

Serving residents of long-term care homes in Vanderburgh County

# VOICES VIEWPOINT

Volume 4,  
Issue 1

Spring  
2008



## WHAT IS VOICES?

VOICES, Inc. provides free and confidential Ombudsman services. It is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1980 to address concerns and problems in Evansville nursing homes and licensed assisted living homes. VOICES, Inc. is the only agency in Vanderburgh County dedicated solely to advocate for residents in these homes. Services include investigation of complaints, resolution of problems and protection of resident rights. Additional services include information/training for staff, residents and the general public on long-term care issues—these issues are quality of life, residents' rights, selection of a home and sources of payment for care.

## WHAT DOES AN OMBUDSMAN DO?

The ombudsman's job is to protect the rights of residents and assure that residents receive fair treatment and quality care by:

- Investigating and resolving complaints
- Visiting each long-term care home periodically to evaluate conditions
- Ensuring that residents are receiving the legal, financial, social, rehabilitative and other services to which they are entitled
- Educating residents, families and facility staff about residents' rights
- Providing the public with information about long-term care homes
- Representing residents' interests before state and federal government by working to change laws, regulations and policies
- Assisting with the establishment of resident and family councils



## HOW DO YOU CONTACT THE OMBUDSMAN?

When anyone—a resident, family member, friend, employee or other interested party has a complaint, problem or concern regarding the health, safety, welfare and/or rights of a resident, they can turn to the Ombudsman, **Michelle Motta**, for assistance by calling **423-2927**.

Mother—  
The essence of loveliness,  
The beauty of a rose,  
The sparkle of a dewdrop  
And sunset's sweet repose.



~ Lydia M. Johnson

## ARE YOU ELIGIBLE FOR EXTRA MONEY?

### WHAT?

The Economic Stimulus Act of 2008 provides payments to over 130 million American households. The payments will begin in May 2008. **To be eligible, you have to file a 2007 tax return, even if you are not required to file.**

### WHO?

To be eligible, your qualifying income should be \$3,000 or more. Qualifying income is—

- Earned income
- Social Security benefits (including Social Security Disability payments)
- Certain railroad retirement benefits

### HOW MUCH?

If you have qualifying income, you will receive a payment of \$300 (\$600 if married filing jointly). You will also receive \$300 for each qualifying child.

### HOW?

File your 2007 taxes, by mail, using short form 1040A, with only a few lines filled in. You may file electronically, for free, at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) by clicking on the “free file” icon and follow the simple instructions.

### WHEN?

You must file your 2007 taxes, with the IRS, by **October 15, 2008.**

Once you have filed a 2007 tax return, you do not have to do anything more to receive your economic stimulus payment. The IRS will determine eligibility, figure the amount and send you the payment.

### DO YOU NEED HELP?

If you need help filing your taxes, you can receive assistance by:

- Going to [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)
- Calling the IRS hotline at 1-866-234-2942

**Package 1040A-3** provides specific instructions on how to file a tax return to receive the economic stimulus package.

(The above information was taken from IRS Package 1040A-3)

## PROBLEM SOLVING WITHIN YOUR HOME

**Step 1: Voice Concerns to Those Directly Involved—See VOICES Viewpoint Volume 3, Issue 2 for further explanation or online at [www.voicesinc.info](http://www.voicesinc.info)**

**Step 2: Bring Your Concerns to Staff Supervisors—See VOICES Viewpoint Volume 3, Issue 3**

**Step 3: Follow the Facility’s Grievance (Complaint) Process—**Keep your own copies of complaints and written material leading up to and during this process. Every home is required (by federal Medicaid regulations and/or state licensure standards) to have a formal complaint process. Usually a staff person (possibly the director of social services, the activities director or the assistant administrator) is designated by the home to review complaints. Be specific about your concerns and the steps that have been taken to resolve them. According to law, residents and family members are entitled to a “reasonable response” to a complaint; meaning the home should respond to your complaint in a timely fashion. If you have followed your home’s complaint process and are still not satisfied, contact **VOICES at 423-2927.**

(Taken from National Citizens Coalition for Nursing Home Reform’s *Resolving Problems in Nursing Homes*, Consumer Information Sheet, 1999)

## IF YOU ARE THREATENED WITH EVICTION, HERE ARE SOME IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW

The facility is your home and you must not be transferred or discharged (evicted) from your home unless at least one of the following conditions is met:

- The home cannot provide adequate care for you
- Your health has improved to the point where you no longer need services provided by the home
- You endanger the safety of other residents in the home
- You endanger the health of others in the home
- You refuse to pay for your stay (except when Medicaid is pending)
- The home ceases to operate

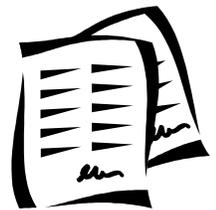
The Following Are **Not** Permissible Reasons To Be Forced To Leave:



- You refuse treatment
- Your source of payment changes
- You are non-compliant
- You are uncooperative with staff

**Unless you initiated the move**, the facility must:

- Give written notice of your transfer/discharge on the form required by the Indiana State Health Department
- Give you, your representatives and the Ombudsman at least a thirty day advance notice, or as soon as possible unless transfer is needed because of your immediate health needs. Under some specific rare circumstances, less than a thirty day notice is acceptable
- Include, on the notice, the reason for the transfer, location to which you will be transferred, information concerning your right to appeal the transfer, and contact information for your local and state ombudsmen
- Give information concerning a “bed hold” and your right to return to the next available semi-private bed if you need the services provided and Medicaid pays for your care
- Provide preparation and orientation by facility staff to ensure your safe and orderly transfer from the home
- Allow you to make choices about your move, especially where you wish to live



If you receive a notice of Transfer or Discharge from your home and you wish to appeal, you must do so within 10 days of receiving the notice or forfeit your right to appeal. Your local ombudsman will be able to assist you with this process. If you receive a notice and wish to appeal, please contact your local ombudsman, Michelle Motta, immediately at **423-2927**.

Renters and property owners cannot be removed from their home without going through the proper legal process. The same goes for you too!

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

The Vanderburgh County Senior Olympics "Athletes Around the World" is fast approaching! The games will be sponsored by Southwestern Indiana Regional Council on Aging (SWIRCA) for residents of nursing homes and assisted living homes. This will be a wonderful time to get out, socialize, compete and show your strength. Ring toss, fishing, ball toss, washers and wheelchair races are just a few of the categories available. The top three winners in each Olympic category are awarded medals, so start training now to be in your best shape for the events! Don't forget to show your team spirit

by wearing coordinating hats, scarves or other ornaments to set your team out from the rest; make up a team name, cheer or song.

### ONLY A FEW REMAIN!

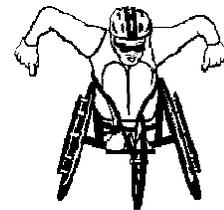
The *Timeless Recipes and Memories* cookbook contains recipes from those who have lived in long-term care homes in Southwest Indiana. The 178 recipes have stood the test of time like those contributing the recipes. This book preserves the rich food history of our community along with the memories of those who made and passed the recipes down from generation to generation. Each 3-ring padded binder includes a pocket for additional recipes, tabbed dividers and a bookstand that stores neatly in the binder. Your copy of *Timeless Recipes and Memories* is waiting, for just \$10.00. Simply call **423-2927**. Proceeds will go to VOICES, Inc. to assist in advocating for long-term care residents in Vanderburgh County.

### WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18TH

9:00 a.m. – residents of assisted living homes

1:00 p.m. – residents of nursing homes

**SEE YOU AT SWIRCA  
ON THE 18<sup>th</sup>!**



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SUITE 405  
EVANSVILLE, IN 47711  
PHONE: (812)423-2927  
FAX: (812)423-4350  
WWW.VOICESINC.INFO

ALL SERVICES ARE FREE  
AND CONFIDENTIAL



Upholding the rights and dignity  
of Nursing Home Residents

DONATIONS AND MEMORIAL  
CONTRIBUTIONS ARE  
GREATLY APPRECIATED!

