

Iowa Hospital Auxilian and Volunteers Gift Shop Conference and Market

April 3, 2025



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The 2025 Iowa Hospital Auxilian and Volunteers Gift Shop Conference and Market will feature innovative ideas for gift shop strategies and promotions. This conference also provides time to shop and place orders with gift shop market vendors.

PROGRAM AGENDA

9:15 a.m. Registration

9:50 a.m. Welcome, introductions and business meeting

Kirsten Heerd, Volunteer Services and Lifeline Coordinator, Public Information and Senior Health Insurance Information Program Site Coordinator, Henry County Health Center, Mount Pleasant, and President, Iowa Hospital Auxilians and Volunteers

- Meet the Iowa Hospital Auxilians and Volunteers board of directors and Gift Shop Conference Committee members
- Business meeting
- Approve bylaws changes

10 a.m. Gift Shop Show and Tell

Kirsten Heerd, Henry County Health Center; Bailey Clubb, Manager of Volunteer Services and Committees, Clarinda Regional Health Center, and President-elect, Iowa Hospital Auxilians and Volunteers; and Lisa Alesch, Volunteer Coordinator and Gift Shop Manager, Buena Vista Regional Medical Center, Storm Lake

Have you wondered what other hospital gift shops look like and what their best sellers are? This fun rapid-fire session will include photos, best sellers and sharing about Iowa hospital shops. This audience interaction session will be one you won't want to miss.

11 a.m. Shop and buy from vendors

Be ready to place orders and purchase items from various gift shop vendors. Take advantage of one-on-one shopping with participating vendors, who we encourage to bring cash and carry items.

Noon Lunch, network and shop

1 p.m. Breakout sessions

Breakout session No. 1: Strategies for a Successful Gift Shop

Brandy Reisinger, Gift Shop Lead Coordinator, Northeast Iowa MercyOne Waterloo Medical Center, and Laura Kloewer, Public Relations and Outreach Coordinator, Montgomery County Memorial Hospital and Clinics, Red Oak

Everyone wants to have a successful gift shop that customers talk to their friends about and keep coming back to. This session will discuss ways to merchandise products and create interest through visual cues and inventory variety. We will also touch on ways to engage with customers to ensure a pleasant customer experience and ways to use advertising and marketing to reach your target audience.

Learning objectives:

- Learn how to create fresh, eye-catching displays to attract customers to new and older products, and promote seasonal or thematic items.
- Keeping a close eye on stock levels, restocking popular items, and introducing new products to keep the selection fresh and appealing.
- Gain ideas to engage more with your customers and show appreciation in a variety of ways, including pop-up shops and colleague appreciation.
- Learn how to develop personas and tailor messaging to resonate with staff, visitors and patients

- Learn how to segment target audiences to create effective, targeted marketing campaigns
- Understand how to use low-cost marketing channels, collaborate with hospital departments and create buzz with strategic promotions

Breakout session No. 2: Promoting Your Brand Through Clothing and Merchandise

Emilie Hardy, Manager and Buyer, Mercy Flowers and Gifts and Well Bean Coffee Shop, Mercy Medical Center, Cedar Rapids

Who says hospital branding must be bland? Join retail guru Emilie Hardy for a lively session about turning your hospital gift shop into a stylish showcase for your brand. With over 30 years of retail experience and record sales at Mercy Medical Center, Hardy knows how to make merchandise work. From trendy apparel to must-have swag, discover how to curate items that delight your customers, boost loyalty and keep the cash register ringing. Packed with real-world examples and tales from her million-dollar milestone journey, this session is your backstage pass to creating a gift shop that's profitable and unforgettable. Come ready to rethink hospital branding because your brand deserves to shine as brightly as your mission.

Learning objectives:

- Explore real-world examples and best practices for designing and remodeling retail spaces to enhance the customer shopping experience and boost brand visibility
- Gain insights into building a cohesive brand presence through gift shop offerings that resonate with both internal and external audiences, fostering loyalty and pride
- Learn strategies for driving sales and increasing revenue through innovative merchandising, marketing and customer engagement techniques
- Understand how to select apparel and merchandise that effectively reflects your hospital's brand while appealing to a diverse customer base

2 p.m. Shop and buy from vendors

Finish buying for your shop while enjoying dessert. Take advantage of this last chance to shop one-on-one with participating vendors. We will announce door prizes. You must be present to win.

3 p.m. What I Wish I Knew

Kirsten Heerdt, Henry County Health Center, Bailey Clubb, Clarinda Regional Health Center, and Lisa Alesch, Buena Vista Regional Medical Center

Join the Gift Shop Committee members during a question-and-answer session based on things they wish they had known since they started managing their gift shops. We encourage audience participation.

4 p.m. Adjourn

SPEAKERS

Lisa Alesch has worked at Buena Vista Regional Medical Center in Storm Lake for 16 years. Alesch spent her first 13 years as the nutrition services coordinator and is now the volunteer coordinator and gift shop manager. As part of her role, she leads an active auxiliary with over 200 members and a retirement club with 150 members. Before this, Alesch was the director of food services for a local school district.

Bailey Clubb oversees Clarinda Regional Health Center's medical foundation, helps further fundraising efforts and explores ways to help serve patients in the community. Clubb uses her associate's degree in business management to direct day-to-day operations and buying for the gift shop. She also oversees over 100 volunteers and the eight foundation volunteer committees. Clubb has worked at the health center for seven years and has been in her current role for five years.

Emilie Hardy is the manager and buyer of Mercy Gift Shops at Mercy Medical Center in Cedar Rapids. Hardy brings over 30 years of diverse retail experience to her role as manager. With a background that includes owning a business and working for large retail companies, she has developed a deep understanding of the retail industry, customer service and sales growth. Under Hardy's leadership, Mercy's Gift Shop reached a historic milestone, surpassing \$1 million in annual gross sales for the first time and increasing revenue by 72% over the past three years. She is also leading a complete remodel of the Gift Shop at Mercy Medical Center, overseeing the construction process while ensuring her team delivers excellent customer service throughout the transition.

Kirsten Heerdt coordinates volunteers for Henry County Health Center, a 25-bed critical access hospital in Mount Pleasant, and the Midwest Old Threshers Reunion. Heerdt also helps with the gift shop's management, buying, advertising and other avenues of promotion. Heerdt has just completed a remodel and expansion of the Henry County Health Center gift shop. She shares her time with the Public Information Department. Before this, Heerdt was a river guide in Colorado, a newspaper editor and a human resources trainer in the banking industry. She has degrees in journalism and commercial recreation and tourism.

Laura Kloewer is the public relations and outreach coordinator at Montgomery County Memorial Hospital in Red Oak. Kloewer

also works closely with the hospital's nonprofit affiliates, including their auxiliary and foundation. With over a decade of experience in health care and 15 years in the nonprofit sector, she's enthusiastic about philanthropy, promoting health equity, strengthening community relations through storytelling and building connections. Drawing on her marketing, outreach and community engagement background, Kloewer finds creative ways to connect people with mission-driven initiatives that inspire collaboration and support while ensuring that community programs and resources have a meaningful impact.

Brandy Reisinger has been the gift shop lead coordinator at Northeast Iowa MercyOne Waterloo Medical Center Gift Shop since 2022. Reisinger has a Bachelor of Arts degree in interior design with a business emphasis from the University of Northern Iowa. Her career started as a design assistant and grew to interior designer for Flack Interior Designs Associates. She moved to Design 360 at Decorating Den Interiors before joining the MercyOne Waterloo team.

REGISTRATION

Register online at www.ihaonline.org.

- IHAV members – \$50
- IHA members – \$200
- Non-IHA members – \$225

PROGRAM LOCATION

IHA Conference Center, 100 E. Grand Ave., Suite 100, Des Moines.

- If you have dietary restrictions or allergies, email iharegistration@ihaonline.org.
- Dress for the conference is business casual. Layered clothing is recommended for your comfort.

CONFERENCE MATERIALS

This is a paperless conference. IHA will email conference materials when available.

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