



DATES AND EVENTS

SHARE AND CARE

Do you need someone to talk to? Would you like some of your questions about mental illness answered? Our support group for family and friends of the mentally ill meets Tuesdays at 6:00 PM at Arden House, 1552 Colorado Street, Glendale, at the corner of Colorado and Lincoln. We encourage you to come. Enter through the front or rear entrance. Parking is available behind the building or on the street.

MONTHLY NAMI MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Tuesday, June 6, 2006

Share and Care: 6 pm – 6:50 pm.

Program: 7:00. Mark Gale will speak on "Public Policy and the Criminalization of Persons with Mental Illness: How We Got Here, Making Our Advocacy Work Now!" Mark Gale is a Vice-President of NAMI-San Fernando Valley, a NAMI Family-to-Family Education Program teacher, a support group facilitator, and a member of both the NAMI Los Angeles County and California State Criminal Justice Committees. He participates in the Los Angeles committee's continuing education Family Panel Program at Twin Towers Correctional Facility and is the co-author of a guide posted on the Los Angeles Sheriff's Dept. website regarding mental illness and the criminal justice system called "My Family Member Has Been Arrested. What Do I Do?" Mark is also a Coordinator with the California Treatment Advocacy Coalition. CTAC and the California Psychiatric Association are sponsoring AB 2357, a bill in the current legislative session which, if passed, will extend the sunset of AB 1421 until 2013.

He says: "I think it is important that members understand how we got to the current state of affairs and what can be done to change things going forward. I do not want to be handling the same problems fifteen years from now that we have today and unfortunately for those who have come before me, that is what happened to them, I truly believe if we all speak with one solidified voice there is hope for real change and the political winds are blowing in that direction."

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WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Jonée Shady

Many of you may not know that I had been selected to chair the Los Angeles County Coordinating Council earlier this year. This council is made up of the Presidents and past Presidents of the 19 Los Angeles area affiliates of NAMI. Yes, there are 19 affiliates! This means that on any given day of the week, someone could find support and education for families that have loved ones with a mental illness. This position comes with more opportunities for advocacy on a greater scale and of course some perks such as being invited to events throughout the county where I represent NAMI.

On May 18, I had the pleasure of attending the Mental Health Commission's Annual Program Recognition and Volunteer Awards Luncheon at the Music Center where two of our NAMI family were honored for their dedicated service to improving the lives of those living with Mental Illness. In addition, Steve Lopez, LA Times staff writer, was the keynote speaker who was also given an award. I wanted to recap some of the comments they made in their speeches.

Steve Lopez has been writing a series of articles about Nathaniel, a homeless musician who once attended Julliard. He took us on his journey of how he came to know Nathaniel. He humbled himself by saying that he didn't know anything about mental illness until he started trying to figure out why this talented musician was living in the streets. He expressed how it was his friendship towards Nathaniel that has made an impact. Mr. Lopez commented on how he had to learn how to talk to Nathaniel so that Nathaniel would not be afraid of Mr. Lopez. He thanked NAMI for helping to educate him on the ups and downs of Mental Illness. He summed it up by saying that we need compassion, education, and understanding. (The NAMI Mission) He is currently writing a book and hopes to use the proceeds to fund a rehearsal hall where Nathaniel can practice music and possibly teach others.

Stella March (NAMI LA) then accepted an award for her 27 years of volunteer service as the National Coordinator of Stigma Busters and as the local coordinator of NAMI's In Our Own Voice program among her many advocacy activities. She stressed the need for more advocates. Stan Mc Afee (NAMI Pomona Valley) received the Outstanding Family Member Award. He too stressed the need for advocates, fighting stigma and

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NAMIWALK NEWS

Judie Erpendeck

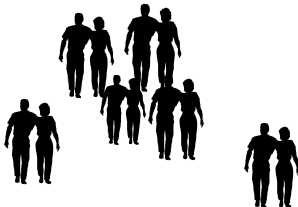
NAMI Glendale is participating in the Los Angeles County NAMI Walk, Saturday, October 7, 2006. We invite you to join us in helping to raise money for NAMI. Our chapter will receive a percentage of the funds. We are forming teams among our members, family and friends. If you would like to sign up please call me 626.574.7974 or e-mail me at nanarose55@hotmail.com. The more participants we have the more money we can raise and the more fun we can have.

NAMI Los Angeles County is targeting 6,000 walkers for this event, which is expected to raise over \$500,000 **to support its programs of education, research and advocacy for those who suffer from schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder and severe anxiety disorders.**

The walk will take place at the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica, California. Registration for the 5K Walk will start at 8:00 am, pre-walk activities at 9:30 am and the Walk starts at promptly at 10:00 am. **WALKERS ARE ELIGIBLE TO WIN PRIZES IN THE EXCITING CELEBRITY DRAWING!**

The NAMIWALKS for the Mind of America is a nationwide fundraising and mental health awareness program that is being held in over 50 communities around the country in 2006, including right here in Los Angeles County. It is expected that these Walks will raise approximately 5 million dollars in 2006 for NAMI and the mental health services it provides to thousands of families across the country.

For more information please contact NAMIWALKS office at 213.251.6556 or 213.251.6557 or go to the local website www.namiwalkslac.org.



**NAMI Walks
October 7, 2006**



The *GAMgram*, the Community's Voice on Mental Illness, is published by NAMI Glendale to educate its members and the general public about issues affecting the mentally ill.

President: Jonée Shady
Editor: Jane S. Hancock
janelou@aol.com

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spreading the word about NAMI. These two have been dedicated NAMI advocates and hope that their work will continue with additional advocates. There are a lot of us out there doing what we can but we would welcome many more.

I write this only to say that in the case of Steve Lopez, he has helped one homeless person with mental illness to get off the streets and yes, it has taken a long time and yes he is in the position to do so. But in the cases of our NAMI family, if we all could just contribute a small gesture, if we could help just one other family, if we could spread the word to fight stigma, what a difference it would make if each of us touched even just one person. We all have stories to tell and our stories can make a great difference!

MORE MEETINGS AND EVENTS

- **Tuesday, June 13, 2006**
Share and Care: 6 pm — 7:30 pm.
- **Tuesday, June 20, 2006**
Share and Care: 6 pm – 7 pm.
Business Meeting – 7 pm.
- **Tuesday, June 27, 2006**
Share and Care: 6 pm – 7:30 pm
- **Tuesday, July 4, 2006**
NO MEETING. HOLIDAY!

NAMI Glendale Writing Retreat – June 24, 2006.

Join us for our second writing retreat this year. We begin at 8:30 with breakfast at Jane's house, continue with a short writing warm-up exercise, and then write about our experiences as care-givers, consumers; write about books we have read; write about information we have that might be helpful to others. For reservations or information, call Jane at 818.240.7279.

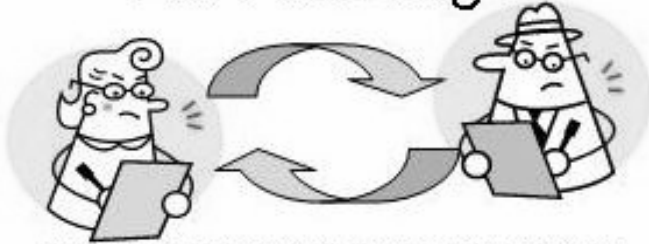
NAMI National Convention in Washington DC June 28 – July 3, 2006: "Changing Minds Changing lives Keeping the Promise"

**NAMIWALKS 2006 on Third Street Promenade
October 7, 2006. See article on this page.**

**DBSA GLENDALE –
A SUPPORT GROUP
for those suffering from
depression and bi-polar disorder
Glendale Adventist Medical Center
1509 Wilson terrace, Glendale
Thursdays 6 – 8 pm
dbsaglendale@yahoo.com
626.358.6587**

**Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
www.dbsalliance**

Do You Blog?



Do you have something to share or journal? Join the crowd at www.namiglendale.blogspot.com

The War Against Mental Illness Daryl Hazard

Editor's Note: At our May 2 speaker meeting, former NAMI Glendale member, Cliff Payton, who has relocated to Lancaster, came to visit and brought with him a friend, Daryl Hazard. He gave me two articles written by Daryl and permission to print them. On May 5, just three days later, I received this email from Cliff: "Daryl passed away this morning, probably from a heart attack. He's had two before, the last one when he was in the hospital while recovering from meningitis in the brain. They hadn't expected him to live beyond the first night. He has told me several times that he knew he didn't have much time left. He was a good friend to both those suffering from brain disorders and their families. He was in effect my counselor. I'll miss him. Cliff."

Mental illness is a dividing issue which must be fought on two fronts—one by stakeholders and one by consumers. All previous beliefs of individuals possessing mental illness must be laid aside. Both consumer and stakeholder are in a battle against an independent entity, mental illness. This is true because both feel the effects: frustration, anger, bewilderment, helplessness, futility, and the list goes on and on. Just one side may have symptoms of mental illness and must wage war within his or her mind. The stakeholder must prevent irrational behaviors within themselves when dealing with the illness as well. From the onset, this battle is a journey of lost assets like peace of mind, patience, mental energy, emotional turmoil, personal strength, financial resources, and personal property. Only war creates such devastation for all involved. In this war there are small skirmishes, battles and victory.

There are three segments to obtaining victory. The first is acceptance of the diagnosis; the second is acceptance of medications, and the third, acceptance of help from the support systems. Both the stakeholder and the consumer must go through these stages, but rarely together.

I have experience with the schizoaffective disorder and so my explanation comes from a consumer's point of view. I will explain what the consumer must go through that brings victory--through understanding the needs for knowledge, medications, and dependency on others. Timing of involvement by stakeholders is crucial

to the plan for success in reaching the far-off point of functionality of the consumer. The game plan for stakeholders, the secret for stakeholders, is to maintain resources until they will be effective and produce positive results, to maintain endurance over a long period of time.

The first phase of the battle is from onset to acceptance of the diagnosis. In this phase of confusion no one knows what to do, neither consumer nor stakeholder. The best plan for stakeholders is to realize the consumer needs safety and they cannot help much beyond that point. This is the start of a very long journey for them. The fight here is in the stakeholders maintaining their own mental health, not expending their resources, and preparing with knowledge about mental illness, public resources, and strategies.

The second phase is the period between acceptance of the diagnosis and the acceptance of medications. The consumer is dealing with the consequences of proceeding in life with an irrational mind. It basically is the consumer's choices in life that make his or her own battles. The only way for success is to run out of mental energy and surrender to the leadership of competent minds found in the support system. The stakeholder's battle is with over-involvement in the consumer's issues. This involvement is best confined to obtaining services and transportation to doctor's offices, mental health services, hospital, shelter, board and care, legal services, judicial diversion programs and bail help. Once these are accomplished and the consumer is safe, the caretaker can go back to preparing for the next encounter by saving resources. Don't fight or entangle yourselves with individuals, institutions, systems, or programs that you have no influence on. This is a waste of time and peace of mind.

The final phase of the war is moving from acceptance of medications to acceptance of help from the created support system. This is where the consumer can work with a rational mind to improve choices, participate in creating a satisfactory support system, and decide the ingredients of recovery. Here is the battle where the stakeholder needs to engage in providing anything to increase the consumer's ability to make better choices and meet challenges--to monitor and approve the needed institutions, systems, and programs that established the support system and determine your own future participation in monitoring financial help, interaction, and sibling counseling for a possible needs trust.

Mental illness is probably never going to go away, so victory is only in the mind. The consumer claims victory when the elements of recovery, which are self-developed, are met and maintained by effective use of his/her support system. The stakeholder claims victory in seeing the consumer effectively using his support system. Success culminates with an active, positive, and mutual participation by everyone within the support system.

COMMENTARY: MIKE MILLER

More On Mental Illness and A Philosophy of Life

Last month I wrote about the importance of a life philosophy including use of NAMI principles to help deal with mental illness. For example, NAMI principles such as "We forgive ourselves and reject guilt," impart perspective comparable to a life philosophy such as the view that those who suffer are not alone. Use of a life philosophy helps us react to the travails of life.

The May Commentary was primarily written for those in the support function such as NAMI members. I also referred to those with mental illness in relation to a life philosophy and opined that, at times, philosophy may not help them—such as when they are in an extreme depression or manic state, or severely schizophrenic. After reading the Commentary, my daughter Carrie, who has experienced severe depression, advised that the article did not distinguish enough between the support person who is well and the person with the mental illness.

To the extent those of us in a support and caring role can understand our loved one and their illness, we are in a better position to perform that role. Accordingly, I am writing this supplement to last month's commentary to complete the picture per the insightful direction of someone with the illness. This is consistent with the NAMI principle that "We aim for better coping skills."

Carrie clarified that for the person with mental illness, my reference to how suffering can make one stronger, does not always apply to the person with the illness. When severe or out of control, the suffering can demean and even lead to the death of the ill person. She also advised that when a person is in the throes of extreme mental illness, a general life view will usually not help. At such times, the most a person can do is break down their life into workable compartments, day to day steps that can help. In fact, this often involves saying to yourself—my goal for today is to get through the day. In other words, a day by day view to survive the moment may be the only workable tenet during these dark days of struggle. When the illness is severe, dealing with "one thing at a time" is often the primary useful approach.

Carrie does not discount use of life philosophies, particularly when the ill person is doing better. The perspective gained is valuable to recovery and living. She cites Viktor Frankl, author of *Man's Search For Meaning*. Frankl, who survived a Nazi concentration camp, imparted the insight that while the Nazis controlled everything in the inmates' lives, they could not control how the inmate reacted to all of this. It was as a prisoner in a Nazi death camp that Frankl observed in the starkest possible way that people need a sense of purpose to maintain a will to live. In this regard, Carrie believes that in the darkest situations, a sense of persistence in the face of adversity, seeking support, and knowing that one is not alone are among the life views that matter; that give some semblance of meaning

in order to go on. Consistent with Frankl's view, there is no alternative to going on, to survival.

Last month's Commentary advised that "We should be sensitive to those times when the illness so overwhelms our loved one, that our espousal of life views and philosophical perspective may not help them." Of course, these views and the perspective gained may help those of us in a support role. In that role, when our loved one is overwhelmed, in addition to reminding them that they are a person, they do matter, and there is hope. We should also encourage and help them to go step by step, day by day. No grandiose philosophies at such times, just practical encouragement and help for them to accomplish one task at a time.

Those of us in a support role often struggle with doing the right thing to help. The situation differs from person to person and flexibility is important. Sometimes communication is the only thing we can do to try to help. Hopefully, these commentaries will provide some helpful food for thought when all we can do is talk or write to the person we support. Do the best you can and remember, consistent with NAMI's philosophy, "We accept that we cannot resolve all problems and we will never give up hope."

Challenges

NAMI Glendale has some challenges ahead. What do you think about some of the issues we face? Here are some of my personal favorites:

Growing and still meeting needs. As our membership grows and as more people come to Care and Share, how do we meet all of the needs expressed at meetings? Can we meet them?

Member participation. How do we encourage more participation at the membership level? Presently the "core" group does so much of the work but how do we distribute some of the tasks among more members?

Elevate our identity. What steps should we take to make professional mental health providers, the families who do not know about us and the community at large to become more aware of NAMI?

What other ideas or issues do you want to share? This is the place, where we can have some exchange of ideas and work to improve NAMI Glendale.

(Posted by Wayne Baldaro on the Blog, May 17, 2006. Let us hear from you, either on the Blog or via email to janelou@aol.com or via snail mail to Jane Hancock, Editor GAMIGram, NAMIGlendale, 1552 Colorado Blvd., Glendale, California 91205. We value your thoughts, your opinions, your insight, your questions, your stories.)

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