



EMPOWERED AGING

Ombudsman

SERVICES *of Contra Costa
and Solano*

2016-
2017

ANNUAL
REPORT



Purpose and Gratitude

Message from Nicole Howell, Executive Director

This Annual Report represents a milestone for Ombudsman Services of Contra Costa and Solano! Thank you to our many supporters and advocates; your commitment inspired this new publication as a vehicle to express our gratitude and to highlight the people who fill our work with purpose.

My path to a career in elder advocacy and senior services seems accidental in some ways, as having majored in Political Science, it was not my intention to serve older adults, let alone advocate for their personalized care and choice. Though I was naturally drawn to a profession that would serve others, it was not until I stepped into my first Ombudsman role in San Mateo County that I fully embraced my passion for this work. Seeing first-hand the neglect and compromised quality of life of our elders and those living in long-term care gave my career path meaning and direction. My personal family history was also a big influence. My Native American great aunt entered a long-term care facility at the age of 87. I saw how cultural misunderstandings combined with her dementia impacted her care; she was often viewed as “difficult” and “unmanageable” by her doctors and facility staff. I was determined to create

change to protect her bright light and independent spirit and I am committed to doing the same for the seniors we serve.

I am heartened by the fact that I am not alone in this work. I am impressed by the willingness of our staff and volunteers to work together with patience and tenacity to resolve situations at facilities. They are problem-solvers and bring fresh perspectives to better serve residents. This year, I was particularly impressed by a staff member who took the initiative to create the Master of Social Work (MSW) internship program, allowing us to train and deploy student interns in Contra Costa County. This innovative program exposes MSW students to senior issues through hands-on field work, and we as an organization have an opportunity to guide their career direction, growing our circle of elder and long-term care advocates.

I am invigorated by the generous commitment of our donors whose partnership and caring fuels our work daily. I hope you enjoy our inaugural Annual Report.

“Together, we are making a difference in our community and beyond.”

Interested in checking out some compelling reads that relate to issues in aging? Here are some of Nicole's recent favorites:

This Chair Rocks: A Manifesto Against Ageism by Ashton Applewhite, a new “it” book about aging and how we, as a society, need to fight our prejudices and misconceptions about growing old.

Data Driven Nonprofits by Steve MacLaughlin, a guidebook for nonprofit organizations to analyze and improve their performance and increase positive change in the world.

An American Sickness: How Healthcare Became Big Business and How You Can Take it Back by Elisabeth Rosenthal, a look at our dysfunctional healthcare system, including how patients get caught between acute care hospitals and skilled-nursing facilities.

When Breath Becomes Air by Paul Kalanithi, a beautiful and heartbreaking memoir by a neurosurgeon facing stage IV lung cancer as he considers what makes a life worth living.

150,000 Seniors
in Contra Costa County

60% of residents do
not receive any visits
from family or friends



2,713 Ombudsman
facility visits

1,163 consultations to
families on issues like residents' rights and care placement



1,879 complaint
investigations
by Ombudsman



9 out of 10
cases closed
to the satisfaction
of the residents



29%
increase
in core services
over prior year



250
attendees
at the inaugural
Person-Centered Care
event hosted by
Ombudsman Services



Mission / Purpose

Ombudsman Services of Contra Costa and Solano believes that aging is a natural phase of life deserving of respect and dignity. The mission of Ombudsman Services is to protect and advocate for older and dependent adults by preserving their rights and improving their quality of life throughout the process of aging. Through a dedicated staff and a network of trained Ombudsman volunteers, Ombudsman Services empowers long-term care residents of Contra Costa and Solano County and protects their rights and safety through advocacy and education, providing a voice for the community's most vulnerable members.



Frank is actively looking for opportunities to help residents make friends, form strong bonds, and have a meaningful and positive experience.

Sparking Conversation

Frank Severa greets new residents with a smile, inviting them to share a meal or simply going out of his way to make conversation. “When I first moved into The Commons at Dallas Ranch, I had a hard time adjusting to my new circumstances,” he said. “For a few days, I stayed in my room and ate alone. Then I decided to venture out, but initiating conversation with other residents was challenging.” He came up with an ice-breaker solution and now regularly affixes inspirational signs to his walker that say things like, “Miracles Happen Every Day” or “Dream Big.” Sparking conversation, these messages have led to many friendships and continue to ease the transition for new residents.

Frank is a man of many talents and after spending years in sales, he decided to change careers and together with his wife, owned and operated photography studios. This second career allowed him to hone his photography skills while being closer to home/family and having more time for his other passion, sport fishing. Frank came to The Commons after being hospitalized from a fall. His wife of 58 years, Phyllis, had passed away and he selected The Commons because his daughters lived nearby.

While his sport fishing days on Lake Berryessa may be over, Frank is still

quite the photographer. “I was asked by Roberto Maldonado, the Executive Director, to take pictures of the residents in the memory care unit,” he said. “I really enjoyed taking their photos, which now hang on the outside of their homes.” For years Frank’s company was contracted with the Emporium (department store) to offer holiday Santa photos. Now he enjoys keeping his skills fresh while helping others in The Commons.

He first met Ombudsman Debra Hanschar during one of her routine visits to the facility. As he got to know Debra he was impressed with how she worked with residents to update the bylaws for their resident council. Frank was elected resident council president soon after the bylaws were approved.

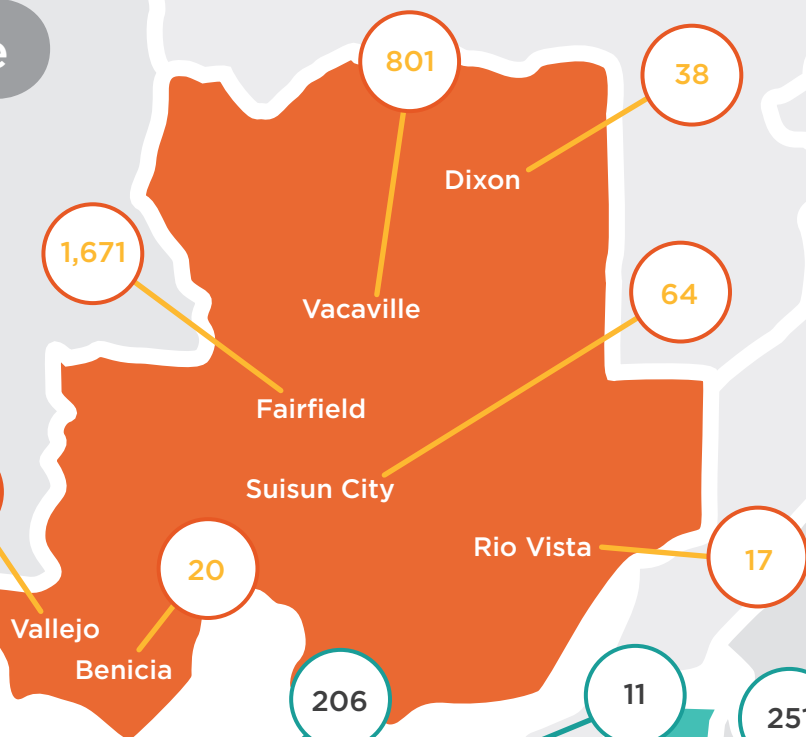
Frank believes in building a strong community and as council president he is actively looking for opportunities to help residents make friends, form strong bonds, and have a meaningful and positive experience. He is working on developing a group of resident ambassadors to help new residents transition into their new living environment. “I believe the program should sell the sizzle not the steak,” he remarked, “and I have lots of ideas for ways to make the activity program more engaging and eventful.”

Who & Where We Serve

We've extended our reach and now provide services in Solano County!

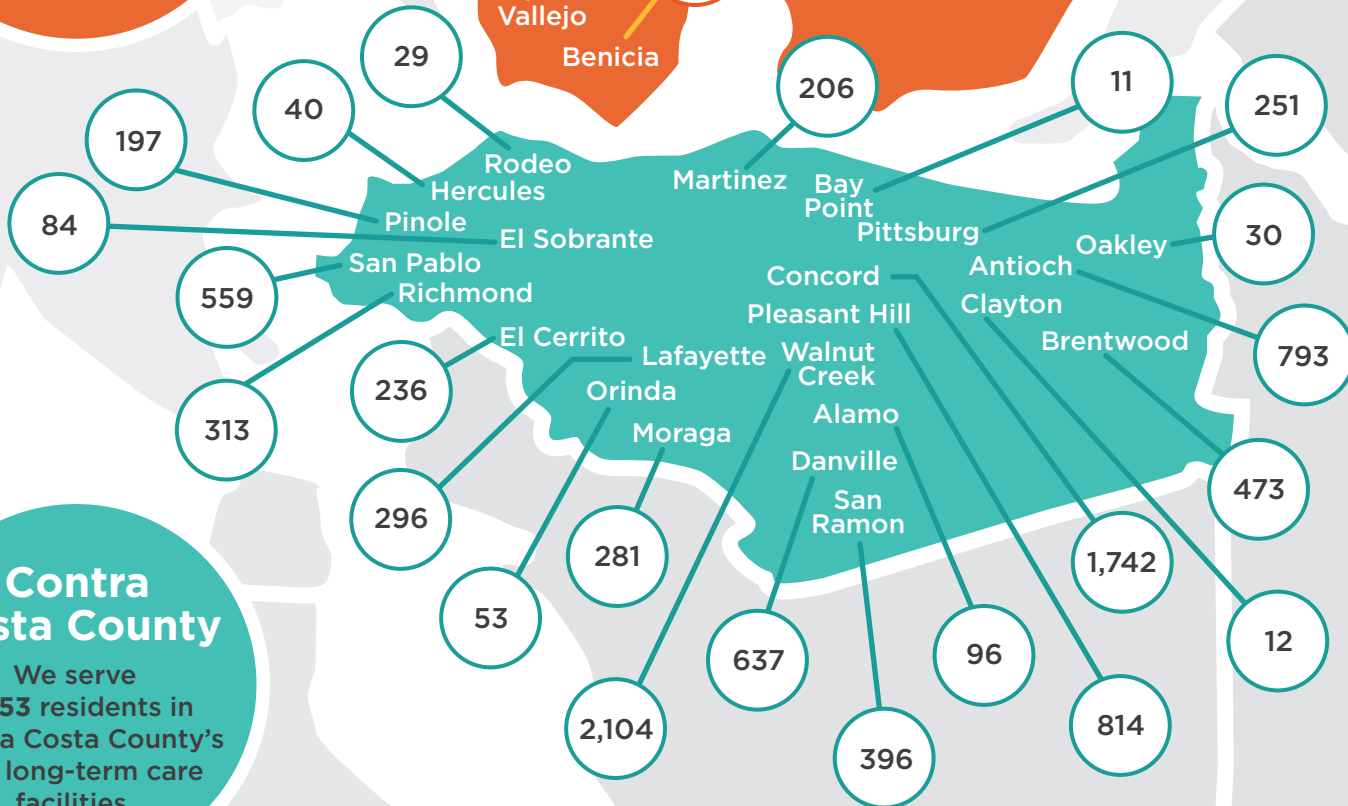
Solano County

We serve **3,546** residents in Solano County's **140** long-term care facilities.



Contra Costa County

We serve **9,653** residents in Contra Costa County's **423** long-term care facilities.



Priorities for 2017–2018



We will work to **reduce the unnecessary use of antipsychotics** in long-term care facilities **through education and collaborative problem-solving**, empowering residents to live more meaningful lives.

We will **host more person-centered care events and in-services** for facility leadership and caregivers, to provide practical tools to improve quality of life for residents and the aging community.



By **growing our volunteer base**, we will make **more facility visits, close more cases, and build more effective relationships** with facilities and their staff.

By leveraging our shared knowledge and experience in Contra Costa County, **we will bring the highest-quality Ombudsman services to long-term care residents in Solano County** and **further distinguish ourselves as the go-to resource on aging** in our growing service area.



Save the Date!

**Facility Education Event
for Leadership & Staff**

4/24/18

Pleasant Hill
Community
Center

Friends Volunteer Together

Maggie Gerk has a knack for building trust with staff, administrators, and residents, and she also has a knack for recruiting her friends to become Ombudsman Volunteers. A former nurse and hospital administrator, Maggie wanted to become a certified Ombudsman when she saw an article about OSCC in the Contra Costa Times. After her retirement, she attended an orientation class and instantly knew that this volunteer work was for her.

“Advocating for facility residents is a passion of mine because so often these individuals are either unable to or afraid to speak for themselves,” she says. “I love a challenge, so when I get a positive outcome for residents, it is very gratifying. Once these residents know that they have an individual to help them problem solve their issues, they begin to trust that their concerns and frustrations will be resolved or improved upon!”

Before taking the training herself, Maggie introduced her friend, **Bonnie Safine**, to Ombudsman Services, and it was a match for her as well. Bonnie is a former hospice nurse who acted in a variety of roles including setting up the Brun’s House in Alamo, CA. Renowned in the community for her work with hospice patients and their families, Bonnie brings a depth of experience and compassion to her volunteer position.

“I am passionate about wanting to make a difference in the lives of seniors who are no longer able to live independently and are experiencing hardships/challenges that they can’t resolve themselves,” she says. “What I find most interesting are the stories that residents share about their lives, careers, and families. I like complaint resolution and being able to represent the resident by ensuring that their rights are being protected and they have the best possible quality of life.”

Kathy Rumel, who retired from Sutter Delta after several decades of service, is another friend of Maggie’s who is now an Ombudsman. “As I was getting ready to retire, I was wanting to do some volunteer work and my good friend, Maggie, told me about the Ombudsman class,” she remarks. “I thought it sounded like something I’d like to do.” Maggie and Kathy took the training together and now all three are active volunteers, dedicating hours of service to the community. “To see and hear how appreciative residents and family members are for Ombudsman support is very rewarding,” says Maggie. “Hearing a family member say, ‘You were the one shining star in a very difficult situation for my mother’ makes this advocacy work all worthwhile!” Maggie’s is actively recruiting more of her friends to help grow the volunteer team in Solano. Watch out, she may be calling you!



Maggie Gerk,
Bonnie Safine &
Kathy Rumel at
the Ombudsman
Services
Summer
BBQ



Message from Emily De Falla

Board President

Led by Nicole's energy, warmth, and vision, Ombudsman Services of Contra Costa and Solano has grown significantly since 2015. We took an especially great leap forward during our most recent fiscal year (July '16-- June '17), by expanding and enhancing our program, increasing our operating budget with new grants and gifts, moving to a large new office, adding staff and volunteers, and growing our board (see *By the Numbers*, page 2).

Big News! On July 1, 2017 we officially expanded our service area to include Solano County. We now serve 13,000 residents in 600 facilities, which represents 4% of the total long-term care residents in the state. This is an opportunity to pool resources and affect the culture of care in our region. We look forward to partnering with the Area Agency on Aging, which serves Solano and Napa counties. We are excited to bring Contra Costa's successful program model to a new county, and have been carefully planning and ramping up staffing and volunteers to support our larger service area.

I am proud of how far we've come and the impact we've made in the community. I am honored by the many philanthropic partners (see page 9) who believe in our mission and direction and who have chosen to invest in Ombudsman Services at unprecedented levels. Together we are giving a voice to our seniors and other long-term care residents. We are empowering self-advocates, protecting rights to personal choice and safety, and are resolving incidents of abuse and neglect at record-breaking rates. Ombudsman Services has become a leader in culture change in the aging and long-term care community. Thank you for being part of this shift to person-centered care that ensures resident dignity and quality of life.

2016-17 Board of Directors

Emily De Falla, *President*
Grala Warren, *Vice-President*
Michael S. Ball, *Secretary/Treasurer*

Susan Frederick
Michelle Hasan
Deborah Russo
Betsy Thompson
Janelle Williams

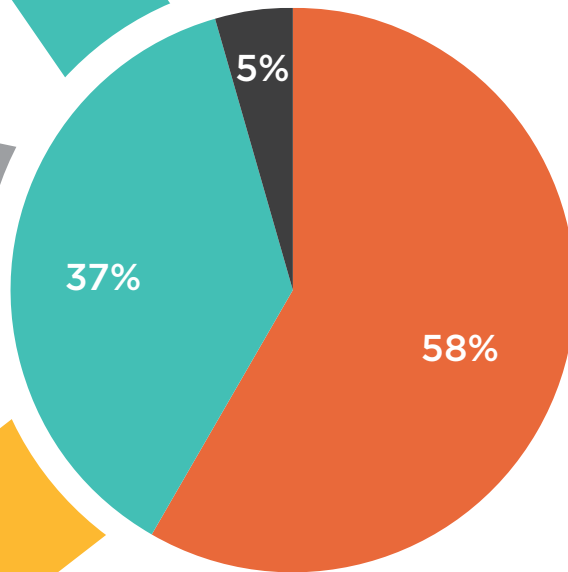
Advisory Council

Joan Carpenter
Shirley Krohn
Celia Mason
David Moore

“Ombudsman Services has become a leader in culture change in the aging and long-term care community.”

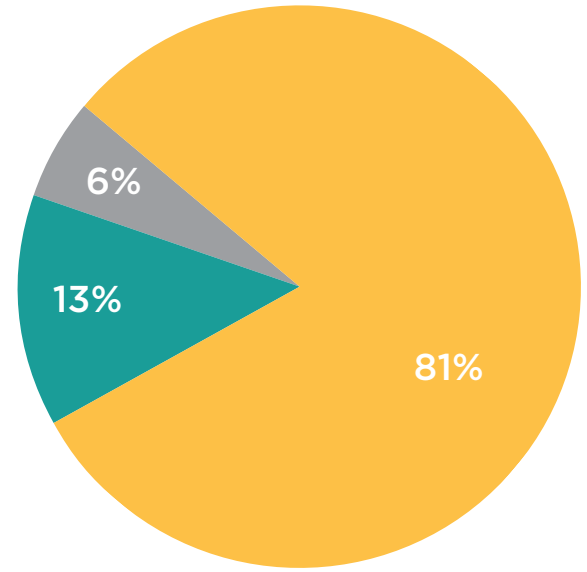
2016-2017 Financials

Ombudsman Services' budget has been growing steadily with a 42% increase in the year ending on June 30, 2017. This allowed for significant staffing increases and most notably, a 29% increase in services.



Revenue

Foundations
Government
Individuals



Expense

Program
Management/Administrative
Development/Fundraising

Special Thanks

Recognizing gifts made to Ombudsman Services of Contra Costa and Solano between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017.

\$10,000+

David Moore
Beswick Estate

\$1,000–\$9,999

Emily De Falla
Betsy Thompson

\$500–\$999

Susan & Bob Frederick
Michelle Hasan
Arthur B. O'Connor
Grala & Lou Warren
Sam Yoshioka

\$250–\$499

Michael & Karen Ball
Frede Hammes
Celia Mason
Janelle Williams

Up to \$249

American Association
University of Women,
Richmond
Richard & Barbara Bain
Carole Brekke

Kate Demartini
Judith Dexter
Carolyn Dushkin
Lodestar
Bonnie McDonald

Judy Miller
Blanche Poynter
Doris Rosen
Swartz-Prasad Family

Karen Thompson
Priscilla Tudor
Mike Wener
Harvey Wittenberg

Foundations

Lafayette Community Foundation
Dean & Margaret Leshner Foundation
Thomas J. Long Foundation
May & Stanley Smith Charitable Trust
Sunrise Rotary Foundation

Government Supporters

Community Development Block Grant—City of Antioch
Community Development Block Grant—City of Concord
Community Development Block Grant—County of Contra Costa
Community Development Block Grant—City of Walnut Creek
Concord Pleasant Hill Healthcare District
Contra Costa Employment & Human Services
Los Medanos Community Healthcare District

to
Service
they do
standing
in the
Residents
state and u
Ombu
and

“I give
Ombudsman
es because I know
an outstanding job
g up for residents
eir time of need.

are frequently in a fragile
unable to help themselves.
dsman listen, educate,
protect their voice.”

— Celia Mason
Contra Costa County
Resident

“With an increasing
aging population, we will
need even more advocates
like Ombudsman Services to
improve safety, ensure dignity,
and enhance the quality of life
for older adults.”

—Nancy Shillis, Senior Program Officer
Thomas J. Long Foundation

Empowered Aging

Join us as we advocate for older and dependent
adults in our community and protect their rights!

Become a Volunteer

There are a number of ways to volunteer, from becoming a
trained Field Ombudsman to helping out in the office. As a
Field Ombudsman, you will be part of a staff-supported team of
volunteers with countless opportunities to make an immediate impact
on the safety and quality of life of those living in long-term care facilities.
If you would like to learn more about our upcoming volunteer trainings,
leadership opportunities on the board, the MSW Internship Program, or
other ways to give of your time, **please contact Nicole at 925.384.1124.**

Make a Gift

Your gift will be put to immediate use in the community, enabling us to advocate
on behalf of long-term care residents and their families. Government and
foundation funding provide for a portion of our expenses and the remaining
comes from generous individuals like you! You can make a gift online
by visiting our website at www.ccombudsman.org, or by mailing a
check to: 2255 Contra Costa Blvd. Ste. 204, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523.

Questions? Call us at 925.384.1124.

Stay in Touch

Interested in hearing from us about our work and
current issues in aging? Make sure we have your
email and mailing address to receive our print and
online newsletters. Send your contact info to
Katy at katywijaya@ccombudsman.org.

Also, follow us on Facebook.





EMPOWERED AGING

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