

Ombudsman program seeks volunteers

FROM AREA AGENCY ON AGING X

Mahatma Gandhi once said, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in service to others."

The Missouri Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program provides a service to the vulnerable and often forgotten-about members of your community, nursing home residents.

The mission of the Ombudsman Program is to improve the quality of life for residents through advocacy, education and empowerment.

The program is comprised mostly of volunteers who dedicate their time to help residents rediscover a sense of self determination, empowering them to exercise their rights.

Ombudsman volunteers help residents work through any issues they may be facing. Visiting with residents helps reduce the sense of isolation some may feel, especially those who do not have close family or friends. The best part about being a volunteer is it provides a sense of purpose, an opportunity to give back to someone in need and, as an ombudsman, to truly make a difference.

If you are interested in giving back to your community by becoming an ombudsman volunteer, please contact Council of Churches of the Ozarks Ombudsman Program at 417-862-3598.

Help wanted at Carl Junction senior center

The Area Agency on Aging is accepting head cook and assistant cook positions.

These positions complete ordering, prepping, cooking, serving and cleaning duties. The cooks must abide by all federal, state, and local laws and guidelines. You must pass the Safe Serve training and be able to do basic math (measure, divide, add, subtract, ratios) and communicate in both oral and written forms. Applicants must also understand basic computer technology for documentation and trainings.

If you are interested in a job that is Monday through Friday, in which you can get your kids to school and be home after school, please call The Center manager Tammie Lynch, 417-649-6437.

Medicare advantage open enrollment ongoing

The beginning of January begins the annual open enrollment for Medicare Advantage beneficiaries.

You may be thinking Medicare open enrollment ended last month and you would not be wrong. This enrollment period is only for those currently on Medicare Advantage plans who wish to make changes. You can switch to another advantage plan or switch back to original Medicare and add a supplement and/or a Part D

prescription plan. It ends on March 31, and your coverage begins the month after you enroll.

Medicare Advantage beneficiaries are not required to make any changes; however, this is another chance to switch if you missed the annual Medicare open enrollment that just ended.

If you have questions or would like to make changes, please call the Area Agency on Aging at 417-781-7562 for an appointment.

Give yourself a 'Head Start'

The Head Start and Early Head Start program sponsored by Economic Security Corporation of Southwest Area might be the perfect place for those looking for a part-time job. Many types of jobs are available at centers located throughout Barton, Jasper, Newton and McDonald counties.

Do you have cooking skills? Maybe a job as a cook would be good for you. The children are always excited about their breakfasts and lunches.

Being a bus driver is considered one of the most important jobs in the program. The bus driver is the first and last person the child sees every day. You can start their day off with a smile and finish their day with a hug.

From teacher aides to safety monitors, there are many other types of jobs available with

Head Start. There are full-time positions available too. All jobs in the program include full training, paid sick and vacation days, paid holidays and many other benefits. Plus, few jobs offer the special satisfaction of making a difference in the lives of children as you will find in the Head Start program.

If you would like to find out what is available in a location near you, contact Kathy Miller, assistant director, at 417-627-2090 or email kmiller@escswa.org.

Staff shortages are everywhere

Many restaurants, companies, and health care owners and officials are reporting a shortfall in staffing.

In Missouri, if you go to the hospital or a restaurant, you will notice longer waits and more self-check outs. Businesses are shortening hours or closing all together. Across the nation, window fronts, internet sites and newspapers have posted help wanted signs. Companies are holding job fairs and increasing wages. There are near-record job openings, but that does not mean businesses are paying a wage workers will accept.

The United States Labor Bureau reports that paid unemployment claims are at a 42-year all-time low. People are not actively seeking work for several reasons. CNBC credits 89% of the workforce decline to

adults in their 50s simply burning out, retiring early, or taking a COVID-19-related break. Those over 62 just did not come back to work after COVID-19 took root last year, and many seniors retired again due to ongoing COVID-19 scares. COVID-19 quarantines and people looking for work-from-home jobs.

Caregiver support group meets in January

The January Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group will meet at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 18, at the Area Agency on Aging central office, 531 E. 15th St.

Come join fellow caregivers as they share their stories and give support to each other through the challenging job of caregiving for a family member, friend or loved one.

Ruth Guzman, a caregiver for her late mother, facilitates the group and knows exactly how it feels to be a giving and loving caregiver.

For more information, email rmguzman60@outlook.com.

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