

Jo Kleinbaum stands in gap for seniors

By TAMMY COMPTON
Independent Staff Writer

LAKE TWP. Josephine Kleinbaum, of The Hideout, is an ombudsman, an advocate for older adults who live in personal care homes.

Josephine embraces the opportunity to help others. It's very rewarding, she says. "I have established a relationship with the residents and staff," she says of the personal care home where she volunteers her time. "The staff regard me as a friend and not as a spy — someone who helps them do their jobs more efficiently," she says. It's something she's been doing for over six years, visiting the same local care

home twice a month.

"I was an administrator for social service agencies, a fundraiser for them, so I knew that there were problems everywhere and the question is — how to solve these problems." When she learned that residents were interested in having a Rabbi visit, she got the personal care home involved with the Northeast Pennsylvania Jewish Federation of Scranton. That thoughtfulness was well received by the residents and families of the Jewish Faith, she said.

There are five ombudsmen for the Wayne County Area Agency on Aging, she says, and they're looking for additional volunteers, no

experience necessary. To find out more, please contact Linda Petto at the Wayne County Area Agency on Aging at 253-4262.

Along with being an ombudsman, Josephine also volunteers at Moses Taylor Hospital, in their Hospitalized Elder Life Program or HELP, visiting patients who are over 70 years-old. Since many don't have family to sit and talk with them, Josephine fills the void, talking to them and trying to relieve their fears.

When she sees a need, she tries to fill it. In past, as a member of the Hideout Property Owners Association Board, she helped raise money to build

their firehouse. They raised \$150 thousand and builders donated their time, she recalled.

"So, what I've done with my life is to try to help other people and I'm having fun at it," she says.

Josephine has four children and nine grandchildren. Her daughter, Sharon Kleinbaum, is listed among the "50 Most influential Rabbis in America" and was the first woman to be named, her mom says.

If you know of a volunteer who we may interview, please contact Tammy Compton at (570)253-3055 or e-mail tcompton@wayneindependent.com.

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Wayne Independent Photo By Tammy Compton
Josephine Kleinbaum of Lake Ariel is a volunteer ombudsman with the Wayne County Area Agency on Aging.