

Volun-PEER Newsletter



A Publication of the Schuylkill County Ombudsman Program
- Dedicated to Volunteers and PEERs



PNA Survey Concludes with Great Response from PEERs!



The PEERs' "Personal Needs Account Survey" concluded August 15 with more than 3,000 surveys received.

The survey was developed by the Department of Aging, with assistance from the PEER Advisory Council, in an effort to increase the Personal Needs Allowance for residents living in skilled nursing homes and low-income personal care homes.

For consumers in Pennsylvania who are approved for Medical Assistance benefits, a \$45.00 (nursing home) or \$85.00 (personal care home) "allowance" is reserved for individual spending. While many amenities are provided to the residents, some may

have additional expenses not covered by MA, such as co-pays for medication (in personal care), land lines, beauty shop services, postage stamps, outings, meal delivery, on-line shopping, etc. Additionally, preferred brands of personal care products - body wash, deodorant, toothpaste, soap - must be purchased at the residents' expense.

The project was conducted solely by the PEERs, without assistance from staff or local Ombudsmen. If a home did not have a PEER presence, Ombudsman staff reached out to Resident Council Presidents for advocacy.

The national minimum for the personal

needs allowance is \$30.00 with each State given the ability to add to that amount. In Pennsylvania, the PNA has not been increased since 2007.

Residents in all levels of long-term care have been vocal about the cost of living increasing, while their allowance remains completely unaffected.

The surveys will be tabulated and a full report, along with personal videos from the PEERs, will be forwarded to the State Legislature for consideration. It is our hope that these efforts will result in an increase for the residents.



Training Calendar

Volunteers are invited and encouraged to participate in on-line training modules offered by the **PA Department of Aging, Consumer Voice, Learning Management System (LMS)** as well as in-person Network Meetings.

All certified Ombudsmen (Staff and Volunteers) are required to log 18 hours of continuing education for each federal fiscal year (Oct. 1 through Sept. 30).

The next **Network Meeting** will be held September 28 at

the Lackawanna County 911 Center beginning at 10 am. Volunteers can obtain training hours by attending.

PEER Meetings will resume as soon as we can gather in person. Contact Eileen for further information.

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Did you know?

- *According to an old fall superstition, catching a falling leaf brings good luck*
- *\$9 billion is spent yearly on Halloween candy*
- *Apart from birds, monarch butterflies fly and migrate in the Fall*



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Pumpkin Streusel Muffins

INGREDIENTS:

1/4 cup butter, softened; 1/2 cup sugar; 1/4 cup packed brown sugar; 2/3 cup canned pumpkin; 1/2 cup buttermilk; 2 large eggs, room temperature, lightly beaten; 2 tablespoons molasses; 1 teaspoon grated orange zest; 2 cups all-purpose flour; 1 teaspoon baking soda; 1/2 teaspoon baking powder; 1/2 to 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice; 1/4 teaspoon salt

STREUSEL TOPPING:

1/3 cup all-purpose flour; 3 tablespoons brown sugar; 2 tablespoons cold butter

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 375°. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugars until light and fluffy, about 5 minutes. Beat in the pumpkin, buttermilk, eggs, molasses and orange zest. In a second bowl, combine the flour, baking soda, baking powder,



pumpkin pie spice and salt; gradually add to pumpkin mixture just until blended. Fill greased or paper-lined muffin cups two-thirds full.

For topping, combine flour and brown sugar; cut in butter until mixture is crumbly. Sprinkle over batter. Bake until a toothpick inserted in the muffin comes out clean, 20-25 minutes. Cool in pan for 5 minutes before removing to a wire rack to cool completely.

Virtual Resident Rights BINGO Returns!

Back by popular demand! The PEERs will participate in Virtual Resident Right BINGO in October.

The on-line games were developed during the pandemic as a way to connect with the PEERs in a fun way, while educating them on their rights.

BINGO will be conducted during October, which is National Resident Rights Month. 2 options for play are available to the PEERs - October 19

at 10:00 am and October 20 at 1:30 pm.

All PEERs will be notified by their local Ombudsman and will given the choice of day to participate.

BINGO cards, prizes, dabbers, and any needed supplies will be provided to all participants.

One of the most popular activities in long-term care, the origin of BINGO

goes back to 1530 and the Italian Lottery. The game continues to be played to this day every Saturday night!

Good luck to all our PEERs. We hope you enjoy the games!



Welcome, New Volunteer

The Ombudsman Program is excited to welcome Dr. Lynda Graves to our program.

Dr. Graves was a practicing physician in Minersville for many years and has a vast knowledge of medical procedures, medication administration, and Quality of Care and Quality of Life.

Following retirement, Dr. Graves con-

tinued to serve the public in a volunteer capacity with the South Central PA Medical Reserve Corps. She worked hand-in-hand with medical staff to conduct N-95 fit testing events and COVID vaccine education events.

We look forward to working with Lynda and extend a warm welcome to her.

The Ombudsman Program continues to need caring individuals to advocate for our long-term care consumers.

Training is free and many modules can be completed virtually. Contact Eileen for details and to enroll.



History of Scarecrows

Scarecrows were originally made to do exactly what their name suggests: scare off crows and other birds that might ruin the farmer's crops. Scarecrows have been around longer than you might think – the first scarecrows known to history were made about 3,000 years ago! They were first made by the Egyptians to protect their wheat fields, especially along the Nile River. Originally, Greek farmers would fashion their scarecrows to look like Priapus, who was the son of Dionysus and Aphrodite.

The myth goes, Priapus lived near vineyards and he was supposedly very ugly. So whenever Priapus played in the vineyards, it scared the birds away and improved the harvest. Japanese farmers have also used scarecrows in the past, however, they would hang old rags, meat, and fish bones on their creations. The smell itself was enough to keep not only birds but all creatures away from their crops. German farmers used to make wooden witches for their fields because they be-

lieved the witches would draw the evil spirit of winter into their bodies. The world record for the largest gathering of scarecrows in one location is held by National Forest Adventure Farm in the U.K., with 3,812 scarecrows. This scarecrow world record was achieved on August 7, 2014, in Burton-upon-Trent.



Volunteer Opportunities

The following Homes and Centers have openings for a caring volunteer:

NURSING HOMES:

Broad Mountain, Green Valley Nursing, Greenwood Center for Nursing (formerly Hometown Nursing), Orwigsburg Center, Ridgeview, Rosewood, Schuylkill Center, Seton Manor, Shenandoah Manor, and St. Luke's University Health Network

Long-Term Care Unit.

PERSONAL CARE:

Heritage Mills (Tower City), Providence Place (Pottsville and Pine Grove campuses), The Birches at Shenandoah Manor.

ASSISTED LIVING:

Luther Ridge at Seider's Hill

ADULT DAY LIVING:

Eldergarden



LIFE CENTER:

LIFE Geisinger at Miner's Loft

Free training is provided. Contact Eileen for further details.

Residents' Rights Month, 2023

October is Residents' Rights Month, an annual event designated by Consumer Voice to honor residents living in all long-term care facilities and those receiving care in their home or community.

It is an opportunity to focus on and celebrate the dignity and rights of every individual receiving long-term services and supports.

This year's Residents' Rights Month theme - Amplify Our Voices - emphasizes a community of long-term care residents coming together to make their voices heard.

Amplifying your voice means being outspoken about your preferences and choices, and sharing who you are and your experiences.



National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care

Residents' voices are the most important at the decision-making table. **Your Story Deserves to be Told!**



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Ombudsman services are provided by
MidPenn Legal Services under a
contract with the Schuylkill County
Office of Senior Services.
The program is monitored by the
Pennsylvania Department of Aging.

One Step at a Time...But Always Forward



The theme of my high school graduating class becomes more relevant each day.

This summer I had foot surgery - nothing major - a simple bunion repair. Full disclosure: Nothing is ever simple.

I knew going in that there would be some post-operative restrictions, but the worst was my inability to drive for two weeks! You see, the repair was on my right foot. When I asked the surgeon if I could drive with my **LEFT** foot, he put his fingers in his ears, closed his eyes, and just shook his



head! Can't blame a girl for trying! I'm not an impatient person, I just don't like to be kept waiting. And there **IS** a difference. Plus, I can't sit still! Worst of all, I hate being dependent on other people for things I should be able to do by, and for, myself.

I've had surgeries before, but never involving my foot. Crutches were not an option - I'm less than graceful! When I was offered a walker I politely declined. My daughter laughed - not so politely! I was content to walk

like John Wayne!
The entire experience was an eye-opener and made me think of our long term care consumers. How many of them came into their new homes imagining they would be able to “do” for themselves, not relying on others? How many of them are kept waiting? How many wish they were anywhere else?
With the help of our caring volunteers, they have an advocate who can help them get used to their new surroundings - one step at a time!

Eileen