

Tongue River Valley program expands support for older residents

FROM THE SHERIDAN SENIOR CENTER

SHERIDAN — People want to stay at home as they grow older, allowing them to stay engaged in their communities and maintain independence. This can present some challenges but with some help, remaining at home is achievable.

In many communities, neighbors reach out to help older neighbors. Some support their neighbor one-on-one when there is a need and others organize programs for support. In the communities of the Tongue River Valley, neighborly help for older neighbors has emerged organically.

"A number of people (in the Tongue River Valley) said they do this already for their friends and neighbors," said Michelle Keller. "It's so true and that's what makes Tongue River a great place to live. There are truly caring people here."

Keller, who is the Tongue River Valley coordinator for the Sheridan Senior Center, lives in the Tongue River Valley. Keller is attuned to connecting elders in the valley who could benefit by support to live at home. Keller serves as a connection to Senior Center services such as home delivered meals and in-home

care. Keller's vision is to be sure no one is left struggling when support is available.

But she observed there is a need for additional help such as seasonal leaf raking or decorating for Christmas or for companionship.

"We want to formalize a process to reach everyone," said Keller, whose vision is to fill in any gaps in support if she can.

With Erin Kilbride, executive director of the Tongue River Valley Community Center, Keller organized a lunch meeting to talk with community members about the vision.

"The TRVCC is excited to help get this program started. We want to help people stay in this community and not have to move into Sheridan if they don't want to," Kilbride said. "We are excited to see this grow."

The TRVCC is a focal point for information and activities in the valley and where Keller can be reached.

The women started with sharing their vision with people they thought may be interested in hearing about establishing a network of volunteers who can help with companionship, grocery shopping and minor household repairs.

"Five people signed up as companions for older neighbors," said Keller. "Two companions are paired up. We're just waiting on the background checks for the new companions. People are ready."

Frani Morris, a retired school administrator, signed up to be a Tongue River companion.

"My interest comes from being a caregiver for my mother and the fact that we need something in between home and nursing homes," Morris said.

Through the companionship support, Keller considers best fits for companions and residents. She introduced Morris to artist Alice Fuller who continues to open her home to artists to come to paint in her studio. The women instantly connected with each other. They now spend time with each other in a variety of activities, including shopping.

"She's fun to go grocery shopping with," Fuller said. "She saves me money! Frani is such good company."

"Volunteers can donate one hour a week to one hour a month. It can fit in your schedule," Morris said.

Another service offered through the Tongue River village is a handyman service.

Volunteers provide sim-



COURTESY PHOTO

Dayton resident Alice Fuller, left, enjoys a cup of coffee and a chat with her new friend, Frani Morris, a retired education administrator, who was introduced to Fuller through a new companion program in the Tongue River Valley organized in a partnership between the Sheridan Senior Center and the Tongue River Valley Community Center.

ple repairs around the home for seniors. These services include minor household fix ups such as putting up a railing or fixing a lock.

"Frani, and this whole program, is going to help Mom stay right where she wants to be as long as she wants to be there," said Millie Serna, daughter to Fuller. "It has taken a huge

load off my mind worrying about Mom needing something in town, because I work and it's not always convenient for Mom to wait until a Saturday when businesses may be closed. I cannot believe this service exists, and it actually makes little Dayton, Wyoming, a desirable place for seniors! Again, thanks so much for

all your help; my sisters and I are so utterly grateful!"

If you would like to volunteer or know of someone who may benefit from the Tongue River Valley services for seniors, contact Keller at the Tongue River Valley Community Center at 655-9419 or email Keller at TRVProgCoord@Sheridanseniorcenter.org.



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| Wed - Hawaiian Chicken Breast | | Mexican Beef Soup |
| Thu - Beef Pot Roast | | Roasted Vegetable |
| Fri - Chicken Fried Steak | | Minestrone Soup |
| Sat - Stuffed Pepper | | |

*entrée only offered for Home Delivered Meals

| | | |
|----------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Tue - Blue Grass & Burgers | 7:00 p.m. | Dining Room |
| Wed - Open Mic | 11:00 a.m. | Dining Room |
| Thu - Cribbage | 12:30 p.m. | Dining Room |
| Fri - Bingo | 12:00 Noon | Dining Room |
| Sat - Woodcarvers | 9:00 a.m. | Art Studio |

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Montano to be panelist in PBS Alzheimer's program

BY LOIS BELL
THE SHERIDAN SENIOR CENTER

SHERIDAN — Wyoming PBS will broadcast the program, "Alzheimer's In Wyoming," live on Friday, Nov. 18.

The show will be broadcast on location from Rock Springs.

"Alzheimer's in Wyoming" will be broadcast live as part of Wyoming PBS' Wyoming Chronicle Live at 7:30 p.m. and a recorded broadcast of the program at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 19. Guests include Sheridan resident, Stella Montano, director of Family Caregiver Program at the Sheridan Senior Center. Montano will be joined by

Linda Chasson with the Wyoming Division of the Department of Health and Dr. Cara Johnson, a family practice physician in Cheyenne.

Alzheimer's disease is a type of dementia that eventually affects a person's thinking, actions and memory. Over 5.4 million in the United States suffer from Alzheimer's dementia. In Sheridan County, over 60 percent of residents with dementia are living at home.

The one-hour program will discuss research, support options and current work with the governor's office on a state Alzheimer's Plan. Both Montano and Johnson serve on the Board for the

Alzheimer's Association Wyoming Chapter. Viewers may call in

during the Nov. 18 program with questions at 1-800-495-9788.

CENTER STAGE

What is your legacy?

Did you know that the Sheridan Senior Center and other hard working nonprofits in Sheridan County would really appreciate and be good stewards of your planned gift? The Senior Center has and



RINDY WEST

always will be a part of the Sheridan County community, but we don't think we have done a good job of letting everyone know that memorials and planned gifts to the center are one of the most meaningful gifts! The Senior Center is set up to take gifts of tangible personal property, such as jewelry, coins, works of art, automobiles and much more. Life insurance and IRAs are another way to make a gift.

Many nonprofits are organized like the Senior Center in their by-laws to incorporate these types of

unique and helpful gifts. The Senior Center and other agencies would be very proud and honored to have your support. Memorials and planned gifts are ways to create a legacy for the future. Even tributes can help out your favorite service organization and it's a neat treat to have someone make a donation in your name. For example, wouldn't it be great to see that your best friend has made a Christmas donation for meals in your name to his or her favorite nonprofit?

There are ways to give and share in the celebration of the gift: don't hesitate to make it happen! The Senior Center and our fellow nonprofits are proud to serve our communities in Sheridan County and we thank you for all that you do to help out as we celebrate and serve your fellow citizens!

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

- The public is welcome to view the Veterans Wall of Honor at the Sheridan Senior Center on display through Nov. 13. Stop by and visit the profiles of interviews of Sheridan County veterans. The Wall of Honor is displayed in the temporary lobby wall of the Senior Center.
- The Senior Center new hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. Weekend and holiday hours are 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The building will be open at 7:30 a.m. on select Saturdays that breakfast is served. Check the Senior Center website's Center Stage newsletter link for dates for
- breakfasts at www.sheridanseniorcenter.org.
- Bluegrass and \$2 Burgers, Tuesday, Nov. 15. Open to the public. No charge to stop in and listen to some fantastic fun music.
- Open Mic in the dining room on Wednesday, Nov. 16, 11 a.m. Advance sign-up for a spot at the mic is requested. Time limit: 5 minutes applies. See Jane Perkins at the Senior Center.
- The Senior Center will be serving a traditional Thanksgiving meal on Thursday, Nov. 24 during its regular meal hours 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

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