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Four women reflect on their service to their community

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Special to The Telegram

All religions promote service to each other. The Bible encourages it with the golden rule of do for others as you would have them do for you. But secular research suggests the same, saying it gives us relief of stress; relief of pain; a longer lifespan; lowers our blood pressure; reduces mild depression and is good for our careers.

One can search the internet for articles and quotes, but if we took time to visit with everyone we knew and asked the question: "How do you serve others?" we'd find out many do so much. They serve on boards, mentor youth, lead 4H or cub scout troops, coach soccer or t-ball, donate blood, take care of a sick family member or give those who cannot drive a ride to church. Everything makes a difference.

This article focuses on four women in David City and the work they do to make the community a better place to live by serving others.

Jo Taylor, Marilyn Arnold, Shirleen Kotil and Jean Hansen visited with me about volunteering, and they all expressed gratefulness for the work they are happy to do. It is their joy, and they are glad to pay it forward. Their biggest concern was that they were being singled out for a story as there are so many people in the community who do so much.

These service-oriented individuals weren't comfortable talking about themselves and so the conversation veered to the

importance of the causes they supported, the other people who work beside them and the people they served. They also weren't interested in having their photographs taken, but did agree to pictures of their hands, which help so many—serving food, cleaning, cooking and reaching out.

Of the photo I took, Jean Hansen said, "They look like my mother's hands." She adjusted her wedding ring before I took the picture. Everything about her conversation reminded me she is still, Mrs. Herman Hansen, first and foremost.

All four women agreed that retirement is when they began volunteering more in the community. They all belong to The United Methodist Church, but much of their volunteer work with blood drives, Food Connection, Job's Daughters, the American Legion Auxiliary, Meals on Wheels and the Library, are secular efforts.

All of the women agreed that volunteering made them feel good. Of those they serve, Shirleen Kotil said, "We don't see them as people in need. We see them as family."

Jean Hansen, when asked why she volunteers said with no frills, no fuss, "There's a need and I can help with it."

Jo Taylor said, "I like to give back because people have helped me along the way."

The women are a support to each other, and Shirleen Kotil said of Jo Taylor, "She drives me to get out and do things."

The times they serve together is also a time to

socialize and it "...fights the loneliness," said Jean Hansen.

These four women serve for David City Blood Drives. Marilyn Arnold is the coordinator, Jo Taylor works at the drives and helps Marilyn prepare the sloppy joes, and according to Shirleen Kotil, who said with a little grin, "I'm the one who eats all the cookies." All of the women have taken their turns being an escort; working the registration desk; working in the kitchen and serving in the canteen. "I still give blood, too," said Jean Hansen, who is now 86, and adds, "Helping out gives a feeling of self-satisfaction."

Marilyn Arnold perked up when we talked about the blood drives which she's organized since she retired from teaching in 2005. She got involved with the Red Cross Blood Drives after her nephew lost his battle with leukemia. Hesitant to talk about herself, she praised Mark Mohler who, "...calls 200 people to line up donors for each blood drive."

Area churches take turns donating 20 dozen cookies per blood drive. Marilyn also enjoyed talking about how both Aquinas and DCHS host blood drives, and about the scholarships the Red Cross gives them for doing so. Marilyn often speaks to the high school students, encouraging them to give blood. She said, young, strong and healthy kids make excellent candidates for blood donation. And, "If you think you don't have to donate because somebody else will, you're wrong. Your donation is import-

ant." She noted that in January and February, due to inclement weather, 140 blood drives were canceled in Nebraska. Because of that, there was a critical shortage of blood available in Nebraska. Marilyn also volunteers for Bone Creek Museum and helps at the Wellness Center when the Fun Run is held each summer. She also serves on the Board of Directors for the library.

Jo Taylor and Shirleen Kotil have served in the past on the Friends of the Library Board and continue to be members of The Friends. When asked how long they'd been, Jo said, "Oh, about a hundred years," and Shirleen chimed in with, "A hundred and fifty maybe!" Jo and Shirleen help with the library's Food for Thought programs. They set up the tables, serve the meals, then clean up after the lunch events. They were quick to tell how many other people help, such as, Judy Davis, Denise Bruner, Lucy Cooper, Joann Lukert, and others.

All four women interviewed have been a part of the Food Connection, organized by Louise Niemann, which gives donated food to those with need, held in The United Methodist Church basement each Thursday. The women talked about how great it has been to see people at the Food Connection help each other out, telling new families where to go to get other forms of assistance.

Jo Taylor noted that many groups give donations of money or food: the hospital, Region IV, the Villa, David Place, Runza,

Postal Service, Boy Scouts, Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, churches, and individuals, especially during gardening season donate produce. Jo served on the board for the Genesis House, and she believes the United Methodist Women has been one of the greatest impacts on her volunteer life because it helps her be more conscious of what kind of things people deal with now. It's made a difference in how the church (UMC in David City) thinks about helping in the community, too. An example is when St. Luke's gave 80 pairs of shoes to the Back-Pack program.

Meals on Wheels is a program offered through The Senior Center and a volunteer effort both Jean Hansen and Shirleen Kotil enjoy. Of Shirleen's involvement, she says she does it because, "maybe someday I'll need it." I asked her how many years she'd done Meals on Wheels. "I have no idea!" was her response. Oddly enough, Jean's response was similar. Shirleen took a break from delivering meals when her husband Roger was sick, then went back to it after he passed away.

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She admitted the job is harder on days with bad weather, but the smile on her face and pleasure in her voice showed the effort is worth it. "I love it! I hear all about their families. Even their dogs." She said it takes her around an hour and a half to deliver the meals, unless she visits with people a lot, which she tends to do. She noted that some days, she is the only person the meal recipients get to see, and they are so grateful. Shirleen also enjoys

driving people places they need to go, such as church.

Jean Hansen served over twenty-five years as Guardian for Job's Daughters, Bethel 51. Her late-husband, Herman, also helped by serving as the Associate Guardian. She felt strongly that it was important to help develop girls into leaders. Through Job's Daughters, the girls learned how to preside over meetings, how to be orderly, and how to keep order. Jean attended many state meetings, called Grand Bethels, and made many friends over her years with Job's Daughters.

When asked what might attribute her willingness to volunteer, Jean talked about what a positive person her mother had been; the work ethic her family set on the

farm; the importance of leading when necessary; and staying busy. Her father was a member of the American Legion. She said, "folks about couldn't bury a veteran without my dad being there in the Honor Guard at the funeral." Her mother was in the Legion Auxiliary. Jean currently serves as secretary of the Women's Auxiliary.

And of course, all of these women serve in their church in different ways. One story Jean Hansen tells, is how she originally came to be a member of St. Luke's United Methodist Church. A friend invited her to join the choir at The Methodist church in David City because at the time, they had a fun young choir director named Herman Hansen. She and her sister

joined the choir. One evening at a St. Patrick's Party, Herman asked Jean to dance. She asked him, "why me?" and he said, "Because I didn't think you'd know how to dance." What Herman didn't know was that Jean's sister Elaine had taught her how to dance while listening to the Hit Parade on the radio. Jean sang in the Methodist choir for sixty-five years and the pictures on her dining room wall showed a very happy family which she and Herman created.

These four volunteers are thankful for the opportunity to serve, and we thank them for their service and the memories they shared.



Volunteer Jean Hansen, who volunteers in David City, didn't want her picture taken, however, she agreed to have a picture of her hands taken, which have helped so many.



PHOTOS BY GINA BARLEAN, SPECIAL TO THE TELEGRAM

The hands of several volunteers completing community service work in the David City area.

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WEEKEND CALENDAR

To publicize meetings and events, submit the group's name, meeting time and meeting location in writing no later than three days before the event. All items must include the signature and phone number of the person submitting the information. Notices may be sent to Lifestyles Calendar, Columbus Telegram, P.O. Box 648, Columbus, NE 68602; faxed to 402-563-7500; or email news@columbustelegram.com. To publicize meetings and events for the online calendar, visit columbustelegram.com.

SUNDAY, MARCH 11

St. Michael's Annual St. Patrick's Carnival — 11a.m.-2 p.m. at the Boone County Fairgrounds in Albion. Roast beef and sausage dinner will be served 11a.m.-1 p.m. Social garden from noon-4 p.m., live auction, silent auction, raffle, games, prizes, cake walk.

Divine Mercy DVD Series — 2 p.m. at St. Isidore Church. First four Sundays of Lent.

KC St. Patrick's Day Dinner — 5-7 p.m. corned beef and cabbage dinner at KC Hall, 3115 6th St. Cost is 8

\$8 adults/\$4 children. Raffle

drawing at 7 p.m. Carr-out available.

MONDAY, MARCH 12

WIC Clinic — 10 a.m.-1 p.m. and 2-7 p.m. at the East Central District Health Department, 4321 41st Ave. Services are available free of charge. For more information or to make an appointment, call 402-564-9931.

Monday Night Book Adventures — 6:30 p.m. in the Children's Room in the upper level of Columbus Public Library. This week's theme is Dino-Rama. The program is free and open to the public.

TUESDAY, MARCH 13

WIC Clinic — 10 a.m.-1 p.m. and 2-6 p.m. at the East Central District Health Department in Schuyler, 316 E 11th St.

Gov. Ricketts at Rotary — noon-1 p.m. at Ramada. Meet and greet, lunch and discussion. Pay at the door meal is \$15 per person. RSVP to 402-564-2769.

Lunch and Learn — noon-1 p.m. in the Platte room at Columbus Community Hospital. Topic is The Food=Mood Connection. Preregistration requested. Contact Ileana Jarecki at ext. 4490 or email imjarecki@columbushosp.org.



Rotarians welcome new member, Davis, learn about county recycling

The Shenandoah Rotary Club met Tuesday, March 6. President Kerri Nelson called the meeting to order and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance and 4Way Test. The group welcomed new member Lee Ann Davis, Executive Director at Windsor Manor, as well as guest Carrie Falk, Director of the Shenandoah Public Library.

Pastor Nancy Thomas shared that Family Fun Night's Toilet Bowl Toss was successful, with about \$75 of quarters being exchanged for toilet paper being tossed into the porcelain thrones.

The Peru Rotary gave a few members tickets to attend a special event March 12 featuring a special Native American speaker.

Kim Leininger reminded members to turn in Flight Basketball Squad tickets, along with asked for help at the Rotary informational booth and the after-game meal on March 16, at the Shenandoah High School exhibition game.

Rotarian Carolyn Steinbrink shared a Rotary Minute, then gave out brochures of information she compiled regarding the Page County Landfill and Recycling.



Kay hired as loan officer at Shen Bank Iowa branch

Bank Iowa announced the appointment of Mitchell Kay to the position of loan officer, vice president. Kay most recently served as commercial lender, assistant vice president, for American National Bank in Omaha, Nebraska.

"Mitchell has a proven track record of developing strong business banking relationships," said John McBride, Bank Iowa regional president. "His experience with commercial, small business, agricultural and construction lending will be a great asset to the businesses and individuals who rely on Bank Iowa to put financial advice in the context of market pressures, economic trends and industry forecasts."

For Bank Iowa, Mitchell will identify and serve the Shenandoah and surrounding communities' financial needs through loan counseling, seminars and sales meetings, and by participating in the bank's community activities. He will also work with a wide range of clients, including agriculture, commercial, mortgage and



consumer, to identify their financial goals and develop plans for achieving them.

Prior to joining Bank Iowa, Mitchell worked for American National Bank for nearly 10 years. He began as a teller and held a variety of roles, including customer service representative, special assets account representative and small business commercial lender.

In addition to his work at the bank, Mitchell serves as mayor of McClelland, Iowa. He has also held leadership roles with his local Masonic Lodge, Shriners International, Rotary Club of Council Bluffs Centennial and Vocational Development Center, Inc. He holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Buena Vista University in Council Bluffs.



Memorial event set for Memorial Way

Brittany Szydelko

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Jim Meier of the Nebraska Honor and Remember chapter recently visited the Nebraska City Rotary to talk about Run for the Fallen, a nationwide run which will be coming through Nebraska City June 6.

The Run for the Fallen is a tribute trail across the nation that spans across 6,000 miles, over 19 States (Fort Irwin, Calif., to Arlington National Cemetery) in five months (April 7 through Aug. 5, 2018). The run individually recognizes nearly 20,000 fallen service members since the bombing of the USS Cole at Yemen's Aden harbor in October of 2000.

Each of the fallen runners is honored at special ceremonies at each mile marker of the trail.

Runners in the event will enter Nebraska City on June 6 and will come down Central Avenue before ending at Memorial Way, where the names of fallen soldiers honored that day will be read aloud. There will also be a presentation of an Honor and Remember flag to at least one family.

More plans for this event are still being organized.

On June 7, runners will depart Nebraska City and continue with the trail toward Omaha.

Captain of the Run for the Fallen, Bruce Husted, presented a poster at the Rotary meeting that he donated to Nebraska City which was embedded with all of the names of fallen heroes since the war on terror.

Nebraska City's Memorial Way, with its military service themed mural, dedicated at a special Veterans Day ceremony in 2017, seems to be the perfect spot for a program honoring veterans. Mayor Bryan Bequette said he hopes that Nebraska City residents will be out in force at Memorial Way on June 6.

"I hope that Nebraska City can come out and help support the run to remember those that have fallen in the war on terror," said Bequette. "The Nebraska chapter worked hard with the national Honor and Remember organization to make sure

the run came through Nebraska, so I want to make sure folks come out and help support that."

Why run? Meier said the reason for conducting this event was to make sure that the worst fear for every loved one of a fallen service member is never realized.

"A family's biggest fear is that their loved one will be forgotten," said Meier.

The Honor and Remember organization's mission is to make sure the fallen soldiers are, indeed, honored and remembered by presenting their families with a personalized Honor and Remember flag that is embroidered and stitched with the soldier's name, date of death, and ranking details. These flags are donated by the organization, and are often times funded by a local company in the family's current town or by their friends or family.

The Honor and Remember flag was created by a fallen soldier's grieving father. The fallen soldier (George Anthony Lutz II ((Tony))) was killed in Iraq in 2005. Lutz' father sought out a universally recognized symbol to acknowledge the American service men and women who never make it home. He could not find one, thus the Honor and Remember flag was created.

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Looking at the flag itself, the red field represents the blood, spilled by brave men and women in America's military throughout the nation's history, who willingly gave their lives so that citizens all would remain free. The blue star represents active service in military conflict. This symbol originated with World War I, but on this flag it signifies service through all generations from the American Revolution to present day. The white border beneath and surrounding the gold star recognizes the purity of sacrifice. There is no greater price an American can pay than to give his or her life in service to our country. The gold star signifies the ultimate sacrifice of a warrior in active service who will not return home. Gold reflects the value of the life that was given. The folded flag signifies the final tribute to an individual life that a family sacrificed and gave to the nation. The

flame is an eternal reminder of the spirit that has departed this life yet burns on in the memory of all who knew and loved the fallen hero.

To be involved in the run as a mile marker speaker or a runner, contact the Nebraska City Tourism and Commerce at (402) 873-6654. For more information on the Honor and Remember flag and organization, contact Jim Meier at (402) 490-9293 or via email at meier260@cox.net.



Nebraska City Mayor Bryan Bequette, center, poses with representatives of the Honor and Remember organization during a recent meeting of the Nebraska City Rotary at the Eagles Club.

PHOTO BY BRITTANY SZYDELKO