

LONG TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM AT LIFESPAN RESOURCES, INC



OMBUDSMAN BUZZ

RESIDENTS' RIGHTS MONTH!

Residents' Rights Month is an annual event during the month of October to honor residents living in all long-term care facilities, including nursing homes, sub acute units, assisted living, board and care and retirement communities. It is a time for celebration and recognition offering an opportunity for every facility to focus on and celebrate awareness of dignity, respect and the value of each individual resident. The theme for Residents' Rights Month 2011 is, "**Welcome Home: Creating Connections Between Residents and the Community**" with the goal of educating the community about residents' rights and to increase community involvement with long term care residents.

The Nursing Home Reform Law of 1987 guarantees nursing home residents their individual rights, including but not limited to: individualized care, respect, dignity, the right to visitation, the right to privacy, the right to complain, and the right to make independent choices. Residents who have made their home in other types of facilities maintain their rights as U.S. Citizens. Residents' Rights Month raises awareness about these rights and pays tribute to the unique contributions of long-term residents. How does your facility celebrate Residents' Rights Month?

CREATING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS:

EXAMPLES OF HOW WE CAN CREATE COMMUNITY:

- **Connect with local political leaders and personalities.** Invite state or city officials to meet with groups of residents in public meetings or to attend events in the homes.
- **Provide information** about nursing homes, residents and residents' rights to congregational bulletins and encourage clergy to acknowledge residents in sermons.
- **Sponsor an open house.** Invite the community into the home and show what life is like in a nursing home. Have the residents be the hosts and tour guides. Set up displays throughout the home showing different resident activities.
- **Organize a poster and crafts fair** and arrange for exhibit sites in the community. Residents' posters can send a message about rights in nursing homes.

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.

812-948-6428

SENIOR CITIZENS' ANGEL TREE



The Senior Citizens' Angel Tree is a project sponsored by LifeSpan Resources and Salvation Army to enhance the holiday season for hundreds of elderly or disabled people in Clark, Floyd, Harrison and Scott counties. Participants must be nursing home residents or home-bound clients of LifeSpan Resources. This Christmastime project serves more than 500 people a year who do not have families, or whose families are not able to provide new items to their older loved ones during this season of giving.

Items commonly requested include new clothing, special

toiletries, candy, or items of comfort. The Senior Angel Tree Booth will be located at the Green Tree Mall outside of Sears, with angels available for adoption from November 11th-22nd. Cash donations are also welcome. For More information, contact Earlene Bennett, project coordinator, at 812-948-8330 or 888-948-8330.

LifeSpan accepts donations in addition to adopted angels. Ideal donations include hard candy (especially sugar free), calendars, gowns or pajamas of all sizes, non-skid slippers and socks, large-print crossword puzzles, and toiletries.

SEASONAL TRIVIA!

Did you know:

- In the fall, warm, sunny days and chilly nights trigger the longest and brightest change of leaves
- Tootsie Rolls were the first wrapped penny candy in America; Snickers bars are the highest selling Halloween candy today.
- Theodore Roosevelt moved Thanksgiving up one week to help stimulate the Christmas shopping economy. It did not go over well, and in 1941, congress moved it back!



- The Santa Claus suit we recognize today was developed in the 1930's. Coca-Cola hired American artist Haddon Sundblom to recreate Santa's image. He chose to use the colors of the Coca-Cola brand: red and white.
- Traditional Hannukah meals include latkes (potato pancakes) and sufganiot (jelly donuts), or other foods fried in oil. Mmm!
- The Winter Solstice will be on December 22nd, and will mark the shortest day/longest night of the entire year. It is also the first official day of winter.



LOSS AND THEFT

The majority of people living in nursing homes receive Medicaid to help pay for their care. In these instances, ALL their income except \$52 goes to the nursing home to pay for the cost of care. The \$52 per month that the resident keeps is called their “Personal Needs Allowance” (PNA). The cost of any personal phone/ cable TV service, outings, haircuts, newspapers, sodas, candy, greeting cards, CLOTHES (socks, underwear, shoes), etc., is the responsibility of the resident. These items can be expensive, and \$52 a month isn’t much!

Residents’ personal items are often left vulnerable to loss and theft, especially during the holidays when new items come into their possession. It is important for residents (or their families) to mark names on new items in some permanent way, and to list any and all items on residents’ personal inventory sheets, which should be located at the nurse’s station.

If an item goes missing (even if it is not listed on the inventory sheet), notify the nurse manager immediately. Nursing homes are required to investigate reports of loss and theft. If the item is not found or recovered during the investigation, you have the right to ask the nursing home to replace or to reimburse you for the cost of the item (this rule rarely applies to cash, and it is not advised for residents to keep cash in their possession in a nursing home). If you have items (cash, jewelry) that you would like protected, you can place them in the facility safe or ask for a locked box/cabinet to keep in your room.

REIMBURSEMENT FOR TOILETRIES

Speaking of expensive personal items, did you know you could get your nursing home to reimburse you for a portion of the money you spend when you purchase your own toiletries? Nursing homes are required to provide certain items to residents on Medicaid for personal hygiene. If your home provides Brand X Shampoo, and you prefer to use Brand Y, you can take your receipt to the business office and ask them to reimburse you *their* cost for the brand they offer. For example, if they spend \$2 a bottle on Brand X, and you spend \$3 a bottle on Brand Y, they will give you back \$2, the cost of their brand. Ask the Business Office Manager for a list of items your facility provides. You should see things like razors, shampoo, denture cream, deodorant, etc. Start saving your receipts! A little bit of extra cash goes a long way.



