

Senior Center explains purpose and funding; visits, volunteers and donations welcomed

Written by Wauneta Breeze

Thursday, 16 February 2012 22:15 - Last Updated Thursday, 16 February 2012 22:18

By Joey Large

President of the Board of Directors

Wauneta Senior Services Center

The board of directors and staff of the Wauneta Senior Center would like to share with the community some basic information about the purpose of the Senior Center and how it operates. It is hoped that this article is informative and if readers would like to know more about the center's activities and programs additional articles can be provided in the future.

What is the purpose of the organization?

The corporation was organized in August of 1990 to "operate a facility for services and programs to the elderly." The original board of directors was Albert Loyd Christner, Elinor Denker, Eleanor Crabb, Mildred Brill and Leland DeHart. Over the years the operations of the center have been guided by various area citizens serving on the board of directors and through the growth and demands of the center it has moved from various building locations to its present location at 231 N. Tecumseh.

What are the services and programs offered?

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The main program is serving a daily noon meal to individuals over the age of 60 using the procedures recommended by the West Central Nebraska Area Agency on Aging (WCNAAA). This meal program provides a nutritionally balanced hot meal daily to those coming to the center and to those who have met the home delivered meal assessment guidelines. The meal program is also available to those under the age of 60, but they are charged a different amount for their meals.

The center also offers a place for socialization as weekly you will find individuals playing cards, dominos and participating in weekly wellness or exercise programs.

Are all of the activities subsidized?

There are many who feel the meal program and other activities of the center are totally subsidized by government programs or by tax dollars. Currently the only funding assistance is through the WCNAAA program which reimburses the center ONLY \$2.45 for each qualified meal that it serves daily. The remaining cost of the daily meals is covered by a "suggested donation" value as the center is not allowed to charge the over 60 age group for the meals they eat. Currently the suggested donation is \$4.00 but the daily meal average donation is below this amount.

How is the Senior Center financially?

The operations of every Senior Center in the state of Nebraska are heavily dependent on volunteer help and volunteer giving. The Wauneta Senior Center program is not supported by local or state tax dollars and the only outside funds received are through the WCNAAA meal fund of \$2.45 each. To help pay for the bills, the center has monthly money-making projects like

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the Sunday dinner, the pancake feed, and bingo activities and the building is available to rent for receptions, birthday parties, other celebrations and various seed and fertilizer meetings.

At the annual meeting held in July 2011, it was reported that the center has been operating in a negative financial status for quite awhile and that future trends were not favorable. The daily meal count has decreased to about 50 percent of what it was five years ago, the expenses of insurance, labor, utilities and food costs continue to go up and it is making it a challenge for the board and staff to be encouraged about the future.

Do you have other sources of funding?

The Wauneta Senior Center is very fortunate to have great community support that has come through cash donations or donations of paper products, canned goods, and other items that are needed. The center keeps a list of items that can be donated for those who would like to contribute in that manner. In the recent past we have been blessed with a matching fundraiser that was sponsored by BWTelcom and with considerable cash donations from local citizens and anonymous donors.

How is the Center going to operate on a balance budget?

The board of directors has discussed many ideas and options to resolve this continuing problem. The board is looking at internal operational changes that will save some costs but they will not be the total cure. The budget projections for 2011-2012 showed that an average daily meal count of 35 would help greatly in closing the financial void. However our average is continuing to trend downward and is closer to 20 meals a day than our hope of 35.

The board can sponsor additional fund drives asking for financial help but the best support is that received voluntarily from those who desire to give because of what a positive impact we are having on a family member or the community.

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Other options are to raise the suggested meal price, possibly open a thrift shop on the south side of the building or seek funding support through local tax dollar support. These are all good ideas but the board is hoping that stabilizing and then increasing our daily meal count will not make these other options necessary.

What can the Community do to help?

First, just remember that the center is in your community to provide a solid meal program for those over the age of 60 and the board encourages everyone to stop in and socialize and eat with us.

Second, you do not need to be over 60 to help at the center. Volunteer help is greatly appreciated and helping at the front desk, setting tables in the morning, helping in the kitchen, or volunteering to deliver home delivered meals even once a week is a great help in making the activities of the center work better.

And third, your donations of cash, paper products or listed canned goods are always appreciated.

Suggestions, ideas and concerns are always welcomed by the board of directors and staff. Please contact us at any time for a visit.

Board of Directors of the Wauneta Senior Services Center

- Joey Large, President
- Dale Wicke, Vice President
- Ruth Petsch, Secretary

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- Cindy Einspahr, Member
- Berneta Steinert, Member
- Kerry Hamilton, Director
- Mary Gage, Food Services