

# Ombudsman Buzz



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## What is an

### Ombudsman?

- “Ombudsman” is a Swedish word, meaning “Citizens’ Advocate.”
- The Long Term Care Ombudsman is an advocate for residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities.
- Our mission is to help resolve complaints, to protect and promote residents’ rights, and to educate people about matters that concern the elder population. Our services are **free and confidential**.
- Ombudsman Buzz is a new, quarterly newsletter for nursing home and assisted living residents, and their friends and families.
- For questions, contributions, or suggestions for stories in the Ombudsman Buzz, contact your local Ombudsman:

**Jessica Money**

**LifeSpan Resources, Inc**

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## Activities!

It’s summertime and activities are on everyone’s mind! Activities are an important part of quality of life. Here is some information about what facilities are required to provide:

- A plan of meaningful activities that are appropriate for the residents’ needs, interests and abilities
- Daily activities, including evenings and weekends
- A comfortably furnished living and lounge area for activities and dining
- Equipment and supplies for independent and group activities, with appropriate storage. Locked storage may be required for potentially dangerous items, like scissors
- Group social activities, indoors and outdoors, exercise, and outings
- Spiritual activities
- Creative activities such as arts and crafts, drama, music, and educational programs
- Individual attention
- Promotion of interaction with the community

If residents are not happy with the activities that are currently offered in your facility, they can attempt to address the matter by themselves or with the assistance of resident council. Don’t be afraid to ask for special activities if you think they would benefit others. These could include poker nights, a gardening club, a book club, etc. Activities don’t have to be lead by the activity director; residents can lead them, too! If you have ideas or suggestions, speak up! You may not be the only one who wants to try something new.

## What is Quality of Life?

Quality of life means that you live a meaningful existence, and you have control over your own decisions as much as possible. It includes enjoyable meals, meaningful activities, spiritual fulfillment, relationships, dignity, and more. Your facility is required to provide an environment and care that preserves your dignity and promotes quality of life for each resident. They are also required to provide “reasonable accommodations” to assist you in engaging in relationships or activities that enhance your quality of life. No one can tell you what quality of life means to YOU; that’s for YOU to decide!

Do you feel that staff treat you with respect? Are you allowed to refuse orders, or to receive care on your preferred schedule rather than for the convenience of someone else? Residents should be allowed to determine what is best for themselves as long as those decisions do not cause harm to or threaten the welfare of other residents. Safety is important, and so is your dignity and quality of life. See page 3 for more information on understanding quality of life.



### ~~~~~Did you know?~~~~~

Watermelon is a vegetable! It is related to cucumbers, pumpkin and squash.

July is National Ice Cream Month. The average American eats 5 1/2 GALLONS of ice cream every year!

The Summer Solstice is the longest day of the year, the first day of summer, and occurs in June. The days are already getting shorter! Have you noticed?

Crickets chirp more frequently when it’s warm outside. You can actually tell the temperature by counting the number of chirps in 15 seconds and adding 37!

## Senior Games, 2011

This year was the 25th anniversary of Senior Games, hosted by LifeSpan Resources. Senior Games is an annual, week-long event for people over the age of 55 to compete in various games with other seniors. Some of the activities include golf, horseshoes, fishing, a dance contest and bake-off, putt-putt, and more, and are usually held around the first week in June. This year’s Nursing Home Games (one day only) were held at the Salvation Army in New Albany on June 1st, and good times were had by all! Thanks to all of the facilities and residents who participated. We look forward to seeing you next year!

## Medicare Update . . .



Are you:

- in a nursing home AND
- receiving skilled care after a recent hospital stay (usually for therapy) AND
- receiving Medicare benefits to pay for your current nursing home stay?

Did you answer “Yes.”? Then you may have been told Medicare will not continue to pay for your nursing home stay, if you go on an outing. This is NOT true!

It used to be if you were physically able to go on an outing, then Medicare claimed you didn’t need to be in a nursing home. Now, Medicare has decided a short leave of absence for the purpose of attending a special religious service, holiday meal, family event, going on a car ride, or for a trial visit home is allowed. Going on an outing will not cause you to lose Medicare payments for skilled level of nursing home care.

Medicare Benefit Policy Manual, Pub. 100-02, Ch.8, S 30.7.3 (Page 35, Example, second paragraph)

[www.cms.hhs.gov/manuals/downloads/bp102c08.pdf](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/manuals/downloads/bp102c08.pdf)

## **Understanding Quality of Life, A Few Examples:**

- Do you decide when to go to bed, or when to get up?
- Is your hair washed, trimmed, combed the way you want it? Are your nails kept trimmed and clean?
- Are you asked which activities you would like to attend? If there are no activities which interest you, does someone ask you what activities you would like?
- Is your private space respected? (No one should change the station on your radio or TV, open your drawers, or move your personal belongings without your permission.)
- When staff members come to your door do they knock AND wait for your response before they enter?
- Have staff members asked you what name you prefer to go by, and do they use it respectfully?
- Are you able to choose between a tub bath or shower and whether you prefer to bathe morning, afternoon, or evening? If you use a shared bathroom, are you ushered down the hall in your night clothes, or naked under a blanket? This should never be!

**It is OK to speak up! You are NOT causing trouble by making your wishes known! It’s your right.**

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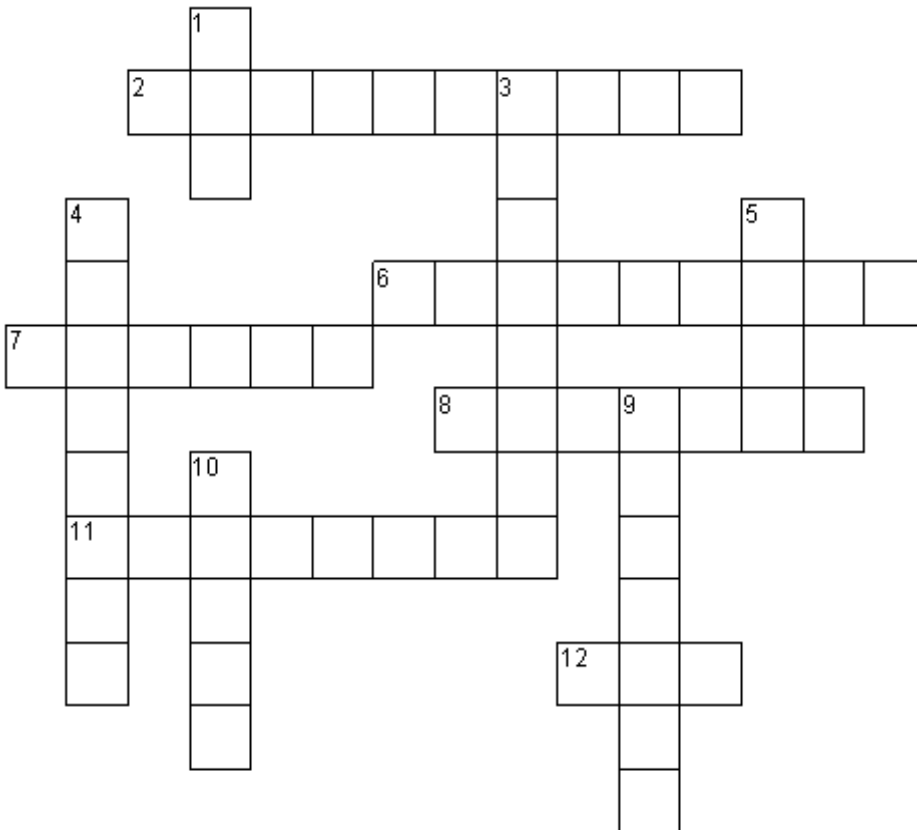
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*LifeSpan Resources, Inc, is the Area Agency on Aging. We provide a number of services to the Aging and Disabled populations of Clark, Floyd, Harrison and Scott Counties in Indiana. These include, but are not limited to:*

- Long Term Care Ombudsman Program
- Aging and Disability Resource Center
  - Care Management
  - Caregiver Support
- Pre Admission Screening
  - Transportation
- Nutrition and Home Delivered Meals

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**ACROSS:**

- 2: To protect your eyes
- 6: Special seat for the sun
- 7: Two-piece swimsuit
- 8: Along the sea
- 11: Eaten a lot
- 12: Your skin goes brown

**DOWN:**

- 1: Shines a lot
- 3: Protects your skin
- 4: Popular summer sport
- 5: Children make castles with this
- 9: Open shoes
- 10: Place for swimming and water sports