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## CO-PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE - PEGGY BUCKLES

Listening to the news often makes me worry about the state of the world. Will we end up in another World War? Are our citizens losing the rights that make us all more equal? Will COVID mutate again and will it be milder or more deadly? What can I do, as an individual, about these issues and how do I help make the world a better place?

One bright spot every month is the time I spend with a group of our members during Coffee and Chat which Betty Stapleford leads. We all have a different perspective and we talk about everything from family to community concerns but just sitting and listening to the thoughts and ideas of others with my cup of coffee one morning a month brings me hope and a sense of peace.

This month we talked about things that are happening in our community and across the world and how divided we are nationally, which is worrisome. Everyone had ideas about how we could be better listeners and discuss things civilly and pull more toward the center instead of pushing to the extremes of both sides. We talked about feeling helpless and discussed what we as individuals could do. As Betty put it, no one can do everything but we can all do something.

Some of the things I can do include, working with other organizations to encourage people to register to vote, signing up to work a shift at the polls during elections, giving more to charities that are active in helping those who have the greatest need, and taking time to see the beauty in the world. I invite you to join us on the first Saturday of every month at 9:00 on Zoom for Coffee and Chat. We hope to be meeting in person again soon. If you would be interested in serving on any committee, we have a great group on the Public Policy Committee and National AAUW is encouraging each branch to form a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. Sally Hibbitts and Melanie Weerasinghr always need help on Tech Trek and Bonnie Shubb has started Speech Trek for the first time this year. Women in History could use members interested in writing scripts, and there is the Latino Leadership group. If mentoring students is your thing or if you're willing to bring treats to their bi-monthly meetings, let Sally Hibbitts put your skills to work.

Now for things that enrich our lives: Sharon Dyer and Eloda Linehan are leading members on fun day trips once to nearby museums followed by lunch. There are morning and evening book groups as well as the Unity Book group. Please join us and expand your horizons whether you're comfortable going out with a small group or meeting by Zoom. We would love to have you join us. Everything looks brighter when you're with friends.



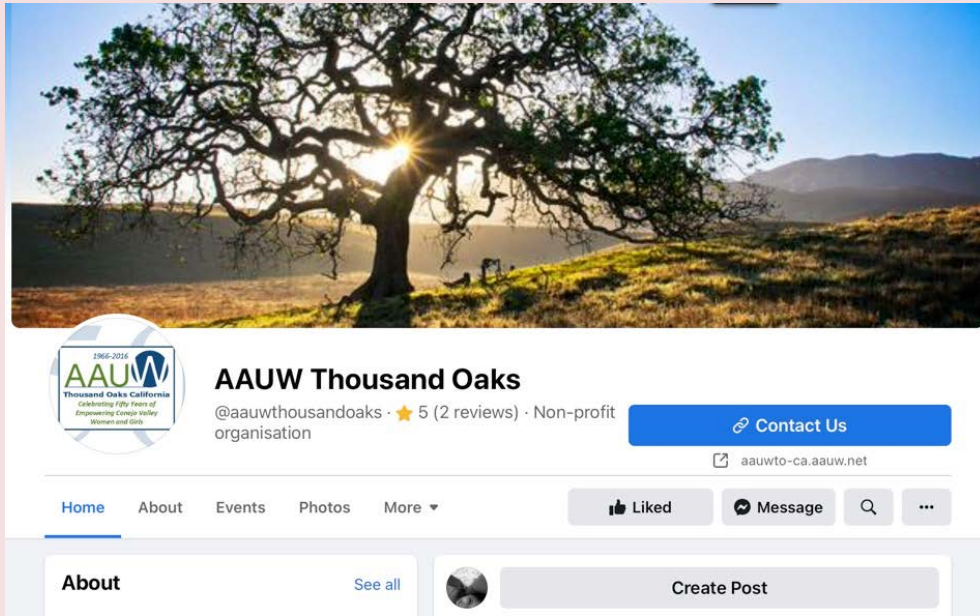


LOOK US UP!



LOOK US UP ON FACEBOOK!

<https://www.facebook.com/aauwthousands/>



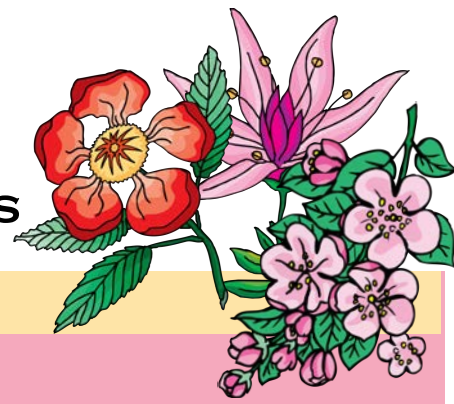
LOOK UP OUR NEW WEBSITE!

<https://aauwthousands.com>





## SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS



### THE DAYTIME BOOK GROUP

Monday, Feb. 28: The Four Winds by Kristin Hannah. Our reviewer will be Pat O'Donnell.

Monday, March 28: The Daughters of Yalta by Catherine Grace Katz. Our reviewer will be Berniece Reed

Monday, April 25: Half BrokenHorses by Jeanette Walls. Our reviewer will be Jean Maxwell.

Monday, May 23: These is My Words: The Diary of Sarah Agnes Pine. Our reviewer will be Laura Ziff

Monday, June 27: Anxious People by Fredrick Backman. Our reviewer will be Joan Udani.

Monday, July 25:White Fragility byRobin D'Angelo.

Monday, August 22: Project Hail Mary by Andy Weir.

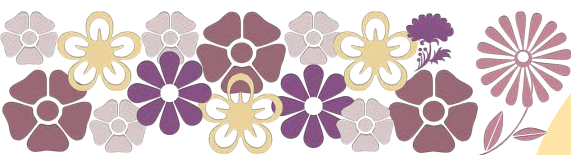
Meetings are held at 10:00-11:30 A.M. At present we are meeting on Zoom. Please contact [joanudani@hotmail.com](mailto:joanudani@hotmail.com) for more information. We are always happy to welcome all AAUW members to our meetings.

### THE EVENING BOOK GROUP

Wednesday, March 16: Winter Gardens by Kristin Hannah. Our reviewer will be Sharon Dryer.  
12:00PM Marmalade 140 Promenade Way, Westlake Village.

Wednesday, April 20: The River of Doubt by Candice Millard. Our reviewer will be Jean Maxwell  
TBD

The Evening Book Group is now meeting the third Wednesday of the month at lunchtime at different restaurants that have outside dining. Watch the e-blasts for more information. The books for May and June will be picked at the April meeting. Please call Sharon Dyer at 818-991-0689 for further information.





## SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS



### MUSEUM & GARDENS GROUP

Museums and Gardens Group has several outings planned.

Please contact Sharon Dyer (818) 991-0689 or Eloda Linehan (310) 809-0926 if interested. Husbands and guests are welcome to attend. We would like to schedule several dates are on Saturday so that people who work can also participate. Please call Sharon or Eloda that you plan to attend. We would like more suggestions for future outings.

So far we have visited the Valley Relics Museum and The Vincent Van Gogh at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art. Future suggestions are Academy Museum of Motion Pictures and the Max Factor Cosmetics Museum. We welcome suggestions for future visits.

#### Date: May 21st 2022

Meet at the Olive Garden next to the Oaks Mall at 12:15 p.m.  
2:00 p.m. "Landscape Through the Eyes of Abstraction" at the California Museum of Art Thousand Oaks, 2nd floor near Macy's  
Suggested donation of \$6.

#### Date: April 9,2022

Scheduled to visit the Descanso Gardens to see the tulips.  
More information to follow.  
Adults are \$15.00 and Seniors are \$11.00.

### COFFEE AND CHAT

We look forward to seeing you for fun and stimulating conversation on the first Saturday of each month. Let Betty Stapleford know at [bstaple4d@gmail.com](mailto:bstaple4d@gmail.com) if you would like a Zoom invitation!  
The next date is coming up on March 5.







## SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS



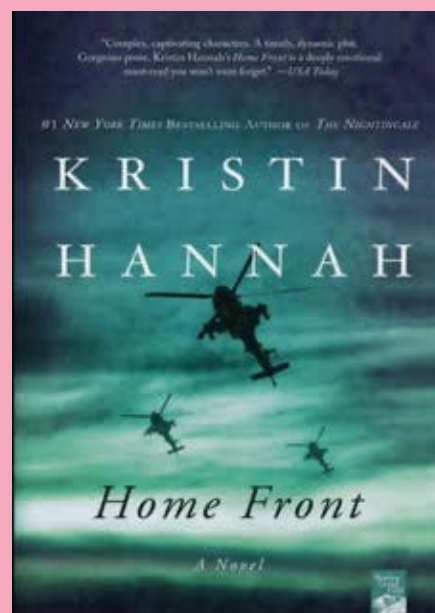
### UNITY BOOK GROUP

For our meeting on March 10 at 2 PM (Zoom) we will be led in our discussion by Shoshana Brower about the novel called, Home Front by Kristin Hannah. This deals with an often overlooked group whom we have not really explored too much...military women. I'm looking forward greatly to this book, if for no better reason than I've enjoyed other books written by this author!

Here's a brief synopsis: *Like many couples, Michael and Jolene Zarkades have to face the pressures of everyday life—children, careers, bills, chores—even as their twelve-year marriage is falling apart. Then a deployment sends Jolene deep into harm's way and leaves defense attorney Michael at home, unaccustomed to being a single parent to their two girls. As a mother, it agonizes Jolene to leave her family, but as a soldier, she has always understood the true meaning of duty. In her letters home, she paints a rose-colored version of her life on the front lines, shielding her family from the truth. But war will change Jolene in ways that none of them could have foreseen. When tragedy strikes, Michael must face his darkest fear and fight a battle of his own—for everything that matters to his family.*

At once a profoundly honest look at modern marriage and a dramatic exploration of the toll war takes on an ordinary American family, *Home Front* is a story of love, loss, heroism, honor, and ultimately, hope.

Looking forward to seeing you on March 10! For more information please contact Shoshana Brower or Sally Hibbits.



140TH ANNIVERSARY!

## 2021 By the Numbers

**AAUW CELEBRATED ITS 140TH ANNIVERSARY**  
and its legacy of moving women forward.



**68,271**

letters from members and supporters  
AAUW's public policy priorities  
reproductive rights,

**260**

fellows and grantees  
received \$5 million in  
funding to pursue academic  
work and lead innovative  
community projects to  
empower women and girls.

**4**

research  
reports  
produced  
by AAUW  
in 2021

**3.3 million**



impressions from AAUW's  
social media communities,  
including Facebook,  
Twitter, Instagram and  
LinkedIn.

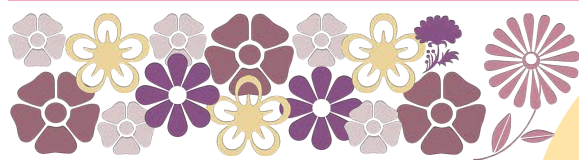






# AAUW INTERBRANCH COUNCIL LUNCHEON

The AAUW Inter Branch Council luncheon was held on January 15th at Los Robles Greens. The speakers included Oxnard Harbor Commissioner, Celine L. Zacarias, Simi Valley City Council Member, Ruth Luevanos, and Jacqui Irwin who represents the California 44th Assembly District. They discussed their motivation for originally running for public office and while each had a different reason and story, all were interesting and well received. There were about 60 members in attendance from the Camarillo, Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks Branches of AAUW. We thank these public servants for their work and for sharing their stories in hopes of motivating more women to run for public office.







# CVUSD SCHOOL BOARD



January 14, 2022

Members of The Board of Trustees  
Superintendent Mark McLaughlin  
Conejo Valley Unified School District  
1400 East Janss Rd.  
Thousand Oaks, CA 91362

Dear Members of the Board of Trustees and Superintendent McLaughlin,

The Thousand Oaks Branch of AAUW proudly supports the essential work and services which the Conejo Valley Unified School District is performing daily during this extremely difficult time period in the life of our country.

AAUW has a long history of unequivocal support for public education as we know it is the foundation of our 21st century democracy. Our public schools are where our students come to be educated in the fullest sense of the word, as citizens of the United States of America.

A high-quality public education is the foundation of a democratic society and the key to economic prosperity, college and career readiness, and gender equality. Public education must remain open and nondiscriminatory in acceptance of all students. American public schools are a consistent unifying factor among the diverse range of students with or without disabilities, LGBTQ+ students, and students from different racial, ethnic, religious, and economic groups in our society.

The American Association of University Women is committed to the pursuit of knowledge and access to that knowledge by all citizens. AAUW is also committed as a national organization and as a local Branch to the doctrine of separation of church and state.

AAUW Thousand Oaks believes that due to an increase in recent public community comments, CVUSD has become the target of unwelcome, undeserved, and destructive criticism.





# CVUSD SCHOOL BOARD



AAUW Thousand Oaks calls upon all those community groups who commit to quality public education to join with us in recognition of the dedication of the entire CVUSD staff especially during this trying time.

A high quality public education system requires involvement by the entire community to provide strong support for our educational staff to continue to teach controversial subjects, including more diversity in subject matter selection, improved and age appropriate sexual education, a gender diverse curriculum, and any other state required subject areas, including those focused upon Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

AAUW Thousand Oaks Branch believes that all of our CVUSD educators should be honored and held in the very highest of public regard, reflecting the high value that the residents of the Conejo Valley places upon public education. This is especially true for our classroom teachers.

Therefore, the Thousand Oaks Branch of AAUW will increase its commitment to, involvement in, and support of CVUSD and we call upon all our members and other public school supporters to become increasingly involved in activities that strengthen, respect, and support CVUSD.

AAUW Thousand Oaks remains committed to ensuring strong academic principles and bias-free public education, which helps to close the achievement gap for all children. We will strive to consistently meet our goals to increase opportunities in education, advocacy, and philanthropy.

Very Sincerely,

Peggy L. Buckles  
Co-President, AAUW TO

Diane Birchman  
Co-President, AAUW TO

Copy to: *The Acorn and Ventura County Star*







## LEND A HELPING HAND!



Could you please possibly help out Betty Stapleford, Sandra Martínez and Sally Hibbits by assisting with the after school snacks at Thousand Oaks High for our Latino Youth Leadership Group meetings? As you know, this is a Branch project designed to help and assist a wonderful group of intelligent, hard working, and persistent teens as they go through high school and head to college.

If you can't drop off the items at the school you can always bring them to Sally's home. Please use the very convenient Sign-up Genius link below and it will take you straight to the easy to use form, which has further information, dates, times, and directions.

A very special thank you to all those who helped out first semester including: Margaret Tennant, Nancy Taylor Walker, Claudia Alter, Wendy Hoffman, and apologies if anyone was left someone out!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e084caaad2ba5fc1-aauw>

Any questions? Please contact Sally at sjhibbits@aol or 805-750-3119.

Thank you!





## PUBLIC POLICY IN OUR BRANCH

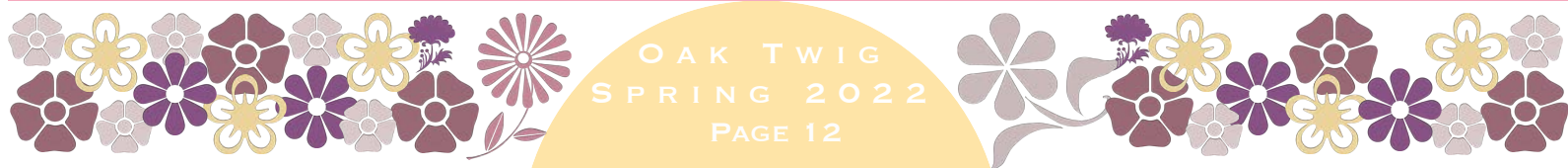


Our Public Policy Committee has been very busy in the new year. At recent meetings we have taken responsibility for supporting our CVUSD Board, teachers, and students. Sally Hibbitts, one of our committee members, wrote a letter of support, with suggestions by other members and approval by our branch board. It was then presented by Peggy Buckles, a committee member and branch co-chair, during public comment at the CVUSD Board meeting on February 1st. And the letter then appeared in a later edition of the Acorn.

Responsibilities of members of the committee during the time between our January 27th meeting and our next meeting on March 3rd. will be to view CVUSD Board meetings online with a particular focus on presentations and comments on the topics of sex education, restriction of book titles, LGBTQ issues, and anti-racism. Committee members will cover meetings through March 1st., and we will include sign-up sheets in the eblasts for members to commit to covering meetings starting on March 15th. through the month of April.

The next subject that we will tackle will be voting rights with suggestions about writing postcards encouraging others to vote in upcoming elections. We will also attend online League of Women Voters programs on voting and possibly work at polling places, register voters at schools and other public locations, and/or monitor voting places or vote counting locations.

If any of these ideas sounds interesting to you or if you have other issues for our AAUW advocacy, please contact Public Policy chair Betty Stapleford at [bstaple4d@gmail.com](mailto:bstaple4d@gmail.com). We hope to see you at our next Zoom meeting on March 3rd. at 7p.m.







## WOMEN PROVIDING HEALING, PROMOTING HOPE

**WHEN** – March 9, 2022

**TIME** – 5:00-6:00 PM

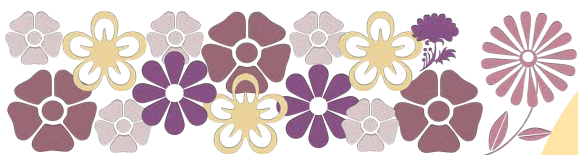
**WHERE** – One Spark Academy located in the old Conejo Valley at 4031 N. Moorpark Rd.

Masking required indoors for all attendees regardless of county mandates

7th and 8th grade One Spark Academy students will present: Maya Lin, Ann Schuchat, Barbara Hillary, and Ruth Patrick

Seating is limited. RSVP Required by March 4th.

RSVP – [lori@onesparkacademy.com](mailto:lori@onesparkacademy.com)





# LATINO YOUTH LEADERSHIP

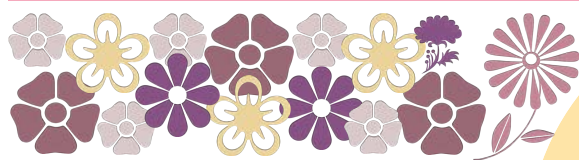


## What Are Members of the Latino Youth Leadership Group Doing now?

They are learning about college opportunities, taking tests, dealing with COVID, waiting for college acceptance letters (seniors), practicing speech skills, studying, volunteering in the community, opposing racism, sharing their life goals, and lots of other things.

But at a recent group meeting they also gave each other Valentine candy in personally decorated bags. (See pictures.) These are bright and articulate young people, but they also enjoy having fun. And it is a real pleasure working with them in this AAUW program.

Please let Sally Hibbitts, Betty Stapleford, or Sandra Martinez know if you would like to participate.

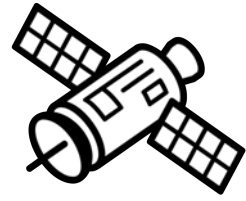
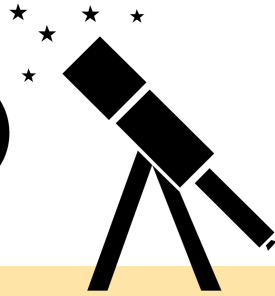






AAUW

# TECH TREK



We are moving forward with our plans to send ELEVEN girls to Tech Trek this summer. Due to the incredible generosity of our members, we will be able to send three girls to the Virtual Camp and eight girls to the in-person camp at UCSB! Thank you to all the many donors, large and small, who came together to help make this great opportunity a reality for our campers.

If individual families prefer to have a girl attend the Virtual Camp, that can be arranged. Also if there's a surge in the COVID rate, then all in-person camps will revert to the Virtual platform.

The teacher recommendations are due in early March and our Branch will be conducting the required interviews over the weekend of March 26-27. If you'd like to be involved in this very rewarding experience, please contact Sally Hibbits.





# SPEECH TREK



AAUW California  
Speech Trek

#### THE 2021-2022 SPEECH TREK TOPIC:

*"WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF-EVIDENT, THAT ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL, THAT THEY ARE ENDOWED BY THEIR CREATOR WITH CERTAIN UNALIENABLE RIGHTS, THAT AMONG THESE ARE LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS."* DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, 1776

IN JUST FIVE YEARS FROM NOW, ON JULY 4, 2026, THE US WILL MARK THE 250<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. AS THIS MILESTONE ANNIVERSARY APPROACHES, THE CONVERSATION AROUND DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DEI) APPEARS TO BE INTENSIFYING THROUGHOUT SOCIETY.

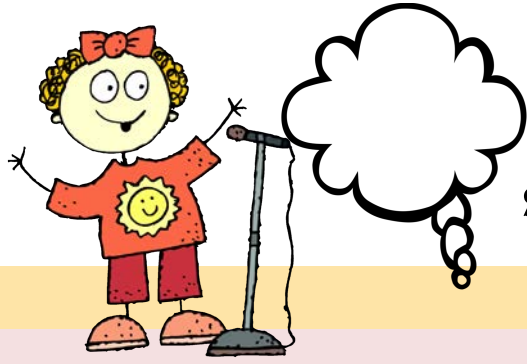
#### 2021-2022 TOPIC:

*HAS THE UNITED STATES LIVED UP TO ITS PLEDGE OF "LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL"? WOULD REQUIRING THE STUDY OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN A HIGH SCHOOL SETTING HELP ENSURE LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL?*

Speech Trek is a speech contest for high school students run by AAUW California. Each year the topic is decided by the State Committee (see above). The contest starts at the local branches. We held the Thousand Oaks contest on Zoom this week. Our contest was open to students who live in the area of the Conejo Valley School District, whether or not they attend the public schools. The Speech Trek Committee was joined by four coaches who supported their contestants and three exceptional judges who are listed below. Students were randomly assigned times, 15 minutes apart, so that they would not hear each other's speeches. We were all very impressed with both the content and presentation style of the candidates as they gave their 5-6 minute speech on the topic. Some brought us almost to tears as they related personal experiences where they felt a lack of inclusion or even bullying. All had valid suggestions for improvement in equal justice for all. At the end, three winners were chosen, as follows:







## SPEECH TREK



First Place: **Charvi Goel**, who was awarded \$500 and whose recording is being entered in the Statewide contest.

Second Place: **Catherine Xu**, who was awarded \$250

Third Place: **Frida Moreno**, who was awarded \$100

A big shout out to the committee: **Jeanette Hosek, Betty Stapleford, Melanie Weerasinghe, and Sharon Dyer**

Thanks to the qualified volunteers who coached the students: **David Birchman, Laurie Richlin, Betty Stapleford, and Eloda Linehan**

Our deepest appreciation goes to our Judges:

**Ruth Luevanos**, member of the Simi Valley City Council and first Latina to be elected to the Council and a background in Education.

**David Maron**, CEO of Maron Software, but perhaps better known in Ventura County for his volunteer work, including being the moderator for many debates and speeches, some of which were co-sponsored by AAUW-TO and others for the League of Women Voters. And our Chief Judge,

**Tammie Helmuth**, CEO of the Girl Scouts of Central Coast, who also served for many years with Toastmasters.

Would you like to see and hear the winning speeches? In the next Oak Twig we will let you know how.



# AAUW TO SPRING LUNCHEON



**SAVE THE DATE!** | AAUW TO Spring Luncheon | ALL Voices Heard!

Sat. May 14 at 11:00

Los Robles Green, 299 S. Moorpark Rd., Thousand Oaks

All County Covid protocols will be followed.

Keynote Speaker

Prof. Sara Sadhwani

Assistant Professor of Politics, Pomona College

Commissioner

California Citizens Redistricting Commission

Sara Sadhwani is an assistant professor of politics specializing in Asian American and Latino voting behavior, elections, interest groups and representation. Her research has been published in the peer reviewed journals *Political Behavior*, *PS: Political Science and Politics*, *California Journal of Politics and Policy*, and the *Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics* and her analysis of elections has been featured in the *Washington Post*, *Vox*, the *LA Times*, and NPR affiliate *KCRW-Los Angeles*.

Her dissertation identified variations in voting behavior between Latinos and Asian Americans and was supported by a fellowship from the John Randolph and Dora Haynes Foundation. She is currently a faculty fellow at the USC Schwarzenegger Institute.

She recently served on the Citizens Redistricting Commission for the State of California, which was tasked with drawing the district boundary lines for Congress, the State Legislature, and the state Board of Equalization.

