

Retired Nurse Brings Insights to Better Living in Nursing Homes

Liana Kraenzlin, a registered nurse who retired young due to health reasons, lived in nursing homes for about three years during and after her recovery from a broken leg. She spent most of that time in a wonderful nursing home. Other places that she lived, she said, were... not so great.

Those experiences gave Liana great insights about nursing home care. She says they also give her an inroad to connecting with the nursing home residents she now supports as a Certified Volunteer Advocate (CVA) with the New Jersey Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman.

CVAs fill a crucial role for the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO), proactively visiting nursing homes to help solve problems for residents and ensure they are treated with dignity and respect. When serious issues such as abuse, neglect or exploitation are identified, a full-time Investigator/Advocate from the LTCO may be assigned to investigate and resolve them.

[Becoming a CVA](#) is a straightforward process. Applicants receive 36 hours of in-depth, virtual and in-person training and take a certification exam. Once certified, applicants shadow experienced CVAs until they are ready for solo assignments visiting nursing homes near where they live. Each CVA receives ongoing guidance and support from a Regional Coordinator.

Liana learned about the CVA program on Facebook and knew it would be a perfect fit for her. For the past two years, Liana has been advocating for the residents of a Parsippany nursing home.

Liana visits the nursing home for about an hour at a time. She makes a conscious effort to visit with residents who are not mobile and spend most of their time in bed. Sharing her own experiences as a nursing home resident helps to build trust, Liana said.

“Some of the most common issues I’ve run across involve nursing care and extended time waiting to have their call bells answered,” Liana said. “Food quality and temperature are always hot button topics.”

Other ongoing concerns include supply shortages and residents being bullied by other residents. One recent crisis arose after the nursing home contracted with a third party to provide laundry services, which included washing residents’ clothing and important items related to their care, such as slings required to help individuals in and out of bed using a Hoyer lift.

The laundry company lost the residents’ Hoyer slings. Residents let Liana know about the situation, and she worked with the nursing home staff and administrators to ensure they replaced the vitally needed slings. Liana said it took more than a month to correct the problem.

“Despite taking so long to resolve,” Liana said, “this outcome is one that gave me a real sense of satisfaction and pride in a job well done.”

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