

Veteran shares career skills in Day Break program

FROM THE SHERIDAN SENIOR CENTER

SHERIDAN — Dennis Powers has a unique relationship with the Sheridan Senior Center's Day Break program. The U.S. Air Force veteran is not only using Day Break's services, he is sharing some of his career skills while there.

Powers, a physical therapist, held a 25-year career at the Sheridan Veterans Affairs Medical Center as a recreational specialist and director. His work supported veterans in recovery. He planned activities that included fishing trips, card tournaments, softball games and casino nights. Through his career, Powers kept things organized and coordinated recruiting and directing volunteers needed keep the program going.

"I was the 'go-to' guy for fun," Powers said.

Today, Powers is helping to keep things rolling with the fun activities offered at Day Break.

"His knowledge is invaluable to the staff," said Barb Blue, director of Day Break. "He is our official Bingo caller and crossword puzzle manager. Dennis continues to keep things organized, even in his retirement."

The Sheridan Senior Center's Day Break program is special. There are only four adult day facilities in Wyoming that provide services for adults and their families.

While mealtime assistance, bathing, toileting and personal care services are provided by staff, an important objective throughout each day is to have fun. Blue and the Day Break team design each day to incorporate each person's personal interests. Powers not only plays, he engages others to play, also.

Day Break services are available to adults over the age of 18 years but many are not aware of a contractual relationship with the VA.

When Powers and his wife, Theo, visited the Day Break program, Blue asked if



COURTESY PHOTO |

Air Force veteran and retired Department of Veterans Affairs recreational director Dennis Powers, center, shares his career skills with others at the Senior Center's Day Break program. With Powers are Tom Zelka, left, and Randall Perry.

Powers was a veteran.

"It's an important question," Blue said. "Day Break works with the VA to keep those who have served our country safe and among friends."

It was a match not only for Powers, but also to Theo.

"This time away from home is a relief to family caregivers and gives them the freedom to work, handle personal business, or just relax knowing their loved one is safe,"

Blue said.

"I have been trying to sell the concept of adult day services for years. It is a hard sell," Blue said. "We go through our adult lives making decisions and being independent. And then something goes haywire and we are unable to care for ourselves. Then the idea of adult day services may seem the answer, but who really wants to go? No one. These feelings are very understandable, but don't give up on the idea too fast."

Tips for introducing someone to Day Break

FROM BARB BLUE
DIRECTOR OF DAY BREAK ADULT SERVICES

Are you caring for a loved one? Adult day services are an excellent option for caregivers and those who are often alone. Services are available Monday through Friday and a schedule can be customized for your needs from part time to full time. Here are some tips for introducing loved ones to the program:

- Tour the facility. See what activities might interest your family member. The Day Break staff is very effective in persuading reluctant people to attend and encouraging participation.
- Some people see Day Break as a "club." Others attend to help others, as a volunteer would.
- Schedule your family member's visit when there is an activity that they might enjoy, like music or exercise class. Some attend for a particular activity, such as Bingo or entertainment offered in the dining room.
- Let us know if you are a veteran.
- Take one step at a time. Use a try-it-and-see approach. The object of the first visit is simply to have the person agree to return.
- Get the right person to take him or her the first time. Choose someone who can usually get your family member to do things.
- Reinforce the positive.

CENTER STAGE |

For Boomers and seniors: Age out loud

About a week ago I was proudly taking my grandson to the YMCA for swim lessons. My natural inclination when stepping into the place of energy and explanation of reasons we should be doing something to maintain our minds and bodies is to look to see what they might have planned to motivate me to do so.



JANE PERKINS

In the front lobby are flyers advertising upcoming classes. They are all conveniently organized by age. In the "Active older adult" sec-

tion "Boomers and Seniors" caught my eye. My little (or big) ego latched on to that flyer without a thought and then I chuckled inside to myself. Now, I know realistically if I were to begin any sort of exercise program I probably wouldn't be classified as an active older adult. To consider programs in the senior category would be wise. Yet, why should you think that just because you are of a certain age you are automatically less capable? So, who was the marketing genius that came up with the obvious rebrand for us ego driven Boomers? Before anyone gets upset, let me make the point.

According to AARP I have been a senior for nine years. While continuing to serve and have programing for people that we would call our moms and dads, changes at the Senior Center are evolving into the next generation. That's me and my friends. Before you say "I'm not old enough," or, "There isn't anything for me," at the Senior Center please come down and be a part of the building of programs to help us welcome the Boomers to our facility. You

will be pleased in what you find and proud to know that all of our programs help to sustain people of all ages in the Sheridan community. We thank the YMCA for their contributions to the community as well.

Boomers and seniors are invited to "age out loud" and join us, our community partner the Wyoming Wilderness Association and Steve Stresky, local geoscientist and trekker extraordinaire, for our summer hike and outings programing. Outings organized by WWA are led by educators such as biology professor, Dr. Ami Erickson, and ornithologist, Dr. Jackie Canterbury. A variety of terrain and difficulty options will be offered. Call us at 672-2240 or see www.sheridanseniorcenter.org or www.wildwyo.org for more information.

We'll have our bicycle check out available again this year. A check-out system is set up at our front desk. This courtesy is made possible with the help of the Elks club bike rehab program.

What summer outdoor activity promotes coordination, patience, improves

your mood, flexibility, light cardio, mindfulness, relieves stress? Horseshoes! We plan on meeting each Thursday morning at 9 a.m. at Kendrick Park (on the east side of the park). They have six horseshoe pits waiting to be used. We try to play by the rules but bend them a little for beginners. In addition, the Sheridan Recreation District has pits at Thorne-Rider Park. If Thursdays don't work for you, come check them out and play when you can.

Another great outdoor experience is waiting for you at Kendrick Golf Course. Brian the resident golf pro tells me they lend clubs and balls for use on their chipping and putting greens free of charge from 7 a.m. to dark. Call them for more info at 674-8148.

Lastly, I would invite and encourage the retired (or not) and talented to get in touch with me in hopes of setting up new programing here at the Senior Center.

JANE PERKINS is the "director of fun" 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.

Sheridan Senior Center
"Celebrating 40 Years of Service!"
www.sheridanseniorcenter.org

Join the Senior Center in collecting items for care packages send to Sheridan military stationed in Kuwait and Afghanistan. May 15 - 19 is the collection drive.

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

Entrée Choice*	or	Soup Kiosk
Tue - Turkey Fillet		Potato Soup
Wed - Glazed Ham		French Onion Soup
Thu - Fish Florentine		Mexican Chicken Soup
Fri - Chicken Fried Steak		Fish Chowder
Sat - Beef & Cheese Enchilada		No Kiosk on Saturday
Sun - Swiss Steak		No Kiosk on Sunday
Mon - Seafood Salad		Butternut Bisque

*entrée only offered for Home Delivered Meals

MAY is Older Americans Month.... Age Out Loud!

Tue - Alzheimer's Memory Walk Bake Sale	9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Lobby
Wed - Gentle Yoga with Cindy Baker	10:30 a.m.	First United Methodist Church, 215 W Works St
Thu - Cribbage	12:30 p.m.	Dining Room
Fri - Bingo	12:00 p.m.	Dining Room
Sat - Pinochle, Double Deck	12:30 p.m.	Dining Room
Mon - Happy Feet Cardio Dance	8:00 a.m.	Meet in Lobby

Lunch Service Hours: 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., 365 days a year at 211 Smith Street
Building hours: 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Mondays - Fridays
9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Weekends and Holidays
211 Smith Street Sheridan, WY 82801
Home Delivered Meals (307) 672-6079
Senior Center Main Phone: (307) 672-2240 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Mon - Fri

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SENIOR CENTER HAPPENINGS |

- Armed Forces Week is May 15-19 at the Senior Center. Care items are being collected for Sheridan veterans stationed in Kuwait and Afghanistan. Lists of requested items are available by calling 672-2240 or stopping by the Senior Center. Donations of \$13 are accepted to help ship boxes. For information, call Jean Harm or Jane Perkins at the above number.
- The Alzheimer's Memory Walk Bake Sale will take place in the lobby of the Senior Center Tuesday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The event is sponsored by the Sheridan Senior Center's Family Caregiver Support Group. Enter the lobby by the new east doors. Off-street parking is available on the east side of the Senior Center located at

- 211 Smith St.
- The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren group will meet Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. in the Sheridan Senior Center dining room.
- The registration deadline for an older adults trip to Glacier National Park has been extended to June 15. The trip is set for Sept. 9-13. We need 20 travelers to make this trip a go. The cost is \$1,776 per person, double occupancy. Call Pam Rodgers with questions at 672-2240 or call Peg Martin at 672-2481 to sign up.
- Make beautiful handmade cards at the Senior Center's DIY Card Workshop with Heidi Roesler on Saturday from 12:30-3 p.m. at First Congregational Church, 100 W. Works St. All supplies provided or you may bring

- your own project to work on. Sign up by calling 672-2240. Space is limited. There is a suggested contribution of \$5 for those registered with the Senior Center and it is a \$7 fee for those not registered. Open to all ages. Cash and checks accepted on the day of the workshop.
- Due to construction at the Sheridan Senior Center, the north doors will be locked at 2 p.m. Monday through Friday for construction in the dining room. Afternoon access to the Senior Center Monday through Friday is through the double doors on the east side of the building. All doors to the Senior Center are locked at 1 p.m. on weekends and holidays as part of the center's usual weekend and holiday hours.