

## **Proclamation by President Obama on National Volunteer Week 2011**

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/04/07/presidential-proclamation-national-volunteer-week>

### **A Message from Assistant Secretary for Aging, Kathy Greenlee**

During National Volunteer Week 2011 (April 10-16), we at AoA acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of the volunteers who serve older Americans all across this nation. Volunteers have always been the backbone of programs administered under the Older Americans Act.

From its beginning the Administration on Aging (AoA) and its state and local networks have counted on volunteer support. Each year about ten million older people use Older Americans Act services, whose delivery largely depends upon the efforts of half a million volunteers.

This year we are highlighting the work of one group of extraordinary and committed volunteers – the more than 11,000 volunteers who serve long-term care residents through their state's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.

More than three-fourths of states use volunteers to support the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, ensuring the rights, safety, and well-being of residents of nursing facilities, assisted living communities, board and care homes and similar facilities. Last year, more than 8,800 of these volunteers were trained and certified as long-term care ombudsmen, resolving complaints with and on behalf of residents.

Volunteer ombudsmen visit and listen to residents' concerns as well as problem-solve. Many residents of long-term care facilities sometimes have little or no contact with the outside world and some have few visitors. An ombudsman volunteer who visits regularly can make a huge difference in the quality of life of a resident.

If you are interested in serving as an ombudsman volunteer, you can contact the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program in your state for more information about volunteer opportunities and qualifications. A good way to locate contact information is through the National Ombudsman Resource Center at <http://www.ltombudsman.org>.

In addition to the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, volunteers help the aging network in many other ways, including: assisting at group meals sites and delivering meals to home-bound elders; escorting and transporting frail older persons to health care services and grocery shopping; weatherizing the homes of low-income and frail older persons; counseling older persons in a variety of areas including health promotion, nutrition, legal and financial concerns; detecting and preventing health care fraud; and helping during disasters. For more information about the wide variety of rewarding volunteering opportunities to benefit older Americans, check out the Administration on Aging Civic Engagement section at

[http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA\\_Programs/Special\\_Projects/Civic\\_Engagement/index.aspx#resources](http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA_Programs/Special_Projects/Civic_Engagement/index.aspx#resources) .

A sincere thank you from me and all of us at the Administration on Aging to each one of you who contribute your time, experience, expertise and compassion to benefit the lives of older Americans.

Kathy Greenlee