



# VOICES Viewpoint

## What is VOICES?

VOICES, Inc., is a non-profit organization. We provide Long-Term Care Ombudsman services to you whether you live in a nursing home or licensed assisted living center in Vanderburgh County. We investigate your complaints, help resolve your problems, and protect your rights. We can help with quality of life issues, selecting the right facility, sources of payment, advanced directives and resident rights. We also provide information and training to residents, their families, staff and the general public.

**Call Michelle Motta or Alicia Reeves at 1-812-423-2927 for free, confidential assistance**



You may be familiar with the regular articles, in the *VOICES Viewpoint*, written by Judith Mangum. For decades, Judith has been a resident of long-term care; but more importantly, Judith has been a staunch advocate for those living in long-term care homes. In addition, she uses her written works to educate, entertain and delight the many folks who read her articles. Well . . . Judith recently won the **Special Lifetime Advocacy Award from the Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care**.

The Consumer Voice is the leading national voice representing consumers in issues related to long-term care, helping to ensure that consumers are empowered to advocate for themselves. They are a primary source of information and tools for consumers, families, caregivers, advocates and ombudsmen to help ensure quality care for the individual. **The Special Lifetime Advocacy Award** recognizes a special individual who has dedicated his/her life to advocated for quality care and quality of life for long-term care consumers. **Congratulations Judith!**

## *Dance the Night Away—Twist or Treat* was a success thanks to these sponsors:



**\$1,000:** Berry Global; Healthsouth Deaconess Rehabilitation Hospital;

Advantage Print Solutions; American Senior Communities; All About You DJ

**\$500:** Altstadt's; VFW Post 1114; Harding Shymanski & Co; Sheets Charles & Charles

**\$250:** Dr. Andrew Tharp & The Vision Care Center; The Eye Group of Southern Indiana; Southern Business Machines; Bethel Manor; Riverwalk Communities; Paul's Pharmacy Zion Lippe UCC Sunday School; Three i Design; Blackard & Brinkmeyer Attorney; Deaconess Kemper CPA Group; Evansville Protestant Home; House Hunter, Nate Shepherd Team

**\$100:** Ziemer Funeral Homes; Family First Companion Care; Lefler Collision & Glass; Home Instead Senior Care; Margaret Kimmel, Raymond James & Assoc; Bell Oaks



## Upcoming Events

### October

- Residents' Rights Month
- Long-Term Care Planning Month

### November

- Veterans Day
- Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month

## DID YOU KNOW



- Residents have a right to use personal belongings.
- Residents have a right to access their personal and medical records.
- Residents have a right to visitors, whether they are relatives, friends, or anyone else of the residents' choosing.
- Residents have a right to manage their own financial affairs.

# — THE RESIDENT ADVOCATE —

The Resident Advocate - a newsletter for residents of long-term care facilities containing news and information on rights and care issues, plus updates on national policy. Please share with your neighbor when you've finished reading this issue!

## Take Your Voice to a Resident Council

Residents have the right to meet as an organized group called a Resident Council. Residents should choose the council leaders, run the meetings, invite guests (including staff and administration), and decide priority issues. A resident council can:

- Discuss concerns about the facility and the care received
- Talk to staff about improvements
- Welcome and support new residents
- Help make life the best it can be for all residents

Get involved in the Resident Council in your facility and ask another resident to go with you to a meeting! Bring your ideas for activities or programs you'd like to see, or concerns you have that need to be resolved. Invite your local ombudsman to talk to the Council about residents' rights. Resident Councils are an important way to be involved.

## Care for the Caregiver by: Dick Weinman



A caregiver **gives** care. But s/he **takes** care, too. In fact, to **get** good care, the resident has to **give** it, as well. All this give and take means that each caregiver and each resident is a unique person with unique needs. From my dozen years as an Assisted Living Facility resident, I've become friends with my caregivers. The young ones tell me their aspirations. The older ones tell me about their families. Many caregivers from the past are friends on Facebook.

How come? I compliment them on a job well done. I let them know I appreciate their work. I tell them about the value of their work. I try to understand the stresses and pressures of their work and of their personal lives. (They often don't hear that from the Administrator.) Above all, I empathize. They, in turn, can appreciate and respect me.





## Be Your Own Best Advocate: Getting the Food You Like to Eat

A common issue raised by residents is about the food served. If you are unsatisfied with the food you receive, what can you do? Talk about what food options you would like to have during a care planning meeting. Work with the Resident Council and the Director of Food Services to talk about food options. Invite him/her to a resident council meeting to discuss concerns and ideas.

The following suggestions are being used in facilities around the country to improve residents' dining experiences:

- Create a food committee made up of residents and staff to suggest and review menus and food service options
- Swap favorite family recipes with other residents and facility staff
- Organize an event where residents write the menu and help prepare the food
- Create days to try foods from different cultures
- Vote on favorite meals to have each week
- Talk to facility staff or your local ombudsman about having flexible snack and meal times
- Ask to have a variety of drink options available – this also helps you stay hydrated
- Let a staff member know if you need extra help eating or drinking

You should be given choices about the kinds of food you eat, the times of day you eat, and how your food is served.

## Learn more about the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program



The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program advocates for residents of long-term care facilities. Across the country, staff and volunteer representatives of the Ombudsman Program directly serve residents, helping them obtain quality care, quality of life, and exercise their rights.

Ombudsmen help residents by:

- Investigating complaints about care, quality of life, or any concerns raised
- Sharing information about quality care and ways to enhance quality of life
- Promoting and working with resident and family councils
- Empowering residents and promoting self-advocacy
- Helping residents and others understand residents' rights
- Support residents in exercising their rights

Each facility must post the ombudsman's contact information in a place where residents can easily see it. If you need help finding an ombudsman in your area, call 202-332-2275 or email [info@theconsumervoice.org](mailto:info@theconsumervoice.org).



For more information, visit  
[www.theconsumervoice.org](http://www.theconsumervoice.org)

Phone: 202-332-2275

Email: [info@theconsumervoice.org](mailto:info@theconsumervoice.org)



## Protect Yourself from Loss and Theft of Personal Items

During the Holiday season I receive many calls about residents who are missing items they received as gifts. I hope you have never had the unpleasant experience of finding that your personal items have disappeared—either through loss or theft. Personal loss is NOT an inevitable fact of life in a nursing home or assisted living home, and you do not have to accept it!

For most residents, the only link to the past may be a few cherished possessions, so protecting these invaluable belongings from loss or theft is of great importance.

### Here are some things you can do to protect your belongings:

- Use a permanent marker to write your name on clothing and other personal items in an area that does not show when worn or used.
- Engrave or permanently mark dentures and eyeglasses with your name. (Most dentists are able to engrave dentures.)
- Ask to see your personal inventory sheet and verify all your possessions are listed.
- RETAIN A COPY of the inventory sheet and keep any receipts or appraisals of these items for your records. Better yet, take photos of your items to help in locating them, receiving reimbursement or making a police report.
- Ask to be provided with something that can be locked, such as a drawer or box. Keep the key with you at ALL times and find out if anyone else has a copy of the key.
- Only keep small amounts of cash for your use. Homes are obligated to maintain a “Patient Trust Account” for you (at your request) and to provide reasonable access (during normal business hours) to your account.
- Identify the staff personnel responsible for investigating reports of loss and theft. Report any loss to that person IN WRITING as soon as you can AND SEND A COPY TO YOUR OMBUDSMAN (see page four for address). Make sure the home gives you the results of the investigation.
- Request reimbursement if the property cannot be recovered.

Federal and state laws require long-term care homes to protect the personal possessions of their residents and have written policies for handling loss and theft. Ask to see a copy of these policies. If a home fails to maintain a reasonably secure environment, the home may be held responsible for the loss or theft of your personal property.

### Ombudsman's Corner

We wish you a happy holiday and are looking forward to advocating for you in the new year!  
Best wishes,  
Alicia and Michelle, your Ombudsmen



### VOICES is Only Able to Provide Essential Advocacy Services to Those in Long-Term Care Homes Because of:

**Donations from generous people!** Partial funding for the Ombudsman Program is provided by CDBG funds administered through the City of Evansville, Department of Metropolitan Development.

In addition, we are grateful for The Thomas A. & Sharon K. Ruder Foundation who partners with VOICES, Inc. to uphold the dignity and quality of life of those living in long-term care homes in Vanderburgh County.

