



The BUZZ: Exclusively for Blue Ribbon Foundation Volunteers

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



We Need a Few More Corndog Kickoff Volunteers

If you haven't signed up to volunteer at the Corndog Kickoff, there is still time. Please contact [Meg Courter](#). Our theme this year is "Stir It Up" and volunteers are essential to the mix at the 2025 fundraising event. Mark your calendars for **Saturday, July 12.**

Last year, 100 volunteers helped ensure the event's success by serving beverages and cookies, taking tickets, signing up bidders, selling merchandise, monitoring



Sign up opens at 8 AM on **May 20th**. Click the QR code to get started.

Fair Volunteer Sign-Up Starts Soon

Opening Day of the 2025 Iowa State Fair is August 7! That's less than 90 days from right now!

the auction displays, managing participation in several games of chance, and so much more.

These are the tasks where we still need volunteers (including the number of people we need): Bid Card Table (3), Silent Auction Monitor (4), Live Auction Monitor (2) and Beverage Server (1).

Grab a friend or two and join the team as we raise funds to support the renovation and preservation of the historic Iowa State Fairgrounds.

Deadline to sign up: Friday, May 23.

We Welcome Feedback

One of our goals every Fair is to make sure our volunteers know that we want to hear from them.

Please provide any feedback on the Blue Ribbon Foundation Volunteer Program. Don't be shy, share the good and the bad with us so we know what is and isn't working from a volunteer's perspective.

Feel free to call us, [email us](#), stop us on the Fairgrounds or take a moment during your volunteering shift.

Thank you!

THE BUZZ eNewsletter is the prime way to get started as a volunteer for the Blue Ribbon Foundation at the 2025 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 at 8 AM on Tuesday, May 20. There are several ways to access the portal once it opens:

- Scan or click on the QR Code shown above.
- Visit the Foundation's [Volunteer web page](#) and find the sign-up link at the bottom of the page.
- Call Meg at 515-262-3111, ext. 370 if you don't have access to a computer.

If you need instructions for using VolunteerLocal, detailed instructions can be found on the Volunteer page of our web site.

Can't wait to see you at the Fair!



Rowena, Karen, Barb and Shan

Three good friends and one very worthy cause. It all started in 1999 when Rowena Dean (above right) invited her two good friends, Karen Watkins (above center) and Barb Detrick (above left), to join her in volunteering for the Blue Ribbon Foundation. At first, they were happy to work at any bottled water booth, but eventually



Introducing Our 2025 Interns

Maya Bruening (L), Sponsor Relations Intern – Maya is a sophomore at Iowa State University studying Agricultural Communications. She is a member of the Agriculture Communicators of Tomorrow Club and Collegiate 4-H. Maya grew up in Charles City on her family's row crop operation, where they also raise goats and cattle. She was active in 4-H and FFA and exhibited livestock at her county fair.

Grace Benson (C), Public Relations Intern – Grace is a junior at Central College majoring in English with minors in Spanish and Religious Studies. She participates on the women's triathlon team and the FCA leadership team.

the Cattle Barn became their one and only favorite.

All three have been Corndog Kickoff volunteers for several years as well. They worked the Spin Wheel game and helped with table decorations and assembling auction baskets.

Shan Pinegar (not pictured) jumped in about a decade ago and now regularly joins Karen for three shifts. Barb always volunteered at least twice, and in 2021 and 2022 brought her daughter Lucy along to join in the fun.

2023 brought a year of change to their routine. Rowena passed away a few years ago and Barb decided to give up the tradition due to health reasons. Karen and Shan continue to hone their volunteering skills and love to share their tips with any newcomers. Both are in their 80s and are true veterans!

Their favorite memories include horse shows, people watching and enjoying everything in the Agriculture Building. Karen never left the Fair without enjoying Mary's Grinders and Pork Chop on a Stick. Barb loves funnel cakes, corndogs and Mary's Grinders too.



Jeff Wangsness

As many of us know, the Blue Ribbon Foundation opened its doors in 1993. Wonderful supporters soon followed. Jeff and Shelley Wangsness have been big fans since 1998. Their first Foundation connection involved buying Fair merchandise and after winning an auctioned pie at the Corndog Kickoff in 1999, they were hooked. Jeff and Shelley agreed to serve as chairs of the event in 2002 when it was moved to the Varied Industries Building. They purchased a Fairgrounds bench in 2001 and became founding members of the 1854 Society in 2004. They also have participated in the T.A.G. program since 2020.

But let's not forget the volunteering! Jeff jumped on board in 2001 and hasn't stopped since. He started out selling bottled water but the real tradition for Jeff is driving the 1854 Society

Currently, she works as a campus writing tutor and an editorial assistant in the Central communications office. Grace grew up in Newton and has attended the Iowa State Fair nearly every year of her life.

Madison Price (R), Donor Relations Intern – Madison is a junior at Central College majoring in Communications and Spanish. She is social media manager of Central's history club, admissions ambassador, writing tutor and plays on the women's tennis team. Madison is from Ankeny where she enjoyed volunteering at her local youth center and serving on a panel for military children in Iowa. Attending the Iowa State Fair is a yearly tradition.



What's New On The Fairgrounds

Bring the kids (and adults) to enjoy the **NEW** accessible-for-all **Variety Star Playground** located in the Fun Forest behind the Agriculture Building (design plans shown above).

Wonderful shade and seating options available at the **NEW Ron and Bev Shivers Family Plaza** on Rock Island Avenue, between Old West BBQ and JRs Southpork Ranch.

The **Back the Barns** campaign continues with Phase One work progressing on the **Horse Barn**, including new restrooms, fresh exterior paint, and window and masonry repairs.

Enjoy a fantastic view of the lower area of the Fairgrounds from new seating available on Expo Hill (under the wind turbine). Several **new benches and Adirondack chairs and tables** allow for comfortable relaxation any time of day - although sunset might be a perfect time to wander up the hill.

Free Estate Planning Tools



shuttle. This will be his 25th year as a Blue Ribbon Foundation Volunteer!

Jeff shared that "I started volunteering because I have always believed if you want to get anything out of something, you need to be engaged. I'm a proud Iowan and think the State Fair is one of our greatest claims-to-fame. I want to see the grounds and buildings continually being improved and restored."

One of his proudest memories involved a lunch hosted by former Executive Director John Putney where the idea of Concert Club was born. Jeff believed businesses and individuals were already willing to trade services or make a donation to the Foundation in exchange for tickets to every Grandstand concert so why not consider expanding the program. The result was Concert Club, which continues to this day!

The Hot Beef Sundae from Cattlemen's Quarters remains one of Jeff's favorite Fair foods.

Thank you to Rowena, Karen, Barb, Shan, Jeff and Shelley!

Utilize a comprehensive estate planning kit to help you protect loved ones, organize everything in one place and save on taxes.

Join fellow Blue Ribbon Foundation supporters already benefitting from our partner GivingDocs' safe, secure and free-for-life suite of estate plan essentials.

Get Started

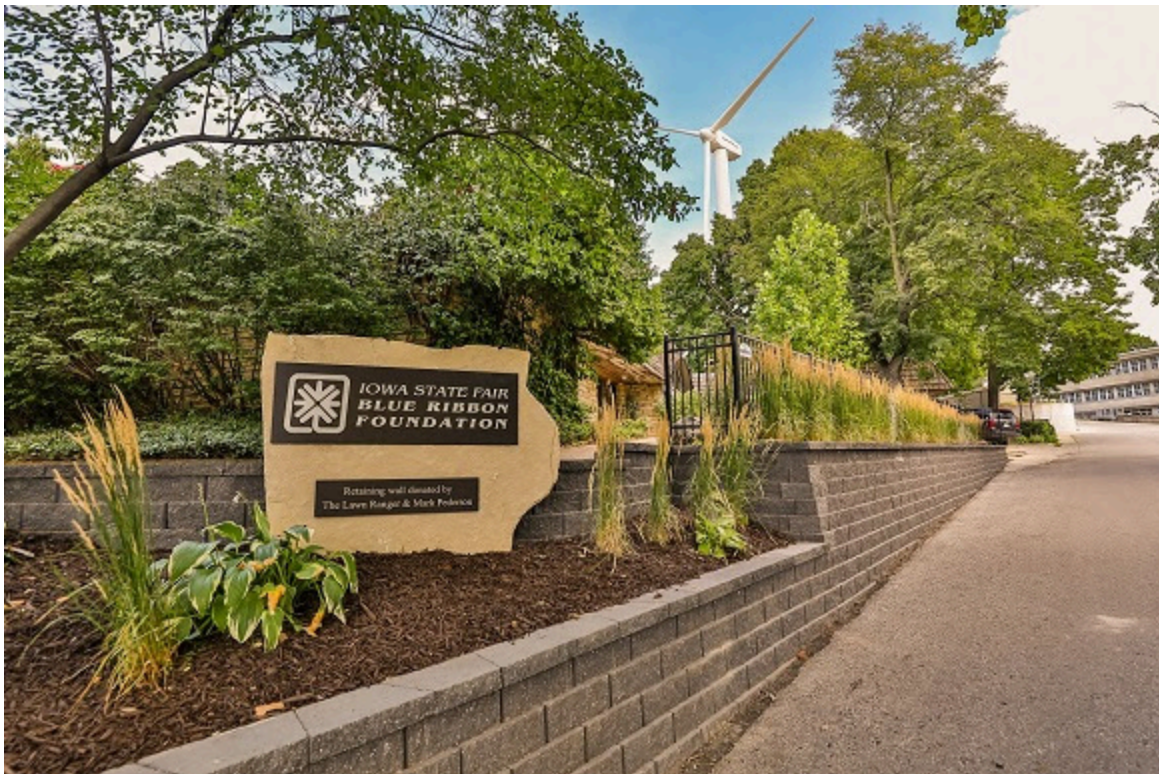


Save-The-Dates

Corndog Kickoff - Saturday, July 12

Volunteer Reception - Thursday, July 17

Iowa State Fair – August 7-17



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