**Sample Letter to the Editor**

Dear Editor:

October is National Long-Term Care Residents’ Rights Month, a time to acknowledge the contributions and sacrifices many long-term care (LTC) residents have made to better our community and to call attention to the rights of residents in long-term care facilities.

Being a part of a community is essential to our well-being. Throughout the pandemic, residents of long-term care facilities were disconnected from the resident and staff communities within their facilities when activities and group dining were limited. Residents were disconnected from the broader local community when visitation was restricted and many residents were unable to leave their facilities to participate in outside activities. This year's Residents’ Rights Month theme - **Inspiring Unity within Our Community** - emphasizes the importance of fostering meaningful community within the facility and encouraging residents’ connection to their local community.

Residents’ Rights Month is an opportunity to focus on and celebrate awareness of dignity, respect and the rights of each resident. The federal Nursing Home Reform Law guarantees residents’ rights and places a strong emphasis on individual dignity, choice, and self-determination. The law also requires nursing homes to “promote and protect the rights of each resident”. Residents’ Rights Month is a time to raise awareness of these rights and celebrate residents.

Celebrate and acknowledge these rights by participating in Residents’ Rights Month events and calling on your elected officials, community members and local facilities to show their support by attending or organizing activities.

**<Insert details of your local Residents’ Rights Month event - be sure to note any proclamations from elected officials.>**

During Residents’ Rights Month, we recognize our local long-term care ombudsman program staff and volunteers, who work daily to promote residents’ rights, assist residents with complaints and provide information to those who need to find a long-term care facility. In this area, the ombudsman program serves **<Insert details about the size of the region, the number of facilities, and how to contact the ombudsman>.**

Our community is also served by a citizen advocacy group **<Insert name and contact information>** that advocates for improved quality of care and quality of life for those who live in long-term care facilities.

As **<Insert name of locality>** celebrates Residents’ Rights, I encourage community members to connect with those they know who live in long-term care facilities, participate in Residents’ Rights Month events, or inquire about becoming a volunteer long-term care ombudsman. Your assistance and attention help to ensure that the voices of long-term care residents do not go unheard and demonstrates to residents that they have not been forgotten.