



# Volunteer Ombudsman Newsletter

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

## Welcome New Volunteers!

*Peggy Johnson*  
Pleasant View Home  
Albert City

*Terry Hornbuckle*  
Wesley Park Centre  
Newton

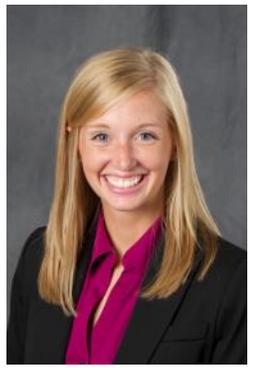
*Pat Holtapp*  
Laurens Care Center  
Laurens

*Marge Wrage*  
Shell Rock Senior Living  
Shell Rock

## Spotlight on Meredith Funke: AmeriCorps VISTA



The Volunteer Ombudsman Program (VOP) is growing rapidly, and to help manage that growth the VOP brought on Cairn Reisch last August and Meredith Funke in November. Both will be serving a year with our program and help recruit, train, and manage volunteers as well as develop some new projects and processes for our program. Here's a little background about Meredith in her own words:



"Born and raised in Cedar Rapids, I recently moved to Nevada to live with family and my spunky yellow lab, Zoey. My older brother works for a logistics company in Chicago. As a family, we enjoy taking trips to Colorado to ski and snowboard in the winter and hike and bike in the summer.

I received my bachelor's degree in Psychology from the University of Iowa. This past May, I graduated with my master's degree in Health Administration, also from the University of Iowa. I have always been interested in working in healthcare in some capacity; a doctor, a physical therapist, even a veterinarian, but I quickly found out that my brain is more wired for administrative projects than it is for science. I have experienced the healthcare industry in numerous capacities, including marketing projects at Mercy Iowa City, an administrative internship at The Emory Clinic in Atlanta, and clerical work at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. I am exploring opportunities to find my niche in the system and presently, my interests lie in a variety of areas: the Veterans Affairs health system, long-term care (nursing home administration), and specialty rehab hospitals/clinics. In my free time I enjoy just about any outdoor activity, reading, spending time with friends and family, and experiencing new things.

I am very excited to be joining the VOP team as an AmeriCorps VISTA member. My passion lies in helping people and making an impact, in accordance with the core mission of the AmeriCorps program. I grew up learning about the concept of civic responsibility through participation in church mission trips and work as a hospital volunteer. I am a believer in giving back to your community, a great opportunity that the AmeriCorps VISTA program provides me. I am looking forward to the year ahead and growing both personally and professionally.

I want to thank our statewide volunteers for donating their time to the Volunteer Ombudsman Program. Because of their dedication, we are able to improve the quality of life of Iowa's long-term care residents. I am looking forward to working with you all!"

## Monthly Reports

*Here's your friendly reminder that monthly reports should be dropped in the mail by November 30 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 after your orientation.*

# Great Story from the Field



Volunteer Ombudsman, Judy Avritt, has been serving at Union Park Health Center in Des Moines for 14 months. In that time, Judy has had a special focus on the military veterans at her facility. A veteran herself, Judy understands the importance of honoring service and being able to share that legacy. When a resident said they would like visits from more veterans, Judy connected with local veterans groups in the community such as American Legions to encourage them to spend some time visiting with veterans who

reside at Union Park. For Veteran's Day, she suggested to her Point of Contact that a ceremony recognizing the residents who served in the military would be a nice addition to their activities program. The idea was well received, and Judy was able to arrange for representatives from each military branch in which a resident veteran served to attend and present them with a certificate of appreciation. The ceremony was a packed house of both civilian residents and family members followed by an ice cream social with patriotic decorations. Judy would encourage other volunteers to replicate this activity in their facilities. Congratulations, Judy.

## Continuing Education

### Webinar: Medicaid Eligibility

Date and Time: December 4, 2014 from 10—11 a.m.

To register, visit this link: <https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/838443642>

This presentation will discuss the Medicaid eligibility rules for people in nursing facilities and assisted living programs, and for people who need in-home services, including protecting assets, spousal allowances, Miller Trusts, transfer of asset rules and Iowa's estate recovery law. The presentation includes the information Scott Hartsook presented during the Elder Law Seminar held on October 23, 2014.

### Other great resources for on-line presentations about aging and long-term care:

National Council on Aging: <http://www.ncoa.org/calendar-of-events/events-archive.html>

University of Iowa School of Social Work:

<http://clas.uiowa.edu/socialwork/nursing-home/webinars/recordings-past-webinars>

## New Resources for Volunteers

Many important volunteer resources have now been posted to a private page on our website. Bookmark and visit <https://www.iowaaging.gov/vop-communicues> to access the latest versions of the VOP manual, monthly report forms, past newsletters, continuing education reflection forms, continuing education scholarships, and more.

**One brand new form has been posted to this page, which we request that all of you complete and mail back to us with your next monthly report** (if you have not already done so). This is a photo/name release form. In order to be able to provide volunteer recognition in a public setting, which we hope to do in the near future, we need your permission to publish your name and/or image as a volunteer with our program. [Click here to access the form.](#) Then simply print, sign, and send to us in one of your postage paid return envelopes. You may also scan and e-mail the form or fax it to 515.725.3313. Thank you!

## A New Look

The Iowa Department on Aging and the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman are undergoing a re-branding process. This means that VOP materials will begin to be updated with new logos, themes, and colors. Next month's newsletter will have a brand new look, too.

So when you see program materials come your way with a new look, that's just a part of our new brand. You do not need to do anything. Continue to provide the materials you have until they're gone. When you ask for a refill on supplies, we will send the updated materials.

Here's what our new logo looks like:



*Thank You for  
serving  
Iowa's  
Long-Term  
Care  
Residents,  
and have a  
Happy  
Thanksgiving!*