

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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October is Residents' Rights Month

VOYCE is excited to announce that October is Residents' Rights Month across the country. Residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities along with family members, ombudsmen, citizen advocates, facility, and staff and others will honor the individual rights of long-term care residents by celebrating Residents' Rights Month. Held every October by the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care (The Consumer Voice), Residents' Rights Month exists to celebrate and focus on awareness of dignity, respect, and the value of long-term care residents. The theme for Residents' Rights Month 2017 is, "It's All About Me: My Life, My Care, My Choices," with the goal of emphasizing the respect and dignity of every resident. "We want to recognize residents' rights to choose their own schedule and activities, communicate how and with whom they choose, be an active partner in directing their care, and be treated as an individual with unique wants and needs," said Lori Smetanka, Executive Director of the Consumer Voice.

The Nursing Home Reform Law, passed in 1987, guarantees nursing home residents their individual rights, including but not limited to: individualized care, respect, dignity, the right to visitation, the right to privacy, the right to complain, and the right to make independent choices. Residents who have made their home in other types of facilities such as assisted living homes, home care, hospice care, adult day care, and respite care maintain their rights as U.S. Citizens. Residents' Rights Month raises awareness about these rights and pays tribute to the unique contributions of long-term residents.

The National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program has worked for more than 40 years to promote residents' rights daily. More than 8,000 volunteers and 1,000 paid staff are advocates for residents in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico. Authorized under the Older Americans Act and administered by the Administration on Aging, the program also provides information on how to find a facility, conducts community education sessions, and supports residents, their families and the public with one-on-one consultation regarding long-term care. VOYCE is honored to be part of this National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.

Our Local Program: The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program operates across Missouri advocating for residents living in long-term care facilities. VOYCE operates the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program in Greater St. Louis and Northeast Missouri in 21 counties, including St. Louis City and St. Louis, Jefferson, Franklin, St. Charles, Adair, Clark, Knox, Lewis, Lincoln, Macon, Marion, Monroe, Montgomery, Pike, Ralls, Randolph, Schuyler, Scotland, Shelby and Warren counties. "VOYCE promotes this event annually in the Greater St. Louis and Northeast Missouri area to celebrate residents and remind them of their rights to ensure they can live the highest quality life possible," said Mary Lynn Faunda Donovan, Executive Director, VOYCE. Families, residents, and individuals are encouraged to call VOYCE at 314-918-8222 to see how we can help resolve any problems free of charge that arise while living in a long-term care community.

VOYCE: A United Way agency, VOYCE is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that provides free assistance to families and individuals seeking long-term care for loved ones, as well as advocacy for

those currently living in long-term care settings. VOYCE offers advocacy services to the 22,000 individuals who reside in more than 330 skilled nursing, assisted living and residential care communities in Greater St. Louis and northeast Missouri. More than 50% of these individuals have no one to advocate on their behalf. Last year, VOYCE responded to over 1,000 calls from individuals looking for long-term care and resolved over 5,000 complaints in long-term care settings. In addition to funding from the United Way, the Mid-East Area Agency on Aging, the St. Louis City Area Agency on Aging and the Northeast Missouri Area Agency on Aging through the Older Americans Act, VOYCE relies on the community for much of its funding, including individual gifts, foundation grants and corporate contributions. VOYCE would not be able to provide its services free of charge to families and individuals if it were not for the continuous generosity of the St. Louis community, year after year. For more information, please visit our website at www.voycestl.org or call (314) 918-8222.

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