

Silver Panther Newsletter

SUMMER 2024 | Vol 15 Issue 3





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FORUM INVITATION!**
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Hello and thank you for taking the time to read this edition of the “Silver Panther”, a newsletter brought to you by the Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils (SCPRC) and The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP).

This Newsletter is designed to keep you abreast of the current issues that affect you, the residents of Connecticut nursing facilities.

We invite you to contact us with suggestions of articles you would like to see in future issues, or best practices your facility is using. You may contact us through Email at LTCOP@CT.GOV or by telephone at [1-866-388-1888](tel:1-866-388-1888).



28TH ANNUAL VOICES FORUM INVITATION

Voices United, Empowering Choices: Strength in Advocacy



You are Cordially Invited
VOICES FORUM 2024

→ **JOIN US** ←

 **Friday Oct 4th, 2024**

 **At 9 AM - 2 PM**

 **Aqua Turf
56 Mulberry St,
Plantsville, CT 06479**



Questions: Susan.Morales@ct.gov

RSVP
[PORTAL.CT.GOV/LTCOP/VOICES2024](https://portal.ct.gov/ltcop/voices2024)

Please RSVP By September 22nd

**** Registration Opens 8/1/24 ****
Visit <https://portal.ct.gov/ltcop/voices2024> or
Click: [Register Here](#)



What is the VOICES FORUM? The VOICES Forum is an annual event which provides an opportunity for Presidents of Resident Councils from around the State to gather and discuss issues and concerns in their homes. The Connecticut Long Term Care Ombudsman Program is the sponsor and partner of the Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils and the VOICES Forum. The Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils is an organization of residents of long term care facilities who work together on the enhancement of the quality of their care and the quality of their lives. The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program supports the Coalition in their efforts to effect positive change in larger systems such as local and state governments.

When is Voices? Friday October 4th. 9am-2pm

Where is Voices Held? The Aqua Turf - 56 Mulberry St, Plantsville, CT 06479

Who Can Come To Voices? (1 Resident + 1 Staff Guest if needed) Voices is designed for resident council presidents to be able to come together annually and so ideally the resident council president or vice president are invited to attend. If the RCP and RCVP are unable to attend for whatever reason, but would want another member of the council to come as an ambassador delegate, they can elect to have them come in their place and attend on behalf of their council. If the resident who attends on behalf of a nursing home needs assistance with Activities of daily Living then they can also elect to have one staff member also come to be present to assist them. The Maximum attendance per building is 2 individuals. 1 Resident and if needed 1 resident assistant (This can be a caregiver for the resident or the rec director themselves if they are assuming that role.) There are some very rare exceptions where another facility staff member or resident may attend, but you would want to confirm such with the state ombudsman prior to



confirming such. We also always want to make sure that legislators who want to attend have the opportunity to do so. So please also forward the link to any legislator you think may be interested in attending the event.

How much does it cost to go to Voices? The cost to attend voices is free. The Facility is only responsible for getting the resident to and from the event.

Is Lunch Provided for the Event? Yes, there is a choice between eggplant parmesan or chicken francaise.

Can the Venue Do Gluten Free/Celiac or other dietary accommodations such as soft food/puree – No unfortunately, we do not offer specific dietary accommodations. In a situation where an individual does have a dietary restrictions we suggest bringing a lunch when attending.

Is there financial assistance for Transportation to be covered to/from Voices for the 2024 Calendar year? Unfortunately, no. Facilities are responsible for covering the transportation to and from the event, however we may suggest that you may wish to coordinate your trip with other local nursing homes to use a shared facility van and carpool residents together or share the costs of the transportation for securing private transportation. For example, in 2022, many Apple Rehab facilities rode in all together to save on costs. Or, several unrelated nursing homes would work together regionally to rent a handy-van for the day in order to ensure residents have access to the event and share the costs. Most recently, UBER did expand access to handicap accessible rides which may also be a consideration for the facilities.



How do individuals RSVP to Voices? There will be an online link to register that you can access Starting August 1st. Registration will Close September 22nd. You will be able to access the link to Register through the [VOICES 2024 WEB PAGE](#). or **Click: [Register Here](#)**





Meet Our New Executive Board Member: Cindy Michaud



Meet Cindy Michaud, a dedicated member of the Summit of Plantsville community since February 2015. Cindy's journey to the facility followed a challenging stroke and heart attack, which marked a significant shift in her life after decades of hard work. Having started her career at the young age of 16, Cindy's work ethic has not waned; she has continued to channel her energy and commitment into her current roles as the resident council president and a new member of the executive board steering committee.

Cindy comes from a large, closely-knit family as one of nine children, and she maintains strong connections with each of her siblings. Her family-oriented nature fuels her advocacy for improving the quality of life not only within her own nursing home but also across Connecticut.

Cindy is a true leader, passionate about effecting change and empowering her fellow residents. Her resilience and dedication make her a valued and respected voice within her community.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

(For More Information and Full Comprehensive Summary Visit our [Advocacy Center Page](#).)

The 2024 Connecticut Legislative Session, held from February 7 to May 8, was a crucial period for advancing significant reforms aimed at improving care for seniors and enhancing the overall quality of long-term care facilities in the state. Throughout the session, various bills were discussed, debated, and passed, reflecting a robust commitment to enhancing the lives of Connecticut's elderly population and those in need of long-term care.

Key Advocacy and Legislative Actions:

The session was marked by active participation from advocacy groups such as the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP), E-Board, and the Statewide Family Council. These groups rallied at the Legislative Office Building on February 29 and March 5, ahead of public hearings on pivotal nursing home reform bills including HB 5001 and HB 5046. Their efforts were focused on highlighting the challenges long-term care residents face and pushing for greater transparency, accountability, and quality of care.

Legislative Outcomes and Impact:

Although not all proposed bills were passed, the session was successful in enacting several critical measures. Noteworthy among these were enhanced privacy protections, such as limiting room occupancy to no more than two beds to reduce overcrowding and increase resident privacy. Another significant change was the mandate to transition nursing facility waiting lists to an electronic format, improving the accuracy and transparency of the admissions process.



Enhancements in Care and Accessibility:

The legislature took significant steps to promote best practices and improve public access to care comparisons. This included requiring links to the Medicare Nursing Home Care Compare website and establishing a Connecticut-specific nursing home dashboard, helping residents and their families make informed decisions about care facilities.

Addressing Staffing and Safety Concerns:

Clarifications were made in statutory definitions for "direct care staff" to ensure that staffing levels are adequate and appropriate for the care required. New consumer support measures were also implemented to facilitate timely wheelchair repairs, significantly improving mobility and quality of life for residents.

Ensuring Fairness and Enhancing Safety:

The session saw the prohibition of discrimination in admissions based on a history of mental health treatment. Enhanced workplace violence prevention standards were introduced to protect both residents and staff. Regulatory authorities were also granted enhanced powers to discipline facilities that fall short of care and practice standards, ensuring accountability and maintaining high care standards.

Transparency and Operational Improvements:

New transparency requirements were established for Managed Residential Care (MRC) admissions contracts, coupled with protections for residents in the event of nursing home closures. This ensures that residents are well-informed and experience minimal disruption during such transitions.



Ombudsman Program Enhancements and Presumptive Eligibility:

Legislative changes significantly enhanced the flexibility and responsiveness of the ombudsman program. This session also saw the establishment of presumptive eligibility for clients of the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders (CHCPE), providing immediate access to necessary services is allowed while the full eligibility process is underway, reducing delays in care initiation.

Safety Measures and Financial Accountability:

The increased availability of fingerprinting services strengthens safety measures in care facilities by ensuring more timely background checks of staff. A new requirement for financial institutions to provide customer financial records within 20 days upon receiving a signed certification from the Department of Social Services was also implemented, enhancing the efficiency of service provision.

Conclusion:

Collectively, these measures taken during the 2024 Connecticut Legislative Session have significantly improved operational transparency, safety, and care quality in Connecticut's nursing, residential, and community care settings. The advancements made are set to enhance the quality of life for the elderly and vulnerable populations, ensuring they receive the support and care needed to live dignified and independent lives in their preferred environments. These legislative achievements underscore Connecticut's commitment to continually improving the state's long-term care landscape and supporting its aging residents.



Congratulations to a Volunteer Resident Advocate Jennifer Glick:



On March 28th, Jennifer Glick a dedicated Long Term Care Ombudsman Volunteer Resident Advocates from the Connecticut Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, who is also a veteran, played a pivotal role in the "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day" ceremony by serving as the



Master of Ceremony. This event, held at the State of Connecticut Veterans Affairs campus in Rocky Hill, commemorated the anniversary of the withdrawal of U.S. ground combat forces from Vietnam and celebrated March 30th as “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day,” a designation established by Connecticut in 2010 with House Bill 5352 (now Public Act 10-40).

Despite several last-minute changes, Jennifer’s poignant and personal remarks, along with their exceptional skills as a Master of Ceremony, contributed significantly to the success of the event. The ceremony honored the brave men and women who served in Vietnam, recognizing their sacrifices and expressing deep gratitude for their unwavering service.

In a touching moment of recognition, Jennifer was surprised and deeply moved to receive a Quilt of Valor, a significant honor bestowed by the Quilts of Valor Foundation to comfort and honor veterans. Being "quilted" is a profound gesture of appreciation, symbolizing warmth, healing, and recognition for a veteran's service and sacrifice.

Commissioner Welch and the staff at Connecticut Veterans expressed their heartfelt gratitude for the advocate’s immeasurable contributions to the ceremony and their ongoing support for veterans. This collaborative effort highlights Jennifer’s unwavering commitment to serving those who served, reinforcing her role as a true support for elders and veterans throughout Connecticut. Thank you Jennifer!



Best Practices

Orange Healthcare Center

At Orange Health Care Center we offer plenty of activities for all needs and interests of our residents. We have had success with many programs and continue to have frequent participants in our routine activities like bingo, trivia, crafting, exercise and word games. However, we also find providing technological stimulating activities can promote further engagement that is beneficial for our resident's quality of life. One of our most successful programs has been a "Virtual Travel" activity.

In our Virtual Travel program, we connect the facility laptop to the 56 inch television through an HDMI cord. Doing so assists with any visual or hearing impairment some residents may have. We enjoy the "You Tube" channel called "[Touropia](#)". On this channel, we've found the most popularity and participation through watching the segments on Natural Wonders of the World, America Destinations, Beautiful Places on Earth, Man Made Wonders, and Strangest Small Towns. Each segment can range from being a half hour long to an hour long. Facts and information on each place can be easily heard and understood along with the large subtitles on the bottom of the screen. We pause the videos at certain times to have time to discuss what was seen, learned or provide an opportunity for questions. This activity is great for all residents. It can be a calming sensory experience for some or an engaging experience for others. Our Virtual Travel program is targeted at providing group discussions, nostalgia, education, socialization and sensory stimulation. At the end of our program we continue with a wrap-up on which places were a favorite, unusual, or



places we've already traveled to in the past. We find most of our conversations snowball into further curiosities leading the group to discover other places to "visit". It's an enjoyable way to feel like we are all traveling together and for free!

We hope this program can assist in all your travel interests!

Pendleton Healthcare



Pendleton Healthcare is using Resident Leadership to empowered residents to be creative, enthusiastic, and happy while serving purpose in their home.



Rich Metayer, Co President of the Resident Council, who is also known as the "Mayor" , an MIT graduate, Former Engineer, is a Resident Leader. Rich puts the Resident Council minutes into his computer & then presents them at the monthly meeting on the large TV screen. He also does a great deal of research on several topics & brings these topics for discussion as he leads his program. The topics include: Sports, States, Countries, Religious Programs, Special Holidays, Black History Month, and "How to Work a Computer & Social Media "

The title of the program is "Mondays with Mayor".

"I enjoy leading the programs. It expands my knowledge & the knowledge of the Residents " – Rich Metayer

John Wolchesky & Chuck Zemko are also both strong Resident Leaders. They started a "Wii" Club in one of the Recreation rooms. Welcoming all residents from all units of the facility, they have seen the club grow. They started with 1 resident & now they have 8 to 10 who join regularly! They are teachers who had to teach residents how to play. (They have even taught the Recreational Therapists how to play the games. Sharing laughs and building bridges of humanity between staff AND residents.) The games include: Golf, table tennis, basketball, shuffleboard, bowling & lawn games.

"It is so much fun, and enjoyable. The Residents are happy to learn" - John Wolchesky

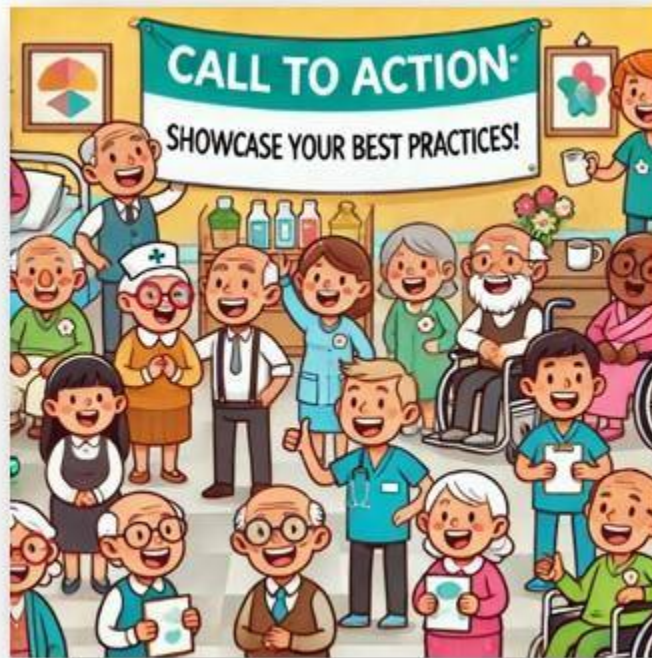
"Several Residents play the games; love the competition and participate from all the units. Very Enjoyable!" - Chuck Zemko



Kathy Banta, a resident volunteer, colored over 60 beautiful pictures with positive quotes to bring cheer to other residents. leading the Community volunteers in delivering the pictures to the Residents. (Staff received them too !!!)

"It makes me Happy to make People Happy"- Kathy Banta

CALL TO ACTION | Resident Council Presidents and Therapeutic Recreation Directors



The Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils is excited to continue our ongoing initiative to highlight the outstanding work being



done in nursing homes across our state. We know that many of you are implementing innovative and effective practices that greatly enhance the quality of life for residents. Now is your chance to share these successes with your peers!

We are calling for submissions of best practices from Resident Council Presidents and Therapeutic Recreation Directors for our upcoming edition of *The Silver Panther*. Whether it's a unique program, an effective policy, or a creative solution to a common challenge, we want to hear about it! Your submissions will help inspire and guide other facilities in adopting practices that have been proven to work.

How to Participate:

1. **Identify** a best practice that has had a positive impact on your residents.
2. **Write** a brief description (300-500 words) detailing the practice or program, the results, and any resources or suggestions to help others implement if interested.
3. **Include** any photos, videos, or testimonials from residents and staff.
4. **Submit** your entry via email to LTCOP@ct.gov and Daniel.Beem@ct.gov as soon as possible.

Benefits of Participation:

- **Recognition:** Your facility will be highlighted in our statewide newsletter, *The Silver Panther*, and on our website.
- **Sharing Knowledge:** Contribute to a repository of best practices that others can learn from and implement.
- **Inspiration:** Motivate other facilities to innovate and improve their own resident care practices.

We believe that by sharing our successes, we help to elevate the



standard of care and quality of life in all nursing homes. We look forward to receiving your submissions and showcasing the incredible work being done across our state.

Thank you for your dedication and commitment to enhancing the lives of our residents.



The Connecticut Long Term Care Ombudsman Program is now on Facebook!



Connecticut Long Term Care Ombudsman Program

2K followers • 106 following

www.Facebook.com/ctlitcop



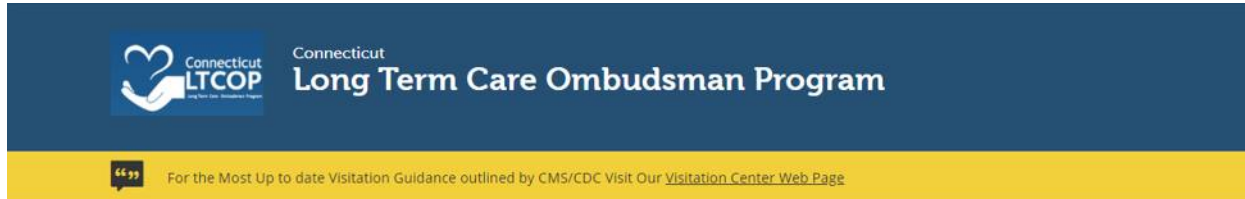
1-866-388-1888

Please visit our page and **“Like and Follow”**





Get Updates from Long Term Care Ombudsman Program and E-Board straight to your inbox!



<https://portal.ct.gov/LTCOP>

Please visit the CTLTCOP web page and click **“Subscribe”** to stay informed on topics that you care about most:

- Legislative News
- Local and State Wide Resident Council Resources
 - Silver Panther Newsletter
- Local and State Wide Family Council Resources
 - Visitation / COVID-19 Updates
 - Educational Opportunities / Webinars



Connecticut LTCOP

Long Term Care Ombudsman Program

Community Ombudsman Program



PURPOSE

Enhance quality of life and care for Connecticut citizens who receive long term services and supports



SETTINGS

- Residential Care Homes
- Assisted Living Communities
- Private Homes



WHAT DOES THE LONG TERM CARE COMMUNITY OMBUDSMAN DO?

- **RECEIVES** and looks into complaints and assists individuals to resolve problems.
- **EDUCATES** individuals and families about their rights.
- **EMPOWERS** and supports individuals and families to discuss concerns with others providing care or services.
- **PROVIDES** information regarding long-term services and supports
- **ADVOCATES** improvements in state and federal laws and regulations.
- **REPRESENTS** the voice of individuals receiving LTSS and their interests before governmental agencies.
- **IDENTIFIES** and seeks to remedy gaps in provider, government, or community services.
- **RESPECTS** the privacy and confidentiality of individuals.

CONFIDENTIAL AND RESIDENT DIRECTED

All activities are on behalf of residents and at their direction. All communication is held in strict confidentiality. The Ombudsman does not follow up unless directed to by the individual.



SEEKING HELP

You're entitled to seek help to exercise your rights.

Visit Us On the Web at:
<https://portal.ct.gov/ltcop/lccco>
or Call

1-866-388-1888



**Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils
 (SCPRC) Steering Committee Members**

Sullivan-Martinez, Jeanette <i>President</i>	Pendleton Healthcare
Balisciano Jr., John <i>Vice President</i>	Hewitt Health and Rehab
Bilansky, Susan	Hebrew Home
Leland, Martha	Touchpoints of Manchester
Richard Metayer	Pendleton Healthcare
James Cramerford	Newtown
Robert Willis	West Side
Ivette Alvarez	Newtown
Cindy Michaud	Summit of Plantsville
Lauri Amodeo	Whispering Pines
Sally Ann Fallon	Whispering Pines



Fourth Of July

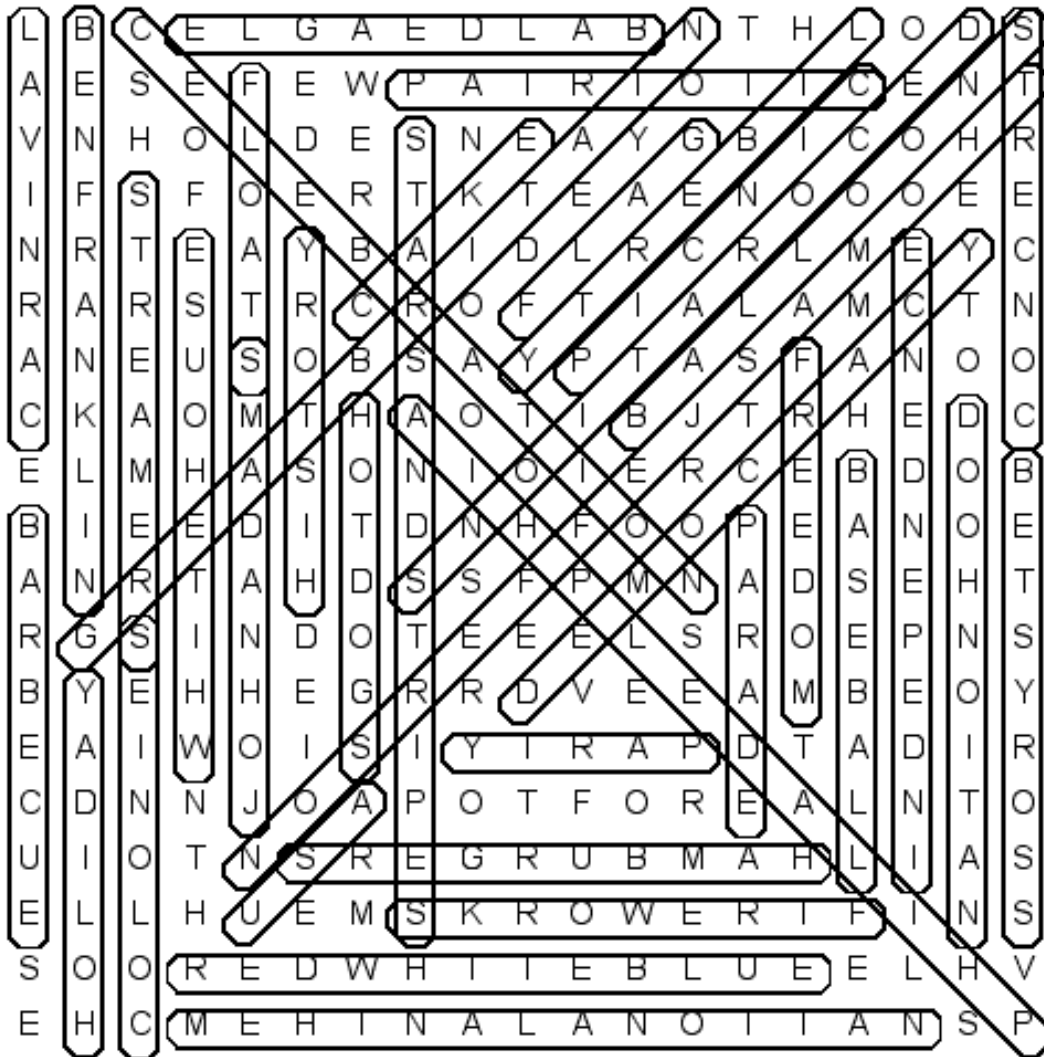
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid.
The remaining letters spell an Abraham Lincoln quotation.

L B C E L G A E D L A B N T H L O D S
 A E S E F E W P A T R I O T I C E N T
 V N H O L D E S N E A Y G B I C O H R
 I F S F O E R T K T E A E N O O O E E
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| BALD EAGLE | CONCERTS | HOLIDAY | PATRIOTIC |
| BALLOONS | DECORATIONS | HOT DOGS | PHILADELPHIA |
| BARBECUE | DEMOCRACY | INDEPENDENCE | PICNIC |
| BASEBALL | FIREWORKS | JOHN ADAMS | RED WHITE BLUE |
| BEN FRANKLIN | FLAG | LIBERTY | STARS AND STRIPES |
| BETSY ROSS | FLOATS | NATIONAL ANTHEM | STREAMERS |
| CAKE | FREEDOM | NATIONHOOD | THOMAS JEFFERSON |
| CARNIVAL | GREAT BRITAIN | PARADE | USA |
| CELEBRATION | HAMBURGERS | PARTY | WHITE HOUSE |
| COLONIES | HISTORY | | |



This is the solution to the puzzle located [here](#).

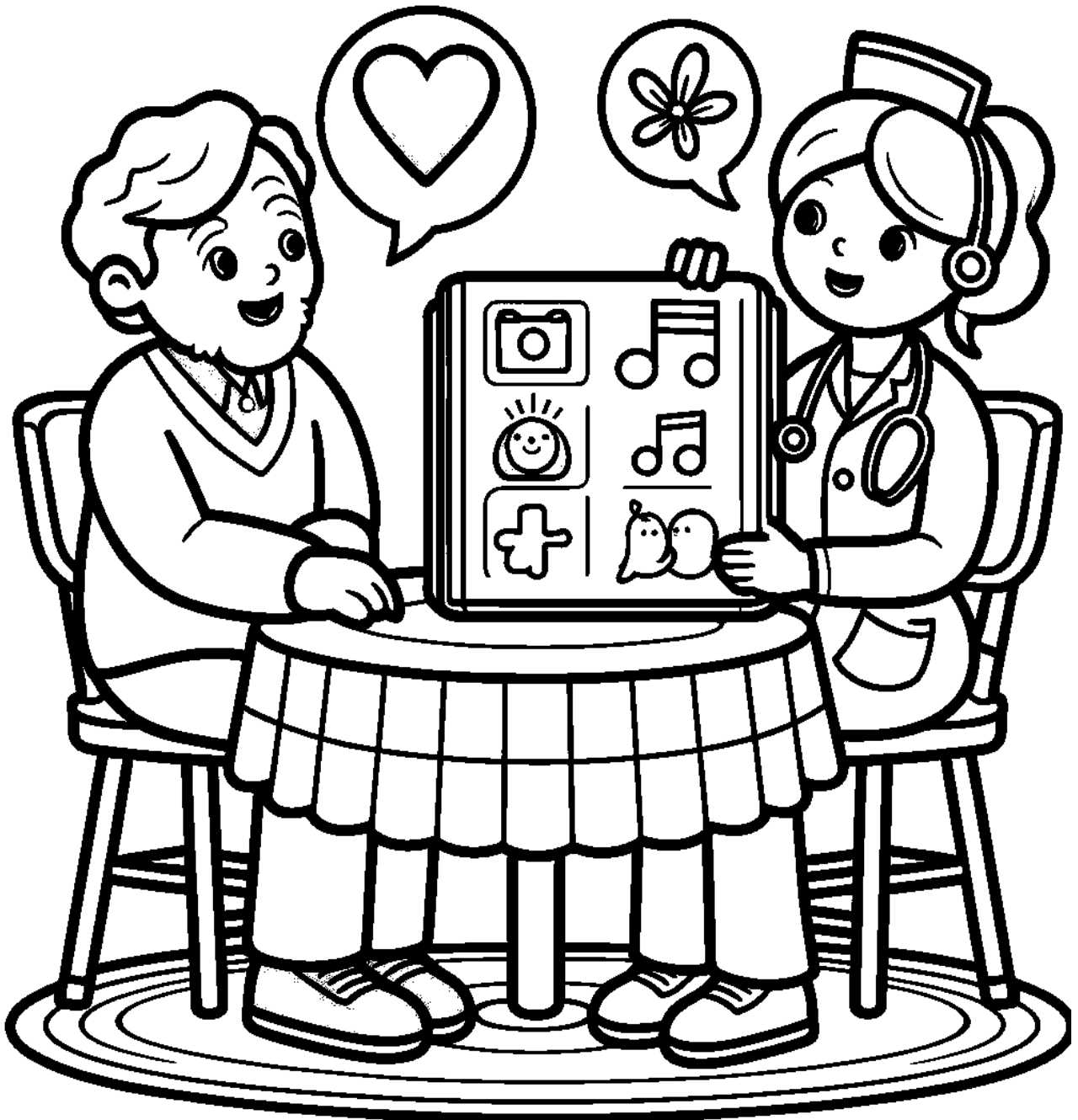


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| BALLOONS | DECORATIONS | HOT DOGS | PHILADELPHIA |
| BARBECUE | DEMOCRACY | INDEPENDENCE | PICNIC |
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| CAKE | FREEDOM | NATIONHOOD | THOMAS JEFFERSON |
| CARNIVAL | GREAT BRITAIN | PARADE | USA |
| CELEBRATION | HAMBURGERS | PARTY | WHITE HOUSE |
| COLONIES | HISTORY | | |



Nursing Home Resident Rights in Color: Creative Coloring Pages

(Resident Right: Individualized Care)





(Resident Right: Dignity)



Resident Right: Quality Care



TOLL FREE NUMBER

[1-866-388-1888](tel:1-866-388-1888)

Email: ltcop@ct.gov

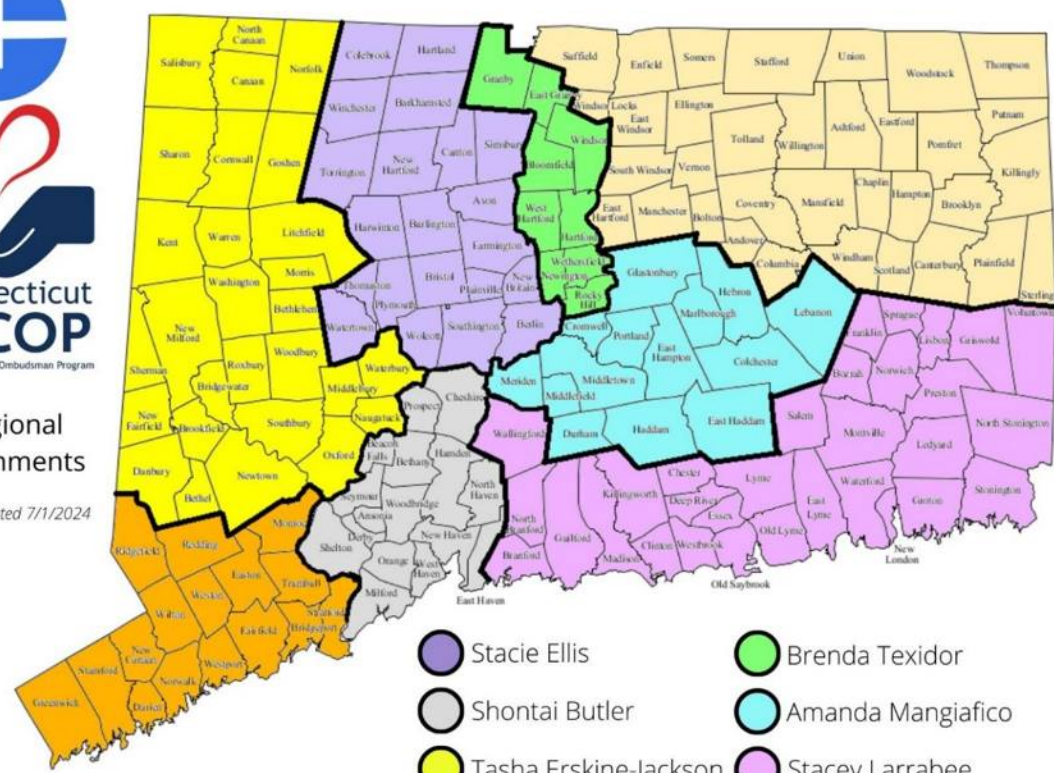
Facebook: www.facebook.com/CTLTCOP

State Website: <https://portal.ct.gov/ltcop>

Contact The CT Long Term Care Ombudsman Program Toll Free [1-866-388-1888](tel:1-866-388-1888)



Regional Assignments
Last Updated 7/1/2024





MedicareAdvocacy.org

The Center for Medicare Advocacy

The Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc. is a private, non-profit organization which provides education, advocacy, and legal assistance to help elders and people with disabilities obtain necessary healthcare. We focus on the needs of Medicare beneficiaries, people with chronic conditions, and those in need of long-term care. The organization is involved in education, training and litigation activities of importance to Medicare beneficiaries nationwide.

TOLL FREE NUMBER

Telephone: [860-456-7790](tel:860-456-7790) | Toll Free: [1-800-262-4414](tel:1-800-262-4414)

Email: info@medicareadvocacy.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MedicareAdvocacy.org>

Website: <https://medicareadvocacy.org/>