

Green Boomerang team traveling far together

BY LOIS BELL
SHERIDAN SENIOR CENTER

SHERIDAN — There is an African proverb that says if you want to travel far, travel together.

Traveling far together are the volunteers at the Sheridan Senior Center's Green Boomerang Thrift Shop. These volunteers have brought operations at the thrift shop a long way since the store's opening two years ago.

"They are a group of hard working volunteers who treat the store as their own. They take pride in knowing that they help the services of the Senior Center," said Haley Rougeau, director of volunteer services at the center.

After visiting select thrift stores in Wyoming and Minnesota that support nonprofits, the Senior Center opened Green Boomerang. The decision also opened doors for the center.

"People wanted to support the Senior Center with donated items but we had no real venue for processing these donations," said Carmen Rideout, executive director for the center. "Green Boomerang gives us a way to accept donations of clothing,



COURTESY PHOTO

Amanda Munford (center, back) stands with some of the dedicated volunteers at the Senior Center's Green Boomerang Thrift Shop. Munford has been hired as the store's manager joining a team who has been important to the thrift shop's operations.

furniture, electronics and other items that support Senior Center services and not just through monetary donations."

But the store has experienced the growing pains of a successful venture. Within a year, the operations outgrew space at 945 Werco and moved last fall to join other businesses at 226 N. Main St. in the location held by Dan's Western Wear for many years. Merchandising expanded into the larger space.

The volunteers followed

and more volunteers joined the Green Boomerang team, many bringing years of retail experience from their careers. Each volunteer has a department to manage with more room now to display merchandise.

Now Green Boomerang experienced a new growth pain: in order to accommodate the generosity of community donations, the volume of work required the presence of a store manager. The Senior Center Board of Directors decided it was time to hire a part-time store manager with retail and customer service experience.

"I think having a manager is good," said Green Boomerang volunteer Deb Rice. "A manager can make the call for us on what are gray areas."

Amanda Munford, a Senior Center staff member with years of retail experience, was hired for the new position. Munford has been with the Senior Center for eight months in the center's communication department.

"When I saw the job posting, I really thought hard about it," said Munford. "With my years of experience in retail — and the fact I love to thrift shop — I could give my talents to Green Boomerang."

Munford brings to the team her 19 years of retail experience that includes customer

service, troubleshooting, meeting deadlines, reporting and small team management. She was introduced to Green Boomerang volunteers last week and hit the ground running this past Monday. Her position is part-time with expectations that under an experienced store manager the store's operations and revenues will be enhanced so as to cover the additional expense.

Green Boomerang is doing what is needed for senior services. Revenues from Green Boomerang help even out the vagaries of government and state funding and fluctuations in free will cash donations. The 2016 Wyoming budget session underscored the importance of the thrift store to the Senior Center; program revenues have been cut to meet state budgetary objectives.

"One of my biggest goals is to strengthen the relationship between Green Boomerang volunteers and their connection to the Senior Center," said Munford. "This goes beyond merchandising. I would like the volunteers to really connect with the services and the seniors they are helping."

"Amanda understands the importance of the store to services for older adults," Rideout said. "She wants the team to see they are helping people."

The Green Boomerang team has the vision to travel even greater distances together.

CENTER STAGE

Seeing a sense of community everywhere

I took a year off from school to travel, I told myself. Nowhere did I put down "Wyoming is a must-see." Somehow, through the generosity and hospitality of a wonderful aunt and uncle, I found myself on a plane from Virginia en route to their home in Sheridan, managing to land a two-month term as an AmeriCorps VISTA Summer Associate at the Sheridan Senior Center.

From my first day I experienced nothing but open arms from staff, volunteers and patrons alike; the team was very welcoming and seemed as excited as I was. I was assigned across the Senior Center on various projects- teaching craft class, helping at the Green Boomerang, working at the dining room desk, helping archive articles, teaming up with the Sheridan Community Land Trust (which has been awesome by the way) to assist hikes, a trip to Green House Living of Sheridan and many other projects.



MADDI JONES

One thing I noticed right away was the involvement, generosity and concern for others' welfare not only at the Sheridan Senior Center but also in the Sheridan community. I saw this the first time at the YMCA fundraiser for their new aquatic center that my aunt and uncle took me to.

It's something that amazes me and I have trouble pinpointing when asked where I see it most; it's everywhere. In the support of local community centers, the volunteers in places like the Senior Center's Green Boomerang Thrift Shop, even greetings and chatter from the neighbors as I walked to work in the mornings. They all made one thing clear to me — this is a community.

When explaining my position with AmeriCorps, often I receive a raised eyebrow. "Are we a needy community?" a patron at the Senior Center asked me. I've realized the perception of AmeriCorps involvement is limited to poverty relief, but in reality is much more than that. AmeriCorps places volunteers as resources to help strengthen communities, often creating or maintaining access to resources which benefit members within them, not only poverty relief. AmeriCorps has changed my definition of serving, showing me there are limitless ways to give back to the community for everyone.

I plan to serve with AmeriCorps in the future, but for now I will be returning to Virginia to start school in Norfolk at Old Dominion University as an art major. I am excited to move forward into the next chapter and would not ask to spend my final summer before college any other way. I am so very grateful for the opportunity that AmeriCorps and the Sheridan Senior Center have given me.

MADDI JONES is a resident of Virginia and recently completed an internship through the AmeriCorps VISTA Summer Associate program at the 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

- Variety Show in Kendrick Park, Friday, Aug. 12, 7 p.m. courtesy of the Sheridan Senior Center. Come early for hot dogs hot off the grill at 6 p.m. Suggested \$2 contribution is asked. Bring a lawn chair and a water bottle. Sign-ups are good by calling Jane Perkins at 672-2240 but sign-ups are not required for on stage talent. Come join the free fun!

- Aug. 16 Wyoming primaries — the two precincts that use the Senior Center to vote will be voting at the Sheridan County Fairgrounds this year. If the change is an inconvenience, please contact the Sheridan County Elections office and request an absentee ballot to be sent to your residence. The phone number is 674-2515.

- Many homebound older residents may only have a mid-day meal from the Senior Center. Could you spare 45 minutes one day each week to reach out to older residents in Sheridan? The Senior Center needs volunteers for the following home delivered meal routes and days: Monday - Route #8; Thursday - Route #1; Friday - Route # 10; Saturday - Route #10; and, Sunday - Route #9. For information, call Haley Rougeau, Director of Volunteer Services, at the Sheridan Senior Center at 672-2240.

- Grandparents raising grandchildren don't get a summer break. Learn what resources are available to support you and to provide you with information you can use in this very important role of raising a grandchild. There is a Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group that meets the third Wednesday of each month at the Senior Center. This is a free support group and activities for grandchildren are provided. The next GRG meeting is Wednesday, Aug. 17, 5:30 p.m. in the dining room at the Sheridan Senior Center, 211 Smith St. Dinner is provided. For information, call Stella Montano at 675-1978.



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Wed - Spaghetti/Meat Sauce	our daily Soup
Thu - Glazed Baked Ham	Specials Mon - Fri
Fri - Swiss Steak	
Sat - Chicken Pot Pie	

*entrée only offered for Home Delivered Meals

Mon - Hike on Soldier Ridge	9:00 a.m.	Depart Senior Center
Tue - Museums Day Trip	7:30 a.m. Heritage Towers	7:45 a.m. Sr. Center
Wed - Alterations by Marcine	8 a.m. to 11 a.m.	Art Studio
Fri - Variety Show	sc fee \$2.00 about 7:00 p.m.	Kendrick Park
Sat - Pancake Breakfast with sides	7:30 to 9:30 a.m.	Dining Room

Donations of items to the Senior Center's Green Boomerang Thrift Shop gladly accepted Wed - Sat, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., 226 N. Main St., 675-1974

Lunch Service Hours: 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., 7 days a week

211 Smith Street Sheridan, WY 82801 (307) 672-6079
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