



Volunteer Ombudsman Newsletter

Listen, empower, and serve as a voice for Iowa's long-term care residents

Welcome New Volunteers!

Maxine Stiemsma
Whispering Heights
Rock Valley

Marlene Van Holland
Whispering Heights
Rock Valley

Judy Parsons
Parkridge Specialty Care
Pleasant Hill

Connie Richards
QHC Mitchellville

Spotlight on Cairn Reisch: AmeriCorps VISTA



My name is Cairn Reisch and I am an AmeriCorps VISTA serving at the Iowa Department of Aging. I work specifically in the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman with the Volunteer Ombudsman Program. I am originally from Kalamazoo, Michigan where I grew up on a small family farm. I am the oldest child with two younger brothers, Clark (19) and Hunter (18), and a younger sister, Shay (14). My father died about 10 years ago in a climbing accident and my mother is now raising us while also working in a program creating work opportunities for young adults with disabilities.

I went to Central College in Pella, IA and just graduated in May with a degree in Health Promotion. I have served in AmeriCorps for three part-time terms previous to this year; places that I have served are Marion County Senior Nutrition, Pella Regional Long-term Care, Marion County Humane Society, and the Christian Opportunity Center. From these experiences I knew that VISTA was a great program that strives to end poverty here in the United States.

My main hope for this year is to assist in expanding the Volunteer Ombudsman Program so that every county in Iowa has at least one active Volunteer Ombudsman. To accomplish this I will not only be focusing on marketing but you (current Volunteer Ombudsman)!! I will be working on ways to recognize your efforts and accomplishments, creating continuing educational opportunities, and strengthening our community of Volunteers. I am ecstatic about what this year is going to hold and I look forward to getting to know all of you!!!

It's Our 1 Year Anniversary!

Our first volunteers, Nwanneka Eke and Judy Avritt, began their service on September 10, 2013. Since then, nearly 100 volunteers have answered the call to advocate for our elders in long-term care. More than 1,000 hours have been served. We are so proud of what you all have accomplished.

Cheers to the growth of the Volunteer Ombudsman Program, and to many more years of service!

Continuing Education: Introducing Peer Groups!

As the VOP grows we are working to strengthen our community of volunteers around the state of Iowa. One way we hope to do this is by starting numerous Peer Groups, each made up of Volunteer Ombudsmen around a specific region of Iowa.

Goals of Peer Groups:

- Create a support group of Volunteer Ombudsmen serving at different facilities in the same county/general area around the state of Iowa.
- Peer Groups will strengthen the chain of communication between Volunteer Ombudsmen, Volunteer Ombudsman Coordinators, Local Long-Term Ombudsmen, and the State Long-Term Ombudsman.
- Provide free and interactive continuing education opportunities for Volunteers.

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To make Peer Groups a reality we are looking for Volunteer Ombudsmen willing to facilitate a group within their area. In most cases, there are a handful of other volunteers in your county or bordering counties. Please contact Sarah Hinzman with any questions or if you are interested in becoming a group facilitator at 515-651-7479 or sarah.hinzman2@iowa.gov. We would like to provide some virtual training to selected facilitators in September and have peer groups begin meeting in October.

To qualify as a Peer Group Facilitator, a volunteer should:

- Have at least six months experience as a Volunteer Ombudsman by October 1st, 2014.
- Have genuine plans to recertify and continue service as a Volunteer Ombudsman.
- Consistent completion of minimum volunteer expectations (unless advance notice was given), such as visiting his/her facility for three hours or more and submitting a report each month.

Online Reporting Testers Requested

The VOP is in the final stages of creating a web site where volunteers can log-in and submit their monthly reports online instead of sending in paper reports. We are looking for 8-10 volunteers who plan on using the online reporting system to help test the final product during September. If you are interested, please contact Merea Bentrott: 515-344-0052 or meresa.bentrott@iowa.gov. Continuing education will be available for your participation!

Legislation Introduced Requiring Round the Clock RN Care



The Consumer Voice applauds the introduction of H.R. 5373, the Put a Registered Nurse in the Nursing Home Act, introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky on July 31st. The bill would require all nursing homes receiving Medicare and/or Medicaid reimbursement to have a registered nurse (RN) on duty twenty-four hours per day, seven days a week. Although most people believe RNs are already required round-the-clock, this is not the case. Under current federal law, nursing homes are only required to have a RN eight hours each day regardless of facility size – no matter how many residents they have or how sick they are.

Registered nurses play a critical role in the nursing home. RNs are the only nurses in a nursing home that can assess a resident's condition. The absence of RN staffing for up to 16 hours each day means there is no one present capable of assessing and responding when residents' medical conditions suddenly change or deteriorate. When not properly assessed, changes in condition can have serious and even fatal consequences. In addition, residents are entering nursing homes from hospitals "quicker and sicker," and their overall care needs have increased over time. They require a high level of nursing skill and knowledge to anticipate, identify and respond to changes in condition, ensure appropriate rehabilitation and maximize the chances for a safe and timely discharge. Residents don't just have these needs between 8 am and 4 pm during the week – this level of oversight and care is needed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Consumer Voice and other long-term care advocacy organizations have long advocated for a RN round-the clock. Research has shown that higher RN staffing levels in nursing homes result in improved care outcomes, such as lower antipsychotic use, fewer pressure ulcers, less restraint use and cognitive decline, fewer urinary tract infections and catheterizations, less weight loss and less decrease in function. Higher RN staffing is also essential to prevent the unnecessary hospitalization of nursing home residents, which can have devastating consequences to residents and place a high amount of preventable costs upon our nation's health care system.

The Consumer Voice is the leading national voice representing consumers in issues related to long-term care, helping to ensure that consumers are empowered to advocate for themselves. They are a primary source of information and tools for consumers, families, caregivers, advocates and ombudsmen to help ensure quality care for the individual. To learn more go to www.theconsumervoice.org.

Volunteer Coordinators have been assigned regions! Find out who you're assigned to!

Due to the growth of the program, the Volunteer Coordinators recently took steps to define roles and share the work of coordinating growing numbers of volunteers across the state. The picture depicts the Volunteer Coordinator you should now report to with all of your queries regarding the program. Your Volunteer Coordinator will also be in communication with your individual progress in the program. Essentially, these regions align with the Local Ombudsmen.

- If your Local Ombudsman is Tonya Amos, Kim Cooper, Jennifer Golle, or Pam Railsback, then Sarah Hinzman will be your VOP Coordinator moving forward. Sarah's contact information is sarah.hinzman2@iowa.gov and 515-657-1479.

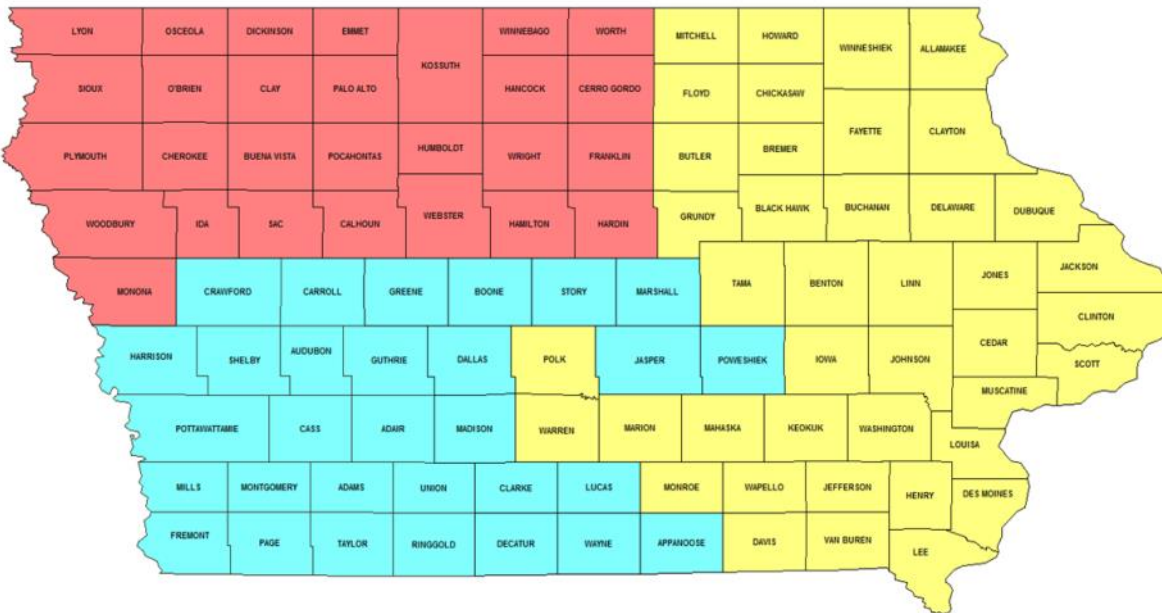
- If your Local Ombudsman is Stacia Timmer or Kim Weaver, then Merea Bentrott will be your VOP Coordinator moving forward. Merea's contact information is merea.bentrott@iowa.gov and 515-344-0052.

- If your Local Ombudsman is Melanie Kempf or Julie Pollock, then Cairn Reisch will be your VOP Coordinator moving forward. Cairn's contact information is cairn.reisch@iowa.gov and 515-725-3340.

If you have any questions, please contact one of us—but preferably your assigned VOP Coordinator.

Monthly Reports

Here's your friendly reminder that monthly reports should be dropped in the mail August 29th, or as soon as possible if you have not already done so. For those that had orientation in the last two weeks, you do not need to send in a report unless you were able to visit



Merea Bentrott
515-344-0052
Merea.bentrott@iowa.gov

Cairn Reisch
515-725-3340
Cairn.reisch@iowa.gov

Sarah Hinzman
515-657-1479
Sarah.hinzman2@iowa.gov

Recruitment and Marketing Survey!

As we work to grow our program state-wide we would appreciate you taking a few minutes to complete a survey that collects your ideas about volunteer recruitment and marketing. It is only ten questions long and should take less than five minutes.

To participate, click the link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/XZHL2K2>



*Thank You
for serving
Iowa's
Long-Term
Care
Residents!*