



NEWSLETTER

NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY (www.namislo.org)

Volume 25

July 2009

Number 7

General Meeting.

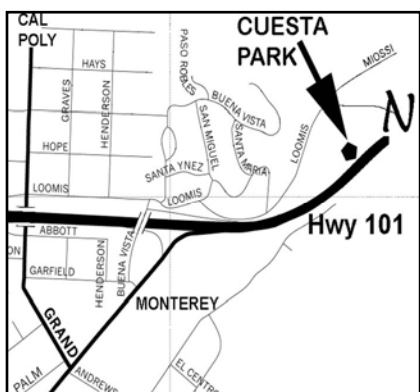
ANNUAL PICNIC! (Y'ALL COME): Tuesday, July 28 at 6:00 PM, Arroyo Group Area, Cuesta Park (see below). Please bring SALAD FOR 8. NAMI will provide: place settings, chicken, soda, water, and dessert.

NO GENERAL MEETING OR SUPPORT GROUP THIS MONTH BECAUSE OF THE ANNUAL PICNIC

August is vacation month for NAMISLOCO—next regular meeting is September 22nd (see below)

ANNUAL PICNIC! (Y'ALL COME): Tuesday, July 28 at 6:00 PM, Arroyo Group Area, Cuesta Park (map below). THE ARROYO AREA IS ACROSS THE CREEK, ADJACENT TO THE PLAYING FIELD AND RESTROOM. Please bring SALAD FOR 8. NAMI will provide: place settings, chicken, soda, water, and dessert.

Cuesta Park is off of Loomis Street



August is vacation time for NAMI and there will be no regular meeting or support group. Our next regular meeting will be on Tuesday September 22nd.

Dr. Mike Lisiak will be our speaker for our September meeting. He is a psychiatrist at ASH.

NAMI-SLOCO Library:

We now have an on-line catalog of the books, tapes, CDs and DVDs in our extensive library. Go to <http://www.namislo.org> and click on "Library"

The **San Luis County Mental Health Board** meets at 3:00 PM on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at the Behavioral Health Campus (old General Hospital). Contact the MHD office (Phone: 781-4719) to confirm date and room location.

Parents and Teachers as Allies

Parents and Teachers as Allies will be doing a training session this summer and **Lisa needs the names of those individuals interested in doing presentations at local schools.** If you are interested please contact Lisa at 788-0869 or lisakelley@hotmail.com.

Help Needed

We need a volunteer to bring coffee and juice for the general meetings in Sept. and October. (Just need to make coffee and buy juice. Everything else is provided.) Please call Nancy Griffin for more info 543-9399.

There are two vacancies on the mental health board for a consumer or family member. For more information, anyone interested could call **Jane at 781-4719.**

Year at a Glance

January thru June: Support Group and General Mtg, 4th Tuesday

July: Annual Picnic, July 22 **no Support Group or General Meeting**

August: Summer Vacation: no meeting, newsletter or support group

September: Support Group and General Meeting 4th Tuesday

October 3rd: Beautiful Minds Walk

October: Mental Illness Awareness Event: 4th Tuesday of October.

November: Support Group and General Meeting 4th Tuesday

December: Holiday Party: Dec 8, 2009 **no Support Group/Gen. Mtg**

Schizophrenia May Be Linked To Immune System

New studies examine the genetic code.

From NPR by Jon Hamilton, July 3, 2009 via (namicalifornia.org)

Three new genetic studies are providing some tantalizing hints about what causes schizophrenia.

The studies, published in the journal Nature, identify sections of our genetic code in which small changes can affect a person's risk for developing the disorder.

The studies found such changes in stretches of code involved in brain development, memory and the immune system.

The findings are important because schizophrenia has been so hard to study, says Kari Stefansson, CEO of the Icelandic company deCODE Genetics and an author of one of the studies. One reason is that schizophrenia doesn't occur in animals.

"It's a disease of thoughts and emotions," Stefansson says, "the two functions of the brain that define us as a species and define us as individuals."

Scientists have tried for decades to find differences between the brains of typical people and those with schizophrenia, but without much success. So Stefansson and a consortium of researchers from around the world decided to look for subtle differences in the genes of thousands of people. Some had schizophrenia; some didn't.

One place the studies found a clue about what might be going wrong in the

(Continued on page 2)

Death Penalty and Mental Illness: Families of Victims Speak out at National Convention; "Double Tragedies" Report Released

From NAMI Newsroom (www.nami.org)

July 6, 2009

San Francisco, CA—For the first time, families of murder victims have joined with families of persons with mental illness who have been executed to speak out against the death penalty.

Double Tragedies, a report being released today at a special session on the first day of the annual convention of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), calls the death penalty "inappropriate and unwarranted" for people with severe mental disorders and "a distraction from problems within the mental health system that contributed or even directly lead to tragic violence."

The report calls for treatment and prevention, not execution. It is available online at www.nami.org/doubletragedies.

The report, a joint project of NAMI and Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights (MVFHR), is based on extensive interviews with 21 family members from 10 states: California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Tennessee and Texas.

"Family opposition to the death penalty is grounded in personal tragedy," said MVFHR executive director Renny Cushing. "In the public debate about the death penalty and how to respond in the aftermath of violent crime, these are the voices that need to be heard."

"Most people with mental illness are not violent," said NAMI executive director Mike Fitzpatrick. "When violent tragedies occur they are exceptional, because something has gone terribly wrong, usually in the mental health care system. Tragedies are compounded and all our families suffer."

The report identifies an "intersection" of family concerns and makes four basic recommendations:

- Ban the death penalty for people with severe mental illnesses.
- Reform the mental health care system to focus on treatment.
- Recognize the needs of families of murder victims through rights to information and participation in criminal or mental health proceedings.
- Families of executed persons also should be recognized as victims and given the assistance due to any victims of traumatic loss.

At least 100 people with mental illness have been put to death in the United States and hundreds more are awaiting execution.

Beautiful Minds Walk

VOLUNTEER HELPERS WANTED FOR NAMI SLOCO

"**BEAUTIFUL MINDS WALK**". A group of energetic folks is now planning this special event in recognition of the annual NAMI Mental Illness Awareness Week on October 3, 2009 at Laguna Lake Park in San Luis Obispo. Many helpers are needed to ensure that this ambitious event runs smoothly and provides a truly memorable experience for all who attend. To learn more and volunteer your help, please call Marcia Bess at 805-481-4847.

A huge thank you Betty McGraw for her presentation on Peer to Peer at our June Meeting. It is always good to hear about the NAMI programs running successfully in SLO County.

Have You Paid Your Dues?

Thanks to all of you who have taken time to renew your NAMI membership. With each active membership, NAMI becomes that much stronger. For those of you pending, why not send in your membership check today? You and we will be glad you did!

Pam Zweifel, Membership Chair

(Continued from page 1)

brains of people with schizophrenia was in a gene responsible for a protein called neurogranin, which can affect memory and thought.

"The neurogranin pathway could be one of the biochemical pathways that lead to this disturbance of thought," Stefansson says.

But he says a more provocative finding is a genetic hot spot in a stretch of code that affects the immune system.

"It raises the question that somehow the tendency to develop schizophrenia may have something to do with infections of mothers during pregnancy."

The idea is that some families carry a genetic variation that affects the way the immune system responds to infection, Stefansson says. If a mother gets the flu while she's pregnant, this immune response may affect her child's brain.

It's also possible that the immune system is involved in schizophrenia in some other way, says Dr. Tom Insel, director of the National Institute of Mental Health, which helped fund the new studies.

He says the stretch of genetic code affecting immunity is pretty mysterious.

"In some ways it's a little bit like the Bermuda Triangle of the human genome," he says. "It's an area with tremendous amounts of variability. And it's an area where we often find variation that's associated with many different disorders: diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, Crohn's disease."

In those diseases, the immune system attacks the body's own cells, a process that could also affect the brain. Researchers have suspected the immune system before, Insel says. Now, they'll probably take a harder look.

Insel says he's particularly intrigued by the finding that some genetic variations linked to schizophrenia are also linked to depression and bipolar disorder.

"It suggests, potentially, that when we're talking about the genetic factors that contribute, what we're really thinking about are genetic factors that contribute to how a brain gets built," he says.

That would mean problems in the brain start very early in life, even though the symptoms of schizophrenia may not appear for decades.

One thing the genetic studies clearly show is just how many different systems in the brain may contribute to schizophrenia, says Harvard's Dr. Pamela Sklar, an author of one of the studies.

"That's a hopeful finding because the implication is that there may be more places to intervene," she says, "if we understand the biology."

Source: NPR



NAMI PEER-TO-PEER

PEER TO PEER NEWS: Peer-to-Peer Classes are led by mentors who have achieved recovery from mental illness and are now able to teach recovery coping strategies to others. CALL

FOR DETAILS AND RESERVATIONS (Required).

Peer-to-Peer Coordinator - Betty McGraw (541-5144 X 113)

Email BMcgraw@mha.org

NEW-Peer to Peer is now offering "WRAP" Group-Wellness and Recovery Action Plan: an educational course in the journey to recovery.

NAMI-SLOCO Presents

"FAMILY-TO-FAMILY"

A Class offering:

Education and Support for Family Members

Whose Relative or Loved One Suffers from:

- MAJOR DEPRESSION
- BIPOLAR DISORDER (MANIC DEPRESSION)
- SCHIZOPHRENIA
- SCHIZOAFFECTIVE DISORDER
- PANIC DISORDER, or
- OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDER
- OTHER RELATED DISORDERS

"Family-to-Family" provides up-to-date information & education on the diseases, their causes, & treatments available, as well as help & coping tools for you as the caregiver or loved one. The class is presented in 12 weekly meetings of 2.5 hours per evening.

THE CLASS IS FREE BUT PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED! CALL FOR DETAILS & RESERVATIONS for 2008/2009 Family-to-Family Coordinator – John Kimala 805-550-3889 JohnKimala@aol.com.

Congratulations to all of the new Family-to-Family graduates from the North County, South county and SLO classes.



The NAMI SLOCO executive board meets from 11:30 - 1:30 on the first Wednesday of the month at The Boysdon Room, Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church, SLO .

Fresno Mental Health Clinic Closed

Only crisis center in the area shut down. Urgent care center to take calls during business hours.

From ABC News by Liz Harrison, July 1, 2009
(Via www.namicalifornia.org)

Fresno County's crisis center for the mentally ill is closed as of Monday. Some have predicted the closure would lead to an overflow of severely mentally ill patients at hospital emergency rooms. But others predict a huge cut in the county's mental health budget could be a good thing for the mentally ill in the long run.

44-year old Lisa Rankins comes to the Blue Sky Wellness Center in central Fresno nearly every day. Lisa tried to take her life at 18. She was diagnosed with schizophrenia and depression and has spent time in prison because of drug and alcohol abuse. The Blue Sky Wellness Center is a refuge for Lisa. She and other mentally ill clients come here to eat, do school work or just play.

"It's someplace where I can come to and relax and do some arts and crafts or shoot some pool ... just to stay active," says Lisa.

The Blue Sky Wellness Center is an example of the county's new approach. Mental Health Director Giang Nguyen says the focus is on more intervention and prevention and less crisis reaction.

Nguyen said, "We have restructured, re-engineered the system to provide better, more effective, more quality care for consumers in facing a budget shortfall."

Fresno County supervisors voted to close the area's only crisis center for the mentally ill. In its place, an urgent care center is open Monday through Saturday during the day. The county still has a residential facility for the mentally ill where they stay overnight if they need to. It's just the money is coming from a different source. It's coming from Prop 63 monies - which is a tax on millionaires that goes specifically to the mentally ill across the state. Some fear this new system could overload emergency rooms -- since that's where severely ill patients are now taken involuntarily.

Mental Health Specialist Curtis Thornton says, "A lot of the emergency personnel aren't trained and they're gonna have to wait for a crisis team to go to them and there really isn't a large enough crisis team to deal with these situations."

Mental Health Director Nguyen hopes the county's new intervention strategy will prevent an E-R overload. Both she and her detractors say time will tell how beneficial this restructuring will be.

Source: ABC News

SLO County / T-MHA FAMILY ADVOCACY PROGRAMS

The County Family Advocates for Adult Mental Health Services offer CONFIDENTIAL ASSISTANCE, INFORMATION, AND SUPPORT to help improve the quality of life for families and caregivers, to help families and caregivers navigate the Mental Health system, and to help families and caregivers cope with the many challenges they face. Family Advocates also provide referrals and resources for further support and education.

San Luis Obispo County

Contact: Janice Holmes, Lead Family Advocate, Adult Services: 805-541-5144 x.171 or jholmes@t-mha.org. Office: 277 South St. Suite Y, San Luis Obispo, CA or Henry Herrera, Family Advocate, Adult Services (Se habla espanol), 805-541-5144 X 129 or hherrera@t-mha.org.



REQUEST FOR A SPANISH-SPEAKING MEMBER INTERESTED IN TAKING TEACHER TRAINING FOR THE SPANISH FAMILY - TO - FAMILY CLASS.

Please contact John Klimala@ 550-3889/929-3299 if you are interested or know someone who is interested in training to become a Family-to-Family teacher in the Spanish-speaking community.

DONATIONS GREATLY APPRECIATED. PLEASE MAKE DONATIONS TO: NAMI SLOCO, P.O. BOX 3158, SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93403.

NAMI SLOCO (IRS ID# 77-0099671, CA non-profit # C1535087) is a 501(c)(3), charitable, non-profit, tax-exempt organization. Donations and contributions are tax-deductible as provided by law.

T-MHA YOUTH FAMILY PARTNER, FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP. For parents, guardians, and caregivers of minor children who experience emotional or behavioral problems

For more information please contact either Jackie Garza, Ph: 805-458-6388, email: jgarza@t-mha.org or Patty Ramirez, Ph: 805-541-5144 x129, email: pramirez@t-mha.org.

Consider inviting "IN OUR OWN VOICE" TO MAKE A PRESENTATION TO YOUR GROUP.



This program is a 1.5 hour presentation on stages of mental illness recovery by 2 people that have achieved recovery. For information, contact Betty McGraw, 541-5144 ext. 113 or BMcGraw@t-mha.org .

Our Librarian, Carole Wallace requests that we return library books at the monthly meetings. Please help Carole by returning your books so they can be shared with other members.

NAMI 2009 Membership (membership in NAMI SLO CO also includes mebership in NAMI Cal. & NAMI Nat'l.)

NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS
SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY
PLEASE PRINT

NAME(S) _____ DATE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/ZIP _____

PHONE (DAY) _____

PHONE (NIGHT) _____ EMAIL _____ DONATION _____

NAMI SLO CO
P.O. Box 3158
San Luis Obispo, Ca
93403

New
 Renewal

\$30 Individual
 \$35 Family
 \$50 Friend
 \$7 Client

Mental Health Support Groups In SLO County

Facilitated FAMILY SUPPORT Groups

San Luis Obispo

4th Tuesday of the month 5:30 to 6:45 PM
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
Pismo and Nipomo Sts. SLO

San Luis Obispo

Tuesday Afternoons T-MHA Orientation Class 12:00-1:00
Tuesday Afternoons T-MHA Family Support Group 1:00-3:00 PM
Facilitated by Janice Holmes
Transitions Mental Health Association
277 South St. Suite Y, SLO.
Any questions Contact:
Janice Holmes, Family Advocate
805 541-5144 X 171

Atascadero

Third Monday of every month
6:30 -8:00 PM
5395 El Camino Real "B" (parking behind bldg.)
Info. Call James or Diane @ 461-1286

Youth Family Support Group

Multiple Groups meet weekly throughout the county.
T-MHA Youth Family Partners
Contacts: **Jackie Garza**, Ph: 805-458-6388, email: jgarza@t-mha.org or
Patty Ramirez, Ph: 805-541-5144 x129, email: pramirez@t-mha.org

PEER RUN SUPPORT GROUPS

*Support for individuals with all major mental illnesses or co-occurring disorders are invited to attend.
(No Charge for attending)*

The times for these meetings change often so please call
Jessica Vieira TMHA's Socialization/Peer Programs Manager
541-5144 EXT 165 JVieira@tmha.org
San Luis Obispo
452 Higuera St

Peer Support

Dual Recovery Anonymous

**SLO Peer—Run support groups are now also offering
"W.R.A.P." - Group-Wellness and Recovery Action Plan:
an educational journey to recovery.**

Atascadero

5395 El Camino, Suite B.
Peer Support

(Continued in next column)

Paso Robles

Paso Robles Library Storybook Rm.
1000 Spring St.
Peer Support

For info call Betty McGraw, 541-5144 x 113 or
BMcGraw@t-mha.org.

MEDI-CAL PATIENTS' RIGHTS ADVOCATE
Gerald Clare 781-4700

T-MHA Special Projects Coordinator for: **"The Shaken Tree: Families Living with Mental Illness"**. John Klimala, Special Projects Coordinator, Transitions-Mental Health Association Phone: 541-5144 ext. 125; Email: jklimala@t-mha.org

Family Advocate, Adult Services

Janice Holmes, Lead Family Advocate
T-MHA Phone 541-5144 X 171
Henry Herrera, Family Advocate, Adult Services (Se habla espanol)
T-MHA Phone 805-541-5144 X 129 or hherrera@t-mha.org

For corrections to this section please contact
Ed Garner - egarner@calpoly.edu

Officers

- Lisa Kelley President..... 788-0869
- Ian Fenwick Vice-president
- Pam Zweifel Secretary 543-1825
- Nancy Griffin Treasurer..... 543-9399

Standing Committee Chairs

- Naoma Wright Publicity.....543-5232
- Roger Gambs Newsletter,Peer to Peer Liaison.....461-6590
- Ed &Kathy Garner Newsletter & Website.....550-3117
- Carole Wallace Librarian..... 771-9063
- Cindy Lamas Membership 466-4691
- Norma Hoffman Housing..... 544-2725
- Rae Belle Gambs Forensic.....461-6590
- Mary Jo Paxton—
Support Group Facilitator 489-0575

Special Committee Chairs

- Lillian Bareither - Newsletter Mailing..... 595-2821
- Jerry Howe – Farmers Market..... 543-2261
- John Klimala-
Family to Family Coordinator 550-3889
- Lisa Kelley—
Parents and Teachers as Allies Coordinator 788-0869
- Carole Wallace NAMI Basics Coordinator.....771-9063
- Lisa Kelley NAMI Basics Coordinator788-0869

NAMI SLOCO WEBSITE: www.namislo.org



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