

On March 14, 2009, the Lompoc-Vandenberg AAUW branch presented another successful Girl's Conference. AAUW believes there are hundreds of young women in the Lompoc community who have the potential to achieve greatness. Timed in conjunction with Woman's History Month, and attended by girls from grades 5 through 8, the conference purpose is to help pave the way to success.

During the opening icebreaker, emcee **Dulcie Sinn** challenged participants on their knowledge of famous women via a fun exercise using communication and investigation skills. The morning keynote speaker, who works in construction, spoke to the girls about non-traditional jobs for women, jobs that usually offer higher wages.

The girls then attended three breakout sessions. To help them prepare for the next step in their education, school counselor **Lauren Pressman** gave the 5th and 6th graders some ideas on how to have a smooth transition to middle school. **Emily Casarez**, a senior at CHS, conducted a workshop for 7th and 8th graders focusing on leadership opportunities and involvement in high school activities. Ms. Casarez recently attended the Obama Inauguration as part of a national youth leadership group and shared her experience with the students.

Another strand of workshops dealt with some social challenges facing many of our youth. Local counselor **Tonya Schultz** discussed the dangers of cyber-bullying and suggested how to wisely use the Internet and its social websites. Another AAUW member, La Purisima teacher **Cecilia Walker**, conducted a session on peer mediation.

This year's lunchtime keynote speaker, Warden **Linda Sanders**, gave her compelling story of how she rose in the ranks of administration of the federal prison system.

The third strand of workshops showed participants the importance of math and science. Member **Wynn Clevenger** and several past Tech Trek scholarship recipients talked about the summer camp at UCSB for 7th grade girls and how students may be considered for these scholarships. For the middle school girls, two LHS seniors, **Angel Maciel** and **Megan Corales**, discussed the LHS STAR program that encourages students to pursue math and science.

After lunch, the participants worked on self-image, with a skin care session offered by Mary Kay consultant and LUSD administrator **Laura Lee Parks**. The day closed with a session on relaxation techniques offered by **Sharon Blewis**.