



nami

Howard County

National Alliance on Mental Illness

The Official Newsletter of NAMI Howard County, MD

Volume 75

Winter 2014

Join Us In Stomping Out Stigma!



On Saturday, May 31, NAMIWalks will bring together thousands of people from all over Maryland to celebrate mental illness recovery, to honor those who have lost their lives to mental illness, and to help raise funds, combat stigma and promote awareness. We encourage every NAMI member to join us at the NAMI Walks. Monies raised will be used to fund NAMI's programs in Maryland and NAMI

Howard County will receive 55% of funds raised by walkers who designate Howard County in the **Designate NAMI Affiliate** section when registering.

We need you to:

START A TEAM! If you were a Walk Team Captain last year and you haven't already done so, sign up your team online and start recruiting!

JOIN A TEAM! If you'd prefer not to lead your own team, join a team online and urge others to do the same.

VOLUNTEER! We appreciate all the help we receive each year from our dedicated volunteers. Sign up early to volunteer for the Walk.

SPONSORSHIP!

For more information visit: www.namiwalks.org/Maryland

So please join us as we improve lives and our community **one step at a time.**

May 31, 2014

West Shore Park—Baltimore's Inner Harbor

Distance Roughly 2 miles

Starting Time: 3 p.m.

advocacy
support
respect
hope
health
recovery
cure



nami Walks



National Alliance on Mental Illness



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From the Executive Director

Dear Friends:

I hope that despite the cold temperatures and the never ending snow, 2014 has started off positively for you. Here are a few highlights of what's happening at NAMI Howard County thus far.



NAMI Howard County began the year by offering a new support group, Transition Age Youth Support Group, for parents and caregivers of youth ages 18-26. This group meets the third Thursday of each month; so, spread the word. Also, visit our website www.nami.org/sites/NAMIHowardCounty and check out the times and locations for our other support groups. As you know our groups offer a safe space that provides respect, understanding, encouragement and support.

We are also offering *In Our Own Voice* presentations at the Detention Center as of January and are working to increase the number of high schools where we make presentations. Welcome aboard Howard High School!

We hope to see many of you at *our Springing into Step* Fashion Show on Sunday, March 30th at Historic Savage Mill starting at 2:00pm. We are partnering with Success in Style to host this fun event; so please join us.

NAMI Walks will be held on May 31st at West Shore Park, Inner Harbor, Baltimore beginning at 3:00pm. Since there is no registration fee, please sign up to join a team or create your own and help us continue offering essential, practical education and support at no cost to our local community. We need your support!

I'm also pleased to share that the Board of Directors approved our new 2015-2017 Strategic Plan. This exciting plan will frame our goals and objectives for the next few years; so, please take a few minutes and read about it on our website.

NAMI Howard County looks forward to working with you to promote health, hope, and recovery. Please call us if you'd like to get involved!



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In Appreciation

This month, NAMI Howard County would like to shine our spotlight on an outstanding and irreplaceable member, volunteer, IOOV speaker and peer mentor, Charnell Nunley.

Charnell has been a vital asset to NAMI Howard County during her stay in Maryland. As a person living with a mental illness, Charnell has made significant progress while maintaining her recovery as someone living with a tremendous mental illness, schizophrenia.

Prior to being officially diagnosed with schizophrenia, Charnell lived a very active life in Texas. She had friends and was a member of many different school clubs. All in all, Charnell had a normal and fantastic high school experience.

Immediately after high school she enrolled at Texas Tech University. During her first semester of college, Charnell recalls exhibiting odd behaviors, "I was unable to focus, experienced paranoia, and had hallucinations." These symptoms were to the point where she couldn't go to class or sit through a lecture. She even had panic attacks and couldn't get out of bed. She knew something was wrong and eventually found a therapist and psychiatrist. Initially, she was diagnosed with anxiety and depression. Soon her symptoms worsened and she was hospitalized for 7 days. Eventually, Charnell relocated to Maryland to be with her parents.

She began attending a day program in Maryland. While there, Charnell heard about NAMI Howard County's Connection support group and began attending the support group. Eventually, she learned about NAMI's 10 week Peer to Peer classes and although guarded, decided to sign up and attend the class each week. Initially, Charnell wouldn't socialize with anyone and rarely participated in class. It was evident she was in the process of coming to grips with her diagnosis like most new peers learning about their illness and realized she was not alone. Despite the inability to function on a daily basis, Charnell was encouraged through the Peer to Peer to share and connect with other people living with mental illness. "I made a lot of friends in that class; it changed my life." Charnell began to open up and decided to become more involved with NAMI HC.

After graduating from the Peer to Peer in 2013, she attended support groups with a new attitude. "I bonded with many and shared a lot." Charnell became so motivated she trained and became certified to become a peer mentor for the very class she initially attended. Shortly thereafter, she became certified to speak as an In Our Own Voice presenter. Charnell has definitely given back to NAMI and the mental health community by involving herself and serving in so many different capacities for our peer education classes and programs.

"It's been an amazing two years here working with NAMI. Now I'm heading back to Texas. Thanks to all my friends that helped me get to where I am today and for being a wonderful support system."

Charnell will not be forgotten and has and will shine as she continues to be successful in her journey to recovery. She has already reached out to NAMI Texas and plans on becoming involved with their programs and continue what she started here in Maryland with NAMI Howard County.





It's Worth the Investment: Establishing a Mentally Healthy Workplace

By Beverley Francis-Gibson

Meet "Emily" (an alias) an accomplished and educated young professional who works at a Washington research firm. A self-described perfectionist, Emily likes to be a workplace superstar. Her busy days are chock full of meetings and deadlines, and she has never met a goal she could not attain. The first thing you notice about Emily is her vivacious personality. What you won't notice—and may never know unless she tells you—is that Emily lives with mental illness.

Mental illnesses, or psychiatric disorders, are medical conditions that disrupt a person's thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others, and daily functioning. They include depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder (BPD), obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and borderline personality disorder (BPD). Mental illnesses can affect persons of any age, race, religion, or socioeconomic status.

What It Really Means

Emily has been living with mental illness since she was young girl growing up in New England. She first experienced symptoms of BPD when her parents divorced and her father moved out of the family home; Emily believed that her father has abandoned her because she was a bad person. In middle school, Emily tried to harm herself by smashing her wrist with a hammer. In high school, she had suicidal dreams, and in college, she tried to take her life.

Emily has been in recovery from mental illness for 10 years. She has received therapy for coping with the everyday challenges posed by her illness. She has earned her bachelor's degree and master's degree, and has held jobs of increasing responsibility.

Goals, engagement, and structure keep Emily on track. At work, she uses written reminders like to-do lists to maintain organization and focus. A perfectionist who has difficulty handling criticism, she proactively seeks suggestions on how she can improve her job performance. She strives to remain mindful of her actions and take responsibility.

Outside of work, Emily keeps busy with social activities and has a strong support system of loving family and friends. As part of her recovery, she gives back to the community by volunteering at NAMI Howard County, a mental health organization. Being diagnosed with a mental disorder "may not always be Skittles and beer," Emily says, "but you can still have a full life."

Make the Transition

Most employers know that a mentally healthy workforce is linked to lower medical costs, as well as lower absenteeism and presenteeism. And most employers know that a mentally unhealthy workforce is associated with increased loss of productivity. What employers may not know, however, is how to get from A to B: How does a company change a mentally unhealthy workforce—or a marginally healthy one—to a healthy workforce? Where does it start? Here are a few steps:

- 1.) Evaluate your current mental health benefits and health services.
- 2.) Conduct an employee awareness program (you could invite NAMI presenters, at no cost, to help educate your staff on mental illness). People with positive expectations and knowledge about the effectiveness of mental health treatment will be less impaired at work.
- 3.) Strengthen your programs: Integrate all healthcare services (such as behavioral health, other medical illnesses, pharmacy, disability, disease management, and EAPs) to improve patient outcomes, reduce time away from work, and minimize the cost and impact of behavioral health conditions on the workplace and healthcare costs.
- 4.) Link up with mental health organizations/clinicians in your community.
- 5.) Spread the word to other businesses. Investing in a mentally healthy workforce is good business. It can lower total medical costs, increase productivity, lower absenteeism and presenteeism, and decrease disability costs. Mental illness and substance abuse annually cost employers in indirect costs an estimated \$80 to \$100 billion. Treatments for mental illness are highly effective. Advances in medication and psychotherapy produce very good results, especially when those



Why Wellness Matters

How Healthy Living Leads to Improved Mental Health

Wellness practices are vital to living a healthy, fulfilling life; and yet, for many individuals living with a mental illness, these practices fall by the wayside, due to the reality of managing life with an illness.

Please join us on **Tuesday, March 18th** at the **Wilde lake Interfaith Center** to learn more about key wellness practices that can lead to an improved sense of well-being and state of mind. Whether you are an individual living with a mental illness, a caregiver or just someone who would like to learn more about self-care and healthy living, this evening is for you! The program will be both informative and experiential and will include other “goodies” such as quick and easy healthy recipes.

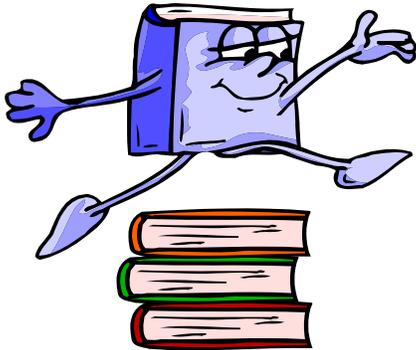


Wilde Lake Interfaith Center

Tuesday, March 18th

7 pm—Coffee and Light Refreshments

7:30 pm—Program



UPCOMING CLASSES

Family-to-Family Education—starts Thursday, April 10, 2014 7-9 p.m.

A 12 week course to help families arrive at a better understanding of the severe mental illness their relatives faces.

Peer-to-Peer Education—starts Monday, April 7, 2014 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

A 10 week course on the topic of recovery for any person with service mental illness who is interested in establishing and maintaining wellness.

NAMI Basics: (recruiting teachers now) —starts Wednesday, April 23, 2014 7-9 p.m.

A six week course specifically designed for parents and other primary caregivers of children and adolescents who are living with mental illness.

Call the office for details or to register

Facilitator Meeting-- On Saturday, February 8th, the Rumsey Rd. office had the honor of hosting some very special individuals—out support group facilitators! The facilitators from our family and parent support groups as well as our Connections group met together to compare notes, share ideas and of course, support one another! A key issue that was raised at the meeting was the need for more trained facilitators, especially **Connections facilitators**. We are very lucky to be in the position where we have over 20 consumers attending each Connections meeting; however we can only serve these individuals if we have facilitators to lead the groups. More trained facilitators would mean that each consumer would receive more time and attention and hopefully, that we could eventually go back to offering Connections on a weekly basis. ***If you or anyone you know might be interested in being trained, please contact the office at 410.772.9300 and ask for Alikah Hawks,***



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Events Calendar

Springing into Step Fashion Show Fundraiser

Sunday, March 30 - 2 p.m.
Historic Savage Mill 8600 Foundry Street Savage, MD 20763

Suggested Donation: \$20.00

Light Refreshment will be served

Donations can be made online or at the door
www.nami.org/sites/NAMIHowardCounty

ANNUAL MEETING AND AWARDS PROGRAM

Tuesday, May 20, 2014, 7:00 p.m.
Wilde Lake Interfaith Center
10431 Twin Rivers Road, Columbia, MD 21044

If you would like to nominate someone to serve on the Board of Directors, please contact Beverley at bfgibson.namihc@gmail.com by March 17, 2014

Support

APRIL Restaurant Night

check the website for the date and location



Saturday, May 31, 2014

West Shore Park – Inner Harbor Baltimore

Starting Time: 3pm

Interested in Volunteering for NAMI HC? Check out the Volunteer Page at www.nami.org/sites/

FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Music Room
7607 Old Sandy Spring Road, Laurel, MD 20707

2nd Mondays, 7:30—9:00 p.m.

March 10 April 14 May 12 June 9

PARENTS OF CHILDREN UNDER 18 SUPPORT GROUP

First Presbyterian Church, Room 204
9325 Presbyterian Circle, Columbia, MD 21045

2nd Mondays, 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.

March 10 April 14 May 12 June 9

FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP

Harmony Hall, The Parlor
6336 Cedar Lane, Columbia, MD 21044

2nd Tuesdays, 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

March 11 April 8 May 13 June 10

PARENTS OF CHILDREN UNDER 18 SUPPORT GROUP

First Presbyterian Church, Room 252
9325 Presbyterian Circle, Columbia, MD 21045

Last Wednesdays, 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

March 26 April 23 May 28 June 25

FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP

Celebration Church, Music Room
6080 Foreland Garth, Columbia, MD 21045

3rd Fridays, 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

March 21 April 18 May 16 June 20

NAMI CONNECTION SUPPORT GROUP

Wilde Lake Interfaith Center, Music Room 6
10431 Twin Rivers Road, Columbia, MD 21044

6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Meets every 2nd and 4th Monday

FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP

First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Counseling Office
3604 Chatham Road, Ellicott City, MD 21043

4th Mondays, 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

May 24 April 28 No Meeting in May June 23

SUNDAY SUPPERS

Florence Bain Senior Center
5470 Ruth Keeton Way, Columbia, MD 21044

3rd Sundays, 2:00 p.m.

March 16 April 13 May 18 June 22



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THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

Please Join Us (if you haven't already done so)!

When you join NAMI Howard County, you will belong to a network of people like yourself, individuals and families who understand the daily challenges people with mental illness face, and who are working to meet those challenges.

Your membership helps to ensure that life saving information, support, and education programs are available for the people in our community who need NAMI.

You may join on-line at NAMI National's safe and secure registration site (at NAMI.org, click on "Join NAMI") or complete and return the form below.

YES! I want to support NAMI. I understand that by joining NAMI Howard County, I will automatically become a member of the state and national levels of NAMI and receive three quarterly publications:

NAMI Howard County Newsletters

NAMI Maryland newsletter, *Connections*

NAMI National magazine, *The Advocate*

Annual membership dues are: \$35 Individual or Family Membership

\$ 3 Open Door Membership

Please make checks payable to NAMI Howard County. SEND TO: NAMI Howard County, 9151 Rumsey Road, Suite 150, Columbia, MD 21045

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

HOME PHONE _____ OTHER PHONE _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

Enclosed is my tax deductible membership fee of: \$ _____

I have also enclosed an additional tax deductible contribution of: \$ _____

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

- Advocate for public policy changes
- Assist with fundraising
- Work or walk as a volunteer at *NAMIWalks*
- Captain a *NAMIWalks* team
- Deliver information and marketing materials
- Facilitate a support group
- Help at Sunday Suppers
- Help prepare mailings
- Publicize NAMI within Faith Communities
- Speak to community groups
- Submit an essay, poetry or visual art to *Inkwell*
- Help in another way
- Teach *NAMI Basics*
- Teach *NAMI Family-to-Family*
- Teach *NAMI Peer-to-Peer*
- Write a book or movie review
- Write an article for the newsletter and/or website



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