



Candace Mueller, Laura Preusser, Lauren Houder, and Lyndsay Oosterbaan set the table at Lauren's Hinsdale home. Dresses and shoes from Neiman Marcus

CONTINUING TO CAPTIVATE

Tablescapes: Bellissima! Set to Transport Guests to the Enchanting Landscapes of Italy

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Longtime Hinsdale resident Lauren Ferrara Houder has always loved Italy.

"My family came here from Italy in 1908 and started a bakery," Houder tells Hinsdale Living of the old Italian bakery that is still thriving on Taylor Street in downtown Chicago. "Continuing Italian traditions in our lives is important to us. Our family still has Sunday dinner every week as a family and remember those who are not with us."

So, when the Tablescapes Event Chair of the Hinsdale Chapter of IWS Family Health (the Infant Welfare Society of Chicago) began to brainstorm ideas for the theme that would ultimately drive this year's event, it's no surprise that her thought turned to her Italian heritage.

"Italy is a melting pot of many different cultures and sceneries," says Houder, who has played a crucial part in the success of the Hinsdale Infant Welfare since 2022. "Each town is different in their own way, which makes it so unique. The beauty of the coast is one of our many highlights, but the small towns and regions are what make Italy so beautiful and never to be forgotten."

Certainly, it is this beauty that will be displayed on the tables of the highly anticipated annual fundraising event *Tablescapes: Bellissima!* on Sunday, March 23 at the Marriott Southwest Burr Ridge.

"We are thrilled to bring a taste of Italy to this year's Bellissima event," shares Laura Preusser, Tablescapes Benefit Chair. "Attendees can look forward to exciting live and silent auctions, stunning tablescape designs that embody our namesake theme, live music, and an expanded selection of boutique vendors. It's going to be an unforgettable day filled with Italian-inspired charm and community."

"Tablescapes is a celebration of our community coming together to support a vital cause," adds Candace Mueller, President of the Hinsdale Chapter of Infant Welfare Society. "The dollars we raise directly benefit the Angel Harvey Family Health Center, ensuring that underserved families across Chicago have access to the critical healthcare they need. It's an inspiring reminder of the impact we can make when we work together."

This impact has the chance to become even greater than ever this year, as the longstanding event is set to feature a number

of new events, including the chance for VIP attendees to take advantage of the new Early Access Sip & Shop presented by The Julie Sutton Group that will allow for a 'first look' at nearly two dozen local, premiere boutiques, while enjoying champagne and lite bites, along with vitamin B boosts compliments of Initium IV Therapy and shopping bag valet. General admission will follow at noon, where guests will partake in the traditional bidding on creatively curated tablescapes and vignettes such as "Under the Tuscan Sun" and "To Rome with Love," each paired with unique experiences such as wine tastings, Italian chef dinners and cellar tours.

"Our tablescapes this year are truly special, as they include both experiences and artistic vignettes inspired by iconic Italian movies. Our Junior Board played a crucial role in designing the La Dolce Vita tablescape and will also be on hand working with us on a multitude of tasks, including selling raffle tickets and even serving gelato. But I'm particularly excited about our new after party, with music and festive cocktails," adds Lindsay Oosterbaan, Tablescape Design Committee Chair.

Certainly, Tablescapes continues to be an event possible due to the hard work of so many. "We are so blessed and lucky and I'm grateful for this team of 77 women strong that make up HIWS," concludes Mueller. "We have about 39 new members this year, and so I think people really enjoy the activities that we do all throughout the year. I think that's what brings us together as a community."

But it's the community of families served by the Angel Harvey Family Health Center that will forever remain in the hearts of each and every member of HIWS.

"We all care deeply about families and recognize the gap in funding for the resources they need. Knowing that we're helping to close that gap is a feeling that can't be described," concludes Mueller. "When you go to the center and you visit it, you get to see all of the quality healthcare that people now have access to that they didn't before."

For more information about Tablescapes and the Infant Welfare Society Auxiliary, please visit www.hinsdaleiws.com.