

Member Profile

Karen Kinsinger



Karen Kinsinger became a member of AAUW in 1985, only a few years after the Morgan Hill Branch was first chartered. She knew several people in AAUW and was encouraged to join by her Holiday Lakes neighbor, Carolyn Wilson. She liked the focus of the organization and wanted to be associated with a group that supports women's rights.

Karen grew up in a small town of 3,000 people in Wetumka, Oklahoma. Proudly, she's part Cherokee Native American. [The name *Wetumka* is derived from the Indian words "we-wau" (water) and "tum-cau" (rumbling), describing a point where rapids raced over river rocks.] She graduated from Oklahoma College for Women in 1960. She majored in Home Economics, which included Early Childhood Education, as she wanted to be a teacher.

After completing her studies, Karen moved to Wichita, Kansas, where she taught public school kindergarten. It was there she met and married her husband John in 1965. Subsequently, they moved to Dallas, Texas, where he finished his PhD in Clinical Psychology. She arrived the year before Texas started offering kindergarten classes in the public schools, so at first she taught a demonstration class for visiting Texas teachers.

She and John moved to Morgan Hill in 1971 and purchased the house in Holiday Lake Estates that they still own. John began working for Santa Clara County Mental Health, and Karen taught kindergarten at PA Walsh School for five years before she retired.

Karen made numerous contributions to AAUW over the years. She chaired an AAUW after-school tutoring project at the homeless shelter in San Martin in the late 80s. At Christmas time, she organized the group who collected and wrapped gifts at her home for the kids and parents at the shelter. In 1988, according to a MH Times article, 52 homeless families in South County had an abundance of gifts thanks to the efforts of AAUW. Karen recalls, "We were wrapping gifts and making bags for each family for two days."



1988 Wrapping holiday gifts, L-R: Laura Brunton, Jean Pinard, Carol Holzgrafe, Karen Kinsinger



2001 AAUW Booth at the Taste of Morgan Hill, L-R: Karen Kinsinger, Joan Ensign, Carolyn Wilson



2000 Wildflower Run: Nancy Casey & Karen Kinsinger



2007 Holiday Party

Of course, Karen also helped with the Wildflower Run. For several years she chaired the 2K children’s race when it still took place on local roads, rather than the high school track.

Since retiring, Karen and John spend much of their time traveling to their condo in Mexico, for fishing and scuba diving; in their motorhome to South Dakota, near Mt Rushmore; visiting family near San Diego, as well as other locations. A favorite trip was to the Galapagos off the coast of Ecuador in 2022.

While not in Morgan Hill for long lengths of time anymore, she always enjoys her return visits, seeing old friends and attending AAUW events.

We recognize Karen’s longtime commitment to AAUW and its mission. Moreover, as a teacher and volunteer, she made significant contributions to countless children instilling in them a love of learning.

by Laura Whitaker



2022 Galapagos