

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Holiday Party Shifts to Drive-in Celebration

What do you do when there is a pandemic and you have to social distance? Improvise!

That's what OSSMC did this year for its annual volunteer holiday party by holding a drive-in party instead!

This year's party, held on December 3rd, was held in the Veterans Memorial Senior Center parking lot in Redwood City. Bruce Utecht blocked off the parking lot so 27 of our 30 volunteers could enjoy a visit from Santa Claus, goodie bags and a Christmas sing-a-long.

While everyone stayed in their cars, Santa delivered box lunches prepared by the Veterans Memorial Senior Center chef. Then, Santa's elf delivered a bag of goodies for each volunteer. Isaac Stevenson, an OSSMC volunteer and accomplished vocalist (see story on the Volunteer



Santa Claus, Bruce Utecht, hands out a delicious lunch to OSSMC volunteer Art Wolf at this year's annual volunteer holiday party.

Recognition Luncheon on page 3), led a sing-a-long from the gazebo and OSSMC staff provided song sheets to each car.

A raffle for three baskets full of donated items also was held with OSSMC staff stopping by each car and having the volunteers put their business cards in a bowl. Everyone had fun, while keeping themselves apart, with masks on, and in their respective cars.

Next year's plan is to be back to our regular holiday celebration!

Annual Ombudsman Volunteer Recognition Event Goes Virtual

In June, with shelter-in-place requirements due to the pandemic, Ombudsman Services of San Mateo County (OCCMC) held a virtual volunteer recognition to honor its three award recipients.

Receiving 2020 volunteer awards were: Greg Giguere, "Distinguished Service Award"; Isaac Stevenson "Nancy Cronin Guiding Force Award"; and Diana Paradise, "Richard Rampton Volunteer of the Year Award." The event also featured OSSMC board member Vic Lee and San Mateo County Supervisor Davie Canepa in a special video.

"We wanted to still show our appreciation somehow and express our gratitude for the very important work that our volunteers do to protect our residents in our long-term care facilities," Executive Director Bernie Mellott said.



OSSMC staff (l. to r.) Kirsten Irgens Moller, Patty Hovik, Linda Manzon, and Cyndi Ware stretch while social distancing and in masks before delivering goodies to each volunteer in their car.

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Message from OSSMC Board President and Executive Director

Denis Fama, Board President & Bernadette "Bernie" Mellott, Executive Director



It has been a busy year for Ombudsman Services of San Mateo County (OSSMC) – even amidst a pandemic when staff had to temporarily work remotely and could not visit our long-term care residents!

From March through July, the field ombudsmen could not do in-person or indoor visits to residents in facilities due to the restrictions imposed by the San Mateo County Health Department. After that, donned with proper PPE equipment, the ombudsmen could conduct patio visits and in-person visits.

"Our ombudsmen adapted to the situation by conducting zoom calls, phone calls with tablets, cell phone texting and window visits when they couldn't go in person," Board President Denis Fama said.

"Covid-19 definitely changed the way we run our program," Executive Director Bernie Mellott added. "The virus has really made us become very creative with contacting the residents in our 444 facilities and, as of now, we are back to doing indoor visits to facilities along with all of our other options for communication."

With the pandemic lockdown, OSSMC continued to work on community visibility with partners such as the Sequoia Healthcare District, Peninsula Healthcare District, San Mateo County Aging and Adult Services, District Attorney's Office, Legal Aide, City of Redwood City, San Mateo County Supervisors, and the Institute on Aging.

"This past year, we also updated our financial policies and continued with board development," Denis said.

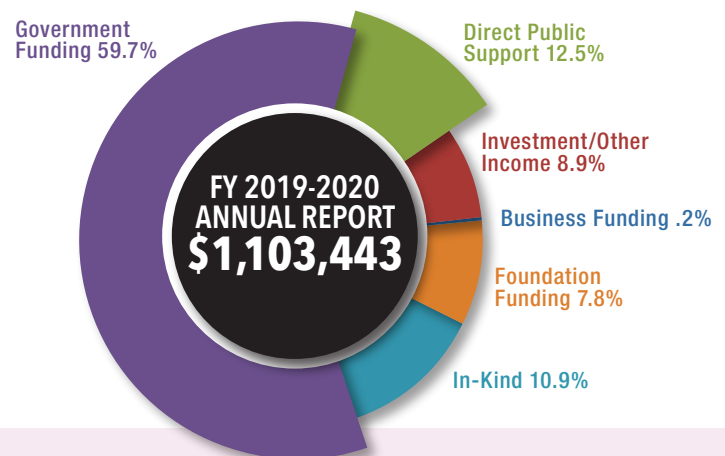
On the creative side, OSSMC revamped its website with a new logo and color scheme: www.ossmc.org

"Using our new logo design and colors, we developed new marketing material, such as brochures, business cards, tray cards, and volunteer flyers, and, of course, redesigned the OSSMC website," Bernie said.

On the staffing side, OSSMC has a new volunteer coordinator, Patty Hovik, (*see related story on page 4*) and an additional paid ombudsman, along with 30 field ombudsmen volunteers.

Finally, as the country and our county work toward vaccinating all of its residents for Covid-19, "I am happy to say that all our residents living in licensed facilities in San Mateo County have received their first vaccinations and residents at some of our facilities have already received their second shots," Bernie said.

"CVS, Walgreens, and Safeway have been instrumental in providing our long-term care facilities with vaccinations, and we are immensely grateful for their efforts," Bernie said.



Heartfelt Thank You

While OSSMC receives many "thank yous" in various forms throughout the year, it was especially heartwarming to receive this one from one of our smaller long-term care facilities who did not feel forgotten during Covid-19!

Dear Ms. Bernie Mellott:

What a year! Very challenging it has been for all of us who have been

working with the elderly population.

And somehow, it does make a difference when Ombudsman "PAM" comes to visit our humble facility of 6 beds. She always comes in with a bright genuine smile asking how we are all doing. It is a pleasant thought that we are not forgotten in the community despite the pandemic. She would follow up when we have concerns about a resident, family

member or just about anything and would give us appropriate support.

Thank you very much for all that you do to keep us and our residents safe. Wishing you and your team the best this holiday of Christmas and cheers to a healthy and happy New Year.

Grace Manuel
Senior with Grace Care Home



OSSMC Hires New Volunteer Coordinator

Patty Hovik recently retired after working in the health care field for more than 40 years, in various management and director-level positions in Washington.

Most recently, she was the administrative services and volunteer program manager for Seattle Children's Bellevue Clinic and Surgery Center in Bellevue, Washington, managing 75 to 100 volunteers.

However, after 18 months in retirement, she wanted to still use her skills and talents in a meaningful way. Lucky for OSSMC, as there was an opening for a volunteer coordinator—and she fit the bill perfectly!

Patty started her new position in early December, overseeing the implementation and coordination of the field ombudsmen, recruitment, training, and certification process.

"I have a passion for creating positive experiences for patients and families, as well as creating an environment of respect for those who freely give of their time to make a difference for those who need their assistance," Patty said.

"Volunteers come with unique talents that can be of great value as long as they are provided with opportunities to serve the community in a meaningful way," she added.

"It's a pleasure to have Patty join our team. We are very fortunate that she decided to move back to San Mateo County and that she found us! I think it's called faith." Bernie said.

With OSSMC, Patty plans to continue working with the field ombudsmen volunteers to improve long-term care residents' quality of care and quality of life by building trusting relationships between them, she added.

To volunteer as a field ombudsman, call 650-780-5705 or visit www.ossmc.org.

Distinguished Service Award

Greg Giguere's job as an elder abuse investigator with the San Mateo County's District Attorney's Office is to protect the rights of the elderly from neglect, physical abuse or financial abuse and help in the prosecution of criminal cases.

For a recent complex case, Greg was awarded the "Distinguished Service Award" for going above and beyond in resolving a case with help from field ombudsman Diana Paradise, another award recipient. "The reason I got into police work was to assist the most vulnerable people," Greg said.

Guiding Force Award

Isaac Stevenson has performed around the world as vocalist with a 19-piece band and has received numerous awards for his contributions to radio and TV in the Bay Area as well as his community volunteerism.

Isaac received the "Nancy Cronin Guiding Force Award" for his community service to East Palo Alto and his work as a field ombudsman for five years. The award is given to someone who exemplifies the spirit of Nancy Cronin, acting as a guiding force and working tirelessly behind the scenes to support the work of OSSMC.

"I am humbled and so blessed in my life; I have been so lucky to continue to serve my community," Isaac said.

Volunteer of the Year Award

Diana Paradise received the "Richard Rampton Volunteer of the Year Award" for embodying the spirit of Richard "Dick" Rampton as a tireless, dedicated, caring and tenacious advocate for long-term care residents.

Through a combination of Greg Giguere's professional and legal guidance, the benefit of Diana's trusted relationship with a resident, and having obtained extensive evidential documentation, Greg and Diana were ultimately able to protect a resident's rights. "Working on behalf of the senior population is deeply rewarding and personally gratifying," Diana said.



New Logo

OSSMC has a new logo design with a dynamic "O" mark with three distinct colors. The core of the mark mimics the "O" in OMBUDSMAN and is composed of three circles symbolizing OSSMC's dedication to Advocacy, Protection, and Empowerment.

The mark is dynamic and active both moving forward and away from the viewer. Conceptually, this represents OSSMC's journey through life as they experience care.

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Ombudsman Services of San Mateo County, Inc.
711 Nevada Street, Redwood City, CA 94061

Mission

The residents of long term care are often the most vulnerable in society. OSSMC works to assure the protection of these residents through advocacy, direct intervention and dedication in collaboration with service providers.

Vision

Vision for the Program:

As a strong, financially sustainable program, OSSMC is the vanguard for advocacy across the state, spearheading new developments and ideas in advocacy for the residents we serve.

Vision for The Community We Serve:

In addition to providing resident-centered care, the LTC facilities will become an extension of the community, offering a variety of intergenerational projects as well as opportunities to participate at various levels in ongoing community events.

Values

Our three key values are to cherish our ombudsmen, to fully and faithfully support our clients, and to positively work with all community stakeholders.

OMBUDSMAN
ADVOCATES FOR QUALITY OF LIFE IN RESIDENTIAL CARE



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