



# OMBUDS BULLETIN

April 2023

Volume 7

***“The shortest distance between two people is laughter.”***

*-Victor Borge-*

*I’m a bud, you’re a bud, we’re Ombuds!*

A QUARTERLY BULLETIN PUBLISHED THROUGH THE LOUISIANA LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

## A NOTE FROM THE STATE LTCOP OFFICE

This quarter is bustling with celebrations. Please see the article about our recent April Volunteer Appreciation event with Carol Scott, National Consumer Voice, who was our virtual guest speaker.

May is Older Americans Month, and many of you are already working with your nursing homes and assisted living facilities on ways to commemorate and celebrate our older adults.

June pays awareness to Alzheimer’s and also to LGBTQ+. This quarter also marks anniversaries for some of our small but mighty team of 28 ombuddies (paid and volunteer).

***You might be a small group, but you are a mighty force!***



Thank you all.

**Rosa Walton**  
State Ombudsman

## A TIP

Research shows gratitude is a powerful emotion that can benefit our mental and emotional well-being. Here’s a tip about practicing gratitude:

Make a habit of expressing gratitude daily, even for the small things in life. You can start by simply writing down three things you are grateful for daily in a gratitude journal or saying them out loud to yourself or others. This can help shift your focus towards the positive aspects of your life and cultivate a sense of appreciation and contentment. Additionally, expressing gratitude to others can strengthen relationships and create a positive ripple effect in your life.



## KUDOS!



This year marks another year of dedicated services for our team of 28, but I would like to recognize this quarter’s anniversary dates for:

**Carolyn Smith**  
Regional Coordinator  
Alexandria Region  
5/16/1990

**Charles Campbell**  
Regional Coordinator  
Lake Charles Region  
4/10/2002

## WHAT’S IN A NAME?



**An Om what? Bud who?**

When introducing ourselves, haven’t we heard that often from residents, staff, and the community? Ombudsman, Ombudsperson, Ombud? The term varies in states and organizations. Steadily the word “ombudsman” is being supplanted with ombudsperson or now more frequently with ombud. This term seems friendly, easy to say, and easier to remember. The Louisiana Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program will always be as titled; however, it is up to each individual to use the most comfortable term. It is each individual’s choice.

# VOLUNTEERING, LIKE LAUGHTER, IS GOOD FOR YOUR MIND AND BODY AND YOUR COMMUNITY

April recognizes volunteers. Volunteerism is essential in many communities and organizations, providing vital support to those in need and helping to build stronger, more connected communities. To recognize and celebrate our LTCOP Volunteer Ombuds, a New Orleans homeowner invited our volunteers for a luncheon at their 1875 historic home on St. Charles Avenue. In addition to good fare and good conversation, we were joined virtually by Carol Scott, Manager, LTCOP & Policy for National Ombudsman Resource Center (NORC).



Carol Scott

*Carol said, "The vision of the founding father of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program, Dr. Arthur Fleming, was to have volunteers visiting residents several times each month. These neighbors and community members would not be inspectors but would advocate on behalf of the residents. Thank you for not putting off this important work by saying, "I will do that when it's a better time for me and when I have time to get around to it." Today we honor and thank the volunteers who empower and work to protect the rights of people living in long-term care facilities."*

## 2023 Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon



Front Row L/R Dr. Michael Jazwinski (Dept. of Aging, Tulane School of Medicine), Vickie Castay, Dr. Brian Cruz (PACE NOLA), Peggy Morris  
2nd Row, Denise Bottcher (AARP Louisiana), Cecile Gordon, Briana Smith, Beverly Gianna  
3rd Row, Melodie Leggett (Capital Area Agency on Aging), Rosa Walton (State Ombudsman)  
4th Row, Tanya Hayes (Regional Ombudsman Coordinator) Scott Wallace (People Program), Debbie Delahoussaye  
5th Row, Arleather Johnson (CAAA), Craig Kaberline (CAAA), Savva Ivakin, Chris DeCuir

## DID YOU KNOW?

The idea for the LTCOP was developed by Dr. Arthur Fleming, Commissioner on Aging to President Richard Nixon. Dr. Fleming envisioned the program as an advocacy program for residents; he wrote the first guidelines.

## WHAT IS THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT (OAA)?

The Older Americans Act (OAA) is a federal law enacted in 1965. Its primary purpose is to promote the well-being of older adults by providing funding for various programs and services.

The OAA was established in response to concerns about the economic and social challenges older Americans faced, particularly those living in poverty. The law was designed to address these challenges by funding programs promoting independence, health, and community involvement for older adults.

### True or False?

1. The authority of the LTCOP comes from the Older Americans Act. **TRUE**
2. Representatives of the Office are required to fulfill the duties outlined in the Older Americans Act, the LTCOP Rule, and the policies and procedures set forth by the Office and the State Unit on Aging. **TRUE**

## LOL

How do you stop a rhinoceros from charging?

Take away his credit card.

My uncle named his dogs Timex and Rolex.

They're his watchdogs.

Which is faster, hot or cold?

Hot, because you can catch cold.

Laughter offers numerous benefits that improve both physical and mental health. Endorphins are released when we laugh, acting as natural painkillers and mood enhancers. Laughter can reduce stress hormones, lower blood pressure and improve immune function. Laughter also enhances cardiovascular health by increasing blood flow and oxygenation while stimulating the production of antibodies and T-cells, crucial for fighting infections and illnesses.

Do you have a joke you would like to share?

Please submit it to [StateOmbudsman@la.gov](mailto:StateOmbudsman@la.gov) and it may appear in the next Ombuds Bulletin.



## OMBUDS AND OLDER AMERICANS MONTH

**Aging Unbound** is this year's theme for Older Americans Month. This theme opens the discussion of what age means for you. Each of us measures "aging well" by our own yardstick and standard.

Ombuds are working closely with nursing homes to celebrate our older adults in nursing homes. Some residents display their art, needlecraft, and poems and offer storytelling.

A staff person at one assisted living facility submitted the following recap of a conversation she had with an older adult, 104, about what it is like to be 104 and be in an assisted living facility. BTW, Irene manages her affairs and is active, engaged, and inspiring.

*I AM STILL IRENE*

*You are the same person.*

*You don't take off your person  
and hang it in a closet.*

*Maintain your identity.*

*Sometimes you have to fight.*

*You can't whine.*

*Make your point.*

*Be specific.*

*Be persistent.*

*Be resourceful.*

*Don't give up your identity.*

*Life is work.*

*Life is change.*

*Life is adapting to change.*

*Life is always who you are.*

## MAY 2023 IS RECOGNIZED AS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

It is a time to raise awareness of mental health and the impact of mental illness on individuals and communities. It serves as a reminder of the importance of prioritizing mental health and taking steps to support overall well-being.

Long-Term care ombuds are crucial in advocating for the rights and needs of nursing home residents with mental health issues. Mental health issues can often be overlooked or ignored by staff.

Ombudsmen can:

- ▶ Work with nursing home residents with mental health issues to identify problems or concerns, such as appropriate medications, therapy, or social activities.
- ▶ Ombuds can play a crucial role in advocating for nursing home residents with mental health issues by raising awareness, identifying problems, advocating for quality care, monitoring for abuse, and promoting communication. Ombudsmen can help ensure these residents receive the care and support they need to thrive.

May 2023 is also recognized as **Medicaid Awareness Month**, a time to raise awareness of the importance of the Medicaid program and its impact on the lives of millions of Americans. Medicaid awareness serves as a reminder of the vital role that Medicaid plays in promoting health and well-being for millions of Americans and the need to continue supporting and expanding access to healthcare for all.

### **BOOK REVIEW: "Age-ing to Sage-ing"** by Rabbi Zalman Schacter-Shalomi and Ronald S Miller

**Age-ing to Sage-ing** explores the spiritual dimensions of aging. The authors draw on a wide range of religious and philosophical traditions to offer a unique perspective on the aging process, one that emphasizes the potential for growth, transformation, and self-discovery in later life. The authors emphasize the importance of community and relationships in aging. They argue that the aging experience is not just an individual but a communal one and that we need to cultivate meaningful connections with others as we age to thrive.

Another key theme of the book is the idea of "sage-ing" - the process of becoming a wise older who can offer guidance, support, and inspiration to others. The book includes practical advice on cultivating a sage's qualities, such as gratitude, compassion, and a sense of purpose.

**Age-ing to Sage-ing** offers a refreshing perspective on the ageing process. It is a must-read for anyone interested in exploring the spiritual dimensions of ageing and who wants to embrace the potential for growth and transformation.

## OMBUD VOLUNTEERS

These are individuals who bring their skills, experience, and compassion to the role of ombuds in the field of long-term care. These individuals demonstrate the diverse range of people who can become effective ombuds, from healthcare professionals to students and retirees. Each person has a unique background that they have used to provide advocacy and support to residents in nursing homes or other long-term care facilities.

### NEW ORLEANS AREA VOLUNTEER OMBUDS



**Chris DeCuir**

**2017:** Chris, a retired tourism public relations manager, brings her smile and hospitality to nursing home residents.



**Laurie Holland**

**2017:** Laurie, a hospital social worker, brings ombudsperson training to assist her oncology patients further.



**Vickie Castay**

**2017:** Vickie became acquainted with the LTCOP while caring for a friend.



**Cecile Gordon**

**2019:** Cecile, a retired attorney, brings her observation and listening skills to her two nursing homes.



**Gary Boye**

**2020:** Gary joined the program after working with an ombud to advocate for his family member in a nursing home.



**Savva Ivakin**

**2021:** Savva, an MBA student, was introduced to the LTCOP while caring for his grandmother.



**Mary Jane Ciccarello**

**2022:** Mary Jane is the Director of the Borchard Foundation Center on Law & Aging. Although she and her husband have relocated out of New Orleans, she continues volunteering with the Louisiana LTCOP as a non-representative.



**Briana Smith**

**2023:** Briana, a Ph.D. student in the Dept. of Aging, Tulane Medical Center, brings knowledge and compassion to this role.



**Peggy Morris**

**2023:** Peggy, a former Adult Protective Services worker, brings experience and compassion to her current training role.

### SHREVEPORT AREA VOLUNTEER OMBUDS



**Elizabeth Moore**

**2022:** Elizabeth works as an occupational therapist but finds time to volunteer as an ombud for residents in a nursing home in the Shreveport area.



**Sandy Bourgeois**

**2023:** Sandy is an ombud-in-training, working part-time for a bank and attending dog shows for her French Bull Dogs.



## COFFEE & CASES

*Ombuds attending each monthly Coffee & Cases receive 1.5 hours of in-service training credit. By participating in all Coffee & Cases, ombuds can receive their 18 hours of credit needed annually.*



### **Mark your calendars for the first Monday of each month**

**9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

On the first Monday of each month, ombuds across the state come together virtually to discuss cases and get input from each other. Some months, we have special guests.

Be sure to add 1.5 hours of State-sponsored in-service training in LORS each month.

## LOUISIANA LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDS

Louisiana Ombuds advocate for 35,000 residents in 400 nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

### **ALEXANDRIA REGION, Cenla AAA**

Coordinator: Carolyn Smith  
Ombud: Rose Waguespack

### **BATON ROUGE REGION, Capital AAA**

Coordinator: Peggy Essick  
Ombuds: Mavis Lee, Anne Miller, Alrina Ponville, Glenda Teagle

### **LAFAYETTE REGION, Cajun AAA**

Coordinator: Dana Adams  
Ombud: Nanette Burch

### **LAKE CHARLES REGION, Calcasieu COA**

Coordinator: Charles Campbell  
Ombud: Toya Guillory

### **MONROE REGION, Cenla AAA**

Coordinator: Anna Horne  
Ombud: La'Trichelle "Lockie" Chisley

### **NEW ORLEANS REGION, Capital AAA**

Coordinator: Tanya Hayes  
Ombuds: Barbara Soniat, Beverly Gianna  
Volunteer Ombuds: Christine DeCuir, Cecile Gordon, Laurie Holland, Gary Boye, Savva Ivakin, Vickie Castay, Mary Jane Ciccarello, Peggy Morris, Briana Smith

### **SHREVEPORT REGION, Caddo COA**

Coordinator: Casandra Cesare  
Ombuds: Beverly Parker, Lucinda Thornton  
Volunteer Ombuds: Beverly Jones, Elizabeth Moore

## RECRUIT A VOLUNTEER

Research shows that volunteering has many biological and psychosocial benefits:

- Helps stay physically and mentally active
- Reduces stress
- Make new friends and contacts
- Increases social and relationship skills
- Adds job skills
- Increases self-esteem and life-satisfaction
- Increases the level of happiness
- It's Fun!

### **WHERE DO I FIND VOLUNTEERS?**

**In nursing homes** | visiting family and friends

**In neighborhoods** | people we know

**In the community** | through public speaking and media interviews

The Louisiana Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program offers many volunteer opportunities for people within the state. Volunteer-certified ombuds positions are needed, but there are other opportunities to serve, such as a photographer, contributor to this newsletter and other communication vehicles, and tech-savvy volunteers willing to teach residents how to email, text, and Zoom. Bring your ideas and talent to the table and apply to volunteer!

Click on these links for information on how residents in one Louisiana nursing home volunteer to help their fellow residents.

<https://youtu.be/I1A6fLusNFc>

Applying to volunteer is easy, quick, and simple: Click Here:

<https://tinyurl.com/LTCOVolunteerApplication>

## HAVE A QUESTION OR COMMENT?

**What's happening in your region?**

Share tips, information, and success stories in your region to include in this newsletter.

**Email:** [StateOmbudsman@la.gov](mailto:StateOmbudsman@la.gov)

**Call:** (504) 782-6640

[goea.la.gov/ombudsman](http://goea.la.gov/ombudsman)