

Winter 2012

# Ombudsman Connection



Nursing Home Ombudsman Agency of the Bluegrass, Inc.  
*Improving the quality of care for residents in long-term care facilities.*

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## Help Us Protect Long-Term Care Residents

by Sherry Culp, Executive Director

During the past three months, staff and volunteers of the Nursing Home Ombudsman Agency of the Bluegrass, Inc. (NHOA) made 1,686 visits to residents in long-term care facilities in the Bluegrass area. Ombudsmen investigated and worked to resolve 457 complaints related to resident care and services. Ombudsmen and volunteers spent over 6,200 hours at the bedside helping residents get the care they want and deserve. That means that problems were solved, abuse and neglect were often prevented, life improved, and residents experienced relief.

Each year millions of tax dollars are spent for the care of residents. NHOA ombudsmen are consumer driven and work at the direction of residents. Even with all of NHOA's efforts to improve care, there is still much work to be done and we cannot do it alone.

Many bills have been introduced in this legislative session that could improve the care of long-term care residents. However, there is one that, if passed, could be detrimental to long-term care residents. House Bill 361 - Medical Review Panel for Nursing Home Malpractice, prevents nursing home residents and/or their families from seeking redress in court for injuries or damage received by residents as a result of malpractice by nursing home staff. We have many concerns about this bill. It would require a medical review panel to investigate the complaint before it could go to the court system. This would create a discriminatory practice that treats long-term care residents differently than the rest of us. All citizens have the right to pursue legal avenues for wrongs they feel have been committed against them without being forced to go through a review panel. Stopping HB 361 will prevent further victimization of abused and neglected residents. **Advocates agree that this bill:** *Denies residents access to court if they suffer harm from untreated pressure sores, falls or negligent practices; Pigeonholes residents into "medical review panels" that determine if their concerns warrant a hearing; Negates residents' constitutional right to due process; Is cost prohibitive - each case brought for review could cost over \$2,000 for the resident, or guardian; Could cause the review panel to take six months to a year to render a final "opinion"; Intimidates residents and their families/guardians from pursuing legal remedies meant to protect the safety and care of residents; Denies nursing home residents the same rights and legal protections given and exercised by every other Kentuckian.*

**Contact your legislator at 1-800-372-7181 and tell them to vote NO on House Bill 361.**

More than ever it is important that each citizen in Kentucky make their own thoughts and concerns regarding long-term care known. Possible cuts in aging services are further threatening the quality of care long-term care residents receive. Please take advantage of opportunities to inform lawmakers about your experiences with long-term care and what YOU would like to see in the future. Tell them that you want them to protect residents. Join our email list and learn about other bills affecting long-term care consumers by emailing [nhoa@ombuddy.org](mailto:nhoa@ombuddy.org).

## NHOA SERVICE COUNTIES

Anderson  
Bourbon  
Boyle  
Clark  
Estill  
Fayette  
Franklin  
Garrard  
Harrison  
Jessamine  
Lincoln  
Madison  
Mercer  
Nicholas  
Powell  
Scott  
Woodford

# Ombudsmen Making A Difference

Below are two examples of how much ombudsmen help residents on a daily basis.

*I met a lovely couple, both in their 80s, who had recently moved to a retirement apartment community. They had no children and no other family around. The husband became ill, was hospitalized, and then went to a nursing facility located next door to their apartment community for rehabilitation. The wife required the use of a walker. It was unsafe for her to walk by herself from their apartment to the nursing facility. She was dependent on others to drive her next door for daily visits with her husband. The couple's Power of Attorney thought she shouldn't go to see her husband every day, but the nursing home administrator helped arrange for the apartment community's car service to provide a ride for the wife each day. This gave her less than two hours with her husband because she didn't get picked up until 1:00 and had to be in the lobby of the nursing home prior to 3:00 to wait for the driver. She counted the minutes.*

*I talked to both of them often and could see the husband declining. One day I visited with the wife in their apartment. She was distressed about her husband's health and wanted to spend more time with him. I asked if it would be okay with her if I could try and help. She said yes. I went to the administrator to ask if staff could possibly walk the wife over to see her husband and then walk back and get her for lunch and a little rest. Because the apartment community's car service is unavailable in the morning, I approached the administrator to help the wife. We developed a plan. Staff would be asked to walk the wife over to see her husband at 9:00 a.m. and go back for her between 11:00 and 12:00. I asked if the wife could stay later than 3:00 in the afternoon. I was told this would be a battle but that they would agree to try. The next day, the staff followed through with the arrangement and allowed the wife to stay until 4:30 p.m. That night the husband died. I went to visit with the wife in their apartment the next day. We had a long, lovely visit. She was of course devastated by her husband's death but filled with joy that she had been able to spend seven hours with her beloved husband on his last day of life.*

*I heard a woman weeping one day as I walked down the hallway at the nursing home. I knocked on the door and at her invitation, went in. The woman was seated uncomfortably in a chair. I introduced myself and asked if I could help. "I am not a dog and I can't be tied up like this," she said. She was pulling with no success at the call bell that had been attached very securely to her slacks. I worked at it and got it off of her and placed it on the arm of the chair. Still she was leaning over and weeping. "That's not all of it," she said as she pointed to a pillow behind her which was attached to one of the monitors that beep with a position change. "It keeps beeping if I move," she said. She explained that she had been attached to the alarm the night before, her first night in the facility.*

*I asked if I could get the unit coordinator to see what could be done. She agreed, but really did not want me to leave her alone for a second. I notified the unit coordinator. The coordinator responded, "I will be down to assess this morning." I asked her to please make it a priority as the woman is weeping and frantic. The coordinator then came right away and completed her assessment and indicated that the resident did not need to be tethered to the alarm. In fact, she had no mobility restrictions at all. The resident was relieved but insisted that she must leave because this might happen again. I told her I would send in the social worker to give her an idea of when she could be discharged and explained that she could actually leave at any time although that might not be the best plan. I left her a card with all my information and an assurance that I would come day or night.*

Would you like to help us change the life of a long-term care resident? As a Friendly Visitor Volunteer, you would be matched with a resident who can benefit from your friendship. Our expectations of your time are a minimal 1 hour each week. If you are interested in becoming a Friendly Visitor Volunteer, call Troy Johnson at (859) 277-9215.



Find us  
on Facebook!

# Donors, cont.

Linda Stith  
 Robert and Ruth Straus  
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*in honor of Mike and Paula DeBoor*  
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 Mollie Wiseman  
*in memory of Eugene Patrick*  
 Martin and Judith Woodford  
 Woody and Willa Woolfolk  
 Ann Zimmer  
*in honor of Susannah Johnson*  
 Ann Faile Zolondek

Many friends of NHOA choose to donate in memory or honor of a relative, friend, or colleague. When making a memorial or honorary contribution, please tell us:

- Name of the deceased or honored person.
- Your name, address, and phone number.
- Name and address of deceased person's family member or name and address of the person you wish to honor, so we can notify them of the gift.

A \$100 donation provides a year's worth of ombudsman services for a single resident. All levels of giving are truly appreciated. Thank you.

**SIGN UP FOR OUR E-MAIL LIST!**  
 To save costs, we would like to begin sending our newsletter via email to those who are interested. To sign up, send an email to [nhoa@ombuddy.org](mailto:nhoa@ombuddy.org)

## NHOA OMBUDSMEN

Brenda Adkins  
 Stanye Adkinson  
 Sandra Austin  
 Marion Barna  
 Bettye Carter  
 Vanda Chambers  
 Nan Collins  
 Pat DeMay  
 Helen Downing  
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 Ken Evans  
 Deanna Franklin  
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 Becky Hacker  
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## Staff Updates

Ombudsmen Retirements  
 Nora Bethel - Fayette County  
 Roger Cook - Madison County  
 Linn McCuddy - Jessamine County

New Certified Ombudsmen  
 Maxine Franklin - Fayette County  
 Barbara Hatfield - Fayette County

The Nursing Home Ombudsman Agency is a nonprofit agency whose mission is to improve the quality of care of residents in long-term care facilities.

Ombudsmen work to identify, investigate, and resolve complaints for residents in long-term care facilities, and to provide information and assistance to residents and families.

**Our services are free.**

**NURSING HOME OMBUDSMAN AGENCY**

1530 NICHOLASVILLE ROAD  
LEXINGTON, KY 40503  
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TOLL FREE: 1-877-787-0077  
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WWW.OMBUDDY.ORG

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**OFFICE STAFF**

Sherry Culp, *Executive Director*  
Julie McDearmon, *Director of  
Development and Marketing*  
Troy Johnson, *Director of  
Programs and Services*  
Nancy Grigsby, *Administrative  
Assistant*  
Suzi Luciano, *Bookkeeper*

NHOA is a local, independent nonprofit agency that relies on funding through individual donations, local United Way agencies, and grants to serve the Bluegrass area.

**Our services are free.**

Donate now at [www.ombuddy.org](http://www.ombuddy.org)



This project is funded, in part, under a Subcontract with the Kentucky BGADD/AAAIL of Aging Services, Cabinet for Health & Family Services with funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



Ombudsmen Madge Lynn, Sue Landis, Deanna Franklin, and Marion Barna and Friendly Visitor Lucy Dampier (center) entertained residents during a Residents' Rights skit.



Lexington Vice Mayor Linda Gorton presented a Residents' Rights proclamation to Bluegrass Health and Rehab Resident Council President Jay Burks.



Ombudsman Becky Hacker (left) presented a gift to resident Maudie Haynes. Ms. Hacker organized gifts for residents for NHOA's Silver Bells Holiday Tree project.



Resident Wayne Rucker opened his Silver Bells Holiday Tree gift.

# DECORATORS' SHOWCASE 2012

## Tours

**May 12 - June 10**

**Admission: \$15\***

**Wed. - Sat.: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

**Sun.: 12 - 4 p.m. (Closed**

**Mondays, Tuesdays, and**

**Sunday, May 27)**



**HIGHLAND HALL  
6208 OLD RICHMOND ROAD  
LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY**

**Lunch is \$10 (Wed. - Sat.: 11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.)**

**Lunch reservations are recommended for all;  
reservations are required for groups of six or more.**

**\*Presale tickets are \$12 and will be available April 13 - May 10 at:**

- house - 1535 Delaware Avenue, Lexington
- Hubbuck & Co. - 456 E. High Street, Lexington
- NHOA office - 1530 Nicholasville Road, Lexington
- Norwalk Furniture & Design - 2200 War Admiral Way, Lexington

**To volunteer for Decorators' Showcase:**

**Admissions: Call Carol Pruette at (859) 309-1022**

**or email her at [ghpcap@aol.com](mailto:ghpcap@aol.com)**

**Hostesses/Host: Call Tina McMahan at (859) 263-9015**

**or email her at [tfrm103062@aol.com](mailto:tfrm103062@aol.com)**

**Lunches: Call Dena Lawing at (859) 266-6127**

**or email her at [drlawing@insightbb.com](mailto:drlawing@insightbb.com)**

**or Alice Dehner at (859) 223-9117**

**or email her at [a.dehner@insightbb.com](mailto:a.dehner@insightbb.com)**

**For info, to purchase tickets, to reserve lunch, or to book a group:**

**859-277-9215 • [decoratorsshowcase2012@gmail.com](mailto:decoratorsshowcase2012@gmail.com)**

**[www.decshowcase.com](http://www.decshowcase.com)**

*All proceeds benefit the Nursing Home Ombudsman Agency of the Bluegrass.*