

AAUW Meeting
November 26, 2018
Art Space

Minutes:

The guest speaker was Alexandra Lessem who was a 2018 AAUW scholarship recipient. She recently received her doctorate of nursing practice. She is currently working as a cardiac nurse at MCR. Six years ago her husband had a heart attack, which was both terrifying and life changing for Alexandra. Her husband had a stent put in and has since recovered from the attack. She realized while grocery shopping, soon after the heart attack, that she had no idea what to feed her family that would not kill them.

Alexandra had been telling her recovering heart patients to eat a heart healthy diet, which is a low fat plan that allows people to eat everything else in moderation. Her sister encouraged her to watch the documentary, Forks over Knives and after viewing the film her eyes were immediately opened. The film spoke to the benefits of a plant-based diet. She wondered why she hadn't been taught about the plant-based diet throughout all of her years of medical training. The more she learned the more she struggled with why patients were not getting this information.

She read, researched and studied the work of Dr. Ornish and Esselstyn who were able to show data reversing the effects of cardiovascular disease through a plant-based low fat diet. There were other benefits from this diet, which included strengthening the heart, lowering cholesterol, weight loss, lowering the risk of diabetes, reversing diabetes, lowering the risk and improving the prognosis for cancer, improving the auto immune system, reversing the effects of multiple sclerosis and arthritis. This new information is what motivated Alexandra to return to school to get her doctorate. She wanted to be able to influence other nurses to share information related to the plant-based diets with their patients.

For her doctoral capstone project she set up a study that encouraged doctors, nurses, and practitioners to try a plant-based diet for a period of 3 weeks. She had 30 medical professionals join her study. She used the 21-day Vegan Kick Start Program, which is backed by the Physicians' Committee for Responsible Medicine. She supplemented this program with additional research and information, which also included strategies about how to share this information with their patients. She used pre and post questionnaire's to address mood, quality of life and benefits of the diet. What she found was that 26% of the participants were more likely to speak to their patients about the plant-based diet and two-thirds were willing to continue the diet. Some of the

participants complained of some initial intestinal discomfort but it could be attributed to the diet detoxifying the body. She noted that it is important to include vitamin B12 with the diet.

The *Blue Zone* and the *China Study* are good resources to use to learn more about the plant-based diet.

Approval of the Minutes

Not available

Old Business

- First Social at the West End was very successful
Estelle Barnett is looking into the possibility of going to the Denver Art Museum to view the Dior exhibit.
- Jane DeDecker presentation (Jody)
AAUW Loveland sent a letter to the National AAUW to receive support for the 100th year of the women's right to vote sculpture.
Jane is in the process of applying for non-profit status

Treasurer's Report

None

Group Reports

Santa Letters (Claudia)

The writers need the information forms to be filled out about the children in order to personalize the letters. The form is on the AAUW website and once it is completed it needs to be sent to Claudia. The cost is \$5.00

New Business

- Next Book Club- Jan. 7th
Book: *In the Midst of Winter*
- Annual Donation
The group agreed to donate winter socks for the homeless (white men's socks, and thick socks for men, women, and youth)
- Marjie created a sample directory that we can build on for the future.
- Bernice is having hip surgery
- Marilynn Samuelson has some health concerns. Contact Jean Clune for more information

New Members

Judy Stout

Has lived in Loveland for 22 yrs.

She was an educator, principal, and central office employee

She worked in Adams 14

Teri Smith

Has lived in Loveland for 5 years

Teacher

Most recently taught online Science courses

Retired in August

Is enjoying traveling

Irene Thomas

Moved to Loveland recently from Aurora

She is a Journalist

She has 3 grown children

Next Meeting

Dec. 3

Lincoln Gallery

Bring finger foods to share and socks for the homeless