Efforts to save nursing home make me proud; thank you to all who have helped

It is a federal law that every nursing home must have a pharmacist who acts as their consultant on matters related to medications.

I have served in that position at Wauneta's nursing home since 1978. I believe that only two or three employees have worked there longer than I have.

When I opened the pharmacy in Wauneta in 1978 in the back of Berry's drugstore, I had only been out of pharmacy college for a little over a year. My exposure to nursing homes was limited to a few visits with my grandmother at Golden Ours Convalescent Home in Grant.

Rodney Einspahr of Imperial was the consultant for Kinder Kare in Wauneta at that time. He called me and said since I lived at Wauneta, I might as well have the job. I asked him what I would have to do and he said, "not much." It paid the huge sum of $10 per hour. How could I possibly refuse?

At that time my duties consisted primarily of checking to see that medications were being stored properly and I would destroy any medications which were outdated or no longer being used by a resident. I could usually get the job done in under an hour.

That all changed in the 1980s when Congress made a lot of regulations with the goal of improving patient care in nursing homes. My days of doing "not much" were over. I currently spend 8 to 10 hours every month in the facility to complete duties of the consultant pharmacist.

I have enjoyed my 33 year association with the Heritage residents and staff.

One year ago this week, the communities of Wauneta and Palisade were celebrating the success of the Bronco boys basketball team. Many locals made the trip to Lincoln to watch them compete in the state tournament.

It was amazing to see everyone else who showed up. Alumni from both Wauneta and Palisade and from the consolidated Wauneta-Palisade school, friends and relatives of the players and their parents, former teachers and administrators, people who knew someone who knew someone from Wauneta or Palisade, all came to watch and cheer on our team. Even more followed the radio and TV broadcasts of the games.

I talked to one gentleman who told me he came to the game because his grandmother used to live in Wauneta. He had never been to Wauneta and had only a vague idea of where we are located. It was great to have so many people rooting for the Broncos.

When the announcement was made that $150,000 would need to be raised to make possible the purchase of our Wauneta nursing home I did not doubt that goal would be reached.

As the donations came in and I read the letters to the editor the past few weeks, I started to get the same feeling that I had last year in Lincoln. There are a lot of people out there who are pulling for us to succeed in saving our Wauneta nursing home.

The basketball tournament was a lot of fun and our team's performance was a source of pride for our communities, but in the end it was just a game.

Keeping the Wauneta nursing home in operation is something that will have a real and lasting effect on our community.

Thank you Terry Engell, Page Johnston, and the Wauneta Village board for all the work you have done to make this happen.

Thank you to everyone who has donated. It has been wonderful to see and it makes me proud to be from Wauneta.

Kathleen Bartels

Wauneta, Neb