

April meeting addresses children's mental health

Children's mental health issues in school and in foster care will be addressed by Eric Howard and Alan Ward at the 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 15 NAMI Western Carolina meeting at Mountainhouse. Howard is a social worker at Asheville City Schools' Randolph Learning Center. Ward, a vice president of Smith Barney, is a NAMI Family-to-Family teacher and advocate for children in foster care.

Mountainhouse is at 225 East Chestnut St., Asheville. Peer-to-peer support groups for family members and consumers will follow the programs.

ACT team is topic for May meeting

Social workers Elias Rolett and Mark Yokley will explain assertive community treatment, (ACT) at the 7 p.m. Tuesday, May 20 NAMI Western Carolina meeting, at Mountainhouse. Local ACT teams are based on the highly-acclaimed national PACT model that includes a psychiatrist, social workers and peer specialists serving people with a severe mental illness and/or substance abuse.

Francis LaPierre from the Access Unit of Western Highlands will also speak.

Reaching out to diverse communities

The NAMI Strategic Plan calls for the organization to move from "Good" to "Great." One of the key strategies to achieve this vision is to embrace and empower NAMI leaders and members from diverse communities.

NAMI reaches out to veterans

Across the country NAMI state organizations and local affiliates are reaching out to veterans and their families. The national NAMI website describes the Veterans Improvement Program (VIP), a private, nonprofit organization linked to a day treatment center at the Veterans Administration (VA) facility in Honolulu. The manager for NAMI

Walks in Hawaii made a series of presentations to the staff and veterans in this program, after which 30 veterans and staff were moved to form their own team for the upcoming NAMI Walk.



Similarly, the NAMI affiliate in Kern County, California, helped launch a program called "Front Line," designed

– Continued Page 2

"May Day for Mental Illness Benefit Concert" to aid Copestone & NAMI

Whatever your tastes in music, you'll enjoy the "May Day for Mental Illness Benefit Concert" at 7:30 p.m. Friday, May 30, at Covenant Community United Methodist Church. Admission at the door is \$10. Artists are volunteering their talents, with all proceeds going to the "Incidental funds for needy patients" at Copestone Psychiatric Unit of Mission Hospitals and to NAMI Western Carolina.



Richard Sackett, a singer songwriter and friends, folk ballads; William Jackson, Celtic music; Every Mother's Dream, folk rock; Dr. Dan Johnson group, "Empty Words," original rock; and the Coventry Community Players and Singers, upbeat sacred music. There also will be brief presentations on mental illness by Susan Reinhardt, Asheville Citizen-Times columnist and author, and Susan Ward, who with Richard Sackett is coordinating the concert.

Covenant Community United Methodist Church is located at 10 Rocket Drive. From I-240 East, take Exit 9,

– Continued Page 3

Communities

– From Page 1

as a support group for families and friends of veterans. A recent seminar was attended by more than 65 veterans, family members, and community leaders, more than two-thirds of whom had never heard of NAMI before.

Locally, NAMI WC Board member Christine Smith represents NAMI on the recently established VA Consumer Council on Mental Health. She will produce its first newsletter in April and hopes to establish links to the Family-to-Family and Crisis Intervention Training programs.

African-Americans

One of NAMI's most successful and meaningful endeavors is the Family-to-Family course presented to loved ones of persons with mental illness. The free 12-week course offers up-to-date information on various disorders and their treatment as well as empathic support and coping strategies for interacting with mentally ill family members.

Although mental illness affects all segments of society, in the past decade, few African-Americans have

enrolled in Family-to-Family classes in Asheville. To address this disparity, NAMI WC Board President Jim Pitts and his wife, Sharon, made a concerted effort to reach this community, largely through contacting the historically black churches. This innovative approach bore fruit as several African-Americans currently are enrolled in classes the Pitts are teaching at St. James AME Church.

GLBT individuals

Recognizing that the NAMI family includes Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT) people and that this community has unique needs, NAMI organized a GLBT Listening Session during its 2007 national convention, at which participants shared personal experiences and expertise.

Drawing upon the issues discussed at the session and during follow-up dialogues, the proceedings document provided long- and short-term goals for NAMI to pursue GLBT inclusion. Long-term goals included launching an education and awareness campaign to help all levels of NAMI welcome and value GLBT consumers and families, while short-term goals involved building relationships and developing partnerships with GLBT groups.

First CIT class to graduate

The first Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) class will hold its graduation on Friday, April 25, at 3:30 p.m. in the Lecture Room in the Simpson Administration Building at Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College. It is anticipated that 20 officers and deputies from the Asheville Police Department and Buncombe County Sheriff's Department will graduate.

One year ago, eight local organizations signed a Memorandum of Agreement to work together, along with a bevy of community stakeholders, to develop CIT in our community. After three trips to Memphis and hundreds of volunteer hours, plans are completed for the first 40-hour training, scheduled for the week of April 21.

Come Walk With Us!

The NAMI NC office is vamping up for a wonderful walk this year and would love for you to participate! This year's walk will be held on the Dorothea Dix Campus in Raleigh on May 17 rain or shine. Registration begins at 9 a.m. with the Walk starting at 10a.m.

Right now, we are \$20,000 ahead of where we were at the same time last year, so we are well on our way to reaching and maybe exceeding our \$75,000 fundraising goal! We have 23 hard working teams that are raising money and awareness and would love to have more. Only 12 more teams to reach our goal of 35!

If you have any Walk related questions, please contact Susan King Cope at skingcope@naminc.org or 919-788-0801 or 800-451-9682.

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.

Next Newsletter Deadline: May 23. Email info@namiwnc.org

Crisis Stabilization Unit opens

Patients are being admitted to the newly opened Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU), which is located with the Neal Dobbins Detox Center in Asheville. Thomas P. Britton, director of the crisis-detox facility, said it intends "to serve the consumer in crisis in a manner that would meet our objective of hospital diversion while providing the high quality of care that would reduce recidivism." There is a capacity for 16 with a split between detox and crisis beds as needed for a 72-hour stabilization. Three clients will be served the first month, and more as the other rooms are completed. An opening celebration is being planned.

Eight years ago, Charlie Schoenheit, now the Chief Operating Officer of Western Highlands Network, began plans to establish a local crisis/stabilization unit. Developing the funding and working with the various entities involved was complicated by the ongoing changes and challenges of "Mental Health Reform." He said a goal of the unit is to cut by one-half this area's admissions to Broughton Hospital.

Since December, Britton, MA LPC

Concert

- From Page 1

Rte. 74A, continue under the Blue Ridge Parkway and exit on Rocket Drive, which leads to A.C. Reynolds High School. Watch for the CCUM Church sign on the left. For information, call 777-0783.

For more information on NAMI Western Carolina, please visit namiwnc.org on the Web.

LCAS CCS, who is the Director of Clinical Services for ARP/Phoenix, has led the task of opening the unit. This included completing extensive renovation to make it safe for clients, hiring qualified and competent staff, contracting for psychiatric services to staff the facility 24/7, contracting with the Buncombe County Sheriff's Department for 24/7 law enforcement, getting endorsement to provide services through Western Highlands, obtaining licensure from the state, training staff, finalizing admission and

discharge protocols, and developing programs. Britton said "our team has rallied and worked extremely hard to achieve and complete each of these goals."

The CSU will serve as an important resource for the law enforcement officers. Plans are under way to develop a 24/7 Central Receiving Facility—an emergency psychiatric program that will triage consumers and access appropriate services to deal with the emergency. — By Florence Rowe

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

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.