

A volunteer's perspective

The Senior Center's Home Delivered Meals program is a seven-days-a-week effort by a growing number of professionals and volunteers in Sheridan.

I am one of many and have been part of the program for years. I am pleased to share the following personal thoughts about my experiences — with gratitude for what I have been met with over the years, and with much respect for the many recipients of our daily meals around the community.

As a volunteer, countless thoughts and conversations are part of the daily meal delivery experience. We are aware of our responsibilities to deliver meals and beverages, but often thoughts such as, "Should I walk across the lawn?" or "Why is the garage door open?" inevitably cross our minds.

If things are not as they usually are, we ask, and we hope that everything is still OK. For others, whom we may know better, questions such as, "Where are your glasses?" or comments like, "You had your haircut! My, you look nice!" are shared.

Or finally, for more personal con-

cerns, "Why is that bandage on your finger? What happened?"

As you can see, we gain a feeling for the people we see on a weekly or daily basis — a feeling of connectedness that is difficult to put into words.

These are feelings we hold close to our hearts, feelings that are among our most sacred possessions. It is like a warm empathy that grows and has a soul of its own.

A knowing inside that ultimately we feel honored to be shown such trust and that we could possibly be presented with the opportunity to influence positively the day or the life of another of our fellow Sheridanites.

All it takes is a thoughtful gesture, a word of kindness or encouragement. We do not take these sentiments lightly.

Notes on a door to put the food in the



**Center
Stage**

Tom
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refrigerator, and be sure to lock the door on the way out, may be of little consequence to the uninitiated. But to a volunteer it is the ultimate acknowledgement of trust and faith.

Our efforts are not just to see that our delivery is made; they are to

maintain the integrity and faith of our neighbors. Our efforts are to be forthright, honest, and add a little humor to that person's existence.

Our efforts must be such that we are proud representatives of the growing number of private and professional neighbors who contribute to the Senior Center via the Home Delivered Meals Program.

It is our finest responsibility to give to the recipient of that daily meal a cheerful or hopeful moment, since we can never know quite how hopeful his

day has been so far. Maybe quite so, maybe not quite.

As a longtime volunteer, I feel I have reached a comfortable plateau where there is no measurement, no computation of what I do. It is simply an enjoyable part of my day.

Neither praise nor accolades are my goal ... I already have a warm and comfortable sense about what I do and simply wish to continue to add personal value to the program.

Thank you to everyone at the Senior Center — in the busy back end of the building — who adds a healthy daily dose of cheer to us and sends us on our way.

Center Stage is written by friends of the Senior Center for the Sheridan community. It is a collection of insights and stories related to living well at every age.

Tom Hurst has been a volunteer for the Senior Center's Home Delivered Meals Program for the past 13 years. Retired from the U.S. Army, he is a member of Sheridan Rotary Club.