

# Ombudsman Services of San Mateo County, Inc.

Advocating on behalf of residents in long term care

Fall 2011



As I sat down at my desk to write this piece for our newsletter, I was reminded that it is my ten-year anniversary with OSSMC. When I arrived a decade ago, we were a fledgling independent agency, having just stepped out from under the umbrella of a larger agency. Since then, we have not only found our footing, but have achieved incredible victories, advocating on behalf of residents, working with facilities to embrace a resident-centered care culture, expanding our services and building new relationships with our community partners.

Looking back over the ten year span, I pondered on the stories and cases that have flowed under the bridge during my tenure with the organization. I am very conscious of the incredible odds that our residents face on a daily basis. Sadly, many of them have lost their voices in a system that does not value their wisdom, and often times fails to respond to their needs and wants. I believe we have made extraordinary headway in our interaction with facilities and their staff, building cooperative relationships for improving the day to day lives of the residents, but there is still work to be done.

The next ten years promise a different set of challenges. The approaching baby boomer generation is pushing for dramatic changes in the way care is provided for their loved ones ..... maybe soon to be for themselves. Already we are seeing that those entering nursing homes are older than before, more compromised with more complex health conditions. We are seeing residential care homes beginning to look a lot more like nursing homes, as they are pressured to take new residents who are resistant to moving into the institutional settings that nursing homes present. I know that with your help we are up to the challenges we will be facing, and that we will contribute enormously towards the continued improvement and changes necessary to provide good care for valued elders.

Sincerely,

Tippy Irwin



It has been an exciting year for OSSMC and we are thrilled to present you with our first combined Fall Newsletter/Annual Report. We are eager to share more residents' stories, to tell you about upcoming events, and to express our appreciation to our supporters.

We have almost completed our emergency planning project, meeting one-on-one with every facility in the county, thus ensuring that each of them has a fully completed emergency plan and is trained to meet the needs of residents in the event of a disaster. We have recently embarked on an exciting new project. In October we are hosting a symposium entitled ***Dementia Care Without Drugs: A Better Approach for Long Term Care Facilities***. We have worked closely with California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform (CANHR) to bring together thought leaders in the elder care field who will discuss alternatives to using drugs to treat dementia and related behavioral issues. This promises to be an exciting day, bringing providers, facility operators and caregivers to the event for an interactive discussion.

Due to the nature of our work, we are called to preserve the privacy of the residents, for the most part working quietly in the background. In fact, I was recently at a community event where OSSMC was referred to as a "stealth force." That is how it may seem, but I can tell you that the work we do is vital to the safety and well-being of our residents and a critical component of the aging network in San Mateo County. Our intent is to provide excellence in the work we do with our clients, and to do it gladly for the betterment of our broader community.

The members of the Board of Directors join me in expressing our sincere thanks to the volunteers, staff and supporters of OSSMC who have made the work we do possible.

Sincerely,

Judy Johnson  
Board President

## Helping Residents Thrive

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So often residents are brought into a one size fits all system that fails to recognize them or the celebrations and holidays that made their lives in their own homes memorable. On Mother's Day, with your support, we were able to change that by delivering potted plants and flowers to dozens of residents.

As Ombudsmen delivered the flowers they were met with overjoyed residents thrilled to have received their plant in the name of an anonymous donor. In the end OSSMC delivered more than 100 flowers in six facilities across San Mateo County.

The true heroes of this story are those generous and kind donors whose thoughtful donations brought joy to the lives of so many residents.

If you would like to help bring joy to the life of resident and provide them flowers on Mother's Day 2012 visit: [www.ossmc.org](http://www.ossmc.org).

## OSSMC Ignites an Anti-drugging Movement in the Bay Area

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On October 27<sup>th</sup> in partnership with California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform (CANHR) OSSMC is bringing *Dementia Care Without Drugs: A Better Approach for Long Term Care Facilities* to the Bay Area for a one day symposium.

Thought leaders such as Tena Alonzo, Christopher Cherney and Tony Chicotel will lead facility staff, medical professionals and family members through a day of interactive discussion designed to allow attendees to gain a better understanding of the dangers of using psychotropic drugs as a first line of treatment for dementia care. Participants will leave inspired, challenged and ready to implement real time, facility tested alternatives to dementia care.

To purchase tickets please visit: [www.ossmc.org](http://www.ossmc.org)

Special thanks to our partners:

Pharmerica, The Alzheimer's Association and The Peninsula Health Care District

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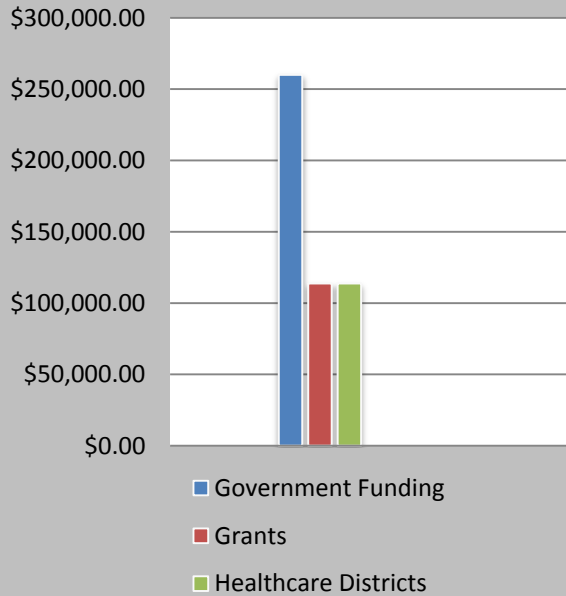
## **ABUSE:** Protecting Our Most Vulnerable

It is early evening in a small 6-bed facility. The residents, who are severely compromised and developmentally disabled, are gathered around the kitchen table. All are in wheel chairs, one is blind, and all are non-verbal, unable to tell us what is happening to them. Five staff members are gathered around, laughing as they watch another staff member assault the residents. He uses a wet towel to hit a blind resident in her face. Each time the towel connects with her exposed skin she flinches in pain. He kicks her wheelchair and tells her to be quiet. The staff member turns to another resident and grabs a chunk of her hair while spinning her wheelchair. She screams out. The other four residents, concerned for their own safety, cower in fear.

We received a series of video clips which revealed these and other events. With the help of the San Bruno Police Department and the Department of Public Health this facility was forced into closure within two weeks – something that has not happened in the 10 years of OSSMC's operations. It was an incredible team effort by our community partners. Had it not been for the ombudsman who makes regular visits to this facility and who has built relationships with residents and staff, this cruel abuse may never have been uncovered.

# OSSMC Year in Review 2010-2011

## A Commitment to Excellence



## Overview

Facility Monitoring Visits: 6,346  
 Investigated and closed complaints: 2003  
 Training and Consultations to Facilities: 577  
 Community Training and Support: 603

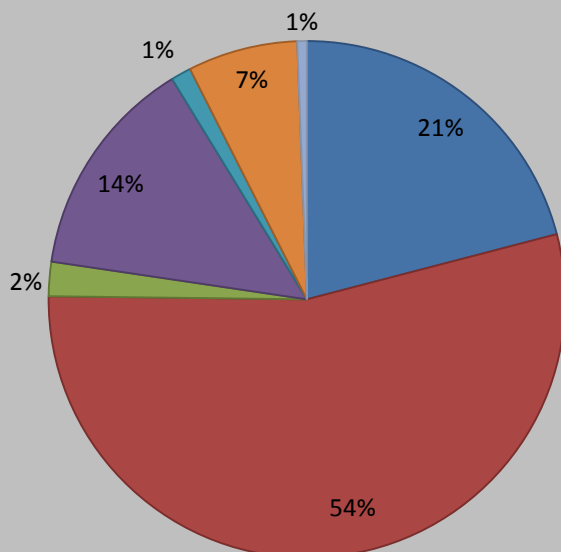
## Abuse Investigations

Physical: 47	Gross Neglect: 32
Sexual: 13	Residents to Resident: 13
Verbal: 25	
Financial: 78	

## Volunteer Hours Donated

Direct Facility and Resident Contact: 8,140  
 Board Service: 500

## The Community We Serve



- Skilled Nursing Facilities - 1,992 residents in 20 facilities
- Assisted Living/Residential Care Facilities - 5,161 residents in 325 facilities
- Intermediate Care Facilities - 204 residents in 34 facilities
- Adult Day Care Centers - 1,325 clients in 23 facilities
- Adult Day Health Centers - 120 clients in 2 facilities
- Adult Residential Facilities - 654 residents in 92 facilities
- Social Rehabilitation Centers - 57 residents in 4 facilities



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

## Ombudsman Services of San Mateo County, Inc.

**Mission:** Actively promote standards of excellence in advocacy and enhancement of the quality of life for residents of long-term care facilities in the county.

### Contact Us

Website: [ossmc.org](http://ossmc.org)  
Mail: 711 Nevada St. Redwood City, CA 94061  
Phone: 650.780.5707  
Fax: 650.364.5399

## Board of Directors

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