



News for Immediate Release

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Secretary of Aging Recognizes Volunteers at 10th Annual PEER Day

Harrisburg – Secretary of Aging Brian Duke today honored Pennsylvania’s Empowered Expert Residents, or PEERs, for their work as volunteer advocates for their neighbors living in long-term care facilities.

PEERs are residents of long-term care facilities who are trained to act as an advocate for fellow residents. The program is part of the State Long Term Care Ombudsman program and works to enhance the quality of care and life for Pennsylvanians in long-term care facilities.

“PEER volunteers are a great asset to the Ombudsman program,” Duke said during an event held in Grantville to recognize PEERs. “They selflessly provide advocacy services to residents in long-term living facilities, some of whom may have no one else to speak for them.”

Pennsylvania was the first state to establish and maintain a comprehensive self-advocacy program such as PEER. Today’s event honored more than 300 individuals and two awards were presented.

Harry Wood from the Colony in Mercer County received the PEER Volunteer award, and Lena Wagaman from the Village of Laurel Run in Adams County was given the Staff award.

Individuals participating in the PEER program must complete a 10-hour training program. There are approximately 1,600 trained PEERs in more than 200 nursing and veterans’ facilities, as well as other long-term living facilities covering 59 counties statewide.

Today’s recognition program was held in conjunction with Residents’ Rights Month, which honors residents living in all long-term care facilities and celebrates dignity, respect and the value of each individual.

For more information on the PEER program, visit the Department of Aging online at www.aging.state.pa.us.

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