

# Providing strong support for senior community

By **Julianne Endres**

Watertown Area Community Foundation

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Sept. 8 is Grandparents' Day, so this week's Watertown Area Community Foundation's story tells of its long-standing support for seniors. WACF has granted more than \$150,000 to the age 60-plus community, including funding of 60s-plus dining and the Senior Activities Center. The grant total includes designated distributions from donors' funds to Jenkins Living Center.

Age, for many it's just a number.



Sometimes those numbers can get you a discounted meal or a movie ticket.

Depending on "your number," you may be dubbed as "more experienced" or "older and wiser" than your counterparts.

Whatever your age, there is no shortage of activities for seniors in the Watertown area, which this weekend welcomes about 500 contestants in the SD Senior Games. Local seniors have had plenty of practice activities at the Senior Activities Center.

"Roughly 80 of the contestants are local," said Andrew Magedanz, city Park & Recreation adult and senior activities coordinator. "A lot of their participation stems from the senior center."

Magedanz has had his position for about three years and replaced Jeremy Herrboldt, current

recreation superintendent, who had held the role since its inception in 2009. Funding was supported by a three-year start-up grant from the Watertown Area Community Foundation.



Herrboldt said his first few years in the position had challenges. Activities such as Wii bowling, computer classes and disc golf were added with more traditional ones such as horseshoes, cornhole and shuffleboard.

"The challenge was to change the stigma of a Senior Center and



make it a fun place that people want to come to," said Herrboldt about the challenge of drawing more seniors to the activities other than just members of the center.

Thanks to Herrboldt and Magedanz' efforts, as well as Senior Activities Center representatives, the numbers have been on a slow incline. There is ample room for more.

"The goal has been to offer something for everyone, and I believe we are pulling it off and it keeps getting more diverse each year," Herrboldt said.

Beyond a long list of activities, there are dances Wednesday evenings and BINGO every Friday. An updated BINGO machine was also supported by a WACF grant. Other grants at the center have assisted with new tables and chairs, new window shades, a new door, and other improvements at the facility.

60s-plus Dining, coordinated through the Inter-Lakes Community Action Partnership, has also been supported by WACF grants.

"We serve 120 to 150 daily which includes meals at the Center as well as those delivered to apartments and homes," said Rita Rahlf, site manager.

The Senior Center also offers meals seven days a week, including frozen ones for the weekend and when blizzards are predicted. Rahlf also said WACF funds allowed the center to purchase new refrigerators.

"When equipment like that goes down, it's hard for a nonprofit to cover those expenses," Rahlf said. "We are very appreciative of the support whether it's from grants, the United Way or others in the community."

Lloyd Christians, former Senior Activities Center president, said the facility is all about friendliness to the people it serves. Chris-

tians and wife Lorraine now reside at Edgewood and don't get to the center as much, but they won't forget it.

"It's a haven for people to go to," he said. "It's not just about going there for something to eat. We entertained ourselves and socialized. We just enjoyed being there."

Current president Ellen Dreher said the center's goal is to keep its members and visitors as active as possible.

For Watertown's size we should be seeing a lot more people of that 60-something number coming through our doors," she added.

For a tour or more information contact Magedanz at 882-6260. For more information on 60s-plus Dining, call Rahlf at 882-2166.