



THE VOICE

NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS
PALM BEACH COUNTY

FROM THE PRESIDENT—BY LIZ DOWNEY

*When you walk to the edge of all the light you have
and take that first step into the darkness of the unknown,
you must believe that one of two things will happen: There
will be something solid for you to stand upon,
or, you will be taught how to fly.*

("Faith" by Patrick Overton)

That quote for me defines spirituality – believing that things will always work out the way they are supposed to, whether it's the way I think they should or not; that there is something greater than myself

NAMI/PBC General Meeting

“TREATING BRAIN ILLNESSES IN SENIORS”

**Dr. Ashok Sharma,
Adult/Geriatric Psychiatrist**

**South County Mental Health
Center**

**16158 So. Military Trail, West
Palm Beach**

**Tuesday, April 13, 2010
at 6:30 pm**

Free & Open to the Public

that will always carry me through, IF I allow it. That's the key for me – *if*.

When I was first introduced to the world of brain illnesses, I was surrounded by darkness. The whole situation seemed hopeless because I could not "fix" my loved one and I felt alone. Fortunately, I began a spiritual journey which helped me build a foundation that moved me from denial into acceptance, and back toward the light. What was it that started my journey? SUPPORT.

First I attended a NAMI Family Support group. Here I could share my tears and my fears. I learned I was not alone and that was huge. I learned that this was a life-long journey, but that there were people whose loved ones were in recovery. There were some who had worse situations and some not as bad. I started to become "educated" about mental illness by those who had gone before me.

Support for those of us affected by brain illnesses is vital. Without it we will stay in our restrictive misconceptions, grief, and anger. We need that "outside perspective" because we are too close to the issue; we can't see the whole picture.

I urge people to take advantage of support groups, and to continue attending the support groups even after the crisis has subsided. It keeps that stable foundation in place, so that when the time comes, and we are tossed back into the despair and fear, we can find our way out more quickly. We also have valuable experience that we can share with others to help them out of the abyss. It is by getting "out of myself" that I can receive the love and help of others, be open to suggestions and opportunities, and in turn, have hope and be of maximum service to the people around me.

FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS

BOCA RATON

West Boca County Library on State Rd 7

Meets the 4th Monday of the Month; 6:30–8 pm

Call 561.588.3477 for more info.

BOYNTON BEACH/DELRAY BEACH

Hagen Ranch County Library

14350 Hagen Ranch Road, Delray Beach

Meets the 2nd Wednesday of the Month; 6:30pm

Call 561.588.3477 for more info.

LANTANA (SPANISH-SPEAKING)

Lantana Library

4020 Lantana Road, Lake Worth, FL

Meets the 4th Saturday of the Month;

10:30am–12:30pm

Call 561.588.3477 for more info.

LAKE WORTH

NAMI/PBC Office on 10th Ave N.

Meets the 4th Monday of the Month; 3pm

Call 561.588.3477 for more info.

JUPITER

County Library on Military Trail

Meets the 3rd Thursday; 6:30–8pm

Call 561.744.2301 for more info.

WELLINGTON

Wellington Public Library on Royal Fern Dr

Meets the 2nd Monday of the Month; 6:30–8:30pm

Call 561.790.6070 for more info.

CONSUMER SUPPORT GROUPS

NAMI CONNECTION

RECOVERY SUPPORT GROUP

Jo's Place @ South County MHC

16158 S. Military Trail, Delray Beach

Mondays, 1–2:30pm

Call 561.588.3477 for more info.

PEER COUNCIL MEETING

NAMI/PBC Lake Worth Office

1520 10th Avenue N, Suite D, Lake Worth

Sunday, April 25, 11:00am

Call 561.588.3477 for more info.

***See Announcements**

LAUNCH OF THE PEER COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

BY CRISTINA ANDREOLI

The time has come to communicate the planned launching of the bi-annual Peer Council newsletter in September 2010. The newsletter committee has been formed with the peers, Lori Jo Baach, Curtis Russ and myself, as enthusiastic members. The goal of the newsletter is to be the creation of a voice that is owned by peers and can be produced and distributed totally by the peers. Interestingly, each bi-annual issue would be theme-driven; the first issue in August being dedicated to the theme of “New Beginnings”. The contents, the three of us agreed, would cover a number of interesting points including: **things others don’t know about us; things we collect; recipes; recovery; milestones; movie reviews; and book reviews.**

Potential writers in the peer community are encouraged to submit information and/or articles for the peer newsletter. The subjects can cover any of the points above under the overarching theme of “New Beginnings”. Peer submissions should be received by June 1 at NAMI/PBC’s email address - info@namipbc.org. Please address the email to Cristina Andreoli. The draft articles, which should be substantive, will be edited by me.

The newsletter committee has planned a contest aimed at selecting a name or title for the paper. Some ideas have emerged, but your collective input on the name is welcomed. Please share your thoughts through email at info@namipbc.org c/o Cristina Andreoli. The cut-off for submissions will be May 20. The winner will win a NAMI T-Shirt.

In summary, I look forward to receiving your articles and newsletter names/titles; it will be a creative endeavor which will bring out your thoughts on issues, plus any emotions/passions which you might wish to share.

STARTING SOON: FAMILY-TO-FAMILY EDUCATION COURSE

Applications are now being taken for our next 12-week F2F Education Course starting April 10, at our Lake Worth Office, from 10 am - 1 pm. Call the office to register at 561-588-3477.

MEDICAID REFORM (WAIVER 1115 UPDATE)

BY DEBORAH LEVINE

More managed care is in the cards for all folks counting on Medicaid. So why is this waiver program important? First of all, it means Floridians can take more money from the federal government to cover many more people. There are now 3.8 million people in Florida uninsured. We have 770,000 children in that number.

Can you imagine? The kid care program alone has 250,000 children. The state legislature is planning to accept the funds (\$1 billion) that should cover the shortfalls. The CHAIN letter has questioned these figures as only cost savings of 2% over all as compared to ACHA'S numbers of 20%. The pilot program data has been questioned as to the quality of care and the availability of access. The pilot program's proposed 2% savings will hardly be a benefit compared with the extensive administrative costs that will be incurred. Access and outcomes are important if this program is to serve even more people on Medicaid. Managed care that works by freezing capitation cost to achieve savings without improved health care services is as good as nothing. A card that says Medicaid without a true network of services is also as good as nothing. Our access to medications along with support for our community of mental health services is what people with mental illness on Medicaid have been offered for many years. To infringe on that by a network of an inferior PILOT program is what we do not need.

THE NAMI FLORIDA PEER CONFERENCE

BY CRISTINA ANDREOLI

NAMI/PBC is delighted to disclose that the statewide Peer Conference, held at the Lake Yale Baptist Center in Leesburg on March 10-12, was a great success for NAMI Florida. About 200 peers learned from and engaged with NAMI, the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF), and other leaders to discuss holistic recovery practices. There were about 100 DCF scholarships for peer participation; area donors included our own Jack Miller from Magellan Behavior Health. And NAMI/PBC, sponsored me

(Continued on page 4)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

4/6/10

Board of Directors Meeting
1520 10th Ave, Ste D, Lake Worth at 5:30pm
(Call office by 4/2 if attending)

4/17/10

Caridad Family Health Fair
8645 West Boynton Beach Blvd, Boynton Beach
8am-1pm

4/23/10

Project Connect (See our website for details)
First Baptist Church of Lake Worth
127 South M Street, Lake Worth, FL
9am-1pm

4/24/10

Making Connections Beyond the Classroom Conference
Santaluces Highschool, 6880 Lawrence Road, Lantana, FL
8am-1pm

5/8/10

DCF's Splash to Recovery—Belle Glade
Pioneer Aquatic Center
10am-3pm

5/15/10

Tri-County Suicide Prevention Conference
NOVA SE University, Davie, FL
9am-4pm

5/21/10

DCF's Splash to Recovery—Royal Palm Beach
Calypso Bay Water Park
4pm-8pm



(Continued from page 3)

and my colleague, Curtis Russ. I would like to thank the kindness and support of NAMI/PBC.

The future of this generation of peers cannot depend solely on the existing environment; they should rediscover themselves and become more action-oriented. Peers should focus on learning professional skills while maintaining a recovery lifestyle and fighting existing system constraints: “stigma”, “poverty” and “lack of funding”. As Clint Rayner, of DCF’s Office of Consumer and Family Affairs, said at the Conference, “We are not violent; we are victims of violence.”

While a vision of recovery of individuals with diagnoses has been formulated to guide mental health systems (New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, 2003), there is a need to promote recovery at all levels in the peer community. At the Peer Conference, there were very powerful and inspirational presentations by all the resource people which really speaks to the clarity of vision and strength of passion on the topic of recovery of each of the presenters.

Clarence Jordan, NAMI National Board of Directors, invited peers to join NAMI in embracing recovery through “genuine” uniqueness, “connections” that are familial and social, a sense of “identity” that is self-shaped and “independence” in the community. “Don’t be saddled with one definition of recovery”, said Mr. Jordan.

Mr. George Sheldon, the surprise guest and Secretary

for DCF, spoke of the importance of recovery and the future of the mental health sector from the point of view of commitment against shrinking resource funds and legislative action.

David Sofferin, Assistant Secretary for Substance Abuse and Mental Health of DCF, added that organizations and peers have to focus on “nurturing a relationship with their legislators locally before they reach Tallahassee.”

Judy Evans, Executive Director of NAMI Florida, addressed the closing session on March 13. She shared with participants that “(NAMI) is a grassroots organization” and “telling your stories to your legislatures and participating in political elections is a way (for NAMI peers) to advocate. She also talked of “the need to focus on things that work, like self-directed care.”

With the objective for peers to learn, network and inter-relate, the conference workshops were full of peer leaders wishing to learn about subjects ranging from Club-houses to Certified Peer Support Specialists, the Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) and Creativity in Recovery, etc.

Clint Rayner presented the Peer Specialists Orientation Training. This program concentrates on a salaried professional approach to recovery for peers that incorporates the principles of “consumers as role models”, the value of “ethics”, “life experiences’ and “passion” with a statewide focus on peers’ establishing working partnerships with mental health teams.

Another workshop-led presentation by Pam Demers,



7TH ANNUAL NARSAD SYMPOSIUM

What a great turnout for last month's NARSAD symposium. We had over 75 people new to NAMI visit our table and a large showing of our membership as shown below. See you all next year!

Program Director of the Gainesville Opportunity Center, concentrated on the concept and operations of clubhouses. Partnered by workers and peers, the vision of a clubhouse is a community in which all peers choose, “tap into their skills” and achieve their highest level of “work-ordered” success. “Out of the jails and into the clubhouses” is an objective to be achieved.

The feedback from peers on mental health issues gained momentum and inspired enthusiasm for the possibility of change spearheaded by DCF. David Sofferin, who chaired this session with Clint Rayner, led peers to raise issues such as:

- the need for training programs for ALFs (DCF action);
- the issue of why Managing Entities started within DCF with no funding; the fact that costs will come out of services (monies will come out of program/administrative efficiencies);
- the need for services for peers who are more established in their recovery (clubhouses and drop-in centers can help);
- the need for the use of Facebook and Twitter. (DCF is in the process of redesigning their website and inserting these modalities).

Peers were given an opportunity to voice their SAM-HSA priorities and their recognized inputs included:

- access to affordable medications;
- access to better and affordable healthcare;
- affordable, accessible housing/supported housing, etc.
- They also participated in fun activities such as a bonfire and a dance.

In the final analysis, in the words of Sherry Jenkins Tucker, Executive Director of the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network, it might be useful to remember the motto, “I am the evidence that recovery works (ITE).”

HOME SWEET HOME

BY LIZ DOWNEY

Last month I had the pleasure of visiting two of Melvin J. & Claire Levine Jewish Residential & Family Service (JRFS’) residential programs. Approximately 10 of JRFS’ staff are currently enrolled in NAMI/PBC’s Provider Education Course. Their interest in learning more about brain illness, and their passion and dedication to their work prompted me to learn more about JRFS’ programs. There

is a critical need for affordable, quality supportive housing in our county, however, for some, JRFS’ residential options may be viable. I toured one of their two group homes and their apartment residences in West Palm. Both alternatives provide a continuum of services for those who may be developmentally disabled, significantly learning disabled, and/or chronically mentally ill. The various levels of monitoring and supervision allow for easy transition between programs when a resident’s functional level changes. To find the right housing option, professional staff conducts a comprehensive assessment with the family and resident to determine the right levels of supervision, monitoring, and oversight to ensure the highest possible quality of life for the individual.



The apartments are very spacious and the grounds have many “park-like” common areas. Residents have an individualized primary care coordinator and a care plan which includes nutrition, exercise, vocational goals, medical and psychiatric needs, in-home supports, finances, and interpersonal goals.

The group home I visited houses 6-7 adult residents (min. age 21). The residents enjoy their own private room that they can furnish and decorate as they please. Meals are prepared by a dietician and the residents eat together. They also participate in enriched social programming through various community and individual activities in addition to community work programs, designed with individual goals, and emphasis on increased independence across various life skills.

For more information, contact Phyllis Hoffman at 561-283-0239 or visit their website at www.jfcspb.org.

National Alliance on Mental Illness for Palm Beach County
1520 10th Avenue North, Suite D
Lake Worth, FL 33460

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE PAID
WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33460
PERMIT NO. 1327

Or Current Resident

NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS
PALM BEACH COUNTY'S VOICE ON MENTAL ILLNESS
ADVOCACY, EDUCATION & EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ARE AT THE HEART OF OUR SERVICES.

NAMI/PBC Membership

- | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------|------------------------------------|------|---------------------------------------|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Voting | \$45 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$55 | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional | \$65 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate | \$250 | <input type="checkbox"/> Open Door | \$5 | <input type="checkbox"/> Student | \$15 |

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NAMI Membership exists at 3 levels: Affiliate, State & National; with just 1 payment, you'll be joining all 3 at once! As a member, you will receive: cutting-edge newsletters & publications, like *The Voice* & *The Advocate*, action alerts & leadership opportunities, plus advanced notice of upcoming meetings, classes & events.

NAMI is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, charitable organization—contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. *Together*, we can continue to fight for all those affected by mental illness. *Thank you!*

Check here for renewal:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/St: _____

Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

I'd like to support NAMI with a donation of:

- \$5 \$10 \$25
other: \$_____

I'm interested in volunteering with NAMI/PBC.

I wish to opt out of NAMI's solicitation.

Members are NAMI/PBC's lifeblood; your joining helps us continue to provide free outreach, support & education. In bringing mental health issues to wider attention, we advocate for better treatment... As our membership base grows, our voice becomes stronger...