

# Sheridan is blessed with gracious volunteers

There seems to be more talk nationally and worldwide about volunteer efforts and true heroism. A look at our own community reveals heroes every day.

I have the awesome privilege of working with volunteers on a daily basis and I can tell you first hand, Sheridan is blessed with an abundance of gracious folks that give of their time to make our corner of the world a better place to live. National Volunteer Week 2010 is April 18-24. The national theme is "Celebrating People in Action." Volunteers in our own community deserve to be celebrated!

Wyoming ranks 16th in percentage of volunteers and 19th in hours per resident among the 50 states according to [www.volunteeringinamerica.gov](http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov).

Reviewing the 2010 Volunteer Guide generated by ServeWyoming and circulated by The Sheridan Press, it is apparent how many organizations thrive in this community with the assistance of men, women and children giving of their time.

From Lunch Together feeding those who may otherwise go hungry, Habitat for Humanity helping build homes, trained volunteers manning the crisis lines for the Advocacy and Resource Center, to the inspiring dedication of Hilary's Posse assisting Hilary Herbert of Sheridan with her recovery from an auto accident — many people benefit from Sheridan's volunteers.

Other programs such as the

Sheridan YMCA keeping kids active with the many sporting events and after-school programs and seniors assisting in classrooms with the Foster Grandparent program also deserve praise.

Dave Wooten, the outreach coordinator for Greater Wyoming Big Brothers and Big Sisters, sums it up for many nonprofits, "Volunteers are the very heart of Big Brothers Big Sisters. Without them, we would have no program!"

Volunteers are invaluable at the larger facilities as well. Sheridan VA Medical Center volunteers donate up to 12-hour days driving veterans up to 350 miles round trip for medical appointments. Sheridan Memorial Hospital volunteers assist in the surgical waiting room, deliver mail, and help in the resource center at the Welch Cancer Center.

Patty Forister, volunteer services coordinator at SMH shares, "We truly depend on our volunteers to help us maintain the level of service that people have come to expect at our facility. We couldn't do it without our volunteers."

Individuals not listed and just as



**Center  
Stage**

Nancy  
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deserving of recognition are the everyday heroes of neighbors helping neighbors. Good deeds done by these heroes range from picking up extra groceries to share, raking leaves, shoveling sidewalks and offering respite for a loved one to those that give

rides to friends, greet or sing in the choir at church, or lead mission trips delivering supplies to foreign countries.

At the Senior Center alone there are numerous individuals and businesses dedicated to volunteering their time to make the many services provided possible.

Volunteers deliver meals, greet visitors in the lobby, assist in the dining room, entertain and lead exercise classes. Others include the mother who brings her small children to visit and the students of Volunteers Of America who faithfully handle the Senior Center's recycling each week.

Senior Companions and Tel-a-Friend volunteers form bonds of friendship and make such a positive difference in the lives of so many. It is incredible to witness high school students playing cards and board games with seniors and watching the

generation gap simply disappear. The Senior Center would most certainly not be the active, vibrant, exciting place it is without wonderful volunteers!

One of our very own volunteers, Alta June Pool, recently won the honor of representing Wyoming at the National Jefferson Awards in Washington, D.C. We are all so proud that she is receiving the recognition she deserves and that we wish all volunteers could have. For many volunteers like Pool, it is simply a way of life and a grateful community benefits from their lifelong commitments!

It's hard to imagine how many lives are touched and enriched by volunteers each day.

Not only during this coming week dedicated to volunteers, but throughout the year, we celebrate Sheridan 'People in Action' and thank all who, on a daily basis, do so much to improve the quality of each and every one of our lives.

*Nancy McKenzie is the director of volunteer services at the Sheridan Senior Center, a commissioner with ServeWyoming, and a member of the local volunteer group, ServeSheridan.*

*"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."*