

It's time to renew!

And if you're not a member, NAMI needs you

Join NAMI today! If you've already renewed your membership for 2008, thank you! If not, now is the time. (Dues received since July 1 apply through 2008.)

NAMI's mission is to improve the lives of those with mental illness and their families through support, education and advocacy. With affiliates in every state and in more than 1,100 local communities, NAMI is the nation's leading voice on mental illness. We need your help alongside more than

Renewal form page 3 or renew online at namiwnc.org

210,000 NAMI members to work effectively for better treatment, for more research in brain dis-

orders and for education to eliminate the stigma surrounding these no-fault

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Western Highlands recognizes NAMI advocates and affiliates

Western Highlands Network (WHN), which manages mental health, developmental disabilities and substance abuse services in our eight county WNC area, and its Consumer and Family Advisory Committee (CFAC) honored several NAMI members at its Nov. 17 annual board meeting. Arthur Carder, CEO of Western Highlands, called the honorees examples of "what we all have done. We have all made a difference."

Leslie Huntley, a member of NAMI Four Seasons and co-chair of CFAC, presented Mona Cornwell with an award for her leadership in bringing the Crisis Intervention Team program to our area. Mona serves on the board of NAMI Western Carolina and of NAMI NC.

NAMI Western Carolina and NAMI Four Seasons affiliates were honored for their enormous strides in bringing



Larry Thompson (left) receives the Rowe Lifetime Achievement Award from Western Highlands Network CEO Arthur Carder.

awareness of mental illness throughout the counties served by Western Highlands through events such as Celebration of Courage and programs such as Family-to-Family, which help reshape people's perceptions, reduce

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Welcome To Our Holiday Dinner

NAMI Western Carolina invites you to its annual Holiday Dinner at 6 p.m. Tuesday, December 18, at St. Mark's Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall, East Chestnut St. at Merrimon Ave. Please bring a covered dish to share.

We will accept gifts (unwrapped) for patients at Broughton Hospital. They would welcome socks, gloves, caps, shirts, blouses, tops, T-Shirts, sweat suits (XL, XXL, XXXL), shampoo, hair conditioners, lotions, billfolds, pocket-books, stationery and stamps.

'Building community, taking action'

By Tracy Mixson

NAMI Western Carolina lived up to the 2007 Mental Illness Awareness Week "Building Community, Taking Action" theme, planning and participating in mental health events targeting women, students and veterans, and in places focusing on families, children and overall wellness. Events were listed in the affiliate's newsletter, and on the its website, www.namiwnc.org.

Kicking off National Mental Illness Awareness Week, NAMI Western Carolina set up prominent displays at both the YMCA and YWCA, with information boards and brochures about the affiliate's free peer support services and educational programs. The displays were updated and re-stocked throughout the week, and featured the local affiliate's phone number and website. At the more urban YMCA, information about depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders and children was in greatest demand. At the more diversified downtown YWCA, materials in Spanish and those with a focus on African Americans were popular, as well as those for women, children and anxiety disorders.

Before and during the week, affiliate members wore MIAW stickers, Bipolar Disorder Awareness Day pins and silver ribbons to spark conversation about mental illness. A NAMI member wrote a commentary in the *Sunday Asheville Citizen-Times*. MIAW posters with affiliate contact information were mounted throughout the city in grocery stores, libraries, coffee shops, etc.

NAMI Western Carolina began the week with an information booth at a women's health fair; members were on-hand to answer questions, give information about the affiliate's support and education services, and offer free materials about mental illness.

NAMI Western Carolina went to college twice, both times in collaboration with the college counseling center/student services department in conjunction with a Depression/Anxiety Disorder Screening event. Celebrating Bipolar Disorder Awareness Day, NAMI Western Carolina's bipolar disorder support group "Magnetic Minds" marked its fourth year at



Warren Wilson College, where almost 500 students viewed the group's information station and about 200 were screened for depression, bipolar disorder and anxiety disorders. NAMI Western Carolina was also on campus at Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College's mental health fair, where almost 200 students were screened and many more passed through seeking additional information. At both college events, NAMI Western Carolina provided useful mental health websites for students, instructors and administrators, and information about how to start a NAMI on Campus Club.

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Advocates

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stigma and provide needed supports.

Also honored was Larry Thompson, who received the first Rowe Lifetime Achievement Award, established by Western Highlands to honor the late John Rowe and Florence Rowe's compassion and advocacy on behalf of those in need. The Rowes have been active NAMI Western Carolina members and Family-to-Family teachers.

A NAMI Western Carolina member, Thompson was CEO of the former Blue Ridge Area Program and remains involved in community service and advocacy.

October Road was honored as an outstanding provider for establishing a quality program for adult mental health and substance abuse consumers in just over a year. George Scott was recognized as the Western Highlands staff member who has had a great impact across all departments. Proudly

wearing gold, silver and bronze medals, Jason Morrow of Tryon was honored for his aquatics feats at the Special Olympics World Summer Games in Shanghai.

Mandy Stone, Buncombe County DSS Director and Assistant County Manager, will chair the Western Highlands Board during 2008. NAMI member Nancy Carey serves on the Board and NAMI members Leslie Huntley, Bob Carey, Mona Cornwell and Kelly Rodriguez are CFAC members.

CIT grads back from Memphis

The first trained Crisis Intervention Team graduates, including NAMI Western Carolina's Mona Cornwell, returned from their weeklong training in Memphis in early November.

The 40-hour CIT training program Oct. 29-Nov. 2 included sessions taught by mental health professionals on topics such as psychiatric disorders, medications, and suicide intervention; visits to the state mental hospital, the VA, a peer center, and a family health center to talk to consumers; and role-plays involving CIT officers from Memphis that allowed participants to practice verbal de-escalation techniques.

In addition to Cornwell, the group was made up of Lt. Randy Whitson of the Buncombe County Sheriff's



From left: Sam Cochran, Randy Whitson, Sarah Benson, Dale DenOuden, Mona Cornwell, Rich Munger, Charlie Schoenheit, Randy Dupont.

Office; Capt. Sarah Benson of the Asheville Police Department; Lt. Dale DenOuden of the Buncombe County Sheriff's Office, who's also an instructor in the A-B Tech Emergency

Services Academy; Rich Munger of Buncombe County Human Services; and Charlie Schoenheit of Western Highlands Network.

Building

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Two NAMI Western Carolina members shared their stories of living with mental illness during a MIAW function at the Asheville VA Hospital. The duo spoke about coping strategies, hope and recovery and were followed by Nicholas Warr, author of "Phase Line Green: The Battle for Hue," 1968, and N.C. Sen. Martin Nesbitt, (D), head of the legislative committee that focuses on the mental health system. Nesbitt was blunt about North Carolina's mental health crisis, but said he was encouraged by what seemed to be the lessening of stigma surrounding mental illness, due in part to MIAW's VA events. Like fixing the state's mental health system, seeing the end of stigma won't happen soon enough, the senator said, but it

is going to happen. At the function, NAMI Western Carolina also opened a dialogue to sponsor a Veteran's Council that would originate from the VA hospital.

A nationally known recovery expert spoke at NAMI Western Carolina's regular meeting, always advertised and open to the public. Dr. Sharon Young, Clinical Director at Cooper-Riis, a residential "healing farm community" for people with mental illnesses, discussed how the recovery model is affecting everyone in the mental health arena, from consumer to family member to mental health professional.

Rounding out the week, members of the affiliate's consumer social group "Ground Zero" went bowling and proudly wore pins for MIAW and the affiliate.

At each MIAW event with an information table, individuals could enter a drawing to win a one-year NAMI membership. Those who didn't win were contacted by phone and asked if they wanted information about NAMI or affiliate support group material.

It's impossible to estimate how many people became more aware of mental illness during MIAW, or of NAMI and the specific services provided by NAMI Western Carolina. But making the community aware of NAMI's message, its mission and its multitude of services continues beyond Mental Illness Awareness Week 2007 for NAMI Western Carolina, with support groups, "In Our Own Voice" presentations, "Family-to-Family" classes, educational programs, health fairs, peer support trainings, mental health reform and political forums, a Veteran's Council, and more.

Hundreds attend CIT Conference, Fall Institute

By **Jim Pitts**
NAMI WC President

NAMI North Carolina and the Wake County Sheriffs Office joined forces at North Carolina State University's McKimmon Center in Raleigh on November 26-27 to put on an important and stimulating set of educational meetings related to mental illness and law enforcement.

The first day, Monday, the CIT Statewide Conference featured Major Sam Cochran of the Memphis Police Department, the law enforcement officer known nationally for teaching the "Memphis Model," a distinctively effective partnership between law enforcement, behavioral health agencies and hospitals to divert mentally ill persons from jails and prisons. NAMI has been an integral part of the Memphis Model since its beginning nearly 20 years ago. Nearly 300 persons attended.

The second day was NAMI NC's Fall Institute: Decrimi-



nalizing
Mental
Illness and
focused on

effective programs of decriminalization, NAMI NC's new initiative to seek changes in policies and laws that prevent "criminalized" consumers from successfully reintegrating into work and community after jail. Nearly 200 persons attended. A substantial number of NAMI members and law enforcement personnel participated in activities for both days.

In the wake of a collapsed state-wide mental health system, NAMI NC is taking the lead in re-establishing and establishing old and new patterns of collaboration to build a system that will serve consumers and families. Law enforcement, consumers, and families are beginning to realize a common interest in diminishing brain disorder stigma while better protecting both law enforcement and consumers.

Celebration of Courage contributors

Additional contributions have been received in response to NAMI WC's Celebration of Courage, the beautiful floral display on St. Joseph's Campus of Mission Memorial Hospital Sept. 7-8. Donors included Donald and Rosemary Jackson, \$300; Brian Pitts, \$100; Kim Pitts, \$100, as well as generous contributions from William Cowan, Evelyn Pitts, Kimalyn Pitts, Wellington and Andrea Pitts, and Joseph and Dorothy Sulock.

Thanks Nina

A huge thank you to NAMI WC member Nina Accardo for bringing such great treats to the last several meetings. Nina's stepping up and taking charge in an area of need exemplifies the type of volunteerism our affiliate needs to be a more effective voice on mental illness in our area.

Dr. Karl Schroeder will speak Jan. 15

Dr. Karl Schroeder, a psychiatrist with the Asheville VA Hospital, will be guest speaker at January's program.

Among topics Dr. Schroeder will likely discuss are the newest advancements in medications, the increasing number of vets coming back from Iraq and other combat areas with mental health issues and substance abuse issues, as well as other topics.

Dr. Schroeder's presentation will be at 7 p.m. at MountainHouse, 225 East Chestnut St., Asheville. Support groups for all consumers and family members will follow.

Contact Numbers For Western Highland Network

Western Highlands Network, 356 Biltmore Ave., Asheville, NC 28801, www.westernhighlands.org manages mental health, developmental disabilities and substance abuse services in Yancey, Transylvania, Rutherford, Polk, Mitchell, Madison, Henderson and Buncombe counties.

For routine needs or daytime emergency, call 828-225-2800 or 1-800-951-3792 (toll free).

For emergencies after hours & weekends, call 828-252-4357 or 1-800-951-3792.

Renew

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brain disorders. Your membership helps NAMI Western Carolina to be a powerful voice on mental illness in our community and to advocate to fix our state's failed mental health reform.

NAMI Western Carolina activities during 2007 included:

- Supported members and consumers at affiliate meetings, support groups; responded to phone calls
- Sponsored affiliate educational programs and a 12-week NAMI Family-to-Family class
- Raised awareness through Celebration of Courage, NAMI WALKS, at health fairs and area colleges.
- Advocated at local, state & na-

Volunteers Needed

NAMI Western Carolina is growing, and we need your energy, your input, your help to make our affiliate a stronger force for change in Western North Carolina.

Volunteer opportunities include newsletter writing, editing, helping update the website, and helping advocate for change by contacting elected officials on issues that affect us all.

And some of our members this year such as John Morrison and Nina Accardo, have seen a need and created their own volunteer opportunities. Many thanks to them both.

Call David, 654-8754, for info.

On the Web: NAMIWNC.org

- tional levels; were represented on local mental health organizations
- Helped with depression screening during Mental Illness Awareness Week
- Received NAMI National grant that increased membership and community awareness
- Moved forward with Crisis Intervention Training for local law enforcement
- Worked with VA Medical Center to establish a Veterans' Consumer Council
- Celebrated at a picnic with NAMI Four Seasons and at our

Holiday Dinner

- Members gave informative programs, a radio interview, served on the NAMI-NC board.

Thank you for supporting our vital work by joining NAMI WC. Dues are shared with NAMI national and NAMI NC and entitle you to receive informative local, state and national publications.

Send this completed form and check payable to NAMI WC to:
NAMI WC, P. O. Box 8046, Asheville, NC 28814

Help Us Make A Difference!

Join NAMI or Renew Your Membership

I would like to be a member of NAMI-WC and am enclosing my check for membership and/or contribution.

Please check if: new or renewal:

\$35.00 One-year Membership (Individual and Family)

\$3.00 Open Door Membership for those with limited means

\$ _____ Additional Contribution (if any)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Home Telephone _____

E-Mail _____

Mail checks payable to NAMI WC:, P.O. Box 8046, Asheville, NC 28814

NAMI Western Carolina is a 501(c)3 non profit corporation. All contributions are tax-deductible.

Return Service Requested

Support

NAMI WESTERN CAROLINA offers support, education and advocacy to families, friends and to all persons with a biological brain disorder/mental illness. NAMI WC monthly membership meetings are at 9:30 a.m. the 1st Saturday and 7 p.m. the 3rd Tuesday. (Use the side entrance.) Meetings are open to all and include support groups.

SUPPORT, GENERAL INFORMATION: Mary Lane
Travis: 298-1847, olg77tr@bellsouth.net

SUPPORT GROUPS: Support meetings for all are held following the general meeting at 9:30 a.m. the first Saturday of the month and following the 7 p.m. program on the third Tuesday of the month. All NAMI WC support groups offer peer-to-peer support; they are not led by mental health professionals.

MAGNETIC MINDS, Bipolar Disorder Support Group: Consumer support group only for people with a bipolar disorder diagnosis; meets at 7 p.m. the 1st & 3rd Wednesday monthly. Info: www.magneticminds.org. Co-facilitators: Betty Hall, b.i.hall@charter.net; Tracy Mixson, 232-0438.

NAMI-CARE: Support group by consumers, for consumers and about consumers meets at 10 a.m. the first Saturday monthly. NAMI-CARE stands for Consumers Advocating Recovery Through Empowerment. NAMI-CARE FACILITATOR: Marlene Wooten, 505-0438, marlenas333@charter.net.



EDUCATION AND OUTREACH: NAMI WC offers free educational programs and participates in a variety of health fairs, anti-stigma campaigns and mental illness awareness events. To request a speaker or the affiliate's participation, contact Jim Pitts, 258-5359, jimpitts1@mac.com.

NAMI FAMILY-TO-FAMILY EDUCATION: An empowering 12-week course of up-to-date facts and support for families and friends of persons with a diagnosed mental illness. Trained family members teach the 2 1/2 hour classes. The course is free with all materials provided. Classes fill up quickly and the class size is limited. For information on the next class to be offered in Asheville, call 299-9596 or email rohaus@charter.net.

IN OUR OWN VOICE: LIVING WITH MENTAL ILLNESS: People with mental illnesses tell their stories about learning to cope with the reality of their disorders while recovering and reclaiming productive lives in this brief, yet comprehensive, interactive presentation. IOOV includes video, personal testimony and discussion. IOOV PROGRAM COORDINATOR: Tracy Mixson, 232-0438, namiwc.voice@charter.net. Far West Counties: 524-1355; South West Counties: 884-6103.

NAMI NORTH CAROLINA HELPLINE: 1-800-451-9682

All meetings are held at Mountainhouse, 225 E. Chestnut Street, Asheville, unless otherwise indicated.