



The Beacon

A Newsletter for Long-Term Care Residents

July 2022

Social Isolation Project Distributes Cuddly Companions



The LTCO Social Isolation Project (SIP) staff have been donating electronic pets to long-term care facilities in NJ. These electronic pets help alleviate issues including social isolation, loneliness & cognitive decline. The response has been incredible! A long-term care resident stated, "I always had a cat growing up. This is so sweet!"

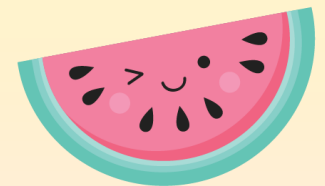
"The electronic pets represent life's important memories. These emotional experiences bring forth a feeling reminiscent of how these residents felt in the moment of loving their real life pet. That tie of companionship, unconditional love and fun is what this experience is all about," said Jennifer McMahon, Chief of Advocacy Services for the LTCO.



Members of the SIP team work with facility staff to suggest creative ways residents can socialize and communicate, and to resolve any other problems residents face. They remind residents and staff the importance of residents' rights including the right to meaningful activities. For more information about the Social Isolation Project or if your community could benefit from having some of these joyous creatures donated, please contact the LTCO Social Isolation Project staff at 877-582-6995 or email Jennifer.Sills@ltco.nj.gov.



SUMMER WORD SCRAMBLE



- 1. ATHE _____
- 4. OHT _____
- 7. LYUJ _____
- 10. OLOP _____

- 2. NSU _____
- 5. WMIS _____
- 8. IPNCIC _____
- 11. NFU _____

- 3. EIC AMREC _____
- 6. RSOFEWL _____
- 9. AHEBC _____
- 12. SRAGS _____

LTCO Advocates for ASL Access

Juan, a 60 year old resident of a large NJ nursing home for many years, was not getting the care or respect he deserved. Juan is deaf but lived in a facility with no staff or residents who spoke his language (American Sign Language or ASL), and he felt isolated, lonely, and bored. Jeff Findlay, a LTCO advocate who is fluent in ASL, met Juan and started to speak with him about what he wanted. Juan desired friends who could understand him and for staff to communicate with him in a way he could understand. He also wanted to live closer to NYC where he is from and wanted to be able to go outside and smoke.



Jeff worked with Juan for weeks to find a new facility to match Juan's preferences, and they did – a facility closer to New York, with a resident Juan's age who also speaks ASL, with outdoor access, and staff who knew some ASL or who were willing to learn it.

But LTCO advocacy for Juan didn't stop there. Prior to Juan's move, the facility where he was living began to put up barriers. They questioned his capacity to make decisions and delayed processes to make the transition happen. Jeff and other LTCO advocates raised the alarm and pushed to make the facility transfer him.

When Jeff visited Juan a week later in the new nursing home, Jeff helped facilitate a conversation with the Assistant Director of Nursing to write Juan's specific preferences into his plan of care. The social work director and other staff are taking ASL classes to improve their ability to speak with Juan. Jeff asked the Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DDHH) to follow Juan in his new home to make sure he has communication devices he needs and to work with staff to better serve him. When Jeff left the facility that day, Juan was attending a birthday party, enjoying cupcakes, and conversing with his new friend (the other deaf resident who speaks ASL).

**I can now communicate
with someone.**

Juan

Of this journey, Juan says "I have a nice room and newer clothes, I have new friends, one is deaf so I can now communicate with someone. I do not miss where I was. I can watch karate movies here which I love and I can go outside. I couldn't do that before."

This is just one example of advocacy that LTCO does every day. If you are not happy with the care that you are getting, please call our office and we will do everything we can to assist you.

Call 1-877-582-6995 or email ombudsman@ltco.nj.gov.

New Jersey Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman

Laurie Facciarossa Brewer, LTC Ombudsman

www.NJ.GOV/LTCO

FOLLOW US

