



Meet Our Volunteer

Meet George

George is a Volunteer Long-Term Care Ombudsman who has served residents of nursing facilities in Tarrant County for 11 years.

Why did you decide to volunteer with the Ombudsman Program?



I decided to volunteer with the Ombudsman Program because I wanted to do something meaningful for my community. The Ombudsman Program appealed to me because it offered me a sense of purpose by being able to help others in areas where they cannot help

themselves. I hoped to bring some measure of comfort to residents who are experiencing physical or emotional discomfort. The Ombudsman position is a good fit for me because it requires similar skills to those I developed as a Human Resource professional. I advocated for rank and file employees, ensured compliance with state and federal regulations, and interacted with all levels of management.

What is your first memory of serving residents as an ombudsman?

My first memory is that of a resident telling me, very loudly, to get away from his door because I was disturbing his meal. For a moment, I wondered if serving as an ombudsman was the wrong volunteer position for me. Then, a few steps down the hallway, I



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heard a resident say to another resident, "That's Mr. Russell. He is here to help us." This made me see a real need to stick with it.

Describe a time you helped a resident.

A really articulate resident complained that she received very little tuna on her tuna fish sandwich. We discussed the problem and I suggested she speak with the Director of Nursing (DON). She went to see the DON while I continued visiting other residents.

Before departing the facility, I followed up with this resident and found her eating a new tuna fish sandwich that was made to her standards. She informed me that the DON took a picture of the poor-quality sandwich and promptly went to speak with the head of dining services. This immediately resulted in a sandwich made to her liking.

This experience showed me that resident empowerment is effective. When residents and I discuss their concerns, I always encourage them to self-advocate and include strategies for self-advocacy when appropriate.

What impact do you as an ombudsman have on residents' lives?

I think residents receive some degree of comfort and satisfaction every time I help them. They know they have someone they can lean on; they often inform other residents about who I am and what I can do for them. I give some residents the confidence to advocate for themselves.

Knowing what you know as an ombudsman, do you have any advice for the public about long-term care?

While the work is highly rewarding, the challenges surrounding staff shortages, infection control, and a host of other issues mean many of society's most vulnerable are not getting their care needs met. Families with loved ones in nursing homes need to keep close watch over them by making frequent visits.

For More Information About Volunteering

Email or call Pat Borgfeldt, Ombudsman Developer, Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, Pat.Borgfeldt@hhs.texas.gov or (512) 438-2545.