

First Interstate Bank volunteers deliver meals together since 1998

BY LOIS BELL
SHERIDAN SENIOR CENTER

SHERIDAN — Volunteers are valuable to the Sheridan Senior Center but volunteers are incredibly essential to one of the center's programs: home-delivered meals to elders.

"Without volunteers, we wouldn't have the home-delivered meals program," said Senior Center home-delivered meals coordinator Shirley Knisley.

Knisley has seen the demand for home-delivered meals rise from 150 to 190 meals delivered per day. Knisley oversees 12 delivery routes, schedules volunteers and substitutes, and works between individual dietary needs and the Senior Center kitchen staff. When a route is not covered by a volunteer, Knisley personally is out the door to deliver meals to elders counting on what may be their only meal of the day. She always looks to keep her volunteer pool adequately staffed, delivering meals 365 days of the year.

Volunteers are the lifeblood for nonprofit, charitable and civic organizations to fulfill their missions. But for decades, nonprofits have had to juxtapose downward trends in volunteerism against increasing need for services. Although there are exceptions, today's generation of volunteers

is not inclined to long-term relationships in volunteering. But even the best intended would-be volunteer is pressed for time. Though individuals provide the backbone to volunteerism, there are still gaps for many nonprofits.

Introduce: a creative partnership where a business or organization promotes volunteerism among its employees or members. Under this model, the organization encourages volunteerism to nonprofits during the work day among its employees or members. Some select the nonprofit organizations for their employees to support as a group.

One of these community partners is First Interstate Bank. Years ago, the bank saw an opportunity for it to support the continuity of a valuable program to community elders. According to Margaret Sare, First Interstate Bank employee, First Interstate's involvement with the Sheridan Senior Center's home-delivered meals program runs deep.

"It starts with the company's guiding principles — being a values-based, family company that helps take care of the communities we serve," Sare said.

In 1998, bank employees Frank Rotellini and Sare were looking for ways to engage the FIB employees in the community. Sare and Rotellini presented the idea of

volunteering to deliver meals to homebound seniors at an all-staff meeting.

"Almost every hand went up," Sare said. The partnership between FIB and the Senior Center began and continues to this day. "Over the years it's involved a slew of people."

Bank employees have volunteered to deliver meals for a short or longer term. The bank is assigned one route one day a week and has made a commitment to show up on that day for almost two decades. Employees can volunteer on a specific week based on their work schedule. Sare has ensured that the route is covered by an FIB employee or two every week.

The partnership has not gone unnoticed — or unappreciated.

"We are so blessed and so fortunate to have meals delivered every single day including Christmas Day," said Maria Elena Hoeck.

Hoeck and her husband, Richard — a veteran — appreciate the meals from the Senior Center kitchen delivered to them before noon each day.

"Volunteers should really be praised to the skies," Hoeck said. "They've been so loyal no matter the weather."

Employee Pat King has been delivering meals to elders as part



COURTESY PHOTO

First Interstate Bank volunteers Carole Weisz, left, and Pat King are two of the bank's employees who have delivered meals since 1998. Maria Elena and Richard Hoeck are two recipients who have benefitted from their efforts.

of the FIB volunteer team since 1998. King's long-term commitment bucks the current short-term, one-event volunteerism trend.

She is not alone. King is counted among a number of FIB colleagues who have volunteered for Senior Center meal delivery since 1998. Colleague Elisa Brandt saw the value of volunteerism when she watched her father deliver meals. Brandt is a legacy.

Why do these two volunteer?

"It is fulfilling to see the smile on a person's face when you bring

them a meal each day," King said.

"Those people never fail to get us our lunch," Hoeck said. "With our health, it's great to get healthy well-balanced meals. We know we're getting good food."

It's a creative partnership in volunteerism between First Interstate, the Senior Center and homebound elders with continuing value.

FIB employee Cynthia Whiteman said: "There's a story behind every person we deliver to and it makes me feel like a part of that story."

SENIOR CENTER HAPPENINGS

• How do you start to organize all your stuff... your life? Back by request,

join us for a free community presentation on April 5: "Downsizing Your Life —

Part Two" with guest presenters Amanda Lawson of Caring Transitions and Shelley Kinnison of Real Estate Rehab. The presentation is on the dining room stage of the Sheridan Senior Center, 211 Smith St., 5:30 p.m. This presentation is offered free to the community through community partnerships under the Sheridan Senior Center's "When I'm 64... or more" life planning lecture series. Refreshments will be served.

• So popular, we're bringing it back! Diabetes Education and Empowerment Program with tips on empowering you with your diabetes (or pre-diabetes). This is a six-week free course open to all ages beginning April 19, 5:30-8 p.m. in the Senior Center's Community Room. Call the Senior Center at 672-2240 to reserve your spot. Must pick up an application packet from the Senior Center front desk and complete it prior to the first class.

• The Senior Center is offering two upcoming

day trips:

- Eaton's Dude Ranch tour and picnic on May 5
- Devil's Tower tour and picnic on May 27

Must sign up and pay in advance to reserve your spot. Call the Senior Center at 672-2240 for details or stop by at 211 Smith St. Mondays through Fridays for information.

• Another great get-away with the Senior Center! Deadwood history and casino trip Aug. 29 to Sept. 1. Package includes round-trip transportation from the Senior Center, three nights lodging; welcome reception, \$56 in meal vouchers, \$40 in slot play, \$6 in blackjack match play, free slot tournament entry and one day tour of historic Deadwood and Lead area. Cost is \$420 per person with a roommate. Call Jean Harm at 672-2240 Mondays through Thursdays for more information.

• Keystone Awards Thursday, April 21! The Awards honors individuals who have made significant contributions to our community! Tickets are available at the WYO Theater.

Volunteering changes lives — yours, others'

April 10-16, 2016, is National Volunteer Week across America. Here at the Sheridan Senior Center we have close to 600 volunteers that do everything from home delivered meals, helping carry trays in our dining room, to shoveling snow and or teaching exercise class. Many volunteer for one event once a year, many others for a short



HALEY ROBERTS

weekly.

I have been the director of volunteers here at the Senior Center for almost a year now, and in that year I have learned what it truly means to volunteer. I first came to the center as a volunteer myself. I started out delivering meals and then helping serve on the Development Committee and the Keystone Awards Committee. Having always enjoyed volunteering in general, the Senior Center quickly became my favorite place to serve. I love to volunteer because of the feeling that I get in knowing that I can do something to make a positive difference in someone's day.

Once I became the director of volunteers, I quickly realized the Senior Center is much more than just a place of employment — it is a life changing place.

The stories that I have come across here in the last year are incredible. Our largest volunteer category is home-delivered meal drivers. We have volunteers that have been delivering meals for 30-plus years. They give selflessly without any expectation of reward and are always willing to go above and beyond to help out. It is funny because often a volunteer has been approached about becoming

a home-delivered meals driver and they are hesitant or wary of the job, fearful that they will somehow screw it up.

My favorite part of this process however is watching the volunteer drivers go from not being sure this is a great fit, to becoming attached to their weekly routes and looking forward to seeing the people we serve when they volunteer. Some of the people we serve can go a whole day without seeing anyone but their daily meal delivery volunteer; to them, having that five-minute conversation can make all the difference in their day.

Another volunteer category that is vital to our success is our thrift shop, Green Boomerang. All of the proceeds from the store help support the services of the Senior Center and I am proud to say that our store is completely run by volunteers including the store manager, Sandy Watson.

Volunteers like these individuals are what continue to amaze me about the Senior Center. The thrift shop volunteers are extremely dedicated to the success of the Green Boomerang, some of them working up to 48 hours a week!

Even though we currently have close to 600 volunteers, we are always looking for more. We offer a wide variety of volunteer opportunities but also look for new ideas on ways to volunteer. If you have a special skill that you want to teach, or just make a difference in someone's life, stop into the Sheridan Senior Center today to fill out an application.

I am so excited to see how the service of volunteerism continues to evolve here at the center.

Winston Churchill said it best, "We make a living by what we get, but a life by what we give."

GUEST COLUMNIST HALEY ROBERTS is the Director of Volunteer Services at the Sheridan Senior Center. 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.

Local news? Call 672-2431.



www.sheridanseniorcenter.org

Fun and Food

BUILD YOUR OWN SALAD MON- FRI

Entrees and kiosk include sides, dessert and drink.

	Entrée Choice*	or	Soup Kiosk
Sun -	Hot Turkey		
Mon -	Philly Beef Sandwich w/Au jus		Cheesy Ham/Broccoli
Tue -	Pork Chop W/ Mushroom Gravy		Vegetable Beef Soup
Wed -	Chicken Parmesan /Linguini Noodles		Butternut Lentil Soup
Thu -	Baked Italian Pasta		Chicken & Rice Soup
Fri -	Fish Florentine over Wild Rice		Turkey Noodle Soup
Sat -	Chicken a la King		

*Home Delivered Meals

Mon -	Basic A.M. Moves	9:30 a.m.	Community Room
Tue -	"When I'm 64 - Downsizing Your Life"	5:30 p.m.	Dining Room
Wed -	Bridge	12:30 p.m.	Community Room
Thu -	Managing Chronic Disease course begins	5:30-8:00 p.m.	Community Room
Fri -	Table Tennis	1:00-3:30 p.m.	Dining Room

Lunch Service Hours: 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.,
7 days a week 211 Smith Street Sheridan, WY 82801
Home Delivered Meals — call by 10 a.m.: (307) 672-6079

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