

“You Have to Get Involved to Keep Going”

Agency: Center for Active Generations

Program: Rural Senior Program

Service: Provides resources to seniors in small towns to participate in meaningful activities and programs.

Need: A Sioux Empire United Way research project found that rural seniors face many challenges not faced by urban seniors because of a lack of community resources. The SD population of 60+ is at 18.3%. We are eighth in the nation for the percentage of the population in the 60+ age group.

Impact: Center for Active Generations staff help plan activities and trips for seniors in Lennox and Canton and also provides staff support in Dell Rapids. Over 110 individuals belong to the center in Lennox, with 16 attending exercise classes and 25 participating in monthly birthday parties.

Many people look forward to retirement as a time to slow down. Eleanor is not one of those people.

“You have to get involved to keep going,” says Eleanor.

And keep going she did. Eleanor is one of the founding members of the Lennox Senior Center, which opened in 1974. The program and its activities are supported by the Sioux Empire United Way through Center for Active Generations.

“We would give plays, hold suppers, play cards, exercise together,” continues Eleanor. “I went everyday, I really just liked being a part of the center.”

Eleanor recently moved to Sioux Falls to be closer to her family. And even though she’s in her 90s she’s now helping her new friends and neighbors stay as active as she is. She has started and is leading an exercise class twice a week for those who live in the same building.

“I asked the building owner if they offered exercise classes, and offered to start them myself,” says Eleanor. “We started with 10 people and now have 20, even the men want to work out.”

Thanks to the Sioux Empire United Way, individuals in rural communities can still live a happy, active life, like Eleanor, “Being a part of the Lennox Center gave me something to do, a place to belong.”



Eleanor (in center) leading her group in exercises.