

Meal site, Golden Age share space

By MARY LOU OLSON

Oberlin seniors say life is better since the Golden Age Center began to provide recreation and a place to get together almost 30 years ago, and later added a daily hot lunch.

Senior citizens can enjoy a meal, then join friends to play cards, add pieces to a puzzle, stitch on a quilt or play a game of pool at the center, 220 N. Penn Ave.

The center opened in 1976 in a rented building across the street, now owned by Pauls Funeral Home. Aleen Van Vleet was the director.

Several years later, the present building was purchased with a federal grant and matching money by DeCATUR County.

Volunteers spent hours renovating the building, the former Pepsi Cola Bottling plant. A refrigerator, piano, coffee pots and other items were donated.

A year later, a drive raised \$10,000 to renovate the 40-by-70-foot back room for a dance hall and all-purpose room. Among volunteer laborers on that project were Kenneth Van Vleet, Dale Gaines, Denzil Townsend, Bill Stevens, Walter Zwickle, Fred Ploussard, Glen Shipley, Elden Cody and Ival Kathka.

In November 1989, a meal site opened in the back room with Julie Gallentine as manager. Hot meals were delivered weekdays from Atwood to Oberlin by Frank Sawyer, and now Leanna Ashford of Atwood brings them.

Wesley and Eulaine Benda are among seniors regulars at the meal site.

"It is really special and really great to get out with people," Mrs. Benda said, "plus there is no cooking, no dishes and no waiting."

Wilma May added, "The meals are hot and excellent, and Wesley entertains us with his humor. Our favorite is the one he shared about the time that neighbors called EMTs when he was lying in the front yard puzzling how to fix his watering system. Now, with a twinkle in his eye, he says he keeps moving when he is in the yard."

Edna Mott said she comes mostly for the social benefits and to get out of the house.

Vivian Bishop, 95, has been collecting the \$2.25 for the lunches for the past 12 years.

Delores Zodrow became manager in June 1997, replacing Evelyn Hill. Volunteers who help serve include Lois Fredrickson, Pat Wurm, Julie Gallentine, Mary Ann Amack, Marian Franker, Beth Goltl, Florine Vernon, Estella Waldo, Alice Shirley, Rosella Meitl and Faye Miller. Substitutes are Patty Brown, Kelva Swindler and Donna Lincoln. Edna Mott and Floyd Edgett count the money and take it to the bank, and Marion Wenger cleans up.

Lance Lohofener said he has helped deliver meals for more than eight years. Volun-



COLLECTING THE MONEY for meals at the Oberlin Meal Site for the past 12 years has been Vivian Bishop, 95.

teer drivers are Charlie Corcoran, Pat Wurm, Dwight Stateham and Gaylen Huntley.

Senior citizens who would like to join the group for meals but can't drive should call County Clerk Marilyn Horn at 475-8102. For home delivery, call Mrs. Zodrow at 475-3222. Reservations for meals need to be called to Mrs. Zodrow at the same number by 1 p.m. the day before.

"We invite those 60 and older and their guests to come for the daily lunches Monday through Friday," she said. "Home delivery is also available for those unable to attend due to social or physical disabilities. We also welcome those working who would

like to pick up a meal at noon. Those under 70 may also attend at a cost of \$4.50 per meal."

Many stay for cards and other activities in the front room in the afternoon. Dorothy Moore has been manager of the center since October 2001. She said that although most play pinochle and pitch, open bridge is scheduled on the last Thursday of the month. Quilters work on their projects, and proceeds are used for improvements at the center. A pool table, puzzles, books, and magazines are available and everyone enjoys the monthly birthday parties.

Improvements made with memorial money and contributions have included cupboards, desk, tables, coat rack, magazine and book racks and a piano.

Button collectors and the Oberlin Royal Neighbors meet at the center once a month. People can use the rooms for family reunions, anniversaries, birthday parties, garage sales and alumni gatherings. The building is now owned by the county.

Mrs. Van Vleet has been a regular card player since the center opened.

"I look forward every day to coming to the center to play cards and visit with friends," she said.

"I just like to play cards!" Dewaine Stapp added.

Doris Gilbert joined the group six months ago and rides the county bus, since she does not drive.

All senior citizens are welcome to attend a monthly potluck at 12:30 p.m. on the third Sunday of the month.

The present board includes Barb Solko, president; Mary Horney, secretary; Max Carman, treasurer; and Henry Edgett, Elsie Goodnight, Calvin Ufford and Myrna Jones.

An average of 40 meals are served daily, but there is plenty of room for all seniors who would like to join the group for lunch, as well as an afternoon of recreation.

For details, call Mrs. Zodrow or Mrs. Moore at 475-3222.



ENJOYING AN AFTERNOON of quilting at Golden Age Center was Faye Miller (above). Senior citizens get a hot, nutritious meal at the Oberlin Meal Site on weekdays. Shown (below, from left) are Floyd Edgett, Walt Meitl, Wesley and Eulaine Benda and Edna Mott.



SERVING UP MEALS at the Oberlin Meal Site on Friday were Estella Waldo (above left) and director Delores Zodrow. Checking her cards during a game at Golden Age Center was Merle Shirley, who says she enjoys meeting with friends.



Staff photos
by Kimberly Davis