

Lakeland Ledger

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Letters to the Editor: Help Long-Term-Care Residents Speak Up About Quality of Life, Needs

Building upon the national observance of Long-Term-Care Residents' Rights Week, Florida is stepping up to the plate for the fifth year in a row by proclaiming October "Residents' Rights Month."

This year's theme, Our Two Cents Is No Small Change, encourages residents to share their opinions and speak up about their quality of life and care in nursing homes, assisted-living facilities, and adult family care homes. It also encourages facilities to value their residents' perspectives in order to provide excellence in caregiving.

I thank and applaud Gov. Crist for his dedication to empowering Florida's frailest elders and those of us who care for them.

As Florida celebrates residents' rights, I encourage community members to visit someone they know in a long-term care facility, volunteer in a facility or inquire about becoming a long-term care ombudsman.

These special volunteers are the driving force behind Residents' Rights Month, and they carry the spirit of the occasion throughout the year, advocating for some of Florida's frailest elders by personally responding to their concerns and helping to resolve them. The program can be reached by calling toll-free 888-831-0404.

Let us all work to ensure that the voices of long-term-care residents do not go unheard and demonstrate that they have not been forgotten. Let us treat them with the respect they deserve and give back to them at least a portion of what they have given to us throughout their lives.

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