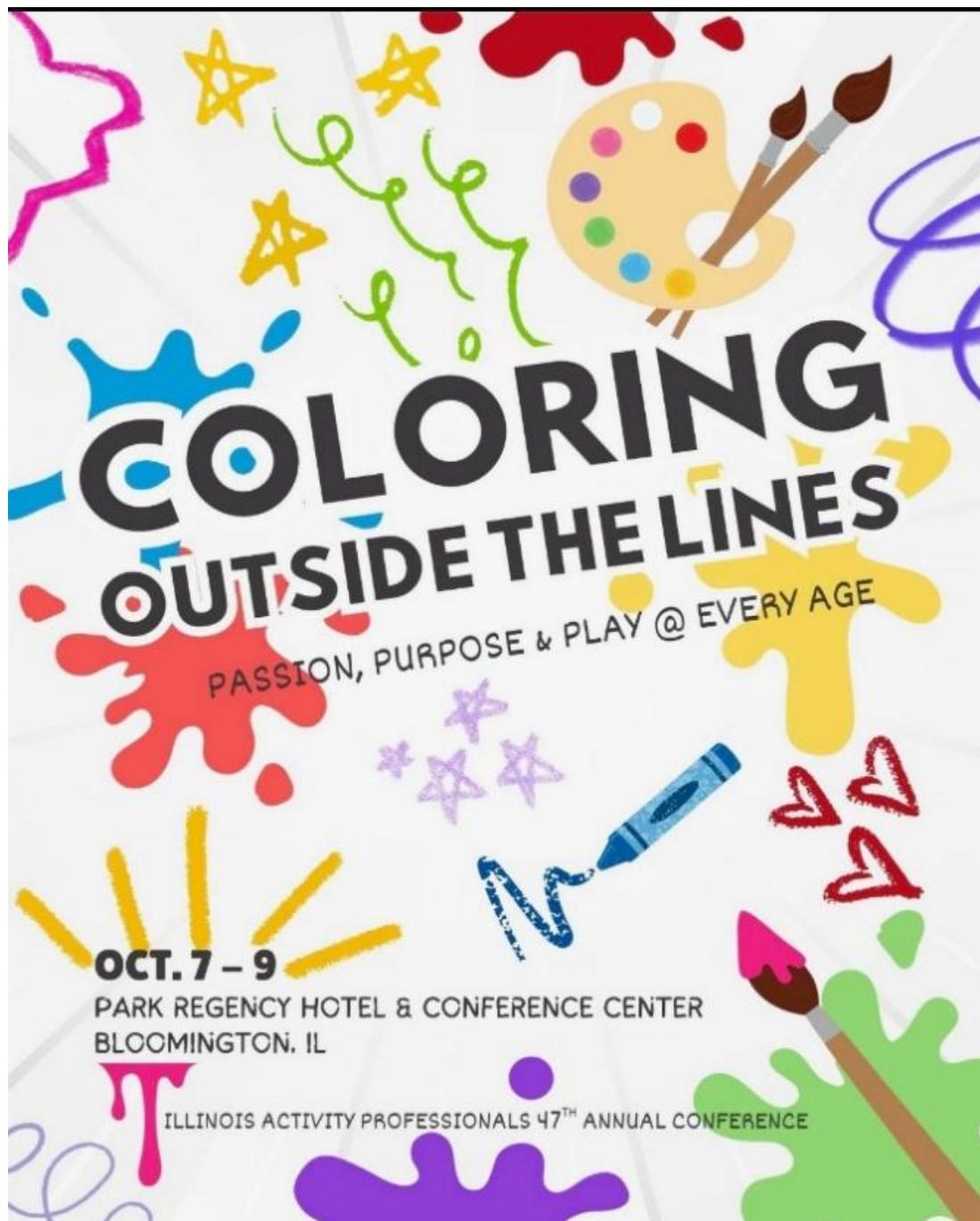


Illinois Activity Professionals Association 47th Annual Conference



Best Conference Ever!

Register Early!

October 7 – 9, 2026

Lodging at:

Parke Regency Hotel and Conference Center
Bloomington, Illinois

WELCOME

IAPA presents its 47th Annual Conference designed to interest and educate Activity Professionals, Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists, Administrators, Social Workers, Consultants, Nurses, CNAs, and other professionals working various venues, including: nursing homes, retirement communities, assisted living facilities, supportive living facilities, adult day centers, senior centers, hospitals, mental health settings, group homes, developmental disabled setting, homes for the blind and deaf, rehab, and other specialized care throughout Illinois.

REGISTRATION & PAYMENTS

Registration opens June 1st. You must pre-register by Friday, September 18, 2026, for this conference. **On-site registration is not accepted.**

Take advantage of IAPA Membership!! If you are not currently a member of IAPA, now is the time to join and take advantage of lower conference rates for members. Individuals can become a member for \$35 and save up to \$100 of the conference fee. A facility may become a member facility for \$50. Facility membership entitles you and all staff in your facility to attend this conference at a savings of up to \$100 per person.



For easy registration, you may follow this link and use your credit card: **<https://activities4illinois.org/annual-conference/>**, completing the Registration Form (and Membership Application, if joining or renewing).

Or you may complete the form(s) online **<https://activities4illinois.org/annual-conference/>**, print and use a check or money order to pay for your conference registration and membership fees. If you pay by check or money order, please return the form from website with your payment to **IAPA, 2800 Via Rosso, #141, Springfield, IL 62703**. Questions? Call Deb Greiner, Conference Chair at (779) 272-4943.

Refund Policy: Cancellations received on or before 9/8/2026, will receive a full refund. Cancellations received **after** 9/8/2026 will **NOT** be refunded. If you cannot attend after paying, another person from your facility may attend in your place.

- If you are already a member, don't forget to add your Annual Renewal Membership Fee, which is due September 1st for everyone.
- No acknowledgement of registration will be sent unless you request an e-mail confirmation.
- Register early to assure you get the sessions you want, as participation is limited in some of the sessions.

- Education Sessions: If mailing the Registration Form, make sure to mark your first and second choice of sessions (information included in Sessions section below) on the registration form.
- CEU's are provided as part of the registration fee. There is no additional charge. All CEU's will be approved by the OUTCOME SERVICES of ILLINOIS, a nationally recognized CEU organization. (Your conference registration packet will contain instructions.) IAPA, in co-sponsorship with the Outcome Services of Illinois, is providing these continuing education credits to Activity Professionals, Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists, Administrators, Social Workers, Consultants, Nurses, CNAs, and other professionals. You can earn up to 16 continuing education clock hours by attending this year's conference.
- **Lodging Information:** Parke Regency Hotel and Conference Center is located at 1413 Leslie Drive, Bloomington, IL, 61704. Make your room reservations by calling (309) 662-4300. Identify yourself as part of the Illinois Activity Professionals Association (IAPA) to take advantage of the following group rates **Please note: Reduced conference room rates are effective for Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday ONLY (October 6th, 7th and 8th.)**
- - ❖ Group rate of \$106.00 plus tax and fees for a standard room (2 Queen [sleeps 4] or 1 King available [sleeps 2]);
 - ❖ \$169.00 plus tax and fees for a King Whirlpool suite (includes sleeper sofa), (sleeps 4), and
 - ❖ \$179.00 plus tax and fees for a 2-BR Master King suite (sleeps 4).
 - ❖ A continental breakfast is included in the price of the room.
 - ❖ There is a 24-hour cancellation policy. **You must reserve your room prior to September 8, 2026, or be charged the full room rate.** Please make your reservations early.

DON'T MISS THESE DEALS!

- ***Individual Member savings!*** Save up to \$100 on your conference registration by joining IAPA at a membership rate of \$35.00 Visit our website membership information page for a list of benefits.
- ***Facility Membership!*** Save up to \$100 per person on every staff member's conference registration by becoming an IAPA facility member at the rate of \$50.00 per facility. Visit our website membership information page for a list of benefits.
- ***Mix and Match!*** Mix and match conference days and staff. Take advantage of the discounted rates and send different staff each day. Don't miss these deals. **When registering multiple attendees for different days, please add all names to the Registration Form so each person can have a Conference packet.**
- ***Bring Your Administrators!*** Share the conference information with your administrator and let them know they can earn 10 hours of their required CEU's by attending the conference on both Thursday and Friday, at Administrator's rate of \$150 (non-member, \$200) and, of course, they are welcome to join us on Wednesday and earn an additional 6 CEU hours. Administrators that attend the conference with one of their staff pay \$100 (non-member: \$160) to attend on Wednesday Intensive.
- ***Retired IAPA Member!*** Keep up with your CEU's and pay \$250 (non-member, \$350) for all three days.
- Please direct questions to: Deb Greiner, IAPA Past President, Education Chairperson, Conference Chairperson (779) 272-4943.



- **DO YOU KNOW A SPECIAL ACTIVITY PROFESSIONAL THAT DESERVES RECOGNITION?**
Be sure to go to our web site (<https://www.activities4illinois.org/awards/>) and choose the appropriate award for that person. Submit to Misty Duncan at mduncan@marybryanthome.org



WAYS TO WIN A FREE CONFERENCE FOR 2027

1. This year's theme is "Coloring Outside the Lines – Passion, Purpose & Play @ Every Age!" Bring a theme-based table centerpiece to *this* year's conference. Attendees vote for their favorite centerpiece, and a winner for a free 2027 Conference (Thursday and Friday only) will be announced on Friday! Voting slips will be in your Conference Packet, which you will receive at the Conference registration sign-in table.
2. Submit an entry for the next year's Conference theme. *Submission forms will be included in this year's Conference registration packet.* The Board will choose the winning theme after reviewing the entries. The winner of a free 2027 Conference (Thursday and Friday only) will be notified at a later date.



A Call to Lead: Join the IAPA Board or a Committee and Shape the Future of Activity Professionals in Illinois

The Illinois Activity Professionals Association has always stood on a simple but powerful belief: **engaged, educated, and connected activity professionals create better lives for the people we serve.** Our field continues to evolve, and so do the needs of the individuals in our care. To stay at the forefront of education, advocacy, and innovation, IAPA depends on members who are willing to step forward, share their strengths, and help guide our mission.

This year, we are inviting passionate members to consider joining the **IAPA Board of Directors** or becoming part of one of our **active committees**. Your voice, your experience, and your ideas matter—and they can make a meaningful difference statewide.

Why Your Involvement Matters

Activity professionals are the heart of person-centered care. We bring joy, purpose, dignity, and connection to the people we serve every day. But to continue elevating our profession, we need leaders who understand the challenges and opportunities within our field.

By joining the board or a committee, you help IAPA:

- Strengthen professional education and training
- Expand access to resources and best practices
- Advocate for the role of activity professionals in all care settings
- Support new professionals entering the field
- Build a stronger, more unified statewide community

Your involvement ensures that IAPA remains a trusted source of information, leadership, and inspiration for activity professionals across Illinois.

Who We're Looking For

You don't need decades of experience or a long résumé. You simply need:

- A passion for improving quality of life for those we serve
- A willingness to collaborate
- A desire to help shape the future of our profession
- A commitment to supporting fellow activity professionals

Whether you're new to the field or a seasoned leader, your perspective is valuable.

Ways to Get Involved

You can choose the level of involvement that fits your schedule and strengths:

Join the IAPA Board

Help guide the direction of the association, support statewide initiatives, and represent the needs of activity professionals across Illinois.

Serve on a Committee

Committees are the engine of IAPA. You can contribute to areas such as:

- Education & Training
- Conference Planning
- Membership & Outreach
- Legislative Awareness
- Communications & Newsletter
- Professional Standards

Even a small amount of your time can have a big impact.

Why Now?

Our profession is growing, changing, and gaining recognition. This is the moment to step forward and help shape what comes next. Your leadership can help ensure that IAPA continues to provide the highest level of education, support, and advocacy for Illinois Activity Professionals.

Together, we can keep IAPA strong, relevant, and forward-thinking.

Ready to Make a Difference?

If you feel called to contribute, we encourage you to reach out, ask questions, and explore where your talents fit best. Your involvement—big or small—helps strengthen our entire community.

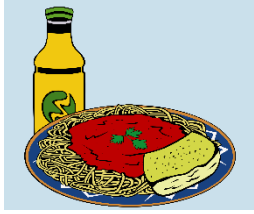
Let's lead the way together. Let's keep IAPA at the forefront of education, excellence, and innovation for all Illinois Activity Professionals.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Please read the menu planned for the conference. The meals are one of the most expensive costs of the conference. Please indicate on the registration form the meals you will be attending, as well as any dietary restrictions, or if you would prefer the vegetarian option. (All Lunches include beverages.)

Wednesday Lunch: Garden and Bowl Bistro – (Soup and Salad Bar)



Wednesday Vendor Social: Dawn Diner at Dusk – (Breakfast for dinner)

Thursday Awards Lunch: Pasta la Vista – (Chicken Parm Pasta)

Thursday Evening Reception – (Toog’s Food Truck for food purchases, complimentary munchies, and cash bar)

Friday Lunch: Southern Comforts – (Beef Brisket and “Fixin’s”)

WAYS TO HAVE FUN WHILE HELPING IAPA CONTINUE ITS MISSION:

Visit the Ways and Means Table...for some fun merchandise.

Bring your raffle prizes and buy your raffle tickets!

Join in on the 50/50 drawing.

Check out the Silent Auction items and place your bids. (Contributions always needed.)

(Don’t forget to bring your “mad” money for vendor and raffle shopping!)

Design your themed centerpiece (“**Coloring Outside The Lines – Passion, Purpose & Play @ Every Age!**”) to win a free 2027 Conference.

Don’t forget about the after-hours fun:

Wednesday Evening Vendor’s Social

4:30 P.M. – 7:30 P.M.

Stay until the end and see how lucky you are winning one of the fabulous door prizes.

Thursday Evening Reception

“Neon Nights – Bold and Bright”

6:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.

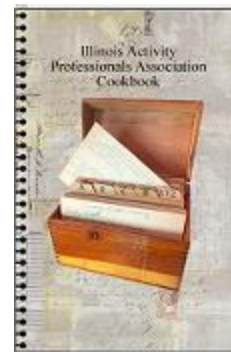
Toog’s Food Truck and cash bar will be available throughout the evening.

Karaoke by Evolution Entertainment, Complimentary Munchies, Glow Gear and Photo Booth!



Meet your Friends! Come eat, drink and light up the night with your glowing neon while enjoying the entertainment, and other surprises!

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT LAST YEAR: IAPA COOKBOOK! Over 300 recipes from members make up this cookbook! Order early for weddings, grads out on their own, birthdays, Christmas gifts, etc. Each cookbook costs \$20 to pre-order (\$25 if we have to ship), and can be ordered on the Conference Registration form and can be picked up at Conference.



Save the date:

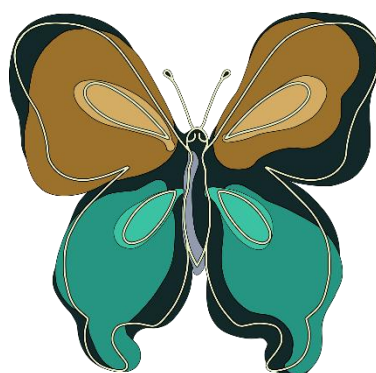


IAPA 2027 Conference

October 6-8, 2027

Parke Regency Hotel & Conference Center

Bloomington, IL



YOUR CRAYON SUPPLIERS (AKA, SPEAKERS):

We're excited to bring back several favorite speakers and welcome eight new ones. Be sure to read about each session listed. This Conference is like no other you have seen – from sessions, to meals, to activities – we are “Coloring Outside the Lines!”

WEDNESDAY, OCT 7, 2026

Lisa Olson Chris Thompson

THURSDAY, OCT. 8, 2026:

Keynote: Chris Thompson

Sandy Biske Jody Baalman
Julio Barrenzuela Rachelle Blough
Lee Moriarty Janet Sand
Tanya Scott Denise Spillman
Eric Swanson

FRIDAY, OCT. 9, 2026:

Closing Keynote: Lacey Wild

Michael Avett Patricia Iannone
Karla Marshall Lisa Moran
Deb Moreland Lisa Olson
Vanden Bosch, Jim



YOUR CREATIVE COLORING BEGINS...

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 7, 2026

7:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M. - Conference Registration Open

9:00 A.M. – 4:30 P.M. – Opening Keynote - Lisa Olson and Chris Thompson – “Game On! Coloring Outside The Lines Through Play” – Step into a one-of-a-kind, highly interactive workshop that challenges everything you thought engagement had to be. This session invites you to experience programming from the resident perspective – where uncertainty, creativity, and freedom replace pressure, perfection, and outcomes. Through playful, hands-on activities, you’ll discover how to reduce anxiety, spark authentic participation, and create meaningful moments that align with CMS Quality of Life standards like dignity, autonomy, and choice. Walk away with adaptable, low-resource ideas you can use immediately across any care setting – and a renewed belief that the most powerful engagement happens when we stop trying to get it right and start making it real.

12:15 P.M. - 1:15 P.M. - Lunch

4:30 P.M. - 7:30 P.M. - WELCOME RECEPTION and VENDOR SOCIAL (exhibit area open).

Join us as we welcome a larger variety of vendors, meet new friends and rekindle old friendships. Refreshments will be served. At the end of the evening, each vendor will be giving away a special prize. Winners (one gift per winner) must be present to win.

THURSDAY, OCT. 8, 2026

7:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. - Conference Registration Open

8:00 A.M. - 6:00 P.M. - Vendor Exhibit Area Open

9:00 A.M. - 10:30 A.M. - Opening Keynote – Chris Thompson – “Coloring Outside The Lines: Why We Do What We Do and How To Do It Better” – This is a high-energy, interactive keynote designed to reignite passion and pride in the activity professional across all care settings, from long-term care and memory care to hospitals, retirement homes, behavioral health and beyond. Through humor, storytelling and creative engagement, this session challenges traditional thinking and inspires participants to move beyond routine programming to create meaningful moments of purpose, connection and joy. Attendees will leave with fresh ideas, practical strategies, and a renewed sense of confidence in the value of their role, along with a reminder that they don’t just fill time – they create purpose.

10:30 A.M. – 10:45 A.M. – Break

BREAKOUT SESSIONS:

10:45 A.M. – 12:15 P.M.

A: Sandy Biske - Honor Flights – “Thank You” is one of the most powerful statements in the English language. Despite that, many of our veterans never got that simple acknowledgement when they returned from service. At Honor Flight Chicago, “thank you” is at the core of all we do. HFC was funded in 2008 to recognize America’s senior war veterans by flying them to Washington, DC, to tour the memorials built in their honor. The one-day, all-expense-paid trip is filled with appreciation tributes, memories and gratitude. Join Sandy Biske, a lead volunteer with HFC, and learn how **your** community’s veterans can participate in an upcoming flight.

10:45 A.M. - 12:15 P.M.

B: Julio Barrenzuela – “Salsa As You’re Able: Creating Connection, Confidence & Joy @ Every Age” - Julio Barrenzuela is widely known for his message: “*You don’t have to dance—you get to dance.*” His work emphasizes that movement is accessible to everyone, regardless of age or ability. Through his programs, you can create spaces where participants experience joy, build confidence, and connect across cultures. His presentations are not just about dance - they are about inclusion, community-building, and helping people see themselves as part of something bigger.

10:45 A.M. - 12:15 P.M.

C: Tanya Scott – “Artmaking Through Play: Creative Pathways for All Ages” - This session explores how *play*—as a mindset and a method—can transform artmaking into an accessible, joyful, and meaningful experience for people of all ages. Participants will engage in hands-on creative play, examine inclusive facilitation strategies, and learn how to tailor materials and prompts to different developmental stages, physical abilities, and cognitive needs.

12:15 P.M. – 1:30 P.M. - Lunch, followed by General Business Meeting, Installation of Officers, and ending with Awards Presentations.



1:30 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.

D: Janet Sand - "The Many Colors of Solo Cups & Oh, The Things We Can Do With Them" - With activity budgets shrinking, let's use the colorful world of Solo cups in a variety of ways. (However, let's face it; we know generic plastic cups may be more in line with your budget). Let's explore the variety of ways we can use plastic cups to entertain the masses. We can use them for much more than mocktails. Let's explore active games, competitions, memory games, and more ways to use these colorful cups.

1:30 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.

E: Lee Moriarty - "Getting Creative in How We View 'Behaviors' - We Can't Paint Everyone With the Same Brush!" - In this session, we will examine how changing our language and thought process places responsibility on us as caregivers and professionals to look beneath the surface. Using Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as a guiding framework, we will explore what individuals may be reacting to and how unmet needs can show up in unexpected ways. By understanding the root of these reactions, we can better support individuals, strengthen connections, and ultimately improve quality of life.

1:30 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.

F: Eric Swanson - "Rhythm Events for Connection to the Heartbeat" – Eric Swanson of Drum Impact hosts rhythm-based events using percussion, drums, tuned chimes and accessible instruments in order to allow people to connect to themselves, each other, and to the group as a whole. We begin with how to access the sounds; then move to a beat, which anyone can play, as “There are no wrong notes;” then into orchestration where we all play together; leadership by the participants (“Are You Ready to Rumble!”), then yoga hand stretching with breathing; “eggs and bacon” for a treat; and finally, we all come together smiling and enjoying the sounds, vibrations, each other’s company and the unbridled joy of “In-the-Moment Music Making!”

3:00 P.M. – 3:15 P.M. Break

3:15 P.M. – 4:45 P.M.

G: Rachelle Blough - "Activities in Assisted Living and Beyond" - Join us for this practical and informative education session. This session will provide practical resources that you can utilize for program planning. The presenter will utilize interactive discussion, media clips and real examples of how to use the demographics of people to make a well-rounded and well attended calendar of events. Our presenter will review the 7 dimensions of wellness and provide examples of each as well as share realistic ways to increase your attendance at your programs.

3:15 P.M. – 4:45 P.M.

H: Jody Baalman - "Recycling Junk into Treasures: Thinking Outside the Lines" – Join Jody for many creative ways to recycle common things that may normally be tossed out. You'll look at "junk" with new eyes so you can use waste to create unusual, useful items. This hand-on session provides ideas for various skill levels. You may be pleasantly surprised at all the things you can do with "stuff."

3:15 P.M. – 4:45 P.M.

I: Denise Spihlman - "Crayons, Not Clipboards - Bringing You Back" – What happened when joy gets replaced by checklists? In today's world of regulations, documentation, or staffing shortages and constant demands, activity professionals find themselves marking off checklists instead of holding crayons. We need realistic ways to bring back joy to our clients and ourselves – even with our limited time and resources. Let's rediscover our purpose and passion in our daily work. So grab your crayons and prepare to color however you want!

6:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M. – Thursday Evening Reception - "Neon Nights – Bold and Bright"

FRIDAY OCT. 9, 2026

7:00 A.M. - 9:00 A.M. - Conference Registration open

8:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. – Vendor Exhibit Area open

BREAKOUT SESSIONS:

9:00 A.M. - 10:30 A.M.

K: Patricia Iannone - "Emotion, Body & Belief Code Workshop" - The Emotion, Body, and Belief Code techniques can help rid your mind, body, and soul of energies that could get in the way of physical and emotional healing. In a few simple steps, you could remove those energies for good. Using muscle testing to access your subconscious mind, you can begin identifying trapped emotional energies that could result from turmoil or bad experiences and work to release them. The Codes may restore balance and create energetic harmony in your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Everyone can benefit from these modalities. **Limit of 25!**

9:00 A.M. - 10:30 A.M.

L: Lisa Moran - "Outside the Lines, Inside Your Best Self" - This experiential session invites you to step beyond old patterns of stress and reconnect with a deeper sense of ease and inspiration. By allowing yourself to follow intuition, curiosity, and what genuinely brings you joy, you'll open the door to fresh insight, new perspectives, and the energy that comes from reconnecting with your sense of purpose. Through a guided hypnosis experience, you'll be led into a relaxed, focused state where clarity, imagination, and a stronger sense of inner alignment can naturally emerge. But this session goes beyond the moment. You'll also learn simple, practical techniques designed to help you interrupt stress responses, reset your mindset, and return to a grounded, resourceful state—whenever and wherever you need it. These tools are easy to use, adaptable to your daily routine, and can also be shared with the individuals you serve. Whether you're looking to recharge personally or bring fresh energy and intention into your professional role, this session offers both an immediate sense of renewal and a reliable way to reconnect with it. Come ready to relax, explore, and leave with tools you can carry with you long after the session ends.

9:30 A.M. – 10:30 A.M.

M: Deb Moreland - "Growing Outside the Lines: Hydroponics for Purpose, Passion and Play" – Step outside traditional programming and discover how hydroponics can bring purpose, passion and play into any care setting. This session explores creative, accessible ways to implement hydroponics gardening programs that engage people of all ability levels. Participants will learn about different hydroponic systems, hands-on set-up techniques and how to incorporate gardening into meaningful activity programming through story-telling,



innovation, and real-life examples. This session highlights how growing plants without soil can cultivate pride, connection, and a renewed sense of purpose for people.

9:30 A.M. – 10:30 A.M.

N: Michael Avett - "Sketching the Soul: Authentic Conversations That Defy the Margins" - Activity professional is all about balancing the logistics (the "what" we do) with the humanity (the "why" we do it). Since you're working in a care environment, you know that the "impactful moments" often happen in the quiet spaces between scheduled events.

10:30 A.M. - 10:45 A.M. -Break

10:45 A.M.– 12:15 P.M.

O: Karla Marshall - "Montessori Concepts: Coloring Outside of the Lines" – Introduction to the basic Montessori concepts using the colors of a color wheel to create the most engaging and the most peaceful environment for our persons with dementia, and to share the basic Montessori concepts to assist providers and families with tools to think out of the lines to improve the quality of life and overall well-being of a person living with dementia.

10:45 A.M.– 12:15 P.M.

P: Lisa Olson - "Imagine If: Communication At Its Best" - This 90-minute workshop explores the **Total Communication (TC)** philosophy—a holistic approach that uses all available means (signs, speech, body language, visuals) to ensure a person can understand and be understood. By weaving in the themes of John Lennon's "Imagine," we will challenge the "possessions" of traditional speech-only norms and envision a "brotherhood" of accessible interaction.

10:45 A.M.– 12:15 P.M.

Q: Jim Vanden Bosch - "Reimagining Purpose, Passion and Play in Various Care Settings" - The words "purpose, passion and play" can often feel hollow for peoples in care settings. We usually apply these words to life outside of a long-term care setting where mobility, independence and choice are the normal ways of going about our lives. This workshop will explore how you can help bring experiences that are rich with purpose passion and play to the clients you work with. Using several video clips that were filmed inside care facilities, we will look closely at examples of what this can look like, and what this might mean for both you and the people you work for.

12:15 P.M. - 1:15 P.M. – Lunch

1:15 P.M. – 2:15 P.M.

Q: Closing Keynote: Lacey Wild - "Reds, Whites, and Browns - Oh, My!" – Our animal presentations are interactive, hands-on experiences that blend education with excitement to spark curiosity and wonder. Guests learn engaging age-appropriate facts about exotic animals – their habitats, behaviors, and adaptations – while having the opportunity to safely pet, hold, and interact with many of them. This unique approach turns learning into a memorable experience, building confidence, fostering a deeper appreciation for wildlife, and leaving everyone both inspired and amazed.



2:15 P.M. - 3:30 P.M. – Raffle, Silent Auction, Closing, Hand in Evaluations – You can help keep our Raffle and Silent Auction fun and exciting by bringing creative, crafty, seasonal, unusual and/or useful items to choose when their winning ticket is called.

Thank you for registering early. Some sessions have limited registration.

Be sure to reserve your hotel rooms early (309) 662-4300 as well to get the group rate.

We look forward to seeing you October 7th!



Illinois Activity Professionals Association
2800 Via Rosso, Unit 141
Springfield, IL 62703

**ATTN: ADMINISTRATORS
AND ACTIVITY PERSONNEL**

