



Ready, set, go

Cutting the ribbon at this year's NAMI Walks is NAMI North Carolina Board President Jim Pitts, flanked by Executive Director Deb Dihoff and Health and Human Services Secretary Lanier Cansler. You can still contribute. See page 3.

May/June speakers

May 19 – Rachael Nygaard, Director of United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County's 2-1-1 program, will speak. United Way's 2-1-1 program provides services that you, a family member, or friend should know about before a crisis arises.

June 16 – Ted Schiffman, new director of the Copestone psychiatric unit at Mission Hospitals, will provide a "re-introduction" to the unit and discuss how the unit runs and how it might work more effectively with NAMI.

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

What does NAMI do?

Find out at Western Regional Conference

If you haven't attended a state-level NAMI meeting in recent years, you may wonder how to describe the programs and services of the nation's largest grassroots organization devoted to mental illness education, advocacy, and support. You won't have to drive to Greensboro or Raleigh to get an answer to the question.



On Saturday May 30, NAMI-NC brings its road show to Western North Carolina! Because of the active growth of NAMI affiliates and memberships in our region, the state office and board of directors have decided to stage a "Western Regional Conference: The Power to Change Minds" at the Asheville campus of A-B Tech Community College. From 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. NAMI-NC will address the information and support needs of WNC affiliates.

The morning program will give an overview of NAMI's signature programs and explain how to bring one or several to your affiliate. Angela Kimball of NAMI's

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New NAMI class for parents starts this June

Three members of local affiliates – Jeannie Edge and Sharon Pitts from NAMI-WC and Donna Reilly from NAMI Four Seasons – have completed special training to teach NAMI Basics, a sorely needed new program for families and caregivers of children and adolescents living with mental illnesses. The six-session course will be offered for the first time in our area this June. All instruction and course materials are free to participants.

NAMI Basics, which was piloted in 2007, was inspired by NAMI's flagship Family-to-Family class and follows a similar format. The instruc-



tors are parents or other caregivers of individuals who developed the symptoms of mental illness before age 13.

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Children's Mental Health Awareness Week

The National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health declared May 3-9 as its annual National Children's Mental Health Awareness Week. Activities held during this week were designed to increase the public awareness of the well-being and human development of our nation's children and youth. During this week, the federation seeks to communicate the following messages:

- Mental health is essential to overall health and well-being.
- Serious emotional and mental health disorders in children and youth are real and treatable.
- Children and youth with mental health challenges and their families deserve access to services

and support that are family driven, youth guided, and culturally appropriate.

- Stigma associated with mental illness should no longer exist.

The Federation emphasizes the following key statistics:

- Fully 10 percent of children and adolescents in the United States live with serious emotional and mental disorders.
- In any given year, only 20 percent of these disorders are identified and treated.
- Half of lifetime cases begin by the age of 14.
- In 2008 in North Carolina, 96,296 children were identified as living with a mental illness, of whom

only 47 percent received the mental health services they needed.

Following are some helpful links related to children's mental health:

- National Federation of Families: www.ffcmh.org
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): www.nami.org/caac
- NAMI of NC: www.naminc.org
- American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry: www.aacap.org
- Exceptional Children's Assistance Center (ECAC): www.ecac-parentcenter.org
- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH): www.nimh.nih.gov

Class for parents

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The program was developed around elements that have been extensively tested and found to be highly effective in the field:

- Recognition that mental illness is 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.
- The need to gain confidence and stamina for dealing with what can be a lifelong role of family understanding and support.
- Empowerment of family caregivers as effective advocates for their children.

The local NAMI teachers are very enthusiastic about the program. "This course is a wonderful experience!" says Donna Reilly. "It balances basic psycho education and skill training with emotional support, self-care, and empowerment. We hope parents and other caregivers of children and adolescents with diagnoses and undiagnosed mental illness will take advantage of this unique opportunity." Jeannie Edge noted that the course will provide information about a wide range of mental illnesses, including ADHD, major depression, bipolar disorder, conduct disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, anxiety disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorders, schizophrenia, and substance abuse disorders.

The course also explores:

- coping skills, such as handling crisis and relapse;
- basic information about medica-

tion use in the treatment of mental illness in children;

- listening and communication techniques;
- problem solving skills; and
- the mental health and school systems' roles in treating children with mental illness.

Because class size is limited, early registration is critical. For more information or to sign up for the class, call Jeannie at (828) 664-1146 or Donna at (828) 684-5477.

Having trouble getting to NAMI meetings?

Interested in Ride Share? We are trying to coordinate a new program just for you. Call NAMI at 687-6901 and leave your name, contact information, and location.

MayHope Concert for Mental Health

May is, indeed, Mental Health Month. Of course, it is also National Egg Month, American Bike Month, and National Bar-b-que, Asparagus, and Older American Months. So it goes in a world with too few months and too many worthy causes. Among these causes, both essential and recreational, the need for greater access to and consistency of mental health services remains critical. Raising awareness and resources and promoting hope for better mental health are the goals of the MayHope project.

For the third year running, a small but dedicated group of mental health proponents have put together a mostly musical event, this year called May-Hope, to contribute to this cause. Mental illness activist and recording artist Susan Ward initiated the project. She, along with activity therapist Richard Sackett, registered nurse MaryAnn Sizemore, and psychiatric counselor Susan Hickerson, form the core of the coordinating committee.

MayHope will be held on Saturday, May 16, at 7:30 p.m. in the All Souls Episcopal Cathedral in Biltmore Village. Sharing the privilege of performing in this acoustically and artistically marvelous sanctuary are Womansong, Neoh's Mundo, and Richard Sackett and Friends.

- Womansong, a generous and talented

all-female chorus, accepted the invitation to sing despite their busy schedule. They bring a rich and vibrant presence and a tradition of wholesome, progressive, and well-practiced choral music.

- Neoh's Mundo is a local Latin jazz guitar combo featuring Daneoh, a regular fixture in the ensemble, which graces the weekly Jubilee services on Wall Street in downtown Asheville.

- Richard Sackett has been performing music in therapeutic settings for over 25 years. He'll share original and traditional tunes with a band of old friends and workmates, complimented by Daneoh.

- Providing comic relief is Asheville Citizen-Times columnist Susan Reinhardt.

Proceeds will be shared equally among four organizations: the Copestone Psychiatric Unit, providing intensive inpatient and outpatient services at Mission Hospitals; NAMI-Western Carolina, the local affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, which provides education, support, and advocacy to individuals with mental illness and their families and friends; All Souls Counseling Center, providing outpatient psychotherapy to the uninsured and the underinsured; and A-Hope Hospitality House, offer-

ing a day program for the homeless of downtown Asheville.

So please make time on May 16 to join us at All Souls Cathedral to enjoy some wonderful music and support local mental health service providers. Advance tickets are available for \$15 on line at www.NAMIWNC.org. Tickets at the door will be \$20. For further information, contact Richard Sackett at (828) 777-0783.

NAMI-WC offers free education for families

NAMI's Family-to-Family class is the first opportunity many have had to talk to others about the challenges of dealing with a loved one's mental illness. This acclaimed 12-week class for caregivers of relatives diagnosed with a severe mental illness will be offered again in Asheville at 6 p.m. on Mondays, beginning on August 24. NAMI-WC sponsors the course with funding from Western Highlands Network.

Jim and Sharon Pitts will again lead Family-to-Family. The free class covers schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, clinical depression, panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, anxiety disorder, and co-occurring addictions.

The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry reports that when family members take this or a similar course, persons with mental illness experience a 50-percent reduction in relapse, increased stabilization, and a decrease in hospitalizations.

Since the class size is limited and classes fill up quickly, early registration is required. Call 258-5359 today for information.

NAMI Walks NC Fundraising

Though NAMI Walks NC took place on May 2 in Raleigh, **we will continue to accept donations through June 30**. NAMI Walks—a coordinated state-by-state and nationwide effort—is the organization's major anti-stigma and fundraising campaign. Half of what each North Carolina affiliate raises for the statewide effort is returned to the affiliate. It's a primary source of revenue for signature programs such as Family-to-Family, Peer-to-Peer, In Our Own Voice, NAMI Basics, and support programs (Magnetic Minds and NAMI Connection) for persons who have a diagnosis of mental illness.

Grateful for NAMI support, local couple helps others in return

Unless Asheville had a support group for families with a mentally ill loved one, John and Mary Lane Travis were not about to move here. "NAMI literally has been a lifesaver for us," said Mary Lane. The couple had attended NAMI at meetings in Arlington, Virginia. Fortunately, a fledging group existed in Asheville, thanks to Jack Benning and other advocates. So when John retired from the Federal Aviation Administration in 1985, the couple moved to Haw Creek. Not content to only receive support, the Traveses have in return given it to countless others for over two decades.

Both served on the Board of the Western Carolina Alliance for the Mentally Ill, which has since been incorporated as NAMI Western Carolina. As Board secretary, Mary Lane saw the need for a newsletter, so she established one and produced it for several years.

Until recently, the Traveses listed their home phone number on the local, state, and national NAMI sites. Family members, friends, and people with mental illness called, some desperate for a sympathetic ear, others searching for advice and information on available services and resources. "We just did it. We knew it was important. It was never a problem," said Mary Lane. She encouraged callers to attend NAMI meetings and always followed up by sending an appropriate brochure and affiliate information.

Seeing the need for housing, John, teaming up with Ed Peterson and Bob Beacham, was instrumental in establishing the Riverview Group Home in West Asheville and other apartments for people with mental illness. John frequently fired off letters advocat-



ing for improved services. The couple advocated at Mental Illness Advisory Council meetings and attended state and national NAMI conferences. For several years, the Traveses, along with Laura Williams and her late husband Don, provided Saturday night meals for the residents of Nantahala Apartments.

The Traveses grew up in Danville, Virginia. John is a graduate of Virginia Tech and Mary Lane of Greensboro College, where she was a religion major. They've loved living within sight of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Although the phone doesn't ring as often now, John and Mary Lane have not settled down into rocking chairs. They enjoy spending time at the theatre, the symphony, and the East Asheville Library. John's boyhood interest in radio continued during his U.S. Signal Corp service, and he now serves as president of the Southern Appalachian Radio Museum. As W4QCF, with an Amateur Extra Class License, John enjoys conversing with other ham radio operators.

Oh, and about their family member who first spurred their interest in NAMI? He's doing very well, working and now being supportive of his parents.

Magnetic Minds celebrates 12th anniversary

"Magnetic Minds," NAMI Western Carolina's peer support group for people with bipolar disorder, celebrated its 12th anniversary Wednesday, May 6 at 7 p.m., with cake, games, door prizes and more. Once a year, the group opens its doors to family members, friends and community members to join in the evening's fun and festivities.

Magnetic Minds was founded in May, 1997 by three NAMI consumers diagnosed with bipolar disorder, and has since served about 1,400 people throughout the mountains and foothills, as well as South Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee. In addition to support, group members have been prominent participants in community and college campus events during Mental Illness Awareness Week. This year, Magnetic Minds formed its own team to participate in NAMI North Carolina's major fundraiser, NAMIWalk.

The group will return to closed meetings on May 20, with an "ask the doctor" session with local psychiatrist Karl Schroeder. Dr. Schroeder works at the Asheville Veteran's Administration Hospital and Copestone Psychiatric Unit, has received NAMI North Carolina's award as Mental Health Professional of the Year, and has been Magnetic Minds' medical advisor since its inception. Time permitting May 20, there will be small group sharing.

For more information, call Tracy Mixson at 232-0438.

CIT training continues and expands coverage

The fifth Crisis Intervention Team training class for law enforcement officers was held from April 20 to 24. CIT training is a 40-hour program that educates officers who come into contact with people with severe mental illnesses on how to recognize the symptoms of those illnesses and respond effectively to people experiencing psychiatric crises. Graduation was held on the

afternoon of the 24th at A-B Tech.

The latest class included five officers from Henderson County. In addition to personnel from the Asheville Police Department and the Buncombe County Sheriff's Department, trainees have also included Buncombe County Resource Officers, as well as officers from Rutherford and Polk Counties. One attendee at this training asked if

firefighters, as they are first responders, would be included in future classes. Rich Munger of Buncombe County Human Services will look into this question. Budget cuts have limited Asheville Police Department participation during the past two classes, but by the end of this fifth class, well over 100 officers from four counties will have graduated from the program.

Conference

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national office will show how members can effectively train for coordinated advocacy that can influence state and national policy agendas affecting health and recovery possibilities. The afternoon will feature a CIT panel of law enforcement and civilians from our area. The May 30 program is for members and affiliate leaders of NAMI, but also for nonmembers who want to better understand how NAMI partners with local social services, law enforcement, schools, medical organizations, the Veterans Administration, and hospitals.

Registration, which includes lunch, is \$10 for NAMI members and \$20 for others. Checks payable to NAMI-NC should be sent by May 23 to NAMI-NC, 309 W. Millbrook Rd., Suite 121, Raleigh, NC 27609. Members please list your local NAMI affiliate. Call Jennifer Rothman at (919) 788-0801 for further information.

Contributors

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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.

Join 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.



P.O. Box 8046
Asheville, NC 28814

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Free NAMI Basics Class

Twice a Week for Three Weeks • Cost: None for instruction or materials • Dates: Tue. & Thur. 6:30- 9:00 p.m. • Starting June 9th • Location: Mountainhouse (Across from Fuddrucker's on East Chestnut St. near the intersection with Charlotte St. in Asheville) • Pre-registration critical. Call day or evening: Jeannie Edge (828) 664-1146 or Donna Reilly (828) 684-5477

Support – Education – Advocacy

NAMI WESTERN CAROLINA is an affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to improving the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness. Members are families, friends and people living with mental illnesses such as major depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder(OCD), panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and borderline personality disorder.

NAMI WESTERN CAROLINA welcomes families, friends and people with a mental illness to meetings at 10 am the first Saturday and 7 pm the third Tuesday of the month at Mountainhouse, 225 E. Chestnut St., Asheville. (Parking in the rear, use the side entrance)

Call 687-6901 for information www.namiwnc.org www.naminc.org www.nami.org

NAMI CONNECTION is a recovery support group for adults with mental illness, regardless of diagnosis. Trained individuals, who also are in recovery and understand the daily challenges, offer encouragement and support. Group meets at 10 am the first Saturday of the month at Mountainhouse. Facilitators: Marlene Wooten, 505-0438 marlenas333@peoplepc.com and Christine Smith, 258-1832 cjip1860@yahoo.com

NAMI BASICS is a new education program for parents/caregivers of children and adolescents living with mental illness. Trained teachers or other caregivers with similar experiences with their own children teach this free six-week class. Facilitator: Sharon Pitts, 258-5359 sharonpitts1@gmail.com

NAMI FAMILY-to-FAMILY EDUCATION is a free 12-week course of facts and support for families/caregivers of persons with a diagnosed mental illness. Trained family members teach the 2½-hour class. Early re-registration is required. Coordinator: Florence Rowe, 299-9596 rohaus@charter.net

MAGNETIC MINDS is a support group for people with a bipolar diagnosis that meets at 7 pm the 1st and 3rd Wednesday monthly at Mountainhouse. Facilitator: Tracy Mixson, 232-0438 psychodog@charter.net www.magneticminds.org

IN OUR OWN VOICE offers free presentations by people with mental illness in recovery to dispel stigma; includes video, personal testimony and discussion. Coordinator: Tracy Mixson, 232-0438 namiwc.voice@charter.net

NAMI gives peer-to-peer support, not led by mental health professionals

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