



# Meet Our Volunteer

## Meet Marge

Marge is a recently certified Volunteer Ombudsman who has been serving residents of a nursing home in Dallas County since May 2021.

### **Why did you decide to volunteer with the Ombudsman Program?**

I was living in Florida and serving as a full-time caregiver for my mother with dementia, and I learned first-hand the importance of having an advocate in a long-term care facility. After she passed away, I looked for volunteer opportunities and found the Florida Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. I moved to Dallas right before I was certified in Florida and decided to serve as a Certified Volunteer Ombudsman in Dallas.



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

I remember walking through the facility and being touched by how much the residents wanted to talk to us about their lives.

### **Tell me about a specific time you helped a resident.**

I've helped several residents get help from the nursing staff. In my short time as an ombudsman, this is by far the issue that I have seen the most in the facility I visit.

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

I believe that we can benefit the lives of residents in a few different ways. First, we can help ensure facilities remain places where residents can feel safe and cared for. Second, we are available to help residents resolve any issues they are experiencing. Third, ombudsmen show residents that someone is listening to them and that they haven't been forgotten. Many times, residents are just happy someone is visiting.

## **Describe a time when a resident has had a positive impact on you?**

After facilities reopened [from COVID-19 pandemic restrictions] and I started visiting residents, I had a resident tell me that things were better in the facility since I started visiting. This made me realize just how important the Ombudsman Program is and how glad I am to be a part of it.

## **What is something you've learned while serving as an ombudsman?**

I realized how most residents need these facilities. They depend on them for medical care, nutrition, social interaction, and more.

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

Individuals living in long-term care facilities need advocates and someone to listen to them. It may be difficult for them to communicate, but that makes it even more important that someone is there to help them.

## **When you are not volunteering as an ombudsman, what else do you like to do?**

I enjoy music and cooking. I have a Pomeranian-Chihuahua mix that I walk frequently.

## **Is there anything else you would like to share?**

Volunteering as an ombudsman has been a rewarding experience for me. I feel as though I am, in some small way, helping to solve some of the issues I noticed while my mother was in a long-term care facility.

## **For More Information About Volunteering**

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