

March/April Speakers

Dan Zorn - Mobile Crisis, Provider Services, Challenges

Dan Zorn, CEO of Asheville-based Families Together, will be the speaker at the March 17 meeting of NAMI Western Carolina.

For the past decade, Families Together has provided family support services intended to meet the comprehensive mental health and/or case management needs of children, families and adults.

Topics Zorn is expected to discuss include regional mobile crisis services provided by Families Together as well as the state of services in our area and the challenges facing providers of those services.

Larry Thompson - Legislative Update

Larry Thompson, a NAMI member and head of Blue Ridge Group Homes, will be the April 21 speaker. Former CEO of the Blue Ridge Area Authority, Thompson will give members an update on legislation and the state's mental health budget.

Meetings begin at 7 p.m. at Mountainhouse, 225 E. Chestnut Street. Support groups for all follow the educational meeting.

NAMI-NC's annual walk to be held May 2 in Raleigh

By Jim Pitts

NAMI Walks is an important part of the social

movement to combat the stigma associated with mental illness and to affirm that timely medical treatment—combined with family and community support—works. NAMI Walks for the Mind of America, NAMI's signature walkathon event, will be held in Raleigh, on the campus of Dorothea Dix State Hospital, on May 2. I will be there to walk with hundreds of people representing NAMI-NC's 34 affiliates and nearly 2,000 members. Last year, the organization exceeded its \$75,000 goal, raising over \$95,000.

Mental illness is much more common than most people realize, affecting one in every five families. The causes of mental illness are complex, being partially genetic and partly the result of living in the world. But what really matters is how

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Acclaimed Family-to-Family program begins March 19

NAMI Family-to-Family, a free 12-week class for relatives and friends involved in caring for individuals diagnosed with a severe mental illness, will be offered in Asheville from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. on Thursdays beginning on March 19. NAMI-WC sponsors the course with funding from Western Highlands Network.

A recent evaluation of Family-to-Family showed that course participants gained a greater understanding of mental illness, coped much better,

worried less, and felt newly empowered to advocate for better treatment and services for their relative. Many family members describe the impact of this course as life changing. Often this is their first opportunity to talk openly to others about a relative's mental illness.

Family-to-Family provides families with:

- Current information about schizophrenia, major depression,

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Local affiliate well represented at first NAMI Connection training

Six NAMI-WC members attended the first facilitator training held in North Carolina for the new Connection Recovery Support Group. The



training was held in Charlotte from February 20 to 22. Newly trained facilitators are Jamil Pitts, Ray Carter, Cindy Sutherland, Charles and Marlene Wooten, and Christine Smith. We are proud that our affiliate had the most representatives of any in North Carolina.

NAMI Connection, which will replace NAMI Care, will continue to be a support group for consumers with any diagnosis. The group, facilitated by two peers, will begin to meet once a week for 1-1/2 hours starting in early spring. Times and locations will be announced later on our website: www.namiwnc.org.

NAMI Walks

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we respond to a mental condition, by seeking to understand and deal with it. The Pitts family was extremely fortunate to discover NAMI when mental illness emerged in our home. Thanks to NAMI and modern medicine, our family member is in recovery and has returned to living a productive life. I believe it is my responsibility to share the good news by participating in the NAMI Walk. Besides, the walk is a lot of fun!

We participants will be there to publicly declare that mental illnesses—such as bipolar disorder, depression, schizophrenia, and obsessive-compulsive disorder—are treatable, just like physical illnesses, such as cancer, diabetes, and heart disease. We walk in Raleigh, the state capital, because we want to capture the attention of legislators, a new governor, and health insurers, people whose policy and funding decisions profoundly affect health conditions throughout North Carolina. Enlight-

ened policies and generous funding of mental health prevention and treatment will improve employee productivity in the workplace, and reduce the sizable contribution of untreated mental illness to problems as diverse as drug addiction, homelessness, school dropout rates, and rising jail populations. We owe it to ourselves and our families to make our cause visible and to declare that addressing mental illness is central to health care reform for all Americans.

I'm asking you to walk with me or donate to support my walk in this great event. To sign up, visit my personal walker page: <http://www.nami.org/namiwalks09/RAL/jpitts>. NAMI is the largest education, support, and advocacy organization that serves the needs of all whose lives are touched by these illnesses. This includes persons with mental illness, their families, their employers, the law enforcement community, and policymakers.

NAMI is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit rated by Worth magazine as among the top 100 charities "most likely to save

Former NAMI-WC President celebrates a special birthday

Jack Benning, who served for several years as one of NAMI-WC's earliest presidents, recently celebrated her 90th birthday at Asheville Manor. The party was well attended; guests included her three children, her grandchildren, and NAMI friends. Jack is in excellent spirits and greatly enjoyed visiting with everyone who attended.

Jack would be delighted to receive visits from friends who were unable to attend the party. The Manor is located at 308 Overlook Road, very near Long Shoals Road. Drop by if you can.

the world" and has been given an "A" rating by the American Institute of Philanthropy for efficient and effective use of charitable dollars. To find out more about the 2009 walk, visit the NAMI-NC website at www.naminc.org.

Western Highland Network Contact Numbers

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.

Family-to-Family

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bipolar disorder, panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, borderline personality disorder, and co-occurring brain disorders and addictive disorders.

- Up-to-date information about medications, side effects, and strategies for medication adherence.
- The status of research on brain disorders and the most effective evidence-based treatments to promote recovery.
- An opportunity to gain empathy by understanding the experience of a person with mental illness.
- Help with problem-solving, communication skills, and strategies for handling crises and relapse.
- Care for caregivers coping with worry, stress, and emotional overload.
- Ways of locating support and services in the community and advocating to improve services.

Since the class size is limited, early registration is required. For information, call instructors Marlene Wooten, 505-0438, or Florence Rowe, 299-9596.

Family-to-Family teacher training planned in WNC

If you are interested in teaching NAMI Family-to-Family, contact Leslie Huntley, huntleywhiteoak@alltel.net or 828-894-3507. A teacher training weekend is tentatively planned for this summer in western North Carolina. To qualify, participants must have completed the 12-week course and commit to teach two sessions or more.

NAMI goes to Washington

The leadership of NAMI-NC—Executive Director Deby Dihoff, President Jim Pitts (of our local affiliate), and President-Elect David Bullins—recently attended the NAMI National Winter Leadership Conference, held in Washington, D.C. Our state officials worked on developing NAMI’s policy positions and strategies for promoting the important role that mental health should play in health care reform in America.

On February 5 NAMI leaders from the various states spent all day visiting members of their respective congressional delegations. Deby, Jim, and David, braving the bitterly cold weather and elaborate anti-terrorist security measures, raced back and forth across the Capitol grounds, visiting the offices of both Senators and seven Representatives from North Carolina, including our new Senator, Kay Hagan. On February 6-8, state and national NAMI staff, members, consumers, and family members held discussions on how to strengthen our movement, locally and across the nation.

Buncombe jail no longer charging for mental health service requests

There’s good news from the Buncombe County Detention Facility regarding inmate mental health service requests. In the past, jail administrators had charged \$10 for requests made by sick slip or “inmate request form” to see the psychiatric nurse.

But a new “no charge” policy represents an effort to facilitate this service by eliminating a potential roadblock to receiving care for possibly reluctant inmates. (Inmates seen for medical sick call continue to be charged \$10.) Jim Duffy, Detention Facility mental health discharge/reentry planner and NAMI volunteer, screens request forms, frequently meeting with inmates to identify their problems and offer guidance and referral, and forwards requests for mental health evaluation or medications to the psych nurse.

Volunteers needed to help with office tasks

NAMI-WC has volunteer opportunities available! We are seeking consumers and family members who have the time and energy to help with the following short-term tasks.

You may volunteer on a yearly or half yearly basis to:

- Put labels on new rack cards.
- Organize and update our membership list.

- Type submitted articles into a NAMI newsletter template.

Volunteers also needed to coordinate:

- Bele Chere table volunteers.
- The Iris/Celebration of Courage event.

Please contact Christine Smith at (828) 258-1832, or cijp1860@yahoo.com for more information or to volunteer.

VA Consumer Council, NAMI-WC strive to help veterans and families

In late 2007, the Veterans Administration asked all mental health facilities within its hospital system to help form veterans consumer advisory groups. The VA was to provide a meeting place, some clerical help, and a liaison who would help the group navigate the VA system. Thus the Veterans Consumer Council (VACC) on Mental Health for the Charles George VA Medical Center in Asheville was born. Since then, VACC has drafted and adopted by-laws, participated in mental health week, and made several recommendations to Dr. Carole Rivers, the hospital's Chief of Mental Health Services. Christine Smith, co-president of NAMI-WC, is the NAMI representative to the VACC. Other council members are veteran consumers at the mental health clinic.

VACC's goals include establishing a close relationship with NAMI, thereby helping to facilitate more services, including support groups, for the thousands of veterans in our area who either have served their country in the past or are now returning from current wars. The families of such veterans also need support and education, an area where NAMI excels. The council recognizes that the government can't and shouldn't be charged with doing everything. NAMI and VACC, working together, can provide many services. Anyone wanting more information about the council should contact Ray Carter, chairman of VACC, at raycarter2001@yahoo.com.

The costs of mental illness; the hope for recovery

- Mental illnesses are biologically based brain disorders. They cannot be overcome through "will power" and are not related to a person's "character" or intelligence.
- Mental disorders fall along a continuum of severity. Even though mental disorders are widespread in the population, the main burden of illness is concentrated in a much smaller proportion — about 6 percent, or 1 in 17 Americans — who suffer from a serious mental illness. It is estimated that mental illness affects 1 in 5 families in America.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) has reported that four of the 10 leading causes of disability in the US and other developed countries are mental disorders. By 2020, Major Depressive illness will be the leading cause of disability in the world for women and children.
- Suicide worldwide causes more deaths every year than homicide or war. (WHO, 2001)
- Mental disorders are the leading cause of disability in the US and Canada for ages 15-44. (NIMH, 6/2006)
- Without treatment the consequences of mental illness for the individual and society are staggering: unnecessary disability, unemployment, substance abuse, homelessness, inappropriate incarceration, suicide and wasted lives; The economic cost of untreated mental illness is more than 100 billion dol-

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NAMI-WC Co-President joins CAFAC


Christine Smith, co-president of NAMI-WC, is the newest member of the Consumer and Family Advisory Committee (CFAC), a committee of the Western Highlands Network Board.

CFAC is a group of consumers and family members whose role is to ensure meaningful participation by consumers and families in shaping the development and delivery of public mental health, developmental disability, and substance abuse services in the eight-county western region. She joins five other NAMI members on the committee—Bob and Nancy Carey, Jim Greer, Leslie Huntley, and Kelly Rowe Rodriguez.

CFAC meets on the fourth Monday of each month at Western Highlands, 356 Biltmore Avenue, Asheville, in the Board Room. Meetings are held from 6 to 8 p.m. and are open to the public. There are openings for new members to represent the eight counties in mental health, developmental disabilities, and substance abuse.

To volunteer, contact Heidi Sears, CFAC Contact Person, at 828-225-2785 or sear0511@westernhighlands.org.

**Visit
namiwnc.org
for
more
information on
NAMI Western Carolina**



Renew your membership, keep NAMI vibrant

Join NAMI today! If you've already renewed your membership for 2009, thank you. If not, now is the time. Memberships received since July 1st will end Jan. 31st 2010. Your membership empowers NAMI's mission to improve the lives of those with mental illness and their families through support, education and advocacy.

As the nation's leading voice on mental illness, NAMI works for better treatment, more research on brain disorders, and education to eliminate the stigma surrounding these no-

fault illnesses. NAMI has over 210,000 members in 1,200 affiliates across the country.



Western Carolina

NAMI WC reached a record membership of 123 last year and made an impact in carrying out NAMI's mission. NAMI WC and its members gave information and support at affiliate meetings and by phone contacts; presented three 12-week Family-to-Family classes; held educational programs; held a retreat and surveyed the membership; raised awareness through the Celebration of Courage, at health fairs, area col-

leges, radio interviews and programs; helped plan CIT and train officers, advocated at local, state and national levels and was represented on local mental health groups.

Dues are shared with NAMI national and NAMI NC and entitle members to receive informative local, state and national publications. NAMI WC is a 501©3 organization and contributions are tax deductible.

Costs

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- lars each year in the United States.
- The best treatments for serious mental illnesses today are highly effective; between 70 and 90 percent of individuals have significant reduction of symptoms and improved quality of life with a combination of pharmacological and psychosocial treatments and supports.
 - Up to 60% of those with depression recover.
 - Up to 77% with schizophrenia live without relapses.
 (*World Health Organization, 2001*)
- Early identification and treatment is of vital importance; By ensuring access to the treatment and recovery supports that are proven effective, recovery is accelerated and the further harm related to the course of illness is minimized.
 - Half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14; three quarters, by age 24. Thus, these disorders are indeed "the chronic diseases of the young."
 "*National Comorbidity Survey Replication Study (NCS-R 6/2005)*"

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

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

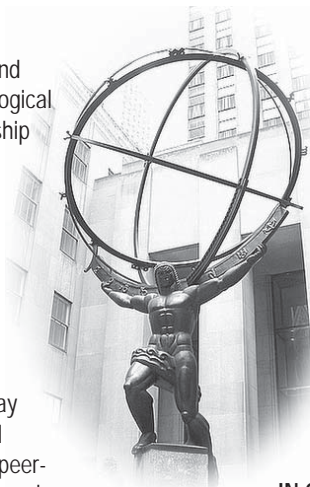
NAMI WESTERN CAROLINA offers support, education and advocacy to families, friends and to all persons with a biological brain disorder/mental illness. NAMI WC monthly membership meetings are at 9:30 a.m. the 1st Saturday and 7 p.m. the 3rd Tuesday. (Use the side entrance.) Meetings are open to all and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