

# *Today's Focus*

## **Illinois Women of Today Newsletter - Summer 2026**

### *President - Barb Wigell*

Welcome to the 26/27 IWT year. **New Friends - Forever Friends.** I'm so excited to be working with this board. My superheroes. I have one goal this year. Growth every month, every trimester. All year long. The first board meeting will be held June 20th. Hosted by Terri Hebda. Please send me any ideas you have for the year and I will share them.

I will be issuing challenges this year hoping we will be inspired to share this great organization. There are new friends out there who will become our forever friends. Pass out those membership flyers. Don't forget to ask them to join us.

more ideas to come. I look forward to a year of adventure and friends.

In friendship,  
Barb Wigell, President  
IWT 26/27

### *Programming VP – Debbie Funsch*

#### ***“Friendship Family”***

Programming Vice President

Debbie Funsch 2026-2027  
Box 553 Pawnee, IL



I missed April All State, I missed seeing so many of you, but you didn't want that stupid cough that took 3 weeks to get rid of. "A virus", they said. Not anything they could give me. I lived on hot tea, cold lemonade, cough drops, cough syrup and soups; while sleeping most of the time in a recliner.

Now on to business! I have many ideas to help you participate and ways for an outstanding number of Illinois members and Chapters to obtain recognition in the many Programming areas this year.

I will have things ready to do at each All State meeting, plus sending packages to Chapters for each trimester to participate in and return to me. This will help members and chapters to receive certifications in the programming areas along with (gifts) small u tokens for those members who participate in the projects, programming areas and meetings they attend in those trimesters.

Let's get excited to work with outside speakers in our Chapters and to attend a meeting once in each trimester to share something with your membership and community.

Spread the word with flyers with date, time, place, and the topic the speaker is discussing. Keep the speaker to under 20 minutes! Allow 10 minutes for questions. Invite other WT Chapters to attend too! Perhaps a Zoom could even be done?

Let me know when your Chapter meetings are in advance. I am willing to show up at least once this next year at a Chapter meeting to answer any questions you have about Women of Today programming and all areas of this fantastic organization.

"Friendship Family" is my theme this year. Why? Because of the many lasting friendships I've made through the Women of Today organization. Like a quilt square these members are all different, colors, sizes, shapes but strong like denim, fighting to keep the Women of Today Organization alive. These members accept the many different opinions each member has with so much love and laughter that they are Family.

Love to All, Debbie.

## *Membership VP – Terri Hebda*

### *GROOVY MEMBERSHIP!*



Feeling groovy with membership!

Let's get in the groove and grow Illinois, and all our Chapters!

Prospective Members are waiting to GROOVE with IWT! They just need to be asked! Are you willing to share all the amazing happenings in your Chapter? Are you full of

Flower Power Friendship?

Challenges for First Trimester

1. Invite someone new to a meeting or event
2. At a Chapter Meeting take a few minutes to talk about what your Chapter has to offer a new member, what is needed in your community that prospective new members would be interested in working on as a Member?
3. Let me know how your Chapter is supporting new members.

## In Groovy Friendship

Terri

### *Secretary - Joy Hutchcraft*

Hope you are enjoying your summer and spending time with family and friends. I am pleased to be serving as State Secretary again this year. I had the pleasure of attending the USWT Annual Convention in Burnsville (Minneapolis area), MN. We had a wonderful time! There were 5 IWT members (Aimee and Dan Kaiser, Lori Akers, Julie Peart, and me) who attended. Laura Bentley, IA, was elected National President. Aimee Kaiser won her bid for Domestic Violence Awareness Program Manager. Dan Kaiser continues on as National Parliamentarian and Webmaster. It is wonderful to have Illinois representation on the national board. Congratulations!

The Springfield chapter was honored to receive a Chapter Grant of \$500 from the U.S. Founders Charities to purchase sensory equipment such as weighted blankets, large bean bags/bean chairs, sensory lighting projectors, sensory fidgets, lighting covers, textured wall plates, etc. for an existing sensory room for the Career-Bound Education (CBE) students at Auburn Junior High School in Divernon. This program is comprised of students with intellectual disabilities varying in ages from 11-14 who, because of the severity of their disabilities, are not able to access the general education curriculum even with significant support. These students are instead taught functional life skills that will help them become more independent and provide them with vocational skills. The Springfield Women of Today will match an additional \$500 to this program. What a "joy" to be able to help these children!

Illinois received many awards which will be presented at the next All State Meeting in August. Aimee gave a wonderful speech on our state's many accomplishments this past year. Congratulations, Illinois Women of Today! I feel truly blessed to belong to such a wonderful organization that has given me so much, but most of all my friendships with each of you! Thanks for all you're doing to make our world a better place.

## *From Treasurer/ Ways and Means - Chellie Funsch*



Hello Illinois Members!!!

Once again, I'm your treasurer for the year.

As you can see from my logo, yes, FRIENDS are the Treasure and we need friends to help build the treasury. For this year, the following will need to provide baskets for the All States.

**August** – State Board Members

**November** – Past State Presidents

**April** – Chapters

You know being treasurer really isn't a hard job and not time consuming. If you are thinking about becoming a treasurer for your chapter or the state, please reach out and we can chat. Yep, selling my position early.

I look forward to another great year with the Illinois Women of Today!

Hugs to all!

Chellie



## Greetings!

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/IllinoisWOT>

Illinois Website:

<https://ilwomenoftoday.org>

US Website: <https://uswomenoftoday.org/>

If accessing the USWT Directory you will need the following password:  
uswtmember

Just a note on the website. Work has begun but has been slow due to other commitments that I have had. I have adopted the new theme with USWT as the webmaster and like it so much I am going to use it for IWT as well. New things to come on our website and a new look are all coming soon!

The Facebook page should look like this when you visit it:

The Facebook page should look like this when you visit it:



**Be sure to Like & Follow**

**IL Women of Today on Facebook**

**Do you have suggestions for the USWT or Illinois Website?**

**Send to [webmaster@illinoiswot.org](mailto:webmaster@illinoiswot.org)**

***Chairman of the Board - Amy Kaiser***

Hello IWT Friends,

It is with great excitement that I begin serving as your Chairman of the Board. I look forward to working with our



Board as we continue building an organization that honors our traditions while embracing new opportunities for growth.

As I reflected on the direction of our organization for the coming year, one idea continually came to mind: strong growth begins with strong roots. That thought inspired my theme as your COB.

### **Rooted in Kindness...Rising in Growth**

My theme is represented by a tree whose roots run deep beneath the soil, reminding us that everything we accomplish above ground begins with a strong foundation below. Those roots represent our values of IWT & USWT. This is what has sustained our organization for more than 40 years.

Nestled within the branches are a pair of cardinals. Cardinals are often seen as symbols of hope, loyalty, perseverance, and connection. Together, they represent the friendships we build, the support we give one another, and the spirit of unity that makes our organization special. Like the cardinals, we are stronger when we journey together.

This year I hope that we will intentionally choose kindness in every interaction. Kindness welcomes new members, encourages future leaders, strengthens lifelong friendships, and creates an environment where everyone feels valued. When kindness becomes our foundation, growth naturally follows.

We will continue to expand our leadership opportunities, strengthen our educational programs, support our charitable initiatives and create meaningful experiences for members across every chapter. We will celebrate our successes, learn from one another, and continue finding innovative ways to ensure our organization remains vibrant and relevant for future generations.

I want to encourage everyone to become involved in a new way this year. Volunteer to chair a committee, mentor a new member, invite someone to join, or simply extend kindness to someone who needs encouragement. Small actions, rooted in compassion, often produce the greatest growth.

May we always remain **Rooted In Kindness...Rising in Growth**.

## **Chapter News**

### **Crystal Lake**

CLWT is preparing for the Kids' Bike Parade to be held on July 4th. We have gotten donations of ice cream coupons for the participants and have ribbons for them to hang on their bikes, trikes, strollers, wagons, and wheel chairs. All is ready. All we need is decent weather on the 4th!

Shari Chakoian - President CLWT



# *Friends Forever in Service*



## **Springfield - Joy's logo and theme**

### **Why the elephants?**

In the wild, elephants exhibit one of the most intricate social organizations among mammals. Their family structures and social organization is a remarkable example of cooperation and familial bonds in the animal kingdom. Female-led groups, guided by wise matriarchs, ensure not only the survival of individual elephants but also the longevity of their group. This intricate social structure highlights one of nature's most closely knit societies.

## **SPRINGFIELD CHAPTER NEWS**

The Springfield Women of Today are staying busy these days. Our chapter meeting is the second Tuesday of each month. In addition, we continue to meet twice a month to work on craft projects to fill shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child (OCC). Children overseas will receive holiday boxes filled with many handmade and store bought items (e.g. clothing, personal care items, toys, jewelry, coloring books, dolls, school supplies, games, stuffed animals) along with a pamphlet about God's love. We are fortunate to have our SWT member Cheryl Pearson as the OCC Midwest Coordinator who manages thousands of shoeboxes each year from central Illinois.

We invite quarterly speakers to our monthly chapter meetings to share their experiences and expertise. Barbara Wheatly with Memorial Health Mobile Crisis Response was our speaker in June. She described the various services they provide to the Springfield area. The Springfield chapter sponsors the annual Esther Jorgensen Memorial Scholarship through Lincoln Land Community College. Our chapter will also be holding a bake sale fundraiser at the Elkhart Homecoming on July 18<sup>th</sup> to raise funds for various projects such as our scholarship and projects such as OCC. Our members also have fun attending quarterly birthday socials along with concerts and plays. We will be attending a "Duel Pianos" concert on Aug. 16<sup>th</sup> and "Come From Away" performances on Oct. 25<sup>th</sup> and Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>. The Springfield chapter also collects many items for various charities throughout the year such as Contact Ministries, St. John's Breadline, Sojourn House, MERCY Communities, various nursing homes, etc.

The Springfield chapter is grateful for their devoted members who volunteer many hours to various projects. We are excited to welcome our newest members – Audrey Kondelis and Dana

Coleman! Congratulations and thank you for joining the Springfield Women of Today! Check our website or Facebook page for more chapter information.



Greetings from the Busy Bees in Pawnee!

We are working hard behind the scenes. We are excited to announce that we will be hosting the August All State at the Pawnee Fire House on Saturday, August 29th starting at 9:00 a.m. This will be a fun day of learning.

We have recently made some donations from our Angel Fund to a couple of local projects and individuals in the area. We will also be planning our Fall Bake Sale.

Staying Busy as Bees -

Daniel Kaiser  
Pawnee Women of Today President

*Newsletter - Shari Chakoian - Next deadline is August 15th.*





Pawnee Women of Today  
invites you to  
IWT August All State

Join us for a day of learning about IWT

**Saturday, August 29th @ 9:00 a.m.**

Pawnee Fire Department Meeting Room

711 8th Street ~ Pawnee, IL

\$25.00 per person

Lunch will be provided

We will be meeting on Friday evening,  
August 28th @ 6:00 p.m. for Dinner & Fellowship  
Pizza Ranch - 1001 Lejune Dr, Springfield, IL 62703  
(Dinner is at your expense)

Due to the small number of hotel rooms needed we were  
unable to secure a block of rooms.

There are several hotels available in Springfield

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Chapter Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Attendees: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Payment Details

Send Registration & Payment before August 15th to :  
Daniel Kaiser, Pawnee Chapter President  
1210 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Pawnee, IL 62558

