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Message from our Executive Director



There are two groups of people without whom this program could not function at its current level: our donors whose generosity is so much appreciated, and our volunteers who form the amalgam, the very core, out of which we operate.

In February, we held our annual volunteer appreciation brunch. For me, it is a time of reflection on how very blessed we are.

I had the privilege of attending a talk given by Lynne Twist, in my opinion the queen bee of all fundraisers, and she gave a definition of happiness that resonated with me. She states that happiness begins with gratitude which is closely followed by a "great fullness." On February 26, as I looked out across the room at this incredible group of dedicated volunteer ombudsman, I was truly filled with both gratitude and a great fullness. My cup runneth over!



To be left alone in the world as we age and lose the capability of speaking up for ourselves is a frightening thought.

"Mr. Robertson" is in just that situation: he is suffering from dementia and unable to make his own decisions, and is certainly not capable of managing his finances. His son had moved him from a facility in the East Bay so he could be closer to him in San Mateo County. One week later his son passed away.

Our ombudsman was called in to see if she could assist. The executor of the son's estate knew nothing about Mr. Robertson, his finances or what bank accounts he has. We have since learned that Mr. Robertson is a railroad retiree and we are in communication with that organization to see if we can find out more about his income and the bank where his retirement benefits are deposited. It would be a start! As Mr. Robertson's health had deteriorated we needed to get him connected to a physician in the county. We were able to get a referral from his physician in the East Bay. He was immediately admitted to the hospital and will, from henceforward, need insulin injections. The small board and care home does not want to take him back for a couple of reasons: firstly, nobody is paying Mr. Robertson's bills, and secondly he has moved beyond the level of care they can provide.

So what comes next? We are working closely with Adult Protective Services to see if we can get Mr. Robertson conserved as soon as possible, to get his finances in order and then to get him moved to a nursing home where he will receive the appropriate level of care needed. We are indeed privileged to be able to provide the voice for residents such as Mr. Robertson. But we are also very fortunate to have strong community partners willing to work with us to better serve the individuals who are our clients.

What's Inside:

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2015 Volunteer and Community Celebration

This is an event we truly look forward to each year: celebrating with all our volunteers -- both field ombudsmen and board members -- recognizing their contributions to the extraordinary work that is accomplished by this program and glowing in their reflected glory as the spotlight shines on them. Words truly cannot express how we, the staff in the program, feel about this group of people.

We especially want to note those who surpassed significant milestones in their years of service:

2 years: Jay Katz

5 years: Ann Dreyfus, Carol Gilbert, Frank Kushin, Bonnie Sickinger, Joanne Tin

10 years: Judy King, Diane Robertson, Bill Rodenspiel

The Richard Rampton Award for our volunteer of the year in 2015, was awarded to Phyllis Annett. Phyllis, is a retired RN, who has been with this program for the past eight years. Phyllis is a committed, dedicated professional, whose ethical standards rise head and shoulders above most of those around her. She is tireless in the work she does with our clients. Her professionalism and her medical knowledge have served her well as she has discharged her responsibilities in the service of her clients.

Phyllis works closely with residents and with family members, and has forged strong relationships with facility staff. She is straightforward, and always establishes a level of professionalism and honesty to which she expects people to respond. Her compassion and her tenacity on behalf of the vulnerable residents she serves makes us indeed proud to have her as a member of our team. Thank you, Phyllis!



Meet Our New Volunteer Ombudsmen

One of the great things about volunteers being such a huge part of our program is that we frequently welcome a new group of committed and excited Field Ombudsmen to our team. This Winter was no exception, as four new volunteers completed the class training and launched into their internships. Diana, Grace, Richard and Isaac bring with them a wealth of knowledge and life experiences that include nursing, music therapy, law and radio. Each of them is eager to begin their official ombudsman duties and leverage their experiences on behalf of residents living in long-term care.



Isaac Stevenson



Grace Reyes



Richard Schwachter



Diana Paradise

Do you enjoy empowering others?

Are you ready to join Diana, Grace, Richard and Isaac?

If you are interested in learning more about joining our next volunteer class, email Tippy at tippyirwin@ossmc.org

Congratulations Judith Guilfoyle on Twenty Five Years of Service

Twenty five years is a long time by anybody's standards – a quarter of a century. At our volunteer recognition event on February 26, we took the opportunity to publicly recognize Judith Guilfoyle for the 25 years of dedicated service she has given to the residents in San Mateo county's long term care facilities.

For Judith this is a journey that began when she was about 23 years of age. After her family experienced a tragic loss, Judith stood by and watched as both her parents declined, her mother into what we know today was Alzheimer's. Her mother was only 42 years old. There was no word or diagnosis for Alzheimer's and nobody knew how to deal with the disease and the accompanying behaviors that her mother was exhibiting. Judith stood by and watched as her mother was tied up, drugged and even locked up. One could say that she stood by and watched but that was not technically true. Judith was quickly honing her skills as an advocate.

After her mother passed away, Judith vowed to herself that no person should go through what her mother had gone through without a strong advocate. She took courses in geriatrics, in conflict resolution and mediation and then, while struggling to run the family business single-handedly and raise her two small children as a single mother, she signed up for a brief period as a volunteer in the very early days of this program, when it was run by a former Catholic priest as a stand-alone non-profit. Some years later, when it had been taken over by Catholic Charities, Judith again joined the program and was soon taken onto the staff – that was 25 years ago! Under the leadership of first Bea Lopez and then Sara Morrison, Judith further refined her advocacy skills, and today is one of the finest advocates for seniors that we know. There is not a person who passes through our office that has not in some way been touched by Judith. Every one of us currently on the staff has learned our advocacy skills from Judith. She is truly fearless in her efforts, taking on whatever adversary stands in the way of her client getting the good care and quality of life that is deserved. Sometimes roaring like a lion, sometimes behaving deceptively like a lamb, taking on whoever stands in her way, it is seldom she loses a battle when advocating for a frail vulnerable client.

She is the second longest serving ombudsmen in the state. In her honor we have created the Judith Guilfoyle Honor Society, recognizing and honoring any ombudsman in our program that serves 20 years or more. Judith's name has been added to the plaque which already names five ombudsmen, two of them still with us today: Nancy Krah and Nancy Cronin, who, like Judith, are two formidable advocates for our clients.



Judith receives commendation from Marc Hershmann, representing State Senator Jerry Hill's Office



Judith's family came out in force to surprise her



Executive Director Tippy Irwin and County Supervisor Adrienne Tissier pay tribute to Judith and all of our volunteers

Do You Like to Plan Parties?

Are you already planning your next holiday party? Do you love chatting with people in your neighborhood? Do you just love attending a good party? We have a job for you! OSSMC is planning our 2016 Gala and we need your help in making it a success. We are looking for volunteers to serve on our event planning committee completing tasks that range from marketing, event planning and fundraising. This is an ideal opportunity for someone who is not able to commit to being a full time Field Ombudsman, but is interested in supporting our program. If you would like to learn more about this please email Director of Development Mitch Reitman at mitchreitman@ossmc.org.

2nd Annual Silicon Valley Gives

On Tuesday, May 5, Ombudsman Services of San Mateo County will join with over 600 local non-profits in the 2nd Annual Silicon Valley Gives. This 24-hour on-line fundraising efforts provides a great opportunity for us to inform our community about our mission and encourage financial support.

How You Can Participate

1. Visit our SV Gives page at svgives.razoo.com/story/ossmc. Click "Donate" to make your own donation beginning on May 4.

2. Start now to encourage your friends, co-workers, family, and acquaintances to donate by providing them the link svgives.razoo.com/story/ossmc through your email, Facebook, Twitter, or by setting up your own fundraising page (click "Get Started" in the "Fundraise for this Cause" box at the bottom of the page).

3. Plan to join OSSMC on Tuesday, May 5 at 5:30 PM for a Cinco de Mayo Reception to celebrate and recognize our donors and volunteers, and to enjoy each other and Mexican-themed appetizers and margaritas. The event will be held in the Bluebird Room of Foster City Recreation Center, 650 Shell Blvd., Foster City. To RSVP, Please send an email to mitchreitman@ossmc.org or call 650-780-5707.



Upcoming Events

Updates on Dementia Conference



2014 Alzheimer's Association Conference

Join our Field Ombudsman for the 17th Annual Updates on Dementia Care Conference: Translating Research Into Practice on Wednesday, May 13, 2015 at the Crowne Plaza Foster City. We will examine the latest research in the biological, social, and psychological aspects of aging and dementia with particular emphasis on work that will have practical applications to clinical practice.

Register today at:
<http://edconference.kintera.org/FosterCity2015>

CEUs available: RN, LVN, CNA/HHA, MFT, LCSW, RCFE, NHA, PSYC

Seniors on the Square

In observance of World Elder Abuse Awareness and Prevention Day, we will be partnering with the City of Redwood City and the San Mateo Daily Journal to bring you a one of a kind event for seniors and their families at Courthouse Square (2200 Broadway) in Redwood City on Friday, June 12, 2015 10am-2pm. Join us for a morning of conversation, prizes, games and music courtesy of Love Power .



Helen Karr, Tippy Irwin and Lisa Mancini during Seniors on the Square 2014

Acknowledgements

Ombudsman Services of San Mateo County, Inc wishes to thank the following donors who contributed from January 7, 2015 to March 31, 2015. If there are any omissions or errors, we sincerely apologize and ask that you contact us.

\$10,001 and over
Mills Peninsula Health Services

\$1,000-\$9,999
Trapp Charitable Fund, an advised fund of Silicon Valley Community Foundation
Sondra Card

\$500-999
Sequoia Healthcare District (Sponsorship of Alive Inside Screening)

\$100-\$499
Home Helpers & Direct Link
Adelaide Curren
Michelle Leao
Robert Perez
Cindy Safe

\$1-\$99
Anonymous
Mary Ann Gage
Susan Gibson
Patricia Maxwell
Nancy Miller
Julianne Mooney
Marianne Petroni
Christine & David Stormont
John Wisnieff

Third Quarter Impact

301 ← Cases Opened

Cases Closed → 39

18 ← Community Service Events

Volunteers in Training → 5

1,228 ← Hours Donated by Volunteers



17

Skilled Nursing
Facilities Visited



238

Residential Care
Facilities Visited



185

Consultations
Provided



37

Community
Education Hours
Provided



Ombudsman Services of
San Mateo County, Inc.



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Ombudsman Services of
San Mateo County



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Board Spotlight: Rich Garbarino

Our board member, Rich Garbarino, was born and raised in San Francisco and attended local schools, including City College of San Francisco. After marrying his wife, Elaine (now married 52 years) the Garbarinos moved to South San Francisco and raised their three children there. Rich worked in the building maintenance industry for Bechtel Power Corporation and then at San Francisco State University where he spent the next 15 years in various capacities. Rich retired from service in 2002 and was then appointed to fill a vacancy on the South San Francisco City Council. Rich ran for, and was elected to full terms in 2003, 2007 and 2011. He served terms as mayor in 2007, 2011 and now in 2015. Rich's accomplishments as a City Council member include the opening of several new city parks, completion of workforce housing units, the largest acquisition of various land parcels in the history of the City and the opening of the South San Francisco Ferry Terminal and the start of ferry service. In addition to the Ombudsman Services' Board of Directors, he chairs or sits on many city and county commissions. In South San Francisco, Rich serves on the City Council Finance and Budget Subcommittee, the South San Francisco Conference Center Authority Board of Directors, and Community Development Block Grant subcommittee. Rich and Elaine have three children and eight grandchildren, ages 5-24.



Rich chose to serve on the Board of Directors of the Ombudsman Services of San Mateo County because he is concerned about the treatment of residents, especially senior citizens and those individuals who are unable to represent themselves. Stories of abuse of care facility residents made him think about what could be done to help these individuals who are victims of verbal and physical abuse. The more that he read about increased incidents of abuse, he began to realize that there is a need for people willing to speak out and stand up for the rights of those victims, and that maybe he could make a difference.

It was Rich's intention to serve as a Field Ombudsman and begin the training program, but it became apparent that because of scheduling conflicts he would not be able to complete the program. Rich says that Executive Director Tippy Irwin invited him to serve as a Board member. He says that he is proud to serve on the Board to make a difference for those in need. He encourages all who feel strongly about helping others to consider joining our board or volunteering as an ombudsman or in other ways.