



# NEWSLETTER

## NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY (www.namislo.org)

March 2009

Volume 25

Number 3

### General Meeting.

**GENERAL MEETING: Tuesday March 24 at 7:00 P.M.** Join us for a surprise meeting that all will enjoy. A whole team of NAMI's board is planning this special meeting so please come. Refreshments will be served. You are welcome to bring a snack to share.

The NAMISLOCO General Meetings are held on the 4th Tuesday of the month (except December and July) at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church on the corner of Pismo and Nipomo Sts., SLO. **The meeting will be in Ramsden Hall which faces the parking lot off Pismo St.** The *Facilitated Family Support Group* starts at 5:30 PM on the same evening and runs until 6:45 PM, so that those who want can attend both the support group and the meeting.

#### NAMI Basics Education Program

*The fundamentals of caring for you, your family and your child with mental illness*

What is NAMI Basics?

**NAMI Basics is the new signature education program for parents and other caregivers of children and adolescents living with mental illnesses.** The program was developed around elements that have been extensively tested and found to be highly effective in the field, including:

- Recognition of mental illness as a continuing traumatic event for the child and the family
- Sensitivity to the subjective emotional issues faced by family caregivers and well children in the family
- Recognition of the need to help ameliorate the day-to-day objective burdens of care and management
- Gaining confidence and stamina for what can be a lifelong role of family understanding and support
- Empowerment of family caregivers as effective advocates for their children

The NAMI Basics course is taught by trained teachers who are the parent or other caregivers of individuals who developed the symptoms of mental illness prior to the age of 13 years. All instruction and course materials are free to class participants.

What are the goals of the NAMI Basics program?

1. To give the parent/caregiver the fundamental information necessary to be an effective caregiver.
2. To help the parent/caregiver cope with the traumatic impact that mental illness has on the child living with the illness and the entire family.
3. To provide tools for the parent/caregiver to use even after completing the program that will assist in making the best decisions possible for the care of the child.

**Would you be interested in helping NAMISLOCO by becoming a NAMI BASICS teacher? Training is available for those who qualify. Please contact Lisa at 788-0869**

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

#### NAMI SLOCO is seeking to BUILD CAPACITY

- The NAMI SLOCO board of directors is in the process of trying to develop ways whereby interested members can have the opportunity to learn about the infrastructure of our organization and eventually move into (or share) leadership roles as chairs, coordinators, or officers before our current leaders "burn out". The goal of this training process is to "spread out" the collective memory and knowledge of present coordinators, chairs, and officers, etc. so that several members are familiar with each position and these positions could be turned over every few years. If you are interested in this training process, please contact one of NAMI SLOCO's officers.

**NEW NAMI SLOCO OFFICERS FOR 2009. We still need a Vice President for 2009.** If you are interested in serving as Vice-President, please contact one of the officers.

Section 2 of our Bylaws state: "The Vice-President(s) shall perform the duties of the President (a) in his/their absence or disability and succeed to the office of the President if that office becomes vacant. The Vice-President(s) shall attend all special meetings of the Executive Board, become acquainted with the duties of the President and perform such other duties as may be assigned by the President(s) or the Executive Board. He/they shall be one of at least three (3) officers authorized to countersign all checks".

#### 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 Walkathon

**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

**ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT THE MENTAL HEALTH OF A CHILD OR TEEN? NAMI Basics can help.** NAMI Basics is a FREE 6-week education class for Caregivers of Children and Adolescents with Behavioral/Mental Health issues. Please call Carole at 771-9063 or Lisa at 788-0869.



**NAMI-SLOCO Library:**

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

**A HUGE THANKS! to Naoma Wright for obtaining the Dr. Phil tape on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and its impact on our returning military men for the Feb. meeting and our library.**

**NORTH COUNTY FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP**

James and Diane Ramirez are the facilitators for the North County Family Support Group in Atascadero. Meetings are the 3rd Monday of every month, 6:30 - 8:00 PM, at the T-MHA MHSA Support Center, 5395 "B" El Camino Real (parking behind building). Contact James or Diane at 805-461-1286

**MANY THANKS! to JOHN LAMAS for his tireless, decade-long work as FAMILY-TO-FAMILY COORDINATOR FOR NAMI SLOCO!** As you know, John has been the "go-to" guy for anything related to Family-to-Family. Since its first SLO Co. class in 1999, nearly 50 F2F classes have been taught to almost 500 county residents. Other obligations prevent John from continuing the outstanding advocacy he has championed, but you will be pleased to know that JOHN KLIMALA has volunteered to take over the job of Family-to-Family Coordinator. We extend our sincere appreciation and gratitude to both John Lamas and John Klimala for their dedication to helping families through some of their most difficult times.



**NAMI PEER-TO-PEER**

★★★★★ NAMI's Peer-to-Peer Recovery Education Course

**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@t-mha.org](mailto:BMcgraw@t-mha.org)

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

**Beautiful Minds Walkathon**

**VOLUNTEER HELPERS WANTED FOR NAMI SLOCO "BEAUTIFUL MINDS WALKATHON"**. 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.

**Hope for overwhelmed family caregivers  
Assisted outpatient treatment (AOT) significantly reduces caregiver strain.**

**by TAC Executive Director Mary T. Zdanowicz, Esq.**

(From Treatment Advocacy Center's *Catalyst*)

Over the last year, the critical public role that families can play in improving treatment has been quite visible. Two Michigan state senators, who know severe mental illnesses firsthand through their brothers' experiences, forged a successful bipartisan campaign to improve their state's AOT law. A state senator in Maine, spurred by his family's experiences, has launched a long-term effort to improve that state's archaic treatment law. And Acting New Jersey Governor Richard Codey, whose wife courageously publicized her struggle with mental illness, made reform of the mental health system a cornerstone of his administration. "There are some who have said that mental health is my personal agenda," he said in part. "But this isn't my agenda, it's everyone's agenda ... Individuals with mental illness are our brothers and our sisters ... our mothers and our fathers. They are our sons and daughters ... our neighbors and colleagues. And, yes, our husbands and our wives. And they all deserve better."

It is no coincidence that legislators with personal experience recognize the necessity of a measure scientifically proven to both reduce care-giver stress and help those who deserve better assisted out-patient treatment.

In that same state-of-the-state address in January 2005, Gov. Codey also recognized the critical private role that so many families take on, noting "50 percent of adults with severe mental illness live at home with their aging parents."

Although we all recognize that providing support for a loved one brings many rewards, care giving responsibilities also generate significant stress. A myriad of studies document the effects of care giving for adults with severe mental illnesses. Each day at the Treatment Advocacy Center, families contact us with heartbreaking stories about the stress of coping with a loved one who is refusing treatment. Aging parents find themselves still struggling to provide a psychotic adult child with even the basic necessities.

One recently published study provides a ray of hope for families. As part of the largest randomized control study of assisted outpatient treatment (AOT), known as the Duke study, researchers measured the effect of AOT on caregiver strain.

The study involved caregivers of individuals with severe mental illnesses who were awaiting discharge from involuntary hospitalization and met these criteria for AOT: lack of capacity to survive in the community with available supports, a clinical history indicating a need for treatment to prevent deterioration that would predictably result in dangerousness, and an inability to make informed decisions to seek or comply voluntarily with recommended treatment. A caregiver was defined as a family or nonfamily member primarily responsible for providing care (assistance with daily living, transportation, treatment management, housing, emotional support).

The level of strain was measured over a year for caregivers of individuals who had sustained AOT (at least 180 days) compared with those who had brief periods of AOT or no AOT. The study results indicate that extended outpatient commitment over the course of a year *significantly* reduces caregiver strain. Not surprisingly, improved treatment adherence also

(Continued on page 3)

**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](mailto:BMcGraw@t-mha.org).



**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!**

Current running Classes:

*North County Class started Jan. 22, 2009 call Lori@226-8087*

*SLO class started Feb. 3, 2009 call Marsha@234-4961*

*South County Class started Jan. 22 call John@929-3299*


*Future Classes will be announced shortly.*

CALL FOR DETAILS & RESERVATIONS for 2008/2009 Family-to-Family Coordinator – John Klimala 805-550-3889 [JohnKlimala@aol.com](mailto:JohnKlimala@aol.com).




**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 .

**ATASCADERO STATE HOSPITAL ADVISORY BOARD MEETS AT ASH, from 9 - 12 AM, May 7, 2009.** The meeting is open to the public and includes a public comment section. You also may submit items regarding your concerns to the board through Rae Belle Gambos, ASH advisory board member, at 461-6590 or rgambos@sbcglobal.net.

 **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.

**PARENTS AND TEACHERS AS ALLIES NEWS:** - Congratulations to **Lisa, Phillip, Marcia, Madeleine, JoAnne, and Roger** for helping present the "Parents and Teachers As Allies" program this last year.

 National Alliance on Mental Illness  
Parents & Teachers as Allies

For more information, please contact Lisa Kelley, Coordinator for Parents and Teachers as Allies, at 788-0869.

**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

**Hospital Beds**  
(From Treatment Advocacy Center Website)  
<http://www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org/>

There were 340 public psychiatric beds per 100,000 population in 1955 but only 17 such public psychiatric beds per 100,000 population in 2005. This marked contrast raises the question of how many beds are actually needed. What is the correct number?

Surprisingly, almost nothing has been written on this question, and there are no federal guidelines.

To answer this question, the Treatment Advocacy Center solicited opinions from 15 experts on psychiatric care in the U.S. They included individuals who have run private and state psychiatric hospitals, county mental health programs, and experts on serious psychiatric disorders. Each expert was asked to assume the existence of good outpatient programs and the availability of outpatient commitment.

The replies received were surprisingly consistent. Almost all 15 experts estimated a need for 50 (range 40 to 60) public psychiatric beds per 100,000 population for hospitalization for individuals with serious psychiatric disorders. Since that figure assumes the availability of good outpatient programs and outpatient commitment, this is a minimum number.

(Continued from page 2) AOT Reduces care giver strain.  
reduced caregiver strain.' However, the study showed that AOT operates as an independent factor from treatment adherence in reducing stress. That is, the researchers concluded that "extended outpatient commitment contributes significantly to reduced caregiver strain, over and above its effect on treatment adherence."

Family and friends are an important resource in providing care and support for individuals with severe mental illnesses. As a matter of public policy, it is imperative that families receive the support that they need. Assisted outpatient treatment is an evidence-based means of reducing caregiver strain. But it is also a proven means of improving consumer outcomes and quality of life.

After all, isn't that what caregivers really want?

**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

**DONATIONS GREATLY APPRECIATED.** We sincerely appreciate the generous financial donations that our members, mental health professionals, and other supporters have made over the past years. We especially need donations to cover the cost of Parents and Teachers as Allies and Laura's Law Advocacy this coming year. **NAMI BASICS** (an educational program designed for families with children and adolescents living with mental illnesses) which is just beginning to be offered will also require funds for startup and initial classes.

**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. 805-541-5144 ext. 129 or pramirez@tmha.org.

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.

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

NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLINNESS  
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  \$30 Individual  
 Renewal  \$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**

Every Tuesday Afternoon 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.**

**For Corrections to this section please contact  
garner.ed@gmail.com**

*(Continued in next column)*

**Atascadero**

5395 El Camino, Suite B.  
Peer Support

**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  
Transitions-Mental Health Association Phone 541-5144 X 171

**Officers and Committee Chairs**

**Officers**

Lisa Kelley President..... 788-0869  
Vice-president — OPEN  
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 Coordinator .....788-0869

**NAMI SLOCO WEBSITE: [www.namislo.org](http://www.namislo.org)**

**Next Meeting  
March 24, 2009**

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