



IOWA RETIRED SCHOOL PERSONNEL ASSOCIATION

From the President Beth Hieronymus

As 2024 comes to an end, it is an honor to serve as your President. My term began with 65 members attending our Annual Meeting, many took advantage of the historic sites around Clear Lake before participating in the rigorous agenda. Our business included the installation of officers, including Co-Vice Presidents Chryss Hartman and Laurie Marple, and voting on the budget. A tremendous thank you goes out to those who hosted our meeting as well as the units from all 6 Districts that sent representatives.

As you know, membership is a pressing issue across every district in the state. Research says it takes 7 contacts before someone chooses to commit to something new. This confirms that bombarding new retirees with information once or twice in the spring is not working. We must increase the awareness of IRSPA and the benefits of membership by making recruitment a priority thorough the year. It is a principal way to recruit and retain members.

Although school districts continue to restrict access to upcoming retirees, we can get our Association into the schools. Membership Chair, Barb Bielenberg, shared lots of examples at the District Meetings, and we know word of mouth is our strongest tool. Getting people to ask about IRSPA and responding in a way that makes them think is the secret. After all, questions show interest, and interest leads to membership.

For example:



President:
Beth Hieronymus
3322 Muscatine Ave.
Iowa City, IA 52240
(319) 360-4634
bhieronymus62@gmail.com

Q: So what is IRSPA?

A: Well, IRSPA enhances retirement.

Q: Hmm, what do you mean by enhances retirement?

A: IRSPA provides access, advocacy and opportunities to retired school personnel.

Q: What do you mean by that?

A: Well, we provide access to many affordable benefits like dental and vision insurance that most districts do not provide under COBRA. We advocate for your IPERS by having a representative on the advisory board. And our lobbyists keep us apprised of legislative issues and seek our input on matters that pertain to seniors. We also provide social and life long learning opportunities through local association meetings.

Naturally, the Q&A session can go a variety of directions; when we keep our responses short and targeted, allow people to connect with what we are saying, and we listen to what others want to know, we are engaging! They may not join in the moment, but we have made a solid connection to build upon for the next encounter. Remember, increasing membership is a marathon not a sprint. I encourage you to think about and practice how you respond to others about IRSPA and the many benefits of belonging. There will be additional ways to increase IRSPA visibility through an online store; details will be in the March newsletter.

We continue to have an opening for District 1 Coordinator and will be looking to fill the offices of Membership, Secretary and Vice-President at the 2025 Annual meeting. Please consider stepping up to serve in one of these roles. We have a dynamic leadership team that will welcome and support you. For now, please reach out to me about visiting your local unit. I always enjoy learning from your work. Thank you for all you do for IRSPA and may this holiday season be filled with friends and family.

Beth



CRAWFORD COUNTY IRSPA

The August meeting of Crawford County IRSPA was held at the Bella Sera restaurant in Denison and hosted by Sue Russell and Marilyn Jepsen. The decorations depicted a back to school theme. Approximately 16 members were in attendance. The roll call question was, "What was your least favorite chore to do when you were a child." There were some interesting and fun responses. The majority said, dusting.

Larry Struck, a retired teacher from Denison, was the presenter. He spoke about he and his wife's trip to Indiana to see the life size replica of Noah's Ark. He showed slides and video of the ark. It was very interesting. They toured a museum first and then the ark. It was very informative and interesting.

We concluded our meeting with a discussion about who would attend the state meeting.

Our October meeting was held on the 25th. Hostesses were Barb Songer and Sandy Sharp. We met at Bella Sera, a restaurant in Denison. President Annette Boeck opened with a prayer and the pledge. We installed our new officers. They are: President, Judy Evers, vice president Karen Burmood, secretary Rhonda Christensen and treasurer Barb Wuestewald.



Barb Wuestewald, treasurer; Karen Burmood, vice president; Judy Evers, president; Rhonda Christensen, secretary; Annette Boeck, outgoing president.

Lunch was enjoyed after our business meeting. Our speaker was one of our own, Barb Songer. She presented a very interesting program on her and her husband's trip to Germany. The focus of the trip was to attend the Oberammergau passion play that is only performed every 10 years in the village of the same name. It is an open air performance and approximate-

ly 2000 locals are in the play. The performance is in German. This village is located in the Bavarian region of Germany and is about 60 miles from Munich. Barb said that around 750,000 attend this passion play. Her presentation was very interesting and informative. She shared many pictures as well.

Judy Jepsen



Barb Songer,
presenter at
October meeting.



DEARSPA IRSPA

DEARSPA had closed up for 2024. We will come back in March to continue learning about our surrounding area. We will begin with the Shonkweilers and their maple syrup collection followed in April with a presentation by the Extension Office on *What To Do With Grandma's Yellow Pie Plate*. For the motorcycle enthusiast, we will tour the Indian Motorcycle Factory in Dickinson County. There are a couple of museum trips planned and a fun visit to Vermeer Glass where we will try out our creativity making a Christmas ornament from glass. We will round out the year with a visit to our local Physical Therapy Department at Avera Holy Family hospital - a place some of us are very familiar with and thankful for.

Jean Hoffman

**THIS DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER
IS THE LAST ONE YOU WILL RECEIVE
BY MAIL UNLESS YOU NOTIFY:**

**ROBERT SWANSON:
3221 Cheyenne Blvd.,
Sioux City, IA 51104
712-252-1446**

rmswanson1936@gmail.com

**THE ONLINE EDITION CAN BE FOUND AT
IRSPA.ORG UNDER THE "NEWS" TAB!**

District 2

FLOYD, CHICKASAW, BREMER, BUTLER COUNTIES

BIG 4 CHAPTER OF IRSPA HOSTS STATE LEADERS

Iowa Retired School Personnel Association Chapter Big 4 welcomed state leaders at their October 16, 2024 meeting at First Citizens Bank in Charles City. Speaking to the members of Big 4 in attendance were Judge Brown, IRSPA District 2 coordinator, John Hieronymus, legislative chairperson for Iowa Public Employees Retirement System on behalf of IRSPA, and Beth Hieronymus, state president of IRSPA.

Beth Hieronymus outlined the benefits of being a member of IRSPA. The organization offers advocacy with lobbying efforts for IPERS and educational issues by giving the members a bigger voice at the state level. Membership in IRSPA provides access to insurances at reasonable costs for dental, vision, medical transport, long term care and many others through Association Member Benefits Advisors. IRSPA is a source of opportunities for members to lifelong learning, keeping current with senior quality of life issues, and interacting with others with similar concerns. Dues for a membership is \$15.00 per year.

John Hieronymus updated the group on the status of the IPERS fund. He is a nonvoting member of the Benefits Advisory Committee. He reported that IPERS is 89.7% fully funded with an annual return on the investments for 2023 of 5.41%. IPERS has 404,000 members and a value of \$4.1 billion dollars. Members appreciated the information and continue to promote the secure status of the retirement benefits for public employees.

Judge Brown, IRSPA District 2 coordinator, reported on the IRSPA state meeting held in Clear Lake, October 2 and 3, 2024. District 2 had twenty-four members attending the session. He indicated an important legislative goal for the organization is to get financial assistance for care givers. A lobbying day is scheduled in February, 2025 and specific will be announced later.

Big 4, which represents the four counties of Butler, Bremer, Chickasaw, and Floyd, has a membership of over forty retired school personnel. New members are always welcome and meetings are held six times a year—three fall meetings and three spring meetings. Each meeting consists of a time for fellowship and programs to enlighten and inform the members. Local dues are \$5.00 per year. Big 4 meets at 9:00 a.m. in the basement of First Citizens Bank on the third

Wednesdays of March, April, May, September, October, and November. Any retired school personnel interested in joining Big 4 should contact Mary Koenigsfeld at alandmarykoenigsfeld@gmail.com.



L to R: Beth Hieronymus, state president of IRSPA;
John Hieronymus, legislative chairperson for Iowa Public
Employees Retirement System on behalf of IRSPA;
Judge Brown, IRSPA District 2 coordinator;
Colette Schmidtke, October meeting monitor

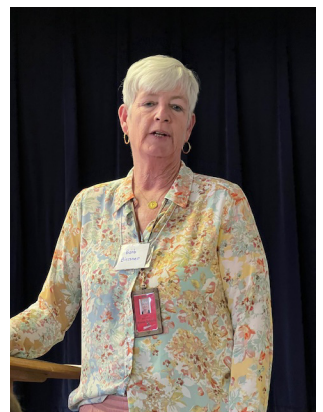
District 2

BOONE COUNTY IRSPA

The Boone County Retired School Personnel Association met at the United Methodist Church in Boone on October 8th. Eleven members and guests were present. Joann Hanson, co-president, presided.

Members brought donations of hygiene items to be given to the Treador Food Pantry as part of a year-long service project.

Following a delicious lunch served by United Methodist Church women, Barb Biersner presented a very interesting program on the Boone Community School District's home school assistance program.



Barb Biersner speaking
at the IRSPA meeting in
Boone



WEBSTER COUNTY IRSPA

We held our first meeting on August 26 at First Presbyterian Church. Our program was done by Brady O'Brien. He is a pianist, composer and production enthusiast from Fort Dodge. He started composing and arranging music at age 10. He gives all of the credit to his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

He accompanies for various churches in the community. He owns his own lighting business and is an active designer for groups around the area. He is also the Coordinator of Technical Theatre at Iowa Central Community College in Fort Dodge. He started his own nonprofit production company in 2021, Brady O'Brien Live. This nonprofit specializes in hosting live productions that also double as fundraisers for other nonprofits and families in the community. His next performance will be December 20th at Decker Auditorium called "A Very Merry Christmas"



Volunteer Hours Chair Becky Nelson-Riley explains to unit members why the state collects the hours, while President Janet Carlon listens.

October Meeting

We met October 7 at Grace Lutheran Church. Announcements were made before our program.

Our unit was asked to contribute a basket for the silent auction at state convention. Ours brought in \$85 for the Parent in Heaven Scholarship.

President Janet Carlon checks out the basket our unit donated for the silent auction.



Matt Cosgrove River's Edge Discovery Center

Karen Hanson, Webster County conservationist, told us about the new River's Edge Discovery Center. Admission is free.

After nearly three decades, the Discovery Center has become a reality and will serve as the hub for conservation and recreation in Webster County. The Center welcomes those who come to learn and play, but it also tells the story of the land and water that we enjoy. The central theme of the Discovery Center is "Immerse yourself in the living story of Iowa's water - the lifeblood that shapes our communities and our landscapes while discovering our responsibilities to protect it for the future. The hands-on, interactive exhibits tell the story of Iowa's most precious resource...it's water.



Here is Past President Sheryl Griffith giving Karen Hansen, speaker from Webster County Conservation, the \$272 we collected for the new River's Edge Discovery Center in Fort Dodge.

It educates visitors on water related topics, such as climate, clouds, watersheds, water quality, wetlands, glaciers, and more. Children can see and climb around in a display that explains where water goes when it seeps into the soil. There is an exhibit that teaches the water cycle and rain, and near the entrance is a reality sandbox that explains Iowa's terrain. There is also a toddler play space, a 500 gallon aquarium featuring species from Iowa's rivers, and a live salamander for kids to see.

Murals cover many of the walls, including a pollinator mural in the center's education classroom which features butterflies and native plants. This mural was designed and painted by students at ICCC and Fort Dodge Senior High.

Ryan Flaherty, Duncombe Principal, spoke to the group about needing volunteers to mentor students at Duncombe.

November Meeting

We met on November 4th at St. Paul's Lutheran Church. Terry Allers, Allers Architect, gave a presentation on the Historic Downtown Walking



Terry Allers talks about the Carnegie Library.

tour of Fort Dodge going back from 1850 to the present.

Although we now have a new library, many members have fond memories of the old library from their childhoods,

The group was surprised when Bruce Hartley, a friend of many of our members and principal of St. Pauls Lutheran School in his retirement from the FDC-SD, stepped into the room to say grace in the absence of the pastor of the church where we held our luncheon.

We also collected \$300 for the Lord's Cupboard along with several bags of paper and hygiene products.

Our next meeting will be held on December 2, 2024, at First United Methodist Church.

Bonnie Rhodes



HUMBOLDT AREA IRSPA

September, 2024

Humboldt Area's IRSPA unit met on September 10, 2024 after a 3-month summer break. President Anita Fagen-Miller called the meeting to order, and the 14 members present enjoyed morning treats provided by Jan Newton.

Renae Dreyer presented a program about Humboldt's "100+ Women Who Care." The charitable group, founded by the late Karen Dunigan in 2006 is now an international initiative that provides financial assistance to local individuals, charitable organizations, and community projects. There are over 900 chapters throughout the world.



Anita Fagen-Miller with the
"100 Women Who Care" speaker
Renae Dreyer

Humboldt's chapter has 166 teams composed of 300+ women. Each individual or group contributes \$100, and then a worthy recipient is chosen. Humboldt generated \$16,600 this year, and the group consensus was unanimous that the Humboldt Veteran's Monument fund drive would receive the money. Renae emphasized that when people come together

each person becomes a powerful force that can do good work and lift up the community. There are no administrative costs, so 100% of the generated funds go directly to the chosen recipient.

The members then wrote welcome cards filled with treats to all the new hires in the community school system. School supplies were collected and distributed to local schools.

Since Humboldt will be hosting the May 21, 2025 District Meeting, Anita discussed the theme, the décor, and the need for volunteers to fill the many duties associated with the event. Members quickly stepped up, and the group is looking forward to hosting the important event.

Toni Hood

October, 2024

The Humboldt Area IRSPA met Tuesday, October 8, 2024, at the Humboldt Community Center for snacks and visiting. Tammy Kampen presented a Breast Cancer awareness program. Early detection is the best defense against breast cancer; with early detection the five-year survival rate is almost 100%. Tammy's information was informative and important; she will be the speaker at the District 2 spring meeting.



Tammy Kampen, who spoke about
the importance of early breast cancer
detection, with treasure Barb Zabel

The 2024 IRSPA annual meeting was held October 2 & 3 in Clear Lake, Iowa. Humboldt members Anita Fagan-Miller, Barb Zabel, and Toni Hood attended. District 2's Mason City hosted the event, and 26 members from District 2 attended the annual meeting. The 2025 annual meeting will be hosted by District 6.

Because Humboldt is hosting the 2025 May district meeting, The PH Balance Scholarship will be given to a senior attending a high school in District 2. The scholarship will be presented to a qualifying high school senior at the May, 21, 2025.

The Humboldt IRSPA has been invited to the November Webster County IRSPA meeting in Fort Dodge. The Webster county unit has a large, dynamic membership; we thank them in advance for their hospitality.

Toni Hood



HARDIN COUNTY IRSPA

Because our attendees are from various communities around the Hardin County Area, we are making an effort to have our programs this year represent a variety of locations.

During the September meeting, Verv Davidson was recognized for receiving his "Quilt of Valor" in Iowa Falls. Verv is the patriotism officer and proudly opens each meeting leading the "Pledge of Allegiance." Mary Martz gave a program on the "Sycamore Garden" which is under development to honor Captain Sneller, an early settler of ROCKSYLVANIA. The



Verv Davidson



**Mary Martz, Carolyn Luiken
and Judy Jeske**

Iowa Falls garden is a work in progress and open to the public. Mary is pictured with Carolyn Luiken and Judy Jeske, who were attending as prospective members.

In October, we were encouraged to schedule a future visit to the CCC/POW Museum in

nearby Eldora, Iowa. An excellent background video and additional information were provided by our "Rosie the Riveters," HCARSP members Judy Jeske and Karla Ridpath.

The November program brought us back to the Iowa Falls-Alden High School music department. The "Scenic City Singers" under the direction of Brandon Waring entertained us with excellent musical selections.



**"Rosie the Riveters," Judy Jeske
and Karla Ridpath**

Marlene Reece



CEDAR VALLEY IRSPA



**Cedar valley Retired Teachers learn about the auto harp by
Presenter Beth Pearson on September 24, 2024.**

THANK YOU

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as your president of IRSPA. It has been a wonderful experience for me. I've met so many delightful people, served on the board with so many dedicated and talented people, and learned so much from them as well as the information gained at the district and state meetings. I have especially enjoyed traveling from one side of Iowa to the other and seeing so much beauty and diversity.

I have one year left as past president out of the four-year commitment. I'm looking forward to that role—being relaxed and just sitting back and enjoying the meetings. :) I have truly been proud to serve. Thank you.

***Jeanne Handeland,
IRSPA Past President***

District 4

DALLAS COUNTY IRSPA

The members of Dallas County Area Retired School Personnel Association opened the year with the events of the past year still fresh on their minds. However, despite the horrific shooting at the Perry Community High School on January 4 and the closure of the Tyson Plant in June that found 1300 workers searching for jobs, they joyfully welcomed their fellow retirees at the annual *We Didn't Have To Go Back To School* brunch. There, Perry superintendent, Clark Wicks, and new Perry High School principal, Brad Snowgren, updated us on the changes being undertaken in the district including security measures.

October brought an informative talk by Rod Stanley, local historian, on the Interurban Railroads of Iowa as well as the "Ghost Places" created by them. In November we learned about Vestibular Rehabilitation and Prevention of Falling from Kirsten Radke and Jacob Hardy from Core Physical Therapy.

Many of our members are snowbirds, so we don't meet during the winter, but we concluded the first half of our year on November 12 by dedicating the bench we had purchased as a memorial to Dan Marburger, Perry High School principal who died of injuries from the January school shooting.



Karen Einck, former president, welcomed Elizabeth Marburger as well as members and other retirees to the area outside the entrance of Perry High to what she dubbed as "Our Principal Park." Karen recalled that before Dan, the only other principal Perry High has had in the last 50 years was Dr. Gene Brady who will be honored in the spring with a tree near Dan's bench making this an area of remembrance for both principals.

A check was presented to Tami Valline, guidance

counselor, for \$1,784.00 which represented the excess donations toward the memorial. The money will go towards three causes that were dear to Dan's heart at the high school: the Student Needs Fund, the Perry High Food Pantry, and the Giving Tree.

Elizabeth was presented with a heart shaped yard marker that stated "Always in our hearts, Dan Marburger," from the company from whom we purchased the bench. At the conclusion of the ceremonies, Emily Grimm a former student and current teacher at Perry High School, read an original poem titled "His Legacy" in Dan's honor:



The structure of a school
Is more than meets the eye,
It is about the people
Who created the world inside.

Teacher, students
Faculty, staff
Look to our leader
To lead us on a path.
PHS had the best
We all knew it was true,
Mr. Marburger captured the heart
Of education through and through.

His legacy is cemented
His heart within these walls
We were blessed to have him
Caring for us all.

Today we celebrate a father,
A husband, boss, and friend.
May this bench be a reminder
His legacy will never end.

Sue Leslie, DCARSPA Secretary

District 4

COUNCIL BLUFFS IRSPA

The Council Bluffs unit met on September 18th, after a summer break, at the Council Bluffs Country Club with 39 members present. We welcomed new member Denise Talbott. After time socializing with friends the IRSPA web site was reviewed focusing on Supportive Services/ Volunteer Hours. Some members were unaware of the many volunteer services that counts towards our volunteer hours. Members were encouraged to keep track of their hours and turn them in each meeting.

We met again on October 16th with 34 members and one guest in attendance. We welcomed new members Carole Nissen and Terry McNeal.

Our speaker was Dr. Jason Plourde, Chief Administrator of the Green Hills AEA. Green Hills AEA covers



Dr. Jason Plourde
Chief Administrator of
Green Hills AEA

15 counties in south-west Iowa. The AEA is in the people business to provide quality services that benefit students. It serves children from birth to age 21 providing support and services in education, media & tech, and special education. Next year the funding from the state will change giving school districts control over their own funding and a

choice to obtain services from the AEA or any provider of their choice. Green Hills has been meeting with districts to help them make plans with more concerns for smaller districts. Dr. Plourde encouraged us to advocate for all kids that need services. Be pro kid, pro school and support the AEA.

Julie Dillehay, Secretary

District 5

DAVIS COUNTY IRSPA

August found our group on the edge of Bloomfield at the McGowen Farm Campground. A picnic lunch was provided by our presiding committee members.

New DCRSP President Deb Van Horn provided school supply trinkets to members whom had taught the longest in Davis County and numerous other categories. We also graciously welcomed several new retirees to our organization. An



overview was given of the great programs coming up for DCRSP this season.

DCRSP's September meeting was held at the Bloomfield Public library. A Trivia game was hosted by Jane



Hutchings; Deb Norton assisted. Four teams competed for the winners podium for the chance to win the Gold. Gold, silver and bronze medals were presented to the proud winning

teams. Snacks and laughter were shared by all.

Our October meeting commenced at the Apple Blossom Farms apple orchard in rural Davis County. Orchardist, Heath Greiner, shared his 14 years of experience in creating what is now an over 2000, 19 variety, apple tree orchard. Each attendee received a complimentary jar of Apple Butter made from this lovely orchard. Lunch and meeting followed at Ray's Longbranch in Drakesville.

Tammy Greiner

Website: www.irspa.org



District 5

JASPER COUNTY IRSPA

Happy Holidays to everyone!!

No doubt like all of you, we are off to another great (Retired) School Year!

In September, we began with 2 people who had never come before and had a fun and informative program about hearing loss by our own member Pam Andrews. Pam herself has a hearing loss and her presentation was entitled "Can You Hear Me Now?" She shared so many common sense tips as well as suggestions we had never heard about. Being the forever teacher that Pam is, she even rewarded our membership at our October meeting by paying for Mystery Box tickets for 5 people who remembered to use some of the tips she had taught us!

In October, my daughter Bev Klingensmith presented a program about her Great Dane BING who is the STAR of a new movie coming out in late March or early April entitled "The Friend." This movie showcases Bill Murray and Naomi Watts, but Bing was the real star! It was based on the book (of the same title) by Sigrid Nunez. Bev's presentation was called 'The Making of a Canine Movie Star' and she explained how she and Bing lived in NYC for 3 months (January-March) filming it and how she was the on set trainer with all that entailed. She talked about the 3 Film Festivals they attended in late August and early September; Telluride, Toronto and NYC. They walked the Red Carpet with stars like J Lo, Will Ferrell, Mark Hamill, Demi Moore and so many more. THEY all were seeking her out for Bing's pawtagraph! As you might surmise, this has been an experience of a lifetime... even for yours truly! Bing



(& Bev who will like always, be behind the scenes) is expected to be on the late night talk shows before the movie opens next spring.

Our November meeting, will have

a local PT speak about things we seniors can do to lessen risks for falls and strengthen our ability to remain strong and independent. Then in December, we will have our second annual Cookies and Carols social event. We will let you know how that goes next time. Until then stay healthy and hopeful!

Denise and Lana

District 5

APPANOOSE & WAYNE COUNTY

Adam Havard, a teacher and coach, at Moravia High School spoke at our meeting about the archery program at the high school.

Adam is a graduate of Centerville High School, Iowa State University BA, and Grand Canyon University, MA.

Richard H. Keilig Jr



Adam and President Richard Keilig Jr of the Appanoose and Wayne Units.

Newsletter Deadline

Articles for the March Newsletter are due
no later than Friday, February 14, 2025

Get info to Toni Hood, at

E-mail: tonihood@q.com

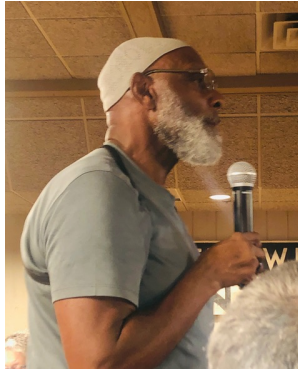
Home Telephone: 515-332-5819

Cell Phone: 515-269-3823



DES MOINES AREA IRSPA

The Des Moines Area Retired School Personnel Association (DMARSPA) met for its regular monthly meeting on September 26, 2024. Our speaker was State Representative Ako Abdul Samad. He praised teachers for building society's foundational knowledge. He noted that September 24 was the National Day of Remembrance for Homicide Victims. He pointed out that today's climate is not healthy and that society needs to have honest conversations even though that has become very difficult. Teachers are put in a Catch 22 situation because they are expected to raise the children but are challenged by parents when they attempt to do so. Don't let the politicians tell you how to teach.



**Representative
Ako Abdul Samad**

We recognized scholarship winner Taylor Albertson. She is a senior at UNI majoring in Special Education.

We were visited by Susie Carr, the DMEA Uniserve Director.

At our October meeting on Oct. 24, our speaker was Terri Spears, the Chief Development Officer for Lutheran Social Services of Iowa (LSI). She informed us that LSI was founded by Norwegian and Danish Lutheran immigrants in 1885 because of their deep sense of service to others. She told us the story of Abby who was in and out of the institutional setting throughout her entire life, including a time when she was adopted but the adoptive parents returned her to LSI and terminated the adoption. But this story ends on a high point because of the work of an LSI therapist, Abby is about to be adopted again.



**Scholarship Winner
Taylor Albertson**



**LSI Chief Development
Officer Terri Spears**

LSI has counselors in five of the juvenile detention centers around the state. It has an annual budget of about \$30M. In 2023 LSI provided 15,221 therapy sessions, 11,000 home visits, 400 refugee resettlements in the Des Moines and Sioux City areas, and 400,000 hours of services to persons with disabilities. LSI partners with Global Greens to establish a gardening program for immigrants. In 2023, 1,181,043 pounds of food were produced by Global Greens gardens.

DMARSPA doesn't meet in November since Thanksgiving would normally be our regular meeting date.

Submitted by Bill Snyder

New IRSPA Facebook Page!



*Are you looking for ideas,
information and inspiration?*

Hurray! The new IRSPA facebook page is up and running. Follow this link, <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61568544260868>, to view, then like and follow and you will receive a notification on your facebook page when there is a new post. What can you expect from this page? There will be a few AMBA posts on a regular basis, posts that you may enjoy that are AARP related, posts about individual units, and of course information about upcoming district and state meetings. Seeing what other units are doing may spark an idea for your group. If you have something you would like to post from your unit, please send it to Jean Hoffman at 42teacher@gmail.com or Toni Hood at tonihood@q.com. Check it out.

District 6

DAVENPORT CHAPTER IRSPA

Our local group continues to enjoy our lunches, business meetings and speakers/entertainment at the Best Western Plus in Davenport on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. We usually have between 75-85 members present. We have a little over 300 members in our unit!

We were happy to send seven of our members to the IRSPA state meeting in Clear Lake. Two of our own board members also were elected to be IRSPA board as co-vice-presidents.



Our local members at the IRSPA state meeting

Members have donated almost \$2000 to our newly established scholarship fund...which we will distribute to local high school students later - in 2025.

Our speakers in September were from the Lake Davenport Sailing Club/Quad City Sailing School. In October, Paul Strid with member benefits was our featured speaker. In November, we learned from Bill Churchill about the Veteran's Memorial Park in Davenport.



Paul Strid (October speaker)

We look forward to our December meeting when we will have holiday music from the Central High Orchestra and a fun "white elephant" gift exchange.

Submitted by Cheryl Sly - Davenport Unit Secretary

District 6

KEOKUK COUNTY IRSPA

KCRSP met on Wednesday, September 18 at the Hope Lutheran Church in Sigourney. Twenty-four members were present. The speaker for the meeting was Lucas Meier, Senior VP in charge of operations for the Keokuk County Bank. He spoke to the group about SCAMS and how the bank can help if you have questions concerning your account. Zeola Coble from Pekin High School was this year's \$500.00 scholarship recipient from KCRSP. Our organization annually gives a scholarship to students majoring in education. Her thank you note was read at this meeting. Membership Chairperson Vicki Griner sent out nine letters to retired personnel in the Keokuk County area. Crystal Stoner and Julie Tremmel attended this meeting as new members. President Sandy Steinke thanked Mary Williams for sending our information to the IRSPA Newsletter. Our news was published in the September State Newsletter.

KCRSP met on Wednesday, October 16 at Hope Lutheran Church in Sigourney. Twenty-six members were present. Guest speaker was Emily Wohler who shared her trip to New Zealand and Australia. Emily had a slide show of photos to share her experience of the continent. Three new members were present at this meeting. They were Annette Clarahan, Crystal Stoner and Julie Tremmel. Sixteen members turned in 3,836 volunteer hours. Next year's goal is to turn in 4,000 hours and have more than sixteen reporting members.

Linda Miller, District 6 Coordinator, reported on issues related to retirees that were covered at the last District Meeting. She discussed the IPERS fund, Parents in



**Linda Miller, District 6 Coordinator &
Linda Crouse, Treasurer**

Heaven Scholarships and announced that the 2025 District Meeting will be held on May 8, in Muscatine. Cyrena Buschmann will send out a link for the State Newsletter for those who want to read it online. Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, March 19, 2025, at Hope Lutheran in Sigourney.

Mary Williams



LEE COUNTY IRSPA

September Meeting

Approximately 30 Lee County Retired School personnel met recently in Donnellson at the Pilot Grove Community Room. Members enjoyed a delicious luncheon from the TTT organization. New member Jan Atkinson and guests Earl Walrath and Beverly Merritt were recognized. Gretchen Kirchner, Legislative Chair, shared details about The Resource Hub and Transportation Grants for students experiencing homelessness. This program comes from the Iowa Department of Education. School districts can receive funds for basic student needs; clothing, food, portable shower units, access to washers and dryers, hygiene supplies as well as transportation to their school. Regionally, schools that have received funds are Ottumwa, Burlington, Fairfield, and Ft. Madison.

The program for the retirees was presented by Clay Steele, Environmental and Outdoor Education Specialist II, from Lee County Conservation. Clay visits Lee County classrooms throughout the academic year presenting 285 programs to students and staff. He shared a power point and information on the monarch butterfly and how they can be tagged to track their movement. The tag is actually a sticker the size of a thumbnail and is placed on the underside of the butterfly's wing so that it doesn't interfere in their ability to fly. The monarch population has been drastically reduced in recent years. Drought, pesticides, habitat destruction, extremely cold winters, cool rainy springs and milkweed eradication has played a part in the decrease in their population. Milkweed is the monarch's primary source of nutrition. This species migrates to south Mexico after the weather becomes too cold in the United States. They tend to arrive in great numbers at the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve located 100 km northwest of Mexico City in early November and stay until March. The Reserve is a UNESCO World Heritage Centre. Steele suggested as we can plant milkweed and high nectar producing plants to help feed the butterflies. More information about the monarchs can be found at monarchwatch.org.

The next gathering for the retired personnel will be Wednesday, October 2 12:00 at the Montrose Riverfront building, Montrose, Iowa.

October Meeting

Montrose Riverfront Pavillion was the setting for the October meeting for Lee County Retired School Person-

nel. Elizabeth Chatfield and her staff served a delicious lunch to 40 individuals. Hugh and Tanya Ferguson, Janet Dinkle and Linda Glasgow were welcomed as their absence had been missed.

Staff from River Hills Village presented the program to the members. Lexy Reu, Marketing Manager, described River Hills as a continuum campus. Individuals can be served in all stages of life from independent apartment living to skilled nursing care. Memory Lane and the Bounce Back Program are also available. Wendy Caviness, RN, Assisted Living Manager, stated that there are two levels of Assisted Living depending on need. Services include weekly laundry, 24-hour staff, 2 meals per day, medication administration if needed and housekeeping are provided. Short term stays are also available.

Residents have opportunities to leave campus and are transported two times per month to eat at local restaurants, 1 time for dinner and 2 times to visit local retail stores. The Bounce Back program is intended for a short term stay to recover from an illness or surgery and is housed in a separate area to share commonalities.

Administrator Heather McCormick informed the audience about the furnished and unfurnished apartments, which are always in high demand. She recommended that if anyone was interested in making a move, they should put their name on the waiting list.

McCormick also recently attended a meeting and learned where Medicare Advantage and Aetna insurance plans were not going to be accepted by regional hospitals and clinics. She suggested it best to check with your provider if you have this type of coverage to ensure clarity.

Pam Strong conducted the auction of donated items at the end of the program; proceeds go toward the scholarship program. Next meeting will be November 6 at the Denmark Congressional UUC at 12:00. Keokuk National Cemetery Personnel will present the program.

Jill Anderson-Cox



L-R, Caviness, Reu, McCormick



Dear AMBA,

I am a newly retired school personnel employee and am interested in getting involved with my local unit. I recently went to my local unit meeting and was really impressed with the number of retirees that attend these meetings. I was amazed at how much camaraderie there was amongst old friends and teachers. I learned that by becoming a member of the Iowa Retired School Personnel Association (IRSPA) I would have access to many valuable benefits, including something called Passport or My AMBA Discounts. I like to save money and was hoping you could share some information about Passport.

Sincerely,
Penny Pincher

Dear Penny,

It is great to hear you are excited about getting involved with your associations in your retirement. Saving money while on a fixed income is very important and the Passport program is a great way to allow you to do that. My AMBA Discounts provides you with:

EXCLUSIVE DISCOUNTS ON *shopping & services*

Having a Passport Membership means you can enjoy discounts *wherever and whenever* you shop! Enjoy Passport's selection of hot deals and members-only savings.

- Online as well as in-store savings
- National merchants, including electronics and car manufacturers
- Entertainment savings at theme parks, movie theaters, and more!

Membership for Passport is \$81, however, by joining the IRPSA with an annual membership of \$15, you have access to the Passport program, absolutely free. Passport has exclusive savings with over 2500 merchants including premium travel discounts and a wide variety of local and national merchant discounts. You can take advantage of name brands that specialize in home goods, electronics, fixtures, faucets, mattresses and more. There are big savings on hotels, car rentals and even cruise lines.

Become a member of the IRSPA and sign up for the Passport Program online. You can also save money on the go with Passport Mobile. There are over 1800 participating restaurants nationwide. Please note that if you have any questions about signing up for MyAmbaDiscounts and the Passport Program please reach out to Paul Strid, our AMBA representative at 708-347-7081 or paul.strid@getamba.com. **Paul Strid**

AMBA Senior Benefits Representative

PH. 708-347-7081 • email: paul.strid@amba.info

"To Serve, Not to Be Served"

VOLUNTEER HOURS-Why We Collect Hours

Volunteer hours are used for determining available grants. Our report is sent to AARP, the Senior National Service Program in Iowa, the Volunteer Promotions Office of Iowa Economic Development Authority, and the Executive Director of Iowa. The report goes to the Governor's office and to the National and Community Service Director in Washington DC.

When an IRSPA member works for NO PAY or NO REIMBURSEMENT, those hours should be written down. Divide hours into two categories: 1. Youth and Education and 2. Community. Driving time to and from volunteer efforts also counts.

The following lists include, but are not limited to, activities that qualify as volunteer hours: Youth and Education Hours: any work with public or private schools, Boy/Girl Scouts, 4-H, caring for children (including grandchildren), youth programs, coaching or helping with sports or fine arts activities, assisting with testing or contests such as spelling bees, free meal programs, scholarship committees, and any effort that involves youth.

Community Hours: volunteer work for libraries, churches, museums, community centers, fundraisers, hospitals/medical facilities, mission work, food banks, legion/service club work, assisting elderly and disabled people, humane societies, tax preparation, visiting shut-ins, county fair/farmer's market, beautification efforts, and acts of kindness to those in need.

The IRSPA Volunteer Hours officer(s) compiles Iowa's hours at the end August. Units that do not meet in the summer may turn their hours in earlier. Local units can provide tally sheets. There is also a tally sheet available on the IRSPA website under the volunteer hours tab.

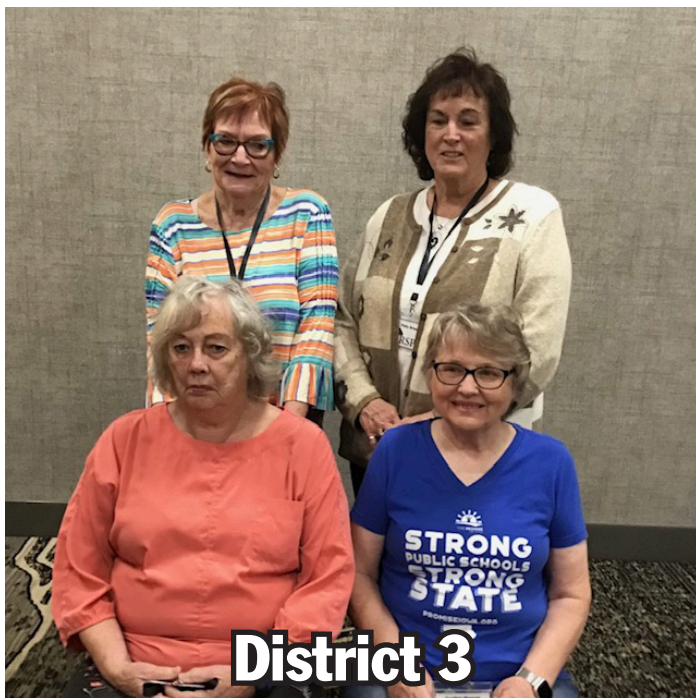
VOLUNTEER HOURS UPDATE:

submitted by Jay and Sandy Thede

- Sioux City Area reported the most volunteer hours
- Fort Dodge reported the 2nd highest hours
- District 2 reported the most total hours
- Carroll-Greene, Council Bluffs, and Mason City improved for 4 years in a row
- 2024 hours increased by 11,000
- Iowa's hourly rate of \$28.88 ranks 43rd nationally -the national rate is \$33.49
- IRSPA's total volunteer value was \$9,363,736.97

Toni Hood

2024 IRSPA Annual Meeting - Clear Lake, IA



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2024 IRSPA Annual Meeting - Clear Lake, IA



Karen Dole spearheaded a flawlessly organized and very hospitable IRSPA Annual Meeting in Clear Lake.



Jean Hoffman and Beth Hieronymous attended a "Train the Trainer" workshop in North Carolina sponsored by NRTA. They presented a "7 Membership Touches" program that presented information that helped the audience brainstorm ideas for increasing IRSPA membership. Their program was very dynamic; the audience participated and shared how they became members, what their units are currently doing to increase membership and heard recruiting tips that will help members share the benefits of IRSPA membership.



Linda Miller inducted our new president Beth Hieronymous, vice-president Anne Cowley, and co-presidents Laurie Marple and Chrissy Hartman.



Laurie Marple and Chrissy Hartman, from District 6, are ready to assume their new duties as Co-Vice Presidents of IRSPA.

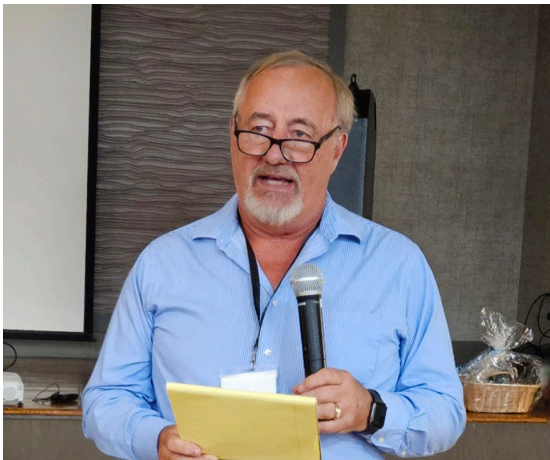


President Jeanne Handeland and Past President Jean Hoffman exercising their last "official" presentation. Two Jeans are always better than one, and we appreciate all that they have contributed to IRSPA.

2024 IRSPA Annual Meeting - Clear Lake, IA



The PH Balance Scholarship silent auction netted \$1,091 and attendees contributed \$675 to the donation box.



John Hieronymus, Legislative and IPERS representative, shared relevant information with attendees.



Sam Crosser and Melissa Dorenkamp provided a medley of entertaining music during dinner at the IRSPA annual meeting.



Jean Hoffman, Beth Hieronymus and Linda Miller enjoyed seeing the Central Gardens of North Iowa in Clear Lake.



A huge "shout out" to the Mason City unit hosts who organized the IPERS Annual Meeting. Seated: Lynn and Barb Anderson, Sandy Thede, and president Karen Dole. Standing: co-presidents elect Larry Niebur and Jay Thede

2024 IRSPA Annual Meeting - Clear Lake, IA

AARP Representative Connie Eastman



AARP representative Connie Eastman spoke at the IRSPA annual meeting. She gave some background information about Ethel Percy Andrus who founded the National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA) in 1947; in 1958, she established AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) to meet the insurance needs of its many members.

Ethel Percy Andrus was the first woman principal of a major urban high school in California. She found one of her fellow retired teachers living in a chicken coop; this shocking discovery inspired her to devote the rest of her life to improving the quality of life for all. She embodied her motto that is still AARP'S motto: "To Serve, Not to be Served."

Connie covered topics such as: accessory dwelling units, care giving and care giver needs, state and federal programs that deal with aging issues, housing needs, fraud, financial security, and other concerns that affect the aging population.

Connie advised that AARP representatives are available to come to meetings and share the large body of information available through AARP.

by Toni Hood

The Chautauqua-Lifelong Learning



Keynote speaker Beth Ann Schumacher entertained the IRSPA Annual Meeting attendees with an informative program about the Clear Lake Chautauqua program. She is a former social studies teacher at Clear Lake High School and has received many educational rewards. A published author, Beth Ann has a passion for Civil War History and works to build interest in local and national history.

Chautauqua is an adult education and social movement in the United States that peaked in popularity from the 1870's to the 1920's. Chautauqua assemblies expanded and spread throughout rural America and brought entertainment and culture for the whole community, with speakers, teachers, musicians, showmen, preachers, and specialists of the day. U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt is often quoted as saying that Chautauqua is "the most American thing in America."

Lectures were the mainstay of the Chautauqua. The reform speech and the inspirational talk were the two main types of lecture until 1913. Later topics included current events, travel, and stories, often with a comedic twist. Christian instruction, preaching, and worship were also a big part of the Chautauqua experience. William Jennings Bryant, Carrie Nation, Billy Sunday, and Booker T Washington were some of the nationally known speakers.

Chautauquas operated at permanent facilities. These "summer camps" were generally built in an attractive semirural location a short distance outside an established town with good rail service in communities such as Clear Lake; local sponsors built a new city park called "The Camp Meeting Grounds." It was not uncommon for individuals and families to spend summers at these events.

Beth Ann's dynamic program, enhanced by illustrative slides, captivated the audience of educators. As educators, we enjoyed the history which emphasized the importance of educational pursuits in early Iowa.

by Toni Hood

Little Swan Lake Winery



Little Swan Lake Winery is a family owned and operated business located 1-1/2 miles north of the small town of Superior in Northwest Iowa. In May of 2002 our doors opened to the public. The tasting room, our remodeled 1920's barn, features 35 different wines all produced on site, a selection of gourmet cheeses, and buffalo meat from our own herd which roams nearby. Our vineyard consists of two acres of northern cold hardy grapes. The gift shop features clothing and wine related items. We are dedicated to producing the finest and most enjoyable wines and invite you to spend an hour or an afternoon with us.

Our newest addition, our bed and breakfast, opened in September of 2011. This renovated grain elevator is a great place to relax and enjoy the beauty that is Little Swan Lake!

Scott and Diane Benjamin and Family



Little Swan Lake Winery offers a 10% discount on bottled wine to IRSPA members when you show your membership card or the ad from the newsletter. Offer good at the winery only.

lswinery.com • Phone: (712) 858 - 4592

IRSPA CONTACTS

Past President:

Jeanne Handeland
4181 230th St., Wallingford, IA 51365
(712) 260-0943 - jhandy@rvtc.net

President:

Beth Hieronymus
3322 Muscatine Ave., Iowa City, IA 52240
(319) 360-4634 - bhieronymus62@gmail.com

President Elect:

Anne Cowley
413 Eton Court, Sioux City, IA 51104
712-204-5182 - amusicwest@aol.com

Co-Vice President:

Chryss Hartman
2114 Belle Ave., Davenport, IA 52803
563-320-0603 - candm61877@aol.com

Laurie Marple, 1220 Rustic View Ct.
Eldridge, IA 52748
563-320-3708 - marple854@aol.com

Secretary/Historian:

Mary Jo O'Connell
1700 Avoca Street, Dubuque, IA 52201
(563) 557-1451 - moconnell12@msn.com

Treasurer:

Robert Swanson
3221 Cheyenne Blvd., Sioux City, IA 51104
(712) 252-1446 - rmswanson1936@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor:

Toni Hood
1006 6th Ave. N., Humboldt, IA 50548
515-332-5819 Home; 515-269-3823 Cell

Hawkeye Buffalo & Cattle Ranch



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

Hawkeye Buffalo & Cattle Ranch is a family farm in northeast Iowa. Our heritage dates back to 1854 when my great-great-grandparents settled in a sod house just a mile from our farm. The bison have returned, and we invite you to connect with the land, our family, and our farm.

Tours include an informative lesson on the history of buffalo in Iowa and a chance to feed the buffalo. Tours are \$15 for adults and \$10 for children. With an IRSPA membership card or showing your copy of the IRSPA newsletter with the Hawkeye Buffalo advertisement, the **cost is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children.** Tours are set up on an as needed basis so you must call in advance to set up your tour. The Buffalo Ranch is southwest of Fredericksburg next to Split Rock Park and Campgrounds at 3034 Pembroke Ave. Visitors often get a chance to see other wildlife too - deer, sandhill cranes, hawks, songbirds, and occasionally eagles. Buffalo meat is also sold on location.

Check us out at Hawkeyebuffalo.com
Phone: 641-229-6701

Newsletter
Iowa Retired School Personnel
Association
3221 Cheyenne Blvd.
Sioux City, IA 51104

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PLEASE NOTE: Send relevant notices, change of address,
and/or subscription cancellations to rmswanson1936@gmail.com

LEGISLATIVE FUND

Contributions to the Iowa Retired School Personnel Association legislative fund for the improvement of retirement benefits are being accepted for the current year (Oct. to Oct.) Please make your contributions as generous as possible.

\$5.00 _____ \$10.00 _____ \$15.00 _____ Other _____

Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

If Member of Local Unit _____

Unit Name _____

County _____

MAIL EITHER FORM TO:

Robert Swanson, IRSPA Treas. • 3221 Cheyenne Blvd.,
Sioux City, IA 51104 • Make Checks payable to IRSPA

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Iowa Retired School Personnel Association

Name _____

Last _____ First _____ M.I. _____

Street Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

If Member of Local Unit _____

Unit Name _____

County _____

Annual Dues: \$15 • LIFE MEMBERSHIP: \$300