

Boise nonprofit does its part to help seniors stay home

Boise at Home officially opened in February. It has signed up 29 members and 18 volunteers, said spokeswoman Diane Ronayne. Members pay an annual fee (charter memberships are still available for \$425 a year, or \$552 for household) and reap any number of benefits. They could include rides to the grocery store, snow shoveling, computer tutoring and regular invitations to social outings.

Volunteers, including one who is also a member, provide the services. Boise at Home operates in Boise and Garden City. It's open to people age 50 and older.

Founders started the group last year with the recognition that large numbers of older people are capable of living independently in their own homes, want to do so and can, with modest support. One client called Boise at Home because she had heavy flower pot that needed moving, said Ronayne. Another client, who said she joined mostly to help the fledgling nonprofit but didn't anticipate using its services, injured herself while traveling in India. Boise at Home volunteers stepped in to help during her recovery.

"Thousands of people are turning 65 each day," said Ronayne. Programs like Boise at Home are bargains compared to other services for seniors, she said, noting one member who is sight-impaired who had been paying \$500 each month to have someone read her mail and help her shop for groceries. She's now paying less than that for a full year of services.

Boise at Home vets its volunteers carefully, said Ronayne. They undergo background checks, adding another layer of security.

Boise at Home will host an information meeting from 4 to 6 p.m. on Aug. 29 at The Lcoal, 5616 W. State St. in Boise. Free wine, beer and hors d'oeuvres will be available. The public is welcome to come learn more about the program, whether as members, volunteers or both.

Find more information online at boiseathome.org or call 208-424-HOME (4663).