



NAMI Ventura County

Ventura County's Voice on Mental Illness

Newsletter

March 2007

GENERAL MEETING

St. Columba's Episcopal Church
Parish Hall
1251 Las Posas Road, Camarillo

7:00 P.M.
Tuesday, March 13, 2007

Ventura County Behavioral Health Administration

Panel Discussion

KEVIN STAKER DRAWS CROWD AT NAMI GENERAL MEETING



Attorney Kevin G. Staker, a certified specialist in tax law, estate planning and trust and probate law, spoke to a packed house at the February general meeting of NAMI Ventura County. Nearly 60 NAMI members and friends gathered to hear Staker share his expertise on estate and tax planning, advantages of living trusts, special needs trusts, charitable remainder unitrusts and advanced directives. Advice on how to set up a special needs trust was the primary topic of interest to most of those gathered in St. Columba's Parish Hall.

A special needs trust is set up with the disabled individual as beneficiary and allows the individual to retain her or his public benefits while still receiving additional supplemental income. Staker suggests that the best special needs trust allows the trustee (the person designated to disburse the trust funds) "absolute discretion" in distributing funds for the support, health care, maintenance and education of the trust's disabled beneficiary. It was also recommended that wording such as "this trust cannot distribute any amount that would reduce the public benefits of the beneficiary" not be included in a special needs trust, as it may actually work to the detriment of a beneficiary by needlessly tying the hands of the trustee. A question and answer period followed the presentation.

Also present in the audience was Marilyn Scott, Assistant Public Administrator of the Public Guardian's office who briefly spoke about the rebuilding and strengthening that has been accomplished in the Public Guardian's office. ❖

WAIT LIST FORMING

Our Family-to-Family classes in Ventura and Westlake are in full (and we do mean full!) swing. We are forming a waiting list for a possible Family-to-Family class to begin in March, location to be determined. If you or someone you know needs a Family-to-Family class, please call Chris Novak, our Family-to-Family Program Coordinator at (805) 641-2426, or send an e-mail to: namiventura@gmail.com. ❖

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MEET THE BOARD OF NAMI VENTURA COUNTY

(Lisa Moore is a Board Member and the Recording Secretary)

“Be the change you want to see in the world.”
- Gandhi



All of us who have experienced mental illness on a personal basis know the depth and truth of Gandhi's words. Unfortunately those suffering from chronic mental illness are often unable to advocate for the rights they undoubtedly deserve. We as family members

and friends take on the burden of protecting this unrepresented population.

I am currently in my last semester at Pepperdine University in the Clinical Psychology masters program with an emphasis in marriage and family therapy. I work as a relationship educator for Pepperdine's Center for the Family. The goal of this program is to better equip Pepperdine's undergraduates to deal with the challenges of college life. We provide these students with communication tools and educational information that will foster healthier relationships not only in college but for the rest of their lives. In conjunction with Pepperdine, I work as a therapist intern at Sylmar Health and Rehabilitation Center with adults who suffer from severe mental illness. Within NAMI, I am currently teaching my second Family to Family class in Thousand Oaks and sit on the board as recording secretary.

Like many I have struggled through the mental health systems. While still in high school in Amarillo, Texas my loved one became incapacitated by paranoid schizophrenia. Watching her worsen, witnessing suicide attempts, and struggling through failed attempts to help, I was inspired to, at the very least, begin to research her illness. I began working with the mentally ill through different organizations, researching texts and books, and studying Texas law. My loved one's suicide over three years ago came as a harsh ending to a tragic and misunderstood life. I, however, refuse to be complacent in my limited understanding of this disease, or any mental illness. My time has become dedicated to understanding these illnesses, advocating for patient rights, and supporting family members.

NAMI has been a tremendous aid in my quest for understanding. The support and encouragement I have both been able to receive and give has been life changing. NAMI is an outstanding organization that is making unparalleled advances in the mental health field. With our membership growing, our voice is growing

louder. I am excited about the changes our voices have already demanded and the future improvements that are sure to come if we continue to be united in our quest.

Motivated by all the information left to discover, the lessons I can learn, the individuals I can help, and the people that I could not help, I will continue to strive to be the change I want to see in the world.❖

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS APPROVES MIOCR

On Tuesday, February 5, 2007, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors approved the letter of collaboration and allocations for implementing the Mentally Ill Offender Crime Reduction (mentally ill offender court) grant. Commander Steve DeCesari reported the Board of Supervisors action to all the collaborating agencies, and gave a special thanks to Elaine Augustine of the Behavioral Health Department.



MIOCR Leaders plan implementation

Even as Ventura County seeks to provide treatment rather than incarceration for the mentally ill, the state prison system released a plan to construct new mental health facilities at seven California prisons. The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation projects it will need space to treat about 6,650 more mentally ill inmates - about 6,300 men and 350 women - by June 2011.

The department is asking a federal judge to approve building mental health facilities for male inmates at California State Prison, Sacramento, in Folsom; Richard J. Donovan Correctional Facility at Rock Mountain; California State Prison, Los Angeles County at Lancaster; California Institution for Men in Chino; California Men's Colony in San Luis Obispo; and Salinas Valley State Prison in Soledad.

A unit at the California Institution for Women in Corona would house mentally ill female inmates. The

nation's largest state prison system, with more than 173,000 inmates, now is treating 32,577 mentally ill inmates in facilities designed for 28,694 inmates. "We're over capacity about 113 percent," said department spokeswoman Terry Thornton.



Several County Agencies at MIOCR Planning

In an article entitled "Are Prisons Driving Prisoners Mad?" (Time, January 26, 2007), writer Jeffrey Kluger considered the operational and environmental factors contributing to the increasing numbers of mentally ill inmates in the nations prison systems. Kruger traced the origin and history of solitary confinement from its beginnings, as a place for penitent reflection, to the present. In the 1830's it became apparent that long periods of solitary confinement were leading to "emotional disintegration." According to Alfred W. McCoy, professor of history at the University of Wisconsin and author of the book A Question of Torture, the U.S. Supreme Court justices saw solitary confinement as "a form of what some people now call no-touch torture...it sends prisoners in one of two directions: catatonia or rage."❖

PEP PREPARATIONS BEGIN

Preparations are underway for the first Provider Education Program (PEP) class in June. In a conference call with Joyce Burland, Ph.D., the author and originator of both the Family to Family and Provider Education programs, NAMI Ventura County confirmed PEP panel training will take place in May, after NAMI Walk 2007. The PEP panel consists of two Family to Family teachers, two consumers, and one mental health professional. The plan is to train at least three PEP teaching panels over the intensive three and one-half days of training in May.

PEP is based on the Family to Family Program model. The objective of PEP is to help service providers in the mental health field gain empathy and understanding by breaking institutional barriers which separate us, talking together openly, relating what families know from their lived experience and fostering mutual understanding and respect. The course is held for ten

consecutive weeks, for three hours per session. Class participants are drawn from all facets of agency services: day hospital care, case management, residential care, crisis services, club house programs, homeless outreach, therapy, dual diagnosis treatment, vocational rehabilitation and job counseling.

The PEP course is unique in mental health training. By incorporating a deeply personal perspective to the training, there is an appreciable difference in course content, adding an emotional and practical understanding to the academic and medical course content. Bringing the course to Ventura County culminates an effort begun nearly three years ago by Debbie Hurt and coordinated in the more recent past by Sonna Gray.❖

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION PROJECT FEATURES VENTURA COUNTY CRIMINAL JUSTICE EXPERTS

Joyce Wilde, Ventura County CIT Program Administrator (and former NAMI Ventura County Board President) and Sergeant Mark Stadler of the Ventura Police Department, were featured speakers on CIT (Crisis Intervention Training) at a day-long, by-invitation-only program. The two were among thirteen hand-picked presenters from Southern California at NAMI California's Mental Health Criminal Justice Community Collaboration Project. The Program for Phase 1 of the project was held on February 28, 2007, at Cathedral Plaza in downtown Los Angeles.

Southern California NAMI affiliates invited over 600 individuals from law enforcement, business, criminal justice, the judiciary, health and mental health, and public officials to come together to look at new ways of resolving some of the issues surrounding the criminalization of individuals with a mental illness.

Other scheduled presenters included Lieutenant Rick Wall of the Los Angeles Police Department and the Honorable Stephen V. Manley of the Superior Court of California in Santa Clara County. Topics of special interest were Comprehensive Jail and Post Custody Services (by Kevin Smith of Orange County Department of Mental Health) and PERT - Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (by Bill Maheu Assistant Chief of Police of the San Diego Police Department).

(Note: This event had not yet taken place when this issue went to press.)❖

NAMI MOVES INTO NEW OFFICE

"Ideal!", "Oh yes!", "Go for it!" These were NAMI board members' responses to seeing the potential office space offered by the Alzheimer's Association. Two rental spaces were available and NAMI Ventura County will rent the larger of the two spaces, a 12 x 12 foot

office space with its own entrance and access to the inside lunch room, restroom and conference room facilities. And, as the old real estate saying goes, it's all about – location – location – location! The new office is in Camarillo, off of Central, mid-way between East and West Ventura County. The office space will accommodate two desks and display areas for brochures, DVD's and other informational material. Families, who need referral or information resources, will be able to come to the office and get the information they need. The conference room is large enough to accommodate a small (15-20 participants) Family to Family class. Plans are to have the office staffed on a 20-hour per week basis, initially, by NAMI staff alternating with volunteers. If you would like to help out by volunteering some time to staff the office, please call Margaret Yun, NAMI Program Director, at (805) 641-2426. ❖



LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS – HOW ABOUT YOU?

They say the best way to make yourself feel better is to help someone else and NAMI Ventura County needs your help. We have lots of volunteer opportunities available – from “one time only” slots to monthly ongoing needs. A few of our volunteer opportunities are listed below. If you can fill one of these volunteer positions, please call our NAMI number (805) 641-2426 and let us know which slots you'd like to fill.

Adopt-a-Family-to-Family Night: Both our Ventura and Westlake Village Family-to-Family classes need someone to arrive ½ hour early and make coffee for the group, stay for the class (mingle with new F2F participants), and put the coffee supplies away. In total, this is about a 4-hour commitment. Can you do this for one class? If you say “yes”, please call (805) 641-2426 and tell us which class you'd like to “adopt” for a night.

Outreach volunteer: The purpose of the outreach volunteer is to help make NAMI's presence known in your community. We need one person for East County and one person for West County to distribute flyers and brochures at doctors' offices, clinics, schools, colleges and faith communities. This would take about 2-3 hours and it is a one-time-only slot.

Staffing NAMI office: NAMI's new office will need someone to respond to walk-ins, provide information on NAMI programs, arrange brochures, flyers, and

supply clerical support to NAMI Board and staff. We need someone from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. on either a Mon., Tue. Wed., Thurs., or Fri. This can be a one-time-only or an ongoing commitment. ❖



NAMI President greets NAMI Walk Volunteers

Nearly twenty enthusiastic volunteers met at the new NAMI office conference room to discuss and strategize Ventura County's 3rd Annual NAMIWalks for the Mind of America to be held on Saturday, May 12. Debbie Hurt, Walk Manager, coordinated the January 25th meeting, where volunteers were treated to displays of NAMIWalks banners, T-shirts, and sponsorship baseball caps. Among the items shown was a 36” x 40” mounted photo of walk participants, which was given to NAMI Ventura County courtesy of NAMI National. The photo will be on permanent display at the new NAMI office.



WALK Manager Debbie Hurt recruits team leaders

Volunteers were encouraged to provide their local businesses with walk information and opportunities for sponsorship. Large community businesses like Amgen, Dole, Pleasant Hawaiian Holidays, and Verizon were mentioned as possible NAMIWalks kick-off luncheon sponsors. All NAMI members and non-members are encouraged to participate in the 2007 walk, either by asking for sponsorships, forming teams, volunteering to help, or walking on a team. ❖

eSCRIP REMINDER!

Register your Von's, Pavilion's, Macy's, American Express and Visa card with eScrip and NAMI -Ventura County will benefit.

Just go to www.escrip.com, enter the NAMI group number: **5564290** and follow the simple steps to register your grocery cards, credit/debit cards, and store purchase cards.

Here's how it works:

1. You register any one or all of your existing grocery, debit and credit cards for use in the program.
2. Participating merchants will make contributions to your chosen group, based on purchases made by you, just by using the cards you have registered.
3. Your purchases are tracked and available to you online, allowing you to see just how much you are earning on our behalf. ❖

RALPH'S CONTRIBUTES TO COMMUNITY

NAMI Ventura County has a new Ralph's NPO number: 81209. For those of you with the old NPO number, please re-register under the new number. For those new to this program, just by registering your Ralph's Club Card, NAMI can earn up to 4% of your purchase each month.

Just go online at www.ralphs.com, click on community programs, then click on participant and follow the simple instructions to register your Ralph's Club Card. The NAMI NPO # is 81209. Be sure to have your Ralph's Club Card handy so you can enter its number into the online system.

For each month's purchase up to \$200, NAMI receives 1%; \$200.01 to \$350, NAMI receives 2%, \$350.01 to \$500, NAMI receives 3%, over \$500 NAMI gets 4%. ❖

ALBERTSON'S COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Albertsons contributes a percentage of purchases made by you each time you shop at Albertsons and Sav-on Drugs with your registered Preferred Savings Card. It's that easy!

There are two ways to register:

1. ON THE INTERNET

- Go to www.albertsons.com/cp
- Click on "Shoppers login or register..."
- Enter your normal Albertsons Preferred Savings card number and telephone number to login
- Select "My Account"
- Select "Add a Partner"
- Enter the 11-digit number for NAMI Ventura County:
49000116735

- Confirm that NAMI will receive 100% of contributions

2. IN ANY ALBERTSONS STORE

(At a NAMI meeting, ask for an Albertsons "Community Partners" card for NAMI)

- Go to any checkout register or to Customer Service
- Show your Albertsons Preferred Partners card and the NAMI Community Partners card; ask the checker to scan both in order to link your Albertson's card to NAMI
- This need only be done once.

Ask your friends and family to do the same! ❖

SUPPORT GROUPS FOR CONSUMER/CLIENTS

Please note – these groups are for consumer/clients. Family member support groups are listed separately.

DEPRESSION/BIPOLAR SUPPORT GROUPS:

Ventura: Currently there is no support group in Ventura; however, plans are underway to reconvene this group at a new time and location. Once the new time and place have been determined, we'll include the information in this newsletter.

Thousand Oaks:

HUGS (Heads Up Group Support) - Support group for traumatic brain injury and its effects meets 2nd Thursday, 6:30-8 p.m. in Behavioral Health Training Room, 72 Moody Court, Thousand Oaks.

HUGS also meets 4th Thursday, 11:30 for brunch at Eggs 'N Things. For more information call Veronica (805) 498-6851

Mood Disorder Support Group – Meets 2nd and 4th Tuesday, 6:30-8 p.m. in Behavioral Health Training Room, 72 Moody Court, Thousand Oaks Info: (805) 777-3500❖

SUPPORT GROUPS FOR FAMILY MEMBERS

Please note – these groups are for family members. Consumer/client support groups are listed separately.

NAMI in Camarillo – Meets at 5:30 pm, the 2nd Tuesday of each month at St. Columba's Episcopal Church, 1251 Las Posas Rd, Camarillo. The meeting is prior to the General Meeting. Info: (805) 641-2426.

NAMI in Thousand Oaks – Meets at 7:00 pm, the 3rd Monday of each month at 72 Moody Court in T.O. (Mental Health Adult Services Center). Info: Irene King (805) 495-5031 or Kathleen Furness (818) 865-1558.

NAMI in Ventura – Meets at 6:30 pm, the 3rd Tuesday of each month at Ventura Missionary Church, Room 502-Upper. Info: Debbie Hurt (805) 660-1755. ❖

NAMI-CALIFORNIA MOBILIZES TO OPPOSE GOVERNOR'S FUNDING CUTS

The Governor's budget proposes to cut \$55 million in funding for homeless, mentally ill adults with serious mental illnesses – AB 34/2034 programs. **WE CANNOT LET THIS HAPPEN!!**

The Governor suggests that this funding can be replaced with Proposition 63/Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) dollars. **IT CANNOT!!**

We must do everything we can to prevent this cut!

NAMI California suggests an immediate letter-writing campaign to the Governor. For a sample letter and addresses for mailing, go to our website at www.namiventura.org.

Ventura County Behavioral Health Outpatient Service Sites

If you live in:
Ojai or Ventura (excluding
Zip code 93004)

Contact:
Ventura Outpatient Clinic
300 Hillmont Avenue
Ventura, CA 93003

The Officer of the Day
652-6768

If you live in:
Santa Paula, Fillmore,
Piru or Ventura 93004 only

Contact:
Santa Paula Outpatient Clinic
333 W. Harvard Blvd.
Santa Paula, CA 93060

The Officer of the Day
933-4868

If you live in:
Oxnard, Port Hueneme
Or El Rio

Contact:
Oxnard Outpatient Clinic
1911 Williams Dr., Ste 110
Oxnard, CA 93036

The Officer of the Day
981-4200

If you live in:
Camarillo, Thousand Oaks,
And Ventura County areas
Of Agoura, Westlake,
Bell Canyon

Contact:
Conejo Outpatient Clinic
72 Moody Court
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360

The Officer of the Day
777-3500

If you live in:
Simi Valley or Moorpark

Contact
Simi Valley Outpatient Clinic
3150 Los Angeles Avenue
Simi Valley, CA 93065

The Officer of the Day
577-0830

NAMI Ventura County Contact Information

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 25510, Ventura, CA 93002

Phone: (805) 641-2426

E-mail: namiventura@gmail.com

Website: www.namiventura.org

2007 Board of Directors

President	Ratan Bhavnani
Vice President	Candace Jackson
Treasurer	Connie Hall
Corresponding Secretary	Sally Kosoff
Recording Secretary	Lisa Moore
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Housing	Lou Matthews
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Advocacy	Pat Russell

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Delia Fuhrmann
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Ed Nani

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Law Enforcement	Joyce Wilde
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NAMI Ventura County Membership Application 2007

Please fill out the form completely, and mail with check payable to:

NAMI Ventura County, P.O. Box 25510, Ventura, CA 93002-5511

Check One: _____ New Member _____ Renewal Date _____

Memberships: (Check those that apply)

_____ Newsletter only (\$15)
 _____ Single (\$30)*
 _____ Family (\$40)*
 _____ Silver (\$50)*
 _____ Gold (\$100)*
 _____ Donation Amount
 _____ Total Enclosed

Name(s) _____

Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ E-mail _____

*A portion of your membership dues (\$20) is sent to NAMI National and NAMI California.

*Dues and donations to NAMI Ventura County are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

We are always in need of volunteers. Please mark the activities in which you would like to participate:

- NAMI Office Work Support Groups Family-to-Family Fundraising
- Legislation Membership Hospitality Publicity Speakers Bureau
- Newsletter Other

Non-Profit Org
US Postage
PAID
Oxnard, CA
Permit No. 00280

NAMI Ventura County
P.O. Box 25510
Ventura, CA 93002-5510
Address Service Requested

Walkers With The Dawn by Langston Hughes

Being walkers with the dawn and morning,
Walkers with the sun and morning,
We are not afraid of night,
Nor days of gloom,
Nor darkness--
Being walkers with the sun and morning.

**SAVE THE DATE – MAY 12, 2007
VENTURA COUNTY NAMIWALKS
WALKS FOR THE MIND OF AMERICA**

**TO DONATE ON-LINE, REGISTER FOR THE WALK, START A TEAM OR LEARN
MORE ABOUT THE WALK, LOG ONTO WWW.NAMIVENTURA.ORG AND CLICK
ON THE LEFT-SIDE COLUMN – SIGN UP NAMIWALKS VENTURA COUNTY.**