



# THE VOICE

NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS  
PALM BEACH COUNTY

## FROM THE PRESIDENT—BY LIZ

*“Good to Great”* If anyone asks me what I think of our affiliate, I would say NAMI/PBC is a great organization. Last year we expanded our programs, doubled our volunteer base, revitalized our Board and increased the number of people we serve.

This year, Cristina Andreoli, our Board Secretary, is formulating and facilitating Strategic Planning Workshops to assist us in defining NAMI/PBC’s vision and goals. We also have been fortunate in receiving the services of Suzie Hise, a professional business consultant, who is evaluating our day-to-day operations. Together these processes are confirming that we are indeed a great organization, and at the same time, are illustrating ways in which we can improve.

Assessing NAMI/PBC’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities for growth and threats has been an eye-opening experience. To move from good to great (or great to greater), change is required. That change can only be made from this type of thorough examination. And this review must be conducted on a regular basis to promote continued success.

Recently, we received word that plans to form a managing entity in Palm Beach County have been suspended. Given the economic situation and the need for further study, it was agreed that moving forward at this time was not a prudent

decision. However, during our service provider meetings to discuss this issue over the past several months, our Regional Administrator, Perry Borman, did plant a seed for change. He suggested that this was a perfect opportunity for us, as providers, to envision the system of care that we want for our County and to rebuild our system of care from the ground up. He urged each provider to begin instituting policies and procedures that will improve our own individual services and programs, whether we go to a managed care system or not. By thoroughly examining our current mental health and substance abuse services, it was clear to Mr. Borman that this was an opportunity for all providers to move from good to great.

We can also apply this process to our own lives. Sometimes we only focus on our weaknesses and limitations. In order to be a better parent, spouse, friend or co-worker, it is important to also look at our strengths and opportunities for growth. Only then will we continue to be the best that we can be.

## MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

This month is a very important time for NAMI/PBC. Although we continue throughout the year to bring awareness to the community about mental health issues, many communities in our County have planned formal proclamations for mental health awareness month, and many organizations have planned presentations, workshops and activities centered around educating and informing our citizens about mental health issues. I urge you to take advantage of these events. Bring a relative, friend or neighbor to help us spread awareness about this important issue and inform people about the support and services that are available in our community. NAMI/PBC will be celebrating Mental Health Awareness by presenting the “Minds on the Edge: Facing Mental Illness” video on May 11 at the Summit Library, and we have invited community leaders, mental health providers and local politicians to join us for a community discussion. Please see our “Announcements” section, or check our website [www.namipbc.org](http://www.namipbc.org), for other scheduled events.

### **NAMI/PBC General Meeting**

#### **“MINDS ON THE EDGE: FACING MENTAL ILLNESS”**

**DON’T MISS THIS THOUGHT-PROVOKING  
VIDEO—JOIN US FOR THE COMMUNITY  
DISCUSSION AFTERWARDS**

**MAIN LIBRARY, 3650 SUMMIT BLVD.,  
WEST PALM BEACH**

**Tuesday, May 11, 2010 at 6:30 pm**

**Free & Open to the Public**

## NAMI FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS

### WEST BOCA RATON

*Ruth Rales Jewish Family Service*

*21300 Ruth and Baron Coleman Blvd., Boca Raton, FL*

Meets the 1st Monday of the Month; 6:30–8 pm  
(Ruth Rales also has a Family Support Group on the *Temple Anshei Shalom, 7900 W. Atlantic Ave., Delray Beach, FL, 3rd Wednesday of the Month*)

### BOYNTON BEACH/DELRAY BEACH

*Hagen Ranch County Library*

*14350 Hagen Ranch Road, Delray Beach*

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

### LANTANA (SPANISH-SPEAKING)

*Lantana Library*

*4020 Lantana Road, Lake Worth, FL*

Meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of the Month;  
10:30am–12:30pm

### LAKE WORTH

*NAMI/PBC Office on 10<sup>th</sup> Ave., No., Ste D*

Meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the Month; 3pm

### JUPITER

*County Library on Military Trail*

Meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday; 6:30–8pm

### WELLINGTON

*Wellington Public Library on Royal Fern Dr*

Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the Month; 6:30–8:30pm

**CALL 561-588-3477 FOR 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

### PEER COUNCIL MEETING

*NAMI/PBC Lake Worth Office*

*1520 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue N, Suite D, Lake Worth*

*Sunday, May 23, 11:00am*

## SNIPPETS FROM AROUND TOWN

*CIT Annual Awards Luncheon*—Officer Robert Rowe from North end of the county and Officer Shawn Tuttle from the South end of the county were awarded CIT Officers of the Year at the annual CIT Awards Luncheon on March 31 was well-attended and a delicious lunch was provided by Café Joshua. Judge Marx gave a motivating presentation about the need for more community programs like Crisis Intervention Training to improve our mental health system.



*Experts Speak Library*—First, we would like to thank Dr. Abbey Strauss for volunteering his time to present NAMI's *In Living Color: Treating Depression in Primary Care* workshop at the upcoming Tri-County Suicide Prevention Conference, May 15, at NOVA SE University in Davies, FL. We hope our members and mental health partners will attend this important conference. Last month I met with Dr. Strauss at his Boca Raton office and he informed me that he has been conducting interviews with experts on various mental health, general health, and even environmental issues through podcasts. These interviews are available at <http://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/the-experts-speak-an-educational/id338144165>, If you're interested in: how to properly dispose of unused or expired medications; sleep disorders; addictions; mental health parity, and a host of other topics, I encourage you to visit the site. Having an iPod is not necessary, there is a Windows downloadable version.

*The Quiet Room: Follow-up*—Lori Jo (Schiller) Baach is planning to publish an Afterword to her phenomenal book *The Quiet Room*. The format will be in a Question & Answer form. She wants to know what NAMI/PBC members would

like to know since her book came out in 1994. Your questions can be sent directly to Lori Jo at [lorigo102@comcast.net](mailto:lorigo102@comcast.net). Please put in the subject line "QA from NAMI/PBC".

*South County Mental Health Center*—We would like to do a “Shout Out” to the South County coffee guys, John and Alex for providing us with their delicious coffee at our April General Meeting. It was really great to bring our meeting back to South County and will plan to visit again soon. Thank you for your service.



## GUARDIAN ADVOCACY TRAINING

BY CURTIS RUSS, PEER RECOVERY SPECIALIST

NAMI PBC is in partnership with the Department of Children & Families and the Palm Beach County court system to bring Guardian Advocate training to Palm Beach County. You may ask “What does a Guardian Advocate do?” A Guardian Advocate is a person appointed by the court to make decisions for a person with mental illness, when that

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**5/5/10**

Board of Directors Meeting  
1520 10th Ave, Ste D, Lake Worth at 5:30pm  
(Call office by 5/3 if attending)

**5/8/10**

DCF Splash to Recovery  
Pioneer Aquatic Center, 866 State Rd 715, Belle  
Glade  
12:00pm-3:00pm (Free)

**5/11/10**

NAMI/PBC's General Meeting  
“Minds on the Edge: Facing Mental Illness”  
Video & Discussion  
Main Library, 3650 Summit Blvd., West Palm Beach  
6:30pm-8:30pm (Free)

**5/12/10**

Fibromyalgia/P.A.N.D.O.R.A Awareness Day  
Speakers: Karen D. Sacks, MS, LCPC, LMHC;  
Dr. Addie Dissick, Rheumatologist;  
and Daniel Sage, Physical Therapist  
West Boca Library, 18685 State Rd. 7 (¼ mile  
North of Yamato Rd)  
1:00pm-3:30pm (Free)

**5/15/10**

DCF Splash to Recovery  
Barracuda Bay, 1621 Blue Heron Blvd, Riviera  
Beach  
5:30pm-8:00pm (\$3 for swim pass)

**5/15/10**

Tri-County Suicide Prevention Conference  
NOVA SE University, 3301 College Ave., Davie, FL  
9am-4pm

**5/21/10**

DCF's Splash to Recovery  
Calypso Bay Water Park  
151 Lamstein Lane, Royal Palm Beach  
4:00pm-8:00pm (\$6 for swim pass)

*(Continued from page 3)*

person cannot make the decisions for themselves, as determined by a doctor, when the person is in-patient at a facility. Guardian Advocates are only called on when a health care surrogate cannot be found. Guardian Advocates, when called on by the court, only carry out their duties as long as a person cannot make their own treatment decisions or are discharged from the in-patient facility.

Marcia Greene and I will conduct the first Guardian Advocate training April 28, 2010, in Boca Raton. If you are interested in learning more about being a Guardian Advocate, or wish to take the next training class, please call the NAMI PBC office at (561) 588-3477 and ask for Curtis.

## EDUCATING THE COMMUNITY

So far this year, we have completed our second Peer-to-Peer Education Course with **14** peer graduates; our Family-to-Family Education Course with **20** family member graduates; and our Provider Education Course with **21** mental health professional graduates. Many of these graduates have offered to volunteer for NAMI/PBC in various areas. In April we started our third Peer-to-Peer and second Family-to-Family Education Courses. Claudia Roberts, Executive Director of Jeff Industries, has graciously

offered us space at their Café Maurice for our next Provider Education Course. Plans are underway to schedule this course in the near future. A sincere thank you goes out to our instructors: Bob, Cristina, Curtis, Debby, Eileen, Ellie, Fred, Pete, Liz, Marcia, Peter, Terry, and Wayne.

## PEER SUPPORT & FRIENDSHIP — A NECESSITY

BY CRISTINA ANDREOLI

Brain disorders come with a variety of conditions, the most serious of which include depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and anxiety, requiring treatment and support. While stigma is generally well spread, the reality is that anyone “regardless of age, culture, race, ethnicity, economic status and location” can, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), develop a brain condition. Also, the debilitating effects of disability are minimized if these persons receive adequate treatment and support. Sufferers of brain illnesses require high doses of respect, dignity and compassion, as in the case of other illnesses. However, the good news is that people do recover. People can proceed to more productive, happier and healthier lives where they can contribute to society. There are many factors involved in recovery, the most important one being hope. How-



NAMI/PBC Provider Class April Graduates

ever, friends also can and do make a difference in our lives. Friends offer “reassurance, companionship and emotional strength”. Being understood and accepted by friends makes a huge difference in recovery.

NAMI/PBC offers compassionate companionship to a number of these people in society at large and at mental health centers, such as South County Mental Health Center. However, NAMI believes that a lot can be done by a peer asking another friend how he/she can best help them, when they have a brain disorder. The right mix of “empathy, help and reassurance” goes a long way. Reminding them that their condition is treatable, and helping them in identifying the right sort of help, NAMI or otherwise, is very important.

In its pamphlet, “What a Difference a Friend Makes”, SAMHSA states the importance of being very responsive to a peer’s illness, just as in the case of any treatable illness. Of note, are the following SAMHSA tips on how you as a peer friend might respond to a brain disorder: caring for the person who is unwell, asking them questions and really listening to the answers; asking how you can most support them to ease their anxieties; including them in your plans; responding immediately when they are in crisis and convincing them to seek immediate medical assistance.

Ideally, you as a peer have the opportunity to join arms with fellow peers who are combating a diagnosis in order to bust the myths and spread the facts about mental illness. To the contention that there is no hope or recovery, one can respond that there are a plethora of “treatments, strategies and support systems” and that it is indeed possible to live a productive life in society. Treatment can run the full gamut from medication, therapy, counseling, psychiatry, self-help awareness and non-traditional forms of medicine. It is likewise of paramount importance to dispel the myth that all people with a mental diagnosis are violent and that brain disorders are few and far between. In fact, these conditions can strike anyone and do prevalently affect numerous families in the United States. And what about the myth that people cannot consequently deal with the demands of a job, as they never recover? Recovery exists and is tangible: many studies reflect that people recover, often completely. Indeed, recovery can be defined as the process through which people can work and participate in their communities, often with the reduction of complete disappearance of symptoms. In conclusion, NAMI would recommend that peers learn or hone their facts about brain disorders and share them in their com-

munities, especially promoting human rights and social inclusion.

## ACCESS FLORIDA PROGRAM COMES TO NAMI/PBC

BY CURTIS RUISS, PEER RECOVERY SPECIALIST

The Department of Children & Families (DCF) ACCESS Florida program has come to NAMI PBC. The ACCESS Florida program is the service delivery model for economic self-sufficiency services. The types of assistance the ACCESS program focuses on are Food Stamps, Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) and Medicaid.

What this means for NAMI PBC members is that we now offer assistance with the initial application. Once the initial application is submitted there will be a follow-up phone interview by DCF and to make sure all the documentation has been submitted. Notification if a person is eligible for assistance could take from seven (7) days to ninety (90) days depending on the type of assistance requested.

The assistance with the initial application through NAMI PBC is a free service provided to our members. For more information on the ACCESS program or to set up an appointment please call the NAMI PBC office at (561) 588-3477 and ask for Curtis.

### NAMI/PBC BOARD NOMINATIONS

Please take a moment to  
read the insert from  
our Nominations  
Committee.

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 |

1520 10<sup>th</sup> Ave N Ste D  
Lake Worth, FL 33460-2069  
T: 561.588.3477  
F: 561.588.3499  
[WWW.NAMIPBC.ORG](http://WWW.NAMIPBC.ORG)  
[INFO@NAMIPBC.ORG](mailto:INFO@NAMIPBC.ORG)

**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...*