

## Ombudsmen Accept Award

Seven Ombudsmen from The Clearfield County Area Agency on Aging, Inc. shared the spotlight as they accepted an award for the volume of work they carried out in nursing and personal care facilities over the last year. The award was presented to Clearfield AAA Executive Director, John Kordish, and the Clearfield Ombudsman Team by State Long Term Care Ombudsman, Wilmarie Gonzalez, at the annual enrichment training conference held in Camp Hill recently. Each year, at the conclusion of the three-day training, time is set aside to recognize exemplary performance and dedication to the work of ombudsmen.

In calendar year 2007, the Clearfield Ombudsmen handled 19 cases and took part in more than 700 activities including training, consulting with people and facilities, resident visits, educational presentations, attending meetings, resolving problems, and conducting quality assurance visits. For their outstanding performance, the group was given a lovely plaque, shown in the photo.

The word Ombudsman means “Citizen Advocate,” which describes the kind of work they do. Ombudsmen may be called upon to help resolve differences between roommates, staff, family, and/or residents living in long term care facilities. They help residents speak up for themselves, or in cases where the resident is not able to communicate well, they will even speak for the resident.

“This group has incredible variety in their backgrounds and talents,” said Sue Kordish, Ombudsman Supervisor. “They repeatedly draw on their skills to problem-solve and it never ceases to amaze us at the clever solutions they come up with.” Jeanne Urban, Ombudsman, and Program Operations Specialist at the agency, added, “They bring a wonderful blend of compassion, strength, and wisdom to the tasks they are given, which builds trust and a special rapport with residents. We are so fortunate to have such gifted Ombudsmen in our area.”

The agency contracts with Ombudsmen Jan Petrosky of DuBois, Marge Harvey of Drifting, and Gale Mullen of Hyde for their investigative skills. In addition, Antoinette Franek of Morrisdale and Gale Washic of Lanse volunteer their services as ombudsmen.

Mrs. Kordish and Ms. Urban are willing to discuss the role of Ombudsmen in greater detail with anyone who is interested in learning more. To talk with either one or to arrange a formal group presentation, call 765-2696 or 1-800-225-8571.



*State Long Term Care Ombudsman, Wilmarie Gonzalez of the PA Department of Aging (left), presents an award for program excellence to John Kordish, Executive Director of the Clearfield County Area Agency on Aging, Inc. With Mr. Kordish is the entire Clearfield Ombudsman team. Front Row: (l-r) Sue Kordish, Jeanne Urban, Jan Petrosky, and Gale Washic. Back Row: Antoniette Franek, Marge Harvey, and Gale Mullen.*