

Time, talent and treasure

I attended the Wyoming Philanthropy Days Conference in Laramie June 16 through 18 and am proud to announce that Sheridan Senior Center fans came out in full force and, through Internet voting, helped us attain the statewide ServeWyoming Nonprofit Impact Award.

This award “recognizes organizations or groups who have demonstrated innovation, diversity, sound fiscal strategies, and a lasting impact on Wyoming communities by using TIME, TALENT AND TREASURE.”

The Senior Center staff certainly did not accomplish this feat on its own. We are blessed with clients, volunteers, donors and a supportive community who value the growing senior population and its collective contributions to our community. Seniors are valued for the TIME they have to give, the TALENTS they share and the TREASURES they are.

Success stories are in abundance of what makes the Senior Center special and “impactful” to the community. One that stands out for me is Helen, who volunteers seven days a week and has proven herself invaluable to the Senior Center assisting staff and other clients.

After her sister passed away in November, her entire family moved to

Florida. Helen shares: “I stayed in Sheridan because the Senior Center has become my family. This is my home away from home.”

Eight months ago, I found myself in an unexpected, rather frightening caregiver role; the Senior Center staff, volunteers and clients were there for me offering assistance, advice and a shoulder to cry on.

I went from desperately crying alone in my car outside the hospital in Wheatland after hearing news about my mother's health to a sense of hope with that one phone call to the Sheridan Senior Center that gave me options I didn't know I had.

As a long-distance caregiver, I can only compare the support I received to a hug, a smile or a kind word when it's needed most.

This past weekend, I attended the Big Horn Mountain Bluegrass Festival in Buffalo. Sunday morning during the gospel set, a 92-year-old man sang, played harmonica and yodeled with his



Center Stage

Nancy McKenzie



two sons. He sat with his walker on the stage and had a difficult time finishing his songs.

He shared that as a Marine in World War II he “used to be a pretty good man — pretty husky.” To me, the impact he had with his mere

presence at the festival shows he is still a “pretty good man.”

He made me stop and think that it is not the size of the man (or woman), the muscle strength, the eyesight, the stamina that gives us our “worth,” our “contribution to society,” our “acceptance.” It's the TIME and TALENTS that we share that makes us TREASURES to others.

It's the love we give and the way we make others feel.

Although his voice and body were failing, he received a standing ovation when he sang because of what he was sharing of himself and the warmth we all felt.

Our very own volunteer, Alta June Pool, was honored as the Wyoming State

Representative at the National Jefferson Award conference in Washington, D.C., on June 21 for her lifetime volunteer contribution to this community.

She also received a standing ovation when she shared that she reported to duty at 5 a.m. and completed her and husband Wilbur's volunteer commitment to Memorial Hospital's Health Fair blood draw a few short days after Wilbur's passing. It's exciting that at 87, her TIME, TALENT, and TREASURE have been recognized on a national level.

The fact that the Sheridan Senior Center, out of all the nonprofits throughout the state, was honored with this award is exciting and humbling. It was a nice reminder to me that it is the TIME, TALENT, and TREASURE of the amazing individuals who spend time here that make the Senior Center the special place it is.

Thank you to all who support us in so many ways.

Nancy McKenzie is 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.