children’s Centre, Bumala, Western Kenya*, nominated by AWC Aukland.

**GRANT: A PLACE TO LEARN.** sponsored in part by Barcelona Women’s Network.
  *RECIPIENT: Amani School Classroom and Fence, Kenya*, nominated by AWC Aukland.

  *RECIPIENT: Training for Work, Chalfont St. Peter, Bucks UK*, nominated by Chiltern American Women’s Club.

**GRANT: AROUND THE CORNER, A WORLD AWAY**, co-sponsored by The AWC of Luxembourg and The AWO of Greece.
  *RECIPIENT: Five Loaves, Wicklow, Ireland*, nominated by AWC Dublin.

Congratulations to the recipient organizations and the nominating Clubs, which have already established a relationship with these very worthy projects.

**Water, water everywhere but not a drop to drink?**

In *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, first published in 1798, English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge penned these prophetic words, now indelibly etched in the minds of millions of English speakers worldwide. Although not intended that way when written, the plaintive plea of the ancient mariner has become a mantra for those seeking equitable distribution of the earth’s finite fresh water supply.

Because water is essential for all life on Earth, the FAWCO Environment Task Force is suggesting that FAWCO members focus on the global problem of safe and secure water, which will impact and support many of the other global projects that FAWCO has under way.

One of the 2015 UN Millennium Development Goals is to reduce by half the number of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water. In an effort to raise the awareness of how water affects all aspects of life, the Environment Task Force has written several articles illustrating how water connects to other challenging issues. The first article discusses the general importance of water, while the second addresses how the water supply is connected to food production globally. Without a safe, secure and adequate water supply, the world will not be able to produce sufficient food.

An effective solution demands an organized and global approach. Most of us cannot imagine not having access to safe and easily accessible drinking water. The UN recognizes the importance of resolving water supply issues and is sponsoring the initiative, Water for Life Decade. Their web site, [www.un.org/waterforlifedecade](http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade), provides more information. In addition, the FAWCO Environment Task Force suggests that the new FAWCO Target Program could include a focus on water for life.
The Foundation Arts Award

Claudia Jane Scroccaro received The Foundation 2008 Arts Award. She has been studying music all her life. She has studied at the prestigious Conservatory of Santa Cecilia as well as the Conservatory of Frosinone, both in Rome, and is currently enrolled in the Masters Degree in Music Program at the University of Rome. At present she is studying orchestra conducting under Piero Bellugi of Florence. She has directed several orchestras, including the Florence Symphonietta, the Orchestra Giovanile della Sabina and the Piccola Orchestra ’900. June 26-28 of this year, Claudia will direct The John Cabot Chamber Orchestra of Rome in a series of three concerts. The JCCO is a non-profit cultural organization created to give voice to performers, composers and orchestra conductors of all ages and cultural backgrounds. The Concert Series will feature works by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Benjamin Britten.

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The FAWCO Foundation is the philanthropic arm of FAWCO. It was created in 1967 as a not-for-profit corporation registered in the State of Missouri to administer all awards and grants on behalf of FAWCO. For more information, please contact: info@fawcofoundation.org
Rush Holt (D-NJ) introduced HR 2082 to allow the return of ballot requests and ballots by express courier service and even reimburse the cost for military voters.

Still “in the hopper” at the time of writing are bills to provide for online or toll-free telephone tracking of the ballot out to the voter and back to the state and a requirement to disclose if ballots are counted and if not, why not; electronic processing of ballot requests and ballots (for the military only); and a minimum 45-day period between sending out of the ballot and ballot receipt, and electronic transmission of ballots to voters.

The trends are evident: facilitating voting procedures (thereby expanding the voter base) and speeding up the process (ensuring that more and more votes will actually be counted).

A devastating report by the Pew Center on the States found that more than one-third of the states simply do not give military voters enough time to vote. An equally disturbing post-election survey of both military and overseas voters by the Overseas Vote Foundation showed that six percent of respondents couldn’t vote at all because their ballots were late or did not arrive. Further, a full 39% received their ballots in the second half of October, which for many voters was too late to have hope they would be counted, especially in war zones.

These legislative initiatives, combined with the work of the Uniform Law Commission to draft a model law harmonizing voting throughout the 50 states, appear to indicate that absentee voters, both in the military and abroad, can once again, as in 2001, expect real, concrete improvements in the procedures that have caused so many, with good reason, to lose hope. FAWCO's early role in AMOVIR, the Alliance for Military and Overseas Voting Rights,* will ensure that the concerns of overseas civilians are addressed as these initiatives progress.

*See FAWCO Forum — Winter 2008-2009

FAWCO Makes a Difference in Senegal

Women For Girls (WFG), nominated by the AIWC of Genoa, received the 2008 Skills for Life Grant sponsored by AIL0 Florence and The American Women of the Eastern Province. WFG began when Sarah Wallace and Elena Roveta visited Senegal in 2005, where they met a 12 year old girl going door to door looking for domestic work to enable her to pay for her education. Touched, they founded an organization that creates new opportunities for girls and women through higher levels of education and micro-finance. They have combined their education goals with their belief that sustainable development can happen only when women are active participants in organizing economic activities and receive proper training.

The village of Mbousnakh has become a focal point of their efforts. The villagers believed a grinding mill could serve as the foundation of this change, allowing them to help themselves. Because grinding grain into flour is very labor intensive, a mill would give the women more time to contribute to community life.

Developed for the women of this and surrounding villages, WFG has organized a three-year community empowerment training program. Working with a community development organization, the Mill Project will provide training in skills needed to manage the Mill activity as well as in public health and human rights issues. The Mill was delivered on November 21, 2008, purchased with funds from the 2008 FAWCO Foundation DG and a contribution from students at the High School of Law and Government and Community Service in Queens, New York. Signifying a new beginning for the village and for the women of Mbousnakh, the Mill's arrival was accompanied by a celebration full of songs, music, skits, drums and dance.

For more information on Women For Girls, please visit their web site at www.womenforgirls.org.
FAWCO Elects New Board

FAWCO members elected their new 2009-2011 Board of Directors at the annual conference in Vilnius, Lithuania. Kathleen Simon (American Women’s Club Bern) will lead the organization as FAWCO President, following her most recent role as 1st Vice President, where she oversaw the complete re-vamp of the FAWCO website, its “virtual clubhouse.”

Her successor is My-Linh Kunst (AWC Berlin), who will be in charge of all FAWCO communications. My-Linh recently published the book Beyond Borders: Portraits of American Women from around the World, featuring inspiring FAWCO women.

Janelle Mason (AWC Basel) will be 2nd Vice President, responsible for connecting with all members and clubs, FAWCO Representatives, club presidents and regional coordinators, while Michelle Miller (AWC Cologne), the new 3rd Vice President for Committees, will spearhead the new FAWCO Target Program.

FAWCO’s new Secretary is Genette Eysselinck (AWC Languedoc-Roussillon); the Treasurer is Carol Kamphuis (AWC Luxembourg); and Lucy Laederich (AAWE Paris) is re-appointed as Parliamentarian.

To facilitate effective coordination between the two partner associations, FAWCO Foundation President Elsie Bose (AWG Paris) will participate in all Board Meetings and discussions. The FAWCO Foundation is the philanthropic arm of FAWCO and a U.S. non-profit corporation.

FAWCO President Kathleen Simon’s plans for the next two years include optimizing support to member clubs, raising FAWCO’s global visibility and, increasing FAWCO’s impact on issues of worldwide importance. Says Kathleen, “Why is FAWCO important to us? – because FAWCO is a ‘world player’ and it enriches the experience of all of us living overseas, as well as our host communities.”

2009 Education Awards Recipients

During the 2009 FAWCO Conference in Vilnius, Lithuania, The FAWCO Foundation was pleased to announce the recipients of the 2009 Education Awards Program.

- **Dual Cultural Award** (in memory of Suzanne Erisman), sponsored in part by Donna Erisman and AWC Bern: Curtis Meloy Goldsby. His mother is a member of AWC Cologne.
- **Sciences Award** (in memory of Frieda Bacigalupo Natali), sponsored in part by AIWC Genoa: Mary Elizabeth “Mimi” Myrick. Her mother is a member of AWC Basel.
- **AWC Basel FAWCO Members Award For University Degree Study Programs**, sponsored by Shirley Kearney: Elizabeth Suzanne Dyer. She is a member of AWC Lebanon.
- **Humanities Award** (in memory of Gertude de Gallaix), sponsored in part by AAWE Paris: Hannah Jones. Her mother is a member of AWC Zurich.
- **Arts Award** (in memory of Elaine Senigallia): Drew Zaremba. His mother is a member of AWC Brussels.
- **FAWCO Members Skills Enhancement Award**, sponsored in part by AWC Zurich: My-Linh Kunst. She is a member of AWC Berlin.
- **Special Challenges Fund**, sponsored in part by Chilterns AWC: Wiley Ann Becker. Her mother is a member of the AWC Brussels.