

phone: 925.685.2070  
fax: 925.685.2049  
2255 Contra Costa Blvd., Ste. 204  
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523  
[www.ccsombudsman.org](http://www.ccsombudsman.org)



Children's art representing the important role grandparents play in the lives of their grandchildren.  
(Art on left by Elias Ziblat Heebner age 9;  
right, Talia Tantawan Ziblat, age 9.)



**2017-2018**  
ANNUAL REPORT





# Partnerships and Gratitude

Message from Nicole Howell, Executive Director

Thank you for partnering with us in 2017-18. While we are well into the new year, this Annual Report provides an opportunity to reflect back on and share our accomplishments, highlight the people behind the programs and those that we serve, and show our gratitude for your continuing commitment to our mission.

I know first-hand the issues and challenges that arise when a family member needs care. Recently, my 92 year-old grandmother, who experienced dementia, traveled the roller coaster route of hospitalization, transfer to a skilled nursing facility, back home briefly, re-hospitalization, and finally, hospice. As hard as it was for my grandmother, it was also difficult for my parents to navigate a tangle of paperwork and a revolving door of doctors, nurses, dieticians, and care providers. Even though they had me as a resource, it was challenging for them to advocate for my grandmother. Now more than ever I understand how families feel helpless and frustrated when trying to support their aging loved ones, including effectively communicating with those in charge of their care.

While our primary role at Ombudsman Services is to advocate for older and dependent adults, we also understand that caregivers need support for the hard and important work they do. The shortage of paid caregivers has reached a crisis point due to the

exponential growth of the aging population and the need for a level of care that cannot be provided at home. With thousands of vacant CNA positions, long-term care facilities are woefully understaffed. A new law aimed at addressing inadequate staffing went into effect on July 1, 2018, requiring skilled nursing facilities to provide more hours of care per resident, a requirement that many facilities say they can't meet due to the shortage of qualified workers needed to provide this level of care.

To address this issue, we at Ombudsman Services will soon be launching a Healthcare Careers Pathway (HCP) Initiative that will provide a career growth track and support system for individuals looking to enter the healthcare profession. Currently in the planning phase, we are partnering with John Muir Community Health Foundation, Mt. Diablo Adult Education (a division of Mt. Diablo Unified School District), Opportunity Junction, and local skilled nursing facilities to develop a resident-centered CNA program and healthcare career pathway. I look forward to sharing with you more about this bold new venture in the coming months.

Launching these important initiatives that fill the gaps in caring for our elders is only made possible through the generosity of our community – the individuals and foundations who have fueled our growth as an organization. Thank you for believing in our mission and for supporting all of the work we do.

## By the Numbers

212,657 Seniors  
in Contra Costa and Solano Counties



1,120 hours  
of services

provided by our Master  
of Social Work Interns



43 community  
education  
events

2,585 Field  
Ombudsman  
volunteer hours contributed



4,110  
Ombudsman  
facility visits



1,888 complaints  
resolved by  
Ombudsman



95% of  
cases closed  
to the satisfaction  
of the residents



137 residents “screened”  
for free legal services as part  
of the new Residential  
Empowerment Program (REP)

150 bouquets  
delivered  
to long-term care residents on Mothers Day



# Sisters Volunteering Together

New to the volunteer program in Solano County are twin sisters **Edie Parsons and Judy Sullivan**, recruited by Contra Costa volunteer Maggie Gerk, who continues to recruit her friends. “Once you retire, the question is, what do you do that can be worthwhile?” remarks Edie. “This seemed like an avenue to do something meaningful with my time.” Edie worked with In-Home Supportive Services and managed adult and child protection programs.

Judy has worked as an RN and an administrator in hospitals and says, “I’ve always liked working with older people, and now that I am an older person, I should really like it!”

Both sisters took the two-month hands-on Field Ombudsman training conducted in February, which took place over several Saturdays. “The training is excellent,” says Judy. “We talked about cases in the workshops and then went out and watched as the Supervisors engaged in actual problem-solving. Everyone has a different style, so we were able to see different ways of handling a situation.”

“Both trainers are enthusiastic and supportive,” says Edie and Judy. “Monica Shepard and Christine Farnham are very committed and we can call them anytime with any questions we have or if we need advice.”



Sisters Judy Sullivan and Edie Parsons

The facilities that the sisters visit in Vacaville, Suisun, and Vallejo are residential care facilities for the elderly that each house four to ten residents. “As people age and move into a facility, they lose a sense of choice and control,” remarks Judy. “Imagine what it’s like to give up your home and your belongings and move in with total strangers with rules for mealtimes and activities. They have to totally depend on someone else. It’s hard.”

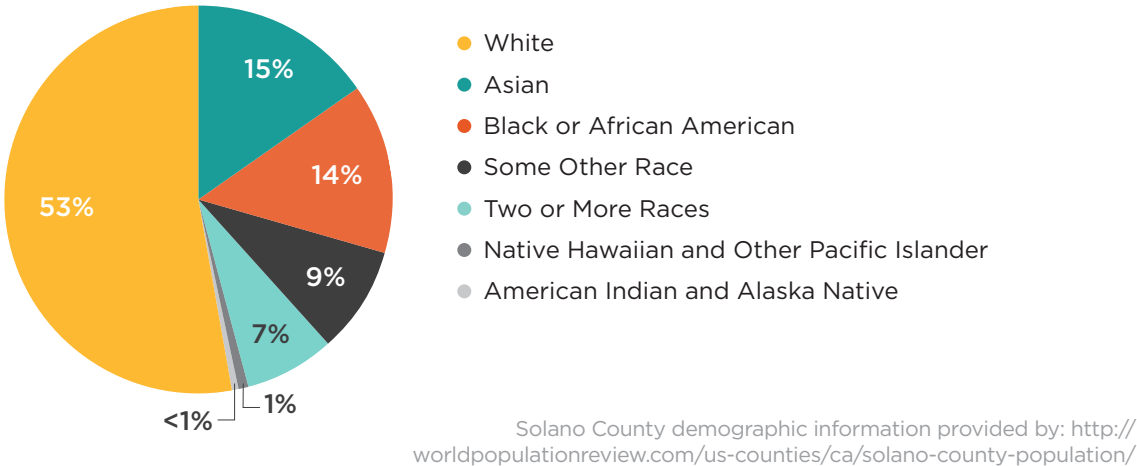
One resident Edie has helped is a disabled woman in her 50s who was quite active and talkative, but unhappy where she was living due to personality conflicts. Edie urged her to make arrangements to move to a different facility and she agreed. Edie says, “When I visited her in her new home, she was as happy as could be and thanked me for being around and helping to solve her situation.”

Being able to communicate with a resident is key to establishing trust. “It’s important to sometimes just lend a listening ear, and chat about everything and nothing,” says Judy. “Often the fact that residents had a life and a career before they came to a facility gets lost. I am glad to offer residents a chance to express themselves in a way they may not be able to with their families.”

Edie’s hope is that she is able to bring a sense of professionalism so that residents feel confident that she is able to mediate their issues. “My greatest challenge is not to jump in and try to solve the problem directly,” she says, “But to remember that I am the person to help figure out a solution and work through communication issues. It’s my aim to help them feel better about where they are.”

Last year at this time we updated you about expanding our services to include Solano County. Here are some facts we’ve found helpful to better serve seniors and dependent adults in our new region.

- Solano County is California's 20th largest county with a population of 445,458.
- Solano County has 58,425 seniors and 10.3% of its residents over the age of 65 are below the national poverty line.
- Vallejo, Solano County’s largest city, is one of the most diverse cities in California.
- Population by Race:



## Some of our proudest moments serving Solano County this year:

- We trained two new Field Ombudsman volunteers who will exclusively serve Solano County.
- We formed a partnership with and opened a satellite office at Solano Family Justice Center.
- We hired and trained two full-time staff members to serve Solano County long-term care residents.
- We tripled the number of facility visits in the region from the prior year.

## Our New Mission & Vision Statement

Last year, we at Ombudsman Services of Contra Costa and Solano embarked on a rebranding process to coincide with the launch of our new website and expanded geographic area. Now complete, the new logo, website, and refreshed vision and mission statement better reflect who we want to be as an organization.

Our new logo represents the energy of bursting out into the community in new ways and bringing it back to the residents. The mission, tagline and dynamic logo, make clear our commitment to empowered aging, resident advocacy, justice, and service excellence.

Thanks to all who were part of the rebranding process!

### MISSION

OSCCS empowers individuals and their families as they navigate the aging continuum, through person-centered advocacy, education and collaborative leadership.

### VISION

Creating communities where all can age with dignity, justice and respect.



## Priorities for 2018–2019



We will **expand our support for professional caregivers** through our new Healthcare Career Pathway and CNA training program, our annual person-centered care event, our ongoing facility trainings and one-on-one staff coaching. Because when we care for our caregivers, **they will provide better support to the seniors we serve.**

We will **expand, diversify and train our board** so we are better equipped to serve older and dependent adults. **Because a skilled and engaged board amplifies our impact.**



We will continue to **reduce the unnecessary use of antipsychotics** in long-term care facilities and investigate the correlation between staffing numbers and the use of antipsychotics. Because when we reduce their use **we significantly improve the quality of life** for those living in long-term care facilities.

Stay  
Tuned

for our  
**Winter Newsletter**  
and more on these  
initiatives!

We will **promote new technologies** for use by long-term care residents. **Because when those confined to facilities have access to person-centered technology for recreation and therapy, their world expands.**





## The Resident Empowerment Program



Nicole Howell met Verna Haas when they were both new Executive Directors and bonded over their shared desire to grow how their organizations serve seniors. Contra Costa Senior Legal Services (CCSL) provides free legal services to older adults, but they are limited in their ability to serve long-term care residents because they aren't authorized to visit facilities. Likewise Nicole saw a huge need for legal services in long-term care facilities, but such services were outside the scope and rights of Ombudsman Services. The REP (Resident Empowerment Program) was the result of partnering together and finding solutions to the significant service gaps for the aging. REP is a shining example of how collaboration can help organizations tackle big issues and achieve broader systems change.



From the start, Nicole and Verna were most concerned about two problems in long-term care facilities: 1) the growing number of residents who are too incapacitated to make decisions about their care and are missing the critical safeguards that allow appropriate family and loved ones to care for them, and 2) the equally concerning number of residents who have the ability

to create planning documents, such as an Advance Health Care Directive (AHCD) and Durable Power of Attorney, but do not have the resources or support to do so. Together, these groups make up approximately ten percent of long-term care residents.

The idea to collaborate and bring critical legal services to long-term care residents came to the attention of the John Muir Community Health Fund, and with their support and the strategic guidance of La Piana Consulting, a pilot program in East Contra Costa County was launched in January of 2018. Equipped with a set of screening questions developed by CCSLS, now when an Ombudsman visits, they can determine if a resident is in need of legal services. If so, the Ombudsman makes a referral CCSLS, who sends out a lawyer to meet with the resident and coordinate with agents, doctors, and family members to create the documents. To date, over 130 individuals at 30 facilities in central and east county have been screened and 14 have been referred to CCSLS for assistance in creating Advance Health Care Directives and Durable Powers of Attorney.

"We have been able to identify several very vulnerable residents who have many obstacles to creating an AHCD and are giving them the support they need to complete the process," says Verna. For example, several residents who were interested in creating an AHCD or Durable Power of Attorney could not because they did not have a current ID. While getting an ID is a relatively easy problem to fix with the right advocate on hand, obstacles like this are big barriers for residents. Nicole adds, "The ability to make important legal decisions for your future and express your desires for care at the end of life is a core right of LTC residents and we are pleased to provide this service to the residents we serve via this partnership."

## Resident Finds New Home by Sharing His Past

"Many long-term care residents lead solitary lives with no visitors except an Ombudsman," says Debra Hanschar, Lead Regional Ombudsman Supervisor for East Contra Costa County. She met such a resident when she visited a small, 6-bed assisted-living facility in Antioch two and half years ago. **Richard Eichendorf** is a man in his 90s who has never been married, with no friends or family to visit.

"He was on his own," she notes. "He shared a room with another, and was the only alert person in the facility, as the others suffered from pretty severe dementia. There was no one with whom he could have a conversation."

"As an Ombudsman, we want to learn as much as we can about each person, so we started talking and I discovered that Richard was doing well, but was concerned about his limited amount of money," she says. "His savings were becoming depleted and he was worried about what would happen to him once his funds were gone."

Debra told him about his rights and the SSI program, but he would have none of it, insisting that he had never owed money to anyone in his life and wasn't about to start now. He was steadfast in honoring his facility agreement and hoped there was another option.

Upon further conversation, Debra learned that Richard was once an active Freemason, but had lost touch over the years. She knew that the Masonic Order operates care facilities and offers support to their members, so she reached out to a local Lodge and reconnected him with the Order. They came back with the news that, yes, he was eligible for financial assistance and could be admitted to a Masonic Home once he ran out of money.

Some months ticked by and he was getting anxious while his funds dwindled. Just in time, he learned that a space had opened up for him and that he would be moving to a 300-bed continuing-care facility in Union City where he would have his own studio apartment.

Lodge members picked him up in a van to give him a tour, which was the longest drive he'd had in years. According to Debra, most residents are confined to their facility and don't have the opportunity to get out into the world. After his visit, Richard remarked that the drive was quite an experience and that "he couldn't believe the freeways!"

In recent visits, she has helped Richard plan for his move, talked about the furniture he will need, and advised him of the questions he should ask in his new facility. "Then he asked me if I would still be his Ombudsman. It dawned on both of us that he was moving to another county and would be working with a new Ombudsman and we would no longer be in touch." There is a silence as she pauses. "It's bittersweet for me. I will miss him so much because I enjoy him. But I know he's going to a new place where he will be well taken care of. I am so grateful that I was able to bring back memories and connections and solve his problems to his satisfaction that led to this happy, brand new opportunity."





## Message from Emily De Falla

Board President

Ombudsman Services has experienced tremendous growth over the past four years. We've added new programs, moved our headquarters to a new city, and expanded our services into a new county. We've also developed significant new funding sources and relationships, and entered into transformative partnerships with like-minded organizations. Our education and outreach efforts to peers and providers has elevated our presence in the community, and we are becoming known as an agent of change.

Now, as we embark on the 18-19 fiscal year, we are intentionally turning our energy and focus inward. We revisited our mission and vision and are working on expanding our board and creating a committee structure that can more effectively support Nicole's bold vision for the organization. We will work on developing an even more diverse funding structure, and we will fortify the organization's infrastructure.

I'm enjoying our new emphasis so far, and look forward to solidifying our strengths as an organization which will set us up for our next phase of growth. I continue to be inspired by Nicole's leadership, staff's dedication, and the tireless efforts of our volunteers. As a board we are more focused than ever and united in our commitment to the mission. Together, we can change the perception of aging as we work towards a society that honors older adults and celebrates their many contributions, past and present.

Thank you for sharing our commitment to empowered aging and for partnering with us this year.

### 2016-17 Board of Directors

Emily De Falla, *President*  
Michael S. Ball, *Secretary/Treasurer*

Susan Frederick  
Michelle Hasan  
Janelle Williams

“Together, we can change the perception of aging as we work towards a society that honors older adults and celebrates their many contributions, past and present.”

## A Perfect Fit for OSCCS

As one of the primary caregivers for both of her parents who are in their 80s, **Michelle Hasan** has a personal understanding of seniors and the energy it takes to manage their financial, medical, and emotional needs. Born and raised in the Bay Area, Michelle is currently Director of Leased Housing at the Oakland Housing Authority and came to the Board with policy development skills, federal and state funding experience, and a deep understanding of the budget process. Her B.S. in Human Development, Adult Studies and Gerontology, as well as her work in housing seniors, makes her a perfect fit for OSCCS.

Two years ago as she was considering how she could have a more direct impact on improving the quality of life for seniors, she discovered the Ombudsman program. She set up a meeting with Nicole Howell to learn more about the volunteer training and becoming a volunteer. “As we talked, I mentioned my background in policy development and Nicole asked me if I would be willing to shift my focus and consider being on the Board,” explains Michelle. After learning even more about the organization and meeting other Board members, Michelle said yes.

Michelle says that she has seen wonderful growth in the organization in her tenure so far. “It’s all very positive,” she notes. “From improving the financial stability and developing strategic fundraising plans to increasing staff and the move into Solano County, this shows that we are both solid and grounded as well as willing to look forward and change and evolve.”

Last year Michelle took part in the rebranding process and Board retreat where they developed a new mission statement. “I learned a lot about myself!” she laughs. “The Board is very dynamic with both thoughtful

### Board Spotlight



risk assessors and those who process challenges as they move forward. I am deeply impressed with our Executive Director and Board Chair—they are in sync with one another and know how to make things happen.”

One of those things is the innovative Healthcare Careers Pathway (HCP) Initiative for low-income community members to become Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA). “When people think about a skilled- or long-term resident facility, they tend to think mainly about the resident,” Michelle remarks. “But it’s about more than that—it’s also about who’s providing the care and what support they are getting. We know that the primary one-on-one contact that seniors have is with CNA. The better a CNA is trained and supported, the better his or her life will be, which circles back to better care for facility residents.” Michelle is energized by Ombudsman Services innovative programs and imagines programs like this will be a model for state and national programs to follow.

Michelle states that the OSCCS board is committed to representing the entire Contra Costa and Solano community and plans to further reflect that diversity through ongoing outreach. “As a woman of color, this is a real positive experience for me,” she says. “Being on the Board fulfills a personal interest, but I have also learned so much about becoming a better voice for seniors, finding places in my work where I can apply these skills. I feel very honored to serve.”



# Special Thanks

Recognizing gifts made to Ombudsman Services of Contra Costa and Solano between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018.

## Individuals and Businesses

### \$10,000+

Beswick Estate

### \$1,000–\$9,999

Mike & Karen Ball  
Emily De Falla  
Celia Mason

### \$500–\$999

Avida Home Care  
Susan Frederick  
Hillendale Home Care  
Arthur B. O’Connor  
Peter O’Keefe  
Sherri Perkins  
Visiting Angels  
Vitas Hospice  
Grala Warren

### \$250–\$499

Sheila Duffy  
Janelle Green  
Interim Assisted Care of East Bay  
Shirley Krohn  
Karen Yapp

### Up to \$249

Richard & Barbara Bain  
Nick Baker  
Lynn Ballou  
Carole Brekke  
Flora R. Burnham  
Sue Cooper-Fordon  
Kate De Martini  
Carolyn Dushkin  
Rhonda Edwards  
Maggie Gerk  
Eleanor Goldstein-Erickson  
Linda Groobin  
Karen Lamiero  
Lodestar  
John Maitland  
Bonnie McDonald  
Judy Miller  
Irene Moore  
Matthew Mullins  
Nellie Raun-Linde  
Doris Rosen  
Russo, Deborah  
Peter Sardelich  
Johanna M. Scherrer  
Cliff Taylor  
Karen Thompson  
Priscilla Tudor  
Shoshana Ziblatt

## Foundations

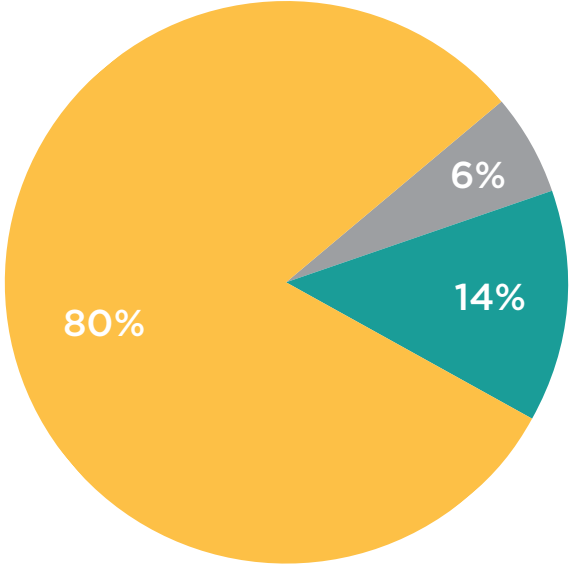
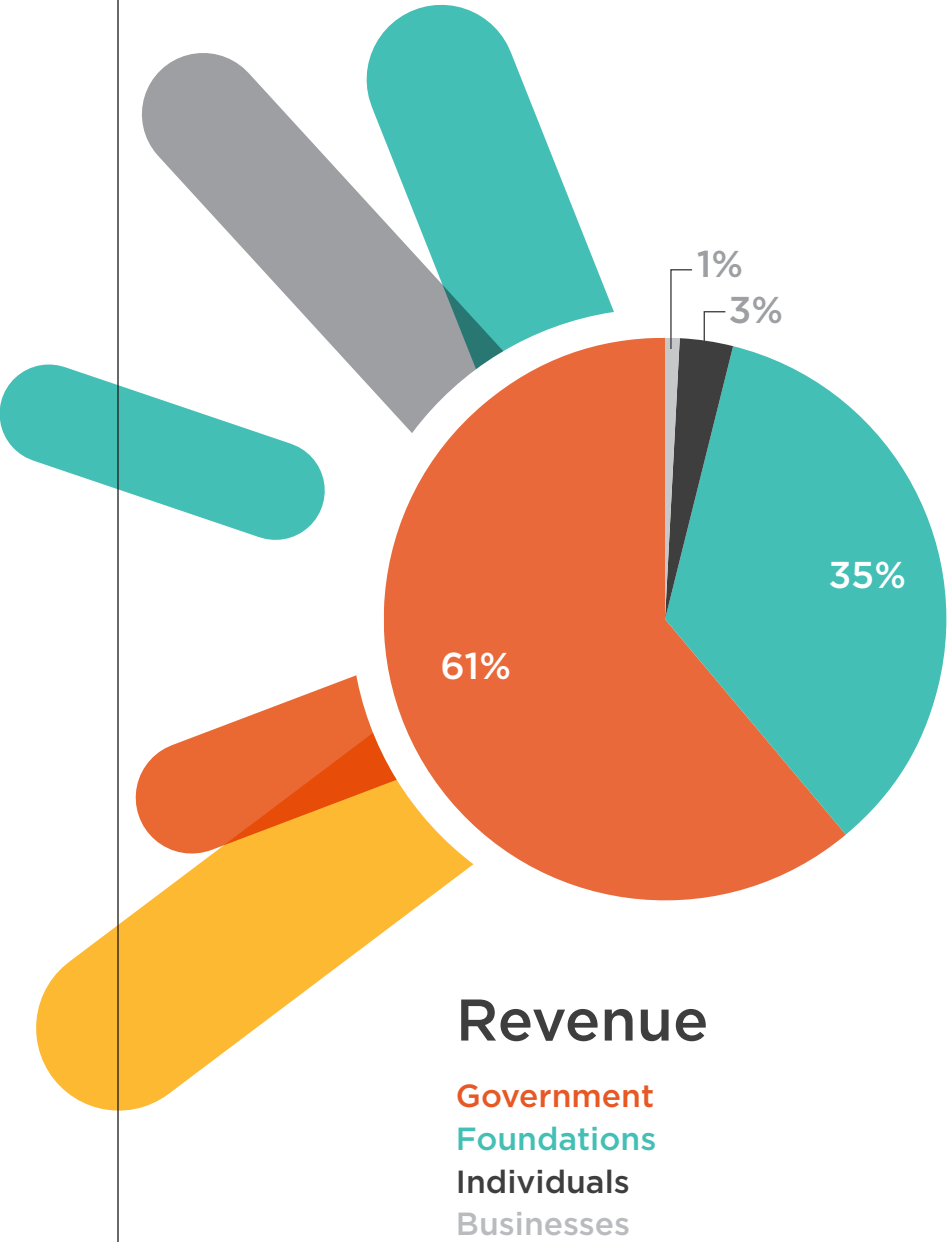
Community Health Fund, John Muir Health  
Contra Costa County Community Awareness and Emergency Response (CAER Group, Inc.)  
Lafayette Community Foundation  
Dean and Margaret Leshar Foundation  
Thomas J. Long Foundation  
Thomas & Vera Long Foundation  
May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust

## Government Supporters

Area Agency on Aging Napa Solano  
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

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this listing. Please contact us if we have made any errors or omissions.

# 2017–2018 Financials



## Expense

Program  
Management/Administrative  
Development/Fundraising

# Mother's Day Flowers

Amid a scattering of flowers, ferns, and fanciful bows, a team of 10 created 150 bouquets to brighten the lives of hundreds of residents for Mother's Day. On May 11, 2018, Ombudsman Regional Supervisor Jay Carter and Office Manager Katy Wijaya, hand delivered bouquets of fresh flowers to 60 residents at Willow Pass Healthcare in Concord, and Ombudsman Regional Supervisor Cara Sperry and Ombudsman Support Specialist Christina Farnham delivered the same to 70 residents at Shields-Richmond Nursing Center.

Residents were deeply touched and very grateful as our small team of staff and volunteers spread joy throughout the facilities. "One resident who had lost the ability to speak, accepted her bouquet, bowed her head and cried," said Katy. "This small act meant so much to these residents, many of whom do not have any family or friends to visit."

A special thanks to our sponsors who covered the cost of all 150 bouquets, and to our generous donors whose gifts in honor of this initiative directly supported our core services. This is a win-win initiative! We bring joy to long-term residents on what is often a lonely day, and we generate critical support for Ombudsman Services.

Thank you to our 2018 donors and sponsors.



For 2019, we hope to reach even more residents *with your help*. Interested in being a lead sponsor or volunteering? Please contact Katy Wijaya at [katywijaya@ccombudsman.org](mailto:katywijaya@ccombudsman.org) or 925.685.2070.

All donors to this initiative are listed on page 12.



Mariah Ward and Johanna Seminario from ResCare, Jay Carter from OSCCS, and Allison Larking from Visiting Angels deliver flowers.

“This small act meant so much to these residents, many of whom do not have any family or friends to visit.”

# 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, apply online or **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.ccsombudsman.org](http://www.ccsombudsman.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](mailto:katywijaya@ccombudsman.org). Also, follow us on Facebook.



“The innovative support Ombudsman Services provides to many of our most vulnerable neighbors—residents of long-term care facilities—is having a dramatic and positive impact on their quality of care, allowing them to remain living in our community with dignity.”

—Lillian Roselin, Executive Director  
John Muir Community Health Fund