



Tips for Building Community Involvement in LTC Facilities

Special activities initiated during Residents' Rights Month stimulate community interaction with nursing home residents and increase knowledge about local nursing homes.

Goals for activities might include:

- ◆ Increasing community participation in nursing homes.
- ◆ Increasing resident access to and participation in community life.
- ◆ Focusing attention on residents' rights.
- ◆ Challenging stereotypes about the elderly and nursing home residents.
- ◆ Recognizing residents' current and past achievements.

In planning events, your group will want to involve nursing home residents as active participants. Invite residents from local facilities to serve on your planning committee and encourage resident councils and/or individual residents to plan activities in their homes or other popular community meeting places.

Activities Involving the Community in Nursing Homes

- ◆ Have your local nursing home(s) sponsor an **open house**. Invite the community into the home and show what life is like in a nursing home. Have the residents be the hosts and tour guides. Set up displays throughout the home showing different resident activities.
- ◆ **Sponsor an educational program** at a local nursing home for the community to participate in. This program could include topics such as nursing home life, residents' rights or resident councils.

Activities Involving the Nursing Home Residents in the Community

- ◆ **Develop a speaker series**, which includes residents. Residents can talk to different groups about living in a nursing home, resident councils, residents' rights, involvement in care planning sessions, etc.
- ◆ **Organize a poster and crafts fair** and arrange for exhibit sites in the community. Residents' posters can send a message about rights in nursing homes.
- ◆ **Connect with local political leaders and personalities**. Invite state or city officials to meet with groups of residents in public meetings or to attend events in the homes.

Community Education Activities

- ◆ **Provide information** about nursing homes, residents and residents' rights to congregational bulletins and encourage clergy to acknowledge residents in sermons.
- ◆ **Add residents' rights information** to your facility's webpage.
- ◆ **Plan an awards ceremony**. Give awards to residents, staff, community leaders or active community members who have in some way improved somebody's life in a nursing home by

promoting or protecting residents' rights. Have the residents determine what awards should be presented. They should also nominate the people for the awards and select the winners.

Quality Care Activities

- ◆ **Invite local and/or state leaders** or the U.S. Congressional Representative from your district to make a presentation to concerned citizens. Have them make a formal or informal presentation on what they are doing locally, statewide, or nationwide to improve the quality of life for nursing home residents and to protect their rights. Contact local and state leaders and find out who is involved with elderly issues.
- ◆ **Set up a Nursing Home Community Council** comprised of community residents to visit facilities and develop relationships, observe daily life and work with ombudsmen.

Activities Within the Nursing Home

- ◆ **Pass out a survey** to residents. The survey should deal with residents' rights and how the facility is doing in meeting residents' rights. Have staff or volunteers assist those who need help completing the form. Release results to staff and residents, along with a remedy to correct for any rights that have fallen by the wayside.
- ◆ **Create a Residents' Rights Appreciation Bulletin Board.** Put the bulletin board in an easily accessible location and encourage residents to post notes thanking staff members, volunteers, family and others who have helped to promote residents' rights within the facility. After Residents' Rights Month is over, the notes can be Xeroxed and put together to create an appreciation booklet for staff.

Activity Highlight
Residents' Rights Announcement

Every morning, announce a different residents' right. A different right can also be announced before each activity or during evening announcements. *Sample:* Good Morning to our residents, visitors and staff! Today is (day, month, and year). We are celebrating National Residents' Rights Month. The right for this morning will be (insert a Residents' Right here). So, let's honor this residents' right, and everyone have a wonderful day!