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Did you know...

- If hay bales get too wet they can spontaneously combust?
- The first group in history to use scarecrows were the Egyptians?
- Apple Cider is the official state drink of New Hampshire?

## Resident Rights Month, 2025

October is Residents' Rights Month, an annual event designated by Consumer Voice to honor residents living in all long-term care facilities and those receiving care in their home or community.

It is an opportunity to focus on and celebrate the dignity and rights of every in-

dividual receiving long-term services and supports.

Residents have the right to self-



determination and to use their voice to make their own choic-

es. This year's theme, *Stand with Me*, highlights the importance of solidarity and support for resi-

dents who stand up and advocate for their rights, as well as the value of encouraging the community to join resi-

dents in sharing their voices.

## Training Calendar

Ombudsmen who volunteer their time and talent are invited and encouraged to participate in online training modules offered by the PA Department of Aging, Consumer Voice, the Learning Management System (LMS) as well as in-person Network Meetings.

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

The next **Network Meeting** will be held will be held at the

Lackawanna County 911 Center beginning at 10 am with date TBD. Details will be provided as soon as the date is chosen.

**PEER Meetings** are held in individual homes and when requested.



## After-School Banana Bread



**Ingredients:** 1 stick salted butter, melted and cooled; 1 cup packed light brown sugar; 2 large eggs, beaten; 1-1/2 tsp. vanilla extract; 4-5 very ripe bananas (mashed); 1-3/4 cups all-purpose flour; 1/2 tsp. kosher salt; 1 tsp. baking soda; 1/2 cup chopped pecans or 1 cup chocolate chips (optional); 1 to 2 tbsp. granulated sugar, as needed.

**Directions:**

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray an 8 x 8 pan with baking

spray.

2. In a stand mixer, or large bowl with handheld mixer, beat together the butter, brown sugar, eggs, and vanilla until blended. Add the bananas and mix until combined.

3. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, and salt. Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients and beat until combined. Add pecans or chocolate chips (if using).

4. Pour the batter into prepared pan. Sprinkle the granulated sugar over the top.

5. Bake until a tester comes out clean, 45 to 50 minutes. Let the bread cool slightly in the pan on a rack. Slice and serve warm with butter.

6. When cooled completely, cover the pan with foil and store at room temp for up to 2 days.

**Recipe courtesy of “Magnolia Table: A Collection of Recipes for Gathering”.**

## Resident Rights Review



Every Resident knows they have Rights. But, did you ever take a “deep dive” into those Rights? Let’s explore!

A resident has the right to freely communicate and meet privately with anyone, including family members, resident groups, and the Ombudsman. This could also include a clergy

person, a member or group of a community organization, a representative from an advocacy agency, a lawyer or paralegal, your attending Physician, Physician’s Assistant, or Nurse Practitioner.

The conversations are private and confidential and can only be shared if you give consent.

If you confide anything with the Ombudsman, that information can only be shared with people you specify, and only with written consent.

Conversely, it is your right to tell all of these people you do not wish to speak with them. No one can force you to visit with anyone. It’s YOUR Right!

## In Memory of Patty Benner



Patty Benner, a PEER at the Tremont Health and Rehabilitation Center, passed away August 23, 2025 at her home.

Patty graduated from the PEER Program September 6, 2016 and was an advocate for the residents and enjoyed visiting with fellow PEERs and

new residents as they were admitted to her home.

She enjoyed reading and crafting. Patty attended Resident Council and contributed to the meetings on behalf of residents who were unable to be there in person.

Our sincerest condolences are

extended to Patty’s family, the staff, and all the friends at her home in Tremont.

We are grateful for Patty’s many years with our program. May she rest in peace.

## What is “Canning”

A Fall tradition, canning is a form of cooking - instead of cooking one meal for immediate consumption, you preserve food that you can save and store away for months! Why do this? Because canning captures flavors at the peak of season to enjoy all year long. Imagine the taste of a fresh peach in the middle of winter!

There are two methods of canning: Water-Bath and Pressure Canning.

Water-Bath Canning is the simpler of the two methods as it involves boiling a big pot of water. The pot is specifically designed for this and includes a rack insert and a lid. Water-bath canning is a lower-temperature canning process (212 degrees F) which makes it safe **ONLY** for high-acid vegetables and fruits such as tomatoes, pickles, sauerkraut, jams and jellies, salsa, most fruits, and fruit butters.

Pressure Canning involves the use of a Pressure Canner which is a device that contains an insert and a fitted lid with a dial or pressure valve. The high pressure created inside allows the temperature to get much hotter (240 degrees F) killing off bacteria, toxins, mold, and yeast. Low acid foods include asparagus, carrots, corn, green beans, mushrooms, cantaloupe and watermelon. You can also pressure can meats, poultry, seafood, and chili!



## PEER Resident Rights BINGO

The annual PEER Resident Rights BINGO is scheduled for October 16 at 10 am and October 17 at 1:30 pm.

Begun as a way to connect during the COVID pandemic, this annual event has become a popular and sought-after way to learn about rights while having fun playing the most popular

game in long-term care.

The games are played on the Zoom Platform.

Residents play one card per game and the blocks contain a “right” which is explained as the letter and number are called.

Prizes, BINGO Cards, Dab-

bers, and additional support are provided through the local Ombudsman.

PEERs are encouraged to gather as a group at a time that is convenient for them.

RSVPs are due before October 10 so that supplies can be delivered to all participants.



## The Teal Pumpkin Project

The Teal Pumpkin Project began in 2014 as a local initiative in Tennessee. It started with the idea of using teal as the color for food allergy awareness. The project has also expanded to include the blue Halloween bucket for children with autism allowing them to carry a bucket to signal

to others they won't say “trick-or-treat”.

Some examples of items that can be given to children who participate in the program include: Glow Sticks/Necklaces; Pencils, Pens, Crayons, or Markers; Bubbles; Halloween erasers or pencil toppers; Mini

Slinkies; Whistles, Kazoos; Bouncing Balls; Spider Rings or Vampire Fangs; Mini Note-pads; Playing Cards; Bookmarks; Stickers; Stencils.

The project has been recognized with the Silver HALO Award for Best Disability Initiative.





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*"LIKE" us on Facebook  
"PEERs of Schuylkill County"*

*Ombudsman services are provided by  
MidPenn Legal Services under a  
contract with the Schuylkill County  
Office of Senior Services.*

*The program is monitored by the  
Pennsylvania Department of Aging.*

## *Opportunities for Growth*



Everyone remembers where they were on particular days in history and what they were doing.

For me, September 6, 2005 comes to mind. I started a new job and it was just like going to a different school. I didn't know anyone, at times I felt alone, and I was excited and terrified all at the same time.

Following my first out-of-office training, I returned to work and cried my eyes out wondering if I'd made the right decision. PS - I did!

On that first day, my Mom and

my brother sent me a "dish garden" - 3 small plants. Over the years, I've had to transplant the contents multiple times as they continued to grow, and grow, and GROW!

\*For perspective, the palm tree in the picture is now 5 feet tall!

The plants are a reminder that when we are given an opportunity for new growth, we should embrace it. I had hoped to spend my entire working life at that prior job. I knew what I was doing, made life-long friendships, and was in my comfort zone. However, I also wanted to do more - and that could not happen unless I

took a leap of faith.

I truly love what I do as much today as I did 20 years ago and am privileged for the opportunity to help our residents. The people in my previous job generously shared their knowledge, which prepared me to do what I do now. For that I will always be grateful.

If you would like to join me in this most wonderful opportunity, give me a call. We can continue to grow - together!

*Eileen*