

Green House Living ... a place for young and old

One of the major goals of Green House Living for Sheridan is to bring young and old together in a comfortable environment with semistructured activities for interaction.

To make elderhood more meaningful and enjoyable, it is necessary to interact with the young and pass on stories of our culture. To make youths more thoughtful and compassionate, they need to hear the stories and values of our culture from the elders.

Dr. Bill Thomas, the national originator of the Green House idea, wanted to facilitate this kind of exchange and alleviate the boredom and loneliness of those who must live in a skilled-nursing-care environment. Not just the occasional visit of a youth choir or a dance recital, but activities in which young and old participate together.

Through genuine interaction over a project, relationships are built, nurtured and sustained. A core piece of communi-

ty enrichment is missing when youth and elders don't have an opportunity to know and share with one another.

Green House Living for Sheridan is incorporating ways to foster sharing between generations in the design and plan for their cottages.

Partnership agreements have been developed between Sheridan College and Sheridan County School District 2.

Some of the activities that are being looked at include: Sheridan College training caregivers for the Green House and Sheridan College nursing, massage and dental hygiene students using the Green House for practicums; artwork and crafts with young and old participating together; structured storytelling/oral history

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projects and theater activities; helping elders with computer activities and playing games together; making cookies and reading together.

The back yard of the Green House will have space for a garden in raised beds that will be planted and tended by elders and

youth together. Sheridan alternative school students are interested in volunteering services at the Green House with the elders.

Green House Living for Sheridan has been given the mandate by our Legislature to serve as a model for building alternative homes for skilled nursing care in the state of Wyoming.

In addition, Green House Living for Sheridan has the potential to become a

model for Wyoming and the nation in developing educational and intergenerational projects that connect a Green House to the community.

Dr. Bill Thomas will be in Sheridan from 1-5 p.m. Tuesday at Sheridan College, Whitney Building CTEL, which is open to the public. He will be talking about alternatives in long-term care, including the Green House Project.

On Wednesday, AARP will be hosting a breakfast at the Sheridan Senior Center at 7:30 a.m. After breakfast, Dr. Thomas and a group of Wyoming state experts on issues surrounding health care will hold a panel discussion, "Long Term Care in America — The Journey."

This is an exciting time for this project ... come and learn more about it!

Silver Threads is a weekly column written by people who are involved with the Sheridan Senior Center.