



# COV NEWS

Volunteer Newsletter

April 2020

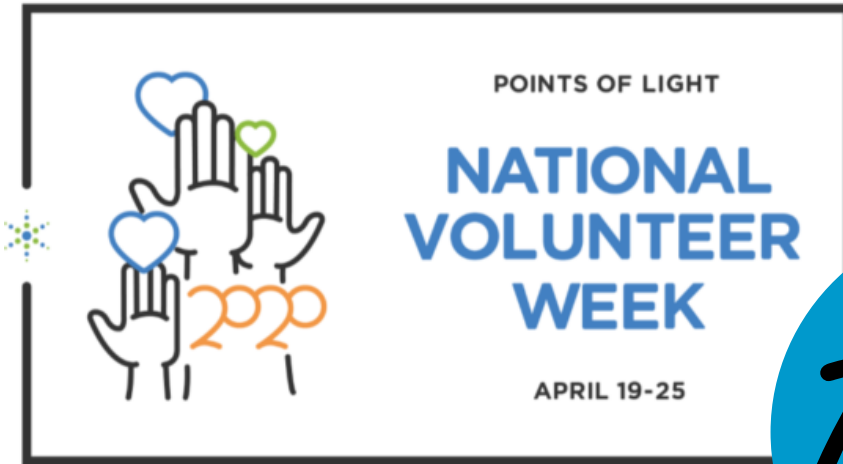
## Special Edition: National Volunteer Week April 19-25

This National Volunteer Week, we couldn't be more proud to recognize the service of all the Minnesota Certified Ombudsman Volunteers. We are grateful for all the hard work that you do each day. But this week in particular, we want to spend some extra time to express our sincere gratitude.

Now, more than ever, your resilience to change and your dedication to this program are deeply appreciated. We are so grateful for your service and truly would not be at our best without you. You help build trusting relationships and extend our reach by providing a presence in facilities statewide. You dedicate your time to working with resident and family councils, listening to concerns and advocating for residents. You help educate residents, families and staff on person-centered care. You work alongside regional ombudsman to ensure residents' rights are protected.

It is with our most sincere gratitude and honor that we say, thank you!





*Thank You*

## To our volunteers:

We are so grateful for the relationships volunteers form at facilities—with staff, with family members and with residents. Your presence builds trust and is a reason many residents feel comfortable sharing their concerns. We can never say thank you enough. Thank you, thank you, thank you. Take care of yourselves. We hope to see you soon.

- Lori Goetz, RO

Being new in my role as a Regional Ombudsman, I've had a lot to learn. Being with you in trainings and in facilities has taught me so much. I'm so impressed by your dedication, know-how and passion. You are really wonderful advocates who do so much for the residents we serve. Thank you!

- Parichay Rudina, RO

I am especially proud of a recent local news article highlighting the work of Certified Ombudsman Volunteers. The title of the article, "Volunteers champion elder rights," was an apt representation of what our Certified Ombudsman Volunteers do all across our state. I'm particularly proud of the quote from the facility LSW that ends the story; "They (residents) don't want to be seen as a complainer." Volunteers are a neutral party and build trust with residents. "It's an additional support and set of ears," she said. We are so proud of the COV service. Thank you!

- Ann Holme, RO

Thank you for all you do to help those we work with. You truly make a difference in their lives and making a lasting impact. We can't do this without you!

- Dan Tupy, RO

A huge thank you to all of our COVs and the hard work you do! I am new to the Ombudsman program, but have already felt the wonderful effects of having your presence in our facilities! Our residents are so fortunate to have you and I am so grateful to work alongside you! I look forward to getting to know my COVs in the Northwest!

- Amanda Caillier, RO

To all of the wonderful volunteers of the Office of Ombudsman for Long-Term Care: thank you! Your time, energy and commitment, often over the span of years, is priceless. I truly appreciate each and every one of you and the difference that you make daily for people living in long-term care.

Thank you!

-Paula Wieczorek, RO

No words feel appropriate to express my gratitude for our volunteers. They are a group of unique, skilled individuals with a passion and drive for improving the quality of life of residents within long-term care. At a time when there are so many options for volunteering our office's volunteers take a path of advocacy, to empower the voice of the residents and to provide a presence that is there to ensure that their voices are being heard. The COV volunteers play a pivotal part in my role as an ombudsman and I feel blessed to work with our incredible group of volunteers. Thank you, thank you!

- Emma Shepard, RO

I haven't had the chance to work with the volunteers within OOLTC, but I am excited to get the opportunity soon. I am in awe of the time and energy that volunteers put into our communities and know that they are a ray of light to the residents/clients that we support.

"Love and kindness are never wasted. They always make a difference, they bless the one who receives them, and they bless you the giver." Barbara De Angelis

Thank you!

- Jason Mekalson, RO

Our volunteers work tirelessly for the residents in their assigned facilities. They become a welcome and familiar face for residents. Volunteers work to ensure residents get to choose activity offerings, have voice in their daily care and provide a consistent presence as many staffing and leadership changes have occurred over the years.

I'm grateful to the new volunteers that have joined our volunteer program and jumped in with both feet! They are a welcomed listening ear for residents. They have been able to quickly navigate learning the operations of long-term care facilities and examine its impact on the residents. Residents have quickly found trust and now confide in the COVs to get their concerns resolved or just simply vent about frustrations.

I'm also grateful to the volunteers advocating at multiple facilities. Their attendance at resident and family council meetings to doing education for community members, neighbors and family members she offers her advocacy to members of the entire community.

Having volunteers as a part of our program allows a more regular presence than Regional Ombudsman can offer alone. Thank you, to all our volunteers, for your efforts and contributions!

- Maisie Blaine, RO

There is a saying that "the heart of a volunteer is not measured in size, but by the depth of the commitment to make a difference in the lives of others." This says it all about the volunteers of our Ombudsman program. The Certified Ombudsman Volunteers give their time and heartfelt dedication to help others who are vulnerable and in need of kindness. The acts are never small, even if they appear to be from the outside looking in. Ensuring access to a cold glass of water, meaningful activities to help pass the time and take one's mind off of the present situation, and ensuring care of the resident is done in a dignified manner are things that cannot truly be measured, except by the heart of the recipient.

- Kristen Rice, RO

The COV's are a vital and important part of the work we do on behalf of residents. To be able to have that consistent, positive presence in nursing homes is an essential part of our work. Residents feel comfortable when they see the same face, it opens up lines of communication. It also provides a level of accountability and support to the facilities. Often times the volunteers are the ones that support the residents when there are complaints and concerns. The COV 's are compassionate, caring, and talented. They also are committed to the mission of the ombudsman's work. To be able to work as a team with the COV 's is very important and beneficial. Thank you, volunteers, for everything that you do!

- Heather Anderson, RO

The volunteers are an incredibly valuable part of the Ombudsman team and what a difference you make! Your consistent presence, your commitment of time when visiting and listening to residents, and your skill in providing resources, direction, and advocacy to address concerns is invaluable to the consumers we serve and to the Ombudsman program as a whole. I am incredibly grateful for your on-going commitment to the residents in helping fulfill our mission to help educate, empower and advocate for those receiving LTC services. Without you, we would not be able to make an impact as many lives as we do. Thank you!

- Sally Schoephoerster, RO

Volunteering is about more than giving your time and resources, it's a way of life chosen by individuals with a passion to make necessary changes in our world. Thanks for caring enough to make positive impacts in your corner of the world.

- Tammy Hollingsworth, RO

I appreciate the volunteers, not only because they have way more experience in the field of long-term care than I do, but because they are the Regional Ombudsman's eyes and ears at facilities while also continuing to provide the presence of the OOLTC's advocacy and support. I wouldn't be at my best without the dedication and services of the Certified Ombudsman Volunteers.

- Brian Stamschror, RO

Thank you so much for all that you do for the Ombudsman Program and the people we serve. I can only imagine how hard it is right now, for you as well, to not be able to visit residents during the pandemic. I have only been back doing Regional Ombudsman work since January but already have seen the wonderful difference you all make in the places you serve. I had the privilege of visiting with some of the COV's and was able to see firsthand how important they are to the facility and the great relationships that they have made with the residents and staff members. I was at a resident council meeting when the Minnesota Department of Health interviewed residents and all the residents knew about the ombudsman program and services because of the COV's education and advocacy. One of the volunteers I work with was able to help get a brand new call light system in two weeks! I am convinced this is some type of record and I know this is just one example of many all around Minnesota. Thank you, volunteers, for making a difference!

- Jane Brink, RO

I want to share a special thank you to the COV in my region, Myrna. Thank you again for all you do and for being a voice and sounding board for the residents living in the community.

- Dave Christianson, RO

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Volunteers provided  
advocacy services



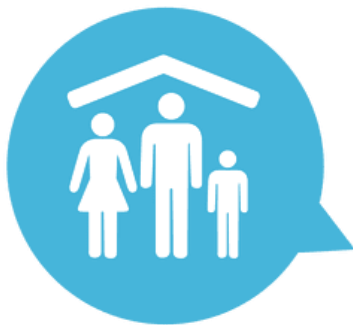
# 2,800+

Hours were generously  
donated



# 170+

Hours were spent working  
with resident councils



# 55+

Hours were spent working  
with family councils

