

Serving residents of long-term care homes in Vanderburgh County



# VOICES VIEWPOINT

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## WHAT IS VOICES?

VOICES, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization that was founded in 1980. We provide free and confidential Long-Term Care Ombudsman services. VOICES, Inc. is the only agency in Vanderburgh County dedicated solely to advocate for residents in nursing homes and licensed assisted living homes in Evansville. Our 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 include quality of life, residents' rights, selection of a home, advanced directives and sources of payment for care.

### Quotes from Maggie Kuhn, Gray Panthers Founder (1905–1995)

In 1970, after Maggie Kuhn was forced to retire at age 65, she started the Gray Panthers. Throughout her life, she integrated people of all ages to work for social and economic justice. Her dedication to various causes was inspirational, but her words were and still are motivational.

**"The best age is the age you are."**

**"Stand before the people you fear and speak your mind  
– even if your voice shakes."**

**"When you least expect it, someone may actually listen  
to what you have to say."**

### YOUR Basic Rights

- You have the right to be treated with respect and dignity
- You have the right to have your individuality and preferences recognized
- You have the right to receive quality care and treatment that is free from discrimination
- You have the right to have a relative or legal representative act on your behalf to exercise these rights when you are unable to do so

# Summers Long Ago

By Judith Mangum



With the weather being so hot lately, I have been thinking about long lazy summers many years ago. This made me think of things I liked to do and eat when the weather is hot and the days are long. When I was small, I liked to play with my friend's goat, pig and horse. I also enjoyed playing kickball with all the other kids in the neighborhood. We would play hide and seek in the barn and were fortunate to never have encountered a snake or a mouse among the bales of hay. Maybe all our screaming and hollering ran them off?

After my accident, momma sat with me on the porch where we took in the warm summer air. On those days, nothing was a better treat than ice cream! My favorite flavors are butter pecan and chocolate mint. We made the ice cream the old fashioned crank way. It was a tiring, but worth the effort. I asked momma for an electric ice cream maker, but she wouldn't get one. It didn't really matter, as long as we had ice cream. I prefer my ice cream in a cone, but will eat it any way. Nothing is better than eating an ice cream cone on the porch on a hot summer day. When we were allowed an extra special treat we would have a sundae or banana split.



Barbequed ribs, hamburgers, pork chops are all great grilled outside especially when accompanied with potato salad, baked beans, chips and watermelon. My friend liked BBQ squirrel and raccoon. He would go hunting and cook his bounty up for supper.

I always looked forward to the community summer fish fry. Fresh fish fried to perfection with coleslaw and homemade hush puppies. I must be getting hungry as I can almost taste it now. Afterwards we would have a watermelon seed spitting contest. This was one time we could spit without getting in trouble from momma. I was so excited when I won the contest.



Other summer activities back then were: having picnics under a huge shade tree, working a garden, canning fruits and vegetables, detasseling corn, mowing, hanging laundry out to dry, swimming, fishing, attending summer socials and just trying to stay cool.

When I feel the heat of the day or when I hear the sounds of: kids playing outside, wind chimes, ice cream trucks and storms, I am taken back in time when I was young. Well, I have enjoyed writing this article and hope you have enjoyed thinking about your summers long ago.



So . . . until next time, I am Judith Mangum, Resident.

# What's in a word? Much more than you think!

When you hear the language of the long-term care setting, you hear many words that do not reflect a home-like environment. And after all, the long-term care facility is your home. Words such as wing, unit, feeder, wanderer, patient, lobby and nurses' station do not evoke memories of a home. How many persons have a nurses' station in their home? Much of the language spoken in long-term care homes is institutional and undignified. When it is said that a person is "admitted" or "placed" it sounds like that person is powerless or even worse, being punished. Terms like "bib," "diaper," and "day care" remind us of babies and children. Elders living in long-term care homes are a far cry from infants – they are adults with pasts, presents and futures. They are human beings that deserve respect --- respect that using the proper language conveys including how the resident is addressed.

Recently while in a facility I witnessed a staff person bring a resident to join a meeting, announcing "I have another one for you." as if the resident joining us was an object - something to be moved from one location to another. With culture change, the staff person should have announced "Mrs. Smith is here to join in." Language can be very powerful either positively or negatively.

## INSTEAD OF SAYING:

## CONSIDER SAYING:

Bib -----	Napkin, cloth or apron
Diaper -----	Underwear or brief
Admitted/placed -----	Moved in
Discharged-----	Moved out
Facility/building -----	Home, community
Wing/unit -----	Household, neighborhood, street, avenue
Nurses' station -----	Work area, desk
Lobby/common area -----	Living room, parlor, den
Shower room -----	Spa
Front line/floor staff -----	Direct-care givers
Resident Council -----	Homeowners association
Physical/speech therapy -----	Exercise/speech class
Dietary services -----	Dining services
Allowed/let -----	Encouraged
Non-compliant -----	Exerting choice
Behavior problem -----	Needs behavioral support
Eat -----	Dine
Feeder -----	A person needing help with dining



**By using dignified language**, one creates an atmosphere of respect. Challenge your housemates, families and staff to adopt a new language – a language, that should no longer be foreign. The next time someone says "Here is your bib.", kindly reply, "Thank you for the napkin." **You will be changing one word, one attitude, one life at a time!!!!**




# Speak Up!

It is very important for you to take an active role in your life and care at your long-term care home. Here are some ways you can be more involved:

- Voice your concerns to the appropriate person —that would be the staff person who has the power to resolve your issue. For example, if you have a complaint about food/meals, ask to speak to the dietary manager. If you have an issue with care, ask to speak to the Director of Nursing (DON).
- Attend your quarterly care plan meeting. This is the time to discuss your individual plan of care, make suggestions and discuss concerns and changes you would like.
- Attend Resident Council meetings. Residents are allowed to meet together to discuss issues of interest. This is the time to make suggestions and address policy issues that would improve things for all residents. There is power in numbers!

Speaking up for what is right is part of our civil rights as citizens of the United States. You cannot be evicted from your long-term care home for making a complaint AND the law prohibits staff for punishing you for complaining. If you have any problems speaking up, you can contact your Ombudsman for assistance. **It is OK to speak up! You are NOT causing trouble by making your wishes known! It's your right.**

<p><b>WHO CONTACTS THE OMBUDSMAN?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o a resident</li> <li>o a family member</li> <li>o a friend</li> <li>o an employee</li> <li>o anyone</li> </ul>	<p><b>WHY CONTACT THE OMBUDSMAN?</b></p> <p>Contact the Ombudsman if you have a complaint, problem or concern regarding long-term care.</p>	<p><b>HOW TO CONTACT THE OMBUDSMAN?</b></p> <p>Call: (812) 423-2927</p> 
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2425 US HWY 41 N  
SUITE 405  
EVANSVILLE, IN 47711

PHONE: (812)423-2927  
WWW.VOICESINC.INFO

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