



# NEWSLETTER

## NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY ([www.namislo.org](http://www.namislo.org))

May 2009

Number 5

Volume 25

### MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

#### General Meeting.

**GENERAL MEETING: Tuesday May 26 at 7:00 P.M.** Come learn about the "Healthcare for All" initiative. Guest speaker Walter Heath will explain this initiative and what it could mean for all Californians. You are welcome to bring a snack to share. Coffee and juice is provided.

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 *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.

#### Mad Pride Stirs up Reaction

(From Treatment Advocacy Center Blog)

A recent Newsweek story looks at some people with mental illness who reject medication and instead **voice their "Mad Pride" over and above the need for treatment.**

What was the reaction? Beyond those associated with the Mad Pride movement, strong caution and reality was given by readers.

Here are some excerpts of reactions from the Newsweek website:

"The lives of one in seven of those with bipolar disorder end in suicide. That is something like 15 times the national average. And I can identify. I couldn't even entertain the thought of taking my own life before the bipolar symptoms hit, and then there was nothing else I could think of minute after minute for days on end. If I'd had the energy during the down months I'd be dead. After I got treatment I was just as I was before (and thankfully with my meds remain that way). So there is a lot to consider here, but let's not forget the stakes."

"One of the symptoms of severe schizophrenia is anosognosia, where the sufferer [refuses] to believe that there is anything off. There are times when a person may need to be hospitalized or medicated when they don't want it, and as painful a prospect as that is, that doesn't make it any less necessary."

Several readers pointed out that treating mental illness is not a one size fits all proposition. That's why more treatment options, including assisted outpatient treatment, are needed. It's not in every case, but some of the comments posted indicate that people do see the need for treatment in the appropriate situation.

"Can you take care of yourself? Are you functional? Do you drive everyone who loves you away with paranoid delusions? Can you get out of bed in the morning? Are you suicidal? Are you homicidal? Hey, I'm all for trying to manage diseases, whether mental or physical, with holistic practices, diet, exercise, etc. But sometimes those measures are not enough. Sometimes those measures are harmful. When you start movement like this, it implies

*(Continued on page 2)*

#### Help Needed

Kathy Garner needs a volunteer to bring coffee and juice for the general meetings in June, Sept. and October. (Just need to make coffee and buy juice. Everything else is provided.) Kathy also needs someone to sell NARSAD cards at the general meetings from June until the November. Contact Kathy Garner 541-0490

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

**NORTH COUNTY FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP** –See Page 4

#### 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**

#### 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 interest in doing presentations at local schools.** If you are interested please contact Lisa at 788-0869 or at [lisakelley@hotmail.com](mailto:lisakelley@hotmail.com).

**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.

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 NATIONAL CONFERENCE IS IN SAN FRANCISCO THIS YEAR ON July 6-9th.** This would be a great year to attend.

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"

## Straining America's Libraries (From Treatment Advocacy Center)

People with untreated severe mental illnesses may pose a greater risk to the future of America's public libraries than does the invention of the Internet, according to a new survey released in the March/April edition of Public Libraries, the journal of the American Library Association.

The survey of 1,300 public libraries finds that 9 out of 10 library staff members said that patrons with a mental illness have disturbed or affected the use of the library by other people, with an almost equal number (85 percent) saying they have had to call the police as a result.

"Our nation's libraries are turning into daytime shelters for people with severe mental illness who need to be in treatment," said lead study author E. Fuller Torrey, M.D., founder of the nonprofit Treatment Advocacy Center and Executive Director of the Stanley Medical Research Institute. "The fact that libraries remain a safe haven from violence and life on the streets for people with mental illness is a sad commentary. Doing so devalues human life and the importance of libraries in our communities."

The problems facing libraries are part of the larger issue of the lack of available treatment for people with severe mental illness, especially for those who are discharged from mental hospitals without any follow up care. The result is an increase of people with mental illnesses who are homeless and turn to libraries and other public facilities because they just need somewhere to go.

"The libraries did not ask to become day programs for people with mental illness," Torrey said, "but they are trying hard to accommodate these patrons. However, this should not be the job of libraries; it should be the job of mental health centers."



**NAMI PEER-TO-PEER**  
Peer-to-Peer Recovery Education Center

**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.

Congratulations to Betty, Dan Gayne and T-MHA for conducting an excellent PEER-TO-PEER mentor/teacher training on May 1-3 that graduated 13 new mentors from San Luis Obispo and Kern Counties. Special thanks to Jane Roberts (a long-time NAMI SLOCO member) for her NAMI Kern Co advocacy.

## 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.

## 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 Kiimala 805-550-3889 [JohnKiimala@aol.com](mailto:JohnKiimala@aol.com).

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



## 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'll and we will be glad you did!

**Pam Zweifel, Membership Chair**

**A huge thanks to Rose Fowler**, our April speaker for her excellent presentation on the many challenges and rewards of being a school counselor.

## Improved Treatment Standards

During the 1960s and 1970s, state mental health laws governing treatment of severe mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia and manic-depression, for individuals who refused it underwent sweeping reform. Most notably, assisted treatment laws were changed to require a court finding of dangerousness before treatment could be provided to those incapable of recognizing their need for it. While well intentioned, efforts meant to protect people with mental illness resulted in many of the most severely ill going without needed treatment and, in too many cases, becoming homeless, incarcerated, suicidal, victimized or prone to violent episodes.

As the consequences of non-treatment continue to build, a new wave of reforms is under way in many states. **States are abandoning dangerousness as the sole standard for assisted treatment.** Instead they are facilitating needed intervention before tragedy occurs. These states are enacting and utilizing standards based on the need for treatment.

Another important reform happening in many states is to encourage the use of **assisted outpatient treatment** as a way to prevent repeated hospitalizations and other consequences of non-treatment. When appropriate, assisted outpatient treatment fosters treatment compliance in the community through a court-ordered treatment plan. Not only does the court commit the patient to the treatment system, it also commits the treatment system to the patient.

Progressive assisted treatment laws must be crafted to reflect the significant advances that have been made in the last two decades in our understanding and ability to treat severe mental illnesses. We now know that these conditions are treatable biological brain diseases and not lifestyle choices, as was the prevailing thought four decades ago. Research shows that at least 40 percent of those diagnosed with schizophrenia and manic-depressive illness lack insight into their illness because of a biologically based symptom known as anosognosia. A person suffering from this symptom does not believe he or she is ill and is likely to refuse treatment reasoning, "Why should I take medication if there is nothing wrong with me?" Additionally, for those who previously refused treatment because of unpleasant or dangerous side-effects of medication, a much broader array of medications is now available so that possible adverse effects of treatment can be more effectively mitigated

*(Continued from page 1) Mad Pride*

you're working on behalf of a certain segment of the population. Do you really want to be responsible for the consequences of that?"

"As someone who until yesterday lived with an unmedicated person with obsessive-compulsive disorder and manic depression, I can tell you that those who reject their medication are the most selfish people on Earth. The hell I endured destroyed our relationship beyond repair. They have a right to do as they please. They do not have a right to inflict it on others."

"I have seen cancer patients walking around proudly with their bald heads. And it made me feel good that they felt strong and secure enough to let what was happening to them show. Some people are truly beyond the scope of what this article was describing. Sometimes people 'snap' and honestly no one might have been able to see it coming - I would have never believed my husband could act some of the ways he did (with bipolar) until I witnessed it. Horrible things happen and they cannot always be stopped. But if someone is seen to be violent, then I think all would agree, he/she should be stopped – without question."

**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** was unable to meet May 7, 2009; please contact Rae Belle for information on the rescheduled meeting at 461-6590 or rgamb@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 for presenting Parents and Teachers as Allies to the Cuesta College Early Childhood Ed class on May 12 . One more presentation is scheduled for May.



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.

**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

**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. **Next class starts May 28, 2009. Please call Carole at 771-9063 or Lisa at 788-0869.**

**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.

NAMI SLOCO extends its sincere appreciation to the El Paso de Robles Youth Correctional Facility Staff Benefit Fund for its most generous donation to NAMI SLOCO. We look forward to being financially able to offer more "NAMI Basics" classes to parents and caregivers of children and youth with SED or SMI as well as more "Parents and Teachers as Allies" presentations to education professionals this coming year.

**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 .

**CONGRATULATIONS to all of the NEW FAMILY TO FAMILY GRADUATES for the spring classes! AND THANK YOU to the awesome FAMILY-TO-FAMILY TEACHERS who made it possible.**

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

12:00 till 6:00, JUNE 26, 2009, TMHA 25 YEAR Anniversary Celebration at Growing Grounds Farm, 3740 Orcutt Rd., San Luis Obispo. For more information please call 805-543-6071.

**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 \_\_\_\_\_

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PHONE (NIGHT) \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

DONATION \_\_\_\_\_

NAMI SLO CO is a charitable, nonprofit, tax-exempt organization affiliated with the NAMI California and NAMI.

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  
Vice-president — OPEN  
Pam Zweifel Secretary..... 543-1825  
Nancy Griffin Treasurer..... 543-9399

**Standing Committee Chairs**

Naoma Wright Publicity.....543-5232  
Roger Gamsb 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 Gamsb 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  
May 26, 2009  
([www.namislo.org](http://www.namislo.org))**

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