

THE IAHCE CHRONICLE

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EXPERIENCE THE MAGIC WITH IAHCE IN 2026



ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION FOR HOME & COMMUNITY
EDUCATION

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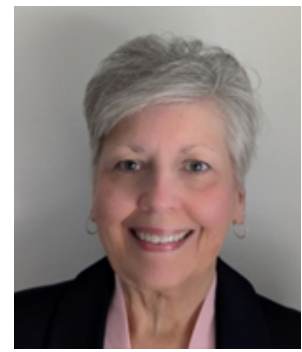
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PRESIDENT – ANGELA HICKS



Dear Fellow HCE Members and Friends,

I hope this letter finds you well. It was truly fitting that the “Experience the Magic” Conference theme began with the enchanting lore of St. Patrick’s Day! On this day, we typically wear green to ward off leprechauns and bring good luck. Gold, representing wealth and luck, added to the festive and magical atmosphere of St. Patrick’s Day. Seeing all the smiling faces in a sea of green and gold was indeed magical!

The conference was a wonderful opportunity to experience the magic of new adventures and educational Share Shops. Attendees also had the chance to form new friendships, reminding us that our old friendships are like gold, making us very wealthy indeed!

Much like the Irish, IAHCe cherishes many traditions and has a rich history of storytellers. Our 102-year-old organization continues to value traditions such as quality educational programs, responsible leadership, community service, heritage arts, and international awareness. I encourage you to become an HCE storyteller and share the wealth of knowledge and experiences you have gained through HCE!

During the Business Meeting, Delegates passed the bylaw concerning County withdrawal/resignation, ARTICLE XXI, SECTION 3, with an amendment. To view the amended bylaw, please visit iahce.org under Guidelines to find the IAHCe Bylaws. Ensure you refresh the page to see the updates, indicated at the bottom of the page as 2026. The Delegates also approved the 2027 Budget and elected new officers. I extend my gratitude to the Delegates for their patience and careful consideration of the bylaw proposal. Thank you to all the counties that submitted award applications. Congratulations to all the award winners! The IAHCe Board encourages all counties to participate, as everything you do is vital to your community. You are already winners in their eyes and ours! Each IAHCe County falls into one of two categories—“54 and Under Members” and “55 and Above Members.” Participation, retention, and gaining new members are the keys to your success!

As we begin the year 2026, we welcome the new members of the IAHCe Board: Darlene Curry as Treasurer and Amy Kerr as PR/Newsletter Editor. We also welcome back Kathy Peterson for a second term as First Vice President and Cindy Henderson as District 4 Director. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the outgoing officers for their dedication and service to HCE: Melissa Chitwood, Emily McDowell, Ashley Davis, and Carol Harms.

Warm regards,
Angela Hicks
IAHCe President



I LOVE SHARING THE MAGIC OF IAHCe!

2026 IAHCe BOARD



Pictured L to R, front row: Cindy Henderson-District 4 Director, Kathy Peterson-1st VP, Alice Grooms-2nd Vice President, Angela Hicks-IAHCe President, Janel Kassing-International Director, Amy Kerr-PR/Newsletter Editor. Pictured L to R, back row: Karen Davis-District 1 Director, Carla Meyer-Secretary, Darlene Curry-Treasurer, Becky Blecher-Cultural Enrichment Director, Karen Cahill-District 2 Director, Vivian Gerrietts-Family & Community Issues Director. Not pictured: Donna Richards-District 3 Director.

2025 & 2026 BOARD



Left to right: Outgoing Treasurer Melissa Chitwood, Outgoing District 4 Director Carol Harms, New District 4 Director Cindy Henderson, 1st Vice Kathy Peterson, 2nd Vice Alice Grooms, President Angela Hicks, International Director Janel Kassing, Outgoing CVH/Sales Ashley Davis, New P/R & Newsletter Editor Amy Kerr, Outgoing P/R & Editor Emily McDowell. Back row: District 1 Director Karen Davis, Secretary Carla Meyer, New Treasurer Darlene Curry, Cultural Enrichment Becky Blecher, District 2 Director Karen Cahill, Family & Com. Issues Vivian Gerrietts. Not pictured: District 3 Director Donna Richards.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

1ST VICE PRESIDENT- KATHY PETERSON



Hi! The conference was fantastic, filled with smiles, positivity, and the power of HCE, along with updates from counties and individuals that were truly uplifting. A big thank you to everyone who attended. The Cozy Couch Club will have a June Zoom meeting, and don't forget to celebrate with "Happy 4th of July Murder" by Rachel Woods. Information about the Patriotic Celebration award is being sent to First VPs, along with the Pop Tab flyer. Many ideas were planted at the conference, and with some sunshine, rain, and a four-day workweek, I'm looking forward to nurturing and growing IAHCE flowers. Wishing you all a happy spring and summer!

KATHY PETERSON

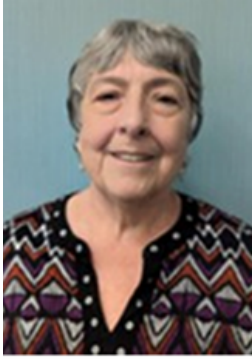


2ND VICE PRESIDENT – ALICE GROOMS

Hello, everyone, after returning home from the "Experience the Magic of IAHCE" Conference in Effingham. I hope everyone that attended had a great time, and I'm sorry everyone else missed a great time! Here are a few things to highlight at the conference this year. We elected three new wonderful people onto the board in the Treasure, Public Relations, and District 4 Director positions. I look forward to getting to know and work with them this year. See further information on each one in this Chronicle. We also said "Goodbye" to four wonderful people who left their board positions: Melissa Chitwood-Treasure, Emily McDowell-Public Relations Director, Ashley Davis-CVH/Sales Director, and Carol Harms District 4 Director. BOO! HOO!, but I'm sure we'll still see them around in the future. Another item of importance was clarified in the business meeting; the process of resigning from the IAHCE organization in the By-Laws. Keep alert to know when the change will be published online in the guidebook and update your guidebook. And finally, we had 45 counties of our 60 counties add at least one new member to our organization, ending the 2025 year with 3,385 members. Keep up the GOOD work this year by Sharing Your Magic of HCE with all your friends, family, strangers, and members of your community, so you can EACH one add a new member to HCE. Just imagine how magical our organization would be if we all did that! Have a magical year in HCE. Alice Grooms IAHCE 2nd Vice-President.

FIND YOUR MAGIC! SHARE YOUR MAGIC! AND EXPERIENCE THE MAGIC OF IAHCE IN 2026!

A fun time for all was had at the 2025 District Workshops: "Make Time for IAHCE." The State Board traveled the state, starting with District 3 & 4 in the south and ending with District 1 in the north. Cheri Burcham, our Extension Liaison, delivered an inspiring message either in person or by a representative. Then President Angela Hicks shared with us how the State of Kentucky has increased their HCE membership by the hundreds in developing specialty clubs and reciprocal membership methods. She gained this information when she attended the ACWW Area meeting in Erlanger, Kentucky in July. The board presented a cute skit on "Making Time," and then everyone broke up into the officer training sessions. A delicious lunch was provided at each workshop, followed by the reveal and invitation to the "Experience the Magic of IAHCE" Conference in Effingham in March 2026. A short meeting was held by each District Director to answer questions and update everyone on activities across her district. I believe everyone picked up at least one new idea or suggestion to take back to their county: another successful District Workshop Series. Submitted by the District Workshop Committee.



SECRETARY- CARLA MEYER

I hope that all our members who attended the Annual Conference from March 17-19 at the Thelma Keller Conference Center had a wonderful experience. I encourage more of our members to consider attending next year. The Conference is scheduled for March 16-18, 2027, at the same location in Effingham.

A heartfelt thank you to the counties that submitted Scholarship applications. The committee will review each application during the June IAHCE Board meeting, and winners will be informed by July. Additionally, the District Workshops are set for:

- August 4 in Sycamore for District 1
- August 5 in Springfield for District 2
- August 6 for Districts 3 and 4

Please keep an eye out for further details from your District Director.

County Secretary Officer Reports should be completed and submitted, either by mail or email, to me and your District Director soon after your annual meeting. It's crucial that your report is legible, so please type or print it clearly. You can email your reports to me at carlameyer8@gmail.com. Be sure to include your phone area code, zip code, and email address, if applicable. We aim to reduce postage costs and prefer to communicate via email. If there are any changes in officers, please inform me as soon as possible to ensure everyone is updated in a timely manner.



OFFICERS WORKING TO PREPARE FOR CONFERENCE



TREASURER– DARLENE CURRY

Thank you so much for electing me as your new treasurer. Melissa Chitwood has done a super job these past six years and I am sure I will seek her advice and expertise often. I am looking forward to working with the other members of your state board and you. I anxiously await the planning of next year's conference when we meet this summer. Please remember that your support fund applications are due June 1, 2026. You can find that form in the IAHCCE guidebook. It is under "IAHCCE Guidelines and Forms," support fund. Hopefully, Mother Nature will soon make up her mind about this weather and we can fully "experience the magic" of spring!

Darlene Curry, treasurer



EDUCATION COMMITTEE

CULTURAL ENRICHMENT- BECKY BELCHER

Another great conference! It truly lived up to its theme, Experience the Magic, delivering an inspiring and memorable event for all. From beginning to end, the conference was filled with energy, creativity, and a sense of wonder. Now I may be a little bit partial, but I believe one of the highlights was the Cultural Arts Show, which beautifully showcased the incredible talent, dedication, and hard work of our members. The room was filled with impressive entries that reflected both skill and passion, making it a proud moment for me and all involved.

Building on that success, the new categories worked well overall. With just a bit of tweaking, they will continue to be even better. I'm working on it.

Thank you to all the counties that submitted Education Award applications. It was especially hard to judge them this year—so many good projects and events. And the application booklets were so well done! The Grand Award went to Sangamon County for their Rag Rug Project. 2nd place went to Fayette County for their Ceramic Class and 3rd place went to Lake County for their Cultural Enrichment Day—Make Time for All Things Pumpkin.

Congratulations, winners!

Now, I know you all have put your clocks away, but I encourage you to carry the same spirit of creativity and imagination forward with magician's hats, wands and books—bringing a touch of magic to your events and meetings throughout the year.

I encourage you to visit IAHCCE.org. Go to the Guidebook for up-to-date information and forms.





Thank you to the approximately 200 members from around the state who attended the 2026 Conference. It turned out to be magical, just as the chairpersons had hoped! We hope you have marked your calendars to return next year and perhaps bring another member or two from your county. I spent some time in the hospitality room and met many of you there. It's nice to have a place to sit, relax, and visit. At one table, we kept a puzzle going, and it was fun to discover how many puzzlers were in attendance. I was pleased to see so many Family and Community Issues Directors in our Share Shop. We reviewed a few topics from the job guidelines on pages 30 and 31 in the Guidebook. The first guideline reminds us that we are part of the education committee with the first vice as our leader. When you come across an educational article or program that your members might appreciate, make a note of it and contribute these to your county newsletter, which is guideline number twelve. Our main focus remains on Mental Health, but you need not limit yourself. Guideline number eight reminds us that our office is responsible for the flag. Ensure it is present at meetings and that you or your designee leads the pledge and the aim. If you are the County HCE F/C Issues director, plan to attend the district meeting held in the first week of August. You can use the information from that meeting to train your unit F/C Issues directors. You can also bring unit members with you to the district meeting or one of the mini district meetings if your district has them, or even to the big annual conference!

Our area has three categories for reports: Citizenship, Health-Food-Nutrition, and Family Living. The guidebook contains information about reports on pages 59-61. I had 13 reports to score across these areas. They were all so neat and attractive that I had to score strictly to determine the leaders. The areas on the score sheets where most lost points were in follow-up and securing new members as a result of the program or evaluating how they thought the program went. Fayette scored highest in Family Living and overall, also achieving the top score in Health-Food-Nutrition, while McLean scored highest in Citizenship.

At our Magical Conference Share Shop, I also distributed more reading material about understanding Mental Health and Alzheimer's. If your county had no one in attendance at this Share Shop, you will find copies of anything you missed in your county's packet. The information came from the Mayo Clinic, the Agency on Aging, and Canada's Alzheimer's Association. We also have lessons from the Illinois Extension that help in this area. Remember the lesson about Heart Health? Well, the brain benefits from the same treatment!

I also included a Mental Activity during Tuesday's lunch program. Lunch attendees were challenged to recall the 50 states, and we sang about them with Ray Charles' 1963 song "Fifty Nifty United States." How many remember that song from way back when? How many states have you visited?

See you in August at the District Meetings, Vivian Gerrietts.



INTERNATIONAL - JANEL KASSING



Ladies,

So happy to meet with so many of you at the conference. We had a full room—I hope you feel like you received the information you need. I tried to find recipes that might be adaptable for your events. I wasn't sure you'd want to include goat stew but knew you could adapt the meat of choice. At lunch on Wednesday, a member shared with me that she found a recipe for and made Savory Green Bananas. She said they were easy to make and delicious. I hope the recipe is included in this issue—if not, I'll bring it in August.

That is when I will share with you the last country I will choose. It actually was suggested by Angela. My term will expire in March, so be thinking about serving on the State Board as the next International Chairperson. If you're interested but have questions, please contact me—I'd be happy to talk with you and answer any questions. It's a challenging office, but you learn a lot about the organization. Consider joining the board.

At the October 2025 board meeting, we dispersed the 2024 Friendship Projects Fund monies. The total collected was \$12,390+. We sent 50% of that to ACWW for their Rural Women in Action Projects. 25% goes to the 4-H Foundation, IFYE, the International Peace Garden, and Mini Stipends. The other 25% goes to send delegates to the Triennial and for the Ronald McDonald Houses International, the charity we chose to support during the rest of my term. Approximately \$1,800 was sent to them. I just rounded out these amounts to give you an idea of where your Friendship Projects Fund goes.

I included in my packet info on the Ronald McDonald Houses International (in 60+ countries globally) and on St. Patrick's Day traditions. Your International Director can share this information with you or contact me.

Enjoy spring, happy Easter, and find some way to celebrate the 250th birthday of the United States. See you in August with more international news.

Janel





PUBLIC RELATIONS – AMY KERR

Thank you! I'm thrilled to take on the role of public relations and newsletter editor. As I set out on this exciting journey from southernmost Illinois, I'm committed to delivering informative content that covers news from all counties, district directors, and board members, ensuring it engages and benefits our readers. To achieve this, I'll establish a well-structured framework for managing newsletter subscriptions and archives, utilizing digital tools for organizing contacts, scheduling content. I'll prioritize clear communication with contributors and maintain a consistent editorial calendar for timely distribution. I aim to make our newsletter a valuable community resource, keeping everyone informed and connected. I'm looking forward to the rewarding experience of informing and engaging with all of you.

I feel like I have such a rich and fulfilling life! Being a long-time member of the Home and Community Education (HCE) group has given me so many rewarding experiences and roles over the years. My enduring marriage of 38 years to my high school sweetheart is a testament to our deep connection and shared journey. Now, we're entering an exciting new chapter as we eagerly await the arrival of our first grandchild this September.

Living on the 80-acre family farm where I grew up holds a special place in my heart, offering a sense of continuity and tradition. Our Yorkshire Terrier, Axle, definitely adds joy and energy to our home. Managing the paperwork and errands for our repair shop showcases my organizational skills and dedication to our family business. My love of crafting and thrifting reflects my creative and resourceful spirit, adding an extra layer of enjoyment to my everyday life.

Experience the magic of IAHCE as I present engaging workshops and insightful information at the 2026 meetings across the state. These sessions are designed to help members with helpful hints and practical skills to help fellow P/R directors and enhancing their ability to thrive in their counties. Whether you're a seasoned member or a newcomer, these workshops will offer valuable insights, new ideas, and collaborative opportunities. Join us as we journey through the latest trends in creating magical and informative newsletters.

AMY KERR

hope everyone has a beautiful Spring and Wonderful Summer.

SALES / CVH DIRECTOR



Carol Meffert, Madison County, has been appointed the Sales/CVH Director as of April 2, 2026. She will begin her 3-year term immediately. Carol feels she would be a good fit for the position of Sales/CVH due to her most recent work experience as a Construction Estimator, which required computer skills (Word, Excel, and PowerPoint) and organizational skills. Carol also serves on the Madison County HCE Board as the 2nd Vice President. Carol will share more when she meets you in the August workshops! Her contact information is listed on the inside front cover of the newsletter. Congratulations, Carol Meffert!





EXTENSION EDUCATOR
CHERI BUREHAM



Happy Spring!

I want to thank all of you that attended the IAHCE Annual Conference in March and made me feel so welcome! I enjoyed talking with many of you and I love how more and more of your faces are looking familiar to me when I see you!

During the First Vice Presidents meeting, your members voted on the lessons that Illinois Extension will provide for next year. The lessons that will be taught in person and by webinar are: Protect Yourself from Identity Theft; Sleep Well, Age Well; Let's Talk About Stress and Ways to Manage It for a Better Life; and Fueling a Healthy Gut. There will be a new package lesson called Stay Independent, Cook Safe. In July, I will have a new flyer available to showcase these lessons, and the materials will be available to you in December. It is great how HCE and Extension work together to build a super lineup of quality lessons each and every year!

Remember to reach out to me if you have any questions or need help getting access to materials.

The best way to reach me is by email at cburcham@illinois.edu.

I hope you have a great rest of your spring and take care this summer because you know it's going to be hot!

Cheri Burcham, Illinois Extension/HCE Liaison

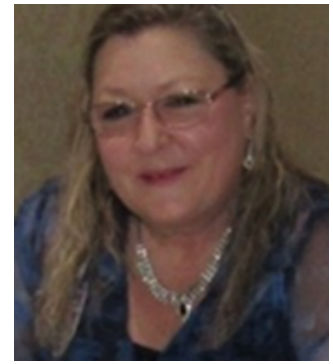
Cheri Burcham





OUTGOING BOARD MEMBERS

MIELISSA CHITWOOD



For six years, I served on the board, surrounded by minutes, motions, and memos. Now, as my term concludes, I reflect on the friendships formed, particularly with my HCE colleagues. Though my official duties end, the bonds I've made will endure. I've met incredible ladies whose laughter brightened my days, and these friendships will carry on beyond my board tenure. As I transition from spreadsheets to the warmth of campfires, I'm leaving behind copier jams and unreliable Internet connections. Instead, I'll embrace fresh air, camping, and time with my grandkids, free from the burdens of packing my entire office for the journey.

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for the joy and camaraderie shared during my time on the IAHCCE State Board. Working alongside dedicated and talented members at both state and local levels has been an honor. The friendships developed within HCE are truly magical, and I will forever cherish the support, lessons, and opportunities I've experienced. Thank you for making these years meaningful; I will look back on them with pride and fondness.

We recently held a wonderful annual conference, and I extend my congratulations to everyone for their hard work. This year, our silent auction raised \$2,268, and the voting for table centerpieces added an additional \$422.30.

Before I depart, I have a couple of reminders that extend beyond Treasurers: Due to the updated USPS processing, the postmark date is now the processing date, not when you drop it off. If you need something postmarked by a specific date, I recommend visiting the post office and requesting a hand postmark. Also, when completing reports, please write out your county name. This may seem unusual, but consider this: If a form says "CCHCE," which county is it—Carroll, Cass, Champaign, Clark, Clay, Cumberland, or Clinton?

Thank you once again for this wonderful opportunity. Now, perhaps I'll finally tackle those "when I retire" projects.

Melissa Chitwood
IAHCCE Treasurer
2020–2026





We will miss you

Ashley Davis

Happy Spring CVH/Sales Directors,

What an amazing 102nd IAHCE Annual Conference! Thank you, Emily McDowell and Becky Belcher, for a fun time and unforgettable memories.

As I typed "unforgettable memories," I reflect over the past nine (9) years serving as your IAHCE CVH/Sales Director. I have so many unforgettable memories that will last me a lifetime. As I said in my last CVH/Sales packet letter: This is not goodbye; it is see you later. You will never know where that shy little Ashley will appear next. I will miss seeing those numbers rolling around December. My mailbox and email will be a little lonely this year, but I will see you all at the August Workshops and at the 103rd IAHCE Annual Conference in March of 2027.

Please do me one favor and remember we all have our ways of doing things. However, your new CVH/Sales Director will have their way of doing things. Please don't say to that person:

"Well, Ashley did it this way or that way!"

Sometimes that can discourage a person and hurt their feelings. We all must adapt to the changes and new ways in everyday life.

Well, I will close out this chapter of IAHCE CVH/Sales Director, tuck away my memories, and move on to the next chapter of whatever my Lord and Savior has in store for me. Stay tuned; you just never know where this "Ole Southern Gal" will turn up next!

God bless you all, and thank you for the amazing 9 years,

Ashley Davis





2025 Conference Review: Make Time IAHCE 2025

Let's take a moment to reflect on the "Make Time IAHCE 2025," the 101st annual conference that took place from March 11-13, 2025, at the Thelma Keller Convention Center in Effingham, IL. It was an action-packed 2½ days filled with engaging activities and insightful discussions.

The conference featured all the elements necessary for a successful event: captivating speakers, intriguing share shops, and a variety of engaging "side shows" that ensured fun times for all.

- *Speakers:* * The conference kicked off on Tuesday with Chelsey Byers, an Extension Specialist in Family and Consumer Sciences, who delivered a touching speech about relationships, time management, and aging, sharing heartwarming stories about her grandmother. During the Wednesday luncheon, after honoring past state board members and long-time HCE members, Lori Kerans from Millikin University inspired attendees with a message about service, using time wisely, and honoring commitments. On Thursday morning, Deanne Frieders, known as This Farm Girl Cooks, shared her experiences as a young farm wife, along with helpful recipes and tips for saving time in preparing and storing freezer meals.
- *Share Shops:* * The conference offered a diverse range of share shops, in addition to officer share shops and district meetings. Topics included gardening, fad diets, tornado trends, art quilts, wellness and mental health, butterflies, bees, honey and vinegar, the history of Illinois, chocolate, mini-manicures, navigating the IAHCE website, pumpkins, birds, aprons, and herbs and nutrition. We also hosted five Make-It, Take-It sessions, providing hands-on learning opportunities.
- *"Side Shows" (Other Cool Stuff):* * We strategically relocated the beloved cultural arts show from the hotel to the convention center, conveniently positioning it across from the ballroom and silent auction room. This move allowed attendees easy access to the beautiful entries. The silent auction was a highlight, complemented by a fun "pot of gold" drawing, both serving as state fundraisers. The Scavenger Hunt kept attendees busy searching for clues, while bingo and board games provided entertainment following the Tuesday awards banquet. On Wednesday night, the Toast of Champaign singers, a Sweet Adeline's group, dazzled us with their harmonious voices and humorous songs.

According to attendee evaluations, the conference was a resounding success and well worth the time spent attending. I am immensely grateful to my co-chair, Emily McDowell of Madison County, and the IAHCE state board for their invaluable assistance and support in planning and executing this remarkable conference.

Carol Harms

2025 "Make Time" Conference Chair



DISTRICT 1 NEWS



DISTRICT 1 DIRECTOR- KAREN DAVIS

I hope this letter finds you well. Wasn't the annual meeting and conference simply wonderful? It was filled with so many happy faces, beautiful cultural enrichment projects, entertainment, and inspiration—all rolled into one memorable and amazing event! We are well on our way to discovering the Magic of IAHCE in 2026. What magic did you uncover at the conference?

For me, the Caribbean represents magic—tropical beaches, ocean breezes...what's not to like, especially when winter in Northern Illinois brings a deep freeze across the landscape...in March! What is your county focusing on this year? All of the Caribbean, or just one of the islands? I've never traveled to the Caribbean, so I anticipate learning a lot as I visit your annual meetings. I've got my beach hat, flip-flops, and passport ready for an island-hopping adventure through District 1 in 2026. I'm looking forward to seeing you all soon at your annual meetings and other events!

Tomorrow, I will meet with officers and members from four counties in District 1: Carroll, JoDaviess, Whiteside, and Winnebago. These gatherings are always productive and inspiring planning sessions for the coming months. We meet twice a year, in April and September. Of course, homemade goodies usually grace the table at our morning meetings. Consider joining forces with your neighboring counties! Cooperation lightens the load and expands the possibilities.

I want to extend my congratulations to the following leaders in District 1:

- Kane County earned the Grand Prize in the International category for 55 Members and Above.
- Lake County member Angela Hicks placed 2nd in Highest HCE Hours with a total of 1,538 hours.
- Kane County earned 2nd Place in "Other" CVH hours with 12,078 hours.
- Kane County also earned 3rd Place in Highest Total CVH (HCE hours and non-HCE hours) with a county total of 17,172 hours.
- Mercer County placed 2nd in Membership, 54 Members and Under, with a 12.1% increase.
- Stephenson placed 3rd in Membership, 55 Members and Over, with a 2.3% increase.
- JoDaviess County placed 3rd in the IAHCE County of the Year, 54 Members and Under.
- JoDaviess County member, Judy Scott, was chosen as District 1 Member of the Year.

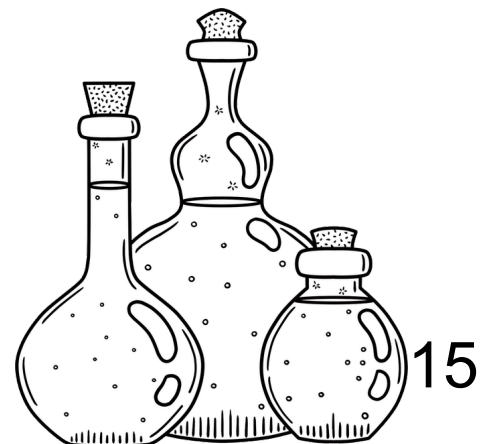
These awards were earned one step at a time—one meeting, one phone call, one event at a time.

With this vision in mind, I will close with a thought:

Be delusional enough to envision a future that doesn't exist yet.

Be disciplined enough to consistently build in that direction.

Keep going. (From Positive Lines)



CARROLL

Carroll County plans activities and finds mutual support with three neighboring counties: Jo Daviess, Whiteside, and Winnebago. It is always a productive and encouraging planning time when we get together. We meet twice each year (April and September). It refreshes and encourages me like a mini state conference. We share breakfast goodies as we plan our summer event(s)! I look forward to tomorrow's meeting!

Carroll County has two units: Odd 'n Ends, and Freedom. We gather in April for our annual meeting. This year we have invited the public to meet Marc Kelly Smith, creator of the SLAM movement. Marc will demonstrate this surprising form of entertainment. It will be a real treat to hear his story of how he came to be world famous in performance poetry. He promises to involve us all in a Slam exercise. Fun. Fun. Of course, we will have our business meeting, too. Highlights will include a report on the recent IAHCE conference and announce the Dorothy Foottit scholarship winners. Guests will learn from our HCE display about the Magic of HCE in Carroll County.

PICKLE BALL SHARESHOP AT STATE CONFERENCE

DISPLAYS AT CONFERENCE



CONFERENCE VOLUNTEERS



LAKE

Hello from Lake County! The Lake County HCE (LCAHCE) started the year with 64 members, including a new unit called C2G Crafters, six new members, and two returning members. Four members, including Angela, attended the conference in March. We are proud to have been recognized with an award in Cultural Enrichment. We're thrilled to report that two items submitted for the Cultural Arts Show won Best of Show in their categories: Sandy Henke for her hand-beaded butterfly necklace and Angela Hicks for her hand-beaded 3-D hot cocoa with whipped cream trinket box/ornament. A big thank you to the LCAHCE members who made 150 playing card holders, which were given as favors to the conference attendees. We also extend our gratitude to Justin Arendt from X-TEK for donating over 300 DVDs/CDs for the project!

MAGIC IN THE MAKING WITH IAHCE



ROCK ISLAND

At the beginning of the year, the Rock Island County HCE began taking orders for their annual geranium plant sale, which serves as their major fundraising event. With the assistance of the 4-H clubs, this event has consistently been very successful. The 4-H clubs receive a percentage of each plant they sell, making it a profitable endeavor not only for HCE but also for the 4-H. The plants are scheduled for delivery in early May for distribution. On March 30, Cultural Enrichment held a Quilt Tying Day, where interested individuals spent the day at the Extension Office tying lap quilts, which are donated to local nursing homes. This year, a donation was made to provide some geraniums to area nursing homes, so each nursing home will receive a geranium plant along with their lap quilt donation. Additionally, the Cultural Enrichment Committee is organizing a matinee get-together at Circa 21 in April, offering lunch and a viewing of the musical "Honky Tonk Angels." The HCE Board is also busy planning their agenda and selecting a speaker for the Annual Meeting, which is set to take place in June.

STEPHENSON

Greetings from Stephenson County!

Once again, Stephenson County HCE participated in the FHN Festival of Trees at the Freeport Public Library. The theme for this year's event was, "In the Silence of a Snowy Night, the Sounds of the Season Speak." HCE members decorated our Christmas tree with blue lights and snowflakes. There were pamphlets on Stephenson County HCE and IAHCE available under our tree for anyone interested in more information on our organization.

In December, our Stephenson County HCE Board met at the home of one of the board members. After our morning business meeting, we had a Christmas potluck and just enjoyed visiting with each other. On Monday, March 16, during a blizzard, four members of Stephenson County HCE started the 300-mile trip to Effingham for the IAHCE 102nd Annual Conference. I am happy to report that we had no problems! However, it was a slower than normal drive on the interstate as there were places with lots of blowing snow and sections of ice-packed pavement. Other drivers weren't as lucky, as we noticed many vehicles abandoned in the ditch, as well as some recent mishaps where the drivers were still in their cars or trucks. Stephenson County HCE President Carla Meyer, the new IAHCE Board Secretary, was also at the conference, but she missed out on the blizzard, as she traveled to Effingham on Sunday.

Stephenson County supported the Silent Auction with a donation of two themed baskets. We also participated with a book centerpiece. At the Awards Banquet, our county received third place in the 2025 Membership Growth Award (counties with 55 members and over). In the CVH program, Diana Ethridge placed second in the state with the Member With the Highest "Other" Volunteer Hours (1,456). I attended the share shops on Volunteer Burnout, Becoming a Dementia Friend, and Public Speaking and Parliamentary Procedure. All of those classes were very good and informative, especially the Public Speaking.

Enjoy the rest of your spring and summer! And make sure you celebrate America's 250th birthday on July 4th!





Ladies enjoying St. Patrick's Day at Conference



In Will County, the weather remains a consistent topic of discussion. The variable temperatures and precipitation contribute to an unpredictable climate, yet signs of spring are evident as forsythias, magnolias, daffodils, hyacinths, and other flowering plants begin to bloom. Seeing the trees start greening is such a wonderful sight, too. Additional sunlight would be appreciated, but with sunlight, it tends to get cooler.

The WCHCE has organized several successful events since our earlier newsletter. In December, we hosted a Christmas party at a local restaurant, featuring excellent food, fun Christmas-themed games, and meaningful conversation among our members. All attendees enjoyed this gathering. February marked our inaugural Bunco game of the year, held at St. Joseph's Park Hall with fifteen members present. The WCHCE provided refreshments and monetary prizes for winners, offering a welcome diversion during the cold winter season.

Upcoming events include a presentation entitled "Bird Feeding Basics" on Saturday, April 28th, at Wild Bird's Unlimited Store, where participants will receive a complimentary bird feeder. Our annual meeting is scheduled for May 12th at the Will County Farm Bureau. Andrea Zoelle (International) will discuss her experience at the IAHCE Conference, accompanied by a catered luncheon and special program. A birdhouse painting craft day will take place on June 9th at the Will County Farm Bureau. Members will be supplied with a birdhouse and all necessary materials, along with snacks and beverages provided by the WCHCE. The second Bunco game day is scheduled for July and promises to be an enjoyable event for both members and guests.

We are pleased to announce the addition of Carol Murphy and Nancy Drauden to our membership roster this year. We anticipate that increased programming and activities will help attract potential new members. We also express our gratitude to Joliet Township for their financial support, which enables us to provide these opportunities.



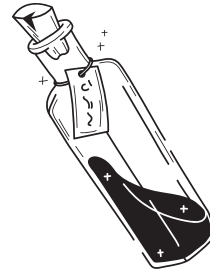
SHARING THE MAGIC OF IAHCE



DISTRIC 2 NEWS

DISTRICT 2 DIRECTOR KAREN CAHILL

Once again, we had a wonderful conference, and kudos to everyone who helped make it such a success! I hope those who joined us had a great time, and for those who couldn't attend, we hope to see you next year on March 16-18, 2027. Please share the packet information you received with your members. I'm looking forward to visiting your counties to see how you're "Experiencing the Magic of HCE." Your creativity with speakers, lessons, and decorations is truly inspiring. Please mark your calendars for the upcoming District 2 meetings this year. More information will be sent as the dates approach. The meetings are scheduled for Tuesday, June 30 at the First Baptist Church in Decatur, Wednesday, August 5 at Southern View Chapel in Springfield, and Thursday, November 5 for another mini-meeting at the First Baptist Church in Decatur. Here's hoping you have a happy, healthy, magical spring and summer. Looking forward to seeing you soon!



DEWITT

Greetings from DeWitt County! We concluded 2025 with a delightful Christmas party at the LaTeaDa Tea Room, attended by twelve members. Although we skip January meetings, February brought us an enlightening session with Stephanie from Sensible Hearing in Decatur, who shared her expertise on hearing loss. Her insights were so compelling that a couple of our members are considering scheduling appointments. Our hostess, Betty Clark, along with Lucretia Crawford, treated us to an array of delicious quick breads.

In March, five of us attended a conference in Effingham from the 17th to the 19th. It was a wonderful experience, filled with learning from speakers and participating in share shops, not to mention the joy of reconnecting with fellow attendees. On March 24th, we held our unit meeting where Larry Roberts, President of the DeWitt County Friendship Center, delivered an excellent program about the center, leaving us grateful for such a valuable community resource.

Reflecting on the conference, I'd like to share an article by Nancy Wikoff, a new member and first-time attendee, who recounted her experience. She attended sessions like "Dementia Friends" and "Volunteer Burnout," which she found informative and engaging. Despite a packed schedule, she appreciated the opportunity to learn about other units during the Family & Community Issues meeting. Nancy participated in a scavenger hunt, marveled at the talents displayed in the Cultural Room, and enjoyed the lively atmosphere of the Hospitality Room. Even without her voice, she felt warmly welcomed and left eager for next year's conference.

Nancy shared her reflections at our March meeting, offering a fresh perspective that reminded us of the dedication our State Board Officers invest in organizing these events. A heartfelt thank you to President Angela and the team!

Wishing everyone a wonderful spring and a Happy Easter! Don't forget to embrace the magic as flowers bloom!

DEWITT COUNTY PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS



MEMBERS @ 2026 CONFERENCE

SENSABLE HEARING PROGRAM



MACON



LARRY ROBERTS
OUT SPEAKER FROM
FRIENDSHIP CENTER

We are thrilled about our new venture into clubs, offering opportunities to meet new people, make friends, and learn skills. We have five clubs, each with its unique focus. The “Lunch Bunch” club, chaired by Sally Dennis, has met twice—in Warrensburg and at a Greek restaurant in Decatur, Illinois—with ten attendees each time. Notably, one person joined HCE, and future trips include the Decatur Airport and Taylorville. The Craft Club, led by Bonnie Lanham, met on March 25, 2026, to craft Easter eggs using various techniques like decoupage and dyeing. In April, they'll bring their own Diamond Art paintings, and in May, they'll make Dream Catchers. Bonnie encourages others to join. Cheryl Sample leads the Needlecraft Club, offering sessions on stitching techniques, beginning with basic hand embroidery. She will supply needles and cloth, while participants bring scissors, a ruler, and a needle threader if needed. Cheryl is eager to introduce Sashiko stitching. The Gamers, chaired by Karen Cahill, had their first meeting at POP's in Decatur. They've enjoyed learning new games and a magic card trick in line with this year's Magic Theme, meeting monthly at our Extension Office. Gini Smith leads the Day Trip Club, which had its first tour on March 23 with thirteen attendees. They visited the Thinkwell Makerspace Innovations Center, where Sam Johnson, a volunteer, showcased various machinery and classes offered. These new clubs are flourishing, and we hope they continue to grow, attracting new members. We also maintain our small units and large group meetings. Upcoming events include a tour of the Little Theatre in Sullivan, the Spring Meeting, sewing days for pillowcases, a lesson about the Tillamook Creamery, a Tri-County meeting, and a session on herbs with our president, Liz King. Linda Austin, Public Relations.



SANGAMON

A warm welcome to Spring was extended, though Mother Nature seemed to have her own plans with fluctuating temperatures. The community remained active with monthly project days, where card makers crafted valentines for overseas National Guard members and bookmarks for various projects. Donations of fidget mats, sock monkeys, and shoulder shawls were made to a memory care assisted living facility, while gift bags and baked treats were delivered to low-income senior living apartments. Over 300 mail bags were sewn for Honor Flight participants, and felt hats were provided to the Grace Lutheran Church Food Pantry, along with socks, gloves, and hats collected during the annual Christmas party. A Thrivent Grant helped fund contributions to the Kumler Food Pantry, including personal care items. The group continued to enjoy and benefit from Lessons for Living, featuring Darla Holden's presentation on Midwest Mission in January, highlighting the need for items like used medical equipment and school supply kits. February's Cabin Fever Day offered a variety of activities, from yoga stretches to napkin folding lessons, alongside a lunch of homemade breads, soups, and desserts. The March meeting featured talks from the Rochester Police Chief and a Sangamon County Sheriff's Detective on safety and scam protection. Five members attended the State Conference, bringing back awards for the County, including a Grand Award for a membership report by Debbie Yeaman, Carole Strick, Barb Shutt, and Ruth Ann Theis, and a Cultural Enrichment Grand Prize for rag rugs by Sue Chamberlain. Additionally, the County was awarded second place for County of the Year, and Darla Holden and Suzi Pettyjohn were honored for their cultural enrichment creations. Best wishes were extended for a pleasant summer, signed off by Brenda Dutcher from Public Relations.



WORKING ON HONOR FLIGHT MAIL BAGS

BRINGING THE MAGIC OF FAIRY TO EVERYONE

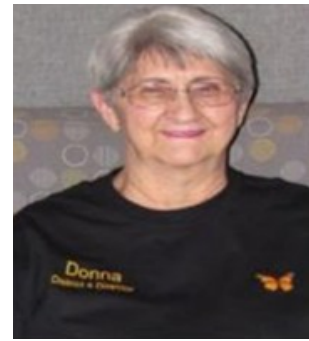


DELEGATES AT ANNUAL MEETING



DISTRICT NEWS 3

DISTRICT 3 DIRECTOR – DONNA RICHARDS



Dear DONNA ,

I hope you don't mind me writing this on your behalf. But we all hope you're feeling better and wanted to let you know how much we missed you at the conference. Your presence was truly felt in spirit, and we look forward to having you back with us soon.

Take care and get well soon!

With Love,

Your IAHCE Family

CRAWFORD



MORNING GLORY UNIT (OBLONG) HAD A SPECIAL SURPRISE. MARTHA HOLT TREATED HER FELLOW MORNING GLORY MEMBERS TO A TEA, COMPLETE WITH FLAVORED TEAS, COOKIES, AND SCONES.

FROM FRONT LEFT: NORMA THOMPSON, EVEA MILLER MARTHA HOLT, MARILYN SHERIDAN, BARB MCCOY, AND LYDIA BAILEY.



SEVERAL MEMBERS HELPED WITH MAKING BIBS FOR AREA NURSING HOMES AND A MEMORY CARE FACILITY. MARCIA ELDER, DONNA NEWBOLD, SANDY BRYANS, HOPE DENNIS, BARB MCCOY, SUSAN ALLISON, MARTHA HOLT, EVEA MILLER, SUE SLAVEN, BARB KELM, VICKIE CLARK, AND NEVA CARTER (ST. ELMO).

AFTERWARDS, THEY ENJOYED A DELICIOUS LUNCH.



SEVERAL MEMBERS WROTE ENCOURAGING WORDS AND WELL-WISHES IN CHRISTMAS CARDS TO BE GIVEN TO AREA VETERANS.

HOPE DENNIS, SUSAN ALLISON, MARTHA HOLT, NORMA THOMPSON, DONNA NEWBOLD, SUE SLAVEN, AND MARCIA ELDER



CRAWFORD COUNTY COLLECTED AND DONATED 39 POUNDS OF POP TABS TO THE RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE. THEY WERE SO VERY HAPPY TO RECEIVE THEM!

PICTURED FROM LEFT: MARCIA ELDER, DONNA NEWBOLD, SUE SLAVEN, NORMA THOMPSON, MARTHA HOLT, AND SUSAN ALLISON

MEMBERS MAKE MAGIC HAPPEN BY WORKING TOGETHER



WORKING HARD BEHIND THE SCENES

FAYETTE

Hello everyone from Fayette County! We started the new year slowly, recuperating from the holidays and beginning to plan all the wonderful things that Fayette County HCE can accomplish this year. In early February, we had a fantastic seed starting class taught by a wonderful instructor who showed us how to use milk jugs as miniature greenhouses to plant seeds during cold weather. Next, we attended a Mental Health First Aid class, an intensive eight-hour training led by Cheri from the U of I and Stephanie. By the end of the day, we were certified and equipped with valuable knowledge in Mental Health First Aid. March brought the anticipation of our conference, which was packed with informative sessions. Those who attended left with a wealth of new information. If you missed it, you truly missed out on a great experience. Following the conference, Fayette enjoyed a weekend dedicated to Heritage Skills, where we learned a range of forgotten skills. The weekend was rich with learning opportunities such as food fermentation, herbal medicine, creating an herbal first aid kit, and understanding the benefits of Aloe Vera. We also engaged in crocheting scrubbies, canning cranberry juice, sharpening knives, making cheese, yogurt, and sour cream, foraging, building a solar oven, and crafting soap, solid perfumes, and candles. We explored knot-making (macramé), the benefits of honey, and made poultices, plasters, and liniments. Additionally, we learned about orchards, seasoning mixes and rubs, and even butchering and sausage-making by cutting up a half hog. Alongside these activities, there were plenty of door prizes and delicious food from the units—so many snacks! The weekend was a blessing in many ways, offering fun and fellowship with the ladies who joined us. We hope to see you next year!



MACOUPIN

Happy Springtime to everyone!

Recently, another board member and I had the opportunity to represent Macoupin County at the Illinois Association for Home and Community Education (IAHCE) Annual Conference held in Effingham. The event proved to be a rewarding experience for both of us, offering the chance to network with fellow attendees and engage in meaningful learning opportunities. We appreciated the welcoming environment and the wealth of knowledge shared throughout the conference.

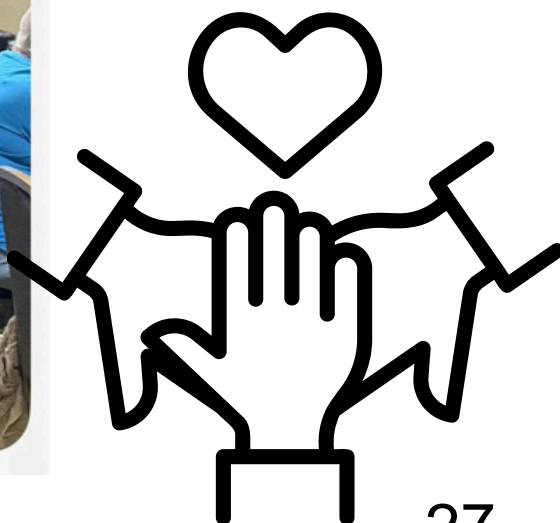
One of the standout parts of the conference was the Share Shops. These sessions covered a variety of engaging topics and quickly became a highlight for participants. Through the discussions and activities offered, we gained valuable information. We left with resources and ideas to bring back to Macoupin County.

Vickie Laughlin, who serves as our Cultural Enrichment Chairperson, recently held a Cultural Arts Day in Carlinville. The event brought together a group of ladies who enjoyed a creative experience painting and decorating garden chairs.

This year, our community service project focuses on supporting the national organization Sleep in Heavenly Peace within Macoupin County. Sleep in Heavenly Peace is a remarkable group dedicated to building and delivering beds to children who would otherwise be sleeping on the floor, ensuring that every child has a comfortable place to rest. To help with this important mission, we will be donating mattresses, mattress pads, blankets, bedspreads, and pillows. By providing these essential items, our county can help to improve the lives of local children in need.

THE MAGIC OF IAHCE IS HELPING THOSE IN NEED !

MINI MESSAGE AT STATE CONFERENCE WAS A HIT !



MADISON

We had our 5th Annual Craft Camp at the end of February. We created some amazing interchangeable crafts to use throughout the year. We had a great group of women that had fun, partook in amazing food, and best of all had tons of laughs and great fellowship. Some members in our county have continued their Ethnic Supper Club. We have visited seven different restaurants at this point and explored cuisines such as: Indian, German, Greek, Ethiopian, Thai, Brazilian, and Italian. Our next adventure is a crepe making class, where we will explore a part of French cuisine. This has been a great opportunity to expand our horizons, trying new foods, and learning about the different types of cuisine, culture, and cooking methods. In March we hosted our annual Kids Make It and Take It; kids craft event at the Edwardsville Library. We were able to reach over 30 kids and their families at this event provided to the community at no charge. In March a group from our county attended the IAHCE Conference in Effingham. We learned new things to bring back to our county and always enjoy attending this event and all it has to offer. In April we hosted our 89th Annual County Meeting. We all were able to "Experience the Magic of the Mississippian Culture" with a presentation from the Cahokia Mounds Museum Society. Coming up in May we will have our "Spring Fling" New Membership event. We also have our Spring County Bus Trip. We will be traveling to St. Louis to visit Union Station, Guido's on the Hill, and the Kaplan Feldman Holocaust Museum. The cost is \$95, which includes your bus, travel, meal, and guided tour of the museum. We still have room for anyone that would like to attend, contact Donna Brandmeyer (618) 691-9008 for more trip information. We are also looking forward to many activities coming up in the next several months, including several members of our county to attend the NVON Conference in July, promoting HCE at our County Fair, and continuing our monthly craft events.



MIXING UP SOME
MAGIC WITH IAHCE



RICHLAND

Members of the Richland County Homemakers Education Association Board recently attended the 102nd Annual Conference of the Illinois Association for Home and Community Education, to which the local HEA belongs. The participants enjoyed three days filled with workshops, meetings, a cultural arts fair, silent auctions, and more. Interacting and sharing with ladies from across the state provided another opportunity to learn and gather ideas for our own improvement.

Richland County experienced several firsts during this conference. A new banner, thoughtfully designed and constructed by Pat Foust with input from all board members, made its debut at the state convention. The banner featured white squirrels on a lavender background, highlighting the focuses on education, scholarship, community service, the homemaker, and 4-H, along with additional information such as unit names and dates.

A special highlight was two of our participants being awarded Best of Show in the Cultural Arts show. Bonita Balding's baby afghan won in the knitted category, while Debbie Geier's "Dragon Fly on a Clothes Pin" secured first place in the photography division. Other participants from Richland County included Karen Schalasky, Eve Novak, Terry Fleming, Carol Bursott, Ruth Skelton, and Lisa Weiler. Additionally, an unusual occurrence spotlighted our county's group: a mother-daughter duo attended this 102nd conference. The mother, Bonita Balding, has been an HEA member for over 60 years and has attended numerous conferences. Her daughter, Lynita Arteberry, attended her first-ever conference and is completing her first year as a board member. Bonita remarked that it has been a "neat experience to watch her take part and grow this year. The way she took over the kitchen at the Holiday Bazaar was amazing."

As the coming year unfolds, board members look forward to sharing some of the ideas and experiences with our own groups. We are always open to new members, so if you are interested, please contact any of the current members to see how to join and enjoy these interesting and unique experiences as well.



HEA board members display new Richland County banner at conference. Pat Foust designed and made the banner. Members are Janet Jones, Bonita Balding, Lynita Arteberry, Pat Foust, Debbie Geier, Mary Ochs, and Julie Oesch.



Bonita Balding and Debbie Geier win Best of Show in their categories at HEA conference. Bonita constructed a knitted afghan and Debbie photographed a dragon fly on a clothespin.



A mother and daughter team, Bonita Balding is one of the longest-serving board members and a 60+ years HEA member while daughter Lynita Arteberry attended her first conference and is finishing her first year as a board member;

DISTRICT 4 NEWS

CINDY HENDERSON DISTRICT 4 DIRECTOR



I am truly honored to serve as your IAHCE District 4 Director. Over the coming year, I look forward to visiting each of your counties and getting to know you better. Connecting with members across our district is something I am especially excited about.

I have been a member of HCE in Pulaski/Alexander County since 2022, and joining this organization has had a meaningful impact on my life. The friendships I've formed, the opportunities to learn and grow, and the shared spirit of service are what make HCE so special.

My husband, Freddy, and I make our home in the country just outside of Olmsted in far southern Illinois. This year, we are celebrating 45 years of marriage, a milestone we are very grateful for.

I was born in Chicago and spent much of my life in the southwest suburbs. After high school, I attended Bible school and later pursued studies in automotive services at a local junior college. My career was primarily in the automotive industry, and I also had the privilege of teaching introductory automotive classes at two junior colleges.

While we were not blessed with children, we cherish the time we spend with our nieces and nephews and take great pride in their accomplishments. And like many of you, we have a special place in our hearts for our dog, Pepper, who is definitely part of the family.

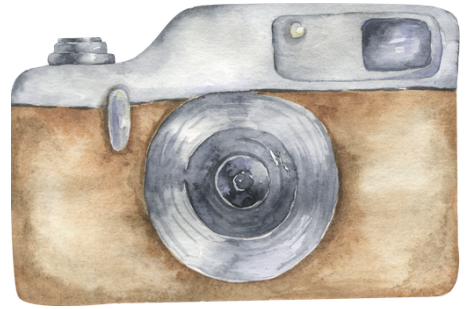
As your District Director, I am committed to supporting each of you and the important work you do in your communities. I look forward to building connections, sharing experiences, and strengthening our district together.

Warm regards,
District 4 Director

CHECKING IN TO CONFERENCE



JOHNSON



2026 IAHCE Conference

We had two board members available to attend the state conference this year. When you are a group of two, you have the opportunity to sit with people from other counties. It was great to meet ladies throughout the state and learn about their county. We enjoyed our classes and the time to focus on things we can do to make our organization better. Thank you to the State Board for all of the time and effort they put into organizing a nice learning opportunity.

Johnson County Annual Meeting, Monday, March 2nd!

We hosted our Annual Meeting a bit earlier this year to account for scheduling conflicts of our board. We were pleased to have about 1/2 of our membership in attendance, as well as a few husbands join us for our meeting, starting with a potluck. We were pleased to have our "retiring" District 4 Director, Carol Harms, as our speaker. She did a wonderful job sharing about not only IAHCE, but also how NVON, CWC, and ACWW fit in with our organization and their current project focus. We were happy to also have our new District 4 Director, Cindy Henderson, come. She was able to meet our members and helped Carol with the installation of officers. Pictured are our officers, as well as a picture of President, Natalie Dougherty with Cindy and Carol. It was a great meeting!



Pictured: Natalie Dougherty, President, and her mom, Phyllis Webb, Family Living.



New District 4 Director Cindy Henderson, Natalie Dougherty, and former District 4 Director Carol Harms.



On Thursday, February 5th, after our board meeting, several members stayed to help assemble 100 gift packages for the nursing home and assisted living facility in our county. Community Outreach Director, Bonnie Hogue, assisted by Faye Mize, gathered multiple items to add to the gift bags. This year we designated 10 gift bags for each facility as "sugar free" and they were very appreciative! The bags were delivered that afternoon by Bonnie and Faye.



Autumn Ridge Supportive Living Facility
Faye Mize, JCHCEA Board Member;
Jacob Breedon, ARSL Activity Director;
Bonnie Hogue, JCHCEA Board Member



Hillview Senior Living &
Rehabilitation Center Faye Mize,
JCHCEA Board Member; Carrie
Knight, HSLRC Administrator;
Brandi Penrod, HDLRC Activities
Director; Bonnie Hogue, JCHCEA
Board Member



The **International Event** was held **November 1, 2025** at Trinity Church in Metropolis, Illinois. Leigh Glass and her 9-year-old daughter, Ella, had a wonderful and interesting program on South Africa. Food samples of the country were made by different members of the council & Leigh.

Leigh, who was born and raised in South Africa, shared that South Africa has 11 official languages and that it is a country within the continent of Africa. There are over 25 different political parties in their country and private Boarding schools are common for most students to attend. One of the natural resources on privately owned beaches is diamonds. As in many countries, there are many poor mixed with those who are wealthy. Leigh complemented the food that was prepared and said it was very close to what was eaten in South Africa.

Community Outreach: 42 Veteran bags were prepared in November 2025. Thank you to everyone who helped fill, purchase items, and delivered the bags. December and January is unit choice. February was 232 cards and little treats for Valentine's Day given to residents in the Massac County care facilities. Thank you to all those who made cards, donated time and money for preparing the little bags. **March Outreach** was school supplies for students in the local schools. The usual supplies needed: pencils, lined paper, eraser, crayons, and etc.

Scholarship Applications for Joppa & Massac County High School Seniors will be due April 1, 2026. These scholarships are presented at the Awards Night sponsored by the local Kawanis. Massac County HCE and Extension Facilities work together to present these scholarships.

The 2026 IAHCE Conference, "Experience the Magic" was March 17-19, 2026, in Effingham, IL. The conference center was magical. Jody Johnson, AJMPU Extension Director, gave greetings from U of I Extension at the opening session and Pulaski/Alexander counties had two members elected to the IAHCE State Board. Amy Kerr is IAHCE Public Relations Director and Cindy Henderson is our District 4 Director.

Massac County was recognized for: Grand Award 54 member & Under in **International, Public Relations, Membership, and County of the Year**. Dorothy Holt, Norma Korte and Debra Korte were the representatives of Massac County.

AJMPU Unit meeting will be **April 9, 2026**, at Shawnee Community College. This is a great learning experience, and a chance to visit members from other counties in our District. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend!

Massac County Annual Meeting was held on March 28, 2026 at St. John's Church, Metropolis, IL. With 22 members and 9 guest attending. Cindy Henderson, IAHCE District 4 Director installed the 2026 Council. Gunner Ristar shared a program on "Experience the Magic". Thank you to New Frontier's Unit for decorating and planning the program. One member was recognized as a first-year member, three 50-year members were recognized with their 50-year pins, rose and certificates. Four 45-year members were recognized with a certificate and rose. A memorial was given for the one member that passed away in 2025.

Brewing up some magic with IAHCE





Valentines delivered to Assisted Living



Making the Valentine gift bags with cards



Leigh Glass and her daughter at the International night.



Representatives from Massac County at State Conference.

2026 Massac County Council with IAHCE District4 Director, Cindy Henderson.





“SPRING BREAK” BACKPACK PROJECT

Monroe County HCE donated 173 food items and monetary gifts to St. John UCC, Maeystown’s “backpack mission program”. Providing food for weekends and holiday breaks for students in need from Waterloo, Red Bud, Prairie Du Rocher, and Valmeyer. Pictured (L-R) board members Kathi Emery, Lucille Ohms, Sharon Scherer, Dorothy Kohler, and Sandy Patrick. Kids need the proper nutrition for their learning, development, and growth.

“DESSERTS AND DIALOGUE”

HCE hosted members and their guests for a program to learn more about how the Monroe County House of Neighborly Service helps local families in need. Our guest speaker was Executive Director, Natalie Kawalec. HNS services include financial assistance and housing assistance. And distributing food for clients with food insecurity. After the presentation was a question & answer session, followed by “Desserts and Dialogue”. A lovely evening learning how we can be involved with helping our neighbors.





VALENTINE'S GAME NIGHT

Monroe County hosted members and their guests for BINGO, Word Search and other Valentine themed games. Such a great event - socializing & enjoying valentines treats!

MONROE COUNTY ATTENDS IAHCE CONFERENCE

Pictured: (L-R) Kathi Emery, Sandy Patrick, Lucille Ohms, Doris Matzenbacher, Janese Sondag, and Dorothy Kohler. This year's theme was "Experience the Magic of HCE".



PERRY

What fun we have here in Perry County HCE! Our Holiday Idea Day in November was themed "A Sweet Time of the Year." With entertainment, funny skits, photo opportunities, an abundance of holiday food, gift baskets, quilt raffles, and great presentations, there was truly something for everyone. HCE members and friends raised \$1,500 towards the Pinckneyville Baby Sarah's Playground Campaign, which aims to fund a whole new playground at Pinckneyville Park.

In February, a group meeting was held featuring lessons on "Amazing Rice" and "Is My Heart Breaking?" An Emergency Department Manager from Pinckneyville Community Hospital shared valuable heart health education and tips for recognizing and responding to cardiac emergencies. Following this, several members visited the hospital to complete CPR training with Nancy Keller, RN, gaining lifesaving skills to help protect their families and neighbors.

Members attending the group meeting also brought snacks and coffee as donations for the Anna Veterans' Home. One school even made Valentine cards for the veterans.

In February, the Perry County HCE Book Club focused on "The Indigo Girl" by Natasha Boyd. The book had numerous ties to Pinckneyville, making it a very interesting read for the members.

March 4th marked the annual International Passport Party, which focused on studying the Dominican Republic, Haiti, the Caribbean, and the US state of Maryland. The 4-H Federation selected a state to study, and the event involved Perry County HCE and 4-H. Families and the public were invited to attend, and there were many table displays, group presentations, activities, games, and crafts. Presenters shared their experiences and upcoming move to the Dominican Republic. A meal featuring dishes from the studied areas, such as Jamaican Jerk Chicken with Rice, Jamaican cabbage, Jamaican Hard Bread, Maryland white potato pie, and Berger cookies, was provided.

Excitingly, another bus trip is on the horizon—two, actually! We had a bus-full ready for an overnight trip to Memphis in April, but some dates had to change, so the Memphis trip is now scheduled for September. However, another idea emerged to take a day trip to the Quilt Show in Paducah, KY, on April 23rd, and I'm sure there will be many pictures next time.

On June 14th, Pinckneyville will celebrate a Happy 250th Birthday Party for the USA! HCE will volunteer to run many of the stands and events. Perry County HCE will also have a quilt show at the Community Center as part of the day's festivities.



President Jane delivering snacks and coffee to the Veteran's Home in Anna donated during the February Group Meeting.



Above pictures of February Group Meeting and CPR Class



International Passport Party

PULASKI/ ALEXANDER

Hello from Southern Illinois! We're delighted to be enjoying the warm weather, a refreshing change from the cold wind and snow at this year's state conference, where Cindy Henderson and I had the honor of being installed as new state board officers. Our unit has been active, hosting fundraisers for our scholarship program, awarding three \$500 scholarships to high school seniors in our counties. We're looking forward to celebrating these students at our awards night dinner on May 29th. Additionally, we'll be donating snacks and drinks to the local veterans' home in Anna, IL, for Memorial Day. We've also launched a new community service project, the Hygiene Project, to collect personal hygiene products for students in need at area schools. At the local county fair, we'll have a booth with old-fashioned carnival games for kids and a food basket raffle for adults. Our board has welcomed new members and experienced some position changes this year. In May, we're excited to host a Hawaiian luau featuring island music, food, and a screening of Elvis' "Blue Hawaii" after exploring Hawaii's facts and history as part of our state study. Cindy and I look forward to meeting many of you as we travel and share the magic of HCE. Best, Amy Kerr.



2026 Pulaski / Alexander Board

L to R

President & Public Relations Amy Kerr, 1st Vice & Community Issues Cindy Henderson, 2nd Vice President Pam Morris, Secretary Martha McMunn, Treasurer Melissa Pfaff (not pictured) CVH Lucille Bierbaum, International Anna Doardi, Cultural Enrichment Holly Miller.

Join the fun and Experience The Magic



MEMBERS Anna Doardi and Pam Morris going over SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS



MEMBERS ATTENDING THE FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCE CONFERENCE HELD AT SHAWNEE COLLEGE APRIL 9TH 2026.

Members Holly Milller and Tori Goines working on 2026 scholarships



AMY KERR ACCEPTING GRAND AWARD FOR MEMBERSHIP WITH THE PERCENTAGE OF NET GAIN IN 54 MEMBERS AND UNDER.

OUR COUNTY ENTRY IN THE BOOK CENTERPIECE CONTEST AT STATE CONFERENCE



RANDOLPH

Spring has sprung, and after staying in and staying warm following the holidays, we are gearing up for 2026. The Randolph County HCE Board is planning at least two county-wide events, as well as our annual meeting in the fall, and hopefully a fundraising event in August. Our units have been regularly donating food and hygiene supplies to our area food banks and planning their own activities.

Four of our members attended the state conference, "Experience the Magic of HCE," in Effingham on March 17-19. Vickie Heller and Joan Wiegand represented our county, along with Janel Kassing, IAHCE International Director, and Carol Harms, the retiring District 4 Director. Carol installed the state officers and was inducted into the new IAHCE Board Alumni Club. All four ladies enjoyed the great speakers, share shops, and the cultural arts show. We sent six items for the show, including a beautiful navy and white quilt hand-quilted by Bernell Wiegard of the Red Bud Nite Unit, which won the judges' Best of Show award and the People's Choice Award. Bernell spent nearly a year stitching that quilt herself. Two years ago, she entered a red quilt that also won those top two awards! We were lucky that Bernell was kind enough to let us "borrow" those quilts, which were wedding gifts for two of her grandchildren.

We had a cabin fever event on March 31 at the Farm Bureau building in Sparta. Cheryn Sutton, a retired home economics teacher and one of our board members, demonstrated various techniques for handling eggs and shared some of her favorite recipes with eggs, including meringue cookies. Then Janel Kassing helped us create beautiful floral displays using hard-backed books. It was a wonderful morning.

We look forward to attending the District 4 mini-district meeting in Franklin County (Benton) in June, led by Cindy Henderson, our new District 4 Director, and the District 3 & 4 Workshop in Vandalia in August.



WHITE

During the toughest of times our members found the energy and the heart to help others in our community. It takes a team of talented and dedicated members to think positive and share what we have learned at conference and continue to gain new members. together we can meet the challenge of keeping members interested in lessons for living. We came back from our State Convention with a lot of new ideas. Everyone needs food and water to stay well and full of energy, but what all people need is true friends, neighbors, and family. and Encouragers. No we can't stop the aging process, but there is plenty you can do-physically. mentally, and spiritually to stay healthier as you grow old. So we just had our Annual Day and we are all ready to work together and find new and challenging ways to keep making White County H.C.E. 2026-2027 a more successful positive year together with new members and new positive lessons for all of us in White County,

Thank You
Fran Matheny
White County Public Relations



IACHE



COUNTY OF THE YEAR 2025 GRAND AWARD WINNERS



**54 AND UNDER MEMBERS
CATEGORY**

MASSAC COUNTY



**55 AND OVER MEMBERS
CATEGORY**

PERRY COUNTY

*KEEP MAKING MAGIC WITH
IDHCE*



IAHCE IS BREWING UP A LOT THIS YEAR SO EXPERIENCE THE MAGIC



MELISSA CHITWOOD , ANGELA HICKS,
AND KAREN BELL/FOX



KAREN BELL/FOX
NVON PRESIDENT

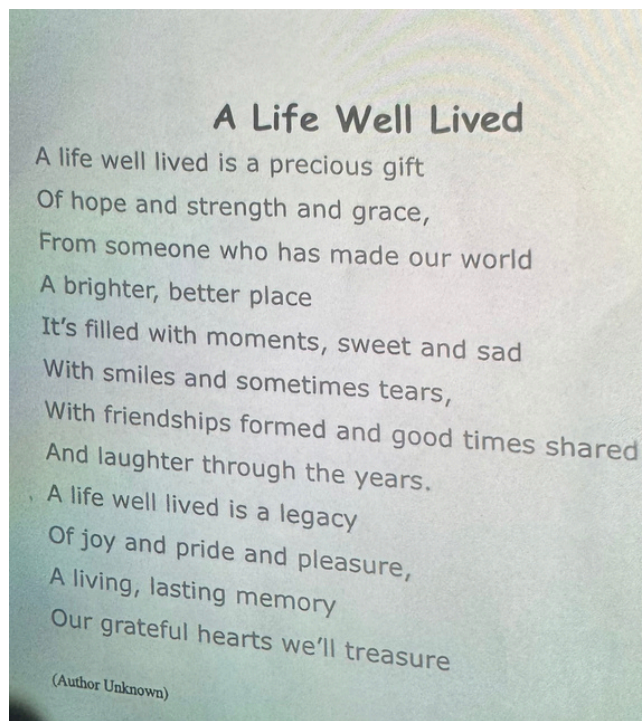


DAWN MORRIS
SPEAKER FOR THE
AMERICAN RED CROSS



JODY JOHNSON
U OF I COUNTY EXTENSION
DIRECTOR FOR THE
SOUTHERN MOST 5
COUNTIES





JUDY MILLSAP FROM JASPER COUNTY SANG DURING THE MEMORIAL PORTION OF THE ANNUAL MEETING HONORING ALL THE MEMBERS WE LOST THIS PAST YEAR.



2025 Grand Awards Presented at the 2026 IAHCE Awards Ceremony



Educational Area	54 and Under Members Category	55 and Over Members Category
Cultural Enrichment	Grand – None Applied	Grand – Sangamon County 2 nd – Fayette County 3 rd – Lake County
Family & Community Issues	Grand – Massac County	Grand – Fayette County
International – South Africa	Grand – Massac County 2 nd – Edgar County	Grand – Kane County 2 nd – McLean County 3 rd – Macon County
Public Relations	Grand – Massac County	Grand – Macon County 2 nd – Perry County 3 rd – McLean County
CVH- Member with the Most HCE Hours	Grand – Stephanie Vaupel (JoDaviess) 2 nd – Norma Korte (Massac) 3 rd – Karen Drees (Effingham)	Grand – Annette McNeil (Fayette) 2 nd – Angela Hicks (Lake) 3 rd – Marilyn Martin (Perry)
CVH – Member with the Most Other Hours	Grand – Gloria Elliott (DuPage) 2 nd – Anita McConnell (Massac) 3 rd – Sheila Rene' Blessent (Vermilion)	Grand – Jean Gaspardo (Livingston) 2 nd – Linda Eades (Macoupin) 3 rd – Dianna Ethridge (Perry)
CVH – County with the Most HCE Hours	Grand – Clark 2 nd – Massac 3 rd – DuPage	Grand – Fayette County 2 nd – McLean County 3 rd – Jefferson County
CVH – County with the Most Other Hours	Grand – Edgar 2 nd – Massac 3 rd – Warren	Grand – Macon County 2 nd – Kane County 3 rd – Fayette County
Membership Activity	Grand – Massac County	Grand – Sangamon County 2 nd – Perry County 3 rd – McLean County
Membership Top 3 Overall With the percentage of net gain	Grand – Pulaski/Alexander County 30.8% 2 nd – Mercer County 12.1% 3 rd – Ford County 8.8%	Grand – Fayette County 21% 2 nd – Perry County 5.4% 3 rd – Stephenson County 2.3%

Member of the Year Award Goes to:

District 1 Judy Ann Scott – Jo Daviess County
 District 2 Kate Schmitgall – Tazwell County
 District 3 Sandra Bechtold – Jersey County
 District 4 Ruth Norris – White County

County of the Year 2025 Grand Award

54 and Under Members Category

Grand – Massac County
 2nd – Jo Daviess County

55 and Over Members Category

Grand – Perry County
 2nd – Sangamon County
 3rd – McLean County

CULTURAL ENRICHMENT ITEMS ON DISPLAY AT CONFERENCE



COZY COUCH BOOK CLUB



PUZZLE RACE IN HOSPITALITY ROOM



THE MAGIC OF FUN AT THE IAHCE STATE CONFERENCE...





IAHCE DISTRICT WORKSHOPS

160 Johnson Ave. Sycamore, IL

4500S. 2nd Street Springfield, IL

716 E. 1700th Ave. Vandalia, IL

CONFERENCES AND RECOGNITION DAYS

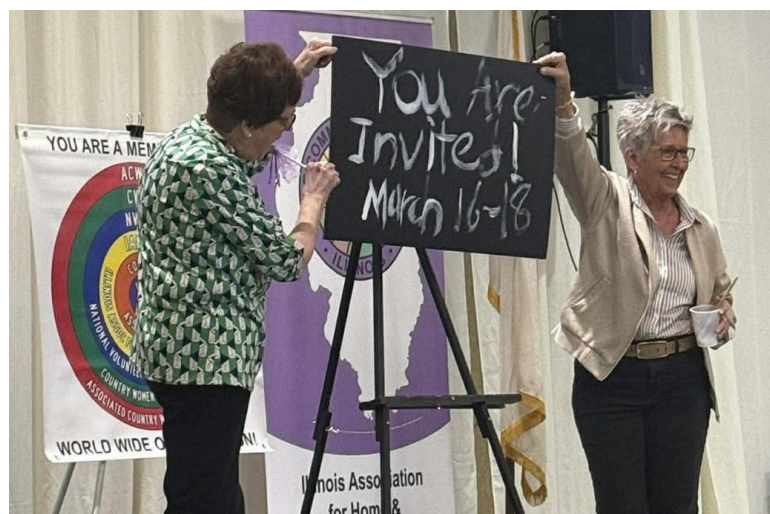
NVON 2026 July 14 -16 2026 The Wisconsin Hotel, Lake Delton, Wisconsin

ACWW Triennial April 26- May 1, 2026, Ottawa, Canada

HCE Month October - HCE Week is October 12th -17th 2026

IAHCE Conference March 16th -18th 2027

Please note: All members are welcome to attend any of the above-mentioned Workshops and Conferences. Information is available on the iahce.org web page.



Traditional Dominican Republic: Recipe for International Day 2026

Guineitos, Guineo en Escabeche: Savory Green Bananas (side dish)

Source: www.dominicancooking.com

Ingredients:

- 4 unripe bananas
- 1 ½ teaspoon salt, divided
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 red onion (thinly-sliced)
- 1 medium (red) bell pepper cut into strips
- 1 teaspoon mashed garlic
- ¼ teaspoon pepper, or to taste
- 1 tablespoon of fruit vinegar (optional) (*I used EDEN selected UME Plum Vinegar.*)
- 1 tablespoon minced parsley



Instructions:

1. Score (*do not peel*) the **banana** peels and boil them until they are tender adding a teaspoon of **salt** to the water (set aside the extra salt.)
2. Take them out of the water and let them cool down to room temperature.
3. Now, peel, and cut the banana into slices, about ½-inch thick slices.
4. In a skillet heat the **oil** over low heat and cook and stir the **onions** until the onions become translucent.
5. Add the **pepper strips** and **garlic** and cook and stir for a minute.
6. Stir in the **banana slices** and cook until they are heated through. If you are using **vinegar** add it now.
7. Season with **salt and pepper** to taste. Stir in the **parsley**.
8. Now you are ready to serve this very tasty side-dish! **ENJOY!!!**



ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION FOR
HOME & COMMUNITY EDUCATION
AMY KERR 264 WESSENBERG RD
VILLA RIDGE ,IL 62996



DATED MATERIAL– MUST BE DELIVERED BY MAY 15TH

12/31/2026

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