

## NAMI Basics...Up and Running

In June, the first NAMI Basics class was successfully concluded in the Asheville area. Inspired by NAMI's Family-to-Family flagship program, this six-session class is for family members and primary caregivers of children and teens with severe emotional and or behavior management concerns. The co-teachers, who have been trained by NAMI, also are parents of children facing these issues. Participants gained new insights and understandings, shared joyful and heartrending experiences, and offered each other hope. A few of the comments made by our first NAMI

Basics graduates were:

- The class was "very informative. I wish I had taken this class before I began my journey into mental illness, it would have made my trip a lot easier.



- Most impressive!! I learned so much and feel so much stronger as a parent to face society with the facts (not

stigma) of mental illness. I now feel I have my book of many resources to always refer to for help.

- Just after the 3rd class a friend called me in crisis about her young son. I was able to share some of what I had learned and I sent her links to the NAMI website. Sharing our knowledge and stories is what it's all about.

For more information about NAMI Basics and the next class contact Jeannie 828-664-1146 or Donna 828-684-5477.

## NAMI Convention Update July 21st

NAMI WC's 7 pm Tuesday, July 21 meeting will feature a panel of affiliate members who will report on the July 6-9 NAMI National Convention in San Francisco. "Creating a Healthy Future for Us All" was the theme. Issues covered are critical to improving the lives of people affected by mental illness, including: criminalization, employment, housing, education, multiculturalism, parity and health care reform.

Support groups for all will follow the report. The program for the 7 pm August 18th meeting will be announced. Support groups will be offered at the 10 am Saturday, August 1st meeting. All meetings are at Mountainhouse, 225 E. Chestnut St.

## Businesses make group's birthday bash a big success

Magnetic Minds Bipolar Support Group's 12th anniversary celebration on May 6th was a great success, with a good turnout of members, family and friends.

A wealth of party favors were donated by local businesses including Applebee's Neighborhood Bar and Grill, The Asheville Tourists Baseball Club, Cinebarre Theater at Biltmore Square, Flat Creek Mountain, Inc., Fuddruckers Restaurant, McDonald's Restaurant on Patton Avenue, Mountain Java on Merrimon Avenue, The Olive Garden and Sam's Club. In addition, the national Elijah Foundation donated stuffed "Bipolar Bears."



Three NAMI members with the bipolar disorder diagnosis founded Magnetic Minds in 1997. Since then, the support group has served more than 1,500 people with manic-depressive illness from across Western North Carolina, the foothills and three bordering states. Magnetic Minds meets at 7 pm the 1st and 3rd Wednesday monthly at Mountainhouse, 225 E. Chestnut St., Asheville. For more information, visit the group's website at [magneticminds.org](http://magneticminds.org), or contact KC Lane at 423-4341 or [magneticmindswnc@gmail.com](mailto:magneticmindswnc@gmail.com).

## CooperRiis adds urban campus

This fall CooperRiis will open an urban campus in Asheville as a sister facility to its Mill Spring Healing Farm Community. It will provide access to the opportunities of a special and vibrant city and to two community colleges, four private colleges, and two state universities. As with the Healing Farm, this new campus will be home to a therapeutic community consisting of 24 residents supported by a broad array of services and staff.

The new facility will be located on Zillicoa Street, on three wooded acres in the quiet, historic Montford neighborhood near the University of North Carolina at Asheville (UNC-A). Entry can be direct or via transfer from the main CooperRiis campus in Mill Spring, NC. Each campus will have the same admission criteria. For more information as plans develop, visit [www.CooperRiis.org](http://www.CooperRiis.org) or call 1-800-957-5155.

## Health Partners looks at priorities

Dr. Jim Pitts represented NAMI WC at the June 10th Health Partners Community Health Assessment meeting at the NC Arboretum. The group detailed health priorities in Western NC for the coming year. For information, contact Health Partners [www.healthpartnerswnc.org](http://www.healthpartnerswnc.org)

## Advocacy resources

Visit [NCMentalHope.org](http://NCMentalHope.org) for a good resource on state mental health news and advocacy efforts you can take.

## Western Regional Conference: “The Power to Change Minds”

NAMI North Carolina, recognizing the growth of its affiliates in WNC, held a state-wide regional conference in Asheville for the first time in decades. Dr. Jim Pitts, president of NAMI NC and co-president of NAMI WC, welcomed the group. The May 30th event at AB-Tech attracted some 45 attendees who were strongly urged to advocate. “The Power to Change Minds” was the conference theme. With budget cuts threatening to drastically reduce mental health programs and NAMI giving NC a dismal grade of D for its public mental health care system, the need to advocate is obvious. Deby Dihoff, executive director of NAMI NC, called the proposed cuts, “devastating.”

Angela Kimball, NAMI National’s Director of State Policy, presented a training workshop, “NAMI Smarts for Advocacy: Telling Your Story.” She said that consumers, family members and caregivers relating their personal experiences have the greatest influence on legislators. When you email your message, identify the Bill in

the subject line, be polite, be brief, tell your story, and ask the legislator how he or she will respond, Kimball advised.

A Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) panel emphasized the value of having trained law enforcement officers respond appropriately to people experiencing a psychiatric crisis. Panel members were Rich Munger, Ph.D., planner/evaluator, Buncombe County Human Services Support Team; Mona Cornwell, State CIT Advisory Committee; Chris Eby, Asheville Police Department; Jamie Sales, Adult Mental Health/CIT Coordinator for Mental Health Partners LME, and Sgt. Ken Phillips, Director of Law Enforcement Training at Catawba Valley Community College.

NAMI volunteers and staff reported on Family-to-Family, NAMI Basics, Peer-to-Peer, In Our Own Voice, Connection and Support Group Facilitator Training. Also, the affiliates were updated on NAMI NC’s procedures and resources.

## MayHope raises awareness, resources

MayHope’s May 16th concert achieved its goal – to raise awareness of mental health issues and provide resources. Thanks to committee members Susan Ward, Richard Sackett, MaryAnn Sizemore and Susan Hickerson for planning this musical treat in the magnificent sanctuary of All Souls Episcopal Cathedral in Biltmore Village.

Performers included Copestone activity therapist Richard Sackett and Friends; Neoh’s Mundo, a Latin jazz combo featuring Daneoh; and

the vibrant Womansong chorus, directed by Debbie Nordeen. Susan Reinhardt proved to be just as entertaining a speaker as an Asheville Citizen-Times columnist.

Representatives from the organizations benefiting from the MayHope spoke briefly about the services that they provide. Recipients were Copestone Psychiatric Programs of Mission Hospitals, NAMI Western Carolina, All Souls Counseling Center and A Hope Hospitality House.

## Consumer conference helps to build community

Western NC was well represented at the May 29-31 conference of the 500-plus members NC Mental Health Consumers Organization (MHCO) in Raleigh. A seven-person contingent from Mountainhouse was among the 19 mental health entities taking part, with Mountainhouse employee John Morrison doing the driving. "People get a chance to get out of town and family care homes and to feel like fully independent adults," he said, "and it builds a sense of community."

Jeff McCloud, MHCO'S Board presi-

dent, noted that "people with mental illness can provide hope and support to others coping with similar challenges." This is the mission of MHCO that was founded 20 years ago. "Understanding Your Needs as a Mental Health Consumer," was among NAMI NC's informative pamphlets that were available. Approximately 180 consumers attended the annual session.

Workshops dealt with such topics as diabetes, reportedly afflicting one in five persons with a mental illness; with the value of volunteering, and the

issue of group and family care home residents, regardless of their income, being allotted \$65 a month spending money. Barb Richards' workshop on "The Magic Benefits of Music" pointed out that music changes brain chemistry for the better. She played snippets of several genres and advised, "as the music plays, allow it to wash off the stress of the day."

Visit NCMHCO.org or call 1-800-326-3842 for info on NCMHCO, that also monitors goings-on at the NC Capitol Building and forms support groups.

## NAMI WC & MAHEC to co-sponsor conference on integrated health care

NAMI Western Carolina and the Mountain Area Health Education Center (MAHEC) will co-sponsor a Continuing Education Program as part of the October 4-10 Mental Illness Awareness Week. NAMI WC is working with Elizabeth Flemming, LPC, Associate Director of MAHEC Mental Health, and Eric Christian, Integrated Care Coordinator at MAHEC. The October 8th conference will address how to build effective and collaborative systems that care. With both the current healthcare and behavioral health systems under pressure to do more with less, the trend is to divest services. Funding barriers in accessing and receiving care are increasing and awareness has increased about how to best deliver mental

health and medical care. Collaborative and integrated care approaches offer opportunities for people seeking recovery to be more involved in their physical and mental well being.

Speakers will include Sharon Young, PhD, CooperRiis Healing Farm, Mill Spring, NC; Mark Ragins, M.D., Medical Director, Mental Health America, Los Angeles Village, Long Beach, CA; Kristy Carter and Melissa Heywood of Top End Association for Mental Health Inc., Parap, Northern Territory, Australia, and Dr. Elizabeth Huddleston, Mental Health Recovery Coordinator at the Charles George VA Medical Center in Asheville. More information on this conference will be in our September/October newsletter.

## Western Alliance Center celebrates ADA anniversary at new location

Western Alliance Center for Independent Living will hold its Grand Opening and 19th Anniversary Celebration of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on Friday, July 24 from 2 to 4 pm at its new 108 New Leicester Highway location.

This is a great opportunity to meet the staff and to learn more about their services. Please RSVP at 828-298-1977 if you plan to attend.

## 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.

### Western Highland Network Contact Numbers

Western Highlands Network, 356 Biltmore Ave., Asheville, NC 28801, [www.westernhighlands.org](http://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 class begins August 24th in Asheville

NAMI Family-to-Family, a 12-week class for relatives and caregivers of individuals diagnosed with a severe mental illness, will be offered at 6:30-9:00 pm. Mondays beginning August 24th in Asheville. NAMI WC sponsors the free class with funding from Western Highlands Network. Trained volunteers teach the course that is designed to help caregivers understand and support individuals with mental illness while maintaining their own well-being. The course discusses the clinical treatment of these illnesses and teaches the knowledge and skills that family members need to more effectively cope.

Up to date information covers schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, clinical depression, panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, anxiety disorder, posttraumatic stress, and co-occurring addictions. Empathy workshops help students

understand what



it's like for their loved ones to have a mental illness. Class members develop problem-solving, communication and advocacy skills. For many participants, Family-to-Family is their first opportunity to talk with others dealing with a relative's mental illness. The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry reports when family members take this or a similar course, persons with mental illness experience a 50% reduction in relapse, increased stabilization and a decrease in hospitalizations.

Dr. Jim and Sharon Pitts will lead the class. Since its size is limited, early registration is required. Call 258-5359 or email [sharonpitts1@gmail.com](mailto:sharonpitts1@gmail.com) today for information.

### *Family-to-Family carries out NAMI's mission*

Sixteen family members – including parents, siblings and the spouse of relatives with a severe mental illness – completed the NAMI Family-to-Family class June 4th in Asheville. Co-teachers were Marlene Wooten and Florence Rowe with Helen Sheorn as support person. NAMI WC has offered the free course at least once a year since this educational program began in 1996. Currently, funding is from Western Highlands Network. The 12-week course offers facts and support for families of persons with a severe mental illness.

Family-to-Family has proven to be an effective way to carry out NAMI's mission of support, education and advocacy. Here is a sample of the recent class evaluations:

- Very informative. Have been able to directly use some of the information when interacting with my

family member. Has definitely made me more patient with her as I have a better understanding of her condition.

- Benefited in many areas including education, emotional and social
- Very beneficial – Benefit of support group and sharing experiences with others. Learning tools to cope. Knowing that there are others who empathize with you. Making new friends, learning about resources.
- I've been enriched because of the new knowledge, the community, and the advocacy. I'm wanting to reach out to teach others, and I've already had a couple of opportunities to do so.

### Teen & family support group

A support group for teens with mental health issues and for their families in the Asheville and Hendersonville area meets at 11:30 am the second Saturday monthly at the Lutheran Church of the Nativity, Airport and Hendersonville Roads, Arden.

The agenda includes pizza, socializing and activities toward empowerment and lifting stigma. Parents get together separately for support and information. There is no charge. Call 828-684-5477 to ensure that adequate pizza is ordered.

### BELE CHERE volunteers needed July 24-26

Volunteers are needed to sell shuttle bus tickets to Bele Chere at the Asheville Mall on July 24-26. This is a great annual fundraiser for NAMI WC. We are scheduling volunteers for two-hour shifts (or longer if you like) from 11 am to 9 pm, on Friday; from 9 am to 9 pm on Saturday, and from 11 am to 5 pm on Sunday. Please join us! To sign up, call Chris at 258-1832 after July 16th or email [cijp1860@yahoo.com](mailto:cijp1860@yahoo.com). Please state the day(s) and time(s) you wish to volunteer and your contact information.

# Mental health team adds new position

Through the generosity of county funds, RHA Health Services, Inc., a non-profit organization offering services for people who need support in their communities, has hired Asheville native CeLisa Daniels as the mental health supervisor for the Buncombe County Detention Center. A recent graduate of Wayne State University in Detroit, Daniels is a provisionally licensed LCSW. Coming on board in this new position in early July, she is supervising the RHA employees who work in the jail: Jim Duffy, mental health case manager; Steve Allison, substance abuse case manager, and Veronica Ilovera, pre-trial release case manager.

Daniels will focus on diverting mental health consumers who meet the criteria from custody. Consumers so released are required, under supervision, to fulfill a linkage plan for treatment in lieu of incarceration. Additionally, she will do assessments on inmates with identified mental health needs, chair jail committee meetings and perform other duties as required.

- Contributors**  
**Contributing writers**  
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# NAMI WC at record membership

NAMI Western Carolina has reached a record number of 137 individual and family memberships for 2009. This indicates an increasing awareness of the need to be involved and supportive of our efforts to improve the lives of all those affected by mental illness.

Dues received now will pay for a 2010 membership as well as for the remainder of 2009. Dues are shared with NAMI National and NAMI NC and entitle members to receive informative local, state and national publications. All contributions are tax-deductible.

## 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.

# NAMI Launches new PSA campaign

Arlington, VA— The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) has released “Puzzle Pieces,” a new public service announcement (PSA) initiative that encourages people to connect with each other through NAMI to help themselves, their families and their friends who live with mental illness.

The “Puzzle Pieces” campaign includes four 60-second and three 30-second radio PSAs featuring testimonials from individuals and families that describe their experiences with mental illness and the role NAMI played in their recovery.

To view and listen to the NAMI PSA spots, visit [www.nami.org/psa](http://www.nami.org/psa).



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## 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](http://www.namiwnc.org) [www.naminc.org](http://www.naminc.org)  
[www.nami.org](http://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@charter.net](mailto:marlenas333@charter.net) and Christine Smith, 258-1832 [cjip1860@yahoo.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:rohaus@charter.net)

**MAGNETIC MINDS** is a support group for people with a bipolar diagnosis that meets at 7 pm the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday monthly at Mountainhouse. Facilitator: KC Lane, 423-4341 or [magneticminds@gmail.com](mailto:magneticminds@gmail.com). Website: [www.magneticminds.org](http://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, [psychodog@charter.net](mailto:psychodog@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.*