



Meet Our Volunteer

Meet Veronica

Veronica is a Certified Volunteer Ombudsman who has served residents of nursing and assisted living facilities in the Lower Rio Grande area for over seven years.

Why did you decide to volunteer with the Ombudsman Program?



In a prior job, I worked with "Winter Texans." Winter Texans are retirees who live part-time in the Lower Rio Grande Valley to escape cold weather.

At my job, retirees would talk to me about concerns. I would listen to them and brainstorm solutions with them. A friend of mine saw a "call for volunteers" with the Ombudsman Program. She suggested I apply to volunteer since I like to talk with older adults and like to help people.

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

I remember walking through my assigned facility and being greeted with big smiles from residents.

Tell us about a specific time you helped a resident.

Once, I helped a gentleman who wanted to exercise on his own stationary bicycle which was stored at his daughter's house. He said he asked staff on multiple occasions about whether he could have the bike brought to the facility for him to use. He never received a response from staff or



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suggestions on how to make it happen. I spoke to the administrator explaining what this resident wanted. The resident was assessed and approved to use his stationary bike. On my next visit, I found him in his room exercising on his bike. He was very happy and grateful for the help. For me, it just felt GREAT!

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

Recently, I made a visit with my program's Managing Local Ombudsman, Ivonne. When we entered one resident's room, the resident opened her eyes, said my name with a big smile, and told Ivonne that I am her friend. Not only do I believe I provide a reassuring and comforting presence for residents, they do the same for me.

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

Even if you are confident your loved ones who live in an assisted living or nursing facility are being well cared for, continue to visit them often. If you visit often, you can catch problems early and work to get them resolved.

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

I am an adventurous person. I enjoy being outside, barbequing, watching sunsets from the beach, and landscape photography. I am a Pittsburgh Steelers' fan and I love to watch them play.

For More Information About Volunteering

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