



From the Desk of the Director

Happy holidays to one and all! Just where this year has gone is a total mystery. Life is full and it is that very fullness that propels us forward helter skelter through the months, facing the challenges with determination and the opportunities with excitement and hope of a better tomorrow.

Right now we are on the brink of some very exciting medical advances that seem straight out of science fiction (see article on this topic on page 2).

Will we all, like Methuselah of Hebrew tradition, live to the ripe old age of 969? That does not even bear thinking about. But nevertheless we are certainly looking at the possibility of 110, 120 and maybe beyond.

That leads us straight to one of the challenges we are beginning to see today concomitant to the probability of a longer life span. Ombudsman Services of San Mateo County is currently dealing with eight cases, all involving residents over the age of 90, all living in assisted living facilities, needing some

additional assistance with their activities for daily living, but all relatively healthy, not needing nursing care. Each of these individuals has run out of money.

In the words of one, "What is a person to do? I sold my home and used the money to pay for assisted living over a number of years. I never expected to live this long. Now they are wanting to evict me for non-payment. Where am I to go?" And that is the question. In their ripe old age, are these people facing homelessness?

It seems there are no easy answers to be found in the State of California: not from the Department of Health Care Services, not from Health Plan San Mateo, not from our colleagues and valuable partners at Aging and Adult Services and not from the Federal Administration on Community Living.

And just what does this say about the society in which we live? What value do we place on our aging population, if any? A lot of questions, but no clear answers.

Tippy Irwin



**HAPPY HOLIDAYS
FROM ALL OF US AT
OMBUDSMAN SERVICES
OF SAN MATEO
COUNTY!**



Update on Executive Director Search

OSSMC's Transition Committee is working on the very difficult task of replacing our longtime executive director, Tippy Irwin. Tippy will retire in May 2017. The Committee has retained a consultant to help guide it through the many steps involved in identifying, and attracting the ideal candidate for the job. In the process we have learned to value Tippy's many talents even more, if that is possible. The official outreach for potential candidates will start in January. In the meantime everyone at OSSMC is spreading the word informally and keeping eyes and ears open in the hope of hearing about just the right person to fill this job that is so instrumental in continuing the organization's important role in the community.

Is This The Bionic Man? by Tippy Irwin

"Gentlemen, we can rebuild him. We have the technology," announced the narrator at the start of the 1970s television series, 'The Six Million Dollar Man'. In this TV program scientists reconstructed the shattered body of crash victim Steve Austin with bionic implants he could control with his mind."
(Excerpt from Nature, July 13, 2006)



Pure fantasy? At the time, yes." But it seems that we have finally arrived – at least part of the way. A project entitled "Braingate," now in its second phase, has extended to include Stanford University. One of our clients suffering from tetraplegia has become part of the clinical trial. This neural interface system demonstrates the feasibility of people with extreme paralysis caused by spinal injury using the system to control a computer cursor and other assistive devices with their thoughts alone. To try to encapsulate the extraordinary scope of this project in one small paragraph is beyond my ability.

Our client, "John" has been paralyzed for 9 plus years after skidding on the grass and breaking his neck. Once "Braingate" determined he would be an ideal subject for their project, it took some tedious years of neuron mapping before John began to see results. He is now able to move a cursor across a screen, using only his brain to make it happen. In his first attempt John struggled to move the cursor to three o'clock, but his second attempt to reach a target resulted in the cursor falling to the bottom of the screen and "sulking" in the corner. After six weeks of intensive effort, John is now hitting his target 149 times in a six-minute period. An amazing feat, lagging only just behind Jason, his simian counterpart who holds the record!

John is now able to type on a keyboard using only his brain to select the keys – he has been practicing on a paper keyboard taped to the ceiling above his head. He sent the first ever communication from the brain of a human to an assistive device (i.e. a cell phone) of another in a different state. John has enthusiastically met the challenges this project has presented to him. He stated, "I now have a reason to get up in the morning."

And Then There Were None



The title of Agatha Christie's famous novel pertaining to murder and mayhem was brought to mind when a friend of mine was called to Hong Kong to say goodbye to her sister who was considered to be in end stage cancer, with 22 tumors rampant throughout various organs in her ravished body.

By the time Rose reached Hong Kong, there was no trace of cancer in her sister's body. The medical establishment in Hong Kong had taken a sample of the latest tumor that had developed in the small intestine and had shipped it to a lab, Foundation One, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The lab had worked up a specialized treatment specific to the type of cancer attacking Rose's sister's cells. With just one small pill twice a day over a short period of time, her sister's body miraculously annihilated the 22 tumors, and there was no trace of the cancer in her body. That was several months ago, and today she is still cancer free and in recovery. The pills are expensive at about \$6,000 per pill, and because this therapy is so new, it is not yet clear how long this drug therapy will need to continue. There is hope that this type of therapy will become increasingly available to the millions of people suffering from different forms of cancer.

SAVE THE DATE!
OMBUDSMAN SERVICES OF SAN MATEO COUNTY
ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

SUNDAY, APRIL 30, 2017

11 AM-2 PM

PENINSULA ITALIAN AMERICAN SOCIAL CLUB

SAN MATEO

FEATURING...

...CHAMPAGNE BRUNCH

...A TRIBUTE TO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TIPPY IRWIN
ON HER RETIREMENT AFTER 15 YEARS

...LIVE AND SILENT AUCTIONS

FOR INFORMATION ON VOLUNTEERING FOR THE PLANNING COMMITTEE, SPONSORSHIPS OR ON DONATING AUCTION ITEMS, PLEASE CONTACT MITCH REITMAN, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT, 650-780-7249, mitchreitman@ossmc.org.

In September, Team Ombudsman Services raised \$4,125 for Alzheimer's Disease research at the San Francisco 5K Walk to End Alzheimer's.



Welcome New Ombudsmen!!

Seven volunteer ombudsmen completed training and are in process of completing their field internships this Fall.



Pictured Above From Left to Right are our new volunteers: Betty Frayman-Kori, Lisa Ragan, Lita Gunawan, Hugh Norton-Smith, Twila Dependahl, Gabe Kralik. Pictured Left: John Lyle

First Quarter (July-Sept. 2016) Impact

Activity	Annual Goal FY 2016-17	Year to Date (July-Sept)
Number of Facility Visits Made	5,000	1,212
Percent of Facility Coverage Plan Achieved	85%	96%
Number of Complaints Investigated	1,550	383
Percent of Complaints Resolved to the Satisfaction of the Residents	90%	88%
# of Volunteer Ombudsmen	45	43
Volunteer Hours Donated	5,000	1,439
# of Facility In-Service Trainings Provided	25	5
# Consultations with Facility Staff	200	38
# of Community Education Events	30	15
# of Consultations with Individuals	350	142

Acknowledgements

Ombudsman Services of San Mateo County, Inc. wishes to thank the following funders and donors who contributed from July 1-November 29, 2016. If there are any omissions or errors, we sincerely apologize and ask that you contact us.

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|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| \$1,000 and Above | \$1-249 |
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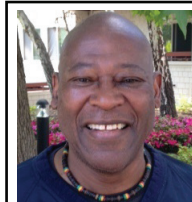
VOLUNTEER OF THE QUARTER:

Terry Mathis



Terry has been with the program for three years. Initially Terry was very unsure of her ability to fill the role of ombudsman, but with her can-do attitude, she has taken every opportunity to learn and has truly blossomed.

Faced with the loss of an ombudsman and gaps in facility coverage, Terry's supervisor asked if she would be willing to expand her hours and cover some additional facilities. Terry immediately responded, "I am a volunteer... I will go where you need me." It is that refreshing attitude and her thirst for learning that has driven her to develop into a valuable seasoned member of the field ombudsman team.



Thank you to our valued Field Ombudsman, Dr. Joe Canton, who conducted an in-service training session in October for our volunteers on the subject of cultural diversity.



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Board Spotlight

James Wambach
Jim earned his Bachelor of Science from The Ohio State University's College of Business. He has substantial executive leadership experience, with a focus on sales and marketing while leading fast growing technology companies for 25+ years. During this time Jim was consistently recognized for his ability to build strong organizations and dedicated teams that provided their clients high value solutions. Many of his organizations successfully developed from "seed" stage to IPO and/or experienced successful, high value acquisitions.



Six years ago, Jim made a major life decision to spend more of his time serving the community by supporting older adults and their families through some of life's more difficult transitions. He was designated a Certified Senior Advisor (CSA) by the Society of Certified Senior Advisors and founded Sesen Elder Care, a practice focused on successful aging, by providing elder care education, care management and advocacy and in-home care. Today, Jim also serves as a volunteer and President of the Board for Foster City Village, a non-profit focused on supporting health and wellness for an aging population and enabling seniors to remain in their homes with a high quality of life. During one of his community presentations on successful aging, Jim learned more about OSSMC, an organization he has long admired for their important services, and welcomed the opportunity to help, believing doing so was a natural extension of his passion for improving the quality of care for older adults in life transitions. Jim is married with four adult children and two grandchildren. He enjoys spending as much time as possible with his family and friends, in addition to experiencing the natural beauty of the Bay Area with any activity that allows him to be outdoors.