

Volunteer gives to community through exercise education

BY LOIS BELL
SHERIDAN SENIOR CENTER

SHERIDAN — “It’s like a family,” said Ginny Holcomb. Holcomb refers to the Basic A.M. Moves (B.A.M.!) class she teaches Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings at the Sheridan Senior Center.

Developing friendships through an exercise class is not a reason people participate in group exercise, but it’s a nice surprising benefit. According to Holcomb, class participants really look out after each other.

“If someone is going through a hard time, they’ll bring each other meals or pass around a card for everyone to sign for that person,” said Holcomb.

Holcomb has been a registered occupational therapist for 16 years and is currently on the staff of Westview Health Care Center in Sheridan. She has been teaching the B.A.M. class three times each week at the center since 2014 when she moved to Sheridan. There is no charge for the class but participants are asked to register with the Senior Center and have the opportunity to donate \$1 that goes directly to the Senior Center. Donations help to fund and continue programs such as this.

“Westview believes strongly in supporting the community,” said Holcomb. Her presence at the Senior Center is part of Westview’s community outreach program.

“From a therapy standpoint, we’d rather have you healthy than in pain and needing therapy,” said Holcomb.

Holcomb states that there are several components to the class.

“First, I do spend time educating the class about their health and well being,”

said Holcomb. “I also teach exercises in the group that we do together and that participants can safely do at home. Third, there’s the social component and last, they can use me as a resource if they have questions, concerns, or are struggling with a particular exercise.”

Two years ago, the class started with six to seven participants; today, 18 to 23 people attend on a regular basis.

One benefit of the class is that Holcomb instructs exercises that are designed to meet each participant at the level they can participate on. The exercises primarily focus on strength, stability and postural control.

“We have someone in a brace, participants in wheelchairs and walkers and one in the early stage of dementia,” said Holcomb. Holcomb estimates that the ages of the participants range from 68 to 94 years, and represent all functional levels.

“Movement is huge for every single person,” said Holcomb. “It’s the number one thing you can do for your health.”

There are misconceptions about exercise that Holcomb has the opportunity to address. She points out that the statement of “no pain, no gain” is a myth.

“You don’t have to have pain to get benefits from movement,” said Holcomb.

Other myths? Holcomb points out that you don’t have to get sweaty and you don’t have to be able to walk to exercise.

“The biggest thing you need to do is to show up and believe you can get better,” she said.

Movement is often key in managing pain from arthritis, soft tissue injury, joint replacement, recovery from surgery or to



COURTESY PHOTO |

Occupational therapist Ginny Holcomb volunteers teaching an exercise class at the Senior Center to older participants. Holcomb and colleagues have taught the class for two years with a focus on the importance of movement to one’s health.

just mitigate the effects of aging. There are also benefits to those suffering from neuropathy, a numbness or weakness in the feet and legs often experienced by diabetics, circulatory issues and dementia.

“Regular exercise is important to enhance safety, preserve function, prevent pain and to keep participants independent as long as possible,” said Holcomb.

Holcomb is fueled by the participants’ feedback on the exercises that she teaches.

One participant shared that she noticed improvement when she had to crawl into a

window well at her home to retrieve something.

“She said, ‘before I came to this class, I could not have done that!’” Holcomb said. Others have shared that they see improvement in being able to turn their head, that their improved posture has minimized their back pain or that they are falling less at home.

“Stories like that that make me want to continue to do this,” said Holcomb. The class participants are most likely glad that she does.

CENTER STAGE |

Keystone Awards celebrate volunteers who make our community great

On April 21, the Sheridan Senior Center with the help of Century 21 Realty, Kennon Products, other community sponsors and friends from near and far will honor three longtime residents who have a lifetime achievement of service to Sheridan: Esther McKenzie, Jack Pelissier, and Judy Taylor.



RINDY WEST |

It gives me goose bumps to reflect on how these honorees have spent countless days and years of their lives making Sheridan a great place to live, work and play! Since the Keystone Awards are in April, which is National Volunteer Month, it is fitting that we take note of how these friends and neighbors have shared their time, talent and wisdom

with all of us.

Did you know that Esther has delivered home delivered meals from the Sheridan Senior Center for 31 years or that she was a nurse at Sheridan Memorial Hospital and a teacher at the Taylor School for many years or that she is a Silver Haired Legislator to our state? She has done all of these things as a part of the community culture we embrace in Sheridan County. Pretty impressive and inspiring!

Jack has been instrumental in both the insurance and real estate industries in the Sheridan area since the ‘60s, and has served Sheridan County as an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps. He possesses a strong sense of community and has served on numerous local boards, including the Sheridan County YMCA, founding board member of the CVC, and the Joe and Arlene Watt Foundation. Did you also know that Jack announced the Big Horn High School football games for numerous years? What

would our community have been like without concerned and active civic pillars like Jack Pelissier? I can’t imagine. Are you seeing a trend here, a trend of volunteerism?

How many of you know that Judy has served extensively on the Sheridan Travel and Tourism Board, as well as many other efforts throughout Sheridan County. She was chair of the Christmas Stroll for many years, on the Chamber Board from 1988-2005, a Chamber Ambassador for 25 years, a member and officer of the Kiwanis Club, on the Dayton Benefit Club and the WYO Rodeo Board for 20-plus years. Judy has announced the Cowgirls, Young Riders and high school rodeos for many years, was the chairperson of the Key Club for many years, and who doesn’t know her as Mrs. Claus on Main Street of Sheridan during Christmas time.

I can’t tell you how much we are honored to pay tribute and celebrate these three people. The program for the evening will be similar to the Kennedy Center Honors and will include special video and entertainment ... not to give too much away, but each form of entertainment for the honorees has been customized to their interests, which are really varied and unique.

The Keystone Awards will be April 21 at the WYO Theater. The honoree reception will kick off at 6 p.m. in the Mars Theater and then at 7:30 the awards show

will begin. One of the first things that will take place is the award of Sheridan College scholarships contributed by the Perkins Foundation to the 2016 Keys to the Stone Honorees. We celebrate volunteerism from students Julia Fenn — Sheridan High School, Allison Reed — Tongue River High School, Kaylin McKinley — Big Horn High School and Hannah Sharp — Sheridan College. Each is to be commended on their great efforts to promote service to community.

Many of you have personally been intertwined with the lives of these Keystone and Keys to the Stone Honorees, so please join us for an evening of tribute and celebration. We want to show you what volunteerism and partnerships have done for Sheridan — the history is beautiful! Proceeds from the event will support services in Sheridan County through the Sheridan Senior Center.

We are proud of how much this event showcases the beautiful acts of kindness and service that have helped build parts of community for people of all ages and walks of life. Thank you, and see you at the Keystone Awards! For tickets to the event, or to help sponsor, please call the WYO Theater at 672-9084 or purchase online at www.wyothater.com.

RINDY WEST is the development director 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.

SENIOR CENTER HAPPENINGS |

- Are you a grandparent raising a grandchild? Join us this Wednesday, April 20, in the Sheridan Senior Center dining room at 211 Smith St., 5:30 p.m. No need to call ahead. Learn tips and about valuable resources that may help you. You and your grandchild (or great-grandchild) are welcome to attend. Supper will be provided. If you have special dietary needs, please call Stella Montano at 675-1978 before Wednesday. Otherwise, please just come!
- Only six days to the 2016 Keystone Awards on Thursday, April 21! The

Keystone Awards honors individuals who have made significant contributions to our community! Tickets are available at the WYO Theater. Special price for those registered with the Sheridan Senior Center.

- There’s still time to sign up for a Senior Center group trip to Jackson Hole, Wyoming, May 25 – 28! Registered with the Senior Center? Take \$20 off the price. Call for details at 672-2240 or stop by the Senior Center at 211 Smith St. to pick up a flyer at the front desk. Deadline to sign up and pay is May 6.

THURSDAY APRIL 21
KEYSTONE AWARDS

Sheridan Senior Center
“Celebrating 40 Years of Service!”
www.sheridanseniorcenter.org
Fun and Food

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Sun - Egg & Sausage Bake		
Mon - Ham Loaf		Potato Soup
Tue - Chicken Sesame		Pork Gumbo
Wed - Chicken Fried Steak		Taco Soup
Thu - Taco Salad w/ Chips		Broccoli Swiss Soup
Fri - Hawaiian Pizza		Mexican Beef & Vegetable
Sat - Saturday Breakfast, 7:30 - 9:30 a.m.		
		Turkey Pasta Salad, 11:30 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.

***Home Delivered Meals**

Mon- Basic A.M. Moves	9:30 a.m.	Community Room
Tue - Blue Grass & Burgers	7 p.m.- 9 p.m.	Dining Room
Wed- Pool Tournament	9:00 a.m.	Rec Room
Thu - Keystone Awards	6:00 p.m.	WYO Theater
Fri - Basic Computer	10:00 a.m.	Conference Room

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