

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 parking is available on the street. Please enter through the front door.

MONTHLY NAMI MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Peer to Peer Class for Mental Health Consumers begins 9/25/07 in West LA

NAMI Westside-LA is sponsoring its first Peer to Peer Education Course, a free, nine week course given by mental health consumers, for mental health consumers. It is a course on the topic of recovery for any person with serious mental illness who is interested in establishing and maintaining wellness. The course is a combination of lecture, interactive exercises and structured group processes, and includes information on stigma, discrimination, relapse prevention planning, coping strategies, empowerment and advocacy.

NEWS FROM VERDUGO MENTAL HEALTH

Lynn Brandstater

Verdugo Mental Health clients, families, and staff were upset to learn of the Governor's budget veto of the AB 2034 program. VMH has sixteen client slots for this program. We're awaiting news from the advocates at the State level about any legal fixes to this devastating news. At the same time, we are hopeful Los Angeles County will find a way to keep the program up and running while those longer range efforts play out.

Staff will form a team to support the upcoming NAMI Walk. We realize how important it is never to let the public forget the issues impacting our mental health community, and the Walk is a great way to do that.

The VMH website has been updated for the new business year and suggestions are still welcome. Take a look at www.vmh.org.

Breakneck races for the last available close-by parking spaces, dust on shoes, and colorful construction worker language filled the summer. All that is well worth the fact the new clinic building is right on schedule with

completion still slated for December. Verdugo Mental Health thanks NAMI Glendale members for their patience at meetings with all the disruption.

Hope and Recovery

Niki Davis



There is an event at the end of June each year that I wish every NAMI member in the county would attend . . . at least once. The 'Hope and Recovery Conference' put on by the Office of Consumer Affairs of the LA County Department of Mental Health is phenomenal.

I remember the first one I ever attended... it was around 1999. Susan Ziemer Brender was still alive and kicking butt for her clients. (Susan was a beloved NAMI Glendale member and Verdugo Mental Health staff). She gathered a group of VMH clients up and took us to an all-day conference put on for and by other folks living with severe psychiatric diagnoses. I was in awe to hear the keynote speaker tell of the days he was out on the streets or in jail as he grappled with the near-death sentence of severe schizophrenia and all the issues that come with the journey of being a mental health client. His story seemed more hopeless than my own, as I struggled through my drug haze to listen. Somehow, this man went from losing everything and eating out of garbage to a recovery process that included a full time advocacy job, a home, car, and family and friends who cared for him. (It was noted that 75% of those diagnosed with schizophrenia actually recover given enough time).

I still tear up as I remember. I did not know then that people can create a life of purpose and love once they fall down the rabbit hole marked "severe mental illness." All I wanted to know was, how can I create such a life for myself?

The secret was in the first name of the conference: HOPE. At this conference, I learned what hope was. If he can do it, so can I.

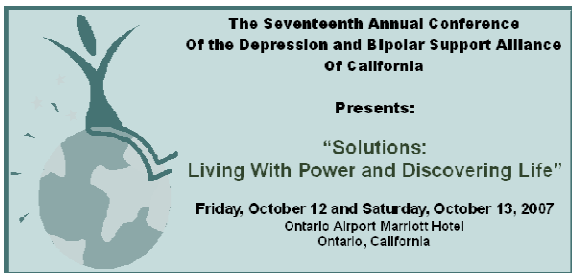
Who would know that by 'Hope and Recovery 2006,' I would be a speaker telling my own story of recovery. In the audience were my mother, my father, my partner, and my sister. That conference forever changed all of us. To have my family witness what I did so many years ago . . . that recovery is not only possible, but to be expected.

This June's 'Hope and Recovery 2007' was no less magical to me. Tears still came to me as our speakers

emphasized that when I believe I can recover, and then I become willing to do what is necessary to recover. Step 1 is Begin. Step 2 is Keep Going. We learned that everyone's pathway is unique... that we must follow our dreams and drive our treatment as we surround ourselves with folks who also believe we can recover. We learned that our feelings are not symptoms and that we deserve respect for our wealth of experience in our own unique lives.

Even if the mission to transform ourselves or our system of care seems impossible at times, we were told that it is well worth the effort, we learned that we can advocate for a mental health system that is grounded in wellness, as we transform our own lives to also be grounded in wellness. We learned that our dreams make our lives meaningful and are at the center of our recovery.

We need dreams. We need hope. We need each other. We need family and friends who know to say, "I don't know what the future holds, but I will be there with you." We need more family members and mental health staff to attend 'Hope and Recovery.' Please join me next year. The possibilities of recovery will astound you and perhaps you too will be transformed by the unstoppable power of hope.



For more information go to www.californiadbsa.org

WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Walking Together Shows Support

Joneè Shady

Let's walk together on October 6, 2007, at the Santa Monica Promenade to stamp out stigma and raise funds to improve the quality of those living with serious mental illness. Your planning committee has been working for several months to organize and contact sponsors for our fourth annual NAMI Walks LA County. I am asking for one day of your time to walk with us and kick off Mental Health Awareness week.

I know at times it seems that things will never get better for our loved ones. I know at times we feel like there is nothing we can do. I know at times we simply are tired. But remember one of our principles of support: "We will never give up hope." NAMI is dedicated to improving the lives of our own loved ones. NAMI provides education and support for families. Things have gotten better but we know we have a long way to go.

Many of our own families have been helped by our Family to Family classes. Many of you come weekly to our support group. Many of you have used our library. Many of you visit our website and of course read this great newsletter that our

own Jane Hancock edits every month. It is time now to give back for that support.

I am asking that you walk with me. You can become a team captain and ask 10 of your friends to walk with us or you can join a team. To join my team, click on the following link and sign up to walk www.nami.org/namiwalks07/LOS/jonees (Team Page). You can then create a walker page and ask your friends to sponsor you.

If you cannot make the walk and wish to contribute, you can click on the following link and sponsor me as a walker www.nami.org/namiwalks07/LOS/joneesW

(Walker Page). The choice is yours but we really need you to participate in any way that you can. You can even create your own team.

Together we can make a difference and we want the community to see us en masse as we walk down the beautiful Santa Monica Promenade and show our support for all of those who suffer from a serious brain disorder.

Are you ready to JUMP START your career in human services?

Do you see injustice in the world around you?
Do you want a career where you can help people?
Do you enjoy problem solving and team work?

JUMP START is an incredible career training opportunity in the mental health field. This fellowship program is open to graduates with a BA or a BS in any discipline. **JUMP START** is a FREE 15-week, full-time, post-graduate, experiential fellowship. It provides both philosophical and skills-based training as well as field experience for students looking to enter the mental health field.

Participants will:
Receive a lunch/travel stipend of \$10 a day with the opportunity to receive a signing bonus of \$500 at the end of the training.
Receive invaluable training that will prepare them for work in the mental health field.
Intern with potential employers.
Interact with and learn from nationally recognized leaders in the mental health field.
To receive an application please email: jumpstart@mhela.org

JUMP START begins Sept 10, 2007
Classes take place at CSU Dominguez Hills
Applications are due August 15, 2007
Preference will be given to people recovering from mental illness and their family members

JOIN NAMI – YOU ARE NOT ALONE
\$35.00 PER INDIVIDUAL OR FAMILY
MEMBERSHIP MAKES YOU A MEMBER OF THE
STATE AND NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.

Please make checks payable to:
NAMI Glendale

Mail to: NAMI Glendale Treasurer, Wayne Baldaro, c/o Verdugo Mental Health, 1540 E. Colorado, Glendale, CA 91205.
GAMlgram only - \$10.00

www.namiglendale.org

RESOURCE INFORMATION

- ❑ (PMRT) Psychiatric Mobile **Response Team**, (626) 258-2004 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) 903-7530.
- ❑ 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 a.m. 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**.

How to Help NAMI

There are a variety of ways to help support your NAMI affiliate. Here are a few. Maybe you too have a suggestion. Please let us know.

If you do your grocery shopping at Ralphs you can help NAMI Glendale. Go to www.ralphs.com and enroll in the **Community Contribution Program**. Each time you shop at Ralphs NAMI will receive a donation from Ralphs.

Do you read? Do you use Amazon to purchase items? If you use any of our on-line links at the NAMI Glendale website to the Amazon on-line store, any purchases help NAMI Glendale.

Many employers have matching dollar programs whereby if an employee donates money to an organization, the company also makes a donation. Ask your human resources department if the company has such a policy. If they do, consider making a contribution to NAMI.

This year NAMI Glendale has contributed to the Verdugo Mental Health Facility expansion, to the local DBSA chapter, to Project Return, and to a Holiday Program at Patton State Hospital. To be able to continue to do these things and more for our community we need the support of you, our members, and the support of professionals, organizations and groups that want to make a difference.

Your support as members counts. It matters to the decision makers when we use our collective voices on issues that effect our loved ones. It matters that we use that voice to battle stigma and elevate the needs of those who suffer from mental illnesses. It lets those who do suffer know that they have a community that cares and fights for them.

Do You Have a Question about HIPAA?

The Department of Health and Human Services has developed a website for anyone with questions about patient privacy and rights that caregivers have. To use the site go to

<http://www.hhs.gov/hipaafaq/index.html>

The California Memorial Project

By Lori Shephard



The California Memorial Project is a collaborative effort between the Peer/Self-Advocacy Unit at Protection & Advocacy, Inc., the California Network of Mental Health Clients, and Capital People First and other local people first chapters.

People with developmental and mental disabilities share a common history at state institutions. Our movements share many common issues, principles, and beliefs. This is an opportunity to reclaim our history at state institutions in California. It is critical that people who have lived in state institutions lead the way to bring honor and dignity to those who have died in a state hospital. It is their voices and experiences that should guide this project.

We need to remember and honor the thousands of people, who have lived, who are still living, and those who died in state institutions.

It is critical that our voices be heard about what it was like to live in a state institution from our perspective. Most of what is written about state institutions is from the facilities or staff, family members', and society's perspective; but there are few first hand experiences from those who were patients. We will be collecting stories of those who lived in the state institutions. We need to get these very important stories down on paper from people who lived in the state institutions over the past decades before those stories are lost forever.

NAMI Glendale has and will continue to support this valuable project.

The Real Drug Problem

Commentary by Mike Miller

The major value of NAMI is its focus on practical everyday problems and issues faced by those who have mental illnesses and those who have to deal with these issues. One of these issues is compliance with "meds" where, for example, our loved one has taken a prescribed drug that helps, but they go off of the drug or fail to give it time to work. Other related issues are also dealt with at almost every NAMI meeting. To an extent this affirms, in part, that drugs can help and are often a significant tool for the benefit of our loved one. This Commentary is not an attempt to dissuade NAMI members from continuing to give advice with regard to drug usage. Nevertheless, the common everyday acceptance of pharmaceutical products and their claims needs to be more guarded. Drugs and the drug industry need to be critically viewed and not eyed as the only game in town. Indeed, on August 6, 2007, the *Los Angeles Times* devoted almost the entire Health Section to a warning about the distorted power of the drug industry in America.

The *Times* articles are detailed and cannot be duplicated in this Commentary. To provide a flavor of the issues, a few of their main concerns are set forth in the following quotes:

"[The patient-doctor] sanctuary has been breached. Today, drug manufacturers do everything in their considerable power to ensure that their brand-name prescription medications are on the lips of patients and in the minds of physicians every time the two meet across an exam table...In 2006, drug makers spent almost \$5 billion to reach consumers by direct advertising..."

"Drug makers richly support the nation's patient advocacy groups and only a handful of charitable organizations refuse the sponsorship of pharmaceutical firms...this raises real questions about the independence of patients' groups."

Concerning drug company advertising, both direct via the media and their extensive public relations with medical professionals and organizations, the *Times* quotes the New England Journal of medicine statement to a Senate committee as follows:

"...when financial incentives yield inappropriate or dangerous care, when they inordinately raise the cost of care, when they risk patients' lives in clinical trials, and when they damage the [medical] profession, they have gone too far."

A personal anecdote that incorporates some of the concerns raised by the *Times* occurred to my daughter and me, last year. Because of our experience in dealing with my daughter's severe depression, NAMI National contacted us through a public relations firm that was helping to put together a National Mental Health Day. The firm contacted me to arrange for our participation on the subject of depression. The firm was committed to our participation until I told them that my daughter's greatest improvement occurred when she went off of drugs after opting for an alternative treatment called the vagus nerve stimulator (VNS). VNS is now an accepted form of treatment for depression. It is not a drug. The public relations firm dropped us from participation. Upon checking, I determined that drug firms were a major sponsor for the event and were funding the conference that we were to participate in. So, on National Mental Health Day, the public got no wind

of this alternative treatment for depression that has helped my daughter and many others, because it did not involve a drug. Moreover, my daughter's road to recovery was omitted from the program because she went off of drugs. America is the loser and I am still concerned that NAMI National, an organization that I admire, is too involved with the drug industry.

I recommend all those reading this Commentary to obtain the *Times* coverage of August 6 and to also consider the following publications: "Hooked: Ethics, the Medical Profession and the Pharmaceutical Industry" by Dr. Howard Brody (2007); "The Truth About the Drug Companies: How They Deceive Us and What to Do About It" by Dr. Marcia Angell (former *New England Journal of Medicine* editor).

Although some reform efforts are underway to counter the improper influence of drug companies, the efforts of these companies over the past decade have already pushed various belief systems into our collective consciousness including the typical paradigm of the current psychiatric system- "take drugs and cope with it." This belief means your condition is a permanent, life long condition and you should manage the symptoms and be functional. Although this belief system may be realistic for many, it falls short of the whole story which includes a growing group of people who have substantially recovered from mental illness through a variety of means that do not rely just on drugs. To emphasize medications as keys to recovery is to overlook other important factors such as alternative treatments like VNS for depression, people working with people on a sustained long term basis, nutritional and other health practices which should be tried as part of the road to betterment. Drugs can be part of this road, but they are not always the main highway.

Many people are on the road to recovery because of non-drug alternative treatments, better nutrition including supplements, exercise, personal therapy, spirituality and better daily health practices. This is a story that needs to be told and will be in future Commentaries. Yes, drugs can be part of that picture, but you won't get that information from the drug companies and the many doctors who concert with them. To them, pharmaceuticals are the only game in town.



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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Recently A Variety of Mental Health Related Stories Have Appeared in Newspapers

Either in the form of a column or in the news, here are a few of the most recent.

Every time I think Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger is starting to get a clue how to lead, he snaps me back to reality. This time it was his boneheaded elimination of a program that saves money, draws raves and helps thousands of poor souls lead productive lives.

But before I get to Big Boy's blunder, I want to tell you about a man named Bill Compton. To read the rest of Steve Lopez's column go to:

<http://www.latimes.com/news/columnists/la-me-lopez29aug29,1,5748981.column?coll=la-news-columns&ctrack=2&cset=true>

Bipolar disorder in youths may be over-diagnosed

A new study says a forty fold increase can be partly attributed to doctors mislabeling children and teens with the illness. To read more go to:

<http://www.latimes.com/news/science/la-sci-bipolar4sep04,1,6746933.story?ctrack=3&cset=true>

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



NAMIWALKS LA 2007

**Save the Date: Oct 6, 2007
Santa Monica Promenade**

Complete Your Team Next Week I know some of you have been putting this off but it is now time to complete your team roster. The time to the Walk is closing fast. We are now only 38 days until the Walk.

It is important for your team members to have ample time to do their fund raising. As you know, it takes time to write the letter or email, sent it out and await the responses to come back. This isn't something that just happens in a week or so.

NAMIWALK Manager
NAMIWALKS Los Angeles County

email: namiwalks@ca.rr.com

phone: 213/251-6519

web: <http://www.namiwalkslac.org/>

Dear NAMI Family,

As you know, time is passing very quickly, and the WALK is almost upon us.

We are asking all the NAMI Presidents, NAMI Officials, Board of Directors, Family to Family teachers and general members to consider purchasing a **Kilometer Marker** for the WALK. The cost for each Marker is \$250.00, and you can dedicate it to your loved one, an outstanding NAMI person, a deceased relative or put your business name on it. We have experienced a significant drop in donations coming from the corporate world this year. As a result, we must now depend on our NAMI leadership and membership to pick up the slack.

Please consider purchasing several Kilometer Markers.

Thank you,

John Griffin

**Please note: Kilometer Markers are available by sending your donation to: NAMI WALKS LA Atten: Roza Woods
PO Box 741029 Los Angeles, CA 90004**



NAMI President Joneè Shady with Kilometer Marker