

A Day in the Life of an Ombudsman

By Juanita Beale, Volunteer Coordinator
King County Long Term Care Ombudsman

Ombudsmen are a diverse group of individuals coming from all walks of life who want to protect the rights of the elderly and people living with disabilities in licensed care facilities.

Often a new trainee will ask, "Just what does an Ombudsman do in a nutshell?"

An Ombudsman is the "voice" of a resident who asks for help resolving a problem. The King County Ombudsman is a volunteer of action who opens up the lines of communication and seeks a fair and reasonable solution to the resident's concern. The Ombudsman is "Resident Driven". The Ombudsman advocates for the resident's Long Term Care Rights, and is a low level problem solver who strives to find a solution to the resident's complaint as quickly as possible. Ombudsman trainees are well educated during an intense training class offered by LTCOP to be confident, strong advocates for the resident's they serve. 25% of complaints are resolved by Ombudsmen the same day. This invaluable service is free to LTC residents in 1300 facilities in King County.

In a time of lay offs and budget cuts, over the summer, while most of us were on vacation having fun in the sun, 57 volunteer Certified Ombudsmen were responding to over 537 complaints, opening 230 cases, and spending a total of over 4000 hours advocating for the Resident's Rights and solving problems for very frail and vulnerable adults...all for free.

Volunteer Ombudsman are desperately needed throughout King County to visit Adult family Homes, Nursing homes and Boarding Homes.

Please help me get the word out that the 4 day training to become an Ombudsman is available in Seattle this October and November.

Thank-you,

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