

# **Do you have an interest in improving the quality of life for those living in nursing homes and adult care facilities?**



*You can help by becoming a Certified Ombudsman today!*

## **Who is a Certified Ombudsman?**

Certified Ombudsmen are over 18 years of age, have passed a background check, and can volunteer at least 2-4 hours per week on a flexible schedule. They may be employed or retired but cannot have a conflict of interest with any long-term care facility in which they are placed. By protecting the rights, dignity, and safety of residents in nursing homes, adult care homes, and assisted living facilities, Ombudsmen help improve quality of life for residents. Ombudsmen have many different professional and personal backgrounds, but the one thing they share in common is their passion for improving quality of care and advocating for the rights of the residents they serve.

## **What do Ombudsmen do?**

Certified Ombudsman Volunteers are advocates who visit the residents of long-term care facilities and investigate complaints or concerns on their behalf with permission. They work independently to investigate these complaints and advocate with staff to resolve problems, advocating always from the residents' point of view.

Ombudsman Volunteers help raise program awareness and educate others about the important role of being an Ombudsman. After completing a thorough certification training which includes facility visits, written and verbal monthly documentation requirements, and shadowing experiences, volunteers are assigned to facilities and visit with the residents on a regular basis. Certified Ombudsmen monitor resident care by talking to residents, investigating, and documenting complaints, and resolving residents' issues. They also educate residents, families, and facility staff about resident rights. All Ombudsman services are free and confidential to the residents we serve.



## Where does an Ombudsman volunteer?

After training, Ombudsmen and their Coordinator work together to choose from available facilities close to where they live, work, or visit. We make every effort to place Ombudsman volunteers in convenient facilities and make sure they are comfortable with their placements.

## When do Ombudsmen volunteer?

Certified Ombudsmen work independently with support from paid staff Coordinators. They make their own schedules for visiting their assigned facilities. Volunteers visit residents, make follow-up phone calls, 18 hours of continuing education, complete documentation and reports, and travel to/from facilities. There may be times when a volunteer spends more time on a particular case or resident, but there is flexibility with this volunteer experience also. You can set your own schedule although we ask that volunteers not to make visits at the same time or on the same day of the week if possible. Some volunteers donate much more time to the program, but the average is 2-6 hours a week. Volunteers can request a leave of absence for vacations, illness or other personal matters.

## What benefits are there for volunteers?

Volunteers enjoy being able to make a direct impact on the quality of long-term care in their community, as well as being able to learn and navigate the systems. They have a chance to use or learn new skills in advocacy, public speaking, and conflict resolution. Training and continuing support is available monthly and at annual events. Mileage reimbursement for traveling is also something the program offers. Most of all, volunteers meet new people, keep active and find the work rewarding.