

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK APRIL 10-16, 2011

National Volunteer Week is April 10-16, 2011 we acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of the volunteers who serve older Americans all across this nation. Volunteers have always been the backbone of programs administered under the Older Americans Act.

Louisiana has counted on volunteer support to assist in serving seniors in the programs supported by the Older Americans Act. Approximately fourteen volunteers help provide services.

This year we are highlighting the work of one group of extraordinary and committed volunteers, who serve long-term care residents through their Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.

Volunteers support the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, ensuring the rights, safety, and well-being of residents of nursing facilities, assisted living communities, board and care homes and similar facilities. Last year, more than eight of these volunteers were trained and certified as long-term care ombudsmen, resolving complaints with and on behalf of residents.

Volunteer ombudsmen visit and listen to residents' concerns as well as problem-solve. Many residents of long-term care facilities sometimes have little or no contact with the outside world and some have few visitors. An ombudsman volunteer who visits regularly can make a huge difference in the quality of life of a resident.

If you are interested in serving as an ombudsman volunteer, you can contact the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, 225 342-7100 for more information about volunteer opportunities and qualifications.

In addition to the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, volunteers help the aging network in many other ways, including: assisting at group meals sites and delivering meals to home-bound elders; escorting and transporting frail older persons to health care services and grocery shopping; weatherizing the homes of low-income and frail older persons; counseling older persons in a variety of areas including health promotion, nutrition, legal and financial concerns; detecting and preventing health care fraud; and helping during disasters. Contact your local council on aging for volunteer opportunities in your area.

We thank each volunteer who contributes their time, experience, expertise and compassion to benefit the lives of older Louisianan's.