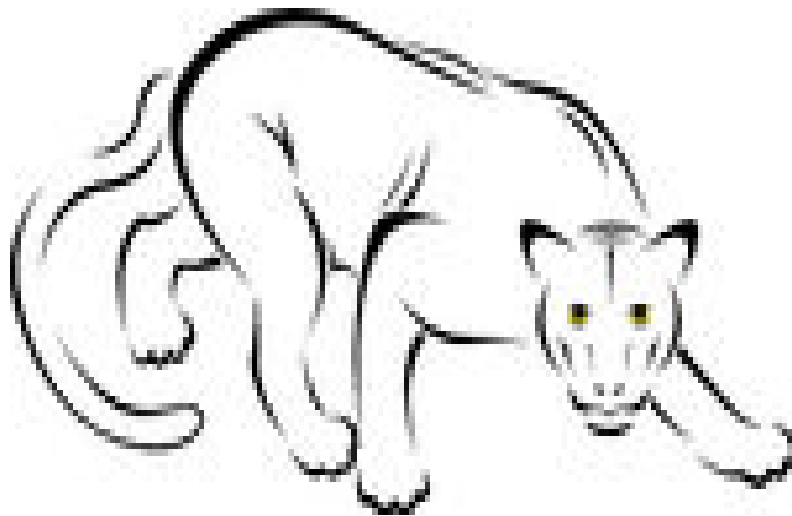


DECEMBER
WINTER EDITION
2014

The Silver Panther Newsletter



SCPRC Executive Board Members

*Grace Bligé-Curry; Karen Hawley; Jack Cretella;
Mary DePasquale; Ronnie Martin; Brian Capshaw;
Helen Fitch; Charlene Paquin; Jeanette Sullivan-Martinez*



*Winter in Connecticut!
It is a beautiful time of year.
The Ombudsman Program wishes you
A wonderful and healthy winter season!
Keep warm!*



VOICES 2014

Therapy with a Twist

The 18th annual VOICES Forum was held in October and was a resounding success. The focus of the forum addressed the reduction of antipsychotic medications and alternative approaches to enhance the lives of residents living in nursing homes. The day began with State Ombudsman, Nancy Shaffer welcoming attendees and public dignitaries to the event. Connecticut is the only state in the country to hold an annual forum of this kind, enabling residents to come together and exchange their ideas and experiences. The group experience creates a powerful feeling of solidarity and provides a venue which will enable residents to express their needs and concerns not only to administrators of nursing homes but to the legislative assembly as well.

Speakers during the day included, Michelle Pandolfi, speaking on the topic of the CMS focus of reducing antipsychotic medications. Nancy Michaud-Wozniak, therapeutic recreation director from Harrington Court in Colchester, on an innovative approach to using technology to enhance the lives of residents through the use of a computer program called IN2L or “It’s Never Too Late”. Jean Gleeson, from Smith House, located in Stamford, spoke on the benefits of music and memory and the program she employs. During the morning segment of the forum, the guests were treated to a surprise appearance and address by Lieutenant Governor, Nancy Wyman. Brian Capshaw, who currently is a member of the Statewide Council of Presidents of Resident Councils, presented focus items that will be brought before the upcoming legislative assembly.

The 2014 Carol Rosenwald Award was presented to the Center for Medicare Advocacy / Judith Stein, who tirelessly assist and advocate for residents of nursing homes related to their Medicare coverage. Judith Stein founded the Center in 1986 and is currently the Executive Director.

Elder Justice News

Abuse Is Getting Old: A Roadmap For Action

The second annual Elder Justice Coalition Conference was held November 21st. The coalition brings together agencies from the public and private sector to identify and address the needs of older adults in a collective forum. This year the keynote speaker was Mary Twomey. Mary is the co—director of the National Center on Elder Abuse at the University of California, Irvine. Presentations focused on bright spots in promoting elder justice throughout the country as well as specific efforts in Connecticut. Updates were given from the workgroups that have developed and included banking, law enforcement and fraud detection. The coalition looks forward to continuing this important work and hopes to launch a comprehensive website in the near future.





GEARING UP FOR 2015 Legislative Session

By Brian Capshaw

It's late December and if you were to me ask me what do you like better Christmas or the legislative session, the answer is always legislative session! As a member of the legislative committee for the Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils we have started aggressively pursuing our agenda. Once again this year our top priority is the Personal Needs Allowance (PNA). For the fourth year in a row our allowance has been \$60 a month. We have begun by making our state government officials aware that we are looking to get our PNA restored to 2010/1011 levels of \$69. Nancy Shaffer, our state ombudsman and I sat with Anne Foley and Susan Eccleston of Governor Malloy's budget team on December 17th and we were told of the dire fiscal outlook for the next two years and possibility of getting an increase in PNA through the budget was slim and next to none and we should approach the legislature. We are also looking for the Human Services Committee to re-introduce our nursing home staffing bill from the 2014 legislative session. Our bill, which changes Connecticut's regulation of 1.9 Hours per Resident per Day to 2.3 passed 2 committees last year. We are waiting for a meeting with co-chairs of the Human Services Committee Representative Cathy Abercrombie and newly appointed Senator Marilyn Moore to discuss the staffing bill.

The Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils is also looking to pursue other issues as well. In past legislative sessions we have lobbied for increased Civil Monetary Penalties (CMPs) that nursing home owners and operators must pay when they harm residents. According to the Department of Public Health this will be taken up in the 2015 legislative session. Other items we hope to approach the legislature with are the authorization of electronic monitoring of a resident's room in a long term care facility and an act concerning arbitration agreements in nursing homes. The first, we as residents or our family members should be allowed to place a camera in our rooms to monitor what goes on. The second, we should be allowed to sue for violation of resident bill of rights and not have to sign a binding arbitration agreement, which waives the right to sue, as a part of the standard admission package.



Java Music Club

This year, the CT Long Term Care Ombudsman Program was fortunate enough to purchase three copies of the innovative program, Java Music Club. Proposals were requested from all CT nursing homes and were due by November 21, 2014. Three Homes will be selected and given this program to use in their Home. While the name of the program suggests an emphasis on music, the Java Music Club is much more than just a music recreational program. The program was designed for residents of long term care and retirement homes and members of community day programs or centers, and its overall objective is to bring residents together and help minimize feelings of depression, loneliness, and isolation that are too often found among people who utilize long term care services. The Java Music Club program is evidence-based and the best part about it, besides its overall goal, is that no music skills are required and it's easy to use and implement for recreation staff.

Once proposals are received, reviewed, and Homes chosen, the CT LTCOP will organize trainings for recreation staff, which will be facilitated by the creators of the Java Music Club. We are looking to commence this training in the New Year, hopefully January 2015. Stay tuned for more updates on this innovative program and the progress chosen Homes are making with it.

Senator Blumenthal calls Roundtable

On October 1, 2014 Senator Richard Blumenthal met with a small group of elder care representatives to discuss the use of antipsychotic medication in Connecticut long term care facilities, especially as it pertains to individuals with dementia. Among those invited to attend were State Ombudsman Nancy Shaffer and resident and executive board member Brian Capshaw along with representatives from such agencies as the Department of Public Health, Alzheimer's Association, Qualidigm, Leading Age Connecticut and the Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities.

Although Senator Blumenthal is pleased to see that the usage rate in Connecticut has declined by 21.6%, he would like to see Connecticut do better. New guidelines set forth by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services set a goal to reduce usage of such medications nationwide by 25% by the end of 2015. Senator Blumenthal had previously proposed legislation at the federal level that would require informed consent when an antipsychotic medication is being used "off-label" and he is considering revising and reintroducing such a bill in the future.





Best Case Practices Creating Healing Spaces in Long Term Care Facilities

Our environment can have the power to heal and comfort. This is especially true for individuals dealing with serious illnesses and those diagnosed with Alzheimer's and/or dementia related illnesses. Many individuals struggling with dementia often develop what is commonly referred to as the "four A's" – anxiety, aggression, agitation and apathy. Peaceful environments, music and the arts, while not a cure for dementia, can relieve stress, lessen symptoms and enhance the lives of patients and caregivers alike. Painting, photography and participation in the expressive arts benefits Residents in a host of ways....Creative expression, helps individuals create a sense of empowerment, relieves stress, remember their past, explore their thoughts and feelings, elevate feelings of self-worth and contributes to an overall sense of beauty and well-being.

Most recently, our facility created a new gallery / sensory room utilizing the Residents nature photography. While special thanks goes out to the staff for their assistance in preparing the room, I am especially grateful to the Residents who participated in our creative corner art class. The photography is absolutely beautiful!

To that end, I'd like to take this opportunity to share some suggestions for creating a Resident gallery / sensory space in your facility:

- Offer a therapeutic photography class. Provide modifications as needed. The focus of the activity is on enhancing the lives of the participants over the technique. Explore what is seen, felt and experienced. Encourage participants to be present in the moment.

- Select and then develop the photography that is soothing to the senses. Selecting a category or theme is often helpful, i.e. nature, landscapes, etc... Frame the art in complimentary frames. And make sure to encourage Resident participation in every step of the way.

- Have the room painted in a hue of soft blue, beige or green. Reduce clutter, avoid harsh lighting and be sure to maintain a comfortable room temperature. Bring in calming music and utilize aroma therapy. We utilize organic lavender.

- Last but not least, dedicate the room to the Resident artists!

Submitted by, Jennifer Heil, BS, TRD, M. ED

"Art is our one true global language. It knows no nation, it favors no race, and it acknowledges no class. It speaks to our need to reveal, heal, and transform. It transcends our ordinary lives and lets us imagine what is possible."

Richard Kamler

Alexandria Manor Sensory & Gallery Room



WINTER PASTIMES
WORD SEARCH
OUTDOOR



A	J	O	S	K	I	P	A	T	R	O	L	A	R	E	N	S	A	M
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Skis, Snowboarding, Slope, Poles, Skipatrol, Parka, Snowball Fight, Mittens, Scarf, Boots, Ski Area, Skate, Times Square, Sled



INDOOR



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O	F	S	C	R	A	B	B	L	E	P	O	P	C	O	R	N	E	T

Knit, Crochet, Needlepoint, Bake, Sew, Quilt, Concert, Sing, Poetry, Read, Game, Cards, Monopoly, Scrabble, Chat, Draw, Fireplace, Paint, Popcorn, YMCA, Shop

~ Karen Hawley ~



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*Wishing you a wonderful
New Year*



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(SCPRC)**

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