



### **The BUZZ: Exclusively for Blue Ribbon Foundation Volunteers**

Welcome to "The Buzz" – the Blue Ribbon Foundation Volunteer eNewsletter!

YOU – our valued volunteers – are central to the success of the Iowa State Fair Blue Ribbon Foundation's mission, so we continue to stay connected to you year-round! Look for issues to be emailed three times a year: January, May and September.

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#### **Wow! A Record-Setting Fair**

The 2024 Iowa State Fair broke numerous records including the largest total attendance in our 170-year history. Especially when good weather happens in August, Iowans turn out in force to celebrate the last days of summer at the Fairgrounds. We saw it happen!



#### **Your Opinion Matters**

For the first time in many years, we sent out a Volunteer Survey to gather your specific thoughts, ideas, and suggestions on the Blue Ribbon Foundation volunteer experience. And yes, you responded! 227 of the total 647 volunteers spent the time and effort to provide us with valuable feedback. That's a 35% response rate.

There is one other record that hasn't been widely publicized which Blue Ribbon Foundation volunteers were directly involved in setting: the Foundation's seven merchandise stores sold more than \$679,000 in merchandise! In just 11 days! That's 33% more sales than during the 2023 Fair. Wow is all we can say!

Well, we also can say THANK YOU! Here's to YOU ... our many volunteers who help ensure this success. [CLICK HERE](#) for the full list of 2024 volunteers to whom we extend our true appreciation.

If you didn't have a chance to watch the Post-Fair video it is [linked here](#). Enjoy!

Let's recap volunteering at the 2024 Iowa State Fair with a few facts and photos below:

- Total number of volunteers: 647.
- Volunteers filled 1,371 shifts over the course of the 11-day Fair.
- Total number of hours volunteered: 5,254.
- If we paid these volunteers \$12 per hour it would have reduced our fundraising total by more than \$63,000.
- Volunteers sold 60,864 bottles of water. On average, the stands sold 533 bottles per day.

This success doesn't happen without dedicated volunteers who love the Fair and enjoy doing their part to see it thrive.

### THANK YOU!



Below are some of the compiled results from the survey.

- When asked to rate the program from 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest rating, the average over all answers was 4.75. 80% of respondents give the program a 5 rating.
- This is the breakdown of how long the respondents have volunteered:
  - o 43% - between 2 and 5 years
  - o 18% - first time volunteers
  - o 17% - between 11 and 20 years
  - o 14% - between 6 and 10 years
  - o 7% - more than 20 years
- 75% attend the Volunteer Reception.
- 87% believe the VolunteerLocal sign-up portal is very easy or somewhat easy to use. Only 1% thought it was somewhat difficult.
- Twice we used the text feature to communicate with volunteers and you believed it was helpful. We will expand this (and email communication) in future years.
- 86% of you feel prepared for your shift. We will work harder to make sure 100% of you feel prepared.
- Another area where we need to improve includes THE BUZZ e-newsletter, both making sure you all receive it in January, May and September and with respect to interesting and informative content.
- 89% answered you would volunteer again while 10% said you would if it worked with your August schedule.

Thanks again for this valuable information. We will be discussing several recommendations and improvements that you shared in the survey.

You still have time to provide your feedback. [CLICK HERE](#) to access the survey.







## Volunteer Spotlight



*Pictured above, left to right: Pat Van Lent, Melissa Graeve, Joyce Carr and Lindy Fyfe volunteering in the Riley Stage water booth during the 2024 Iowa State Fair.*

### **Linda, Mary, Joyce, Pat, Cheryl and Melissa**

Since 1996, Linda Fyfe and Mary Woods have been Blue Ribbon Foundation volunteers. They've brought quite a few friends into the volunteer fold since those early years. Joyce Carr jumped in to volunteer in 2001 while Pat Van Lent joined them in 2008. More recently, Melissa Graeve and Cheryl Wandell also volunteer. All six are members of a non-profit philanthropic organization, Phi Tau Omega.

Linda Fyfe had this to say on why they volunteer for the Blue Ribbon Foundation, "We love the Fair and enjoy volunteering in our community. The Fair gives us time together which we

treasure, and we love watching people and seeing our family and friends enjoy their time at the Fair."

The group also enjoys helping the Fair's Marketing Department by bringing a group of members together to assemble large mailings that go out to the community. Other area organizations that benefit from their generosity include AMVETS, Animal Rescue League, Hawthorn Hill and Ronald McDonald House.

Their favorite Fairtime volunteer task is selling bottled water and their favorite booth is the one near Riley Stage. Working four shifts during each Fair is their target and they have rarely missed.

We say a giant THANK YOU to this lovely group of ladies for being a vital part of the Blue Ribbon Foundation's success.



*Pictured above, left to right: Traci Buck (niece of Joyce Carr), Joyce Carr, Melissa Graeve and Cheryl Wandell volunteering in the Riley Stage water booth during the 2022 Iowa State Fair. Not pictured: Mary Woods.*



### A Few Historical Photos - ENJOY!

#### Something New

For the first time, the Blue Ribbon Foundation has embarked on a planned



giving campaign. We are sharing with our Fair friends how they can ensure the future condition of the Iowa State Fairgrounds by including the Blue Ribbon Foundation in a will or estate plan.

A planned gift is one of the most profound ways you can carry on your love for the Iowa State Fair.

Click **Learn More** below for complete details such as sample legal language to include in a will, free estate planning tools, steps for joining the Champion's Circle, and several helpful resources.

**Learn More**



*Above: 1954 entry gate. Center: 1950s Grand Concourse. Below: Late 1940s Varied Industries Building.*



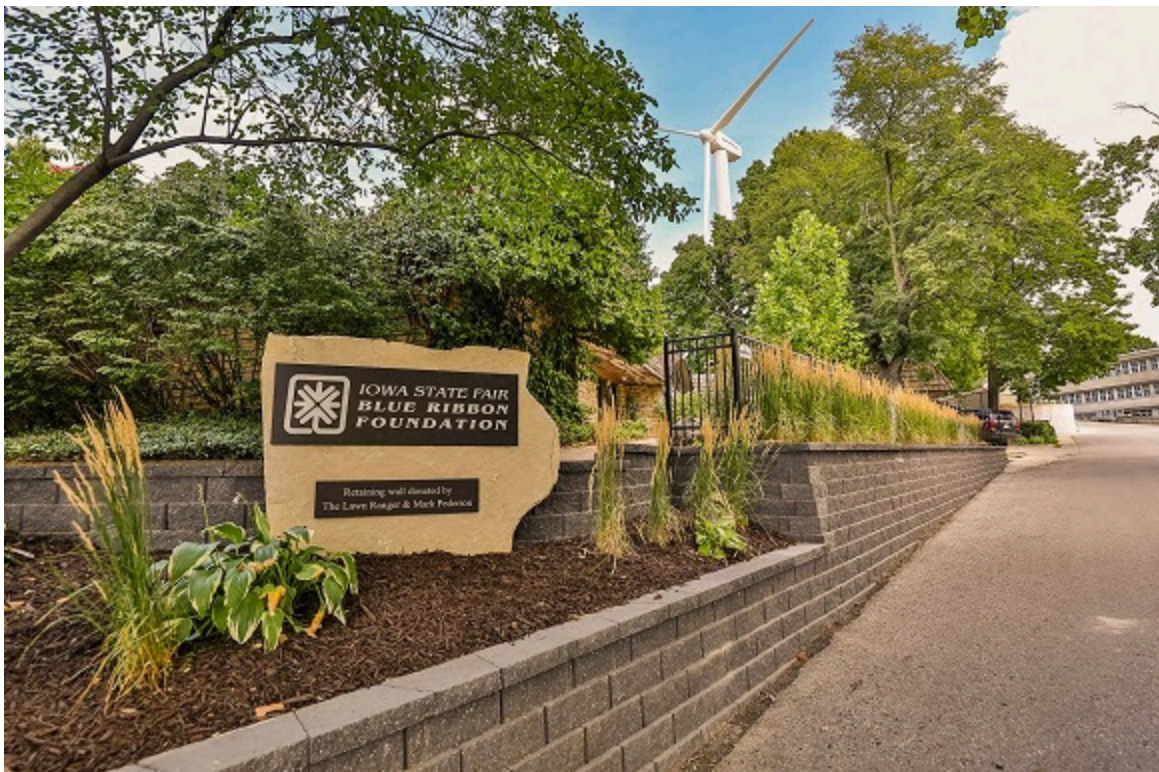




### Save-The-Dates

2025 Corndog Kickoff Benefit Auction: Saturday, July 12

2025 Iowa State Fair: August 7-17



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