



The Banner

Central Montgomery County Business and Professional Women's Club
Volume XCIV – February 2021

Next Meetings – Thursday, February 18, 2021
via Zoom at 7:00 pm – Details to follow

President's Message:

Dear CMC BPW Members,



We are zooming along as we wait for our members to receive the COVID vaccine. I know patience is a virtue, but it is most difficult as we watch millions receive their shots and we are still waiting. I did speak to Maggiano's on 2/9/2021 specifically about our upcoming Spring District Meeting on April 24. Seems they can only accommodate 25 guests at this time, but I am to keep calling and ask has anything changed. You will be the first to know. But we will continue

Zoom for the Board and General Meetings. (I am waiting for the shot, too.)

What has really been special during these past months has been the participation of you the members! It has been most gratifying that you are trying the Zoom. We are all learning how to operate the system and we had and will have such great programs. Last month, Norma Zarfoss and I shared the news about the PA BPW Foundation and the BPW Foundation (National) to you. I know some of you know the story, but we have so many new members that we wanted to make sure everyone realizes what we do for our members whether it be Scholarships or the Edith Oler Flanigan Fund Grants for members in emergency need. We know times are very tough for many so please consider helping with a monetary gift if you can.

We also had the most interesting presentation of the "A Step-Up Academy" by member Trish Corvo and her colleagues, Marybeth Harmer and Jillian Winn. She also had her intern, Jolie Puches, join us. They shared the philosophy and the structure of the school that was developed for autistic children. With a video and a power point presentation we learned about a school that is right in our community. Please pass the word to friends and neighbors.

Know Valentine's Day came and went but thank you for the efforts of all of you who shared Valentine's with our Mary Walker House women veterans and with members and friends. We really shared our love. Thank you Mo for taking the time to head this project for February.

**Central
Montgomery
County
BPW Officers
2020 - 2021**

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Nancy Werner

Vice President

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Recording

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I know this is most difficult not meeting in person and even more challenging in sharing the Duty cards for the Twilight Wish Project. We never know when an opportunity might open.

We are in for a fabulous treat with member, Barbara Jean Maresca, sharing her knowledge of the Laurel Hill Mansion with us. It was purchased by the Women of Greater Philadelphia, Inc. but the leader was BPW member, Alma Jacobs. Alma passed away two summers ago but her legacy with this group will live on. The mansion is full of history that takes us back in time to the Revolutionary War. I will stop as I do not wish to spill any beans.

Plus we have joining us will be Mydera Tailiah, a poet, who will be sharing her work with us.

We are busy women even during this challenging time. Please let us know

Fondly,
Nancy



Musical Talent Wanted

Anyone interested in leading our members in singing the *Emblem Benediction* at the close of our meetings?

No auditions needed, just be ready to sing to the tune, *Blest Be The Ties That Bind*. If you're interested, please send President Nancy an email.

Thank you Susan Parsons Knab for being our guest vocalist at CMC's January meeting!

2021 BPW/PA Mid-Winter Board Meeting



You are invited to attend the 2021 BPW/PA Mid-Winter Board Meeting to be held on March 13, 2021 at 9:00 am, via Zoom. Board meetings are held in the Summer and Winter to conduct the business of the State Federation between conventions.

Please register in advance by clicking the following link (There are only 100 spots available):

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tzMof-GqrTstH9fdXNa9qEbzEVNzPsQ-0ZSW>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

REMINDER: While all BPW/PA members are welcome to attend, only the BPW/PA Officers, Standing Committee Chairs, Special Appointees, District Directors, Past State Presidents, and Special Committee are permitted to vote

February Dinner Meeting

For February, we have two fabulous guest speakers!



CMC member Barbara Jean Maresca will share the backstory and ongoing importance of Laurel Hill Mansion. (The picture to the left was taken when CMC members visited the mansion in December 2009.)

Past speaker and Poet Mydera Taliah returns to tell us about her newest endeavours: Speak Me Free Productions and a book! Born and raised in Norristown, Pennsylvania, Mydera Taliah is a writer, visual artist, host, educator, and the Creative Director of SpeakMeFree Productions.



Due to the COVID 19 pandemic and our need for social distancing, Central Montgomery County BPW will discontinue in-person meetings at Maggiano's until further notice.

Our meetings will continue via Zoom. Zoom invitations for meetings, held the third Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm, will be sent out by President Nancy Werner.

State Theme:

May Your Dreams Take Flight

District Theme:

Just Be

CMC Theme:

Nevertheless, She Persisted



February is American Heart Month -

Courtesy of the American Heart Association:

Signs and Symptoms of Heart Attack

If you have any of these signs, call 9-1-1 and get to a hospital right away.

- **CHEST DISCOMFORT**
Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- **DISCOMFORT IN OTHER AREAS OF THE UPPER BODY**
Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- **SHORTNESS OF BREATH**
with or without chest discomfort.
- **OTHER SIGNS**
may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.

Signs and Symptoms of Stroke

If you have any of these signs, call 9-1-1 and get to a hospital right away.

Spot a stroke F.A.S.T.

- **FACE DROOPING**
Does one side of the face droop or is it numb? Ask the person to smile.
- **ARM WEAKNESS**
Is one arm weak or numb? Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?
- **SPEECH DIFFICULTY**
Is speech slurred, are they unable to speak, or are they hard to understand? Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence, like "the sky is blue." Is the sentence repeated correctly?
- **TIME TO CALL 9-1-1**
If the person shows any of these symptoms, even if the symptoms go away, call 9-1-1 and get them to the hospital immediately.

ACTION ALERT: Prevent CATASTROPHIC Cuts to Victim Service Grants

(from 5 Calls email sent February 9, 2021)

On October 19th, Members of Congress received a letter urging Congress to take immediate action to prevent devastating cuts to federal funding for victim service programs through the Victims of Crime Act (“VOCA”), including programs serving victims and survivors of child abuse, sexual assault, domestic violence, trafficking, drunk driving, assault, homicide, and other crimes. The letter also urges Congress to increase federal support to help states compensate crime victims for costs such as medical bills, lost wages, and even funerals.



The situation is dire! Federal **grants to victim services** through the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) decreased by 25% last year, and further drastic cuts are expected, because the non-taxpayer-funded pool of funding VOCA grants are pulled from is running dry. Congress can fix this by ensuring federal financial penalties from deferred prosecution and non-prosecution agreements are treated the same way as penalties resulting from criminal convictions - that they go to serve and compensate crime victims.

State **victim compensation** funds are also facing financial challenges due to decreased revenue, and many are unable to provide adequate compensation to help survivors pay for medical bills, counseling, lost wages, and other costs. Congress can fix this by increasing the percentage of state victim compensation funds that the federal government matches through VOCA.

We need your help to get Congress to pass these measures into law!

Use this template to contact your elected official. Don't forget to personalize it by saying why this legislation is important to you.:

Greetings!

My name is [*your name and, if applicable, your organization*], and I am a constituent writing you from [*your location*]. Victim service providers, including programs serving survivors of child abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking, drunk driving, homicide, and other crimes rely heavily Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grants. VOCA also supplements state victim compensation funds. VOCA grants are not taxpayer-funded; instead, VOCA is funded by monetary penalties from federal criminal convictions. As the Department of Justice is entering into more deferred prosecution and non-prosecution agreements, the money available for VOCA grants has dropped dramatically. As a result, grants for victim services were cut 25% last year, and victim service providers are facing further potentially catastrophic cuts in their VOCA grants! Moreover, state victim compensation programs are struggling and are unable to reimburse medical bills, lost wages, and funeral costs.

[*If applicable, explain how cuts to victim services and victim compensation grants will impact your community*].

The solutions to these programs are laid out in the letter on this issue which you received on October 19 (<https://tinyurl.com/yxc3vou4>). Among other solutions, Congress should redirect monetary penalties from deferred and non-prosecution agreements to the VOCA fund and increase the federal government's contribution to state victim compensation funds.

As a constituent and as someone who cares deeply about victims and survivors, I ask you to take immediate action in support of the solutions included in the letter above.

If you have any questions, please contact Denise Edwards (dedwards@nca-online.org), Rachel Graber (rgraber@ncadv.org), Terri Poore (terri@endsexualviolence.org), Monica McLaughlin (mmclaughlin@nnedv.org), Daisy Pagan (daisy@navaa.org), and Dan Eddy (dan.eddy@nacvcb.org).

Yours truly,

[your name, location]

[organization and title, if applicable]

Paycheck Fairness Act (AAUW)



BPW, AAUW and other women's organizations have worked for 24 years to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act, and this is the year we will succeed. As this critical bill heads for the House and the Senate, we need to mobilize quickly to ensure we get it across the finish line.

As the COVID-19 pandemic rages on causing record unemployment and housing crises, women and the families who depend on their income are disproportionately bearing the brunt. And the compounding injustices of sexism and racism are exacerbating these issues by widening the already yawning gender pay gap. This is unacceptable, and it is past time for Congress to act to stop it.

January 29, 2021 marks the 12th anniversary of the signing of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. What more fitting tribute than to continue that legacy by joining us to demand equal pay now?

Despite existing federal and state equal pay laws, the gender pay gap persists, impacting millions of women and their families. We need to update our laws to ensure all workers can take home a fair paycheck. Congress must ensure all women have the tools they need to challenge discrimination and all employers have the incentives they need to comply with the law.

Equal pay for equal work is a widely popular principle. Congress must act like it. Urge your members of Congress to do their part by cosponsoring and supporting the Paycheck Fairness Act today!

Raise the Wage! (from We the People PA email sent February 4, 2021)

THE TRUTH ABOUT WHO MAKES MINIMUM WAGE:

- 35 YEARS OLD** The average age of minimum wage workers
- 88% are at least 20 years old and 35.5% are at least 40
- 56%** of minimum wage workers are women
- 55%** of minimum wage workers work full-time
- 44%** have at least some college experience
- 3 OUT OF 5 WORKERS** earning minimum wage are employed in service occupations (mostly food preparation)
- A woman working full time at minimum wage will earn **\$15,080 annually.**
- Nearly **\$4,000 below the poverty line** for a mother with 2 kids.

MomsRising.org

#RaisetheWage

Tell Congress to #RaisetheWage: <http://action.momsrising.org/sign/minimumwage>

This week, Governor Tom Wolf announced his budget address with an increase to the state minimum wage to \$12 an hour, effective July 2021, with a goal to reach \$15 per hour by 2027. Nonetheless, PA's minimum wage hasn't budged in over a decade, while every state surrounding our commonwealth has raised their minimum wage. We go together to stand up for working-class Pennsylvanians, and you can do your part to make that happen. Send a letter to your representative to support a minimum wage increase using this letter-writing tool here - <https://www.congressweb.com/PBPC/5#/5/>

Take Action to Raise the Wage in PA:

We can't survive on \$7.25! Contact your representative to raise the wage using this letter-writing tool below. Once that's completed, we challenge you to share it with three friends. We go together to stand up for working-class families in

Pennsylvania, and we can all do our part to make that happen.

Please join WTP endorser, Senator Art Haywood's advocacy Zoom calls to raise the minimum wage every other Wednesday at 6:30 pm beginning February 17th. Join the senator and his staff [here](#).

If you write a letter or send an email to any elected official (on any issue), please send a copy of your letter/email and response to CMC Legislation Chair Cheryl D.

Standing and Special Committee Reports

In order to conduct our Zoom meetings in a timely manner, President Nancy will be asking all committee chairs to submit a brief report to be included monthly in *The Banner*. Whether you have some news to share or would just like to give our members (especially our new members) a brief overview of your committee, all reports are welcome.

Correspondence – Nancy Werner

President Nancy received a thank you letter from the Norristown State Hospital's Volunteer Resources Coordinator, Patricia Hart. She expressed appreciation for our Holiday gift giving of the Target Gift cards and \$50 toward the Volunteer Miscellaneous Fund. Each patient received a personal holiday gift with a card. Thank you again CMC members for your support of this annual project.

ERA Update – Nancy Werner

ERA (Equal Rights Amendment) might just be coming our way. To learn that on January 21, that the ERA was introduced in the Senate and the House of Representatives. Senators Ben Cardin (D/MD) and Lisa Murkowski (R/Alaska) promoted the bi-partisan legislation to remove the deadline for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. In the House of Representatives, rep. Jackie Speier (D/CA) and Rep. Tom Reed (R/NY) introduced the companion legislation, H.R. Res.17 with 195 co-sponsors. With the support of President Biden and Vice President Harris, the ERA will be "front and center" on the agenda for women. Please give your U.S. Senators and Representatives a call or email and urge them to sign on to their specific bill or vote for its passage.

Foundation Work – Nancy Werner

At our January Meeting, Norma Zarfoss and Nancy Werner shared the PA BPW Foundation and the BPW Foundation. Some of you were unable to attend so we will provide a few facts to share with you.

BPW Foundation was established in 1956 by our National President Marguerite Rewalt, Esq. Federations were asked to support this entity and were recognized at the annual National Conventions. In the beginning, Scholarships were distributed to many occupations. However, over time as our membership decreased, so did the donations. In the later years, the Career Scholarships were awarded of \$1000 to one applicant per Federation. The categories were eliminated. But from 1956-2008, over \$6.4 M was provided to many individuals seeking our financial assistance. When BPW/USA was disbanded in 2009, the individual federations took on the responsibility of awarding scholarships.

PA BPW Foundation was established in 2007. Maureen Myers, Esq., Cathy Collins, PSP, and Nancy Werner, PSP, were selected to apply to the IRS for a 501 c 3 status. To do so, they wrote bylaws and guidelines for the new Board to follow. There would be 8 PA Federation members who would serve 3-year terms. One must leave for a year but may reapply. Three BPW/PA EC Officers also serve on the Board and are appointed by the BPW/PA President. This application is on the bpwpa.org under the member's section. It is due March 15. BPW/PA was able to give the finances under the Education and Service Committee to the newly formed PA BPW Foundation. There were 2 funds.

The Scholarship Fund would be for anyone who could prove need for financial assistance, be a U.S. citizen, a paid member of PA or a resident of PA for at least 2 years. Due dates are November 1 and May 1. Application and directions are on the bpwpa.org on the public page. Six scholarships of \$2,500 are awarded each year.

The Edith Oler Flanigan Fund Grant provides funds to **BPW members only** in emergencies such as: catastrophic illness or accident, extended unemployment, or disaster loss. This application is on the bpwpa.org website under the membership section. All is confidential.

We ask our CMC BPW members if they can support our Foundations. We ask that you use the form that has Noreen Morello, CMC Treasurer, for the donation to the PA BPW Foundation. (Attached to the Banner.) Please send to her and she will send to the PA BPW Foundation on our behalf. This is for record keeping only. Thank you.

Public Relations – Becky Shoulberg

We want to remind you that your CMC membership gives you access to the uber Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce! Right now it is Zoom galore and we encourage CMC members to follow our FB page and Chamber's for events and newsletters!

Our FB page has different sections so be sure to follow more than our posts. Go to the Event and Files section too for fliers and newsletters. You can also post on our club page to promote yourself, business or non profit. Be sure to share our posts!

Ways and Means – Becky Shoulberg

Have you signed up for Benefit Mobile app and/or Escrip? This is our year round fundraiser tool that earns for us everytime you shop or dine with participating merchants, at no cost to you. Designate Central Montgomery County BPW. The next 3 members who sign up by Feb. 28th will win a \$5 gift card to Target or Starbucks. You have to show me you made a purchase.

Legislation – Cheryl Decoteaux and Ginny Bailey

Update on HB 38 (from Fair Districts PA email of February 2, 2021)

Thank you to all who made calls, sent emails and rallied friends and neighbors to say NO to the judicial district bill, House Bill 38. **We were definitely heard.** In fact, Fair Districts PA was mentioned numerous times in the course of the House State Government meeting last week. The bill's prime sponsor, Representative Russ Diamond, bragged that he doesn't listen to "special interest" groups like Fair Districts PA or the League of Women Voters. Other legislators called attention to the groups who have spoken out against the bill and referenced Fair Districts PA's concern about a new, unprecedented form of gerrymandering.

Despite far more expressions of opposition than support, and unanswered questions about the bill's intent and implementation, HB 38 was voted out of committee with a 13-12 vote. Two Republicans joined the ten Democrats on the committee to vote NO.

Given how quickly that vote was scheduled, our concern was that the bill would then be voted out of the PA house earlier this week, with a vote in the senate early next week. Instead, it's been tabled, with no further action. **From what we can tell, it will NOT be on the ballot in May.** While it's possible legislative leaders will attempt to pass it in time for the general election in November, we are hopeful that the outcry of opposition from constituents, advocacy organizations and law associations turned the tide, convincing legislators and their leaders to set this very bad bill aside.

If you write a letter or send an email to any elected official (on any issue), please send a copy of your letter/email and response to CMC Legislation Chair Cheryl D.

Happy Valentine's Day to the Veterans in Coatesville – Maura Gillen

This letter was included with the “goodies”:

Dear friends –

We are always thinking about you, but holidays give us a chance to show how much! We mentioned the idea of valentines for veterans at Mary Walker House and LZ II, and a bunch of people got involved!

One of our members, Trish, works at A Step Up Academy, a non-profit school for children with autism; she immediately wanted to let the kids get involved, and we hope you can see how much they enjoyed the project and how strongly they felt about showing you they care.

A couple of our members, Deb and Vanessa, got their own kids involved. Linda, Crystal, Barbara Jean, and Nancy penned personal cards, as did Alexis, who is one of our greatest veteran advocates.

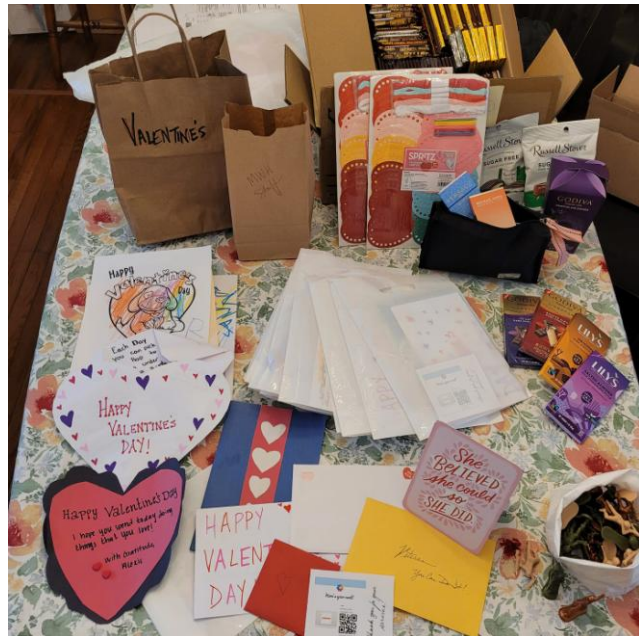
[Alexis is the founder of an organization called Seeds of Hope, creating gardens for veterans; she wrote and directed a documentary film called “Our Way Home” and created a children's book about veteran appreciation called “Beginning Hope”; and currently serves as National Development Coordinator for Bunker Labs, supporting veteran entrepreneurs and small business owners.]

Our PR committee chair, Becky, worked with Fresh Market to get funding to purchase chocolates there; Ana donated money toward chocolates and some craft kits; and Bozena gets credit for the chocolate going to the veterans at LZ II. Many of our members donated funds toward gift cards, including Sue, who moved to Florida a year ago but still participates in our local organization and strongly supports Mary Walker House. And Norma remembered a previous call for stamps, so she donated those.

Mo contributed the Army women – only recently made available! There's a story online about a little girl who pestered toy companies until one decided to give it a go. It's about time!

WE HOPE YOU CAN FEEL ALL OUR LOVE!!! Stay safe!

**From the Business & Professional Women,
Central Montgomery County local**



Jennifer Lewis, case manager at the Mary Walker House in Coatesville was delighted to receive the many Valentines created by CMC BPW and our families and friends, including the students and staff at A Step Up Academy.

Empty Medicine Vials – Nancy Werner

SAVE THOSE MEDICINE VIALS, PLEASE. Some of you have asked about where they are going. There is a business in Cincinnati, Ohio called Matthew 25: Ministries which accepts these donations of empty plastic pill bottles. They in turn recycle them to European sources to be used in the distribution of pills. We will meet again, and I am ready to accept all your unwanted vials. I am sure that they will appreciate our contributions. I have their address.

Update on the Kelly Ann Dolan Foundation – Nancy Werner

The Kelly Ann Dolan Foundation was featured in our January Banner. On February 4, Linda Bean, CMC member and Community Outreach Coordinator for the Kelly Ann Dolan Foundation, was on Face Book Live with Ben Hartranft. Ben attended North Penn H.S. and has become known as the Eagles Autism Ambassador. Every Friday from 7-8:30, Ben and J present a live webinar and feature a variety of exciting guests to talk about autism awareness. Watching and listening to Ben was quite captivating. Nancy

Happy Birthday to our Members!



February

Agnes Ferrara – February 12

Tracey Martin – February 13

Thinking of You

Please keep sending prayers to the Honorable Cheryl Austin as her mother and father are still hospitalized in Florida. She has been commuting to see them. She sincerely appreciates our many thoughts and prayers for her family.

Dates to Remember

February 14 – Valentine's Day



February 17 – Random Acts of Kindness Day

February 18 – CMC Monthly Meeting via Zoom, 7:00 pm

March 4 – CMC Board Meeting via Zoom

March 13 – BPW/PA Winter Board Meeting via Zoom

March 18 – CMC Monthly Meeting via Zoom

June 10-13 – BPW/PA 101st Annual State Convention
Pittsburgh Marriott North

Save The Dates

Saturday, April 24, 2021 - CMC BPW is the hostess for the Spring District Eleven Meeting at Maggiano's. It's early but the New Year will be here before we know it and we have to start planning.

Sunday, December 5, 2021 - BINGO! This is our fund raising event for our two scholarships for the Montgomery County Community College. At Maggiano's. More information to come later.

Important Websites:

- Pennsylvania Business and Professional Women's Clubs – www.bpwpa.org
- Central Montgomery County BPW – www.centralmontgomerycountybpw.org
- Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce – www.montgomerycountychamber.org
- The Patch – patch.com/Pennsylvania/Norristown
- Benefit Mobile App – www.benefit-mobile.com
- Twilight Wish Foundation – twilightwish.org