

Serving residents of long-term care facilities in Vanderburgh County



VOICES



VIEWPOINT



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WHAT IS VOICES?

VOICES is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1980 to address concerns and problems in Evansville nursing homes. It is the only agency dedicated solely to providing services to nursing home residents in Vanderburgh County. These services include investigation of complaints, resolution of problems, and protection of resident rights. Services are provided by a certified Ombudsman and are free and confidential.



During this time of year, flowers and vegetable gardens are being planted in anticipation of the joy and bounty they bring. Farmers are plowing the fields and planting the crops in hopes there is a good harvest. Therefore, it seems fitting to provide a few words from one who works the land.

An old Farmer's Advice:

- ◆ *Your fences need to be horse-high, pig-tight and bull-strong.*
- ◆ *Life is simpler when you plow around the stump.*
- ◆ *When you wallow with pigs, expect to get dirty.*
- ◆ *Always drink upstream from the herd.*
- ◆ *If you find yourself in a hole, the first thing is to stop diggin'.*
- ◆ *A bumblebee is considerably faster than a John Deere tractor.*
- ◆ *Live a good, honorable life. Then when you get older and think back, you'll enjoy it a second time.*



DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION OR CONCERN?



Contact your local Ombudsman, Michelle Motta, at (812)423-2927. A nursing home **must** allow residents to make suggestions and complaints relating to his/her quality of life and treatment. A nursing home resident may contact the Ombudsman any time. Also, any resident, family member, visitor or staff can file a complaint with the Indiana State Department of Health by calling their toll free number at (800)246-8909. The person filing a complaint can request that their name be kept confidential. **ANY RETALIATION**—(including verbal criticism) against anyone filing a complaint **IS AGAINST THE LAW!**



CULTURE CHANGE IS A CHANGE IN HOW ONE THINKS ABOUT CARE. For example, instead of you following the schedule and manner the facility sets for your meals, baths and sleep, etc., the facility would care for you in an environment where your choices would direct your daily routines. Staff would refocus on you as an individual by respecting and supporting your choices. Wow!!! How exciting!!!!

This is not to insinuate that the facility in which you live is inadequate. We all know that no matter how good a job one does, there is ALWAYS room for improvement. Other nursing homes across the United States are taking the step to improve through culture change. As a resident advocate, I find it especially exciting that Indiana nursing homes are in the forefront of this movement.

Here are a few examples of how other facilities in Indiana are implementing culture change during mealtimes:

- All staff are trained to serve meals while wearing aprons, and adopting an attitude of “Please be our guest.”
- Mealtimes are referred to as dining. “Lets dine!” Who wouldn’t rather dine instead of just eat.
- Occasional meals with a theme (Backyard Barbeque, Italian Masterpiece, Trip to the Orient, Summer Festival Feast, etc.) are celebrated.
- The dining room has a pleasant atmosphere.
- Drink orders are taken at the table or bedside.
- Food choices are offered from a menu or from a buffet.
- Bibs are replaced with large napkins with Velcro fasteners.
- Medications are not passed at mealtime.
- Instead of just receiving nutrition, mealtime becomes a pleasant dining experience.



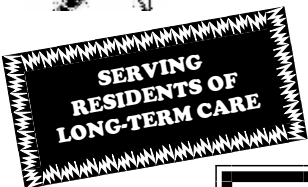
We all know that change is not easy. But change means growth and to grow means to improve. You can help improve your life. Take one step at a time. Discuss ideas with your resident council and take them to your facility administrator. Many changes require little or no money, just effort. Who better than you and your fellow residents to suggest changes to improve your quality of life.

In future newsletters, we will continue to explore how other facilities are implementing culture change. Let me know what your facility is doing.



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