



Volunteer Ombudsman Program Receives Support

By Pearl Bouchard, Area 1 Agency on Aging

The Volunteer Ombudsman Program has received a boost in Area 1. The Inland Northwest Community Foundation has informed director, Pearl Bouchard, of their support for the important work they have undertaken toward developing a volunteer ombudsman program in northern Idaho. A grant has been awarded in the amount of \$13,987 to support this project.

Area 1, through assistance of a VISTA position, began recruiting and training volunteers early on in 2007. Their goal with Foundation support is to assign a volunteer in each of the 43 nursing homes and assisted living homes in Kootenai County and then move on to Bonner County. According to Bouchard, financial support for the project will cover the cost of background checks, educational and training materials, recognition events, and promotion of the program. Part of the VISTA's job is to develop a sustainable project that can continue after the Foundation support is no longer available.

Inland Northwest Community Foundation, formerly Foundation Northwest, serves 20 counties throughout Eastern Washington and North Idaho. Founded in 1974, its mission is to foster vibrant and sustainable communities in the Inland Northwest. The Foundation manages more than 200 funds, valued at \$59.9 million at December 31, 2006. The Foundation has awarded \$30.5 million in grants and scholarships throughout the region since its inception.