



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 decided it's time to stay connected to you year-round! Look for issues to be emailed three times a year: January, May and September.

In each issue, expect to relive some of the best Iowa State Fair volunteer moments, learn about non-Fairtime volunteer opportunities, test your Fair knowledge, look back at some of the Fairgrounds' improvements that have materialized over the decades, learn about new ways to engage with the Blue Ribbon Foundation, and so much more.



Volunteers - Time to sign up!

The dates for this year's Fair are August 10-20, 2023 and we are just a short 80 days away!

This eNewsletter is the primary way to find out about volunteering for the Blue Ribbon Foundation at the Iowa State Fair.

Again, the VolunteerLocal portal will be used for interested volunteers to view the available jobs, dates and shifts.

The sign-up portal opens Thursday, May 25th. There are several ways to access the portal once it opens:

- Click the SIGN UP HERE button below
- Visit the Foundation's [Volunteer web page](#) and find the 'Click Here To Sign-Up' link at the bottom of the page
- Call Meg at 515-262-3111, ext. 370 if you have any questions

Open [this link](#) for instructions on using the VolunteerLocal portal



Volunteering at the Corndog Kickoff

Event date: Saturday, July 8th in the William C. Knapp Varied Industries Building

Contact [Meg Courter](#) directly to inquire about tasks, responsibilities and availability.

Shifts start at 5:15 pm and run until 9 pm or 10 pm. The following volunteer shifts are still available:

- Door Patrol/Ticket Taker
- Ticket Sales
- Bid Card Table
- Silent Auction Monitoring
- Mystery Grab Prize
- Spin Wheel
- Serving Beverages
- Golf Cart Driver - parking lot shuttle
- Photo Booth Assistant

Deadline to sign up is Friday, June 16th

[Sign Up Here](#)

Volunteer Spotlight



Margo & Chris Fox - Margo and Chris Fox are an ever-present duo at the Iowa State Fair. In fact, they met at the Fair in 1989, were married in the First Church (see photo above) in 1992, and celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary with family and friends at Stockman's during the 2022 Iowa State Fair. Throughout the intervening years, they have been instrumental in helping the Foundation make the Fair the best it can be.

Margo began her Fairtime volunteering in 1992 for the Bill Riley Talent Contest. When the Foundation was formed in 1993, she received a call from then Executive Director John Putney asking if she'd help the Foundation. She said yes and is considered the original Blue Ribbon Foundation volunteer! Chris has been with us for a long time as well. Both he and John Putney's son Mark were the original "water boys," driving a golf cart delivering cases of bottled water all around the Fairgrounds throughout the 1990's.

Chris and Margo spend valuable time throughout the year helping the Blue Ribbon Foundation staff prepare for the Corndog Kickoff auction by collecting donations, finding baskets to display the items, and overall strategic planning for this essential fundraising event. Margo lends her eye for detail during week-of set-up as we package and display several hundred auction items. Both have been honored as Iowan's of the Day – Margo in 2008 and Chris in 2015. They are members of two key Foundation membership programs: 1854 Society since 2004 and Champions Circle since 2021.

Of course, let's not forget that throughout the 11 days of each Fair you will find Chris and Margo driving the 1854 Society shuttle, helping other society members navigate the Fairgrounds all the while sharing their love of the Fair and sharing a good deal of historical knowledge too.

They are both exceptional ambassadors for the Blue Ribbon Foundation!

Thank you Chris and Margo!



Juanita Gustin - For more than two decades, Juanita (pictured above at right) has been a Blue Ribbon Foundation volunteer at the Fair. She started in 2000, at age 69, when her good friend Lorna Bingham told her how much fun she had volunteering at the 1999 Fair. The dou always volunteered five or six days and during the first few years could be found at the merchandise trailer by the Pepsi clock.

Juanita and Lorna opted to change locations with the opening of a booth in the air-conditioned Richard O. Jacobson Hall. Their day consisted of a tram tour, then watching the programming on the Pioneer Hall stage before heading to the museum for a one o'clock shift. Sadly, Lorna passed away in 2021 but Juanita continues to volunteer a day or two during the Fair.

Juanita loves meeting all the wonderful volunteers and Fairgoers each and every year. She also loved receiving her free T-shirt to wear and fondly recalls her favorite one from 2004 because it featured the Fair's sesquicentennial – or 150th year! A few years ago, Juanita donated all her volunteer T-shirts (except this one favorite) back to the Foundation to be made into a quilt that was auctioned at the Corndog Kickoff. She's truly a volunteer who keeps on giving.

Juanita is a very special member of the Foundation's volunteer corps. Thanks for all you do Juanita!



Jeremy Parsons - New Fair CEO & Manager

In January, Jeremy Parsons was named to succeed Gary Slater as the Fair CEO & Manager.

With more than 30 years of fair experience, Parsons spent his early years as a seasonal employee at the Iowa State Fair and as a volunteer at his home county fair in Leon, Iowa. A former teacher and coach, Parsons served as the executive director of



January Photo Challenge Winner

Ann Cutts was the first to correctly identify the location of the historical photo printed in the January 2023 issue. The Fairview stage was built in 1982 west of the Cultural Center. In 2015 the MidAmerican Energy Stage debuted in the same location with an expanded stage and seating area, dressing rooms, and restrooms.

Ann grew up in Iowa but in 2017 retired with her husband to Georgia. She shared her love of the Fair with us in this statement:

My earliest memories are of my dad exhibiting a carcass steer before the fair officially opened and eating corn dogs for each meal because that was the only food stand open. My first competition was the junior open class vegetables. Then I showed beef cattle and stayed in the dorm. When I became

the Missouri State Fair Foundation before being named the CEO/Manager of the Clay County Fair in Spencer, Iowa in 2011.

"It is an honor to have been chosen to serve as caretaker for one of Iowa's most beloved institutions," said Parsons. "The Iowa State Fair holds a special place in my heart and I am humbled to join the team responsible for building upon the Fair's rich heritage and traditions."

Welcome Jeremy!



What's new for the 2023 Fair!

Sheep Barn – WOW! What an amazing transformation in the works! The Sheep Barn is the first livestock barn to receive a much-needed facelift. Major work will be done on the terra cotta tiles over entrances, renovations to restrooms and offices as well as restorations on the archways, column heads and east entrance murals. An overall \$25 million investment in all four livestock barns, the Cattle, Swine and Horse Barns will receive equally transformative make-overs in the next few years.

Agriculture Building – as the 4th T.A.G. Team project, the north and east doors of the Ag Building have been replaced. Plans include replacing the west and south doors following the 2023 Fair. Since its inception in 2019, the **Together Accomplishing Goals** initiative has allowed for several smaller Fairgrounds project to be completed.



Who is that?

Is that another US President behind Ike?

If yes, who is he and when was he elected? (try hard to NOT Google the answer)

[Email Meg](#) your answer!

a parent I loved bringing my daughter and showing her all the things the fair had to offer. Now that I'm older my favorite things are seeing old friends, taking in all the great entertainment and of course the food! I constantly brag about the fair to all my Georgia friends.



Introducing our 2023 Interns

We have three new smiling faces joining us for the 2023 Iowa State Fair. The hard work and enthusiasm of our interns is vital to the Foundation's success year after year. Our 2023 interns – all Iowa State University students - are:

Regan Freland – Donor Relations Intern. She is from Monroe, is studying PR/Communications and looks forward to her senior year.

Faith Kuehl – Sponsor/Business Relations Intern. From Woodward, Faith will be a junior this coming Fall and is an Agricultural Business major.

Macy Loecke – Public Relations Intern. A Manchester native, she is a senior studying Agriculture Communications and Public Relations.



Save-The-Dates

Corndog Kickoff – Saturday, July 8

Deadline to Sign Up to Volunteer at the Fair - Wednesday, July 12

Volunteer Reception in the Youth Inn (registered volunteers will receive an invitation) - Wednesday, July 19

Iowa State Fair – August 10-20



Blue Ribbon Foundation Staff and Contact Information:

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