

Bradenton Herald

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Letters to the Editor: Honor long-term care

Building upon the national observance of Long-Term Care Residents' Rights Week, Florida is stepping up to the plate for the fifth consecutive year 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 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 1-888-831-0404.

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 us throughout their lives.

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