

A quiet life of service to others

BY LOIS BELL
SHERIDAN SENIOR CENTER

SHERIDAN — She's been called a grandma, a go-getter, a teacher, a mother, a wife, a choir member, a God-send and the Energizer Bunny. But no matter how you know her, 4-foot plus Margie Pierce has a legacy in serving others.

It is the little things that bring Pierce joy in her life. When a friend couldn't hang pictures, Pierce stepped in. "We got it done," Pierce said. "It's enjoyable when you can do things for people that they can't do for themselves."

Many people retire from work, but for Pierce, previous retirements actually meant a change in the direction for her boundless energies.

Pierce recently retired earlier this summer as a senior companion, a program that provides companionship for older adults. The Sheridan Senior Center provides oversight to this Senior Corps program in Sheridan.

It was not long before Pierce was visiting with nine older residents in her senior companion role.

"She would give people rides to doctor appointments and grocery shopping," said Nancy McKenzie, the director of volunteer services



(COURTESY PHOTO)

Called a go-getter and the Energizer Bunny, 85-year-old Sheridan resident Margie Pierce is known for her service to others. The 4-foot plus dynamo is thinking about how she can give some more.

at the Senior Center when Pierce signed on as a Senior Companion years ago.

Later, when Pierce no longer drove, she adapted. A simple thing as no longer driving did not deter her: Pierce found a way to keep giving. She continued as a senior companion to neighbors in her apartment complex. In addition to vis-

iting with others as a senior companion, Pierce cleaned and did laundry for some of her neighbors who found the chores a challenge to do. Two strokes did not slow Pierce down.

Pierce has been working hard her entire life, according to McKenzie.

"She's one of the most inspiring people I have ever

met," McKenzie said.

Pierce was born and raised on a farm in Dutch Creek and learned the work ethic that come out of such a childhood. She ranched with her husband in Montana and Wyoming, taught elementary school and ran a 60-mile round-trip mail route with her husband twice weekly from

Bayhorse, Montana, to Recluse, Wyoming.

The couple moved to Sheridan and Pierce landed a job with the Department of Veterans Affairs. For 17 years, she worked in laundry service with duties sewing issued uniforms to VA staff and mending clothes.

But this was not all Pierce did. She worked at the

YMCA child care center, volunteered with Head Start, served as a foster grandparent, and volunteered as a senior companion.

She helped at her church, sang in her church choir, sang with the Senior Center's Sheridan Aires performance group and served meals at the homeless shelter several times a year.

"What spare time she had," McKenzie said, "she shared her joy and talent of painting and gardening and has been a 4-H leader teaching children leather work."

Pierce doesn't do it for recognition but gives her credit to a higher power.

"She doesn't want any credit for her work; she wants the credit to go to God," McKenzie said.

But Pierce's boundless caring for others has been recognized by the community. She was one of the four Wyoming finalists for the Jefferson Award, has been honored as an Unsung Hero, and has garnered awards for her artwork. She accepted the recognition with a quiet gratitude.

Pierce would like to jump back into the foster grandparent program to assist teachers in the classroom.

"Maybe in a year after I get some things figured out," the 85-year-old Pierce said. "I don't like to be idle."

A new look. A new feel. A new name.

A new era is dawning for our senior center as we approach our grand opening on Sept. 20. Whew! We have been envisioning this for the past six years when we first started to explore updating the center

for the future.

Two planning grants from the Wyoming Business Council helped the board of directors and employees explore the possibilities. The questions we asked focused around the major

issue facing senior centers across the country. How are we going to serve the increasing numbers and next generation of older people and their families in the coming years? How will it be sustainable?

The first grant in 2011 analyzed our business operations for the programs and services we provide to determine how we must grow to meet the increased demand. Each service area was studied in terms of this and in correspond-

dence with our mission: "To celebrate, embrace and serve older adults for the betterment of our community." Our purpose is to provide community services to help people live in the com-

munity and avoid premature institutionalization. In order to be sustainable and vital for the long haul we learned we needed to be creative and think outside of the box in what and how we deliver services. In order to serve older people who are often of low to modest fixed incomes, we must serve people that are able to pay for the full cost of services too.

The second grant from the WBC in 2014 studied our buildings, looking at how we could organize spaces to best serve more. We looked at the flow of people throughout the day and how to be as flexible with the space as possible, utilizing areas for a multitude of activities. Updating the space to a more modern feel was also recommended to draw in the next generation of people coming of age — the baby boomers.

There was a recognition then, that the space we need will never be enough. We learned that building a larger and larger space at

211 Smith St. was not practical. A second story, which is often suggested, was not feasible. Instead, having a number of sites around Sheridan to house our programs was a better way to organize. Therefore, the center at 211 Smith St. will continue to be the hub of activity for the organization with Goose Creek Transit, Help at Home and Day Break being more functional in other locations.

And...ultimately and please don't forget, the community at large is truly our space. Our partnerships with other organizations and entities such as the Sheridan College, YMCA, library, WYO Theater, Tongue River Valley Community Center, city parks and the big beautiful Bighorns are spaces and places that are available and waiting for us to be!

The studying and planning included not only input from the experts but also from our staff, our donors, our current customers and

our future customers. I am happy to report that the work is almost finished with some minor follow-up projects left to be completed.

You will see the new look and feel as soon as you walk in the door. We hope you like it. And... we hope you will like the name we will be announcing on Sept. 20. Yes, this too has been on our minds and under consideration for a long time. We are a senior center now and will always be a "senior center." We want our senior center, however, to have a name to begin the next era of our organization. The new and updated brand represents who and what we are in our community. There have been hints over the last few months. Has anyone guessed? Join us on Sept. 20 at 10 a.m. for the unveiling.

GUEST COLUMNIST CARMEN RIDEOUT

is the executive director of 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.



CARMEN RIDEOUT

SENIOR HAPPENINGS

• Join us for a hike to Sherd Lake on Aug. 30. It's an easy to moderate diffi-

culty level for older hikers. Meet at the Senior Center, 211 Smith St., at 7:45 a.m.

Carpool leaves at 8 a.m. Bring your own lunch. Good fishing available, so bring your fishing gear and valid fishing license. Limited to 12 hikers. To sign up, call 672-2240, Monday through Friday between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.

• Services have resumed at 211 Smith St. Join us for lunch at the newly remodeled Senior Center with new meal service hours, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. seven days a week. • Construction continues at the Sheridan Senior Center. Hours open to the public are 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. until further notice.

• Do you have a gift to share? A talent? Time? Great opportunities to share and to meet new people are available in a number of volunteer roles at the Senior Center. Call Terri Hayden, director of volunteer services, at 672-2240, ext. 131. • Are you caring for a loved

one? Feeling overwhelmed? Don't know what resources are available to you? Call Stella Montano, director of family caregiver support, at the Sheridan Senior Center, 672-2240, ext. 112.

• Third Thursday Poets chapbooks are on sale at the front desk of the Senior Center, featuring Rose Hill, Wyoming 2015-2016 Poet Laureate and others. The cost is \$8 per copy. Proceeds support services of the Senior Center.

• Walkers or bikers meet at 8 a.m. Thursday mornings by the lobby doors of the Senior Center. Do something good for yourself and meet new people!

• If you are 60 years and older, a Tongue River Valley resident and have a small repair job that needs to be done, call Robin Ruff at 655-9419 with inquiries about the Senior Center's free TRV Handyman services.



www.sheridanseniorcenter.org

Fun and Food
BUILD YOUR OWN SALAD Mondays - Fridays
Entrees and kiosk include sides, dessert and drink.

Entrée Choice*	or	Soup Kiosk
Tue - Taco Salad/Beef,Cheese,Chips,Salsa		
Wed - Chicken Ranch Pizza		Salad Bar Available Mondays through Fridays
Thu - Spaghetti w/Meat Sauce		
Fri - Pork Wings		No Salad Bar Available on Saturday or Sunday
Sat - Turkey Tetrazzini		
Sun - Swiss Steak		
Mon - Tarragon Chicken Salad		

*entrée only offered for Home Delivered Meals

DOG DAYS OF SUMMER WEEK WATCH for DETAILS

Tue - Young at Heart Players	9:30 a.m.	Community/Fitness Room
Wed - Pool	9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.	Pool Room
Thu - Cribbage	12:30 p.m.	Cafe
Fri - Dominoes	9:30 a.m.	Cafe
Mon - Pinochle	12:30 p.m.	Community Room

Still under construction! Open to the public 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. daily
Lunch Service Hours: 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., 365 days a year
Join us for lunch at the Sheridan Senior Center 211 Smith St
Loan Closet, Outreach, and Administration Services, 672-2240. 211 Smith Street:
9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Mondays - Fridays.
Help at Home Services, 675-1978. 232 North Brooks: Mondays - Fridays.
Day Break Adult Care Services, 674-4968. 241 Smith Street: Mondays - Fridays.

Relax...

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