

GAMIGram



Volume 18 Issue 6

NAMI Glendale

November/December 2003

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, December 2, 2003 – 6 to 8 pm.

It's Holiday Party Time. This year we will **NOT** have a potluck. The NAMI Glendale Board voted to thank you all by providing refreshments. So leave your salads and desserts and chicken wings at home and come enjoy each other's company, do some sharing and caring, and find pleasure in a special opportunity to give.

Another change in our usual pattern. Instead of bringing a white elephant gift to exchange, bring an unwrapped new game to donate to the Glen Roberts Child Study Center. See Page 2 of this newsletter for suggestions.

We'll eat, play some games, sing some songs, and install the officers for 2004. Please join us.

Saturday, December 6, 2003 – 2 to 4 pm.

NAMI Walk Pep Rally. Come learn about the Los Angeles County NAMI Walk planned for May 22, 2004. Let's get hyped! This is an information meeting and kick-off rally. You are urged to attend this very important meeting and bring along 5 - 10 potential volunteers. Contact friends, family, co-workers, neighbors, sponsors. Do not forget the agencies, churches, colleges and businesses that you frequent; bring them along with you. Sandy Villano, President of Los Angeles County Coordinating Council, says, "Lets show our Nation that Los Angeles is not just about Fires, Floods, Earthquakes and Michael Jackson."

Where: St. Anne's Conference Center, 155 North Occidental Blvd., Los Angeles, 90026.

When: December 6, 2003, 2-4pm.

Turn to Page 2 for more events to remember.

WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Jane S. Hancock

I often write about my son Richard in this column, but not this month. This time I am writing about my husband Fred, me, and our son Roger. It's not a story about mental illness but it is a story about hospitals and has a moral. If it could happen to us, it could happen to anyone.

I drove Fred to the hospital for a routine procedure, a colonoscopy. We went to admitting and were greeted by a friendly person behind the desk who asked us questions and took his referral and insurance cards to copy. "Are you married?" she asked. "Fifty-two years," Fred answered and added as he always does, looking at me, "and if I had to do it again, I'd marry the same woman all over again." She smiled and said, "Congratulations" and then looked at me. "Date of birth?" she asked. "Mine?" I questioned. "Yes, because you are the next of kin." So I told her. "Don't you want to know his birthday too?" I asked. After all, he was the patient. "No," she said. "Don't need it."

Fred signed his name on several releases, she strapped the plastic identification tag on his wrist, and off we went, papers in hand, to the third floor. A nurse took the paper work and invited us to wait a few minutes. Someone would be back to call us.

In no time at all we heard a voice call out, "Roger Hancock." I spoke up. "Fred, not Roger." But she ignored us. Soon she came back again, calling "Roger Hancock." This time I stopped her. "This is Fred Hancock. Roger is our son. You mean Fred Hancock." She looked at the papers in front of her and then asked us to check the wrist band. There it was. Roger Hancock, not Fred.

In 1980 when our son Roger was seventeen years old, he spent a month in that hospital. Why didn't the person in admitting need Fred's birthday? Because she had it—or thought she had. 1963! That was Roger's year of birth, our son who is now 40 years old. Why didn't she think it odd that a 40-year-old person had been married 52 years? Or that the signature signed didn't match the name? I don't know.

Luckily we didn't have to go back to admitting to make the changes but changes had to be made before he could have the procedure. No wonder we hear stories about people getting the wrong operations! All that is needed is a simple clerical error!

More Events to Remember

Sunday, December 7, 2003 – 11 am.

NAMI-Inglewood and FaithNet invite us all to church!

Understanding Principles for Better Living Church
Wyndham Bel Age Hotel
1020 N San Vicente Blvd
West Hollywood, CA 90069
RSVP to Alpha Tyler (213) 351-2874

Tuesday, January 6, 2004 Speaker's Meeting

NAMIWalks for the the minds of America. You are invited to become a part of a history-making event! LA County prepares to fight stigma, raise awareness and generate funds on our largest scale ever by holding its 1st Annual NAMI WALK. As you know, each year thousands of walks raise considerable public awareness and hundreds of millions of dollars for a myriad of national health problems, but up to now, never for mental illness. Niki Davis will speak and show the NAMIWalks video. Come learn the steps needed to generate change and solvency in our troubled times. May 22, 2004, is not only a date, but a movement. Whether or not you have ever participated in a walkathon, a 5k race, or a huge fund-raising effort, your help is needed. We will also learn how to keep Verdugo Mental Health alive and well by supporting the 2nd annual VMH 5K/10K FUN WALK n' RUN on March 6, 2004.

Saturday, December 13, 2003

Glen Roberts Child Study Center is having their annual Christmas party on Saturday, December 13th. Glen Roberts provides psychological and psychiatric services to children, adolescents and their families. These children may come from backgrounds of severe neglect, abuse, parental drug addiction and abandonment. They struggle with depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, and in some cases, psychosis. Many of their clients come from impoverished families, and Glen Roberts Christmas Party will be the only celebration they will have this season. This year Glen Roberts is conducting a drive to collect as many new



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.

President and Editor: Jane S. Hancock

children's games as possible to distribute to their clients and their siblings. By giving games this year, Glen Roberts hopes to encourage family together time. Glen Roberts is requesting that the games be delivered to the Center no later than Monday, December 8.

The games recommended for each age group are as follows:

3-6: Candyland, Chutes and Ladders, Cooties, Don't Break the Ice, Don't Spill the Beans, Hi Ho Cherry O, and Hungry, Hungry Hippos.

6-11: Battleship, Checkers, Clue Junior, Connect Four, Guess Who, Jenga, Mancala, Monopoly Junior, Sorry, Trouble, any type of UNO.

12 and Older: Battleship, Chess, Clue, Jenga, Life, Monopoly, Othello, Scrabble, Sequence, Sorry, Stratego, Trouble.

Glen Roberts is located at 1530 E. Colorado Street, Glendale, CA 91205. For further questions, please call the Center at 818-244-0222.

BRIEFLY NOTED

NAMI Glendale Family-to-Family Education Course Niki Davis and Jonee Shady

We have completed five classes in the course and it has been an amazing journey. Our class is full (19) and our members so valuable and helpful towards each other. Many of our students are NAMI Glendale members, of which we am so proud (Forrest Barker, Lee Eskey, Tracy Hall, Gloria and Albert Lug have been wonderful!). Special thanks to Tracy Hall for spreading the news about the course to her coworkers. We have three wonderful family members from The Sycamores (In-Home Family Services) in South Pasadena because of Tracy's recommendation. Another special thanks goes to Susan Eyraud and Verdugo Mental Health for the accommodations donated for our class each Thursday night. We break for Thanksgiving and Christmas and then continue through January. 2004.

SCRIP Information

It is easier than ever to buy groceries and contribute to NAMI Glendale at the same time. We no longer sell SCRIP at the meetings because Ralphs' has an easier plan, a new program. All we need from you is the number on your Ralphs' card. We register that number with them and then (when the strike is over!) every time you buy, a certain percentage is automatically credited to NAMI Glendale. Isn't that easy? You don't even have to come to the meetings (although we wish you would). All you have to do is let Kay Connus (818.248.8045) know the number on your card and we are in business. This is an important fund-raiser for us and we need your help.

A check for our percentage (4 or 5 percent depending upon amount purchased) will be mailed quarterly to NAMI Glendale along with a quarterly statement. This statement will be available to you when you figure your taxes. Please sign up.

SO NOW WHAT?

Jean Lee Scherkey

"Depression is an opportunity for change." In all the research and self-help literature I have absorbed since realizing my mother's diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia and mine of major depression, I have never read more poignant and truer words. This is the message of the book "The Secret Strength of Depression" written by Frederic Flach, M.D., K.H.S. Karen Cornelius, Psy.D, Glendale NAMI's October speaker, also emphasized the overwhelming need for loved ones and those suffering from mental illness to turn what appears to be a negative into something positive. I had chosen long ago to make my mantra and battle cry "CHANGE!", to embrace the metamorphosis from chaos to beauty and enlightenment. I know my life will never be the same. I will never regain a "normal" happy childhood filled with security and friendship. I cannot travel back and recapture my twenties, an entire decade lost to the madness of caring for someone who did not wish to be well.

I look to my younger sister, who escaped the clutches of my mother's schizophrenia five years before I did, and I sometimes weep hollow tears that will never dry. She graduated Summa cum Laude from the University of Minnesota, has an adoring husband and a beautiful son. So much of me is overjoyed for her more than deserving happiness, but part of me mourns, as if I were robbed, raped, of all those simple, precious pleasures.

However, when I think on all that I have gained from my depression and surviving my mother's schizophrenia, I know how blessed I am. It is true; I do not have the life I dreamed I would as a girl. But after you mourn the losses, which I believe is vital to every recovery; you begin to see all the new skills acquired and a hidden grace bloom. I have always known within me that whatever path my life took, I would want to make a difference, and this life-long goal can now be fulfilled through mental health advocacy. I may never be a mother, but I have learned how wonderful it is to be an aunt. The hyper vigilance of my mother's paranoia has sharpened my observation skills. My mother's schizophrenia has always been obsessed with invisible powers in the air and on individuals. But through my mother's schizophrenia, I have learned to judge a person on character, not on physical or monetary attributes. And most of all, my depression has taught me perseverance and grace, for if I just hold on through the void and death of the dark pit engulfing me, I can endure and survive anything.

Our lives are forever changed, whether you are the sufferer of mental illness, a family member, or both. But without the faith that good can come from tragedy, we will remain lost forever. I challenge all who read this to find the positive, the hope, the change in yourself and your loved one, for I believe this is the road that will lead you to the miracles that lie ahead.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SAVE THE DATE! Dust off your walking shoes a couple of months early. Verdugo Mental Health is having their annual 5K/10K Run/Walk Fundraiser on Saturday, March 6, 2004. Come and lend your support by walking, passing out water, or helping wherever needed. Let's show our appreciation for all the services they provide Glendale NAMI and help make their walk a huge success. This will put the spring in your step and rev you up for NAMI's walk in May.

The PATH Regional Homeless Center is now open! It is located at 340 N. Madison Ave, Los Angeles. The center is open Monday – Thursday from 7:30 am – 4:30 pm, and on Fridays from 7:30 am – 1:00 pm. They are closed the last Friday of every month. PATH offers 180 day transitional housing, medical and psychological care, public services for children and adults, homeless court, Travelers Aid and The Vera Beauty Salon. For more information please call 323-644-2216.

Thank you! Kay Connus would like to thank all of her NAMI friends for the much appreciated plaque award and acknowledgement received at the luncheon on October 4, 2003. She also received flowers from Verdugo Mental Health and a plant from NAMI Glendale. "Many, many thanks!" she says.

Donations. We wish to thank Diane Rodgers for the donations to NAMI Glendale from her friends in honor of her sister Sharon Feola who died on August 6, 2003.

We received another donation recently from Eric Poppick who is attending our Family to Family meetings. All donations received are used to purchase new books, videos, or other educational material for the benefit of our members.

Book Recommendation. *Speaking of Sadness- Depression, Disconnection and the Meaning of Illness* by David A. Karp, Oxford University Press (1996). Recommended by Michael Miller and reviewed by the *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune*: Millions of people who suffer from long and excruciating depression will recognize themselves in these pages. *Speaking of Sadness* provides an open challenge to wrestle with difficult questions. The palpable, personal familiarity with false turns in the labyrinth of depression makes *Speaking of Sadness* a distinctive contribution in the literature of this field.

Mr. Karp is a noted sociologist with severe depression. The book is well-written and illuminating. He interviewed fifty people with depression as a partial source for his book. Their reality jumps from the pages.



WALK FOR NAMI. WALK.

OFFICERS ANNOUNCED FOR 2004

Co-Presidents

Jane Hancock and Jean Lee Scherkey

Vice-President

Dorothy Meyer

Recording Secretaries

Lee Eskey and Tom Stemshorn

Treasurer

Kay Connus

Corresponding Secretary

Niki Davis

NEWS FROM NAMI NATIONAL

CUSTODY RELINQUISHMENT STORY BANK

NAMI needs help spreading the word to state and local networks that NAMI national has created an online story bank for families that have either faced the prospect or actually given up custody of their child to access mental health treatment and services. The story bank is included on the NAMI Child & Adolescent Action Center section of the NAMI public web site.

NAMI is collecting these family stories to help in our advocacy efforts to enact federal legislation--the Keeping Families Together Act (S. 1704/H.R. 3243). Family stories are extraordinarily powerful. This bipartisan-supported legislation holds real promise for state-wide systems reform. Read more about the legislation on the NAMI web site.

LAWYERS NEEDED

NAMI maintains a list of lawyers around the country willing to accept referrals of pertinent cases involving people living with mental illnesses or their families. Currently, there are several hundred attorneys on the list. Periodically callers are referred to attorneys on lists maintained by other organizations such as the American Bar Association and the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel (ACTEC). Although NAMI sends these attorneys a questionnaire to assess their experience and areas of expertise, we do not have the capacity to monitor their performance in individual cases or vouch for the quality of their work. Nevertheless, we receive large numbers of calls from people seeking legal assistance and therefore would like to expand our list as much as possible. If you or your members know of attorneys in your states or communities with specific expertise or commitment to helping consumers or their families, please contact Stuart Broad, Stuart@nami.org, or Elise Resnick, Elise@nami.org, and provide names and mailing addresses. We will send these attorneys a cover letter and short questionnaire inquiring about their willingness to be included on our list. Thank you for your help!

CONVENTION NEWS

NAMI's 25th Anniversary Convention will be held in Washington, D.C., September 8-12, 2004. Remind your

members to register by December 31, 2003 for the special First-on-Board rate of only \$175. The Convention will be held at the Washington Hilton and Towers Hotel located at 1919 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, DC 20009. For reservations call: 1/800-HILTONS or 202/483-3000. Room Rates are \$119/single or \$129/double, plus 14.5% tax, per night. And don't forget that convention workshop proposals are due December 20!

NAMI'S CAMPAIGN FOR THE MIND OF AMERICA

NAMIs Campaign for the Mind of America is a grassroots initiative to increase access to mental health treatment services by changing public policies and priorities at the local, state and federal levels.

The Campaign emphasizes our nations need to dramatically improve access to treatment particularly among young Americans; assure the positive outcomes associated with early diagnosis and treatment; assure access to a full range of evidence-based practices, including appropriate medications and community-based supports such as supported employment and housing; and improve communities overall health, education, business and public safety by assuring access to effective mental health services.

The Campaign consists of a 3-tiered strategy to improve access to treatment and services. The specific elements include national and state action networks and the Matters of Fact initiative that build consensus on reform through public outreach activities. Community leaders are partnering with NAMI because they are aware of how untreated mental disorders affect every community particularly in the arenas of education, business, law enforcement and overall health care. Clear solutions need to be outlined so that policymakers and community leaders see an urgent problem that is solvable today.

Key campaign messages are half a century of inadequate mental health policy has failed people with serious mental disorders and now compels community leaders to act; in every community, this public health crisis is having devastating effects on education, law enforcement, health care and business. Community leaders agree: we must act together now.

MEMBERSHIP FOR YEAR 2004

Membership in NAMI Glendale makes you a member of the state and national organizations.

Full membership for individual or family is \$30.00 yearly. Make checks payable to NAMI Glendale and mail to Membership Chairman, Kay Connus, c/o Verdugo Mental Health, 1540 E. Colorado, Glendale, CA 91205.

GAMIGram only - \$10.00.

States involved in the initial launch are Iowa, Florida, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts and West Virginia.

- * State professional organizations link together to highlight the problem and proposed solutions
- * Technical support from NAMI helps affiliates build these networks
- * Media support helps educate the public, community leaders, and policymakers on the problem and solutions

Key Policy Objectives
In order to advocate for effective system change, the following specific policy objectives have been developed for the Campaign. Individual states may adapt these goals in light of the unique circumstances and needs of the state.

1. Institute partnerships between mental health professionals and child-serving professionals to identify and treat school age children with mental disorders.
2. Commit to preserve three essential components of mental health services: early detection and treatment, crisis intervention and acute care, and comprehensive community-based support.
3. Develop programs that treat children and adolescents at home in their communities and prevent institutionalization.
4. Train police officers in crisis intervention and provide mental health backup in response to psychiatric emergencies.
5. Create a state plan to provide appropriate housing supports for people with mental disorders.
6. Create a blue ribbon panel led by the governor to recommend how business and government can work together to promote the employment of people with mental disorders.
7. Issue an annual report on state expenditures and services in support of those with mental disorders with outcomes evaluated.

3. **Matters of Fact**
A policy research and education component will support the national and

state action networks with public outreach activities.

- * A steering Committee helps direct the research focus of the Campaign
- * A literature survey tells us what we already know and can say publicly
- * Additional research fills in the knowledge gaps
- * National and state media coverage makes a science-based case that the system is broken, but that we have solutions

NAMI members will be given special materials, training and participation opportunities at the Winter Leadership Conference, January 16-18, 2004. The nationally improved "NAMI visibility" will give all advocates empowerment through the Campaign for the Mind of America to act together and change the nation.

For more information contact the NAMI Resource Information Line 800.950.6264 and ask for Campaign for the Mind of America member services information. Access the NAMI website at www.nami.org for full reporting on the Campaign launch event and ongoing action

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neurodevelopment. His laboratory has explored the relationship between neurocognitive deficits in schizophrenia and activities of daily living, and the neurocognitive effects of antipsychotic and adjunctive medications. He has written two books: *Schizophrenia from a Neurocognitive Perspective: Probing the Impenetrable Darkness*, published in 1998, and *Schizophrenia Revealed: From Neurons to Social Interactions*, published in 2001.

Biosketch for M.F. Green

Michael Foster Green, Ph.D. is a Professor in the Department of Psychiatry

and Biobehavioral Sciences at the Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, and is

Director of the Treatment Unit of the Department of Veteran Affairs VISN 22

Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center (MIRECC). Dr. Green

obtained his B.A. in psychobiology at Oberlin College, his doctorate in

neuropsychology at Cornell University, and he received postdoctoral training

in neuropsychology at UCLA. He is on the editorial boards of *Cognitive*

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Probing the Impenetrable Darkness, published in 1998, and Schizophrenia

Revealed: From Neurons to Social Interactions, published in 2001.

Let me know!

Karen

- Our guest speakers for April 6, 2004, will be a panel from California Clinical Trials. California Clinical Trials has just moved their headquarters from Beverly Hills to Glendale Adventist Hospital. They are very interested in getting to know members of the community so that they can offer the best care to their patients and the patient's family members. It is a rare opportunity to discover the world of pharmaceutical research. Roger Rignack, Manager of Advertising and Recruitment Services, will be one of the panel members that evening, and he has given NAMI Glendale an open invitation to tour their facilities. This promises to be an exceptional evening.

Love from niki davis and Jonee Shady, co-teachers.

