

Schenectady Branch AAUW Program

“Voices of the Women of Afghanistan: A Photojournalist’s Report on Her Recent Trip to Afghanistan”

How this program addressed AAUW’s mission: Through Connie Frisbee Houde’s pictures, her impressions, and the voices of the women she interviewed, our members and the other community residents became more aware of what life is really like for women in a small rural community in Afghanistan. They realized the impact of having a newly built well on the health of the community, the women’s yearning to continue their education and wanting the best for their family and themselves.

Connie Houde described it best as she focused on her goal “to depict the spirit and sacredness of people and their surroundings. The cultural heritage and way of life of many different people are often threatened by global events, war and industrialization. I focus on the nobleness of these people and their lands as they strive to keep their autonomy, culture and community alive.”

The branch goals met in doing this program included

- *Focusing on women and children’s issues* including health, education and safety, in other countries.
- *Community Outreach* – By having this program at the main county library and opening it to the public we were reaching out to our members and community residents to make those interested aware of life in a rural Afghan village. They in turn made donations to support our local Women against War Afghan Well Project which builds wells in rural communities to address the health risks of unsafe water and inadequate sanitation conditions and educate the local residents.
- *Community service* – giving donations to support our local Women against War Afghan Well Project
- *Visibility* – Posters in the main and branch libraries, newsletter article, newspaper, TV and radio publicity in their community events segments.

Action Steps in planning this program

- After reading an article about Connie Frisbee Houde in the Albany Times Union, we contacted her during the summer and asked her to present a program focusing on women for our first general meeting.
- We reserved the meeting room at the main branch of our library and got training from the library staff on how to connect a laptop to their projection system

Action Steps taken for community visibility

- Wrote articles for our newsletter and a copy for our local TV and radio stations and our local newspapers to include in the community events segments.
- Put up signs in the main library and the branches advertising the program.

Measureable impact on the community

More members and residents attended this meeting than at any other program we have had in the past couple of years. The library sets up about 50 chairs for meetings and we had to keep setting up more chairs as more people arrived. We had over 62 people attend this program.

Lesson Learned

For interesting programs such as this, having the venue be the main branch of the county library will bring in many more people. In the past we have a number of our general meetings in a church which didn’t draw a lot of members and non-members.



Join us

Wednesday, September 15

at 7:00 p.m.

***In the McChesney Room of
Schenectady County Public Library
99 Clinton Street, Schenectady***

***Connie Frisbee Houde,
a photojournalist,
will share her photos
and experiences
from her recent visit to Afghanistan.***

This program is sponsored by AAUW.

***The public is welcome to this informative presentation.
Bring a Friend!***



***"A real friend is one who takes the hand of his friend
in times of distress and helplessness"***

— Afghan Proverb

