

# *Today's Focus*

## **Illinois Women of Today Newsletter - June/July**

### *From President Aimee*



Happy Summer IWT! Hope this note finds you all doing well and staying cool. We just returned from the USWT Year End Convention in Des Moines, IA. Happy to report a good time was had, and lots of awards for Illinois were brought home. These awards will be presented at the August All State. It was also great to see old friends and to make new friends.

I'm excited and looking forward to being your IWT President for a second year. We will continue in the tradition of "Kindness Lights the Way...2.0". I am in the process of working on some goals & challenges for the coming year as well and will be bringing those with me to the August All State.

The Board of Directors will be hosting the August All State in Springfield on August 24th. I would like to challenge all chapters to increase their attendance at this all state meeting. We will be focusing on Domestic Violence Awareness at the meeting and have set the theme of **Love Shouldn't Hurt**. This was the theme used by the 2023-2024 USWT DVA Director, Julie Hutchinson. We liked the theme so much that we decided to copy her idea for this meeting. Thanks, Julie, for all of your hard work over the past year in bringing awareness to Domestic Violence.

This is a very exciting year to be a member as USWT will be celebrating their 40th Anniversary. I am excited to be working with the 40th President of USWT, Jane Hanson for this coming year. Jane is excited and ready to lead USWT into our 40th Year. If you have ever thought of attending a National Convention 2024-2025 is the year. Mid-year will be held again in Omaha, NE and year end will be in Duluth, MN. I am looking forward to making both of these trips in the coming year. Remember that Kindness Lights the Way...

Aimee Kaiser, IWT President

## ***From Programming VP – Julie Peart***

*As the new Illinois Programming VP for 2024-2025, I would like to say "Howdy" from Springfield with hopes that you all are staying cool now that summer is here in the Midwest.*

*My theme this year is "**Trust Your Purpose**" - If we take the time to do the Wellness & Personal Development and STEP Certifications, we see the growth in ourselves that leads to our own purpose. When we support DVA, Community Connections, and numerous chapter and state projects, we add to the purpose of many other organizations. The purpose of our Women of Today corporation is to encourage, foster and support the growth and establishment of state and local member chapters. I have the utmost trust in our Illinois members that they will keep the purpose of programming going, which is all about reaching within ourselves and reaching out to others, and to reach our goals for submitting certifications, transmittal forms, and project reports.*

*National officers were elected in June at the Year-end Convention. Lisa Hahn (MN) is our new Programming Vice-President. Her staff includes Shellie Haun (NE): Wellness & Personal Development Program Manager, and Dawn Nissen (IA): Domestic Violence Awareness Program Manager. Lisa's theme this year is "Mixing It Up with Programming."*

*This first trimester focuses on wellness & personal development, domestic violence awareness and STEP programs. Chapters that send in certifications during the emphasis months will receive a gift at the All State. The National Program Managers are also providing an incentive for certification during the emphasis months for programming. June is the emphasis month for Wellness & Personal*

*Development along with STEP, August is the emphasis month for Domestic Violence Awareness, and Wellness & Personal Development is again in September.*

*The Wellness & Personal Development form has been revised and a copy of the new version should be included with this newsletter, along with the challenges from Lisa Hahn and Shellie Haun. Their email addresses are [pvp@uswomenoftoday.org](mailto:pvp@uswomenoftoday.org) for Lisa, and [wpd@uswomenoftoday.org](mailto:wpd@uswomenoftoday.org) for Shellie.*

*The Community Connections form needs to be completed each trimester and submitted to the National Programming VP. This form is available to fill in electronically on the website, but copies can be printed to fill out and mail to the National Programming VP. When completing the form please include the hours worked including transportation time to the project as well as money raised. Our chapters do many things for our local communities and deserve recognition on the National level. Separate forms are still used for DVA and Bucket of Sunshine projects. These projects are not included on the Community Connections form.*

*I will talk about filling out and submitting the DVA transmittal forms, plus project reports to the National Project Library in future newsletter articles. As a reminder, all of the forms can be found on the USWT website:*

*[www.uswomenoftoday.org](http://www.uswomenoftoday.org)*

***Remember to stir in a little kindness and check on your friends & neighbors during these hotter days. :)***

### *From Membership VP – Daniel Kaiser*



Hello, Illinois Women of Today! My name is Daniel Kaiser and I am serving as your Membership Vice President. It is a pleasure to serve alongside your President and my wife, Aimee. We both share a passion for helping and serving others. I am looking forward to working with all of our chapters this year and exploring ways to grow our membership. It is my goal for 2024-2025 to increase our membership by at least 6 new members. This is only 2 per trimester. I will be communicating with each of our chapter Presidents and Membership coordinators in the coming weeks on ways that we can work together towards this goal. It is time to get back to the basics of

what Women of Today is all about and that is empowering our members to grow as individuals. In getting back to the basics, we need to get back to the basics of growing our chapters and working toward new extensions in our state as well. I am excited about what we can accomplish in 2024-2025 as we celebrate the 40th Anniversary of Women of Today and keep growing.

### *From Secretary - Joy Hutchcraft*

I hope everyone is having a great summer! Thanks to everyone who attended the IWT All State Meeting in Springfield. We enjoyed hosting all of you! The Springfield chapter will be sharing a profit of \$181.12 each with the IWT. Thanks for all the volunteer time provided that weekend to make items for the Operation Christmas Child Project.

I am just back from the USWT Annual Convention in Des Moines, IA. We had a wonderful time! There were 9 members (Pat Barker, Chellie Funsch, Debbie Funsch, Aimee and Dan Kaiser, Terri Hebda, Joy Hutchcraft, Julie Peart, Barb Wigell) who attended from the IWT. Jane Hanson, MN, was elected National President over Laura Bentley, IA. It was the first time in many years that there had been a contested election for National President. As we celebrate the beginning of our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as USWT, we were excited to welcome back 25 Past Presidents who made the weekend that

much more special including our First National President Vicki Fisher from Iowa!

The Springfield chapter was honored to receive a Chapter Grant of \$500 from the U.S. Founders Charities for our Operation Christmas Child Project. We will be using the grant to purchase hygiene items, clothing and accessories, school supplies, coloring books, or purchase supplies to create handmade crafts, toys, etc. to fill the shoeboxes for underprivileged children in the world. Last year, our Springfield area successfully packed 2,167 shoeboxes. We want to surpass that number this year and the grant will help us accomplish that goal thanks to the USWT!

Illinois received many awards which will be presented at the next All State Meeting in August. The highlight of the weekend was our State President Aimee Kaiser received her Ambassador Award, the highest honor bestowed to an individual by the USWT. Congratulations, Aimee! She also gave a wonderful speech on our state's many accomplishments this past year. We are proud of YOU!

**\*\*\*One last Secretary note – I was honored to receive Outstanding Secretary of the Year by National Secretary Sue Beattie at the USWT Convention!** It helps to complete your paperwork, incentives, and stay in communication with your supervising officer. 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!

***From Treasurer/ Ways and Means - Chellie Funsch***  
*Hello Illinois Women of Today!*



My name is Chellie Funsch and this is my thirteenth year and counting as state treasurer.

The above is what Women of Today is about – helping others while at the same time helping with our own personal growth. I will have an incentive for the first five people who pick out one word from above and explain to me what that word means to them.

My word would be Rescue – I love attending the All States so that I can be with ‘my tribe’, ‘my family’ and ‘my friends’. Since I was an only child, I was a shy kid and never wanted to get dirty (and I still don’t). Yes, it is true and looking at me now, you wouldn’t believe it. But the Springfield chapter knows how I came out of my shell when I joined Women of Today in August of 1994. Seems like yesterday. Thank you Illinois Women of Today for my ‘Rescue’ in making me what I am today, for your friendship and being my family. Hugs and love to all!!!!!!

Regarding Ways & Means this year, I would like the following to bring baskets to the respective All State for our raffles.

**August baskets will be provided by the Past State Presidents.**

**November baskets will be provided by the current State Board.**

**April baskets will be provided by the Chapters.**

If you won’t be attending but would like to contribute, please feel free to make a monetary donation to the treasury. Contact me to find out where to mail your check.

Ways & Means help keep our treasury going so we can donate to the Sunshine Fund (in memory of members who pass away or are sick), Friendship Fund (special requested donations to Women of Today members and or people in need) and Domestic Violence Awareness (our national charity). It also helps with our budgetary items as well.

In lieu of special baskets this year as I have done in the past, I will be donating \$25.00 per the following:

**August – Domestic Violence Awareness Fund.**

**November – Friendship Fund.**

## **April – Sunshine Fund.**

I look forward to seeing everyone at the August All State – it's always a great time and lots of fun!!!

Thanks and remember



CHELLIE FUNSCH

TREASURER

[Treasurer@illinoiswot.org](mailto:Treasurer@illinoiswot.org)

## ***From Chairman of the Board - Terri Hebda***

Happy Summer!

Once again we had a terrific time at the National Convention. So many friends to see and catch up with and new friends made. Illinois had 9 members represent our State! I think I speak for all of the attendees when I say we came home with a renewed sense of pride in Women of Today. I came away with a new focus on Membership for Illinois. We need to recruit new members and focus on new projects those new Members can bring into our Chapters.

On our way to and home from Convention Barb and I talked about Extensions and where we can focus on new chapters in Illinois. Several communities came up, and plans to contact those communities will be a focus this year.

I also want to get our White Rose Scholarship moving forward. At our August All State I plan to have a preliminary draft application.

Have a wonderful Summer, let's keep our Garden Growing!

Terri Hebda IWT COB

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

## ***From Extensions Director - Barb Wigell***

I hope everyone is excited about extensions this year. I'm not expecting an actual extension until later in the year. I'm more focused on us learning how to do extensions.

For this trimester I'm focusing on gathering names. So I would like everyone to submit names to me before our August Allstate. For example

1. Three names of a possible recruitment to your chapter
2. Three names of a new chapter in our state
2. Three names of a new state.

We have to start somewhere. My theme is , Open Hearts. Open minds, Open Hands. Let's all " think **extensions**". See you at the Allstate. Also please send me the contact person for your chapter.

## Chapter News



Greetings from the Busy Bees in Pawnee! My name is Daniel Kaiser and I am serving this year as our chapter president. I am excited to take on this role. We may be small, but we are busier than ever. 4 of our members including myself had the opportunity to attend the USWT Year-end Convention in Des Moines, Iowa. It was a great event and was very well attended by 10 of the 12 member states. In Pawnee, we are busy planning our Founder's Day event which will be a retreat for our members. We are also planning a T-Shirt Fundraiser to support our Angel Fund. We use our Angel Fund to support the youth of Pawnee in

many ways. In addition, we are planning a local fundraiser to support DVA emphasis month in August. The funds from this will be used to support local DVA shelters in the Springfield area. We are excited also to welcome our newest member Peggy Prillaman and look forward to her ideas and contributions as we stay Busy Bees.



*Illinois Women of Today*

*August All State*



**Love Shouldn't Hurt**

The IWT Board of Directors invites you to attend the August All State Meeting. Since August is USWT Domestic Violence Awareness emphasis month, we will be supporting DVA.

**Saturday, August 24th @ 9:00 a.m.**

Comfort Inn & Suites

3675 South 6th Street ~ Springfield, IL

There are rooms available under Women of Today, call the hotel at 217-529-8898 for reservations.

Rooms are \$145 per night (you may be able to find a cheaper rate online).

We will be meeting on Friday evening, August 23rd for dinner. Location to be determined.



\*\*Items will be collected for local DVA Shelters in Springfield. The Wish List will be shared with all chapters soon.



Mail the \$25 per person and the registration form below to:  
***Debbie Funsch, IWT State Events Coordinator PO Box 553;  
Pawnee, IL 62558***

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

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

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