

## 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 **every** Tuesday at 6:00 PM at Arden House, 1552 Colorado Street, Glendale, at the corner of Colorado and Lincoln. We encourage you to come. Limited is parking available on the street. Please enter through the front door.

### MONTHLY NAMI MEETINGS AND EVENTS

**Tuesday, May 1, 2007**

**Speaker: Joy Lunt  
(Rescheduled from April)**

Joy Lunt, an RN with experience in both Medical-Surgical nursing as well as Psychiatric nursing returns. She began providing neurofeedback services in 1993. Since then she has worked with both children and adults with self regulation issues that range from Autism to Schizophrenia. She consults routinely with new providers and often presents at professional meetings that center around this technique.

At Tuesday's meeting she will be showing and talking about how we now have the ability to provide the brain with information about how to change patterns that are not working well and make them more efficient so that we can function better. This technique is completely noninvasive and is based on providing information about what the brain is doing moment by moment.

She will demonstrate as well as explain this exciting technique that is essentially a way of teaching the brain to self regulate.

### NAMI'S POSITION ON VIOLENCE AND MENTAL ILLNESS IN RESPONSE TO THE VIRGINIA TECH TRAGEDY

- The best predictor of violence is a past history of violence. Research and experts tell us that the likelihood of violence by people with mental illness is low.
- This tragedy is the result of complex issues; there are no quick legislative or other fixes to complicated problems.
- Efforts to label and further ostracize mental illness, or any other medical illness for that matter, will have the reverse effect and not ensure the health and safety of our communities; it will further prejudice and ostracize people, thus creating major barriers to treatment.
- Treatment works, if one can get it. The best way to ensure that people have access to the treatment they need is to adequately fund healthcare systems and to find ways to engage people in treatment and other supports that ensure recovery.

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TO: NAMI California Members  
FROM: Ralph E Nelson Jr, MD, President  
DATE: April 19, 2007

NAMI California extends its sympathy to all the families who have lost loved ones in the terrible tragedy at the Virginia Technology Institute (VTI). NAMI California is a grass roots organization of families and individuals whose lives have been affected by serious mental illness. We understand the need for compassion and support in times of mourning following any tragedy and loss.

When senseless acts of violence occur in our society, it allows all of us time for reflection on the nature of mental illnesses—what they are and what they are not— with regard to symptoms, treatment and risks of violence. In our experience, most people with a serious mental illness are more often the victims of violence rather than perpetrators. This is borne out by consistent research findings by the U.S. Surgeon General and National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH).

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NIMH researchers found that the odds of violence are often governed by factors other than psychotic symptoms. For example, violence was associated with young individuals who have been victimized, physically or sexually; or have co-occurring substance abuse. News reports state that Cho Seung Hui had been frequently bullied by others for his foreign heritage, his shyness, his speech and English language difficulties.

Ultimately, no one may be able to understand the motivations and actions of someone who commits premeditated murder. More importantly, we must, as a community, continue to understand the needs of people who have been victims in the past and to ensure that those with serious mental illness receive proper care in a time when services for them are being eliminated all around us. This includes both voluntary and involuntary services and supports when they are needed, whether or not the mentally ill individual realizes that they are necessary. Many cases similar to this one have the common pattern of "no follow-up" care after hospitalization. We advocate for lives of quality and respect, without discrimination and stigma, and we advance education and support for families who bravely continue their lives in the face of greatly misunderstood mental illnesses and brain diseases.

It is our mission to ensure the facts concerning the connection between mental illness and violence are fostered with accuracy with the American public. Ultimately the treatment and care for mentally ill individuals depends on it. This can be a matter of life and death.

If you would like to really learn the truth, we encourage you to read reports by U.S. Surgeon General and National Institute of Mental Health at the links below.

[www.surgeongeneral.gov/mentalhealth](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/mentalhealth)

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/press/schizophreniaviolence.cfm>

## SPECIAL NAMI FUNDRAISER ANNOUNCED

In a Hollywood press conference on Monday, April 23, the hit television show HOUSE announced a special promotion to benefit NAMI and help raise awareness on mental illness.

For a limited period, T-shirts from the show will be sold on-line (\$19.95)—with an auction of some signed by the cast. The shirts are emblazoned with the phrase "Everybody Lies" – one of the best-known "House-isms" often uttered by the brilliant, but cynical diagnostician Dr. Gregory House, who is the star of the show. The link to participate in this event is <http://shop.seenon.com/>



**DBSA GLENDALE – A SUPPORT GROUP  
for those suffering from depression and bi-polar  
disorder and their loved ones  
Glendale Adventist Medical Center  
1509 Wilson terrace, Glendale  
Thursdays 6 – 8 pm  
dbsaglendale@yahoo.com  
818.209.8442  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance  
[www.dbsalliance](http://www.dbsalliance)**

### **IMPORTANT NOTICE Verdugo Mental Health Parking Changes Our New Building is Coming!**



On or shortly after March 12, 2007, construction will begin on the new VMH clinic building. Construction will make the parking lot unavailable for use for one

year.

VMH has made arrangements for parking at the Eagle Rock Plaza at the corner of the 2 Freeway and East Colorado Street. A shuttle will transfer people from the parking area to the clinic and back on an approximately every 15 minute schedule. The parking area is located to the rear of the West side of the plaza on the upper level adjacent to the Macy's store. An identified shuttle pick up point will be located near the Macy's store in an alcove which was previously an entrance to the building. The pick up point at VMH will be at the Glen Roberts Child Study Center driveway.



**The GAMIGram, 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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## WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

### The Insanity of It All

Jonée Shady

For the past few issues you have read about the ridiculous treatment I have encountered when trying to deal with the Riverside County Jail. I must say I am beginning to wonder what is more insane: the mental health system or those who are patients in this system.

I have been visiting my brother on a regular basis while he sits in Riverside County Jail on what is called a court leave. I was able to attend a preliminary hearing which was for the purpose, as I understood, to determine whether or not the State could recommit him to Atascadero State Hospital. What I gathered from my brother was that he was not fighting this commitment and was going to be sent back to the hospital. This was good news since all patients have the right to oppose their commitments and he wasn't doing so.

So I am at the hearing and the Public Defender, Sylvia Graber, pleads with the judge to have him transported back to the hospital as he has waived his right to appear at these proceedings. The judge informs her that he had been ordered back the previous month. She went on to explain that this was a one-year commitment and that my brother had been sitting for over three months to return.

The court clerk then informs her that it is the hospital that is not accepting him because they have no beds. Now you tell me, is this insane? Neither of us can believe this so you know me! I immediately get on the phone and call his social worker. She returns my call and verifies that yes, indeed, they have no beds and they have

closed admissions. I explained that Nick was not a new patient. She understands but due to a staffing crisis, they had reduced their bed count down from 1200 to 900. Now that to me seems again insane. She explained that when patients are taken to court leave, their beds are filled and not held, and that usually due to turnover rates, a bed is available when the patient is ordered to return.

Not anymore. Nick arrived on December 7, 2006 which will make four months without treatment. Four months of medicine disbursements only. Four months of limited contact with family. Four months of non-contact visits. Four months of not being able to receive greeting cards or care packages. Four months of no incoming calls.

So if and when my brother goes back, he will have to go through this process every single year. I guess I am supposed to be grateful that half treatment is better than none? Now that's insane.

## GAMIGRAM HAS NEW LOOK

Jane Hancock

Let us know what you think of the *GAMIGram's* new look. The Board of Directors authorized the purchase of a color printer. With it we will be able to print flyers, important articles, and the *GAMIGram*.

We hope you like the smaller format. Even though the size is smaller, we will be able to print more articles of interest to NAMI Glendale members on a limitless number of pages more often. And because of the color, we can use more graphics and present photographs in color instead of black and white.

What would you like to read in this new publication? Let us hear from you.

## RESOURCE INFORMATION

- ❑ (PMRT) Psychiatric Mobile **Response Team**, (626) 2582004 for **crisis management**, Monday-Friday 8 am – 5pm. At other times use the Access Line.
- ❑ Access Line, 24-hr: (800) 854-7771 for information and consultation, and for Psychiatric Mobile Response Team **After Hours** and **Week ends**.
- ❑ (MET) operates 5 PM to 1 AM. Call Local Sheriff Station (or 911 if dire emergency) to request MET response. For general information: (562) 9037530.
- ❑ Family Advocate: John Griffin (213) 637-2311.
- ❑ LA Police/Mental Assessment Response Team System – wide Mental Assessment Response Team (SMART.)
- ❑ Mental Evaluation Unit (MEU) call (911) to request the MEU response.
- ❑ IF YOUR LOVED ONE IS ARRESTED CALL: DMH Jail Mental Health Services: John Davis, District Chief (213) 229-9991.
- ❑ Inmate Information Center (213) 473-6080 or (213) 473-6100.
- ❑ Jail Inpatient Unit: Neil Ortego, MD (213) 893-5391.
- ❑ Suicide Prevention Center, Crisis Line 24hrs 7 days (310)391-1253..
- ❑ **Friendship Line**: a toll free telephone help-line, run by people with mental illnesses seven days a week, 365 days a year, offers information about mental health resources and connection to crisis lines. Specially trained peer supporters are now available from 6 to 10 p.m. during the week and from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. on weekends and holidays. Give us a call at **888-448-9777**.

## NAMIWALKS REPRESENTATIVE NEEDED

Jonée Shady

**May is Mental Health month. Display your silver ribbons proudly. What can we do to raise awareness about Mental Illness? What can we do to fight the stigma that is associated with Mental Illness? Keep talking, keep writing, keep advocating, and share our stories.**

I mention the above as I write to say that NAMI Glendale needs you. I realize that we are all on this tough journey as we try to advocate and care for our loved ones who suffer from serious brain disorders. We are here for you every week at our weekly share and care but now I must ask for your help.

NAMI Walks LA is being planned for October 6, 2007, at Santa Monica Promenade and it will be the 4<sup>th</sup> annual walk in LA County. NAMI Glendale has been a full participant for the past three years and we have successfully raised funds as we walked to raise awareness and fight stigma. But for some reason this year we find ourselves without a walk representative from our affiliate.

In order for us to share in the revenues of funds raised, we must agree to fully participate and we are desperate for a walk representative. Nikki Davis was our first year representative, Carmen Fonseca and I the second year, and Judy rose and Eric Erpenbeck last year. These individuals donated their time so that we as an affiliate could be as successful as we were. We need one or two volunteers to fill their shoes. I know our time is limited but I can think of no better way of giving back than to be part of such a beautiful and worthwhile event.

Walk representatives meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month as part of the planning committee which is run by Charlie Hearn of NAMI Patton. There are about 10 affiliates of LA County participating. Each affiliate will take on one task in preparation for the actual walk. The walk representative will act as the liaison between the planning committee, our affiliate, and our community.

If you would be interested in helping us out, please contact Jonée Shady by e-mail [sh8djb@earthlink.net](mailto:sh8djb@earthlink.net) or phone (323) 610-1009 as soon as possible.

## COMMENTARY: MIKE MILLER

### What NAMI Can Learn from AARP

I am old enough to be a member of the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) so I get their magazine and keep apprized of their activities. Most significant is their clout as a watchdog and promoter of the public good for older Americans. They watch out for the health interests of citizens including Medicare. The fact that many people with disabilities from mental illness are also on Medicare means that AARP helps protect many Americans, not just those over a certain age. Also, many of the problems they confront are confronted by all citizens, regardless of age. One such problem is the power of the drug companies.

The drug companies deserve to make profits. The drug companies also do good. Their research and product development is crucial to the health and well-being of millions including those who confront mental health issues. Nevertheless, there is a limit. As former President Clinton warned in a recent speech in Los Angeles, the Congress is held hostage by the drug companies. A vivid example of this was presented by the television news show *Sixty Minutes* in a recent presentation showing how Congress trumped the will of 90% of the population by precluding legislation that would have authorized the government to negotiate drug prices with the drug companies concerning the Medicare Part D benefits. Among other things, the show featured two Republicans who admitted that unprecedented procedures and power trading occurred to force this bill into defeat. Also, key congressional staff members and even some members of congress subsequently left their governmental positions to assume high paying jobs for the drug companies. This is in addition to the millions of dollars in campaign contributions from drug companies.

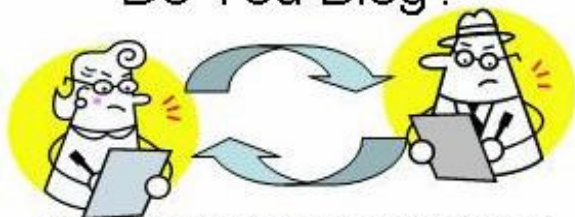
A news article from CBS dated August 29, 2006, reports, "The pharmaceutical industry quietly footed the bill for at least part of a recent multimillion-dollar ad campaign praising law makers who support the new Medicare prescription drug benefit." The ad campaign was done by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, but the money came from the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America.

Just last week the Senate blocked legislation that would let the government negotiate Medicare drug prices. AARP said it would continue to push for allowing governmental negotiations. Of course, these negotiations may benefit citizens, but they will cut into the profit margin of the drug companies. So, why shouldn't the drug companies be allowed to maximize profits while the rest of us, including the millions of older Americans and disabled of all ages, have no say in the process?

I have written NAMI National about accepting money from the drug companies. I have suspicions that NAMI National accords too much influence to drug companies and not enough to others who can help battle mental illness. NAMI needs to heighten its awareness of the reality that the drug companies have too much power. NAMI needs to act more like AARP and protect the ability of all Americans to have

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## Do You Blog?



Do you have something to share or journal? Join the crowd at [www.namiglendale.blogspot.com](http://www.namiglendale.blogspot.com)

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access to fairly priced drugs. NAMI needs to consider the big picture which affects millions of Americans who suffer because the drug companies wield too much clout.

The legislation concerning Medicare Part D (drug program) was drafted largely by the drug companies, rushed through the Congress without proper consideration, and served as a catalyst to pay off some in the legislative process. We used to call this a scandal. Now, it seems to be business as usual.

About 22 million seniors and the disabled are enrolled in the Medicare drug benefit plans. As many of you know, the disabled (those on SSI, SSDI etc.) usually cannot work full time and suffer economically. The fact that the government cannot negotiate on their behalf with regard to a governmental program (Medicare) so that drug companies can profit, profit, profit, makes no sense.

I am a moderate American. I am not for extensive government regulation, but I do believe that issues that involve the well being of the public sometimes need government to help assure that the "people" are protected. It is always a matter of degree. When it comes to the public health, safety and welfare, nothing is more crucial than medical care. The private profit orientation of medical care in America has served the public in many ways. Nevertheless, there are limits. Unregulated capitalism of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century gave us abuse of children in the work place, dangerous work place environments, filthy food with disease, and so on. The political inability to rein in the drug companies in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century is giving us too many medical hardships, too much personal financial hardship, too much promotion of drugs over other alternatives, and too much tilting of the public good to benefit a very few rich people. Wake up America. Wake up NAMI. Watch AARP and follow their lead to a balanced and fair approach to the provision of medical care to Americans.



**JOIN NAMI – YOU ARE NOT ALONE**  
**\$35.00 PER INDIVIDUAL OR FAMILY**  
**MEMBERSHIP MAKES YOU A MEMBER OF THE**  
**STATE AND NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.**  
 Make checks payable to NAMI Glendale and  
 mail to NAMI Glendale Treasurer, Wayne  
 Baldaro, c/o Verdugo Mental Health, 1540 E.  
 Colorado, Glendale, CA 91205.  
 GAMIgram only - \$10.00

Dear members of NAMI Glendale:

I am delighted to inform you of a new on-line learning resource designed exclusively for families who have an adult relative with a mental illness.

[www.CareInAction.com](http://www.CareInAction.com) features in-depth, interactive guidebooks that help families capably transform chaos into opportunities to help their relative while preserving their own stability.

I am a family member, a member of NAMI, a Family-to-Family trainer, a clinician, and an administrator of mental health services. My crew and I bring our personal and professional commitment and want to be of service to other families. We created a site that offers a multitude of learning resources as well as a nurturing and supportive environment.

When families purchase a guidebook about a particular topic they gain access to a downloadable PDF format that guides them through practical information that can dramatically improve their ability to manage their journey of care. They also gain access to a conversation space designed specifically for the guidebook where they'll have opportunities to learn and share with other families who are working through the same material.

Our aim is to empower families to take on the challenges the illness brought into their lives with greater strength, skill and clarity. I am confident that this website will bring families additional sustenance and support

Would you mind sharing the information about this new resource to the families you are supporting? We also want to tap into the wisdom of the community of families and always welcome your input and feedback. Please feel free to contact us at [info@careinaction.com](mailto:info@careinaction.com) or at (206) 855-9727.

May all families and their ill relative find the strength and nurturance they need to access the beauty of life!

Sincere best wishes,

Bea Dixon, Ph.D.  
 Founder

[www.CareInAction.com](http://www.CareInAction.com)

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Missed an issue? Want to share a GamiGram with someone? Use the online GamiGram Archive to view previous issues and share great articles and information with others. Here is the link.  
[http://namiglendale.org/gamigram\\_archives.htm](http://namiglendale.org/gamigram_archives.htm)

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