

# Ombuddy Review

November 2007

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If you know someone in a long-term care facility, you should know us.....

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## *From the Desk of the Executive Director*

We are happy to be offering this, our first newsletter. We hope to make it a bi-annual publication. It is hard to believe that it was six years ago that I started with this program -- shortly after it stepped out from under the umbrella of Catholic Charities in 2001 to become a stand-alone, non-profit agency. And my, how we have grown! From a 3 person staff we now have 4 full time and 2 part timers. At the request of San Mateo County, we have taken on the additional responsibility of covering 88 homes for developmentally disabled adults. We have increased the volunteer base from 15 to 44 highly skilled field ombudsmen. And all this means that we have been able to increase our services to the 9,100 residents in 453 care facilities within the County.

It has only been accomplished because we have an incredible staff, dedicated and passionate about the work they do, with extraordinary compassion for the frail and vulnerable population we serve; and a group of volunteers who are absolutely amazing. We ask a lot of them, and each and every one of them gives enormously of themselves in this difficult,

sometimes heartbreaking work. This is no ordinary volunteer job, but they do it and they do it diligently and gladly, without any extrinsic award or public acknowledgement. Many times ombudsmen work on behalf of a resident who is totally unaware of the assistance being given because he or she is so cognitively impaired. To many it would seem like a thankless task. In the

words of one of my ombudsmen, Nancy Krah, who has been with the program for 24 years:

*"My mother was so lucky to have 2 daughters who saw her every day and to have loving, caring relationships, but a lot of people do not have that connection with*

*their families. I was drawn to this program initially because I saw how important it was to provide that caring connection for the frail and vulnerable elders in nursing homes who had nobody to turn to. Now I serve in the program because it is important to me as I fast approach that age."*

Without these incredible volunteers we could not possibly provide the services for our clients. Check out the facts on page 3!



Judith Guilfoyle and Nancy Krah

## The Facts at a Glance

For FY 06/07

- Trained and certified 16 new ombudsmen volunteers
- Investigated and closed 1321 cases encompassing over 1800 complaints; 260 of those cases involved allegations of abuse
- Provided 5,047 facility visits
- Provided 8,608 volunteer hours of services valued at \$215,000
- Provided 480 consultations and 68 in-service trainings to facilities
- Provided 2,065 consultations to individuals seeking assistance
- Provided at least 500 hours of Board Service valued at \$25,000

## The March of The Millenium



Ombudsman Services has joined the modern era. We now have a website. Take a peek!

<http://www.ossmc.org>

## Volunteers Needed!

Do YOU want to be part of a close knit dedicated team?

Are YOU looking for a way you can give back to your community?

Are YOU seeking an intellectual challenge?

We have all that to offer .... and more.

You must be over 18 and you cannot be an employee of a facility.

Compassion for the elderly is, of course a necessity.

And you must have 5 hours a week to spare.

If you answer YES! to all of the above, then call and speak to Nisreen, who is the Coordinator of Volunteers, phone: 650 349 7008

*Special Thanks to Our Donors FY 2006/07 and Beyond*  
San Mateo County Aging & Adult Services·Peninsula Health Care District·Sequoia Healthcare District·Woodlawn Foundation·San Francisco Foundation·City of San Mateo·City of Redwood City·City of Daly City·City of South San Francisco·Town of Brisbane·City of Burlingame·Town of Atherton·Town of Colma·Peninsula Deanery of the Episcopal Diocese ·Ellen Uhrbrock · Robert & Betty Brown·Marianne Petroni·James & Terry Nagel·Stine & Associates·St. Aidan's Episcopal Church·Joyce Clark·Nancy Krah·Mary Pappas·Judith Guilfoyle·Lidia Church·Yolanda Kohnert·Nicki Manske·Tippy Irwin·Sara & Louis Marsaa·Sohaila Khoshnevisan·Bill Rodenspiel·St. Ambrose Episcopal Church·Ruth-e Bennison·B. Michael·Doris Tirschwell·Gene & Doug Reinhardt·Nancy Miller·Nami Kudo·Nuala & Timothy Cullinane·Edwin & Elsee Ray·Maybelle Pinson·Kiwanis Club of Greater San Mateo·Andre Belarmino·Zel & Donna Pellegrini·

## Residents' Rights Week is October 7th-13th, 2007

Residents' Rights Week is designated by National Citizens Coalition for Nursing Home Reform (NCCNHR), and is celebrated the first full week in October each year to honor residents living in all long-term care facilities, including nursing homes, sub acute units, assisted living, board and care, and retirement communities. It is a time for celebration and recognition offering an opportunity for every facility to focus on and celebrate awareness of dignity, respect and the value of each individual resident.

We are pleased to say that almost every City and Town joined with the County's Board of Supervisors and issued proclamations naming October 7th through 13 as Residents Rights Week. Several Mayors and City Council Members have made arrangements during that time to visit a facility in their area with their local ombudsman. And at Home Sweet Home in Daly City, Council Member Judith Christiansen was serenaded by a group of residents, some of whom had joined them from their Colma facility. They were all very thrilled about the visit.



Residents that move into nursing homes or assisted living facilities retain all their rights as individuals, including the right to live free of restraints. California has the dubious reputation of having the highest use of restraints for residents in nursing homes, except for Arkansas (thank you Arkansas!) And this for a state that prides itself for being on the cutting edge in so many arenas! NCCNHR has begun a push from Washington to diminish restraint usage in California and our local program joined with them to do what it can to help. In our county we

are fortunate to have a number of facilities that are virtually physical restraint free. But we are far from out of the woods yet. A tragic case we recently worked on evidenced how much work still remains to be done. It is not only the facilities that must be

educated but also the staff of acute care hospitals, emergency rooms and physicians who write the prescriptions for the restraints. There is much work to be done.

(Picture shows the President of the Resident Council at Brookside SNF with the Mayor of San Mateo, Jack Matthews, Greg Bogart, Administrator, and two staff members, Jennifer Arroyo and John Akers-Bell.)

### *How Can You Help?*



I would like to volunteer

Tax Deductible Donation:  \$25    \$50    \$100    Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory/Honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to Ombudsman Services and mail to 1700 So Amphlett Blvd, Suite 220, San Mateo, CA 94402

**Winter Weather Will Soon Be Here  
And that can bring its own challenges**  
(Excerpt from the FEMA web-site)  
**BE ALERT TO THE COLD WEATHER RISKS**  
**If you or someone you know**

- ❖ HAS INSUFFICIENT HEAT AT HOME due to substandard housing conditions, poor insulation, lack of money to pay for fuel, etc.
- ❖ LIVES ALONE and may be exposed to cold without others noticing
- ❖ IS PHYSICALLY INACTIVE due to illness or disability
- ❖ EATS POORLY -- no hot, balanced meals for good nutrition
- ❖ TAKES MEDICATION that reduces the body's ability to protect itself against cold
- ❖ REACTS ABNORMALLY TO COLD -- for example, does not shiver when cold (shivering is the body's way of trying to stay warm)
- ❖ ACTS LIKE A "DIFFERENT PERSON" -- perhaps the result of not being warm enough



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