

Concerned Young Women has kicked off a very busy and exciting year! In September we hosted our kickoff event, a wine tasting, at Sonoma Wine Bar. Attendees had the opportunity to meet other dedicated women while learning about the programs and volunteer opportunities CYW provides. In October we hosted a self-defense class and in November, we partnered with several local organizations for the ERJCC's 39th Annual Jewish Book & Arts Fair's Inside the Author's Studio program where we heard author Steven Levy speak about his new book, *In the Plex: How Google Thinks, Works, and Shapes Our Lives*. In December, CYW hosted a very yummy event this Chanukah season - a holiday cookie swap. More than 14 women brought their favorite cookies and treats and traded off to take a variety home. Jackie Pontello, Executive Director of AVDA, was at the event and shared with us wonderful stories about the impact NCJW makes in the lives of the women and children AVDA serves. CYW was proud to present her with \$170 in gift cards for AVDA's clients to have for the holiday season.

CYW members also had a blast schmoozing, playing casino games, and bowling at NCJW's annual fundraiser Let the Good Times Roll, chaired by CYW's own Heather Fleschler and Hilary Greene.

In addition to our programming, CYW's Relax & Relate, a special interest group specifically for moms and moms-to-be, hosted a family Chanukah party and a mom's dinner out, organized by Relax & Relate Chair, Tiffany Halfon. We also introduced two new special interest groups: CYW Book Circle and Knit for a Benefit. CYW will donate all items knitted to the Human Traffick Stop Provisional Supply Bank.

Upcoming events include an evening making no-sew fleece baby blankets to donate to the Human Traffick Stop Provisional Supply Bank, an art class at Pinot's Palette where we will collect art supplies to donate, and a members-only cooking demonstration and dinner.

We are always reaching out to new members. If you or someone you know would like to be involved with our branch, it's easy to stay connected with us: 1) E-mail us at prescyw@ncjwhouston.org to join our mailing list or 2) Join our Facebook page "NCJW Concerned Young Women."

Bari Fishel
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