

# Inspiring Women

Fall Issue:  
Women in Education



**FAWCO**

Inspiring Women Worldwide

September 2017, Volume 1, Issue 3

**CELEBRATING LIVES ACROSS THE FAWCO WORLD**

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Inspiration from the Editor	3
New Member of the <a href="#">Inspiring Women</a> Team	3
Women in Education	4
Inspiration from Germany	5
Inspiration from France	8
Maximizing Tax Breaks for Education Costs	11
Inspiration from Morocco	12
FAWCO Target Program	15
Home and Away: The Accidental Ambassadors	20
Inspiration from Scotland	23
A Club Inspires	26
Inspiration from Sweden	30
Inspiration from Switzerland	32
Reflections On How Our Children Learn	35
Inspiration from Holland	37
Inspiration from Italy	39
Regional Inspiration: Region 11	42
More Inspiration from Germany	46
Inspiration from the FAWCO Education Team	49
Inspiration from Spain	52
How Can You Get Involved	55
Magazine Feedback	55
Inspiring You	56

[Janet Darrow, Global Property Specialist](#) p. 7

[Esquire Group](#) p. 11

[Elinor Badanes, The Pajama Company](#) p. 14

[Tony Armand, BEMER](#) p. 29

Hats off to our three FAWCO/FAUSA advertisers: **Janet Darrow, Global Property Specialist; Elinor Badanes, The Pajama Company; and Tony Armand, BEMER.** They have committed 5% of their profits from FAWCO initiated sales to the Target Project. We invite you to click on the links in their ads to take advantage of their products and services. Please – DON'T FORGET! Let them know you saw the ad in [Inspiring Women](#). For more information about our advertising options, contact: **Elsie Bose, at [advertising@fawco.org](mailto:advertising@fawco.org).**

FAWCO would like to thank [Esquire Group](#) for underwriting [Inspiring Women](#) as our Premier Sponsor. This issue we have an interesting column on page 11 written by Esquire Group's President, Jimmy Sexton.

### ADVERTISERS' INDEX



**esquiregroup**  
international tax  
ADVISORY | COMPLIANCE | TAX PREPARATION

## Inspiration from the Editor



This edition of the magazine is dedicated to the women of FAWCO who have made their way in the world of education. This time we have ten individual profiles from women around the globe.

Our regional focus is on Region 11 and all the good things going on there, while the individual club focus is on AW Surrey. One of the FAWCO Education Team Co-Chairs tells us more about her world of education, and we have a focus on the new Target Project and some of the people involved in it. Robin Meloy Goldsby writes about her time with exchange students, while Jane Mobbille (and her son) write about educating our children.

It's a full edition as you can tell, which I hope you will enjoy.

Here at **Inspiring Women** HQ we look carefully at the feedback we are sent. As a result of some comments, we are thrilled to be bringing this edition to you via a **digital platform called Yumpu** that makes reading it much easier online, on a computer, a smart phone or a tablet. Please do let us know what you think! See page 55 to take the survey.

The fourth edition of **Inspiring Women** will focus on Women in the Arts. If you know anyone you think should be profiled please get in touch by October 6th. Also, don't forget we would love to feature one of your photos on our cover page. See page 55 for details of what we need and read the introduction to our new team member, Marie-Bénédicte Luxem, underneath here.

Meanwhile, hope the Fall treats you well and see you again in a couple of months...

Best wishes,

*Liz x*

Liz MacNiven,  
[inspiringwomen.editor@fawco.org](mailto:inspiringwomen.editor@fawco.org)

## New Member of the IW Team

Hello Power Women! May I introduce myself? I am Marie-Bénédicte Luxem, a member of AWC Zürich, former FAWCO rep, former Target Project Fundraising Coordinator, former AIWC Cologne Charity Chair, and always a FAWCO fan! I am honored to serve as of today as the cover coordinator for your magazine **Inspiring Women**. What a wonderful opportunity to reach out to all our inspirational members throughout the world!

Please send me your best pictures for our next magazine cover, "Women in the Arts." We are looking for images taken by you or of you. Let your creativity flow, show all the energy you're happy to share with us, be vibrant. We'd like to invigorate our fellow members and spread more of the FAWCO fever.

For further details of image requirements please see page 55.

You can reach me at [inspiringwomen.cover@fawco.org](mailto:inspiringwomen.cover@fawco.org).



# Women in Education

For most of us, the first role model we had (after our moms) was probably a teacher. Learning is a magical journey. Understanding the alphabet, turning the letters into words, discovering how the words become stories, then reading your first book. Science was fun and math was a mystery, but all along the way a teacher helped you, steering you along the road and every once in a while, letting you travel down the slippery slope of bold ideas, just enough to feel the excitement of a new challenge but never letting you fall.

The people who become educators have been endowed with special vision. They know it is important and urgent to bring knowledge to everyone. The women profiled in this issue have this vision. Some have stepped outside the comfort zone of traditional schools to bring education to places and settings where the need for knowledge is great. Why? Because they know education is absolute: with it, we have everything, without it, we have nothing.

*Read their stories,  
share their passion!*

*Elsie Bose, Advertising and Sponsorship Manager*

## Inspiration from Germany



**My name is Megan Morris and I am a member of AWC Düsseldorf in Germany,** where I am the editor of our quarterly magazine, *The Radschläger*. Originally though, I am from San Antonio, Texas.

I currently work at The International School on the Rhine in Düsseldorf; I previously worked in the Austin Independent School District (AISD) in Texas. My teaching career began 3 years ago. I have always had a passion for helping others, and I think that I naturally evolved into a teacher. I remember “teaching” my stuffed animals, and then moving on to my younger brothers. For me, there is no better feeling than watching someone on their learning journey as they begin to understand concepts that previously confused them. I believe that my desire to help others, partnered with my passion for learning and education, inspired me to get into this field (and continues to inspire me every day to stay in it).

As a teacher who used to work mostly with older elementary students (grades 4 and 5), and now works in first grade, I think that my biggest evolution as an educator has been tailoring my practices to a (much!) younger crowd. It has been a bit of a challenge to me, because there is a massive difference between working with 5- and 6-year-olds versus working with 10-year-olds. I have become a much more patient person, and I sing and dance in class far more than before. I have learned to really enjoy my precious moments with the younger children — they are truly brilliant beyond compare!

I think what surprises me the most about my profession is how similar children are no matter where they are in the world. I have worked in different schools with children of varying socioeconomic status, in the USA and in Germany, and it never fails to surprise me how much children love to learn. Now working with a classroom of children from all over the world has been a separate challenge. It has caused me to evolve into an even better teacher, as I am often faced with the task of not only communicating with but teaching children who may have very little English skills. It seems that no matter where you go, as long as children have their needs outside of the school hours met, they will always have an absolutely insatiable thirst for knowledge. Kids never fail to surprise me.

The most important thing that I have learned is that you must embrace whatever teaching situation you are in and give your students 100 percent effort everyday. Teaching is a grueling and (for the most part) thankless profession, and you have to have a very positive attitude and make the most of your time with your kids.

The most important thing that I teach kids is how to express their emotions in a healthy way. There is a new wave in teaching to work on “Social and Emotional Learning” with children, and I think this is without a doubt the most important thing I work with my kids on. It is amazing to see young children speaking to each other with respect and showing awareness of their emotions!

## GETTING TO KNOW MEGAN

**If we looked in your purse, what would we find?** Hand sanitizer! Especially in the wintertime, when you work with kids this is very important. I also tend to be very busy so you will almost always find a snack in my purse because I am constantly on the go. Lastly I always have ticket stubs from various places, mostly museums, floating around in my purse. I enjoy spending my free time learning and I love art and history, but I also tend to be a bit messy when it comes to my personal space!



**If you were moving back to your home country, what would you miss most about your host country?** German public transportation is life-changing! I am from Texas, where public transportation is a joke, and it is great to have options for getting somewhere. I think that I am also required by my German residency

allowance to say that I will miss German bakeries, though American soft pretzels have nothing on their German counterparts!

**Which book that you've read recently would you recommend?** I might be late to the party, but if you have not read *Girl On the Train* by Paula Hawkins, you need to! You could not pay me to put it down while I was reading it, and it had such a great storyline. Definitely worth the read if you enjoy thrillers.

**What has been your favorite vacation?** My favourite place that I have been is Luang Prabang, Laos. It is a beautiful small town that was heavily influenced by the French and it is gorgeous! There are waterfalls and great food, and you can ride your bike through the entire town. Absolutely amazing!

**If you became president of a country for a day, what would you do/change?** Oh man, if I were president of the United States for a day it would be quite a busy day. I think that I would definitely want to change the way education is approached in the country. Public schools are in desperate need of funding, teachers are stretched thin on too-low salaries and still expected to buy their own supplies for their classrooms, funding for non-academic programs that have been scientifically proven to help children is being cut, children from low-socioeconomic environments are not being served in ways to help them succeed, the list goes on and on.



Among many other huge issues I would want to tackle, these are some very real problems education faces in the USA.

**What personal motto do you live by and how does it affect what you do/don't do?**

"Do it with passion or not at all" — Rosa Nouchette Carey. I love this quote because it describes me perfectly. I believe that if you commit yourself to something, you should do it 100% or not at all — no one benefits if you do something only halfway. I will never commit myself to anything unless I am sure that I can give it my best effort, and when I am truly passionate about what I am doing then I don't mind all the extra work and hours I put in.



**Your Matchmaker for Global Real Estate**  
Utilize my network and research to answer your questions.

***I'm never to busy or your referrals.***

**+1-562-243-5317**

**Q. "I'm selling my home in Ca. Can you help me?"**

**A. "Yes, I am licensed and knowledgeable about expatriate needs and the California market."**

**Q. "I need to lease an apartment in Hong Kong?"**

**A. "I found a great agent for you in Hong Kong"**

**Q. "Do I have to pay all cash to buy my retirement home in the US?"**

**A. "Many lenders will let expats and foreigners borrow money in the US."**



***I support the FAWCO Target Program with donations from transactions or referrals from FAWCO/FAUSA Members, their friends and family.***



JanetLDarrow@gmail.com  
www.janetdarrow.com



## Inspiration from France



**My name is Karen Kotler Darmon and I am a member of the Association of American Women in Europe**, which is based in Paris, France. I am originally from New York, and have lived in every borough except for Staten Island.

I came to France in 1990 unable to speak a word of French. Worse yet, I had been working in advertising and marketing research for over 12 years. In France, advertising is called “communications” and needless to say it was far too difficult to find a job in communications when I couldn’t speak the language. Consequently, learning French became a full-time job, which, 27 years later, is still an effort.

The only job I was able to find in 1990 was teaching English to business people, with a salary one third of what I had been accustomed to earning. My students were senior executives who were extremely competent in their fields and suddenly, forced to perform in English for international affairs, felt inadequate and incompetent. With a degree in psychology but none in education, I proceeded intuitively. I realized that the prescribed technique of giving exercises had very little

impact on helping these people. They needed to be able to talk fluently rather than know English grammar. It had become apparent to me that performing exercises and developing fluency were two distinct processes, which often didn’t cross over. Often these clients were highly educated and excellent test takers. They would get perfect scores on grammar exercises and then proceed to make endless mistakes in speaking. There were two very different parts of the brain operating.

At this point I was ready for more of a challenge so I began to develop seminars focused on more advanced skills, starting with public speaking. I translated the basic advertising principles of: “impact, communicate, convince, and be memorable” into communication skills, role plays and exercises and began giving workshops. It was satisfying to watch students/clients begin with a seemingly boring, flat presentation with memorized phrases and turn it into a stimulating and informative piece. Likewise, with speaking, flat voices became emotive and compelling.

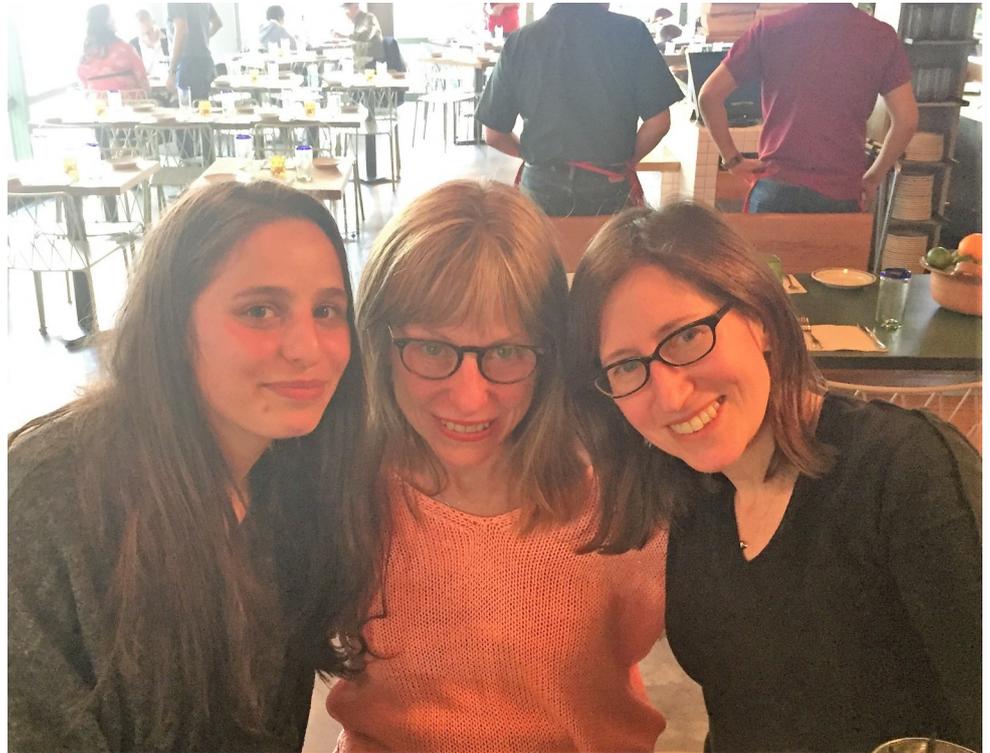
Next I moved to a teaching position at one of “les grandes écoles,” where I teach the “best students in France.” Here I found a population who believed that they already knew everything. This posed entirely new challenges. Over the years in education I have learned that attitude and confidence is not enough. It is so important to be open-minded and ready to accept new ways of learning. For example, when learning a new language, you cannot understand the meaning by translating it back to the language you know. Rather, you need to think within the new language and its own structure.

The same holds true in learning communication techniques. Students and clients who are convinced that what they’ve been doing is the essential base to be added to are preventing themselves from truly optimizing. It is when they try new structures and new ways of constructing their thoughts that they are able to recognize how expansive their expression can be. My goal is

to stimulate thought and provoke the full dimension of expression.

I very much enjoy challenging ongoing beliefs and premises. As a teacher at Celsa (part of the Sorbonne, Paris) I try to provide content to get students involved. For example in my Masters 2 class, where the objective is acquiring the skills to make your message clear, impactful and convincing, I assigned my students the task of informing the public about human trafficking. My students were skeptical at the beginning, saying that it was insignificant in France. Each and every one of them were surprised and touched by the stories they researched. In addition to practicing skills they were also giving a compassionate voice to the world around them.

I found a good balance between working in business and teaching academically. In business, I work with an older group of people who have the experience, know-how and a defined need for learning how to best perform but are slow and methodical in learning. In academia, I work with younger people much quicker to acquire skills but who require more reasoning and proof of their need to do so. My goal in working with this group is not only to teach them the techniques required by the curriculum but also, as the upcoming generation, to get them to think about the world around them and how they can be active players in the world.



The most important lesson I have learned as an educator is that teaching is neither telling nor instructing. Rather, it's eliciting and getting students to experience the lesson. Instructing is inefficient unless the student is able to actively use and integrate the content. Furthermore, learning is maximized when it's fun and meaningful rather than imposed. It's important to start with where the learner is and what's important to them in order to truly enable them to understand, acquire and integrate the lesson.

It has been a wonderful experience over the years to watch my clients/students start to express themselves effectively and feel validated by getting results. I've worked with doctors who need to present their results at conferences, senior managers who need to lead their teams, middle managers who need to coordinate and collaborate with other countries, students who are just embarking on their careers... The one point they have in common is they all need to identify and believe in their core idea. Once they know what specifically they want to say, they can then find the best way to get their ideas heard — to stick and impact. When you know where you're going it's so much easier to get there and so satisfying for a trainer to watch.

## GETTING TO KNOW KAREN

**If we looked in your purse, what would we find?**

A book to read so I always have something to delve into, a notebook to write in, to jot down ideas and record key info, and quite often my computer, which has every piece of information I could ever need.

**What things would you miss about your host country if you moved back home?**

The insight of the French; the depth and quality of thought applied to the world around. The French love to dabble in the grey areas of life and the underlying elements. This richness of thought adds a dimension. And, of course the delicious food and wine would also be missed.

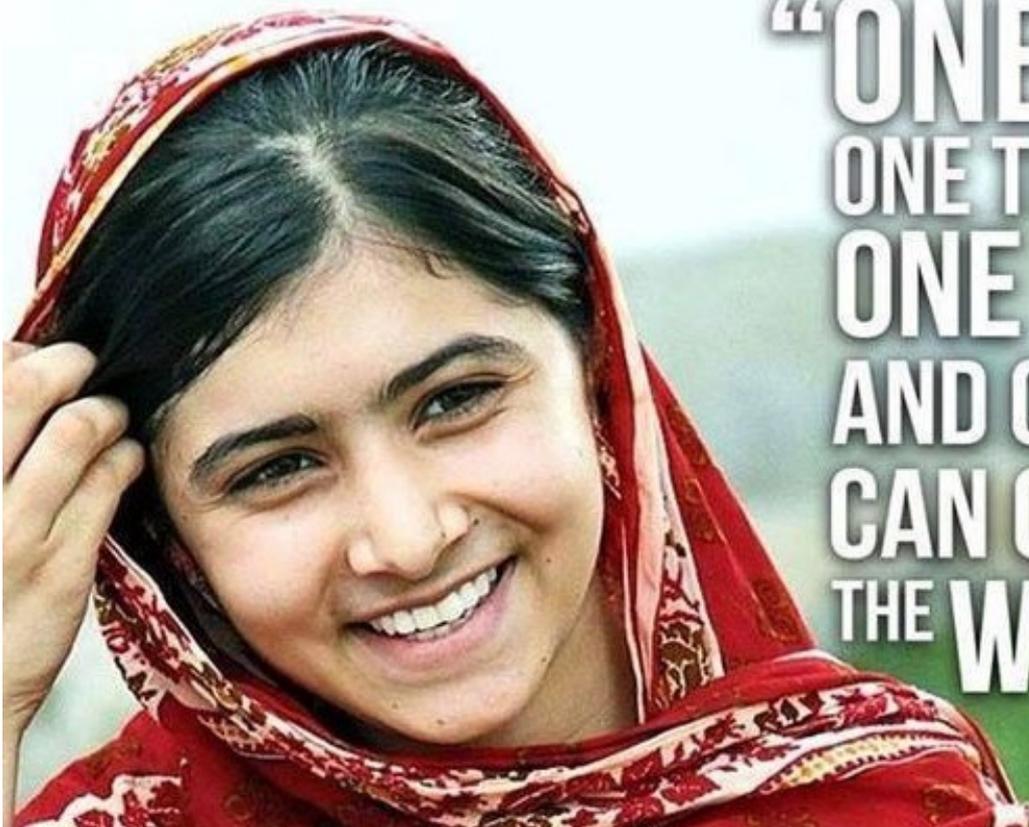
**Which book that you've read would you recommend?**

The most recent and impressive book I've read was *The Known World* by Edward Jones. It's about pre-civil war society and slavery in Virginia. Surprisingly one of the plantations is owned by a black man. This book questions social mores and shows all sides of human behaviour in timeless patterns.

**If you could meet one famous or influential woman, alive or dead, who would it be and why?**

There are so many but I think I would single out Irena Sendler, a woman who is

responsible for saving 2500 children during the war. I'd love to know where she found the courage and ability to act and take such high risks for others.



“ONE CHILD,  
ONE TEACHER,  
ONE BOOK,  
AND ONE PEN  
CAN CHANGE  
THE WORLD.”

- MALALA YOUSAFZAI



# Maximizing Tax Breaks for Education Costs



I am often asked by my clients, especially parents, about what tax deductions and credits are available for education expenses they paid for themselves, their spouse, or their kids. Since this is obviously a topic of much interest to everyone, I thought I would share some information.

The three available tax breaks for educational expenses are the Tuition and Fees Deduction (TFD), American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC), and the Lifetime Learning Credit (LLC). Although their qualifying criteria vary, they all offer tax breaks for expenses — e.g. tuition, books, and supplies — paid for higher education, whether for yourself, your spouse or any dependents you claim on your tax return. To qualify, the student must be enrolled in an “eligible educational institution.” An

eligible educational institution is a college, university, vocational school or other postsecondary educational institution eligible to participate in a student aid program administered by the US Department of Education. This includes foreign institutions, so long as they are eligible to participate in a student aid program under the same guidelines as noted above. Unfortunately, this excludes most foreign institutions.

Let's start with the TFD, which is a deduction of up to \$4,000 for expenses paid to a qualifying educational institution. Note that the expenses must be paid to the institution: e.g., a book purchased from the campus bookstore would qualify, a book purchased from an independent bookstore would not. It does not matter if the student is full-time, part-time, or even pursuing a degree— they must simply be enrolled.

Next is the AOTC, which offers a maximum credit of \$2,500 for expenses paid for a student's first four years of higher education. Unlike the TFD, however, the expenses need not be paid directly to the eligible educational institution. In order to qualify, the student must be pursuing a degree or other recognized education credential.

Finally, the LLC offers a maximum credit of \$2,000 for expenses paid to an eligible educational institution for enrolment in a course, which must either be part of a postsecondary degree program or be taken by the student to acquire or improve job skills.

Here are a couple of things to note: you can only choose one of the above in any given year and, generally, the credits are more beneficial than the deduction. The exact qualifying criteria for each credit or deduction are complex, so you must make sure your tax professional fully understands them.

**Jimmy Sexton, LL.M., is an expert in the field of international taxation, with an emphasis on expat issues. He has presented to American expats at groups that include American women's clubs throughout Europe and is a sought-after expert for several news [organizations](#), including CNN and the [Washington Post](#). He is the President of Esquire Group, an international tax [preparation](#) firm and Premier Sponsor of [Inspiring Women Magazine](#).**

**esquiregroup**  
international tax

ADVISORY | COMPLIANCE | TAX PREPARATION

AUSTRIA | GERMANY | UAE | USA

CONTACT US TODAY: +1-702-384-4829 | [info@esquiregroup.com](mailto:info@esquiregroup.com) | [www.esquiregroup.com](http://www.esquiregroup.com)



## OUR SERVICES INCLUDE:

- ▷ Tax Consulting
- ▷ Tax Preparation
- ▷ Expatriation
- ▷ Unreported Foreign Income / Assets
- ▷ Tax Problem Resolution
- ▷ Cross-Border Estate Planning
- ▷ Nonresident Alien Tax Issues
- ▷ FATCA Compliance

For a full list of our services, please visit our website at [www.esquiregroup.com](http://www.esquiregroup.com).

## Inspiration from Morocco



**My name is Zakia Belahmer and I live in Rabat, Morocco. I am a member of the American International Women's Association of Rabat** and am the leader of our personal development group. My family is from Fez but I was actually born in Casablanca.

After graduating with a degree in English language and linguistics from the University of Hassan II in Casablanca, I worked in the English department of Mohammed V University in Rabat. But I really wanted to teach students English, so I moved first to a high school and then ENSIAS, an engineering college, where I am still teaching English communication, business English and preparation for the TOEIC certificate and animating workshops on personal development and coaching. I also supervise many student clubs, either scientific or cultural ones, and help students to form new clubs in order to create new dynamics in our college.

Since I have always been very interested in education, I have done further studies in coaching and training, with an emphasis on helping students gain self esteem, self-confidence and self confirmation. It is my belief that, as Nelson Mandela said, "Education is the most powerful weapon that you can use to change the world." I don't want my students to just be computer science engineers, but also good leaders and managers with the soft skills that are becoming indispensable for intercultural understanding. So I have done various courses in areas such as leadership and management as well as good communication techniques. All these ingredients have had an impact on my teaching strategies.

When I took my baccalaureate, I wanted to study journalism because I dreamt of becoming a newspaper reporter, but unfortunately my father refused me permission and insisted that the best job for a woman is to become an educator ( a teacher). At the time it was difficult for me to accept this, but I decided to accept my father's choice and study English language and linguistics, while keeping in the back of the mind the goal that one day I would publish articles on education in newspapers. Now the goal has become a reality, as I have published various newspapers articles for students in *Le Matin Emploi* about students' skills portfolio, students' professional projects, procrastination, job interviews and motivation. I am also co-author of the book *Paroles de Coach du Maroc*.

I find it surprising how fast things are changing within the educational world. With digital technologies, which are an integral aspect of the university student experience today, students' learning is enabled, extended and even enhanced. We are shifting to paperless classes with students with either using their laptops or just mobile phones. This makes things

easier for the students and allows them to manage study tasks by being able to replay and revisit teaching materials, and to learn more through visual forms.

I believe that once a teacher you become a lifelong learner. I am greedy to learn and discover new things, and I find that every day my students teach me something new. The most important thing I believe I have taught my students is

self-leadership. Before becoming a leader we must be self-leaders, developing the sense of who we are, what we can do and where we fit in.



### **GETTING TO KNOW ZAKIA**

**If we looked in your purse, what would we find?** A pen and notebook: I've always been a note-taker, and in my profession having a pen in my bag is vital for the success of all my activities. You never know when you might need a pen, and it would be ridiculous for a teacher to ask a stranger for a pen!

A mirror: "The mirrors were invented for better knowledge and understanding of self." A phrase written by Seneca. The mirror is a sort of motivation, and the way we view ourselves is very important as it opens doors for us to develop ourselves and our lives.

A lipstick: it's not about looking good for other people; there are plenty of reasons why wear I lipstick. It makes me feel great and makes my day. I think lipstick gives you a boost, as it's a source of energy, dynamism and beauty.

**Where is the most beautiful place in the world you have been?** This year I went with my husband and son to Prague. I was fascinated by the beauty of the city. The old town is filled with many houses, churches and other structures dating back to the 13th century. I was fascinated by the Gothic grace and Renaissance architecture and many world-class museums and baroque style churches and bridges. And also the spectacle of the

mechanical clock which is regarded as the best preserved medieval mechanical clock in the world. I was astonished to find a seven-foot tall sculpture of the world-famous psycho-analyst Sigmund Freud hanging from a metal beam above the cobbled streets. There is also the John Lennon wall, although Prague is a long way from Liverpool, the birthplace of the Beatles. The wall has been covered in John Lennon and The Beatles graffiti, lyrics and quotations since the 1980s.

**Which book that you've read recently would you recommend?** I would recommend *Living in the Now* by Eckhart Tolle, who is a spiritual teacher and author. He is a world-class teacher who is able to explain complicated concepts in concrete language.

Eckhart Tolle's message is simple: it's about becoming present in the moment. He believes that living in the now is the truest path to happiness and enlightenment. "Most humans are never fully present in the now, because unconsciously they believe that the next moment must be more important than this one. But then you miss your whole life, which is never not now," Tolle said.

**If you could meet one famous or influential woman, alive or dead, who would it be and why?** Morocco's Aicha Chenna, a dauntless

activist in defense of women. She is the lady who has vowed to defend the cause of thousands of unwed mothers in Morocco. She is called the Moroccan "Mother Teresa." Moroccan unwed mothers have long been ostracized by society and shunned by their own families. They are often left on their own without support, a source of income, and even without a home. Aicha Chenna founded the association *Solidarité Feminine* in 1985, for unmarried mothers. It offers the women shelter and varied forms of assistance. The hosted mothers have the opportunity to attend literacy classes and workshops where they acquire the practical skills needed to secure a regular and decent income.

I had the chance to have my photo taken with her recently. If I were able to talk with her properly, I would tell her that she didn't just save the life of the unwed mothers but of the children too; the life of a family and the life of a generation.



## ...Getting Cozy in Your New Fall Pajamas!

Autumn-cool evenings and crisp mornings. It's time to warm up with some new pajamas! Visit our website for this season's best styles. We will ship them just about anywhere, so you can have your new pajamas before the first log is in the fireplace!

Attention: When you purchase pajamas from The Pajama Company and mention FAWCO. 5% of the purchase will be donated to the Target Project- "Hope Beyond Displacement"



The Pajama Company

Happiness is...



a pajama day

thepajamacompany.com

# FAWCO Target Program

**The Target Program** is a three-year program which brings a critical global issue to the attention of FAWCO Clubs, their members and the world. The Target Program offers opportunities for local FAWCO Clubs to make a global difference. Target Programs have the overarching goal of



improving the lives of women and girls. The FAWCO Board, in consultation with The FAWCO Foundation Board, chooses Target Issues on a revolving basis through our four areas of interest. Education—Empowering Women and Girls through Knowledge and Skills, was announced as the overall theme for the FAWCO Target Program 2016 - 2019.

The Education and Awareness Raising Campaign features our monthly blog: "Let's Get Schooled," where we explore the issues which prevent millions of women and girls from receiving quality education around the globe, become familiar with the goals established by world leaders in education to remedy this injustice and look at the impact educating women and girls has on their lives, their families, their communities and society.

On April 1, at the 2017 Biennial Conference in Mumbai, India, FAWCO announced **Hope Beyond Displacement** - "Building better futures through education, vocational and leadership training for refugee women and girls in Jordan," as the new Target Project. The project is an initiative of the Collateral Repair Project (CRP). [The FAWCO Foundation](#) will support the endeavors of member clubs in fundraising for this project. The goal is to raise \$125,000 for them by 2019.

## The Project

CRP was founded to aid refugees fleeing the violence of the second Gulf War and has been providing assistance to victims of violent conflict since 2006. In addition to Iraqi refugees, CRP serves Syrians who have arrived in Amman in huge numbers, refugees of other nationalities, and Jordanians living in extreme poverty. CRP seeks to restore dignity and community among these displaced populations and to ensure that their basic food and housing needs are met. We provide emergency assistance to thousands of families through in-kind aid, information and referral services, and a food voucher program that supplies eligible households with coupons to purchase fresh produce and groceries. CRP's Family

Resource and Community Center offers many activities and opportunities for refugees to learn, rebuild community and heal.



CRP's Super Girls Program is an after school program for girls designed to address refugee girls' particular needs and challenges. It aims to foster and promote lifelong learning and personal development through creative play and a trauma-sensitive approach. Participants will receive leadership, life skills, project-based learning, and technical computer training over intensive, six-month sessions. Over FAWCO's two-year funding period, the program will serve 120 girls and will aim for at least 80% of participants to achieve grade-level academic targets.

**Beryl Cheal is working with staff on designing and implementing training for the adults who will be working on the Super Girls project, as well as doing additional training with other staff members involved in other projects throughout the organization.** Underlying her work is a special emphasis – working with refugees as survivors of trauma. She is helping CRP become into a trauma-sensitive organization so that all refugee participants in programs throughout the NGO will be able to take advantage of a trauma-informed staff working in concert to help mitigate the effects of traumatic experiences.



My name is Beryl Cheal and I was born in California, USA. Now I call Seattle, Washington my home, although I tend to spend quite a bit of time in other parts of the world. I always wanted to be a teacher.

The day after school vacation started, my twin sister and I started playing "school." One of us was the teacher and the other the student – and then we would switch. That lasted just about all summer, every summer until we were about 11 or 12 years old. Education was valued at our house even though we were the poorest family in the rural area of southern Oregon where we lived. Yes, we were poor, but my mother and father always talked about when we would go to college – it was never where we would go, it was when. A very poor family with middle-class ideas.

So, we went to college — a church college in Southern California whose representatives always told us that the college needed people like us. Little did they know that we had no money. But my twin and I believed them and showed up with \$50 each! When the financial officials asked when our parents were going to send the rest of the money we told them that our parents had no money but the college representatives had said they needed people like us – so here we were! I think it was quite a surprise for the college folks. I don't think they had had anyone do that before! We got jobs and managed to get through the first year, washing our clothes and bedding in the bathtub of the dormitory before any of the other girls got up to see that we were using the bars of soap they had left in the bathroom the night before and brushing our teeth with salt and soda, since we could not afford toothpaste.

But we did it. We took two years off to repay the first year's college loan and six years from when we entered, my sister and I graduated with Bachelor's degrees and teaching certificates. She has become a psychologist with a PhD – I became an educator with two Master's degrees.

At first, I taught primary and middle school (5 years), then I moved to early childhood education. It was a good move. That has been my career for the last nearly 50 years. My work in early childhood education has involved teaching Head Start (a federally funded preschool program for low income children in the US), developing Head Start programs as a federal employee, director, consultant, trainer, and coach for Head Start and other early education programs in various parts of the world. I have worked with programs for young children in the US Pacific Northwest and New York City; as the director of a kindergarten system for Palestinian refugee children in the Gaza Strip, Palestine; trained preschool teachers in Eastern Europe

(Moldova); worked with Save the Children, Philippines, as their School-Based Disaster Risk Reduction Technical Officer; provided consultation, training, and coaching to preschool staff in Kawa-Zulu Natal, South Africa; assisted in designing and developing a psychosocial program for refugee children in Amman, Jordan; and worked with Kosovo refugees housed, at the time, outside of Toronto, Canada.



Several important points in my life stand out as inspirations for the work I have been doing in the last 30 years. I help teachers and others who work with children know how to help kids who have experienced traumatic events culminating from home, natural disasters or man-made tragedies, such as war and violence.

The first inspiration, I suppose, was the child in my Head Start classroom who came to school one day, immediately crawled under a table and spent the next 45 minutes to an hour tearing newspaper. At the time, I knew something must be wrong but I didn't know how to help that child. Another point of inspiration was working with Palestinian refugees in Gaza, both children and staff. During that time, I became acutely aware of some of the long-term disastrous effects of the normal reactions Palestinians had to their experiences of war and violence, displacement from homes, living as refugees – as well as living under a military occupation. Returning to Seattle from the first assignment in Gaza, I attended a weekend training seminar on helping children who had experienced natural disasters. Realizing that my training in child development and early childhood education were perfect for helping children who had survived such events, I decided to use my interest and skills to help those kids in some way. The result has been not only working with teachers and other adults who work with trauma-exposed children, but I also volunteer with the organization for which I received my first training, in going to disaster sites immediately after an event and working with children here in the United States.

Over the years, one thing that has surprised me is that teachers (and education in general) are not included in strategizing for children's healing after experiencing trauma. Teachers seem to isolate themselves (and other disciplines support this) to want to deal with teaching the three Rs only. Not only are they not trained to work with children who have experienced traumatic events, but they seem to feel that is not their responsibility. So often they forget that children cannot learn if they are frightened, feel that life is out of control, confused, and mistrustful of adults. And they, being with the children and so many hours a day, can do a great deal to help mitigate these normal reactions from children's experiences, so that children can relax and learn – if they knew how.



I have learned that children have an amazing capacity to heal themselves from very difficult situations, but they often need adult help to do that.

Yes, children are resilient. But teachers often need to assist in that process. It is very important for teachers to realize that how you are is as important as what to do. How teachers relate to children in developing relationships is as important as the subject matter that teachers teach.

It is hard to know what my most important achievements have been. But I one example I can think of makes me feel very humble.

Several years ago, I met my former assistant in the Head Start class that I had taught. As soon as she saw me she exclaimed, "Wait right here. I want to go get Bea." In all honesty, I had no idea who she had gone to fetch. A few minutes later, however, around the corner ran a beautiful, well-put-together, tall, stylish young woman who rushed forward and threw her arms around me saying "Oh, Mrs. Cheal. How nice to see you! I have thought about you so many times." Bea turned out to be Beatrice, a young woman who had been in my Head Start classroom. Beatrice had broken almost every rule we had established for our classroom. On field trips children were told not to climb the trees. Yes, Beatrice was the first one up the nearest tree.

Instructions at school to walk in this specific area, always found Beatrice running – not walking. It seemed that Beatrice found every way to push the envelope as a Head Start child. And now, here she was, this striking young woman having just graduated from Harvard University and recently hired by the TV industry. What an inspiration!



### **GETTING TO KNOW BERYL**

**Which book that you've read recently would you recommend?** Two books that I have recently read have been very instrumental in my thinking. *Teach like Your Hair Is on Fire* – Rafe Esquith. I liked Esquith's enthusiasm for teaching; his genuine caring and concern about his students; his ability and eagerness in listening to his students; his innovative, practical teaching strategies in helping children learn.

The second book is *Lost at School* by Ross W. Greene, Ph.D., which gives practical and important information and suggestions for working with misbehavior at school.

**What personal motto do you live by and how does it affect what you do/don't do?** "Even if you're on the right track you will get run over if you just sit there." - Will Rogers  
"What you are is as important as what you do." I try to incorporate both of these concepts into every part of my life. I strive to do what needs to be done, but do it with caring, respect, and humor.

**Of all the people you have met in your life, who do you admire most?** My mother. She had many ideas about living and the importance of people that were different than those of her family or, as far as I know,

different from any support group. She was very strong in her beliefs.

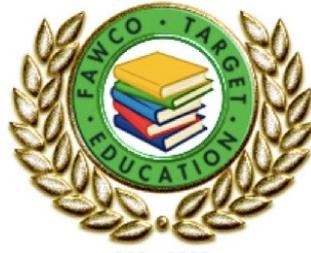
She believed strongly that there were better ways to solve international problems than going to war. Until she found a Christian church that had those same beliefs she had no support, to my knowledge, for these, what were then considered to be radical ideas. She felt, as I do now, that there is God (or good) in every person. Finding it is sometimes a challenge, but with perseverance and searching it can usually be found. I do not consider myself a religious person, but supporting that discovery in developing relationships with children can be extremely important as a teacher.

I believe my mother was the only one in her family who had a college education. She attended UCLA in Los Angeles for two years, taught school for two or three years, raised a family of five girls, completed her four-year bachelor's degree in education the week after her youngest daughter graduated from college, and then went back to teaching for several years.

She was a strong woman – in so many ways a great role model.....

# Inspiring Women

## Advertisers Commit to Support the Target Project



Three advertisers in FAWCO's online magazine, *Inspiring Women*, have pledged 5% of their profits from FAUSA and FAWCO—instigated transactions to the FAWCO Target Project, *Hope Beyond Displacement*. These three advertisers are FAUSA members:

**Your Matchmaker for Global Real Estate**  
Utilize my network and research to answer your questions.

"I need to lease an apartment in Hong Kong"

"I found a great agent for you in Hong Kong"

"I'm selling my home in CA. Can You help me?"

"Yes, I am licensed and knowledgeable about expatriate needs and the California market"

"Do I have to pay all cash to buy my retirement home in the US?"

"Many lenders will let expats and foreigners borrow money in the US"

**Janet Darrow**

+1-562-243-5317

**I'm never too busy for your referrals.**

**Janet Darrow Real Estate:** Global Property Specialist located in Los Angeles County. Janet can help you realize success either buying or selling your property, or refer you to a real estate agent with international experience in your area.

[www.janetdarrow.com](http://www.janetdarrow.com)



Janet.Darrow@gmail.com  
www.janetdarrow.com



**BEMER:** A Bio Electric Magnetic Energy Device (BEMER) that may help you relieve pain, eases movement and enhances energy.

[www.ahealthresource.bemergroup.com/en-us](http://www.ahealthresource.bemergroup.com/en-us)



**The Pajama Company**

**The Pajama Company:** An online specialty shop where you can purchase pajamas for you, your family or friends. A fun day starts and ends with pajamas!

[www.thepajamacompany.com](http://www.thepajamacompany.com)

Thanks to Janet Darrow, Tony Armand and Ellie Badanes for supporting the Target Project. To purchase merchandise or services, please click on their website addresses above. Please be sure to mention FAWCO!

## Home and Away: The Accidental Ambassadors



**Home and Away columnist Robin Meloy Goldsby looks back on a 2010 exchange student program that benefitted her family, her community, and two teenage boys.**

John, Curtis, and I stand in a clump next to a security gate at Cologne/Bonn International Airport. Curtis leaves today for an eight-week student-exchange trip to South Africa. He'll be flying alone, first to Amsterdam and then to Cape Town, where, hopefully, Chris Coetzee and his parents will be waiting for him. Curtis will live with the Coetzee family and attend a private high school called Somerset College, close to the Stellenbosch mountain range. The Coetzee family will take care of Curtis, and we'll do the same for Chris when he comes to Germany. A lot could go wrong with a plan like this, and I've got a case of maternal jitters.

The boys have gotten to know each other through Facebook. I've had plenty of e-mail contact with Renée, Chris's mother, and she seems efficient, kind, and concerned about the right things—warm clothes for Curtis, potential food allergies, getting to the airport on time to meet him. I tell myself that anyone who is worried about my son's insulated hiking boots and apple allergy is probably not an ax murderer planning to sell his limbs to Satan worshipers in Botswana. Or worse.

In his carry-on bag he has an iPod with

volumes four through six of the Harry Potter audio series, half of a baguette smeared with butter, his passport, and 100 euros cash for an emergency. I have yet to encounter any real emergency that could be solved with 100 euros, but giving him more seems overindulgent.

Time to go. I hold it together when Curtis bends down to say goodbye, but just barely. *It's only eight weeks*, I tell myself. I stand on my toes so I can get my head into the spot between his shoulder and his neck. I close my eyes and inhale the mingled scents of cologne, deodorant, and boy.

Mothers have been sending their sons away from home since the beginning of time, for far more worrisome activities than an eight-week exchange program. It's ridiculous to be so emotional.

Curtis is a head taller than anyone else in the security line, so it's easy to watch as he navigates his way through the various stations. Every so often he sneaks a look over his shoulder to see if we're still there.

"I hope we're doing the right thing," says John. "I mean, we're sending him to Africa with a baguette and 100 euros."

Fourteen hours—that's how long it takes to fly from Germany to Cape Town, with a stop in Amsterdam to change planes. Sixteen years—that's how long it takes to raise a boy so he can leave home.

\*\*\*

Over the next eight weeks we hear just enough from Curtis. He sends occasional e-mails and calls us when we guilt him into it. We know that he's having fun at school, that he's participating in an African drumming workshop, and—much to his chagrin—learning to make African beaded jewelry. His

sister finds the idea of Curtis at a craft table making earrings extremely funny. Renée sends me occasional updates and tells me how much she enjoys Curtis's company, how she loves listening to the boys tell stories and play the piano. Chris also plays alto and baritone saxophone, so there's a lot of music in the house.

Somerset College has organized a handful of exchange-student events, including a weeklong "survival" camping trip for the thirty international students who are currently visiting the school. Renée sends photos of Curtis and Chris—two happy boys at an elephant reserve, cautious boys petting a cheetah, somber boys on the boat to the infamous Robben Island, and joyful boys on the top edge of Table Mountain, looking as if they might leap into the abyss.



Curtis writes to us about seeing genuine poverty for the first time. He writes about long hikes, and the Stellenbosch wildflowers, and the way ostriches hang out roadside and baboons run wild. He writes about the view from the Cape of Good Hope, where the Atlantic and Indian oceans meet.

\*\*\*

Later in the fall Chris arrives at Frankfurt International Airport to spend eight weeks with us. It's six in the morning, the plane is early, and we arrive on the other side of the Customs/Immigration area just as South African passengers begin to trickle through the sliding glass doors. I hate these doors. They never stay open long enough to determine who's on the other side.

"Do you see him?" I ask Curtis.

"Nope," he says. "Yes. Wait. No. Maybe."

The sliding doors close. It's freezing cold in

the international-arrivals area. I'm holding hot chocolate and a large cinnamon pastry for Chris.

The doors slide open.

"There he is!" says Curtis.

"Where?" I say.

I stand on my toes and the hot chocolate sloshes over my hand.

"There! I think I see his jacket."

The doors close. Open. Close. Open. Close. Fifteen minutes later Chris emerges. He's a great-looking kid with dark hair, a crooked smile, and greenish-blue eyes. He and Curtis hug while I stand to the side and watch.

I dump the cold hot chocolate. We hurry to the car and head for home, with Curtis proudly pointing out the *Autobahn* sights along the way—no baboons or ostriches, but lots of well-maintained cars driving way too fast, indifferent sheep, grazing cows, and the occasional castle looming on a distant hill.

\*\*\*

Chris goes to school every day with Curtis and works on his German. His first language is Afrikaans, but most of his education has been in English. He also speaks a little Zulu, which doesn't get him very far in Germany. The boys travel to Berlin and stay in a youth hostel. I take them to Paris for a long weekend. They also accompany John to concerts and rehearsals.

Chris likes to hang out in a corner of our living room. He piles his books and laptop on an old end table, and sometimes his saxophone ends up there, too. He likes to play my piano, and he often practices while I'm cooking. Without being asked, Chris takes out the garbage, rakes the leaves, and sets the table while telling stories about his country.

He hopes to study medicine, become a doctor, and live and work in South Africa. Proud of the progress made there, he also acknowledges the need for further change. He's a young man with a boy's optimism.

MC Funk, Curtis's band, invites Chris to perform with them as a guest artist. One of their gigs, a four-hour, no-intermission community event called "Four Hundred Years of Klavier," stars a long-winded and pompous actor in a powdered wig. The wig man delivers coma-inducing speeches between pieces of music played by capable students from local schools. Different groups of musicians in unfortunate period costumes—including one nine-year-old Korean boy dressed as Beethoven—play beautifully. But the wig man drones on and on. By the time he introduces MC Funk, featuring Chris—the last act of the evening—the remaining audience members, glassy eyed and half dead from boredom, can hardly lift their hands to applaud. But the boys, buzzed from four hours of backstage cola and wearing their hip everyday clothes and retro sunglasses, coast onstage and, as Chris likes to say, "own it." They dig into a too-fast but groovy version of "Cantaloupe Island" and pull the audience back to consciousness. The wig man, rendered speechless by their teenage energy, picks at his embroidered waistcoat. I take pictures to send to Renée.

Everyone adores Chris. Girls think he's exotic because he comes from Africa, boys think he's cool for the same reason. The adults, who don't really care where he comes from, like him because he's smart and polite.

One evening as I'm making dinner for Chris, Curtis, and David, our Iranian neighbor, I overhear the following conversation:

"It's so stupid to judge someone based on where he comes from," says David.

"True, that," says Chris.

He likes to say *true, that*. It's a habit we've all

started to pick up.

"Stereotypes are bad," says Curtis.

"True, that."

"When people find out I'm a white South African," says Chris, "they think I'm a racist."

"Yeah," says David. "When they find out I'm Iranian they think I'm a terrorist."

"Yeah," says Curtis. "When they discover I'm American they think I'm stupid."

"Why can't everyone just get along?"

"Right. We're all just people. And, really, we're pretty much the same."

"True, that."

\*\*\*

In mid-December we drive Chris to the airport for his return flight to Cape Town. We arrive two hours early, and the boys choose an airport McDonald's for our last meal together. They're a little edgy, and I sense they're nervous about never seeing each other again. There's some talk about meeting before they start college studies, or about Curtis doing an internship at



Chris's high school. I'm sad because I know these events are unlikely to happen, but I play along because the boys need to convince themselves it's not the end of their friendship. They have Facebook, Skype, e-mail, and instant messaging, but even these two high-tech whiz kids understand the difference between real life and virtual life. There's a lot you can share online, but cultural understanding? You need to be in the same room, or at least in the same country, for that.

Both boys have changed for the better as a result of this adventure. Thanks to Chris and his parents, Curtis has returned home fuller and richer, understanding more than I ever did at his age. I hope we've been able to do the same for Chris.

On our way to the security gate we walk past

a giant departure board flashing destinations. Istanbul, Shanghai, Tel Aviv, Miami. Dallas, Dubai, Pittsburgh, Paris. There, in the third column, is Chris's flight to Cape Town.

"I used to think Cape Town sounded so far away," says Curtis, with his arm over Chris's shoulder. "And now it seems so close."

"True, that," says Chris.

I can't help it. I start to cry. In a move that seems incredibly mature for his sixteen years, Chris takes my face in his hands, looks into my eyes, and says,

"It's okay, Robin. I'll be back."

The kids hug and exchange teen-coded handshakes, and then Chris slings his bag over his shoulder and heads through the X-ray machine. We watch as he continues down the hallway. Already his stride has changed. He was a kid when he arrived here, but as he walks away he seems self-assured and grown-up. He's a man taking the first steps on a long journey home.

**Robin Meloy Goldsby (AIWC Cologne) is the author of *Piano Girl; Rhythm, Waltz of the Asparagus People, and Manhattan Road Trip*. Goldsby's career as a pianist has taken her from roadside dives to posh New York City venues and exclusive resorts, and on to the European castles and concert stages where she now performs. Robin has seven solo piano recordings to her name and has appeared in the USA on National Public Radio's All Things Considered and Piano Jazz with Marian McPartland. Robin is a Steinway Artist. She lives in Cologne, Germany, with her husband and two adult children.**

## Inspiration from Scotland



**My name is Joyce Halsan, I live in Edinburgh and am a member of AWC of Central Scotland.** I am the Website Coordinator and Membership Co-Chair for the club, but I've had many club roles.

Scotland has been my home for so long now that if I left, I would miss so much. When I had to leave years ago before we retired here, I remember taking a last walk through town and what I took home with me were the smells. The sea in Portobello, the hops in the city from the breweries, the sweet flowers everywhere, the grass. This really is my home country now.

I've been retired for 20 years, having been a College Professor in the area of Gender/Women's Studies and Multicultural Studies at Shoreline Community College in Shoreline, Washington. I graduated from the University of Washington with a B.S. in Psychology and a Master's degree in Higher Education with emphasis on Psychology, Ethnic Studies and Gender/Women's studies. At

the time, in the mid-1970s, there were very few courses offered in the area of gender/women's studies at any university, so my course work consisted of research in all the fields pertaining to issues dealing with women and ethnic studies. I designed and taught four courses as a professor. The content was about women in the following areas: as survivors of abuse, workplace discrimination and laws, women of power and a multidisciplinary course: Race, Class and Gender.

My interests and skills developed throughout the years of teaching, and by the time I retired I had ventured into many related areas. Research is always a key love and skill and I have always been interested in learning at all levels. By the time I retired, I was teaching online courses in Gender/Women's and Multicultural Studies using web writing skills. Introducing my students to the possibility of using the internet as a vehicle for presentation and research, I gave them a head start in other course work as well. In 1997 the internet was just blossoming, or maybe exploding, onto the academic scene. As professors, we had to familiarize ourselves with the internet, and later the world wide web, and basically teach ourselves to write the code for websites. This is

definitely a "ground up" situation, and a group of professors at our college began to meet and share knowledge. We were all from different disciplines, which made it particularly interesting in presenting our material to one another. This provided me with a strong base on which to learn the difficult skill of computer coding.

After retirement, I have never quit learning and developing my skills. I was particularly interested in website writing and design; it was an area which was fast changing — a perfect challenge for me. It still is. So when I became involved in the AWC of Central Scotland, I offered my services to develop and maintain a webpage for them. It benefited us in two ways: I could continue developing and expanding my skills and they have the advantage of having a first-class website. In my work with the AWCCS, I was introduced to FAWCO and had the privilege of working on the FAWCO website under Alice Grevet in the early 2000s. She was a mentor to me at the time and my work as a volunteer with her helped me a great deal in expanding my knowledge of working in Joomla!, a CMS community-run program.

I also have offered learning experiences for members in AWCCS to enhance their computer skills as well as using the internet in its ever-expanding capacity. I meet with individuals to help them use our website, and also just to get used to the fundamentals in using their computers. We have our membership database online and use our site to send our Newsletters electronically. We are forever expanding the use of our site as well as learning how to deal with the ever-increasing spam and phishing issues inherent in all websites.

Probably the scene that represents ME in a nutshell is a conversation I had about 12 years ago with a young man who was the husband of a good friend in the club. When I was introduced as the Website Coordinator for the club, he did a double-take, and sat down in surprise. He was looking at a *woman* in her *sixties*. He muttered something like "how did you get to know how to do this???" I just replied, "who do you think taught you and your teachers?" He's a lovely man, and now a good friend of mine, but was caught up in all the beliefs and stereotypes which are still prevalent today.

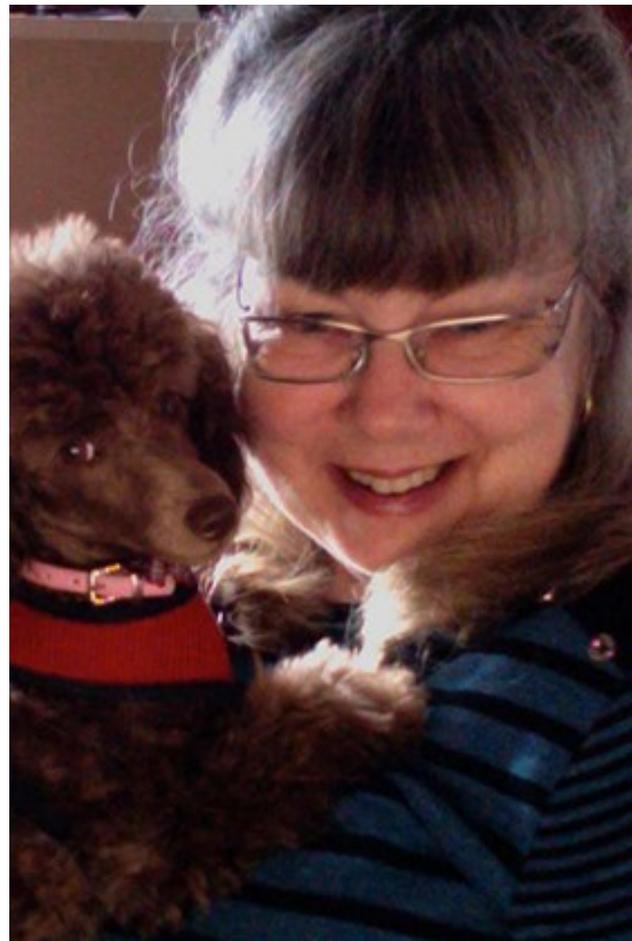


### **GETTING TO KNOW JOYCE**

**Where is the most beautiful place in the world you have been?** So many places...Edinburgh is my spiritual city and I live here by the sea. Nordland in Norway, where my grandparents were born, with beautiful fjords and hills, but most importantly, beautiful people (many, many cousins).

**Which film that you've seen recently would you recommend?** Recently, the film that most moved me was Hidden Figures. I love the film industry when they bring out little-known parts of our history that have made such an impact on our lives. This film, showing women of color who were working for NASA in the 50s and 60s, gave such an important view of everyday lives, hardships and love. It addresses our stereotypes and is an excellent example of institutional racism and sexism, so blatant that no one could miss it. And since I love numbers, it made a special impression on me.

**What personal motto do you live by and how does it affect what you do/don't do?** "Two steps forward and one step back." It's realistic and describes the healing process. It teaches tolerance and patience. I'm always learning tolerance and patience...



**If you could meet one famous or influential woman, alive or dead, who would it be and why?** Margaret Atwood. I respect what she's done with her life and the paths she chose to take. She gave up her time and space to write and become an environmental activist and she has reached so many people with her words and deeds.

I would just love to sit and have a cup of tea with her and have a chat about her interesting life. She was so far ahead of her time, and so brave.

**If we looked in your purse, what would we find that would tell us something about you?** I normally don't carry a purse. My wallet, phone (headphones) and keys are in my pockets. And, of course poo bags for my dog.

# A Club Inspires: AW Surrey, England

There are FAWCO clubs of all sizes and shapes across the world. A *Club Inspires* is a feature where you will learn more about one of them. This time we are pleased to share with you one of the FAWCO clubs based in Region 1 : AW Surrey. Over to them...

The American Women of Surrey, now referred to as AWS, was established in 1975. Our club objectives are to welcome and assist American and international newcomers and their families into Surrey; promote friendship and cooperation among members through social events and activities; further members' knowledge and understanding of England; and give financial and material support to philanthropic projects. Despite roller coaster enrolment (over 1,000 members at the turn of the millennium to around 300), we have remained true to our objective for the past 47 years. It is not just words on paper, we "walk the talk."



Our membership is mostly expats but we also have a small but constant core of "lifers" married to Brits and living here permanently. It makes for a nice mix to have continuity but also change to keep the club fresh.

## **What's on offer for club members:**

We offer Welcome Coffee Mornings and Settling in Surrey orientation classes for our new members. We have pub evenings with spouses and family picnics so members get to know each other and feel part of the club as soon as they arrive.

Members are spoiled for choice with our activities and classes. To name a few, we offer Art Appreciation, Book Club, Bunco, Character Homes and Gardens, cooking classes, Genealogy, Jewellery Making, Hiking, Golf, Flower Arranging and Mod Maude who always finds an unusual monthly activity like llama trekking or doing yoga on a paddleboard on the Thames! Over the years one of our most popular courses has been *English Experience*, where we hold weekly classes with a speaker teaching us about English history. An in-depth experience is enhanced with trips to castles and stately homes, movies and book readings which relate to the current topic being discussed. Our members return home with a real understanding of their host country.



Our social calendar includes an annual Progressive Dinner, which is always popular. Our Members and Mimosa

mornings are a very nice way of getting to know your fellow members. Outings to Ascot races are always a great excuse for dressing up with a posh hat! We recently celebrated our 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the City of London at one of the oldest guild halls – The Stationers Hall, dating back to 1673 (rebuilt after the Great Fire). Our guest of honor was the Master of the Worshipful Company of Stationers and Newspaper Makers, Helen Esmonde, the first female Master in their 613-year history!

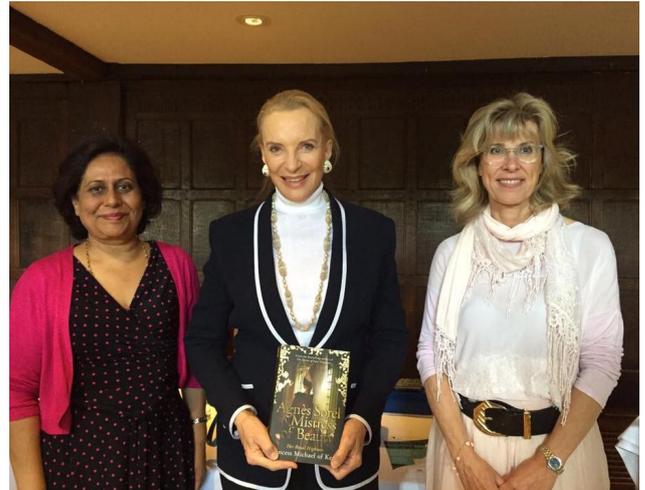
Most months we have a formal speaker at our meetings. Last year it ranged from speakers about the 950th anniversary of the Battle of Hastings (1066 and all that), to the Ben Franklin house in London to authors Anne Sebba and Princess Michael of Kent. We end the year with a member and volunteer appreciation meeting.

### **AWS in the community:**

AWS has always been extremely active in donating time, money and gifts to charitable organizations within Surrey and globally through FAWCO. In 2016, AWS calculated that we had donated approximately £675,000 (\$878,000 at present exchange rate) in cash and gifts in kind since our founding. If we used historical exchange rates, the sum is \$1,000,000 plus!

We work hard (and gladly) to raise the money we donate. Our largest fundraiser of the year is our Holiday Gift Fayre. We have vendors from all over the country come to sell their wares. We have crafts for the children, a bake sale and serve coffee and pastries. It's a whole day affair in November that takes an entire year of planning.

Another wonderful way to raise money for our Charity Slate was created by member Shelagh Klein. It is a Holiday Home tour of our members' homes dressed up for the holidays.



We not only send cash donations to local and global charities but we also give our time and gifts. For example annually we celebrate Christmas at St. Ebbas with a community of mentally disabled adults. For over 18 years we have baked and served a lovely lunch and have had a jolly time decorating, carolling and giving presents.

We have an annual "giving tree" where charities send us a wish list of things wanted. Members take away a "wish" and fulfill it by buying the gift, which is then wrapped and distributed to those less fortunate in the community.

### **AWS and the importance of education**

AWS is so educationally focused that it is written into our by-laws that \$4,500 is given annually to The FAWCO Foundation for an Education Award entitled "AW Surrey Hope Through Education." Several AWS members' children have been recipients of the FAWCO Educational Awards and one AWS member has received an award to further her higher education.

AWS members have supported NEEDED (Nimbus, Enfance, Environnement, Education et Développement) by financing girls in Burkina Faso to become teachers and midwives. The first two FAWCO Target Projects were proposed by AWS members. In March 2015, AWS member Cathy Marland nominated Free the Girls charity, which successfully raised funds and collected bras to "free" women from the sex trade. In 2009, AWS member and Past AWS President Yolanda Henry nominated Wells for Clean Water, under the Tabitha Foundation Canada, and was chosen as the first official FAWCO Target Project. There are now a lot of girls attending school instead of trekking miles for water!

In 2012, AWS received the Development Grant for Thanda Children's Library, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Our active AWS member was Holly Howard, who is mother of one of the co-founders. Thanda provides support for children orphaned or made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS through after-school programming. Over 85,000 meals are served annually to children. Thanda has managed to sustain after-school attendance at 88%. Last year alone, 6,661 books were checked out of the library that was furnished by the FAWCO Foundation grant.



### **Highlighting a few of our members**

We have some impressive ladies in the club we'd like to tell you more about:

**Catherine Marland:** On March 27, 2007, Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, held a reception for 500 powerful, prestigious, working Americans based in Britain at Buckingham Palace which included AWS President Catherine Marland. Catherine was officially announced to The Queen and later had a lively chat informing Her Majesty about FAWCO and AWS.

**Kathy Coughlan:** AWS members have taken educational charity giving to the next level. Past AWS Treasurer Kathy and her family have established their own charity to educate children in addition to funding a FAWCO Development Grant.

**Pam Dahlgren:** Past AWS President, Pam established a FAWCO Development Grant in her will for education, "Pam Dahlgren Educating Africa's Children."

AWS members have also been very involved with FAWCO. Pam Dahlgren was President of FAWCO (2001-2003) and we've had two FAWCO Foundation Presidents, **Ellie Badanes** (2000-2003) and **Melissa Mash** (2010-2012), as well as a FAWCO Treasurer, Kathy Coughlan. They are a strong indication of our respect and appreciation of FAWCO.

**Come visit us!** If you haven't yet visited Surrey, you're missing a real gem. It is half way between London and the south coast and was therefore historically important. Our castle ruins in Guildford date back to 1066! Nestled among the Surrey Hills, it is a place of exceptional beauty. We'd love to share it with you!

Cathy Marland and Melissa Mash <http://www.awsurrey.org/Home>

# IS BASIC HEALTH IMPORTANT TO YOU?

**Are we living with problems related to  
fatigue, stress, and discomfort?**

***Even though we do our best  
to take care of ourselves, we sometimes  
need additional help.***



*Proven Scientific Benefits of Using Bemer: Enhanced General Bloodflow & Cellular Waste Removal – Enhanced Cardiac Function – Better Concentration & Relaxation – More Strength & Energy – Sleep Management & Stress Reduction.*

*There are over 18 years of documented scientific studies on the Bemer published in [www.pubmed.gov](http://www.pubmed.gov) The BEMER is a safe and patented unique electromagnetic medical device designed to improve circulation, which supports the body's natural self-regulating processes.*

**To learn more about BEMER  
go to <http://aahealthresource.bemergroup.com/en-US>**

**BEMER**  
GROUP

Tony Armand MBA  
949-903-5788  
[Tonyarmand888@gmail.com](mailto:Tonyarmand888@gmail.com)



## Inspiration from Sweden



**My name is Susanna Lewis and I am a member of AWC Malmö.** Malmö, which is where I live, is on the coast in the south of Sweden. This September I have taken over as the President of our club, having been on the board for three years.

As a person, I am an extrovert and a proactive problem solver. After years of trying different career paths, I only recently realized that my favorite kinds of problems to solve are people problems, especially with young people, to help them gain confidence and learn to respect themselves, others and the world around them.

My introduction to working in the field of education started as a Masters program assistant at Blekinge Institute of Technology in Karlskrona, Sweden, where in addition to administrative duties, I took on an English learning support role to assist foreign students. I quickly realized that working in English education offered travel opportunities, which led me to spend a wonderful year and a half working in Hangzhou, China, as a guest English

teacher at Hangzhou Dianzi University, where I taught oral English and advanced writing.

After that amazing experience, my husband and I returned to Sweden again and I hit a wall. We were living in a new city in Sweden where we didn't know anyone, I was unemployed, struggling to learn Swedish and suddenly found myself completely and utterly lost.

It took me several years, several wrong paths and one baby to find my way back to education, albeit through an unlikely source.

Last year (2016), a friend recruited me to work as a communicator for My Esteeme, a start-up company that develops teaching tools for preschools that follow the EU equal treatment directive by helping children appreciate diversity and develop healthy self-esteem. I helped achieve success with a Kickstarter crowd-funding campaign, provided support communicating with key clients, and contributed to make My Esteeme a regional Venture Cup winner. Although the work was meaningful and enjoyable, I began to long to spend more time working with students rather than selling products to their school's administrators.

Now I am working as a first-grade class assistant for Malmö International School, an International Baccalaureate school that offers Primary Years and Middle Years Programs, and have a goal for myself to begin studying for my teaching certification in the near future!

My mother was a high school art teacher for 30 years. She often came home exhausted and disillusioned with the American public education system. This intimate insight into her experience deterred me from going into education for many years, but in the end, I can't deny that I really enjoy helping others learn and grow. The work is definitely intense and often exhausting, but I find it incredibly satisfying nonetheless.

The most surprising thing about working in education is discovering how much patience and compassion is required — every minute of every day to every student. And the most amazing thing is discovering that despite being stretched thin with limited time and resources, you are still able to provide that compassion.

Other challenges in my situation working at an international school are the daily surprises that come with being in a diverse multi-cultural environment: every day is a constant barrage of cultural experiences that challenge me, that stretch me, that are sometimes painful and awkward but that become important and deeply valuable to me. It's humbling to realize again and again that you'll never stop learning.

Personally, I've learned a lot about the ins and outs of the IB program through my work, including mindfulness which we do for 30 minutes at the end of every day. We try to create a calm environment using different meditation techniques to help the students focus, cultivate awareness and destress after our long, busy days.

Right now the most important things that I'm teaching are basic social skills, which are applicable throughout your life! One example is turn-taking, which applies to both physical activities and discussions and teaches students to be respectful of others and confident in themselves. Another important lesson is teaching students compassion by reminding them to say sorry, even if their action or words were an accident or not intended to be hurtful. I hope they learn these lessons for life!



### **GETTING TO KNOW SUSANNA**

**If we looked in your purse, what would we find?** Hand sanitizer, tissues and snacks — I'm the mother of a two-year-old and just generally practical so I'm usually ready for any emergency!

**Where is the most beautiful place in the world you have been?** If I could snap my fingers and go anywhere, it would be back to Kampot, Cambodia, in general and Eden Eco Village in particular. I'd love to stay in their treetop bungalows again, eat delicious Khmer food, and watch the river drift by.

**What things do you miss most about your home country?** I miss having small, friendly conversations with strangers. Growing up in the deep South, one becomes accustomed to polite chatter to pass the time, for example while waiting in line. In Sweden, however, remaining silent seems preferred.

**Which book or film that you've seen recently would you recommend?** I recently read *Water Knife* by Paolo Bacigalupi, which is a grimly fascinating account of a not very



distant future where, after years of drought, states in the American southwest have formed their own militias and shut down their borders in order to control and protect the scarce water resources they have left. I liked it because it takes seriously our present threats and follows them to a possible nightmarish scenario. It's a great reminder that our actions today impact not only ourselves but also future generations!

**What personal motto do you live by and how does it affect what you do/don't do?** Right now it's "Don't be afraid to speak up about what you want." This has taken me a long time to learn because for a long time I felt embarrassed to admit that I wasn't where I wanted to be in life and was weighed down by superficial expectations of what success looked like. Especially in a reserved culture such as Sweden, being able to express your goals and ask for help in achieving them can be extremely intimidating. But it's important not to let fear dictate your life. Instead we should be kind to ourselves by showing a bit of vulnerability in order to allow others to help show the way forward. The more you do it, the easier it gets!

**If you could meet one famous or influential woman, alive or dead, who would it be and why?** I would like to meet with Anita Sarkeesian, a media critic who I admire for her fearlessness in standing up to misogyny in video game culture and online harassment. I'd like to talk to her about how she remains motivated and hopeful in the battle against institutionalized sexism and racism.



## Inspiration from Switzerland



**My name is Elizabeth López-Rigaudeau and I am a member of the American Women's Club of Zurich, Switzerland.** I have lived in Hamburg, Tokyo, Madrid, Mexico City, and Düsseldorf and now reside in Zurich. I was born and raised in New York City and am of Puerto Rican descent. English and Spanish are my mother tongues and I also speak French and German.

I have been a member of the AWC Zurich FAWCO committee since 2008, Chair of PhASE, co-Chair of Member to Member Care Team, Nominating Committee Chair, Exec VP and VP Member Relations & Activities. Over the years I also started several key initiatives aimed at strengthening the club's social and local charitable outreach, namely PhASE (Philanthropy and Social Engagement,) which began our Club Sponsored Charity effort, and Member to Member Care Team designed to provide our members with short term support during unforeseen circumstances. Both of these initiatives continue.

My journey in the world of education started quite accidentally on the day I attended a sponsored walk in Zurich for the Rainbows4children (R4C) foundation, co-founded by Kathryn



and Max Robinson. Its mission is to break the cycle of poverty by building a model system of education in Ethiopia. In chatting with Kathryn, I learned about their main project, the Nicolas Robinson School (NRS) in Mekele. The school educates approximately 1,400 students, mainly of disabled veterans, from K-grade 12. She stressed the need for student sponsors and spoke of the possibility for sponsors to visit the school. Their presentation was excellent and their results were (are) extraordinary. I left with portrait photos of my newly adopted two children and convinced that I was on to something worthwhile. Two years later I met my beautiful adoptees and found myself in front of a group of NRS students, helping them with their spoken English.

Never did I think I would have such a fabulous opportunity. This has been particularly challenging since I have an MBA in corporate finance—not in education—and have had to quickly learn some “tried-and-tested” teaching skills. During my last trip, I acquired a

new learning tool from a visiting trainer, and after some research ran workshops for the Kindergarten teachers. They are applying it effectively with much skill and enthusiasm. The R4C foundation's most recent project is a center for vocational training which has met with very good results. I am learning that as I get more involved with R4C, I find myself asking “What's next? How else can I help?” It's almost compulsive! This is how I became a blogger. I can tell you that the thought never crossed my mind before. My daughter was certainly impressed! So now I blog about my trips in the hope of sharing my experiences with family and friends.

I love working with children and this experience has shown me that I was meant to be a teacher. So when Kathryn mentioned that they could use me as an aid to the Spoken English teachers at the NRS, I jumped at the opportunity. The additional advantage was that I could hold individual sessions with my sponsored kids. It's a rare opportunity to get this close to a project. Teaching is exhausting work but so satisfying. You are in front of a group of students who are hanging on to your every word, gesture, and instruction. The responsibility is enormous.

I am proud of what I have achieved through R4C. Specifically, I am proud of my sponsorship of five students at the Nicolas Robinson school; my efforts to promote the R4C foundation and raise funds for two key projects, namely, the installation of showers and a water purification system to improve health and hygiene to the Nicolas community (thanks to a FAWCO Foundation DG), and the recent Nicolas Youth and Adult Learning Center for vocational training; my trips as a volunteer to the Nicolas school. With these efforts I hope to send a simple message to the NRS community: “You are important and I care enough to help.”

### **GETTING TO KNOW ELIZABETH**

#### **What has been your favorite vacation?**

Ethiopia. I loved the gorgeous nature we explored, the ancient traditions we experienced, and the personal contact we enjoyed with our local hosts. We stayed in a

lodge that rested on top of a mountain requiring a 1.5 hour hike to reach. The views were sumptuous. Our first hike up was after a huge downpour with hail (!) and our second was shared with locals on their way to market.

In the evening around a bonfire we ate a delicious local meal, were serenaded by the lodge security staff singing traditional Ethiopian songs, received a foot massage as a sign of welcome, took a bucket shower with warm water provided by our host, and lastly retreated to our private lodge with a large bed heated up with two hot water bottles. It was all so simple but genuine and served with great warmth and hospitality. We slept soundly!

**Which book you've read recently would you recommend?** *Cutting for Stone* by Abraham Verghese. It is a beautifully written book. The author took great care in choosing his words and expressions. It is a story mainly about family love, sibling loyalty, and compassion and how to express it. It takes place in Ethiopia and the women in the story are particularly strong. Empathy is at its core and the humanity expressed is compelling.

**If you became president or leader of either your home country or host country for a day, what would you do/change?** Serving as the first female president of the USA for 24 hours—Wow! I am a strong believer in local community/grass roots efforts that motivate communities to volunteer to take on whatever issues are of deepest concern to them. Local initiatives nurture the idea that every member of the community has a vested interest in progress and can make individual contributions no matter how small. All too often people think that it is up to the local political party to act on their behalf, or worse, that they are not qualified to bring about change on their own. I would invite all the governors to the White House to discuss how they can harness state resources

—human (local civic/educational/religious/health leaders), financial, corporate, small businesses—in a consistent manner to push forward progress on priority issues for their communities. I would, however, place particular emphasis on their work toward achieving gender equality and better care of the aging.

**What personal motto do you live by and how does it affect what you do/don't do?** I am a sociable person so I like team work. When I was looking for a good mission statement for the Philanthropy and Social Engagement activity at the AWCZ, I chose Margaret Mead's inspirational words: *"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."*

**Of all the people you have met in your life, who do you admire most?** I come from a family with strong women but definitely my mother has impacted me the most. I admire her because she immigrated alone to the USA in her early 20s without a job, and with very little English but with the dream of improving her life. She eventually did night school at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City and earned two degrees. She went on to be a professional seamstress with various NYC based designers, sewing their first samples that graced NYC cat walks. Her most notable employer was Oscar de la Renta. Mom was a model in courage and dedication to her work.



## Reflections on how our children learn



**Jane Mabile, a Professional Certified Life Coach, talks to us about how children learn....**

Go ahead and say it out loud. "School was never a problem for me; so how the heck did I end up with a couple of knuckleheads for children, who

don't listen in class and won't do their homework?" You might even be thinking: "Why didn't my sister get any knuckleheads? She didn't work as hard as I did at school; I am definitely NOT the one who deserves this!" Yes, poor you. I can see you sitting next to your son, helping him do his multiplication problems. I can hear you losing your cool, "It is not that hard, son, now watch one more time!!" And I can feel your guilt when you lay down in bed that night, reliving the look your son gave you when you raised your voice.

It was my sister who helped me change my perspective. When I complained to her, she responded, "It is a good thing that you got the 'knuckleheads' – and not me. You were the one who was conscientious about school and learning. I know that you'll do all the right things to help them; they'll be fine." By that time, my sons had opened my eyes to a sad truth: I was pretty much an intellectual snob, with only the most superficial understanding of how people learn. It went something like this: If you work hard, you will succeed at school. And if you don't, then you deserve your results.

Needless to say, my understanding of how people learn was not just rudimentary, it was incorrect. What follows is an excerpt from an essay one of my sons (Jacques-Alexander Gonnard) wrote, which explains in a more eloquent way what can impede learning.

*When I was in second grade I was diagnosed with written language*

*disorder. Basically I was a slower reader and had a lot of trouble writing, plus I had difficulty paying attention. As one can imagine, this was an important source of problems for my academic life. I was pulled out of my bilingual elementary school, redirected to a French school that provided language therapy, and instructed to repeat the year. Soon enough I developed an indifference towards my bad grades, and looking back, I realize that I had lost hope and did not care about school anymore. This defeatism was probably caused by my continual fruitless efforts to try to overcome my issues. I remember working almost every day with my mom; she would help me by reading alternate pages, dictating sentences and spelling words, and during each vacation we would redo my tests. Yet the hard work I provided only brought me lean results. This was my situation into middle school.*

Through those years of accompanying my son, we tried to focus on the learning process, and not grades. The goal was to ensure that he didn't have critical learning gaps, which would preclude him from the next year's learning. Because he spent more time watching the birds fly than listening to his teacher, we had no choice but to redo the key points of the program during vacations and over the summer. One specialist told us that our son's "available" time for learning might be limited to certain contexts and times of day. So we adapted our schedule to his limitations.

A book a friend recommended allowed me to take a huge step forward in understanding how children learn. I picked up a copy of *A Mind at a Time* by Dr. Mel Levine and read it. The book's premise is: "You can encourage a child's strengths and bypass their weaknesses thereby producing satisfaction and achievement instead of frustration and failure." Dr. Levine explains the brain's different neurodevelopmental learning systems: Attention Control, Memory, Language, Spatial Ordering, Sequential

Ordering, Motor, Higher Thinking, and Social Thinking. His last chapters look at what to do when a mind falls behind. The book offered a map to understand my own way of learning, just as it gave me a tool to identify the learning strengths and weaknesses of others. The impact on my ability to support my son was immediate.

In France, my son received years of language therapy. The approach was general, however, and not targeted to his specific writing challenges. Eventually I took a TEFL—Teaching English as a Foreign Language—course, and one requirement was to write a research paper. The topic I chose involved “process writing”, and as a result, I acquired the tools to help my son. Process writing breaks the writing task down into individual parts, making it easier to manage. Ron White and Valerie Arndt, in their book *Process Writing*, propose a writing model consisting of six interactive processes: Generating Ideas, Focusing, Structuring, Drafting, Evaluating, and Reviewing.

Flash forward. A few weeks ago my son Jacques-Alexander matriculated into a US university. How did that happen? Here is another excerpt from his essay.

*The summer before eighth grade, my family and I brought my sister to her college campus in the United States. I fell in love with everything: the architecture, the vegetation, the people, and the academic life. I remember feeling a sensation of innocent jealousy towards my sister; in my current situation I knew that it would take a miracle for me even to hope one day to attend college in the United States.*

*It was after that visit that my life radically changed. I asked my mom what I could do to help my chances. She said to pay attention in class and to read an hour a day. A few weeks later I started eighth*



Celebrating with my son Jacques-Alexander

*grade, and I was completely taken by surprise: I understood my classes, did my homework on my own, and received some high grades. That was the beginning of my new life.*

*When you have been through hard times, where you worked for hours to get only a mediocre grade, you love your good grades so much that it motivates you to work harder to get more of them. When you sacrifice your time and give strong effort for a grade, you earn the right to savor it. That feeling is what has been driving me through my life since eighth grade. I remember teachers saying: “He’s not school material”. Now I look back and can feel my pride breathing inside my heart as I have proved what I can achieve.*

No doubt, the fact that my son found a powerful motivation to succeed in school just before eighth grade played a major role in his transformation. Yet I see the years of support he received from me, his language therapists, and his teachers, as well as his own steady efforts, as the key. When my son’s physical and mental maturity finally kicked into place, he was able to succeed because his knowledge gaps were not too big and his self-esteem was intact.

**Jane Mabile is a Professional Certified Coach (PCC) based in Paris, France. She works at Kedge Global Executive MBA as an executive coach. In addition, Jane runs her own coaching practice for clients representing a diversity of ages, cultures, and professions. A member of AAWE (Association of American Women in Europe), Jane is the editor of its quarterly magazine. She also authors a *Teen Coach* column at the online magazine *INSPIRELLE*. Jane and her French husband have a 23-year-old daughter, and two teenage sons. With special thanks to Jacques-Alexander Gonnard for his part in this article.**

## Inspiration from Holland



**My name is Suzanne Vine and I am a member of the American Women's Club of Amsterdam, Holland.** I am the member support chair for our club. I was born in Trenton, NJ, and my husband and I raised our two children in Maplewood, NJ.

I worked for just over 10 years as an elementary school teacher in the New Jersey school district where we lived. Teaching was a second career for me, or actually a "rebound" career. After graduating from college, I moved to San Francisco and was an assistant teacher at a preschool for two years. I then went to law school, and practiced for seven years in the field of children's rights law. After staying at home with my two children, I returned to work outside the home by substitute teaching. I ended up liking it so much that I decided not to return to law, but instead to become a full-time teacher.

When I represented at-risk children as an attorney, I often felt that their educational needs were not being addressed. I always had in the back of my mind the idea that if I were a teacher, I might be able to help kids before they got into legal trouble. Once I became a teacher I was surprised how hard it was. I felt like no matter how much preparation I did, it was never enough.

The most important thing I learned was how to help students become independent learners. I thought when I first started teaching that I had to be in full control of the classroom at all times. I learned to loosen the reins and let the students manage their own behavior and learning (most of the time). The most important thing I taught was how to love reading and writing. No matter what you do in life, it's important to see learning as a lifelong process, not just something you do while you are in school. If you read and write, you learn about people and places you have never visited, and you open yourself up to new ways of thinking about and looking at the world.

I am most proud of how hard I worked. Even during the summer months, I was always taking courses, and reading books that helped me become a better teacher. During my last year before moving to Amsterdam, I became a



National Board Certified teacher. I put in a lot of work taking a course, writing about my teaching, and submitting videos that showed my students and me in action.

The process was painful at times, and time-consuming, I have to admit I was proud to meet the standards and receive my certification.



### GETTING TO KNOW SUZANNE

**If we looked in your purse, what three things would we find that would tell us something about you?** *You would find a book, my glasses, and a little notepad. The book (and glasses) would tell you that I love to read. The writing pad would tell you that I love to write. I started writing a blog when we arrived in Amsterdam: Suzanne Vine's Amsterdam [suzanne-vine.squarespace.com](http://suzanne-vine.squarespace.com). I use my notepad to take notes about what I see and think, and some of those thoughts end up in my blog. I am also an avid list-writer, so I use the notebook to keep a to-do list*

**Where is the most beautiful place in the world you have been?** *It is so hard to pick a "most beautiful" place. I have been lucky enough to visit so many beautiful places in my life, especially since moving to the Netherlands. Certainly, at the top of the list would be the Dolomite Mountains in Italy. I went there last summer with my family and the wildflowers were absolutely amazing. My favorite vacation was probably our trip last spring to Nepal. My daughter was there for the semester, and it was so special to get to know the country she had grown to love.*

**Which book that you've read recently would you recommend?** *I would recommend *Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant?* It's a memoir written by *The New Yorker* magazine cartoonist Roz Chast about her*

aging parents and the difficulty of caring for them. It's both laugh-out-loud funny and achingly sad. It's essential reading for those of us going through this stage of life, or really for anyone because it's about family bonds.

**What personal motto do you live by and how does it affect what you do/don't do?** *I love the motto, "Until further notice, celebrate everything." It was the motto that my friend Arthur—who recently died from ALS—lived by. His experience reminds me to always look on the bright side of things, no matter what.*

**If you could meet one famous or influential woman, alive or dead, who would it be and why?** *I would like to sit down with Michelle Obama and talk to her about what her life was like both in and outside of the White House. I'm sure she would have some great stories to share.*



## Inspiration from Italy



**My name is Chantal Seys and I am a member of American International Women's Club in Genoa, Italy.** Being a member of the AIWC is very important to me. It is the place where I have met many of my friends.

I was born in Belgium and lived there until I was 27. My brother, sisters and 29 nieces and nephews live there and I see them when they travel to the South of France or come to visit. I go to Belgium rarely since my parents died. Although we are far away we keep in touch regularly through all the apps that the Internet offers.

I have lived in Italy since 1977, the year in which I met my husband, Carlo Baldi, during a vacation in Tunisia. We met in a very unusual way: taking a camel ride into the desert. My first year was difficult here because I didn't speak the language but everything went smoothly once I started working at the American International School (AIS) in Genoa. I lived not far from school in a nice suburb near the sea and we moved to town when I retired.

I started working at the AIS in Genoa, now ISG, in September 1979 and retired in February 2010. These were wonderful years for me, with lots of satisfaction, new incentives to do more and always to grow. I worked as a French teacher in the Middle School and as Librarian for the Early childhood, Elementary and Middle Schools. In some years, I worked as the Secretary and Business Manager rather than Librarian, and as a result I knew the school community very well and loved the good relationship with parents, students and colleagues. The school improved and grew during these years and being in daily contact with people from different nationalities opened my mind and I tried to absorb and make mine the different qualities that made them special. The School was a happy island where you could work intensively and make the best out of it for the benefit of the students. After I retired I became a member of a volunteering association that makes audio-visual books for dyslexic children. The child has the e-book on the computer and by clicking on the arrow can listen to the text read by volunteers. To look at the text and listen to the text at the same time is very important because it helps the reader to improve his/her reading skills.

My love for children got me into this field. When I started working as a teacher I discovered how wonderful it was to work with children. Children are joyful and eager to learn. I realized furthermore how important education is for their future. I like to help students and encourage them to prepare for a profession and improve their personalities.

It was amazing and frightening at the same time to see how the students absorb your words and follow your



directions. It feels good to give them tools to use in future. Not only by teaching them but also by helping them exhibit a greater sense of responsibility towards themselves, other people, the environment and the community.

I learned a lot from my colleagues and the mission statement of the school. Teachers came from different nationalities and they all had their own qualities. Working together was fantastic and helped me to become a better teacher and a better person.

My most important achievement lies in the success of my students. At a recent gala evening to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the school I met several alumni. They were all successful young men and women, working all over the world. I have the feeling that the school gave them a very positive imprint.



### **GETTING TO KNOW CHANTAL**

**What has been your favorite vacation?** My favorite vacation was in Argentina. I went there 3 years ago with my husband and our daughter. Buenos Aires has large avenues with beautiful buildings and amazing parks. We took pictures of huge trees and plants. The maintenance of the city should serve as an example for all cities. On top of that, people are kind and welcoming and the meat is delicious. We also went up to the Andes where we admired the incredible mountains, reflecting different colours depending on their mineral content. It was also an opportunity to get in touch with the local population and buy their colourful sweaters. But the waterfalls of Iguazù were the most fascinating. I had never been surrounded by so much water. The different waterfalls were all around us, the sound of it was great, the nature was luxuriant.

**If you were moving back to your home country, what would you miss most about your host country?** I would miss the culture,

the food and the mild climate. Italy's Renaissance art and architecture are tremendously rich. I feel happy when I walk in those streets lined with 500-year-old palaces, visit churches with Rubens paintings and listen to concerts in one of those palaces. It is the place where the first modern bank was created and the place where Christopher Columbus and the musician Paganini came from. People are open and talkative. The food is of excellent quality and everybody knows that. The Mediterranean diet is one of the healthiest in the world, we enjoy a mild climate, never too hot and never too cold. The summer usually starts in May and ends in October, the coldest months are January and February.

**What things do you miss most about your home country?** Bicycling and horseback riding were my favourite sports in Belgium and it is very difficult, if not impossible, to practice them here. I also miss the North Sea. This is probably puzzling for other people but

the North Sea has long sandy beaches and big waves with tides. Instead, the Mediterranean Sea often looks like a quiet lake. I don't tire of looking at the strength of the waves and walking barefoot on the sandy beach, it's the first thing I do when I return to Belgium. Oh, how could I forget the waffles, chocolate and the French fries!!

**Which book that you've read recently would you recommend?** Being a member of two different book clubs, I read a lot and could recommend different good books of different genres. I just finished *Artemisia* by Alexandra Lapierre. Artemisia Gentileschi was one of the few successful famous painters of the

sixteenth century. She learned the art of painting from her father Orazio who was also a famous painter and in great demand in Rome and all over Italy and England. The book is interesting because of the description of the artists' lives and conflicts in the sixteenth century, first in Italy and then in Europe. Artemisia had to face many difficulties: her loving mother died when she was twelve, her father became jealous and over-protective, she was raped by her father's friend and had to battle to prevail at trial. Life was not easy for talented women at that time but she won the battle and became very rich and successful.

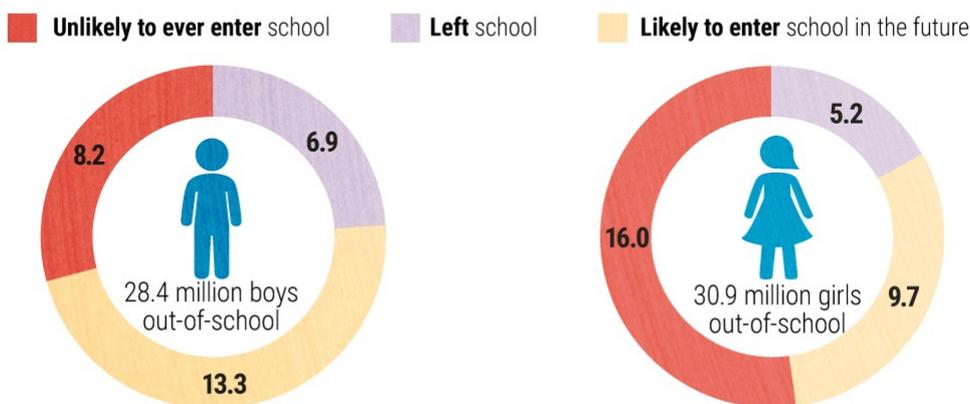
**What personal motto do you live by and how does it affect what you do/don't do?**

*Mens sana in corpora sano* (sound mind in a healthy body.) I am convinced that you have to have a sound mind and a healthy body in order to be a well-balanced and happy person. I therefore read, write and learn something new every day such as a new recipe or Spanish words or computer skills to keep my brain trained and at the same time I practice yoga, walk and go as often as possible hiking up in the nearby mountains. I also follow the Mediterranean diet and eat mainly veggies, fish and fruit as Italians do.



## TWICE AS MANY GIRLS AS BOYS WILL NEVER START SCHOOL

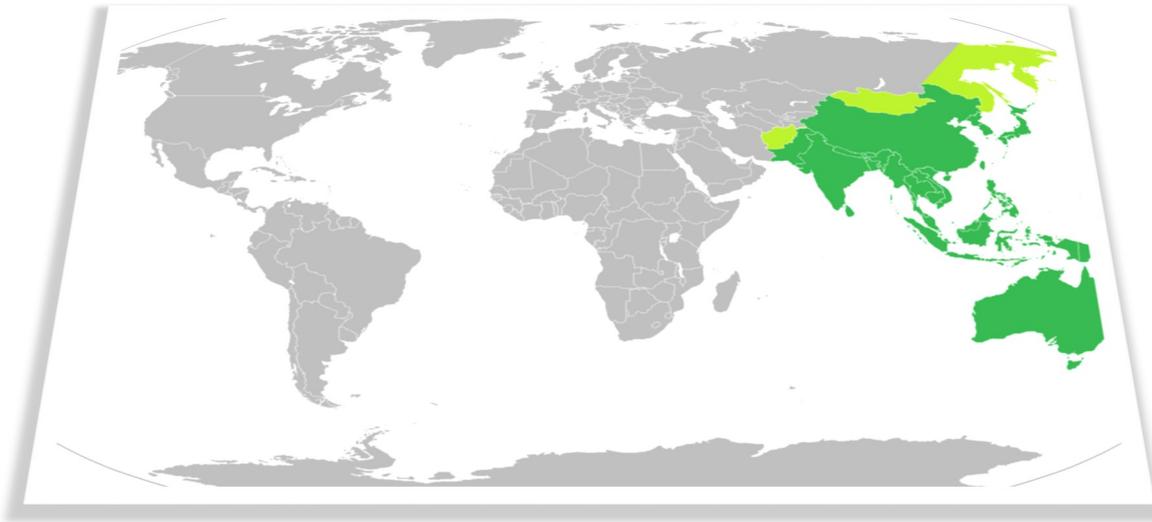
Out-of-school children of primary school age



Source: UNESCO eAtlas of Gender Inequality in Education - <http://on.unesco.org/gender-map>



## Regional Inspiration: Region 11



Region 11 covers Asia/Pacific and currently we have five clubs: American Women's Club of Perth (Australia), American Club Shanghai (China), American Women's Club of Mumbai (India), American Women's Club of Korea (Korea) and American Women's Club of the Philippines (Philippines).



**My name is Jodie Sovak and I am the new Regional Coordinator for Region 11.** I grew up in New York, NY but I have lived in India with my husband since 2004. I am a member of the American Women's Club of Mumbai where I have acted as Parliamentarian at AWC annual Board meetings. I also had the pleasure of coordinating the speakers for the most recent FAWCO Biennial Conference that took place in Mumbai.

Region 11 is so vast that it presents a challenge. I have yet to visit any of the clubs other than my own, but now that I am the Coordinator, I am super keen to do so. I want to find ways that we can stay connected and share ideas. I am new in my FAWCO role but after meeting amazing women at the Mumbai conference, I look forward to digging in! FAWCO is about friendship and a global force of women advocating for women's issues worldwide.

I have been in the world of education for many years. After graduating from Vanderbilt University in 1994, I moved back home to New Jersey and taught high school mathematics in both public and private schools in the New York metropolitan area for the next decade. In the final two years, just before moving to India, I was a full-time graduate student at Montclair State University where I taught undergraduate math courses while completing my Master's degree in Mathematics.

Five years after moving to India, it was a thrill when I was able to return to a school setting with my then three-year-old daughter to start her life as a student. It was shortly after that I joined the American School of Bombay team, first as an Admissions Officer and later as the Head of

Community Relations. Being a parent and joining an international community of families has not only been a great privilege, but it has really helped me to broaden my perspective.

It was my own teachers that had inspired me to get into education! I grew up in suburban New York and attended my neighborhood public schools. Some of my teachers back then still stand out as amazing and inspiring role models. I wanted to have that same impact on young people. I continue to be surprised every day by what students are capable of when given the opportunity and encouragement. Early in my career, I worried a lot about giving knowledge and skills to my students. My thinking has really evolved over the years. I have learned so much from the students with whom I have had the privilege to work and we have built so much shared understanding together. It's a two way street.

I have come to learn that the relationships and connection I have with students are incredibly important. I can have high hopes for my students academically but they have to trust me and believe that I have their best interests at heart. The most important thing I believe I can teach students is to know themselves as learners. That is, help them to understand how they learn best and how to prioritize what is important. In other words - be life-long learners.

For me, it's all about the individual students that I have had an impact on over the years: the young women that were in my higher level math classes, the undergraduates that were trying to satisfy (with fear and anxiety) their math requirements, and the families that were relocating to Mumbai for their first international postings.

---

### **GETTING TO KNOW JODIE**

***If we looked in your purse, what three things would we find that would tell us something about you?*** I am looking in my purse right now, skipping the boring stuff, like keys and business cards!

I always carry a shawl. Mumbai has a tropical climate but I am in and out of air-conditioned spaces all day. My favorite ones are designed by my friend Hema Patel, under her label Amba. Hema is passionate about keeping the traditions of Indian textiles alive.

I always have Kama Ayurveda brand rose lip balm. I put on lip color in the morning, but then I apply this moisturizing, beautifully fragrant lip balm all day long. I keep little pots of it everywhere - in my purse, desk, car, etc. I love it.

Left to my own devices, I would drink coffee all day long. To break the afternoon coffee habit, I always carry Organic India brand Tulsi tea bags. It's calming and tulsi or "holy basil" has amazing health benefits.



***What has been your favorite vacation?*** I have had the pleasure and privilege to see a lot of the world. But my husband and I keep going back to the island of Virgin Gorda in the British Virgin Islands. We've been going there for years to enjoy sailing,

snorkelling, beautiful beaches and the laid-back vibe. Years later, we are happy to enjoy this special place with our two daughters who also love all water sports.

**Which book that you've read recently would you recommend?** *In the Garden of Beasts* by Erik Larson. In this book, Larson uses the memoirs of William Dodd, US Ambassador to Germany under Franklin Roosevelt, to tell the story of what takes place in Berlin and Germany in the 1930s. It chronicles the rise of Hitler from the point of view of Dodd and his family, as well as US sentiment at the time. It is a particularly fascinating book for me because my father was born in Düsseldorf in 1933. He emigrated to the US in 1951. This book gives me a little window into my dad's life during the early part of his childhood and what it must have been like for him as a child in depression-era Germany.



**What personal motto do you live by and how does it affect what you do/don't do?** "Fake it until you make it!"

I say it to myself a couple of times a day and I encourage my colleagues with the same mantra. Working full-time and being a mom of two kids, I often feel like I'm barely holding it together.

So I just fake it until I make it.

Want to be sure you see the next issue of **Inspiring Women** as soon as it comes out? Click [here](#) to have it sent directly to your mailbox!



## Recipes to Inspire You from Region 11

**FROM INDIA:** My dear friend and fellow AWC Mumbai member, Khushnuma Ferzandi, introduced me to delicious Akoori, or Parsee-style scrambled eggs. I have enjoyed this dish at her home often and it is so easy to make. Great for a crowd at brunch time!

### **Akoori — Parsee-style scrambled eggs**

6 eggs  
2 tbsp butter  
2 medium onions finely chopped  
3 tbsp chopped coriander  
2 fresh green chilis (optional)  
1 ripe tomato finely diced

#### **DIRECTIONS**

1. Beat the eggs until well mixed.
2. Heat butter in a large heavy pan, add the onions and cook until translucent for about 4-5 minutes. Add the chilis (if used) and tomatoes and cook until fragrant, another 2-3 minutes. (If using unsalted butter add 1/2 tsp salt)
3. Add 1 tbsp chopped coriander and sauté for an additional 1-2 minutes. Stir in egg mixture and cook over low-heat, stirring and lifting eggs as they begin to set on the base of the pan.
4. Cook only until eggs are a creamy consistency. Do not let them cook until dry.
5. Turn onto a serving plate, garnish with coriander.
6. Serve the Akoori Eggs with traditional Brun pao (roll) or with hot toasted bread and enjoy!



**FROM AUSTRALIA:** Anzac biscuits are an Ozzie favorite! They were sent by wives and women's groups to soldiers abroad in the First World War because the ingredients do not spoil easily and the biscuits kept well during naval transportation.

### **Anzac Biscuits**

85g rolled or porridge oats  
100g flour  
85g coconut  
100g sugar  
100g butter  
1 tbsp golden syrup  
1 tsp baking soda  
2 tbsp boiling water



1. Turn oven to 160°C. Lightly grease oven trays.
2. Place oats, flour, coconut, sugar in big mixing bowl.
3. Melt butter and golden syrup in saucepan. Take off heat.
4. Mix baking soda and boiling water in a cup. Add to melted butter mixture in the pan. Quickly add to big mixing bowl. Mix well.
5. Roll tablespoonfuls of the mixture into balls. Place on trays 5cm apart. Press lightly with fork.
6. Bake for 20 minutes.

## More Inspiration from Germany



**My name is Carol Stocking Harbers and I am a member of the American Women's Club of Hamburg, Germany** where I am the newly elected Editor-in-Chief of Club Magazines.

I grew up in California but I have now lived in Hamburg for 35 years.

I obtained a Bachelor's degree with a Biology major and Psychology minor from the University of California, San Diego in 1975. I decided to pursue graduate studies in Education, thinking a teaching career would be more conducive to having a family. However, after two years of teaching high school biology in rural Connecticut, I decided an academic research career was more in-tune with my strengths. In 1979, I returned to graduate school and joined a research laboratory in London to complete my Ph.D. work in Molecular Biology. My research interests brought me to Hamburg, Germany and in 1989 I was able to establish my own research group at the Heinrich-Pette-Institute, Leibniz Institute for

Experimental Virology. As our institute was associated with the University of Hamburg, we were expected to train and teach doctoral students, in addition to maintaining an internationally competitive research program. At this point, I realized that my education background provided a sound base for mentoring students for a career in science and saw this as an additional reward to my research work. In particular, mentoring young women scientists became an important challenge for me. Over the course of my career, which ended last year with my retirement, I have mentored over forty Masters and Doctoral students.

During my own training period, I was tremendously impressed by my advisor, Joan A. Steitz, who was one of the first woman scientists to be internationally recognized in the field of Molecular Biology. Her enthusiasm for her work was contagious and inspired me to get into the field.

I have been surprised, over the years, that the "glass ceiling" still exists. Although there has been



a strong movement to encourage women into scientific careers since my college days, I never realized how tough the road is for many women. I was lucky not to have been hampered by prejudices in the early half of my career, but looking back, there are many hurdles out there – some generated by women themselves, some arising from unacknowledged prejudices of others. Things have changed, especially in the USA – but one only has to see how few women make it to leading positions in the scientific community to see that women still have a long way to go.



I think the most important thing I have learned during my career/life is to have confidence in yourself, an attribute I now try to teach my grandchildren. Having confidence helped me to be able to mentor women scientists and define and achieve their goals. But also on a more personal level, it has helped me to help my husband's daughters find their own balance between a satisfying career and raising children.



#### **GETTING TO KNOW CAROL**

***If we looked in your purse, what three things would we find that would tell us something about you?*** My iPhone with its many apps – I am addicted to having information at my fingertips (and photos of my grandchildren). Lipstick – the splash of color makes one look and feel better. Bicycle key – my primary means of transportation

***Where is the most beautiful place in the world you have been?*** Many beautiful places, but my husband and I enjoy visiting and hiking in the Southwest USA.

***If you could start all over again in any city or country, which one would it be and why?*** Would not change a thing; California was a great place to “grow up” – Hamburg is a beautiful place to live.

***If you were moving back to your home country, what would you miss most about your host country?*** The many friends I have made over the years—and the more relaxed way of living. Sundays are there to enjoy and relax, go for long walks. No need for a car—just jump on your bike or go on the Underground.

**What things do you miss most about your home country?** Family and the ease of speaking your native language.

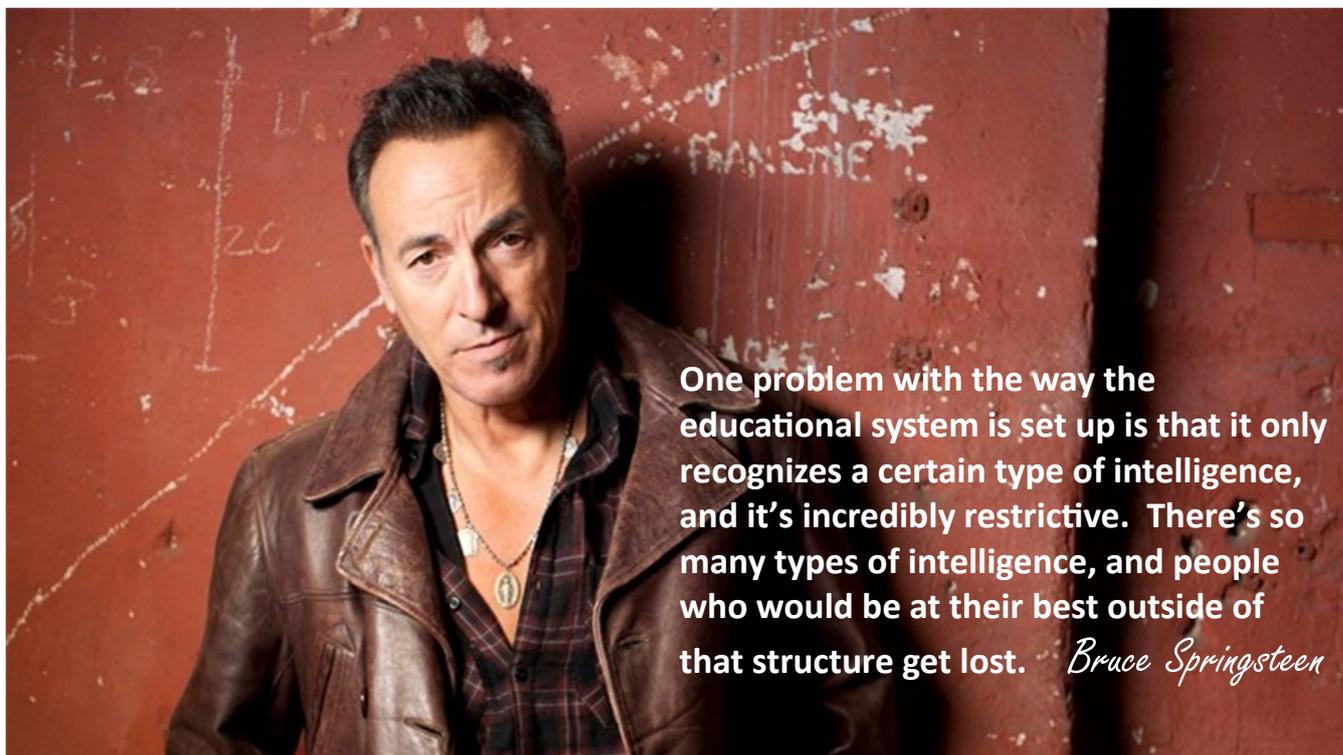
**Which film that you've seen recently would you recommend?** *Paula* – a film about the Expressionist painter Paula Modersohn-Becker (directed by Christian Schwochow). The film reminds me how far women have come – and the multitude of outlets we have to express ourselves. Paula is depicted by a wonderful young actress (Carla Juri), who embodies the driving, free but tormented spirit of the painter.

**Of all the people you have met in your life, who do you admire most? Why? Who has had the most impact on you?** My parents. They taught me the value of education and knowledge, the importance of tolerance and compassion, and the virtues of responsibility and integrity.

**If you could meet one famous or influential woman, alive or dead, who would it be and why? What would you talk about with her?** Melinda Gates. I believe she has been very influential in channelling money into scientific projects that will really make a difference in



making life better for millions. What advice does she have for women?



One problem with the way the educational system is set up is that it only recognizes a certain type of intelligence, and it's incredibly restrictive. There's so many types of intelligence, and people who would be at their best outside of that structure get lost. *Bruce Springsteen*

## Inspiration from the FAWCO Education Team



**My name is Carol-Lyn McKelvey and I am a member of the American International Women's Club of Cologne, Germany.** In my club I have been part of the Programs Team and within FAWCO I am Co-Chair of the Education Team with Arandeeep Degun.

I grew up in Ohio and Pennsylvania. I left home when I was 17 to go to university and since then, have lived in California, New Jersey, Texas, Kansas and Michigan, as well as Germany. I moved to Cologne in 2013 and will be moving back home to Farmington Hills, Michigan this fall.

I feel like my journey into the world of education started with my mom. She was an upper grade teacher in our Catholic school and there was no bigger thrill than going to her classroom "upstairs." Hanging out with the "big" kids, helping with bulletin boards, using a red pen to help grade spelling tests...these experiences ingrained in me a love of all things school-related. Additionally, my mom was a little like a superhero: she cooked every night, worked every day, made our Halloween costumes and various other outfits (including my aunt's

wedding dress!), and painted in her spare time (how did she have any?!), all while raising three daughters. Who wouldn't want to follow in those footsteps, I thought! She and my dad instilled in us the belief that we could do anything that we set our mind to, so we did, too!

As I got older, I started to have an interest in kids with special needs. Whether they were my classmates or other kids I saw and met along the way, making a difference with and for them became important. In my teen years, after taking a sign language class, volunteering for the Special Olympics and assisting in an elementary school class for students with a variety of disabilities, I was hooked. My high school, Warren Area High School in Warren, PA, also had a fabulous special education department, where I met my first mentor, Bob Picarillo. His openness, acceptance and expertise were motivation in my choices as I moved to college.

While at Ohio State (go Bucks!), I had the opportunity to work for two summers at a residential camp for kids with a variety of learning challenges, including autism and Down's syndrome. Camp Lee Mar and the mighty director, Lee Morone, cemented my passion. After graduating with a dual certificate in K-12 Learning Disabilities and K-8 Elementary Education, I was eager to put my new knowledge to the test. Steve, my husband of almost 30 years now but of only days at the time, and I followed his career with Ford Motor Company to San Francisco.

Although it was shocking and frustrating to realize I had to immediately enroll BACK in school (thank you, Cal State University - Hayward for my Master's Degree!), it must have been fate. I met my life-long mentor and role model, Dr. Phyllis Kaplan, and her work and life in and out of the classroom inspired and challenged me then, and it continues to do so today. CSU - Hayward was involved in a pilot program with Oakland Public Schools (a co-teaching model integrating 4 and 5-year-old special needs children into a traditional classroom setting), and I

had the privilege of working alongside April Kilstrom, whose passion for kids paired seamlessly with her mission to educate them to their fullest capacity to learn.

And so began my career. Following Steve's career with Ford around the country allowed me to teach and learn in a variety of settings: a residential school for kids with physical and mental disabilities in New Jersey, an elementary "contained classroom" in Texas, and as a middle school teacher in a variety of roles in Michigan. After co-creating and launching a school-wide character education program with a colleague, I caught the "administration bug" and decided to pursue my Ed. Specialist in School Administration at Oakland University. This cohort setting was another stroke of luck, as learning alongside seasoned administrators provided focus and insight and a clearer view of education from multiple perspectives. (A shout-out to Dan Hickey, whose student-centered leadership was and still is unparalleled.)

Leaving my classroom behind, I began my administration career at Oak Valley Middle School in Michigan, where, on my first day of school on a Monday in mid-October, my principal directed me to find the student who penned a bomb threat in the girls' bathroom the previous Friday. What a start! In the ensuing few years we moved to Kansas where I returned, in a sense, to where it all started - as an assistant principal at a Catholic school under the direction of the most selfless educator on earth, Sue Bernica, and a dedicated staff beyond compare. From there we returned to Michigan, where I returned to my roots as a



classroom special education teacher and waited for an administrative role to open. In less than a year, a middle school assistant principalship opened up in the same district, and after six years in that position, I had the privilege of becoming the principal of Walnut Creek Middle School, my last position before moving to Germany four years ago.

So many teachers describe themselves as "just a teacher," as if it's not the most fundamental of all careers. Nobody would be where they are today without teachers, yet it's always a surprise to me in the USA when teachers are undervalued and criticized. Are all teachers fabulous? Of course not - just like any other profession, there are bound to be bad apples. But the enormous task that they undertake every day, often under conditions that are less than ideal (class size does matter, being the only native language speaker in a classroom is a challenge, differentiating for a variety of ability levels takes hours of additional prep, parent support and stable home environments are often luxuries) to make a difference in the life of a child is never to be underestimated. I never cease to be amazed at the passion and selflessness of teachers. They renew my faith in humankind every day and when I see the result of their passion manifest itself in the success of even the most challenging and challenged students, there is no better reward.

As an educator, there should never be an "end point" to our own learning. My career has evolved due to the influences of every student, teacher, parent and colleague with whom I've worked. Professionally, Bolman and Deal's *Reframing Organizations*, Carol Dweck's *Mindset*, Ken O'Connor's *How to Grade for Learning*, Ken Blanchard's *The Servant Leader*, and Ruby Payne's *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* were transformational for me in my journey.

It's hard to know what the most "important thing" is that I've taught, as the immediate impact is often different than the ultimate outcome, which may not manifest itself for years. Although they are not "things," Steve and I have taken immeasurable joy in watching our daughters, Laura and Kristen, learn and grow under our tutelage and that of the teachers, mentors and coaches they have encountered along the way. In their respective careers, they are also now impacting kids every day, and so the cycle continues!

As an educator there's not one big achievement that I can point to and say, "Yes, that's my greatest achievement!" For me it's the little moments: when Jason, a five year old boy with autism and a fear of water, learned how to swim and his parents cried when they saw the huge smile on his face as he did; when Samantha, who had been suspended multiple times for various reasons, finally broke down and told her whole story, which led to her gradual success and a life-long relationship; when Sharon, Erin and Heather, extraordinary teachers already, embraced standards-based grading, which in turn led to a deeper understanding of their students, presenting at conferences, and being published in a prestigious trade journal; when grateful staff could teach without disruption because streamlined discipline and support systems had been implemented. Moments like these are when I feel like I've accomplished something important...a perfect alignment of passion purpose, and hope. (And for the record, when I read this out loud to my husband, I cried still, after 34 years, remembering Jason's victory!)

---

### **GETTING TO KNOW CAROL-LYN**

***If I could be President of the USA for just one day...*** Without a doubt, I would immediately remove the current Secretary of Education and replace her with someone with a selfless passion for kids and who has actual experience and expertise in educating ALL students. After that, I would work to remind the nation that peaceful co-existence is the minimal expectation for citizens of our country, and that fear and ignorance only breed more of the same.

***My personal motto...*** "Knowledge is Power" (Francis Bacon) and "Be the Change You Wish to See in the World" (Gandhi). These two quotes don't expect perfection; they expect willingness to learn and act. They serve as potent reminders that can be applied in virtually every situation.

***The person who I've met that I most admire...*** As noted in the above professional narrative, I have had the fortune to know and work with many inspiring and dedicated people. The person that I most admire, however, is my husband, Steve. His unwavering moral compass, his personal and professional ethics, his love and support for our daughters, his commitment to me and how he challenges me to be a better person...all of this while being unassuming and quietly steadfast. I am endlessly grateful for him in my life.

***If I could meet one famous or influential person...*** It is a luxury that this is an incredibly difficult question! Angela Merkel, Ellen DeGeneres and Harriet Tubman leap to mind. Eunice Kennedy Shriver, however, stands apart for me for two reasons. She was rock solid in her commitment to kids and adults with special needs and she was able to create an international movement, the Special Olympics, literally from the ground up (her yard at her home was the first site for her "camp") at a time, 1962, when women were typically seen and not heard. I would love to hear her tell the story, feel her passion, and understand how she overcame the obstacles to see her dream realized.



## Inspiration from Spain



**My name is Julie Vanderlinden Triggs and I am a member of the Barcelona Woman's Network in Spain.** I am British and grew up on the Isle of Wight which is off the south coast of the UK.

I come from a working class background on the Isle of Wight and was encouraged by my parents to leave school at 16, which I did. I studied at a local technical college in Hotel and Catering for two years and did so well that they recommended that I follow a hotel management course on the mainland. In those days not only were the fees paid for, but also accommodation and a small living allowance, so my parents didn't need to contribute. I worked at functions, such as weddings and at a restaurant serving on Saturdays, throughout my student days in order to supplement this income.

I worked for about five years in the hotel and tourism industry and then took a teacher's certification course in order to teach hotel and tourism classes at the college level. (Again, funded jointly by the government and myself.) I

missed travelling, so only taught one year in London and then returned to the tourism industry. I worked for Air Canada and then SABENA, formerly the national airline of Belgium, where I met Luc, my husband. In order to go and live in Belgium, I took a one month intensive TEFL course (now known as CELTA) during the week, whilst still working at Heathrow during the weekends.

In September 1990 I moved to Belgium, where I taught at a business language school and at the British School of Brussels Adult Education Programme. After having two children, though, I wanted to change and work in mainstream education. I did a year's conversion course that turned my hotel and tourism qualification into a degree in education. I continued with a Master's Degree at the Free University of Brussels, whilst my children were still small. It was through doing this that I started teaching at the European School of Brussels II, where



I worked for 13 years, before coming here to Barcelona two years ago.

When my mother died, eight years ago, I found an old English writing book from primary school in one of her drawers. In it I had written that I would either like to work in the tourism industry or be a teacher – I now realise that I have done both!

Even though I am 58 and should be slowing down, there are still many aspects of education that inspire me. I also think that as educators we have so much to learn about bringing education up-to-date with modern day life and preparing students for the real world.

The setting up of the Learning Support Department at the European School of Brussels II is my most important achievement. When I started at the school in 2002, I was employed to work on a trial project for the English as a Foreign Language department, as there was no Special Needs Section. Through liaison with class teachers, I formed small separate classes for new students or those experiencing difficulties. In the first year we had three small groups of 6 - 8 students. Those that were new to the school soon picked up the level of the mainstream classes and were moved back when appropriate. With those that remained we focused more personally, not only on English but also on organizational, reading and writing issues, dependent on the student.

The scheme worked well and the following year I was employed through the Department of Education as a 'seconded' teacher ( i.e. I was asked to go and work in other schools to help them introduce the scheme.) As the scheme developed we started organizing individual classes for those students with specific needs such as ADD, ADHD, dyslexia and other undetected problems. Some children had been through difficulties at home, such as neglect, death (including suicides) and other unusual occurrences. For example, one mother set light to the apartment and jumped out the window. Another where a child born through a surrogate mother in the US, lived with her father only and had to follow him all around with his job. She was mixed up in life and never really felt like she belonged.



Because of the size of the school and the "stigma" of a child with learning difficulties in many southern European countries at that time (Italian and Portuguese parents were often in denial that there was anything different in the learning style of their child), we took children that had been detected by their teachers rather than analysed through a psychologist.

As the scheme grew, parents wanted their children to stay at the school and not move them to what had previously been referred to as more "appropriate" education. (For some this would mean returning to their home country and leaving Belgium and splitting the family.) I purchased books with CDs to make the curriculum more accessible, extra time in exams (which is now quite normal) was introduced and there were facilities for typing instead of writing exams, where necessary. For extreme cases of writing difficulties, we bought programs that did voice recordings which automatically transcribed onto the computer for exams.

Toward the end of the decade, my wonderful headmaster retired. The Special Needs budget was cut, a small amount at first, but gradually more and more. The new scheme was re-integration of all pupils back into the mainstream class.

There were also other priorities on the UK government's list. As English was so popular as a second and third language (we were 15 to 20 teachers just in that section), and the subjects of Geography, History and Economics were also taught in a student's second language, the number of UK teachers far out-weighted the equivalent number of UK pupils in each cohort. As teacher's contracts were running out, the UK was not replacing them. Over the last five or six years, the UK has stopped "seconding" teachers at all. A run-up for Brexit perhaps?

### **GETTING TO KNOW JULIE**

**If we looked in your handbag what three things would we find that would tell us something about you?** In my handbag (which is always a rucksack), you would find reading glasses, a small graded reader in Spanish and a plastic bag, which I use to collect rubbish on walks, particularly by the sea, to put into a dustbin.

**Which book you've read recently would you recommend?**

I recently read *The Book of Joy* by the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu. It contains a philosophy to which we should all aspire. Reviews refer to it as "lasting happiness in a changing world." It shows how events change our lives and although they may sometimes be disappointing or not what we want at the time, they lead us to other rewarding results that we could never have imagined. It shows how lasting happiness is within ourselves and it is not through others we should seek it. I can apply the concept to many features and events in my life and it often turns out to be true.

**If you became president or leader of either your home or adopted country for a day, what would you do/change?**

If I were leader of the UK, I would stop the disaster that is about to happen with Brexit. I would impose some kind of compulsory education to the age of 18, to include the introduction of a more rounded final two years, such as the International Baccalaureate and vocational courses with work related experience for more practical students – such as shop



employees. I would scrap university fees and start the privatization of the National Health System (using the same model as the Belgian Health System).

Additionally there is one formidable issue that needs to be addressed – the future of our planet. It needs to become a way of thinking in our everyday lives, not only recycling, but also avoiding the purchase of plastic packaging (fruit and vegetables are sold in plastic receptacles in many major supermarkets in the UK) and living in harmony with the earth needs to be taught at school and become part of the curriculum. This would include learning how to cook in a healthy, nutritional way.

**What personal motto do you live by and how does it affect what you do/don't do?**

My WhatsApp picture is a motto that I saw on a poster a few years ago. It is a picture of the world and reads, "I see no borders." This sums up how I feel about the world around me.

## How Can You Get Involved?

The next **Inspiring Women** will be available in November. The theme of our winter edition will be Women in the Arts — women in the world of art whatever kind of art that might be.

As in this edition, we would like to feature profiles of some of the wonderful women across the FAWCO world. If you know anyone in this field who has done something of particular interest and would make a good profile, please contact the editor by **October 9, 2017**.

We would also like to feature cover photos taken by FAWCO members - that means you! The photo theme should be Women in the Arts

Photos must be :

**PORTRAIT orientation** (landscape photos cannot be accepted);

**Digital and Color**, 150-300 dpi quality and 5-10 MB max.;

**Taken by a FAWCO member** with details of where and when the photo was taken.

**Deadline for submission is October 25, 2017**

**Please send to** Marie-Bénédicte at [inspiringwomen.cover@fawco.org](mailto:inspiringwomen.cover@fawco.org).

*N.B. Photos will be credited but no payment for their use is possible.*

### MAGAZINE FEEDBACK

We want this magazine to be interesting for all FAWCO members. In an effort to provide articles of interest to all of our readers, we have created an online feedback questionnaire. It should only take a few minutes of your time to complete and will be a great help to us!

Please click on the link or paste it into your browser  
to complete the survey.

<https://s.surveypal.com/SkkS5k49Z>

Thanks very much indeed!

# Inspiring You

Founded in 1931, FAWCO is a global women's NGO (Non-Governmental Organization), an international network of independent volunteer clubs and associations comprising 65 member clubs in 34 countries worldwide, with a total membership of around 12,000. FAWCO serves as a resource and a voice for its members; seeks to improve the lives of women and girls worldwide, especially in the areas of human rights, health, education and the environment; advocates for the rights of US citizens overseas; and contributes to the global community through its Global Issues Teams and [The FAWCO Foundation](#), which provides development grants and education awards. Since 1997, FAWCO has held special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council.

## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

**FAWCO is an international federation of independent organizations whose mission is**

- **to build strong support networks for its American and international membership;**
- **to improve the lives of women and girls worldwide;**
- **to advocate for the rights of US citizens overseas; and**
- **to mobilize the skills of its membership in support of global initiatives for education, the environment, health and human rights.**

For more information about this magazine, please contact **Inspiring Women** Editor in Chief: Liz MacNiven at [inspiringwomen.editor@fawco.org](mailto:inspiringwomen.editor@fawco.org)

For more information on how to advertise in this magazine, please contact FAWCO Advertising and Sponsorship Manager Elsie Bose at [advertising@fawco.org](mailto:advertising@fawco.org)



Liz and Elsie at the Mumbai Conference

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:**

Thanks to Beryl, Carol, Carol-Lyn, Chantal, Elizabeth, Joyce, Jodie, Julie, Karen, Megan, Myra, Susanna, Suzanne, Zakia and the ladies of AW Surrey for taking the time to participate in this edition and for the use of their photos.

Thanks to Robin for her Home and Away thoughts and Jane (and her son Jaques-Alexander) for her musings on how children learn.

Special thanks to the proofreading team of: Sallie Chaballier (AAWE Paris), Laurie Brooks (AWC Amsterdam and AWC The Hague), Janet Davis (AIWC Cologne), Mary Dobrian (AIWC Cologne), Cynthia Lehman (AIWC Cologne), Carol-Lyn McKelvey (AIWC Cologne), and Jenny Taylor (AIWC Cologne).

Thanks also to the cover photo artist Christine Humphreys (AW Surrey). Christine says "Our daughter Claire, age 24 just graduated. She was a shy kid at school (hidden talents) but since the age of 11 always aspired to be an architect. She pursued her passion and persevered over the 6 years of her university studies and has come out with a First (Distinction) in her Masters. Personally, I didn't have that opportunity to pursue further education, but my husband and I, as parents, strongly supported and encouraged Claire to keep going and succeed. We are very very proud of her achievements! She is now employed in the city as an architecture assistant who will continue her studies to become a fully accredited architect for the future!!"

