



**MESSAGE FROM
 THE STATE
 OMBUDSMAN**
 The Long-Term
 Care Ombudsman
 Program Celebrates
 Older Americans Month



Leigh Davis
 State Ombudsman
 Florida Department of Elder Affairs

Each May since 1963, our nation has celebrated Older Americans Month. This national observance serves as a theme of activity for seniors in their communities and provides the public an opportunity to honor the wisdom, talents, and contributions of older Americans.

In recognition of Older Americans Month, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) hosts statewide various activities and presentations at long-term care facilities. Our district managers work with staff and volunteers to coordinate special events that include games, refreshments, and guest speakers. These activities centered on this year's theme *Get Into the Act*, and focused on educating residents on how to take charge of their health, engage in their community, and make a positive impact in the lives of fellow residents.

By the year 2020, more than 55 million U.S. adults will be over the age of 65. By promoting and engaging activity, wellness, and inclusivity, more Americans than ever before can *Get into the Act*. While the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program works throughout the year to improve the quality of life for all Florida's long-term care residents, Older Americans Month offers an opportunity to recognize these residents for their contributions by helping them stay healthy, active, and engaged as they age. It is also an occasion to highlight how long-term care residents are engaging within their respective facility's community.

LTCOP partnered with long-term care facilities to celebrate this special month, conduct activities to honor older Americans, and provide tips on how to stay active within their community. To learn more about how you can participate in local events, contact your local Long-Term Care Ombudsman Office by visiting ombudsman.myflorida.com or calling 1-888-831-0404 to find ongoing opportunities to celebrate and support our older Americans.



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Toll-Free: 1 (888) 831-0404

Website: ombudsman.myflorida.com
 Florida Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program
 4040 Esplanade Way | Tallahassee, FL 32399

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Ombudsman of the Year

The State Council selected Joan Rixom as the Statewide Ombudsman of the Year Award recipient. Joan has been with the program since 2007. She serves as a State Council Representative and State Council Vice Chair, acts as a mentor to ombudsmen volunteers who are in training, and is also a volunteer for the Guardian ad Litem Program. State Ombudsman Leigh Davis said, "Upon meeting Joan for the first time, I could immediately see her passion for the residents and the pro-



gram. I am very pleased with the State Council's choice for the Statewide Ombudsman of the Year Award."

Congratulations, Joan!

"I am very pleased with the State Council's choice for the Statewide Ombudsman of the Year Award."



Welcome Deputy State Ombudsman for Legal Affairs

State Ombudsman Leigh Davis has announced Eric Neiberger as the new Deputy State Ombudsman for Legal Affairs. Mr. Neiberger joined the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program in the Central Office on Wednesday, April 22, 2015.

In his last position, Eric spent over five years as a Federal Civil Rights Litigator with the Office of the Attorney General. While there, he was a trial attorney and regularly appeared in state and federal courts throughout Florida and handled his own appeals. In 2012, Eric and three colleagues at the Office of the Attorney General received a Davis Productivity Award for their efforts in curbing frivolous litigation.

Eric is a 2009 graduate of the Florida State University College of Law and earned an undergraduate degree in Elementary Education from the University of Florida. He has been involved with the Florida Government Bar Association since 2010 and is the immediate past president of the organization. Eric is also a member of the William H. Stafford Chapter of the American Inns of Court in Tallahassee.

When not practicing law, Eric is an avid rugby player and supporter and is one of the five founders of the Tallahassee Rugby Football Club. He has been a rugby fan since 2002, when he joined the University of Florida Rugby Football Club during his freshman year of college.

Eric grew up in Gainesville and is a diehard Gator fan. It has been his favorite team since childhood.

Florida Senior Day



Secretary Verghese stopped by to visit Central Office staff at Florida Senior Day.

Florida Senior Day



Even though the weather did not cooperate, it could not deter the anticipation and the enjoyment of those who participated in this annual event. Although a steady downpour sent entertainers and spectators heading for cover, fun was had by all. Cohosted by the Florida Department of Elder Affairs and United Way, more than 1,500 joined together in the Capitol Courtyard for this year's event. The day featured many events: a Town Hall Meeting; presentations by dignitaries from across the state; a variety of exhibits; song and dance routines, and a brief concert by the Tallahassee Swing Band.

Secretary of Elder Affairs Samuel Verghese offered his appreciation to those in attendance for their dedication and hard work in making Florida a wonderful place to live, work and play.

"Those of you here today represent seniors across the state who don't just call Florida home—you actively live here, making contributions in countless ways," he said. "Not only do our seniors contribute greatly to our economy, but they also give so much of the social and moral thread of our communities. Our state would simply not be as strong if not for you all."

Senate Bill 7018 Passes

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program has announced the passage of Senate Bill 7018 in both the House and Senate. The bill was signed by Governor Scott for implementation. This legislation modernizes the operating structure to bring standardization and efficiencies to the program, retargets resources to complaint investigations and training that emphasizes the dignity and quality of life of residents, and conforms the program statute to the federal Older Americans Act.

"I would like to thank the members of the House and Senate, the Department of Elder Affairs, and my staff for all of their hard work regarding this important legislation," said Leigh Davis, State Ombudsman.

Governor Scott Issues Proclamation for Senior Corps Week

The Senior Corps Program connects older Floridians with volunteer programs to become mentors or companions to people in need or contribute their job skills and expertise to community projects and organizations. Through grants and other resources - including the energy and efforts of citizens age 55 and over—Senior Corps helps meet the needs and challenges of America's communities. Senior Corps Programs include Foster Grandparents, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), and the Senior Companion Program.



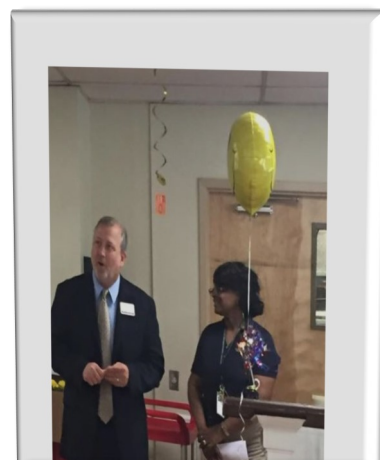
Older Americans Month

May was recognized as Older Americans Month across the country, and with more than 4.8 million residents over the age of 60, Florida has the highest population percentage of seniors in the nation. Join us in recognizing the seniors that make our state so great!

The theme of this year's celebration was "Get into the Act" to focus on how older adults are taking charge of their health, getting and staying engaged in their communities, and making a positive impact in the lives of others.

Residents at Seven Hills Health and Rehabilitation Center in Tallahassee enjoyed a special event to kickoff May's Older Americans Month.

Along with guest speakers, residents enjoyed a performance by an Elvis impersonator, a puppet show, bingo, and refreshments. Thank you District Ombudsman Manager Janice Harvey for all of your coordination efforts and to Seven Hills Health and Rehabilitation Center for hosting this event.



Community, Health, and Safety Fairs....Oh, my!

By Terre Anne Lindstamer, South Central District Ombudsman Manager

With the influx of our northern friends comes the whirlwind of community, health and safety fairs. My volunteer ombudsmen and I love to participate in these events! It is a great opportunity for us to inform the public about the Ombudsman Program and distribute information about residents' rights. We approach the subject gingerly, as many do not want to think about the possibility of finding themselves in need of a nursing home. But fair participants perk up their ears when we begin talking about a friend or loved one who may be in a facility for rehabilitation following hip replacement surgery or the like. Our goal is to let them know that we are available, free of charge, if the resident is ever unable to resolve problems or complaints through the staff first, or if they are not able to advocate for themselves for whatever reason.

We also use these venues for recruitment of future certified ombudsmen. We are privileged to meet the most interesting people and at the same time, often hear tear jerking stories of loved ones who have been mistreated or neglected in a facility. People often say, "If, we had only known about your program...".

This is what motivates us (staff and volunteers) to leave home at the crack of dawn and drive to all corners of our district to participate in as many fairs as we possibly can. We are passionately getting the word out about who we are and what we do!

Local Area Ombudsman Program Earns Statewide Recognition

By Lynn Penley

Tampa Bay area volunteers are making a difference in the lives of long-term care residents, and one such volunteer recently received much deserved recognition from the State's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP).

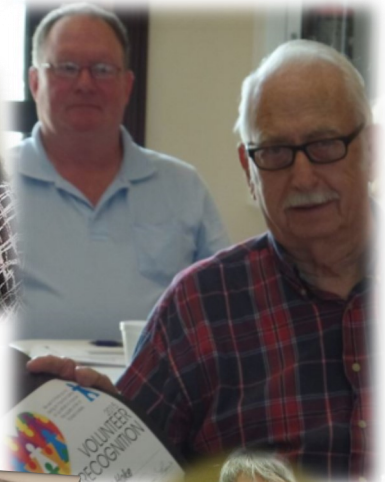
The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, within the Florida Department of Elder Affairs, advocates for the health, safety, welfare, and rights of individuals residing in long-term care settings. Ombudsmen volunteers work with residents, family members, administrators, and other parties to resolve complaints or issues brought by, or on behalf of, long-term care residents in Florida.

For the fourth year in a row, the coveted Ombudsman of the Year Award has gone to a local volunteer. Joan Rixom, who serves in the West Central Council covering Hillsborough and Manatee counties, was recently announced as the 2015 awardee by the State Ombudsman, Leigh Davis. "The first time I met Joan, she had me laughing within minutes. She has an excellent outlook on life and is contagious with her upbeat personality and smile. I commend her for her hard work," states Leigh Davis.

Joan Rixom credits her region's successes to several factors including: the ability to recognize and accept qualified candidates for the positions; the preparation provided by a dedicated staff; the support and encouragement for the new volunteer trainees; the sharing of experiences during sometimes tense times; and all the examples, discussion and help by fellow Ombudsmen and knowledgeable staff.

The Tampa Bay area including Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, and Pinellas Counties, has over 700 assisted living facilities, nursing homes, and adult family care homes served by LTCOP. Ombudsmen volunteers have a significant task to visit and assist more than 35,000 residents. "There are so many residents that need an Ombudsman advocate in this area that there are plenty of opportunities for a volunteer to shine and make an outstanding contribution to another person's life," states Lynn V. Penley, District Ombudsman Manager.

For more information on the Ombudsman Program or to volunteer, contact 1-888-831-0404. <http://ombudsman.myflorida.com>



SUMMARY OF TOP COMPLAINTS

Florida Statutes states: the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is responsible for publishing its complaint data each quarter. The following data reflects verified complaints from cases closed between April 1, 2015—June 30, 2015. The data also shows the number of these complaints resolved.



COMPLAINT DATA TERMS:

Verified: It is determined after work (interviews, record inspection, observation, etc.) that the circumstances described in the complaint are generally accurate.

Not Verified: It is determined after work (interviews, record inspection, observation, etc.), that the circumstances described in the complaint are not generally accurate. Verification is determined by the ombudsman.

Resolved: The complaint was addressed to the satisfaction of the resident. Resolved is one of several disposition codes used by the program. Resolution is determined by the resident.

To find out more about the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program’s complaint or facility assessment data, call toll-free 1-888-831-0404, and ask to be transferred to a representative in your area. All services are free and confidential.

Quarter 3

(April 1, 2015 to June 30, 2015)

Top five complaints accepted in nursing homes:

	#Complaints	#Verified	#Not Verified	#Resolved
Dignity, respect – staff attitudes (0403)	81	43	38	46
Failure to respond to requests for assistance (0602)	76	50	26	47
Personal hygiene (includes oral hygiene) (0606)	61	45	16	40
Medications —administration, organization (0605)	60	41	19	46
Personal Property (0503)	59	34	25	36

Top five complaints accepted in ALF and AFCH:

	#Complaints	#Verified	#Not Verified	#Resolved
Medications—administration, organization (0605)	69	41	28	43
Cleanliness, pests, general housekeeping (1102)	63	44	19	51
Menu (1003)	61	43	18	37
Dignity, respect—staff attitudes (0403)	52	34	18	37
Equipment/Buildings (1103)	41	33	8	36

STATEWIDE STATISTICS

Quarter 3 April 1 – June 30, 2015

Number of Beds	173,620
Number of Volunteer Ombudsmen	327
Facility Assessments	655
Facility Visitations	815
Complaint Investigations	2091

*Reflects both initiation and closure dates that may overlap quarterly reporting periods.



National Recognition Given to 51 of Florida's Long-Term Care Centers as Being Best in the Nation

Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program
4040 Esplanade Way
Tallahassee, FL 32399

The mission of the Florida Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is to improve the quality of life for all Florida long-term care residents by advocating for and protecting their health, safety, welfare and rights.



Fifty-one of Florida's long-term care centers that are members of the Florida Health Care Association (FHCA) have earned national recognition for their exemplary commitment to providing quality care and a better quality of life to Florida's elders. The American Health Care Association and the National Center for Assisted Living bestow these prestigious honors as part of their National Quality Awards program.

Ranking among some of the best in the nation, Florida's long-term care centers strive to offer compassionate and quality care, safe conditions, and a home-like atmosphere for elder residents. The National Quality Awards program honors skilled nursing, assisted living, and post-acute care centers across the nation that consistently exhibit their commitment to improving quality care for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

FHCA Executive Director Emmett Reed said, "Florida's long-term care providers understand that quality is the cornerstone of our profession. We are pleased that the American Health Care Association is recognizing these centers and their staff for the incredible work they do each day to ensure that our state's frail elders receive the highest quality care, which they expect and deserve."

ATTA-BOY



"I am writing this letter to acknowledge the exceptional hard work of Mrs. Janice Harvey regarding a matter concerning my mother at a nursing home in Tallahassee. Mrs. Harvey was very professional and also proved very efficient in her investigation. In closing, I wish to again say 'Thank you' for all your help and efforts Mrs. Harvey." ~ Mr. Alexander, Tallahassee, FL



"Jean Peelen, West Central Ombudsman, recently worked on a case where the resident paid a non-emergency ambulance bill of over \$400 to an ambulance company. The resident wanted the ombudsman to advocate for him to be reimbursed. Jean took on this seemingly impossible task. The outcome? The ALF admitted the situation was not handled as it should have been and is taking the \$400 off the resident's next rent bill. You never can discount a good investigation, pointing out a procedural error and just asking for what the resident wants. Way to go Jean! Great work on the resident's behalf!" ~ Lynn Penley, District Ombudsman Manager



"I would like to thank you for your employee in the Florida Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. Her name is Nancy King. Ms. King, in her writings to me and our telephone conversations, she made me feel like I was talking to my sister about our mother in the nursing home. She never gave me the feeling that she was in a hurry to terminate our telephone conversation, to talk to someone else to score more points by talking to more people. She was always patient. Thank you." ~ Mr. Packrall, Jr., Kissimmee, Florida



Linda O'Leary had seven cases at one ALF that had recently changed administration. The issues were regarding personal funds unaccounted for and a notice to increase the rent causing many to worry they would have to leave. Linda was able to work with residents, guardians, families and the new administration over several weeks to finally find all the personal funds of residents and agree upon a reasonable rent. Now no one has to move and all the residents have access to their monies. Great job Linda! ~ Lynn Penley, District Ombudsman Manager



In Memoriam

It is with great sadness that we say good-bye to our wonderful team member, friend, and Recruitment Manager, Bryan Morgan. He passed away on June 13th surrounded by family and friends. He was an inspiration to all who knew him well. He loved the outdoors, his wonderful dog Xander, cooking, his multitude of friends who were like brothers and sisters from all over the country and the world, his Ombudsman family, and his extended family. While in Florida, he worked to improve the lives of people with disabilities, elders in long-term care facilities, and mentored many young people and volunteers. Being a member of our team for many years, Bryan served in many different capacities. His ideas for promoting our Program were always well received and attracted many new volunteers. Bryan's idea of the internship program with local colleges and universities brought many younger ombudsmen onto our team and many have remained upon completion of their internship. His compassion for our program, his wit and grace, his intelligence, his expertise and his talents will be greatly missed. He was an innovator of programs which received honorable attention and an advocate for dog rescue and animal rights. He was an accomplished dancer, writer and painter. Bryan had two favorite charities if you would like to make a donation: Pet Rescue by Judy, www.petrescuebyjudy.com, 401 South Laurel Ave., Sanford, FL 32771, (407) 302-4497; Hope and Help Center, www.hopeandhelp.org, 1035 Woodcrest Drive, Winter Park, FL 32792, (407) 645-2577. We send our deepest sympathies and condolences to his mother and stepfather Susan and Bjorn Gjolmesli, his father and stepmother Ronald and Sandy Morgan, his maternal grandparents Leo and Delores Moe, and his extended family of friends. RIP Bryan!!!

