

## THREE WAYS TO SUPPORT RESIDENTS OF LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES THIS MONTH

by Trevor Boeding, Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program Director, LifePath



October is National Long-Term Care Residents' Rights Month, a time to acknowledge the contributions and sacrifices many long-term care residents have made to better our community and to call attention to the rights of people living in nursing and rest homes. This year's theme, "Speak Up: Know Your Rights and How to Use Them," was selected to emphasize the importance of residents being informed about their rights, being engaged partners in achieving quality care and quality of life, and feeling confident in speaking up about what is important to them.

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.

During Residents' Rights Month, we also recognize our local Long-Term Care Ombudsman volunteers, who work daily to promote residents'



One way to help support residents of local rest homes and nursing homes is to volunteer with the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program at LifePath. Shown here, Long-Term Care Ombudsman Volunteer Linda Ackerman visits with Richard Boyle, a resident of New England Health Center, a nursing facility in Sunderland.

rights, assist residents with complaints, and provide information to those who need to find a long-term care facility. The Ombudsman Program at LifePath serves over 600 residents living in the six nursing homes and two rest homes located in Franklin County and the North Quabbin region.

As LifePath celebrates residents' rights, I encourage community members to:

1. Visit those they know in a long-term care facility
2. Volunteer in a facility
3. Inquire about becoming a volunteer long-term care ombudsman.

Your assistance and attention helps to ensure that the voices of long-term care residents do not go unheard and demonstrates to residents that they have not been forgotten.

For more information about residents' rights and the services of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, or to learn about opportunities to become an Ombudsman volunteer, please contact Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program Director Trevor Boeding at 413-773-5555, 978-544-2259, 800-732-4636 or [tboeding@lifepathma.org](mailto:tboeding@lifepathma.org). Your time and energy can make a big difference in the lives of residents!

## OCTOBER IS NATIONAL BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Breast cancer, a disease in which malignant (cancer) cells form in the tissues of the breast, is the second most common cancer in women, after skin cancer.

### What are the risk factors for breast cancer?

The following are risk factors for breast cancer:

- Older age
- A personal history of breast cancer or benign (non-cancer) breast disease
- Inherited risk of breast cancer
- Dense breasts
- Exposure of breast tissue to estrogen made in the body
- Taking hormone therapy for symptoms of menopause
- Radiation therapy to the breast or chest
- Obesity
- Drinking alcohol

Whenever a woman notices any unusual changes in her breasts, she should contact her healthcare provider to schedule an exam.

### What is the best method of screening for breast cancer?

Regular high-quality screening mammograms and clinical breast exams are the most sensitive ways to screen for breast cancer.

A mammogram is an x-ray picture of the breast. A screening mammogram can be used to check for

breast cancer in women who have no signs or symptoms of the disease. This type of mammogram usually involves two or more x-ray pictures, or images, of each breast. The x-ray images often make it possible to detect tumors that cannot be felt. Screening mammograms can also find microcalcifications (tiny deposits of calcium) that sometimes indicate the presence of breast cancer.

Diagnostic mammograms can be used to check for breast cancer after a lump or other sign or symptom of the disease has been found. Besides a lump, signs of breast cancer can include breast pain, thickening of the skin of the breast, nipple discharge, or a change in breast size or shape; however, these signs may also be signs of benign conditions. A diagnostic mammogram can also be used to evaluate changes found during a screening mammogram or to view breast tissue when it is difficult to obtain a screening mammogram because of special circumstances, such as the presence of breast implants.

Information from this article was adapted from the National Cancer Institute website at [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov).

**"Whenever a woman notices any unusual changes in her breasts, she should contact her healthcare provider to schedule an exam."**



"You learn some great history and stories that you'd never have known without meeting these people. They're all unique and special in their own way."

—Alan Coutinho, Volunteer Meals on Wheels Driver

**Collective Home Care Inc.**  
 Providing Compassionate and Professional Home Health Care Services in Franklin and Hampshire Counties.  
**413-397-9933**  
 Locally Owned and Operated since 1999

**IN GOOD COMPANY**  
 A SKILLED ELDER COMPANION SERVICE  
 Offering focused attention, engaging activities, outings, and respite for caregivers.

**Sita Lang**  
 Hospice trained/  
 CPR certified

[sitalang@ingoodcompanynow.com](mailto:sitalang@ingoodcompanynow.com)  
[www.ingoodcompanynow.com](http://www.ingoodcompanynow.com)  
**413-834-7569**

Find your story.  
 Volunteer with LifePath.

413.773.5555 | 978.544.2259 | 800.732.4636  
[Info@LifePathMA.org](mailto:Info@LifePathMA.org) | [LifePathMA.org](http://LifePathMA.org)

**LifePath** formerly Franklin County Home Care Corporation  
 options for independence

**FALL INTO YOUR OLD FAVORITES**  
 with  
**WIZZ RADIO**  
 AM 1520  
 Listen 24/7 @ [wizzradio.com](http://wizzradio.com)  
 & Via the TuneIn App



## SENIORGRAM: SENDING A MESSAGE ON SENIOR ISSUES

*When you need a little extra support, our new Elder Mental Health Outreach Team is here*

By Barbara Bodzin, Executive Director, LifePath

*Emily, who is 82, often feels lonely and isolated. Many of her friends have died. Although her family regularly calls, they live out of the area and aren't able to visit often.*

*Miguel is worried that he is going to lose the house he has lived in for the last 50 years. The repairs are too much, and the bills are piling up. He's becoming depressed as the worry weighs on him. He has a hard time getting out of bed in the morning.*

*Ivan is returning to his home after a brief stay in the hospital. He's struggled with substance use in the past but is committed to staying sober for his grandchildren. He was participating in groups at the hospital and is looking for support in the community.*

Fortunately there are resources to help! The Elder Mental Health Outreach Team (EMHOT), a program coordinated by LifePath, serves elders ages 60 and older, whose problems are impacting their emotional well-being. Outreach staff meet with elders in their homes

or another location of their choice to discuss their concerns and to think through options, come up with solutions, and identify resources to help. The program is free for all elders living in Franklin County, Athol, Petersham, Phillipston, and Royalston.

Sometimes one or two visits may be needed. Other times, a team member may work with an individual for longer periods of time or help arrange for ongoing community supports. In addition to



*Sometimes, life situations are complex and hard to manage on our own. For people over 60 like Emily who may be experiencing painful feelings loneliness and isolation, or the challenges of depression, addiction, and other concerns affecting their emotional well-being, a new program at LifePath offers resources to help.*

addressing emotional well-being, the team may help the individual access other services such as housing, fuel assistance, money management, or other programs to assist with day-to-day needs. Support groups are being scheduled throughout the region on such topics as Aging with Vim and Vigor, Enhancing Social Connections, Grief and Loss, and Caring for the Caregiver.

To create enhanced community impact, LifePath is convening an extended community team to increase awareness of mental health issues and available resources. The goal is to create a coordinated community response integrated with other initiatives and efforts. The team includes representation from mental health providers, peer support organizations, emergency response, faith communities, councils on aging, and others working to address behavioral health needs and well-being. The first community team meeting took place in September at LifePath. For more information about attending

a quarterly meeting, contact Diane Robie, [drobie@lifepathma.org](mailto:drobie@lifepathma.org)

The program is one of five pilot projects funded across the Commonwealth through the Massachusetts Council on Aging in collaboration with the Department of Mental Health and the Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

To find out more or to make a referral, call LifePath at 413-773-5555 or 978-544-2259 or email us at [info@lifepathma.org](mailto:info@lifepathma.org).

## VILLAGE NEIGHBORS TO HOLD GRAND OPENING PARTY ON OCTOBER 14

A Grand Opening Party for Village Neighbors will take place on Sunday, October 14, 2018, from 4 to 8 p.m., at the Shutesbury Athletic Club, 282 Wendell Rd. The evening will include dinner, raffles, and oldies music, and is free to residents of Shutesbury, Leverett, Wendell, and New Salem.

RSVP by Monday, October 8, to [prvillage18@gmail.com](mailto:prvillage18@gmail.com) or 413-345-6894 with the number of people in your party who will be attending.

Village Neighbors is a volunteer non-profit community of neighbors empowering aging adults to lead independent and engaged lives at home and in their communities, serving elders in Shutesbury, Wendell, Leverett, and New Salem. Village Neighbors welcomes new friends to become helpful volunteers, to be members, as well as to join one of the supportive committees.

Volunteers will provide assistance to members with occasional household tasks, yard work, or minor home repair, as well as technical

**“Village Neighbors is a volunteer non-profit community of neighbors empowering aging adults to lead independent and engaged lives at home and in their communities, serving elders in Shutesbury, Wendell, Leverett, and New Salem.”**

support for electronic devices and simple computer problems. They will also provide transportation to various appointments, visits with friends, social and cultural events, or grocery or other shopping trips. Additionally, Village Neighbors will provide referrals to vendors such as landscapers, house cleaners, repair persons or home health providers. A simple phone call to a central number will allow members to request a service. Subsidized and waived membership will be available where there is a need.

Village Neighbors belongs to the national Village to Village Network and works closely with the nonprofit social services agency, LifePath, in Greenfield and local councils on aging.

For additional information, call 413-345-6894, email [generalinformation@villageneighbors.org](mailto:generalinformation@villageneighbors.org) or visit [www.villageneighbors.org](http://www.villageneighbors.org).