

New Individual Project Award: Public Policy Category, Smart Start, Pay Equity

AAUW is a nationally recognized advocate and resource for achieving pay equity for women. Our Westchester Pay Equity Outreach Group learned about the Smart Start workshops at an AAUW NY State Convention. In keeping with this AAUW mission, for over a year the AAUW Westchester Branch Pay Equity Group has been working to bring Smart Start Pay Negotiation workshops to women college students in Westchester. The purpose of these workshops is to promote gender pay equity by increasing awareness of the pay gap and by introducing women to steps they can take to negotiate for higher salaries. One of our goals was to break down that barrier. AAUW research shows that women on average earn 77 cents for every dollar a man with equivalent education, experience and job responsibilities earns. Therefore from day one because women earn less, their salaries are adversely affected throughout their careers and their retirement benefits are smaller. Our goal was also to move the mission of pay equity forward. The WAGE (Women are Getting Even) Project gives three hour workshops for 30 students at a time. The workshop fee is \$500 and the travel, board and lodging of the instructor could be another \$500. The Group approached 8 colleges in Westchester. Colleges were not anxious to commit to hosting a workshop. The \$500 fee was cited as the most frequent issue. Attracting 30 students and the poor economic climate when even finding a job was difficult were other problems cited by the schools. The Pay Equity Outreach Group then went to plan B and applied to the LAF fund for \$750 to jumpstart a workshop by offering it to a college at no cost. We succeeded in receiving an award for \$750 and that seed money did work! Our first workshop will take place on March 23rd at Westchester Community College, which serves a diverse and underserved population. We are also in serious talks with SUNY Purchase for a workshop at their school.

Specific action steps included developing a list of potential colleges, meeting with the appropriate staff member(s) to discuss pay equity, our AAUW mission, our goals, and recruitment of students, describing the workshops and the workshop fee. Setting a time line and calendar for steps to be completed.

Community visibility was achieved by publishing articles in our newsletter and on our website. Two of our members were interviewed by the *Westchester Business Journal* and that article was reproduced in our newsletter and on our website. The workshop is listed on the Westchester Office for Women calendar. Westchester Community College is actively recruiting students. It is very unusual for us to get a news article in a newspaper. Our AAUW visibility and an understanding of our mission, goals, advocacy and support for action projects has increased on each college campus that we visited.

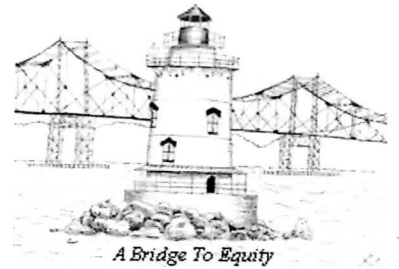
The impact on the community has been positive. The Westchester Business Journal in their article treated us as a respected group with a serious, useful workshop to offer. They printed five tips for negotiating a better salary suggested by Roli Wendorf. They quoted Amy Small's insights about the project. Schools that have not yet agreed to have workshops, now are aware that AAUW is an informed resource for pay equity for women. The workshops have not yet taken place but we project that the feedback from students who attend will be positive and that they will learn some techniques that they feel they are able to apply to negotiating for their salary and benefits.

The group and our branch learned many lessons that will be useful for future projects. Starting with an important mission such as advocating for pay equity for women, gives more weight and recognition to AAUW. The group was seriously listened to and the colleges were clear that the barrier to their participation did not come from their dislike of the mission or goals or their distrust of the quality or

effectiveness of the workshops. The group was able to generate community visibility in the Westchester Business Journal in a positive article. The importance of plan B was evident. Flexibility and willingness to seek grant funding made it possible to obtain a commitment from Westchester Community College. Student workshop evaluations after the first workshop may make it easier to replicate the workshop at other colleges.

Thank you for consideration of our application for a New Individual Project Award for the category public policy.

Selena Barron



CHIPS

The monthly newsletter of the Westchester Branch of the American Association of University Women, Westchester County, New York State

AAUW

**The AAUW LEGAL
ADVOCACY FUND**

provides funding and a support system
for individuals seeking judicial redress
for sex discrimination.

*In principle and in practice,
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There shall be no barriers
to full participation in this organization
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*AAUW advances equity for women
and girls through advocacy,
education, and research.*

The AAUW EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

*advances equity for women and girls through
advocacy, education and research.*

**THE COUNCIL MESSAGE:
\$tart \$mart Workshop at WCC
-by Roli G Wendorf**



We will hold our very first \$tart \$mart Pay Negotiation workshop at the Westchester Community College on March 23. Annie Houle, the Executive Director at WAGE PROJECT, INC, will teach the workshop. The purpose of this workshop is to promote gender pay equity by teaching students pay negotiation skills to increase their salaries. Research shows that women are less willing to bargain, and as a result, settle for lower salaries.

For more than a year, our Pay Equity Outreach group has been working hard to find a local college committed to holding this workshop. While several colleges thought these workshops were a good idea, we did not find any takers in the current economic climate. Budget constraint was the most common reason cited. So we decided to provide funding to the very first college that committed to holding this workshop. We agreed to pay the workshop fee of \$500 and the travel, board and lodging costs of the instructor. We applied for a grant of \$750 from the Legal Advocacy Fund (yes, your contribution dollars to LAF are indeed put to good use!). LAF provides support for outreach activities at college campuses that address gender discrimination such as the pay gap. To our delight, our funding was approved, and we were on our way!

Having the funding didn't mean we had the commitment. This was achieved through negotiation and hard work on the part of our member Jane Pendergast. Jane had a good partner in Susan Hacker, the Director of Career Services at WCC, who was convinced that this workshop would help WCC students. However, many details had to be ironed out before the workshop became a reality. For example, the college wanted a two-hour workshop, but WAGE only offers a three-hour workshop. Anyway, now the main part of the workshop will be taught in two hours, so that some students can leave at that point, while others get the full three hours. An additional workshop may be taught for evening students, and a facilitator-training workshop may also be held.

We are very proud to be holding our first \$tart \$mart workshop at WCC. We believe the students will find it an eye-opening experience. Let's hope it will be the first of many in Westchester. We will let you know how it went in a future newsletter.

GETTING EVEN IN PAY ARENA

The following article appeared in the Westchester County Business Journal on 6/18/10, written by reporter **Georgette Gouveia**. It is based on interviews with our members **Amy Small** and **Roli Wendorf**, and describes the activities of our Pay Equity Outreach group. It is reprinted here with the permission of the Westchester County Business Journal.

Though women now make up the majority of the work force for the first time in U.S. history, they earn only 77 cents for every dollar a man makes. "Women are not getting equal pay after all these years," says Amy Small, representing the Westchester chapter of the American Association of University Women (AAUW). "It starts out from the moment they negotiate or fail to negotiate a salary." Indeed, a woman will earn anywhere from \$700,000 to \$2 million less than a man in the course of her lifetime.



Branch Member, Amy Small

Now several groups operating locally and nationally are trying to address that inequity. In the fall of 2007, the WAGE (Women Are Getting Even) Project Inc., a nonprofit dedicated to eliminating the gender pay gap, launched the \$tart \$mart Campus Initiative. \$tart \$mart offers workshops to college students – primarily women though not limited to them – on how to negotiate a salary. Less than two years later, WAGE teamed with the AAUW to bring \$tart \$mart to campuses nationwide. To date, \$tart \$mart has held 116 workshops at 95 colleges and universities in 29 states. They include several in Dutchess County – the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park; Mount Saint Mary College in Newburgh; and Dutchess County Community College, Marist College and Vassar College, all in Poughkeepsie. The goal is 500 campuses by 2012.

The Westchester chapter's Pay Equity Outreach Group is trying to emulate the success of the Dutchess branch, Small says, but is having a hard time interesting its particular groves of academe – Concordia College in Bronxville, The College of New Rochelle, Iona College in New Rochelle, Manhattanville College in Purchase, Pace University in Pleasantville, Purchase College, Sarah Lawrence College in Yonkers and Westchester Community College in Valhalla. The two reasons given, Small says, are the workshop's fee (\$500 per school) and the difficulty in getting 30 students to commit to the three-hour session. She suggests that the schools, which pair up nicely geographically, might want to share a workshop. So far, though, no takers.

Angela Cherubini, director of career counseling at Sarah Lawrence, says she likes the \$tart \$mart approach and would be interested in the program in the future. "However," she adds, "we are limited on funds and felt our office needed to do more programming about searching for a job in this climate rather than negotiating salary once you get the job offer." There are reasons women are not as good as men at negotiating a salary that have nothing to do with economics. Either because of nature or nurture – or maybe a bit of both – they're not as assertive as men, Small says. This appears to be changing: In "The End of Men" – a provocative, absorbing essay for the cover of the July/August issue of *The Atlantic* – author Hanna Rosin argues that women are leaving men in the dust academically, professionally, biologically and socially, with profound cultural consequences, not all of which are good for women or society. Nonetheless, Small says young women need a workshop to help them figure out their worth and maximize it from the get-go: "Women are still not confident enough to ask for what they want."

Salary points... Looking to make the most of yourself in the marketplace? Here are five tips for negotiating a better salary, courtesy of Roli Wendorf, chair of the Pay Equity Outreach Group, Westchester AAUW:

- ✓ Consider your ideal salary, based on your skills, expected job title, experience and geographic location. There are many wage calculators on the Internet, including wageproject.salary.com
- ✓ Figure out your own bottom line – the lowest salary you will accept – based on the range of salaries for your skills and a budget for living in your geographic area. (Remember that 20 percent to 30 percent of your income will go to taxes.)
- ✓ Position yourself for salary negotiation by trying to gauge what your would-be employer is ideally looking for.
- ✓ Practice getting across your strengths and what is special about you.
- ✓ Remember that the salary is not the only thing that may be negotiated. You could angle for a better job title, benefits, flexibility and educational opportunities.