

Friendship shines in meal service for senior diners

BY LOIS BELL
SHERIDAN SENIOR CENTER

SHERIDAN — One team member immigrated to the United States from South Korea. The other is a fifth-generation legacy in Sheridan County. One was the mother of two young sons, the other the mother of two young daughters. One became the protégé, the other became the mentor. Together the two women forged a bond and a friendship that has lasted years as they provided meal service to Sheridan's elder residents.

Sun Kim and Jean Harm are familiar faces to diners who eat in the Heritage Towers dining room at 428 Jefferson St.

Hired in 1988 by the Senior Center, Harm was the head cook at Heritage Towers. Later she became the site manager overseeing meal preparation for Heritage Towers residents and for the Senior Center's satellite meal sites in Tongue River, Story and Big Horn.

"As soon as Heritage Towers opened in 1980, the Senior Center began serving meals there," said Harm. "Before that the Senior Center meals were served at the Salvation Army, First Christian Church and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I don't know where the food was actually prepared then."

Kim was hired as a baker at the Senior Center's kitchen at 211 Smith St. in 2005. At that time, Senior Center lunches were prepared at both the Smith Street and at the Heritage Towers kitchens.

"I was looking for a morning job," Kim said. "I already had an afternoon job. My kids were little."

Kim admits she didn't know how to bake for large numbers of diners but was offered on-the-job training. Her first assignment was to make dinner rolls from scratch.

"They tell me that my first attempt was pretty good," said Kim, who has since learned to bake cakes, potato rolls and cookies for large groups of people.

"She (Kim) worked at the Senior Center for four or five years before she came over to Heritage Towers to



COURTESY PHOTO |

Sun Kim, left, and Jean Harm have teamed up to provide meal service at Heritage Towers to senior diners for over 10 years. Their friendship is evident in the service they provide to diners.

work with me," Harm said. "It was a good partnership. She was really willing to learn. We started doing social things together outside of work."

The two were a team for more than 10 years and became known for the good meals and caring service. They made friends among the diners.

"You can tell Sun's made a lot of friends at Heritage Towers," Harm said. "She's very neat and particular about how she does things."

"Sun is a sweetheart. She's dedicated to her work and wants to get it right," said Doris Kemnitz. Kemnitz has been a resident at Heritage Towers for 14 years. "She gets along with everyone. She laughs and has fun."

When the center reorganized its meals program, Harm transferred to the center's activities program. Kim became the Senior Center point person for the lunch service at Heritage Towers.

"Now I'm everything," said Kim, who prepares meals in the Senior Center kitchen and transports them to serve at Heritage Towers. But Kim doesn't do it all on her own; she is grateful for the volunteers who help her serve diners.

"Thank you to all the volunteers, I am really, really thankful for all the volunteers. If it wasn't for them I couldn't work over there," said Kim.

Kim continues to enjoy serving and visiting with the people who come to dine.

"They're kind of a family," Kim said.

Once a week, Harm visits Kim and the diners at Heritage Towers. She answers questions, makes announcements about upcoming Senior Center activities and chats with the diners. Harm continues to organize Wednesday evening dinners at Heritage Towers that are now held quarterly.

The two women are still a team continuing to provide caring and friendly meal service to diners at Heritage Towers. Lunches are served at Heritage Towers Mondays through Fridays from 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Those who are 60 and older and registered with the Senior Center can have lunch for a suggested contribution of \$4.50 per person; lunch for unregistered diners is \$7.50.

CENTER STAGE

Heritage Towers senior lunches always open to the public

Did you know that lunch at Heritage Towers is open to the public for older residents and their guests? Many people think that the dining room at Heritage Towers is only for the residents there but that's not true.



JEAN HARM

When Heritage Towers opened in 1980, the Senior Center began serving meals there and they were always open to

the public. For many years, we cooked not only for the Heritage Towers diners but also for the Senior Center's meal sites in Story and Big Horn. When I was hired as the head cook for the Heritage Towers kitchen in 1988, these meal sites were already established.

At that time, meals were also served in the Tongue River Valley but the Senior Center didn't cook them at first. The Senior Center contracted with the Ranch House Restaurant there to make senior meals. That was somewhere between 1975 to 1980. They had a special room that the seniors used and they had a specific menu for seniors. My mom was on the Senior Citizens Coordinating Council and that group was responsible for starting the senior meal program in the Tongue River Valley. They sent bids out to restaurants for the contract. The Ranch House Restaurant had the contract for a long time and for some years the Magnum restaurant had the contract. The Hitching Post restaurant (now the Branding Iron restaurant) also had the senior meals contract and added the room in the back to serve meals for seniors.

Then the Magnum and Ranch House restaurants closed and the Branding Iron had to raise prices for senior meals. So then, in 1992, the Senior Center began cooking meals for Tongue River Valley seniors at Heritage Towers.

Valuable volunteers would pick up the meals to take to the Big Horn and Story meal sites. A Senior Center employee will pick up meals for Tongue River now served at the community center in Dayton.

I oversaw the meals for Heritage Towers and for the meal sites while the staff at the Senior Center kitchen at 211 Smith St. cooked meals for diners there and for home-delivered meals.

I did all the ordering and planned Wednesday night menus. We used to have Wednesday night dinners every week at Heritage Towers. At first it was a new program but then as it went on we'd have up to 90 people come for dinner on Wednesday nights. We'd always have BINGO and sometimes special entertainment.

In 2009, the Senior Center reorganized its meals program and I was transferred to the activities program. Sun Kim took over at Heritage Towers as the Monday through Friday staff person and continued meal service at Heritage Towers with the help of volunteers. I go once a week to make announcements and answer questions for diners. And I still plan Wednesday night dinners but now they are quarterly and not weekly. We get around 50 people at the Wednesday night dinners.

If you are 60 or older, you can dine at any of our senior meal sites in the county, including Heritage Towers. Our grant funding requires that you are registered with the Senior Center to qualify for the suggested contribution of \$4.50 for lunch. Many people like this as they can contribute what fits their budget. Registration is easy as you only have to answer a questionnaire. There is no fee to register. If you are not registered, or want to bring a guest like your family, then lunch is \$7.50 per person.

So, if you like a smaller Senior Center dining experience, consider joining us for lunch at Heritage Towers. We serve lunch there Mondays through Fridays from 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. There is ample off-street parking south of Heritage Towers which is located at 428 N. Jefferson Street, across from the YMCA.

JEAN HARM is the "Assistant 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.

SENIOR CENTER HAPPENINGS

- Join historian Helen Laumann for the September "Conversation in History" as she shares insight on the History of Lake DeSmet and the Dancing on the Water Paddle Showboat. Free and open to the community. Grab a cup of coffee or tea from our dining room and join us on Wednesday, Sept. 14 at 10:30 a.m.

- The Senior Center's annual AutumnFest Dinner and Dance is Friday, Sept. 16, in Dayton. This year tickets are being sold in advance as of Sept. 1 at the TRVCC, 1100 N. Main St., Dayton, and at the Senior Center, 211 Smith St., Sheridan. The suggested contribution is \$9 per person for dinner if you are 60

and older and registered with the Senior Center. The charge is \$10 per person if you are unregistered; children younger than 12 are \$5. No charge if you come for music only. Call 672-2240 for more information. You must pre-pay and sign up for transportation to the dinner and dance in advance; round-trip transportation is \$7.50 per person or three bus tickets payable at the front desk at the Senior Center.

- Fashion show! Featuring fashions from the Green Boomerang Thrift Shop. Saturday, Sept. 17, 1 p.m. on the dining room stage at the Senior Center, 211 Smith St. Open to the public of all ages. Fashions for all ages will be on show.



Sheridan Senior Center
"Celebrating 40 Years of Service!"

www.sheridanseniorcenter.org

Fun and Food
BUILD YOUR OWN SALAD MON-FRI

Entrées and Kiosk include sides, dessert and drink.

Entrée Choice*	or	Soup Kiosk
Sun - Chicken Fried Steak		PATRIOT DAY
Mon - Tarragon Chicken		Beef Stew
Tue - BBQ Pork Sandwich		Shaker Chicken Noodle
Wed - Cabbage Roll Casserole		Pork Stew
Thu - Swiss Steak w/ tomato sauce		Ham & Barley Soup
Fri - Boneless Pork Chop		French Onion Soup
Sat - Broccoli Beef over Brown Rice		

*entrée only offered for Home Delivered Meals

Tue - Weight Release class begins	5:15 - 6:15 p.m.	Community Room
Wed - Conversations in History	10:30 a.m.	Community Room
Open Mic	11:00 a.m.	Dining Room
Smart Phone Class	12:30 p.m.	Conference Room
Thu - SheridanAires Choir resumes	9:30 a.m.	Community Room
Fri - AutumnFest Dinner & Dance	6:30 p.m.	Dayton Women's Club, Dayton

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
Senior Center Main Phone: (307) 672-2240

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