

Volun-PEER Newsletter

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A Publication of the Schuylkill County Ombudsman Program: Dedicated to PEERs and Volunteers

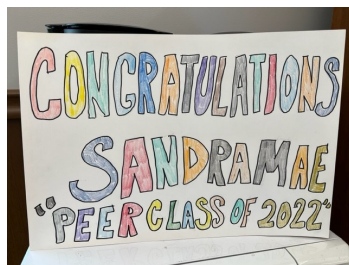
Congratulations, Sandra Mae!

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With the full support of her fellow residents and PEERs, Sandra Mae Nagle graduated from PEER training on December 13 at Green Valley Rehab and Nursing Center.

Her persistence certainly paid off, since Sandra Mae has had to



wait for training all through the pandemic.

In fact, she was still living at her home in the Pitman Valley when she first requested the training. When the nursing home moved to the Pottsville area, we thought the training was inevitable. Unfortunately, the pandemic hit and trainings were put on hold.

Thankfully, we were able to make it happen for Sandra. She was accompanied by fellow PEERs Sue Fry and Ruth Ann Reed, who attended as a "refresher" to their prior training.



A graduation celebration was held to which residents and staff were invited to share in cake and fellowship. Residents even made a special sign to acknowledge Sandra Mae's accomplishment! Congratulations and best wishes to our newest PEER!

Did you know?

- * The lowest recorded temperature was negative 128.6 degrees in Antarctica!
- * Reindeer can see in the dark!
- * Squirrels collect mushrooms for the winter and make their own mushroom jerky!



Training Calendar

Volunteers are invited and encouraged to participate in on-line training modules offered by the PA Department of Aging, Consumer Voice, Learning Management System (LMS), and a host of other options.

All certified Ombudsmen Staff and Volunteers are required to log 18 hours of continuing education for each federal fiscal year (Oct. 1 through Sept. 30).

A variety of modules are offered through the year

including participation in Virtual Family Council.

PEER Meetings will resume when we are able to gather safely.

Contact Eileen for further information or to register for training opportunities.

Chocolate Chip Snowball Cookies

An easy, delicious, melt-in-your-mouth cookie that is a favorite in my house!

Ingredients:

1½ cups (3 sticks) unsalted butter, softened

¾ cup 10x sugar 1 tablespoon vanilla extract

¾ teaspoon salt 3 cups all-purpose flour

2 cups mini chocolate chips

Additional 10x sugar (for dusting)

Directions:

Preheat oven to 375 F and line a cookie sheet with parchment paper.

Place butter in the bowl of a stand mixer (or you can use a large bowl and an electric mixer) and beat until creamy.

Add powdered sugar, vanilla extract, and salt, and beat again (start on low speed and then increase to high) until the mixture is creamy and well-combined.

Gradually add all-purpose flour until ingredients are well incorporated (be sure to scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl!).

Add mini chocolate chips and use a spatula or your mixer on low speed to stir them into your cookie dough (dough will be stiff).

Scoop cookie dough by approximately 1

tablespoon and roll between your hands to form a smooth ball. Transfer to prepared baking sheet and place cookie dough balls at least 1" apart.

Bake on 375 F for 10-12 minutes or until bottom edges are just beginning to turn light golden brown.

Remove from oven and cool slightly. Sprinkle/sift powdered sugar over cookies while they are still warm. If cookies are too warm, sprinkle a second coating of powdered sugar.



Intergenerational University Connections

An incredible opportunity has presented itself to our PEERs and long-term care consumers.

The Ombudsman Program is partnering with the PA Department of Aging and several State Universities to make connections with older adults.

The University students will “meet” by phone or virtually through the Spring semester for approximately 10

weeks.

The students will learn about the residents’ lives, experiences, interests, and knowledge.



They will be supervised by professors, will be bound by a code of conduct, and speak with the residents once a week for 10 weeks.

In Schuylkill County, PEER Donald Mates will participate and we are working to recruit several other residents who would be interested in joining this worthwhile endeavor.

We can’t wait to hear the results!

Farewell to Colleen Maurer

Colleen Maurer, a PEER living at Ridgeview Rehab and Nursing Center, passed away November, 15, 2022.

Colleen originally trained at Broad Mountain Health and Rehab Center and was able to transition back into the community following her time there.

We met again when she came to live at Ridgeview, where she participated in Resident Council and was an active

advocate for the residents of her new home.

Colleen carried her training with her from home to home and shared her knowledge with both staff and residents.

She greeted everyone with a welcoming smile. We are thankful for her time with us and offer condolences to her family, friends, and residents of Ridgeview and Broad Mountain.



Welcome, New Volunteers

Our program is always in need of individuals willing and able to visit our long-term care consumers. After a rigorous ad campaign, we are happy to welcome the following people to our program.

Elaine Bolkovich has been patiently training throughout the pandemic and is set to become Certified in early 2023. As a retired nurse, Elaine brings a great amount of medical knowledge, and as a seasoned volunteer with other programs, also brings a caring spirit to the Ombudsman office.

Fredericka Molina says she has worked around the elderly her entire life and is anxious to help them any way she can. She ran a Food Pantry in the Berks County area. She began training in December, 2022.

Melissa McAndrew was a CNA for 16 years and says she has a passion for assisting the elderly and served as a



conduit between residents and nurses. She also began training in December, 2022.

Sue Brown is a semi-retired RN who worked in a local long-term care facility. She begins training in early 2023.

We wish all of you the best as you work toward Certification and we welcome you to our program.

Tips for Staying Warm

The website "Graying with Grace" tells us feeling cold is a common complaint of the elderly and there are lots of ways to keep our older Pennsylvanians warm. The elderly get cold much faster primarily because their bodies simply don't generate heat as efficiently as they once did. Seniors also tend to lose heat a lot faster because the skin and the layer of fat just under the skin both get thinner as we age and prevents heat retention.

Some simple ways to keep warm include the following:

1. **Layer Clothing:** an extra layer like a cardigan or sweater is ideal for providing additional insulation against heat escaping.
2. **Heat the Head, Hands, and Feet:** While the entire body radiates heat, most of our body heat is lost from the head (40%-45%). We also lose heat from our feet since they are

furthest from the heart. Our hands are the most exposed part of the body and become cold quickly.

3. **Thermostat:** The ideal room temperature is 69.8 degrees.
4. **Sunlight:** Even on the coldest day the sun produces heat. It also provides much-needed Vitamin D. 15 to 20 minutes in front of a window can keep both body and spirit warm.

Mardi Gras

Mardi Gras refers to the events of the "Carnival" celebration, beginning on, or after, the Christian Feast of the Epiphany (Three Kings Day) and culminating on the day before Ash Wednesday, which is known as Shrove Tuesday.

Mardi Gras is French for "Fat Tuesday" reflecting the practice of the last night of eating rich, fatty foods before the ritual Lenten sacrifices and fast-

ing during the Lenten season.



The day is also known in our area as Donut Day. The tradition of making these doughy delights on what's also

known as Shrove Tuesday began with the need to use up all the sugar, butter, lard and sometimes mashed potatoes in the house before the start of Lent. The result: an often yeast-raised potato pastry that is deep fried like a doughnut.

It's been said that the name "Fastnacht" comes from German words translating to "fast night."





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Department of Aging.**

Let's Have Brunch!

Whenever we prepare for the holiday season there are always Maalox moments. Will I get everything done? Will there be enough food? Will there be drama? Will everyone be happy?

As my grandchildren grow older, there are very few “surprises” left. Gift-giving has been reduced to “What can I get for you?” or “Send me a screenshot with color and size”. While I still get them something they didn’t expect, the time of expectation appears to be going away.

It is said that most people no longer want “things”; rather, they want “experiences”. While this may seem like a new concept, it really goes back to the heart of the holidays - spending time with those we love. To that end, we had Brunch at my house the day *after* Christmas. This allowed everyone to visit in a more relaxed atmosphere (jammies were recommended!), no rushing, time constraints, or worries about

fancy dinners. It was simply having breakfast for lunch.

When planning the day I asked what everyone wanted. My 11 year-old grandson was quick to request waffles on a real waffle iron, pancakes, eggs, and (of course) bacon. And that’s exactly what we had! With the assistance of my sous



chef (older granddaughter, Haley), everyone got just what they wanted. Sure, we had lots of gifts to open, but the most fun was sitting around the table eating and talking. It was reminiscent of my own childhood. No cell phones, no distractions; rather, good conversation! Times like this mean the world to me and, hopefully, to the kids. Full disclosure: my grandson now wants to move in with me! Not sure if it’s because of me or the waffles!

Our volunteers bring the experience of “time well-spent” with our residents. A conversation without distraction, without rush, and without a time constraint means the world to them, too!

I hope your holidays were peaceful, joy-filled, and meaningful! Here’s to many more visits in 2023!

Eileen