

Senior Center, a great asset for Sheridan

During June, I attended the 2008 National Conference on Volunteering and Service held in Atlanta, where over 4,000 participants came from across the United States and from as far away as Korea and Australia.

I also attended Wyoming Philanthropy Days in Laramie. Both meetings offered an exciting opportunity to learn, network with peers, and celebrate volunteers and their impact on communities they serve.

It was encouraging to be a part of masses of volunteers that solidified the fact we are all in this together. We may not realize that each effort we make has an impact not only on the organization or person we are volunteering for, but maybe also on Sheridan County, Wyoming, our nation and the world.

Each of us can and does make huge differences in small ways.

Former President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, both spoke at the Georgia conference. They presented inspirational, heartwarming accounts of philanthropic efforts involving vol-

unteerism around the world.

A proud moment for me at the Laramie conference was the awards ceremony, where two of our Sheridan volunteers, Margaret Pilch, Ph.D., and Dorothy Nichols, received two of the five Serve Wyoming Spirit of Service

awards given for their volunteer work throughout Sheridan County.

The central resounding theme at both meetings underscored the fact that we are doing what we can to make a better community, state and world for friends, families and ourselves.

Eleanor Milliron, a Sheridan Senior Center volunteer, sums it up with this statement, "Lots of people can't figure out why they're here, but I know ... I just love to help other people."

Things heard and seen throughout these two conventions reminded me

Silver Threads

Nancy McKenzie



that the Sheridan community, and specifically the Senior Center, is most fortunate to have the support we enjoy from generous donors, outstanding volunteers, conscientious staff and gracious clients.

One example is our Home Delivered

Meals program, where meals are delivered 365 days a year. The invaluable local support of volunteer drivers and businesses has not let rising gasoline prices deter them.

Special thanks are due to Farmer's Co-Op for supplying gasoline coupons, RSVP for mileage reimbursements, and to The Sheridan Press and Sheridan Media for providing publicity concerning this important program.

I learned through my travels that not all communities and senior centers are as blessed as we are.

As a side note, an observance I made over the Fourth of July holiday further solidified the theme of all of us being in this together.

I was in Yellowstone Park surrounded by people from all around the world. Although many different languages were being spoken, we all spoke the common language of "tourist" and were enjoying the beautiful Wyoming scenery together.

I also took a rafting trip in Cody, and although I was again surrounded by strangers, we developed common ground in screaming for dear life while trying to stay in the boat!

From my conference notes two quotes I found to be worthy of sharing: "We are all working toward something that is meaningful," and, "The story is still being written ..."

So, here's to the story, and may we all enjoy the ride together!

Nancy McKenzie is director of volunteer services at the Sheridan Senior Center.