

Gillette News Record

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DRAWN TO ART

Creative siblings win handful of awards in graphic novel character contest, **B1**

MORE HARDWARE Thunder Basin boys, girls bring back trophies from state hoops, **C1**



News Record Photo/Mike Moore

Kasi Hartsoch of Kasi's Home Kitchen places an open sign made from an apron outside her home in downtown Gillette to signify her kitchen is open and taking orders. Hartsoch is one of a handful of local home cooks kickstarting their own home-based businesses through the relatively new YouFeed app.

In-person visitation resumes at the Legacy

New federal guidelines, improving community outlook sparks change

By **JAKE GOODRICK**
NEWS RECORD WRITER

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Residents of local long-term care facilities can reconnect with their families and loved ones this week when the Legacy Living and Rehabilitation Center resumes in-person visitation.

After nearly a year of severe restrictions on visitation at the assisted living facility, residents and staff at the Legacy are excited for the change, said Campbell County Health spokesperson Dane Joslyn.

"They are very happy for residents to see their families," Joslyn said. "They are working to be prudent that all of the infection prevention precautions are in place — mask wearing, distancing, not coming when families are feeling sick."

The in-person visitation will resume Wednesday and move forward with visitor times from 9-11 a.m. and 1-3 p.m. Monday through Friday.

All visits must be scheduled in advance and visitors will be asked to leave by the end of each time slot. Each visitor will be limited to two visits a week.

The new visitation rules will be discontinued immediately if there are confirmed COVID-19 cases at the Legacy or if the county's COVID-19 positivity rate exceeds 10%, according to the Campbell County Health press release.

During the in-person visits, the safety guidelines that have become common practice throughout the Campbell County Health network will still be upheld. Visitors will be screened for symptoms before their visits and required to wear personal protective equipment. The equipment will be provided each visit.

Only one visitor at a time will be allowed for in-room visits and all visits are to happen in residents' rooms. The living room, bistro and other common areas are off limits to visitation, the press release said.

Recent federal recommendations from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend a change to long-term care facility visitation guidelines.

The recommendations for "responsible indoor visitation" include visitation for all residents, regardless if they or their visitors have been vaccinated.

However, the federal suggestions made exceptions for communities with a COVID-19 positivity rate greater than 10%, residents with confirmed COVID-19 infections or those actively in quarantine.

The new Legacy visitation rules will allow it to host eight guests at a time in each of its 20-room resident blocks, of which there are eight.

The two-visit per week limit is to ensure that each family and resident can have time for visits while making sure the facility has enough staff in place to accommodate the visits, Joslyn said.

The new guidelines are a significant change from the facility's heavy restrictions through most of the pandemic. With the change in visitation restrictions, Joslyn said residents are becoming hopeful that it's a sign of more change to come.

They are hopeful of "being able to continue, being able to maintain having visits and the hope for returning to as much as it was before COVID as possible," she said.

Bon 'app'étit

Wyomingites turn to tech and their own kitchens for pandemic relief

By **JAKE GOODRICK** * NEWS RECORD WRITER

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When the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic first began to impact Wyoming last spring, Kasi Hartsoch took them in stride.

At the time, she and her husband, Zach Aars, maintained steady work. She had her business helping people file taxes, which she said was doing well, and he had steady work through the video game development company he operates.

She also had some side work cooking

for families and designing menus catered to the special diets of her clients.

But as the months went on, their clients began to dry up. By the time the calendar turned to 2021, she said they needed to find another way to augment their income.

"It's been steadily getting harder," Hartsoch said. "We are more fortunate than most, I think. But we're definitely feeling the effect here."

That's when she came across YouFeed.

Now she's betting on herself, her cooking chops and a startup company, YouFeed, to supplement her household income and regain some of the stability lost in the later months of the pandemic.

YouFeed is a new app that enables users to buy homemade meals directly from neighbors in their community or earn money by starting a kitchen, creating a menu and selling their own home-cooked dishes.

If it works, the time and effort she and other local cooks have invested on their alternative culinary incomes will have been validated.

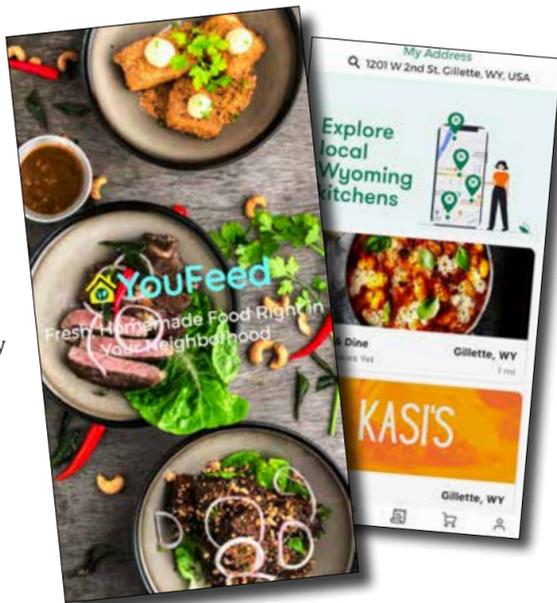
With the app's user base beginning to grow, they're betting it will.

From app to table

As a kid, YouFeed CEO Raman Mehrzad wanted to be a cook. But as part of an Iranian family who found refuge in Sweden during the Iran-Iraq War, he said his parents wanted more for him.

Still, his mother's cooking inspired Mehrzad. The way she combined and created flavors, cooking traditional Persian dishes awed him and others. He learned that food is more than sustenance. It can evoke culture, history or even express love.

His mother's cooking exposed him to that at a young age. She was not a professional chef, but given the right resources



The YouFeed app can be downloaded for Apple and Android devices.

and knowledge, he said she could have been.

While he never became a chef himself, Mehrzad ended up doing OK. He eventually graduated from medical school in Sweden before completing residencies and

research fellowships in the United States at Brown University and Harvard Medical School hospitals.

"My mom being a great chef, she never had the opportunity because she never had the money because she didn't have the business skills," Mehrzad said. "And the biggest reason for why most restaurants fail is lack of business skills and high expenses. I thought, how can I bridge this gap?"

Enter YouFeed, a new app that strives to connect home cooks in Wyoming with local customers in their communities.

The way the app works is simple. Chefs who have been approved by YouFeed open their own digital kitchens, create custom menus and sell homemade food to customers directly through the app. Customers download and open the app to search for nearby chefs, place their orders and either pick up the food or have it delivered.

For the chefs, it gives them an opportunity to monetize their cooking without having to undergo the startup cost and risk of opening a restaurant. And for customers, it provides a way to get some home-cooked meals without having to turn on their own stoves while supporting their neighbors.

See **BON APP-ÉTIT**, Page A7



WEATHER, A2
HIGH 37
LOW 26

COVID-19 AND EDUCATION: Internet access for students a 'big burden' for some districts, **A2**

INSIDE
BLOTTER, A2
CLASSIFIEDS, E1-E3
DIVERSIONS, E4

OBITUARIES, A4
OPINION, A3
SPORTS, C1-C4

