

Ombuddy Review

December 2008

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

Mission:
to actively promote standards of excellence in advocacy and enhancement of the quality of life for residents of long-term care facilities in San Mateo county.

Vision:
that we ourselves would be willing to live and enjoy our last years in any one of the facilities we serve.

Values:
to cherish our Ombudsmen, to fully and faithfully support our clients, and to positively work with all community stakeholders



From the Desk of the Director ...

We all know the old adage stating that the only things we can rely on in life are death and taxes. I think we can safely add "change" to that list. While the country and the state are wrestling with all the changes on the economic front, we at the local program level must unfortunately do the same. The Governor, in his attempt to develop a fiscally responsible budget, has cut **100%** of general fund dollars from the local ombudsman programs. While this is certainly a problem in the short-run, the local program directors are determined to see this as an opportunity to emerge as a stronger and more effective voice for the frail and vulnerable population we serve.

Meanwhile, in San Mateo County, I want to reassure you that, for now, it is business as usual. The only change that might affect our clients and our stakeholders is a cut in office hours. We are now open from 9 to 4 Monday through Friday, bringing us into line with many of the other local programs. In Large part we can thank our many funders who have provided the financial base for us to continue offering our slate of services. We are indeed grateful to them all.

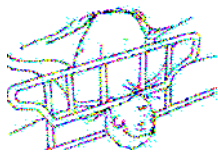
As you read through the newsletter, you will note there are other changes in the works. It keeps us on our toes, open to new opportunities, and encourages us to seek new relationships within the amazing county in which we live.

On The Subject of Funding, or perhaps I should say fundraising, the Ombudsman Board of Directors hosted an elegant dinner/dance and auction event at Peninsula Golf and Country Club in San Mateo.



Vic Lee, Channel 7 News was MC at the event, and Supervisor Jerry Hill and Mike Nevin, ED of Service League, (see photo above) ran the auction. The Fairbrook Jazz Collective provided music. The evening was a lot of fun. Thanks to the generosity of guests and donors, we made a profit of \$25,000

Systems Advocacy Update on Restraints



Yes, we have indeed done well in our county. Excluding only 1 facility, our restraint rates are now down to 4%. My commendation goes to all the facilities for working with us on this issue . . . except for one. Until recently, that facility was restraining all its residents (and sometimes double or even triple restraining).

And then one day, a staff member went into a room and found a resident in his bed, tied down with a waist restraint, his head hanging off the bed resting in a pool of vomit on the floor. His body was trapped between the raised bars on the bed and the headboard. It took a while for the caregivers to

extricate him from this dangerous situation.

Fortunately there were no long-term negative consequences. Without a doubt the facility dodged a bullet.

What I find extraordinary is that the family, who were very glad that Dad was OK, reported to us that they are very pleased with the facility's care of their loved one. The family has been taught that the way to keep Dad safe is to restrain him.

It is time to change the message: restraints do **NOT** keep residents safe. In fact they can be the cause of loss of function and can also cause grievous bodily harm. As long as this single facility continues to over-use restraints, we will attempt to have them understand that their actions are greatly endangering the residents in their care. We hope we succeed before a tragedy makes the need for change all too apparent.

Happy Holidays



'Tis the season to be jolly, tra la la la la la la la ... words of a favorite holiday song. But for many of our clients and their family members the holiday season is a time of great

sadness and sense of loss.

While it is not unusual to feel sadness and loss during the holidays, it is important not to ignore or deny any of the following symptoms of depression in yourself or your loved one: a change in eating habits or sleeping pattern, a loss of interest in pleasurable activities, becoming easily agitated or angry, feeling that nothing you do is good enough, or frustrated by your inability to do the things you used to do, thoughts of death or suicide, or ongoing physical symptoms that don't respond to treatment. Finding someone to talk to about such feelings can be an important step to lift your spirits.

If you are a caregiver in a facility and suspect a resident may be suffering from depression, be sure to keep the path of communication open. Encourage them to talk to you about how they may be feeling. Keep in mind your own or the resident's

limitations and alter traditions if needed. Ask for help from families, friends, or other resources to make your job easier. Do something nice for your resident, and give yourself personal time -- and do something nice for yourself as well. With reduced expectations of the holidays, it can be helpful and even enjoyable to focus on what can still be shared during this festive season.

Two valuable community resources are available. **Family Caregiver Alliance** can be contacted at 1-800-445-8106 if you are a family caregiver and need support. If you work in a facility and notice that a resident is despondent, you are encouraged to call **Family Service Agency** at 650-403-4300, or e-mail Geri Lustenberg at glustenberg@fssm.org and ask for a Senior Peer Counselor to meet with your resident. They offer free services in multiple languages.





Do you have compassion for the elderly?

Would you like to make a huge difference in the lives of others?

Looking for a challenge?

If you answered "Yes" to all of the above -- we need you. Please join our team of dedicated volunteer ombudsmen. A new training session begins on March 11 and involves 38 hours of classroom tuition, followed by a brief internship. The successful candidates will be certified by the state as long-term care ombudsmen -- a challenging but highly rewarding position.

★★★★★ **Star Ranking System for Nursing Homes**

The following is an excerpt taken from a letter addressed to the nursing homes by Kathleen Billingsley, Deputy Director of California's Center for Health Care Quality:

"On December 18 the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) will unveil the "Five Star Quality Rating System" on nursing homes. Nursing homes will receive an overall rating that is based on facility performance on three types of performance measures: health inspections, staffing, and quality measures. Under this new system of ranking, nursing homes with five stars are those considered to have much above average quality, and nursing homes with one star are considered to have quality much below average."

At the national level there are some serious concerns from National Citizens Coalition for Nursing Home Reform (NCCNHR), who believe that CMS is in too much of a hurry to get this up and running. According to NCCNHR, Nurse staffing, including staff to resident ratios, turnover, and retention, is the single most important indicator of quality and should be significantly weighted in the ranking system. Yet CMS does not have the resources to collect all the data from staffing records and relies heavily on self reported data from the facilities. This raises a question of the validity of the data. Like NCCNHR, we hope that this site will not mislead consumers when they are faced with the hard choices. We are eager to see the new website on December 18. Let's hope that it does not follow the Kentucky model where about 90% of nursing homes had achieved superior ratings under their now defunct system. Apparently industry lobbyists succeeded in making the requirements easy to meet. However, Florida and Minnesota have systems that have worked for consumers. We will now have a national model to use. After December 18 you can go to www.medicare.gov and choose "Compare nursing homes in your area."

Farewell Nisreen



Nisreen Khalaf has spent the last two years wearing two hats at Ombudsman Services: those of Administrative Assistant and Coordinator of Volunteers. Sadly for us it is time for her to move on to take advantage of an exciting career opportunity in Washington DC. We wish her lots of good fortune in her new home and her new job. Go safely, Nisreen. We will miss you.

Watch this space to welcome new staff to these positions.

How Can I Help?

By donating to the program or volunteering as an Ombudsman. Please complete and mail the form on the back of the newsletter, or call our office.



1700 S. Amphlett Blvd, Suite 200
San Mateo, CA 94402

RETURN ADDRESS REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org
US POSTAGE
PAID
San Mateo, CA
Permit No. 13

Special Thanks to Our Donors FY 2008/09

Aging & Adult Services ● Vicki Albright ● Karyn Armstrong ● Roberta Barnes ● Wayne & Judy Bayliff ● Craig & Cheryl Beckheyer ● Ruth-e Bennison ● Peggy Berlese ● Borel Bank ● Susan Boutchie ● Barbara Boyd ● Michael Bozzini ● Betty & Robert Brown ● Richard Camera ● Richard Carlson ● James N. Casey ● C.G. Uhlenberg LLP ● City of Pacifica ● City of San Mateo ● City of Redwood City ● Joyce Clark ● Heidi Clarke ● Paul Constantino, Esq ● Shirley Cooper ● Cotchett, Pitre, Simon & McCarthy ● Nancy & Jim Cronin ● Carolyn & Bob Crow ● Kate De Martini ● Sharon Duthie ● Elizabeth Envelope ● Diane Ervin ● Cheryl Fama ● Ed Fike ● Fox, Shjeflo, Wohl & Hartley LLP ● Frances Franco ● Arline Fritz ● Charles Fuller ● Helen & Joe Galligan ● Kelly Gaynor ● Barbara Goodwin ● David Goss ● Fran Guevara ● Doris Hawks Torbeck ● Katie Hoertkorn ● Coni & Doug Hollander ● Dave & Marlene Hood ● Jenny & Harold Hughes ● Teresa Hurtado ● Dr. Shirin Imani ● Tippy Irwin ● Pat Jednorozec ● Nadine Johnson ● Barbara Kalt ● Helen Karr ● Louise Kemmer ● Christine Kenny ● Jim Kenny ● John Kenny ● Patricia Kenny ● Pat Kiisk ● Yolanda Kohnert ● Lisa Laird ● Margaret Laughlin ● Jeff Lee ● Norris Lewis ● Dennis Loiseau ● Marianne Mannia ● Nicole Mannina ● Nicki Manske ● Deirdre Marblestone O'Reilly, Esq ● David Martinson ● Sandra Mercado ● Blenda Michael ● John Michael ● Bob & Sandy Montevaldo ● Mollie Moroney ● Moxa Creations ● Carole Nash ● David Packard, Esq ● Judy Paschen ● Mona Paschen ● Peninsula Health Care District ● Tina Pham ● J.R. Phillips ● George Playjian ● James Poach ● Gene & Doug Reinhardt ● Lance & Maria Reynolds ● Joy Robinson ● Herb & Margarita Rosenthal ● James & Judith Ryzak ● Sequoia Healthcare District ● ServiceMaster Building Maintenance ● Carol Shelton ● James & Judith Shoolery ● John & Susan Sobrato ● SSF Host Lions Club ● Pamela & Doug Stahl ● St Ambrose Episcopal Church ● Jim & Judith Stark ● Shaye Starkey ● Stine & Associates ● Patti Styka ● Judy Sullivan ● Fr. John Takahashi ● Victor Tam ● Al & Fran Teglia ● Paul Terry ● Town of Colma ● Mary Twomey ● Twisted Minds, Ltd ● Dr. Dan Ullvot ● Vallergera & Vallergera ● John & Marie Violet ● Ray Viotti ● Patricia Walsh ● Jim Wendler ● Shirley Zocchi



I would like to volunteer

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

Name: _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip _____

In Memory/Honor of _____

Please make checks payable to Ombudsman Services and mail to 1700 So Amphlett Blvd, Suite 220, San Mateo, CA 94402
EIN# 94-3397402