

## Let's get behind Green House project in Sheridan

By Cissy Dillon

Sheridan

To everyone who has a friend or family member who needs or may need elder care:

I first learned about the Green House concept for elder care about eight years ago when my friend, Hank Songer, asked me to watch a video with her. The video showed how the Green House model differs from traditional elder care, and it was heart-warming.



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While the traditional nursing home model has worked, it is less than optimal in many cases.

A few key points:

- The core difference between a traditional nursing home where the focus is on tasks is that the focus is on building relationships with people in a Green House.

- Elders who had not been talking, eating or feeding themselves in nursing homes were, within a week of moving to a Green House, sharing stories and gaining

weight. One woman even took a fork from her son, who thought he had to feed her, and began to feed herself.

- Evaluations that compared Green House elders with nursing home residents found that Green House residents enjoyed improved quality of life and emotional well-being, improved quality of care, and improved family and staff satisfaction.

- Currently, there are 58 Green House homes in 26 states, 30 more under construction, and 98 (including those in Sheridan) in development.

I was impressed by that first glimpse of the Green House model and have followed the progress to bring the model to Sheridan from the beginning.

An amazing group of committed individuals has been working on the project, and many in our community have contributed — some incredibly generously and others, like me, more on the meager side. Lately, as the deadline to match the Wyoming Business Council grant neared and the need for another \$800,000 became imminent, the possibilities seemed to be diminishing, and I, for one, began to wonder if the goal was attainable.

### Guest Commentary

Then I read what Kay Wallick wrote for The Sheridan Press last weekend. And I began to think and hope.

Kay noted that if 800 people pledged \$1,000 over three years, the goal could be met. I did the math and realized that \$1,000 spread over 36 months is less than \$30 a month.

I could do that! And I thought and hoped that there might be 799 others who could also.

Over the next two days, I talked with two friends, and both agreed that the project was worthwhile and spreading the pledge over three years was very doable. They were interested and said they'd do it.

Sheridan is a great place to live. Let's work together over the next weeks to raise the pledges to make Sheridan even better — especially by offering such a positive alternative for our elder population.

Please consider pledging to the Green House project — \$27.78 a month; or \$400 one year and \$300 each of the next two years. There are many possibilities for finding \$1,000 in a budget over three years.

Talk to your family and friends. If you are interested in making a pledge, please contact Kay Wallick.

Together — we can meet this challenge.