

# Library, AAUW Focus On Eleanor Roosevelt

POTSDAM - Eleanor Roosevelt was born on Oct. 11, 1884. The former First Lady is honored and recognized throughout the world as an icon of democracy. One of her greatest achievements was promoting and securing the adoption by the UN General Assembly of The Declaration of Human Rights on Dec. 10, 1948.

Throughout her life, she tirelessly championed the rights of the poor, the needy and the ever-growing number of refugees. She chronicled her ongoing work in her My Day newspaper columns which she wrote six days a week from 1938 to 1962.

Since 2012, the United Nations has marked Eleanor Roosevelt's birth date as the "International Day of the Girl Child." The day promotes girls' human rights, highlights gender inequalities that remain between girls and boys and addresses the various forms of discrimination and abuse suffered by girls around the world. The 2014 theme is "Empowering adolescent girls: Ending the cycle of violence."

The Potsdam Public Library, in collaboration with AAUW-St. Lawrence County, will be exploring the impact of Mrs. Roosevelt and her friends in a Family Reading and Discussion Group for students in fourth to sixth grade. Last spring's successful Together Book Talks was the inspiration for a second series with a focus on the iconic First Lady whose impact still reverberates on society more than 50 years after her death.

"The Potsdam Public Library received a grant from the New York Council for the Humanities to host a Family Reading and Discussion Group for 2014-15, beginning Sunday, Oct. 19 at 2 p.m.," Youth Services Librarian Sarah Sachs said. "With the help and encouragement of AAUW, we successfully applied for a special grant to fund the program."

"Both my granddaughter Katie and I really enjoyed the first Book Talks led by Sarah and Libbie Freed, a history professor at SUNY Potsdam,"



**READING GROUP** - Eleanor Roosevelt and Friends (Amelia Earhart and Marian Anderson) are the focus of the new Family Reading and Discussion Group, co-sponsored by the Potsdam Public Library and AAUW-St. Lawrence County, funded by a grant from the New York Council for the Humanities. (Seymour Photo)

AAUW-St. Lawrence County Communication Chair Donna Seymour said. "At the AAUW-NYS summer meeting, I learned more about a program by Joan Monk called Embracing Eleanor in the 21st Century that morphed in The WILD Women Project (Women in Leadership Development)."

Learn more about that project at [www.aauw-nys.org/attached%20files/Embracing%20Eleanor/EMBRACING%20LEADERSHIP-flyer6.pdf](http://www.aauw-nys.org/attached%20files/Embracing%20Eleanor/EMBRACING%20LEADERSHIP-flyer6.pdf)

Among other resources was a group of children's books focusing on Eleanor Roosevelt and many of her contemporaries, who all had an important impact on American society during the 1930s and '40's as First Lady.

"It immediately occurred to me to bring this idea back home to the library to see if we could design another reading-discussion group," Seymour said.

"What makes this project so interesting," Sachs said, is that "Eleanor was always focused on women's leadership and development potential and she surrounded herself with the kinds of people who were ready to illustrate her commitment to women, the disadvantaged, leadership and the future, and who would become leaders in their own right by

her example."

Seymour agreed. "I love the idea that today's girls and boys still have so much to learn from women who were shattering glass ceilings long before we'd ever heard of that concept. Eleanor's legacy lives on today because there is still so much work to be done and so many young lives to be transformed by the power of her words, deeds and example."

Sachs has chosen books that include a mixture of picture books and nonfiction texts to explore the influence of this famous First Lady, particularly on pioneers like Amelia Earhart and Marian Anderson. The five books will be discussed over five months: Oct. 19, Nov. 16, Dec. 14, Jan. 18 and Feb. 22, all from 2-3:30 p.m.

For more information and to register, contact Sachs at 315-265-7230 or [ssachs@potsdamlibrary.org](mailto:ssachs@potsdamlibrary.org). The program, led by Sachs and Freed, is designed to include both students and an adult family member to join the reading and discussion circle.

Membership in the St. Lawrence County Branch, founded in 1927, is open to anyone who supports the mission of AAUW: Advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research.