

PLEASE JOIN US AT GCI'S 99TH ANNUAL CONVENTION

April 19-20, 2026

Red, White, and Blue Across Illinois ~ American's 250th Anniversary

Floral Designer ~ Janet Gallagher AIFD



Janet Gallagher, AIFD is an Associate Professor of Horticulture at Kishwaukee College Malta, Illinois. Janet is the founder and CEO of Designs by Janet, a successful special event floral company. She has been actively involved in the floral industry for over 34 years as both an educator and a designer. She has been a member of The American Institute of Floral Designers for 23 years and has served as the National Student Chapter chair. She is currently serving as the National AIFD Education Chair, on the National AIFD board, and the North Central Regional Chapter of AIFD.

As a highly regarded, passionate educator, Janet mentors and inspires her students. She helps them realize their dreams of excelling in a flower shop environment, pursuing other horticulture industry careers, or starting their own floral businesses. For her, seeing her students succeed and make a difference in the floral industry is a true joy.

Being a lifelong learner is a passion for Janet. Each opportunity and new project presents a host of unique ways to combine her floral design, horticulture, and education skills. Whether it's designing at the White House; creating a floral display for the Chicago Flower and Garden show; arranging at the Dana Thomas House in Springfield, IL; or designing at the Krannert Art Museum at the University of Illinois Champaign with her fellow AIFD designers, Janet has consistently fostered creativity through collaboration and team spirit. Additionally, Janet has worked with her students to plan, design, and implement the event décor for the College Foundation Gala at the historic Ellwood House Museum each year. Her unique vision continually challenges and inspires her students to view their floral designs from many different design aspects.

Because of her background in education, Janet is a highly sought-after program presenter to many area organizations including garden clubs, Cantigny Park and Museum, and state high schools. She currently serves as the floral instructor for the Illinois State Florist Association Certified Professional Florist program and, as a certified floral evaluator, Janet has also served as a judge for numerous floral competitions, including FFA and a judge for the Tournament of Roses Parade.

Central Region Director and Honored Guest ~ Rene Lynch



I hope to share my love of the natural world with garden club members and to learn from the wealth of knowledge throughout this community. I admire Central Regions Garden Clubs and our clubs' dedication to fostering environmental awareness, promoting sustainable gardening practices, celebrating the artistry of landscapes and learning floral design. The events, workshops, and projects organized by our garden clubs reflect my own values and aspirations.

Each season brings its share of challenges and triumphs, from the thrill of a successful spring planting to the bittersweet moments of autumn cleanup. Yet, every moment in the garden is a lesson, a treasure, and an opportunity to grow not only plants but also patience, perseverance, and pride. Moreover, the camaraderie of fellow gardeners is something I cherish. Gardening may often appear solitary, but it is, in fact, a communal act—each plant bears the traces of knowledge passed down from those who came before.

My theme "PLANT AMERICA: Progress is Possible" is a broad approach to all we do. I view each club as having its own personality and goals. I support all the efforts that garden clubs do including sustaining membership. In other words, continue to learn new things, take on new projects, and appreciate our members in the process. My Central Region Project is to Show Me Your Progress!



The Garden Clubs of Illinois, Inc. 99th Annual Convention

April 19-20, 2026

REGISTRATION

RED, WHITE, AND BLUE ACROSS ILLINOIS

AMERICA'S 250TH ANNIVERSARY

The Garden Clubs of Illinois, Inc.
2026 Annual Convention

IMPORTANT - YOU MUST BE PREREGISTERED.

THERE WILL BE NO SAME-DAY REGISTRATION AVAILABLE AT THE CONVENTION.

To register online, click [here](#).

Mailed in registrations must be postmarked April 9, 2026.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

EMAIL _____ PHONE _____

CLUB NAME _____ I AM A NEW CONVENTION ATTENDEE YES NO

FOOD ALLERGIES/ DIETARY RESTRICTIONS _____

Sunday, April 19 at DoubleTree Suites Hotel & Conference Center Chicago-Downers Grove

4:00 to 5:30 pm District Directors' meeting at hotel - Conference Suite
6:00 pm District Directors' dinner at hotel restaurant

Monday, April 20 at Abbington Distinctive Banquets

8:30 to 3:00 pm Registration, exhibits, vendors, and raffles*
8:30 to 9:15 am Continental breakfast
9:15 to 10:30 am Annual GCI business meeting and awards distribution
10:30 to 11:45 am Break to visit exhibits, vendors, and raffle areas
11:45 to 3:00 pm Reconvene for business meeting, luncheon, and floral design by Janet Gallagher, AIFD

**Raffle winners must be present to win.*

Luncheon Entree Choice

Chicken Piccata Salmon Filet (Lemon/Wine Sauce) Vegetarian

Meals include: salad, 2 vegetables, potatoes, assorted breads, dessert, coffee/tea and iced tea

Cash bar available during luncheon

Convention Fee \$80

Includes breakfast, luncheon, floral program, and business meetings

\$ _____

Late Fee \$10

After April 9, 2026

\$ _____

TOTAL

\$ _____

Please check all that apply for the 2025-2026 term:

- National Officer
- Regional Officer/Chairman
- State Officer/Chairman
- National Committee Member
- District Director
- NGC Life Member
- CR Life Member
- GCI Life Member
- LMG Life Member
- Club President
- Past State President
- Club Member
- Flower Show Judge
- Gardening Consultant
- Environmental Consultant
- Landscape Design Consultant
- Non-member Guest

To register online, visit [this link](#) or make checks payable to **The Garden Clubs of Illinois, Inc.**
Send form and payment to registrar Geraldine Smrcina, 6 Oak Brook Club Drive, #J206 Oak Brook, IL 60523

CONVENTION LOCATION INFORMATION

Abbington Distinctive Banquets 3S002 Route 53, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137 630-942-8600

HOTEL INFORMATION

DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Hotel & Conference Center Chicago-Downers Grove
2111 Butterfield Rd., Downers Grove, IL 60515 630-971-2000

King bed 2-room suite with sofa bed or 2 double beds 2-room suite with sofa bed rate at \$139 plus applicable taxes
or click [here](#) and use code GCI if calling the hotel to make your reservations.

The cut-off date for room reservations is April 3, 2026.

Questions? Contact 2026 Convention Chairs
Michelle Riddle at michelle_riddle@comcast.net
Diane Greenawalt at diagreenaw@aol.com



EARLY BIRD SPECIAL



Register by March 15 to be entered into a special drawing for 1 winner to receive a refund of the registration fee*.

*Does not include Eventbrite fees if registered online.