

GAMIGram



Volume 19 Issue 2

NAMI Glendale

March/April 2004

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.

Tuesday, March 2, 2004 Speaker's Meeting

We begin at 6:00 pm with a shortened Share and Care. About 6:45 we break for light refreshments. At 7:00 we begin a short business meeting. And following the business meeting we welcome our speaker, Carla Jacobs.

See Page 3 for details on her subject, "Who Will Care When I'm Not There?"

Saturday, March 6, 2004. Verdugo Mental Health Walk.

Please support this in any way you can.

Tuesday, April 6, 2004 Speaker's Meeting

We are pleased to announce that our April speakers will be four outstanding leaders from California Clinical Trials. Timothy Welke, Vice President of Business Operations; Dr. Stanford Jhee, Vice President and Director of Research; Roger Rignack, Manager of Patient Recruitment Services; and Don Walters, Regional Community Liaison will give us a rare look into medical research and clinical studies. This promises to be an exceptional and informative evening.



Saturday, May 22, 2004
10:00 AM

Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area
15501 E. Arrow Highway
Irwindale, CA 91706

WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Jane S. Hancock

Ramblings. First I want to thank all of you who have contributed so much to all the events and activities that have gone on for the last few months. **The Mental Health Initiative.** I turned all the petitions in without bothering to count the names, so I don't know how we did as an affiliate, but I know you were out there collecting and I thank all of you who helped. **The Penny Jars.** We decorated penny jars at a January meeting. We had fun while we did it and the money is already coming in. If you took a jar and left it on some counter some place, be sure to go by often and bring or send the money in to us. Every little bit counts. **Recycling.** On Tuesday evenings we bring cans and bottles to our meetings. It's amazing how much liquid we consume in



can and bottle form! This isn't the greatest picture in the world, but you get the idea! Thank you all.

Shakers. We always have a good time when we go to Shakers. I don't have the exact count yet, but we made our quota of people, so we will get our percentage. It's a good place to meet and greet our friends. **Letter Writers.** If you have already written some letters and mailed them, I thank you. If you haven't, I'm here to help. I will have form letters all ready to mail. All you have to do is add a very short note to personalize them and send them off to a local business or friend. **Share and Care Meetings.** I don't think we ever thank you for attending meetings, but we should. Your advice, your counseling, your helping hand, your sympathetic heart are what the people need who come—first timers and old timers alike need your support. Thank you for being there.

The work goes on. Keep coming, keep writing, keep recycling, keep caring. And one last time, thank you for all that you do.

NURSES VISIT NAMI GLENDALE

NAMI Glendale welcomes visits from nurses in area hospitals who are on their psych rotation. Geoffrey M sent us this letter following his visit. Thank you, Geoffrey.

Hi! I really enjoyed the session today. And I just wanted to share what I wrote as a summary for my report. It's nothing much, but coming to NAMI made me feel this way, and also just my way of sending my appreciation for the great work you guys do. Thanks a lot.

Having attended one of your sessions today made me realize how integral a support system is for a mentally ill patient and to his family member(s). I believe what makes this support group stand out is the fact that its members genuinely care about their family members with any form of mental illness and are eager to share, reach out, and extend a helping hand to others who are in the same situation as they are. I was touched by the members, especially the parents. Considering the load of stress they bear, they showed unconditional love to their family members. They are also taking the time to seek recognition and acceptance for their mentally ill members and to try to alleviate any stigma this illness brings. Though harsh unintentional words have been said to them by their own love ones, I'm pretty sure that deep inside, their mentally ill members can't be any more blessed than to have family members like them. Parents, siblings, spouses, and friends, these are the core of NAMI. However difficult circumstances may be, its members seem to be triumphant and strong, knowing that they will never walk alone. Individuals just like them, brought together by NAMI, will always be by their side.



WALK FOR NAMI



The *GAMlgram*, 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.

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FAMILY TO FAMILY HAS FINAL MEETING

To the Wondrous Graduates of Family to Family
Glendale from Niki

I could not be more proud of each and every one of you and I miss my contact with you already. Thank you for the time, stories, good food, and hearts you shared. We are all enriched.

Trung, I tried to keep the flowers you gave me for as long as possible. Now I dry them and snipped a few for my Valentines arrangement. Rene, the gifts were so very thoughtful and literally "sweet" with my favorite Jolly Ranchers hiding inside! The little brown angel smiles down on me everyday while I sip ginger tea from my "Volunteers always caring always sharing" cup. and Gloria and Albert, the cards, tin of chocolate covered raisins and warmth that reflected the family feel I've come to rely on are precious to me.

I must note that the generous gifts that Molly and Eric made sure Glendale NAMI received, and the jump-start Michelle and Renne have begun in raising money for our walks, and the recycling that Albert and Gloria bring on Tuesdays with their son, and the volunteer Family Team Chair post Lee has taken on, are incredible reflections of the generosity of our entire class.

If I forgot to mention any gift given, any special treat shared, then I take the blame, so please send me updates of your progress and activism so I can continue tooting our horns! (like, Congratulations on becoming a grandmother, Joanne! We missed you. Please send us photos. How was the trips, Susan and Tracy? The party was not the same without you all).

Nothing is perfect, so they say. I may have not been the best family co-teacher for each one of you, but I certainly believe that each and everyone of you were the perfect ones for me to have in our class. I also believe that given a chance, each one of you can go on and be better family co-teachers than I set an example for. That is the way it should be. For this future, I am very proud.



Niki Davis and Jonee Shady with a F to F graduate.

PLAN OF CALIFORNIA

Carla Jacobs

PLAN of California helps families bridge the gap between what private insurance or the public mental health system provides and what is really needed so that their loved one with mental illness can thrive in society, experiencing a real quality of life. PLAN of California offers two distinct services. For help in the present, PLAN consults with families and refers them to reputable care providers via our "Pay-As-You-Go" PLAN. These contractors provide "extras" unavailable through the public system to improve the person's life and recovery in the here-and-now. PLAN's Special Needs Trust program allows families to provide for their relative's future. Direct inheritances can disqualify a disabled person for government benefits and few families have so many resources government services would be unnecessary. A Special Needs Trust protects those benefits.

PLAN walks the Trustors(s) through each step necessary to set up a Special Needs Trust and enjoin it to the Master Trust PLAN has with an institutional trustee who will have the fiduciary responsibility to invest and account for the funds placed into the trust, usually after the last parent's death, or incompetency. PLAN becomes the future "proxy parent" for the beneficiary of the Trust. PLAN will contract with and supervise a personal support person to give the person the care and attention of a family. PLAN approves purchases and expenditures by the Trust and is authorized to modify the person's service plan, if the beneficiary's needs substantially change. No institutional trustee can understand the special needs of a person disabled by severe mental illness. That is why PLAN of California was developed for and is governed by families of people with mental illness. Families know the necessity of sensitive, consistent and caring support for a person whose judgment may sometimes be impaired.

Just as a family would, PLAN can provide help in finding and moving to suitable housing; medication education/ management; help in obtaining and maintaining health care; homeless and criminal justice outreach/discharge planning; life skills tutoring; help in obtaining meaningful work or education; social activities/visits/friendship/ shopping/entertainment.

PLAN of California Bridges the Gaps between the System and the Need.

PLAN is expanding its services through its new "Bridging the Gaps" project. For families who cannot afford to hire a "Pay-As-You-Go" provider, PLAN is operating a free "help line" to counsel families on how to maximize access to the public mental health system. We are preparing fact sheets on issues such as understanding the involuntary process, working with the criminal justice system, effectuating jail diversion and applying for government benefits and providing referrals to local advocates who can personally help these families. PLAN is also building its endowment so that we

can continue services to PLAN beneficiaries if and when their Special Needs Trust funds run out and provide scholarships for our "Proxy Parent" services to families who have nothing to leave their relative except their love. Donations to the "Bridging the Gaps" project are warmly welcomed.

PLANNED LIFETIME ASSISTANCE NETWORK OF CALIFORNIA, 17602 SEVENTEENTH St., #102-240, Tustin, Ca 92780. Phone 888-574-1258 or email Carla Jacobs, Volunteer Executive Director, at

PLANofCalif@aol.com.

(PLAN of California is a 503 (c) charitable organization developed by NAMI-California and the Mental Health Association in 1990.)

FAMILY STUDY NEEDS SUBJECTS

Karen Cornelius

Dr. Michael F. Green (UCLA), who spoke at NAMI Glendale's February meeting, is launching a new family study which will explore the risk factors of schizophrenia. The study is officially known as COGS or the "Consortium on the Genetics of Schizophrenia" as it is an NIMH-funded multi-site study including UCSD, Harvard, Mount Sinai, University of Colorado and University of Washington.

The study will examine how the brain processes information in persons with schizophrenia as compared to parents and siblings without schizophrenia. In studying risk factors, we are getting closer to understanding this illness more in the hopes of creating more effective treatment options.

What will you be asked to do? An interview discussing your medical and personal history (may include history of your son/daughter/brother or sister with schizophrenia). About 4-5 hours of information processing tasks based on a computer and paper and pencil tasks. The electrical activity of your brain will be recorded (EEG) on a task and a small sample of blood (about 3-4 teaspoonfuls) will also be taken for DNA-study.

Who is eligible? We need both biological parents (can be located indifferent states) and at least one unaffected brother or sister and the individual who has schizophrenia. There are NO medication changes in this study and all participants will be asked to do the same things. Overall participation takes about 2-3 days depending on your schedule. We offer financial compensation, possible transportation, and inform you about all of the study details prior to any involvement on your part. All participation is voluntary, which means that you may choose to discontinue at any time during the study.

Dr. Green is a professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences at the Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA.

Please contact Dr. Karen Cornelius at 310-478-3711 extension 43929 if you are interested.

My Mother's Dance

Editor's Note: Every place I go I meet someone who has a loved one, or more than one loved one, who suffers from a mental illness. I met Bill just a few months ago and when he read this poem to me, I knew right away that we had something in common. I have introduced Bill to NAMI and I print this poem with his permission.

My mother swirls
in a dress of desire,
spinning wildly,
escaping the moment,
sending it careening
into a timeless void.
Careful, be careful!
a soundless voice screams
as the dance goes on.

Sweat glistens,
flying off
her aging body.
Spinning, swirling
through her dizzy spectacle.
A phantom hand reaches
from the void,
clawing, grasping
as the dance goes on.

The swirls slow
to circular staggers.
Faltering,
she fights
to throw off
the voidless grasp.
But the struggles
sweep the clouds
from her drugged ecstasy
as the dance goes on.

Her vision clears;
the monsters appear:
The mother with the bunned hair
and endless demands,
snapping her apron like a whip,
the ancestral vines
entangling a young woman
screaming for freedom
and a dance of her own.

A tall, lanky man appears
with stone eyes,
his rigid frame
never bending,
constantly displaying
the *Do Not Enter* sign
emblazoned over his heart.
My mother spins away
as the dance goes on.

Music reaches her;
she manages
one graceful swirl
before the horrors return:
Lights and cacophony
of a big city
attack her senses,
shadows leap out,
encircling her
as the dances goes on.

She strains for the beat,
but her screams
block the sound:
One, Two, Three...
uh...One...Two...
uh...Two...Three...!
The step is gone;
lost
as the dance goes on.

Breaking free
she runs,
frantically,
adrenalin flowing,
headlong
into a dark man
hiding in a corner
of the dance hall.
He grabs her gently;
she can feel his fear
matching hers.
He pushes her forward
as the dance goes on.

He takes her
in his arms,
clumsily
attempting a step;
she pushes him back
violently,

grasps his arms
and runs
from the dance hall.
Her savior,
her lover
kicks the prison gate aside,
and they run,
and run,
and run...
as the dance goes on.

Running,
she holds on
to herself
and his strength,
never looking back
or ahead,
only side to side.
Finally,
they stop,
feverish.
She wants to rest,
she says,
only for a moment.
Secretly,
she promises
never to swirl again.

But the dances goes on.
My mother hears
the distant music
luring
like a lost lover.
Memories of the swirls,
the spins,
the freedom
she could never
quite grasp
drift
in
and out.
Resoluteness,
sadness
envelope her
in a protective cloud,
closing off the universe.
The dance goes on,
it whispers in farewell,
but you
will not.

W.A. Weronka

