

Serving residents of long-term care homes in Vanderburgh County

# VOICES VIEWPOINT

Volume 4,  
Issue 4  
Winter  
2008



## WHAT IS VOICES?

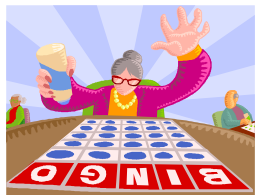
VOICES, Inc. provides free and confidential Ombudsman services. It is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1980 to address concerns and problems in Evansville nursing homes and licensed assisted living homes. VOICES, Inc. is the only agency in Vanderburgh County dedicated solely to advocate for residents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

### AREA-WIDE RESIDENT COUNCIL MEETING

The quarterly area-wide resident council meeting will take place on **Friday, February 6th**. It will be held at the **Browning Event Room at the Central Library from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m.** Doors will open at 1:30 p.m. There will be information on your rights, refreshments, socializing and bingo.

Please encourage residents from your home to attend. Also, persuade your Activity Director to add this event to your home's calendar and make transportation arrangements for those residents who wish to go.

If you have any questions, please call 423-2927.



### WHAT IS AN OMBUDSMAN?

A long-term care Ombudsman is an individual who represents residents of long-term care homes and works to ensure that the residents receive the quality of care, quality of life and rights to which they are entitled under both state and federal law.



### HOLIDAY CHEER

The holidays are fast approaching – time for cooking, baking, and gift giving. Luckily, we have *Timeless Recipes and Memories*. This cookbook contains 178 recipes from area long-term care residents. It is a colorful 3-ring binder including large print, category dividers, and a plastic stand.

Call 423-2927 today, to receive your copy for just \$10.00. We can mail it for an additional \$2.50!

All proceeds go to VOICES, Inc. to assist in advocating for long-term care residents in Vanderburgh County. Such a wonderful way to give during the holidays!

# CHANGES ARE COMING IN 2009 THAT MAY KEEP YOU FROM RECEIVING A TELEVISION SIGNAL

## WHAT?

If your TV is an analog set that is not connected to a pay service, such as cable or satellite, you will need a converter box to receive a signal. If you have cable or satellite service this will not affect you.

## WHEN?

Beginning February 17, 2009

## WHY?

Television broadcasters are CHANGING FROM ANALOG TO DIGITAL SIGNALS to provide better service to consumers. Once the transition from analog to digital is completed, some television channels will be turned over to fire and police departments for emergency use.

## HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE AN ANALOG OR DIGITAL TV?

Look for an input connection labeled “digital input” or “ATSC” on your TV. This means your TV has a “digital tuner” built in to receive digital signals. You may also determine whether your TV has a digital tuner by consulting your owner’s manual or going to the manufacturer’s website.

### Helpful guidelines:

Purchased before 1998 --- your TV probably does not have a digital tuner. Almost every TV made before 1998 was a traditional analog set.

Purchased after 2004 --- your chances of having a built-in digital tuner improve dramatically. Starting in 2004, many of the TVs sold at popular electronics stores feature digital tuners. But it is not a sure thing. Even some of the newer TVs lack the ability to pick up digital signals. If your TV was advertized as “HD-ready” or “HDTV monitor”, you will still need a special converter box.

## HOW DO I GET A COUPON FOR A CONVERTER BOX?

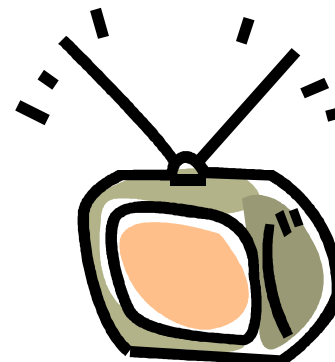
Go to [www.dtv2009.gov](http://www.dtv2009.gov) and follow the instructions to apply for a coupon. There is a specific form for residents of nursing homes and assisted living homes. This website will provide more information on the change from analog to digital signals. It will also provide a way to check the status of your coupon. The coupon is worth \$40 and a converter box will cost around \$55.

Facility administrators, friends and family members may apply for the coupon on a resident’s behalf. Once approved, the resident will receive the coupon through the mail.

## WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE COUPON?

- The deadline to request a coupon is March 31, 2009
- The process may take more than 6 weeks
- The coupon will be mailed directly to the resident
- The coupon expires after 90 days

IF YOU HAVE AN ANALOG TV AND DO NOT HAVE CABLE OR SATELLITE SERVICE YOU WILL NEED A CONVERTER BOX TO RECEIVE A SIGNAL.





# RESIDENT RIGHTS REVIEW

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 4

Page 3



## LOSS AND THEFT

During the Holiday season I receive many calls about residents who are missing items they received as gifts. I hope you have never had the unpleasant experience of finding that your personal items have disappeared—either through loss or theft. Personal loss is NOT an inevitable fact of life in a nursing home or assisted living home, and you do not have to accept it!

For most residents, the only link to the past may be a few cherished possessions, so protecting these invaluable belongings from loss or theft is of great importance.

### **Here are some things you can do to protect your belongings:**

- Ask to see your personal inventory sheet and verify all your possessions are listed.
- IMMEDIATELY mark new items with your name AND add it to your inventory sheet.
- Use a permanent marker to write your name on clothing and other personal items in an area that does not show when worn or used.
- Engrave or permanently mark dentures and eyeglasses with your name. (Most dentists are able to engrave dentures.)
- Ask to be provided with something that can be locked, such as a drawer or box. Keep the key with you at ALL times and find out if anyone else has a copy of the key.
- Only keep small amounts of cash for your use. Homes are obligated to maintain a “Patient Trust Account” for you (at your request) and to provide reasonable access (during normal business hours) to your account.
- Identify the staff personnel responsible for investigating reports of loss and theft. Report any loss to that person IN WRITING as soon as you can AND SEND A COPY TO YOUR OMBUDSMAN (see page four for address). Make sure that the home gives you the results of the investigation.
- Request reimbursement if the property cannot be recovered.

Federal and state laws require long-term care homes to protect the personal possessions of their residents and have written policies for handling loss and theft. Ask to see a copy of these policies. If a home fails to maintain a reasonably secure environment, the home may be held responsible for the loss or theft of your personal property.








### **Nursing home residents *APPRECIATE* gifts . . .**

The majority of people living in nursing homes receive Medicaid to help pay for their care. In these instances, ALL their income except \$52 goes to the nursing home to pay for the cost of care. The \$52 per month, the resident keeps, is their “Personal Needs Allowance” (PNA).

Although the home is required to provide certain basic care items such as toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant and tissues, they are typically generic products. If a resident prefers quality personal care items such as soft tissues, special toothpaste or fragranced shampoo, the resident must pay for it out of their PNA. Surprisingly, the cost of their personal phone/cable TV service, outings, haircuts, newspapers, sodas, candy, greeting cards, CLOTHES (socks, underwear, shoes) and etc. are the responsibility of the resident.

**For these reasons, nursing home residents welcome your gifts any time of the year.**

# GIFT IDEAS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

- Ask the resident what gifts he/she would like
- Large print calendars with special occasions noted (birthdays, anniversaries, etc.)
- Framed prayers, quotes or family photos
- All occasion cards—addressed with postage
- Postage stamps 
- Ballpoint pens
- Small bulletin board that you can change each month or with each season
- Twin size quilt with matching pillow shams
- Wreaths to decorate the door
- Wall decorations—avoid tabletop items
- Sun catchers or mobiles
- Imitation candles—flameless
- Universal TV remote with large buttons
- Wristwatch, wall clock or alarm clock with large numbers or for the hearing impaired
- Small portable radio with batteries
- Crossword and/or word search books
- Books and individual magazines (picture, recipe, travel, crafts & hobbies, etc.)
- Cassette tapes/CD's (resident's favorite music, audio books, etc.)
- Free books/magazines on tape for the visually impaired through the Evansville Public Library 
- Magazine subscriptions—*Reader's Digest* offers large print subscriptions
- Subscription to local or church newspaper
- Lighted magnifying glass
- Photo album or scrapbook filled with photos of family or friends, postcards of places of interest and messages from loved ones 
- Memory book that chronicles the residents' past interests and achievements
- Book of jokes or cartoons
- Guestbook for recording visitors
- Non-poisonous/silk plants or flowers
- Phone cards for calling long distance
- Telephone installation with monthly fee paid
- Cable installation with monthly fee paid
- Cater or carry-in the resident's favorite meal
- Box of hard candies—sugar free if needed
- Wheelchair or walker accessories (cup holder, carry bag, basket, etc.)
- Coin purse with money for sodas, chips or candy—replenish each time you visit 
- Gift certificate/money for beauty salon or barber shop services
- Special toiletries (scented body wash, lotion, lip moisturizer, makeup, perfume, aftershave, quality facial tissue, toothpaste, etc.)
- Hair clips and/or headbands
- Costume jewelry
- Warm socks
- Electric razor 

This gift list was compiled with the assistance of residents Judith Mangum and Richard Kellough.

**When purchasing any gift, you need to keep in mind personal likes, hobbies and interests. Also, consider any allergies or food restrictions a person may have.**

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ALL SERVICES ARE FREE  
AND CONFIDENTIAL



Upholding the rights and dignity  
of Nursing Home Residents

DONATIONS AND MEMORIAL  
CONTRIBUTIONS ARE  
GREATLY APPRECIATED!

