



NAMI

Ventura County

National Alliance on Mental Illness

Newsletter

May/June 2009



NAMIWalks Ventura County 2009

NAMI Ventura County calls on its members and friends to:

"Walk for the Mind of America"

SATURDAY MAY 2, 2009

Check-in begins 9:00 a.m.

VENTURA BEACH PROMENADE

**Every journey begins with that first step.
In 2009, thousands of concerned citizens in nearly 80 communities across the nation will walk together to raise money and awareness about our country's need for a world-class treatment and recovery system for people with mental illness**

Won't you join us?

The pictures above are from NAMIWalks Ventura County 2008

We are dedicated to providing support, education and advocacy for families with mental illness. Support NAMI Ventura County in our mission and JOIN OVER 800 WALKERS AS WE RAISE AWARENESS AND FIGHT STIGMA.

To donate on-line, register for the walk, start a team or learn more, log onto www.namiventura.org, and follow the links.

Matt Worrell - our Star DJ



This is our fifth year that Matt Worrell will be playing a very important role as the official Walk DJ. He donates his time through his business, STAR DJs.

Read Matt's story in the Ventura County Star this week. Matt uses his "bipolar advantage" to bring a great deal of energy to our Walk - and to everything

else he does! Be sure to join us at the Walk and see Matt in action. And use our Star DJ for your next big event!

Our sincere appreciation to Matt for all he does for NAMI. ❖

MONTHLY GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday May 12, 2009, 7:00 pm

"In Home Supportive Services"

Robert Jenkins

Director, Public Authority, County of Ventura

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

KENT KELLEGREW HONORED AS JUDGE OF THE YEAR

The Honorable Kent. M. Kellegrew, with his father, spouse, and children in attendance, was presented with Ventura County Trial Lawyers' Association's annual *Judge of the Year* honor on March 24, 2009 at a gathering of more than one hundred members of the bench and bar. Opening remarks, with humor, were offered by Justice Arthur Gilbert, followed by an introduction by the Honorable David Worley.

Judge Kellegrew, who began his career on the bench in 1997 as a commissioner, was appointed Superior Court Judge in 1999. Judge Kellegrew, in the past, has overseen a general civil assignment. He presently is assigned to the probate and mental health calendar and cases. He sits in the Steven Z. Perren Juvenile Justice Complex.

Judge Kellegrew was at the helm of the recent Ventura County High School Mock Trial program in which more than 20 high schools and 600 students, after weeks of preparation, vigorously compete in a trial setting held at the main courthouse. Judge Kellegrew's commitment of time and energy has invigorated the program which affects the lives and ambitions of each student participant.

Judge Kellegrew has a reputation for civility, hard work, and well-reasoned rulings. He is the 31st recipient of Judge of the Year award. He follows former judge Arturo F. Gutierrez, the 2008 recipient.

At our General Meeting in November, NAMI members and friends heard Judge Kellegrew speak on "The Courts and Mental Illness". We congratulate Judge Kellegrew and are privileged to have him on the Advisory Board for NAMI Ventura County. ❖

WRAP & WELL

RECOVERY INNOVATIONS OF CALIFORNIA (RICA) provides WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) and WELL (Wellness & Empowerment in Life & Living) classes at all 5 VCBH clinics. The classes are facilitated by Peer Support Specialists; former or present VCBH consumers who completed 8 sessions of WRAP and approximately 70 hours of university-level recovery education.

Peers make meaningful connections with class participants by providing empathetic support and sharing their personal stories of recovery. The classes are designed to empower individuals to become self-aware, personally accountable, and to discover healthy ways of managing symptoms and triggers. The 2-hour classes are free and do not require any advance sign-up.

For class times and additional information, call RICA at (805) 981-5439. ❖

Charleen Boxx

NAMI member receives Recognition Award from
Mental Health Board

by Rosemarie Fleischer

Since we first met in 1996, through the "Journey of Hope" class (now called Family to Family Education), Charleen has been a true champion for the mentally ill. And just as importantly, she has been a loyal and supportive friend and confidante to other NAMI family members. Though short in stature, Charleen is a giant to many of us. Listening to us and helping us cope is another special and very personal gift she keeps giving.



Following is the text of the commendation that Charleen received at the April 20th meeting of the Ventura County Mental Health Board:

"The Ventura County Mental Health Board presents this Certificate of Commendation to Charleen Boxx in recognition of her time, talent and generosity. Since 2005, Charleen Boxx has made and donated nearly 200 twin-size comforter/bedspreads for residents of Casa de Esperanza, Camarillo; Hillmont House, Ventura; and, Harvard Place Apartments, Santa Paula. Residents select a quilt to have as their own while in residence and to keep when they move on. The quilts, available in a wide variety of colors and patterns, personalize each resident's room. Charleen's continuing contribution to the quality of life for Behavioral Health clients does make a difference. Residents and staff encourage Charleen, as she is able, to "keep 'em coming"! The Mental Health Board thanks Charleen Boxx for her thoughtfulness, caring and willingness to share her gifts." ❖

GIFTS STILL NEEDED FOR NAMI WALK

Please ask any businesses you use to consider donating items or gift certificates for door prizes for the Walk - good examples are a lunch or dinner for two, or gift baskets, show tickets etc. General guidelines: valued at \$25 or above, unused items, no alcohol.

Please call or email the NAMI office for more information.

Meditation and the Brain

An Evening with author Mark Robert Waldman

by Kathy Quan, RN BSN



Approximately 160 people attended the NAMI Ventura County General Meeting on Tuesday, April 14, 2009, to hear Mark Robert Waldman speak about *Meditation and the Brain, Recovery from Mental Illness*.

Waldman thrilled the audience with his discussion of how to train the brain to think positively which, as he enlightened us, is not the brain's normal process. He pointed out that through meditation, the brain can overcome such negative feelings and experiences as anxiety, anger, fear, and depression. These points were illustrated with slides of actual MRIs of the brain.

With NAMI's Executive Director, Ratan Bhavnani, Waldman lead the audience through a series of exercises to demonstrate the power of meditation on compassionate communication.

With many slides and his visual aide, *Mildred, the cauliflower*, Waldman spoke about his research and findings that these, and other simple meditation exercises, can improve the neural functioning in the brain. Memory and cognition can be enhanced, and more effective and compassionate communication can be established and maintained as well.

Using these techniques, Waldman says recovery from mental illness is possible. As we now know, mental illness is a disorder of the brain, and techniques that help to improve neural functioning have been shown to aid in this process.

Waldman is the co-author of *How God Changes Your Brain: Breakthrough Findings by a Leading Neuroscientist*, with Andrew Newberg, MD. The

book was recently featured in Time Magazine and in Oprah Magazine. He spoke with Tavis Smiley on PBS on Friday before the meeting about the research for this book. You can view the interview here: <http://www.pbs.org/kcet/tavissmiley/archive/200904/20090410.html#>.

One of the techniques Waldman spoke about, and demonstrated, involves yawning several times a day. Yawning does many things for the body. It sets circadian rhythms, it helps to cool down an overstimulated brain, and it has been shown to aid in ridding the head of migraines. In MS patients, yawning has been shown to temporarily suspend many of the symptoms of disease.

By deliberately yawning and deep breathing, a person can for instance, take control of a difficult and negative experience or thoughts, and turn it/them into neutral or even positive experiences which, in turn, leaves a lasting healthy effect on the brain as well as the body. This and other simple meditation techniques are explained in the book.

He cautions that the objects of meditation need to be positive ones, or the negative effects can become permanent and damaging. The brain does not automatically go to the positive; it isn't designed to. We have to make a continuous effort to train it to become positive. Through these efforts, recovery from mental illness can be obtained.

Mark Robert Waldman is the author of eleven books, and is a therapist practicing in Camarillo and Woodland Hills, California. He is also an Associate Fellow at the Center for Spirituality and the Mind, University of Pennsylvania (www.spiritualityandthemind.org). There, along with his co-author, Dr. Andrew Newberg, he conducts research on the neuropsychology of beliefs, morality, compassion, and spiritual experiences. More information about Mark Robert Waldman is available at his Web site: <http://MarkRobertWaldman.com>. ❖

Los Angeles Mental Health Examiner

Kathy Quan is a graduate from NAMI Ventura County's recent Provider Education Program. She is a nurse, author and blogger who uses her experience and skills to advocate for and educate consumers, families and providers. She hopes to enlighten the public that mental illnesses are treatable brain diseases.

Read Kathy's articles on <http://www.examiner.com/x-5524-LA-Mental-Health-Examiner>. ❖

Psychotropic Medication Treatment 101

by Sandra Lee, LMFT



At the March Ventura County Ronald Thurston, M.D. presented a brief history of psychotropic drug development, classification of, and concepts related to the marketing and prescribing of such medications; and answered questions from the audience.

Dr. Thurston is a member of the Ventura County Mental Health Board, Treasurer of the California Psychiatric Association, an active member of the Southern California Psychiatric Society, is past president of the Ventura County Medical Association, has a long career as a practicing psychiatrist, and currently has a private practice in Ventura. Families and friends affected by mental illness were eager to receive input from a mental health professional with such credentials, experience and knowledge.

Dr. Thurston provided a handout from the Web site UniversityOfChicago.edu, which presents in table form classes of psychotropic medications, treatment considerations, symptoms response, common side effects, and reactions to be reported ASAP. Dr. Thurston noted that medications are used to treat impairments, not symptoms. Thus, although a symptom may remain, if its ability to impair function is diminished, the treatment is considered effective. While a variety of side effects may be relatively minor, Dr. Thurston noted some side effects can be serious. For example, a life-threatening skin condition called Steven-Johnson Syndrome may be a side effect of the mood stabilizer, Lamictal. Trileptal can cause low blood salt with seizures and coma. Lithium can have a toxic effect. Some anti-depressants are associated with increased suicidal ideation, or with mania. The balance between effectiveness and risk is always a primary consideration in selecting medication. Also, Dr. Thurston cautioned that the use of street drugs can exacerbate symptoms of mental illness. In those with such symptoms, even the use of marijuana increases the risk of developing schizophrenia. Medication classes noted were stimulants, antidepressants, anti-psychotics, mood stabilizers, and other medications.

- Stimulants are used primarily to treat ADHD. A non-stimulant antidepressant, effecting norepinephrine can also be used to treat ADHD. Examples of stimulants are Ritalin, Adderall, Concerta, and Focalin.
- Anti-depressants are used to treat depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder and anxiety disorders. The new tricyclics, (SSRIs) function by inhibiting

serotonin reuptake at the nerve synapse. Other medications function by inhibiting norepinephrine reuptake. Finally, there are drugs that combine these two functions and are found to be easier and safer to take. Prozac, Zoloft, Celexa, and Trazadone are examples of anti-depressants.

- Anti-psychotics are classified as first and second generation and are used to treat psychosis and mania. Compulsive symptoms associated with OCD or schizophrenia may be affected by a deficiency of dopamine. First generation anti-psychotics affect dopamine D2 receptor blockers. Second generation drugs work on dopamine and serotonin receptors. Negative symptoms are diminished by the serotonin receptor effect. Abilify, Zyprexa, Seroquel, Risperdal, Clozapine, and Geodon are representative second generation anti-psychotics and have the advantage of lower incidence of certain side effects involving movement. Weight gain associated with Zyprexa produces insulin resistance and a metabolic syndrome that increases risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Clozaril/Clozapine is linked to bone marrow suppression. Prolixin and Haldol are long-acting and injectable.
- Mood stabilizers treat Bipolar Disorder. Anti-epileptics and anti-psychotics also help mood stabilization. Lithium, Depakote, Tegretol, Lamictal and Tiletal are mood stabilizers.
- Anti-anxiety medications are benzodiazepines, such as Xanax, which are addictive. SSRIs and Seroquel are also used to treat anxiety.

In sharing the categories by which psychotropic medications are classified, Dr. Thurston emphasized that the classification of these drugs is not to be taken as absolute, as there is much crossover in use. Crossover in medication use has historically been in evidence in the very development of psychotropic medications. Application of tricyclics as psychotropics was discovered by accident, as the original application was for anti-histamine effect, and MAO inhibitors were initially used in the treatment of tuberculosis. As explained by Dr. Thurston, the FDA approves the marketing of a drug for a specific purpose or indication. Once the drug is on the market, and if medically justified, a physician can prescribe the medication for any purpose. Such use is referred to as off label use. Currently, some anti-psychotic and anti-depressant medications are also used to help anxiety and mood stabilization. Also, other medications initially approved for health issues unrelated to mental health, are found to be effective for some symptoms of mental illness. Anti-epileptic and some cardiac medications are examples of such medications. Bipolar Disorder, Epilepsy, and Migraine have in common episodic neuronal

dysfunction. Thus, Lithium, Depakote, and Tegretol are used to treat all three.

To further clarify factors influencing physicians' choices in prescribing drugs, Dr. Thurston explained the terms patent, generic, and algorithm. A patent means a company has exclusive rights to sell a product for twenty years, and producers attempt to get a patent early in a drug's development. With exclusivity established by a patent, a new medication is always more expensive than one whose patent has expired. Generic is a drug's common name, not a brand name. Generic really means a medication is no longer under patent. Thus, a generic medication is less expensive than a brand name drug, as it may be broadly marketed. A drug's patent may expire, but a new delivery system for the drug, such as time-release action, may be under patent, rendering that formulation of the drug more expensive than the older one. A formulary refers to a company or agency's book of covered medications. In knowing how a patent affects the cost of a drug, it is understandable that a company's formulary may prioritize in its list generic, off-patent, lower-cost drugs.

Patenting of drugs not only affects authorization of use by insurance providers, but affects availability of a medication. For example, Lithium, a naturally occurring substance, was discovered in the 1950s to be an effective treatment for mania, but was not introduced to the U.S. market until 1974. There was no patent on Lithium, so there was no motivation for producers to seek FDA approval. Finally, drugs are selected by an algorithm or step treatment. The algorithm dictates a protocol of first trying the drug safest and most effective for most people. It is evident, then, that the cost of a drug may distort the therapeutic step process, placing specific drugs in broader use than others. The end result, however, is that a physician individualizes averages, taking into account data on drug safety and effectiveness, and considering individual responses, as well. As unsatisfying as it may be to consumers, finding the appropriate medication treatment for any individual involves trial and error.

Understandably, audience members wanted help with the trial and error process of finding the best treatment for their loved ones. Remaining true to professional ethics in not providing medical opinion about those whom one has

not assessed, Dr. Thurston fielded questions from the audience without making prescriptive statements about any individual case presented by friends and family members. Dr. Thurston's responses utilized the questions presented to underscore the concepts presented. The statement that most closely exemplified this gracious, professional stance was that in response to one medication regimen described, Dr. Thurston noted that the combination of medications "may need to be tweaked." Rather than prescriptive statements specific to individuals, Dr. Thurston provided solid information about psychotropic drugs, which can greatly enhance understanding and assist people in being well-informed consumers of psychotropic medication treatment. Dr. Thurston's offering corresponds to an old adage. "Give me a fish, and I will eat for a day. Teach me to fish, and I will eat for a life-time." Dr. Thurston hooked us up. ❖

Vote No on Prop. 1E!

Please help us to defeat this proposition on the May 19 ballot.

Proposition 1E changes Proposition 63, a voter initiative passed in November 2004. Prop. 63 added a 1% tax surcharge to annual income over \$1 million, and required all proceeds to go to new and expanded mental health programs for children and adults.

Prop. 63 is working. Over 200,000 people are now enrolled in mental health services who were not receiving treatment before 2004. But Prop. 1E cuts a half-billion dollars from Prop. 63 programs. These cuts will cause immediate and lasting damage. Prop. 1E will limit treatments and services for people living with mental illness. Future services are at even greater risk.

Vote NO on Prop. 1E Because:

- IT'S UNNECESSARY. Legislators have already raised taxes and cut services. The money Prop. 1E takes from Prop. 63 amounts to less than 00.25% of the state budget.
- IT CUTS MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT.
- IT COSTS US MORE.
- THE FIRST CUT IS A BAD PRECEDENT.
- IT JEOPARDIZES FEDERAL FUNDS.
- 1E HAS NO ACCOUNTABILITY FOR SPENDING. ❖

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MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH - 2009

For more than 50 years our country has celebrated May is Mental Health Month to raise awareness about mental illness. In recognition of this mission, the Ventura County Behavioral Health Department hosts an annual conference for mental health professionals, consumers, family members and stakeholders each year to promote mental health.

This year's conference focuses on the topic of Suicide. Suicide is the 8th leading cause of death in the United States, claiming about 30,000 lives a year. Every day, 14 young people between the ages of 15 and 24 commit suicide; that's approximately 1 every 100 minutes. Suicide attempts are among the leading causes of hospital admissions in persons under 35. The highest suicide rates in the U.S. are found in white men over the age of 85. This is a national tragedy.

May is Mental Health Month 2009 Conference

Keynote Address by: Stan Lelewer - "SUICIDE: Prevention, Healing, and Erasing the Stigma"

Thursday May 7, 2009 ■ 8:30 am to 4:30 pm
Residence Inn by Marriott, River Ridge Ballroom
2101 West Vineyard Avenue, Oxnard, CA 93036

Fees for the 1-day conference are \$25 (includes lunch).

To sign up, go to <http://www.vchca.org/bh> and click on the conference link. For questions, call 805-981-9213. ❖

NEW!

FRIENDSHIP LINE

Have you ever felt lonely? Have you ever needed someone to talk to, just to help you get through your day, or just needed a little friendly chat to help perk you up? The new Friendship Line is just what you are looking for! The Friendship Line offers a friendly voice when you are lonely or are having a hard time. The Friendship Line will be open Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays, 7 pm to 10 pm. Each call is limited to 15 minutes, with a maximum of 2 calls per night.

Toll Free: 1-877-672-AWRC (1-877-672-2972)

This Confidential Friendship Line is staffed by Peer Support Specialists from the Adult Wellness & Recovery Center

SUPPORT GROUPS FOR CONSUMERS/CLIENTS

Please note – These groups are for consumers/clients. Family member support groups are listed separately.

Depression/Bipolar Support Groups:

Ventura: DBSA Support Group meets every Tuesday, 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Bible Fellowship Church, 6950 Ralston Street (& Johnson Drive), Building 300, Room 301, Ventura. For more information, call (805) 201-0619. Also see:

<http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/DBSAVentura/>.

Ventura: DBSA Support Group meets 1st and 3rd Saturdays, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Adult Wellness and Recovery Center, 56 E. Main Street (at Ventura Avenue in Ventura). For directions and information, call (805) 671-5038.

Oak Park: DBSA Conejo Valley Depression Support Group meets Mondays and Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. at Church of the Epiphany, Mitchel Hall, Room 6, 5450 Churchwood Dr. (Kanan & Churchwood) Oak Park. Info: Vincent F. Caimano, Ph.D., (818) 292-8551 office or email depressiongroup@mindspring.com.

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 p.m., the second 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 p.m. the third Monday of each month at 72 Moody Court in Thousand Oaks (Behavioral Health, Conejo Clinics). Info: (805) 641-2426.

NAMI in Ventura – Meets at 6:30 p.m., the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month at College United Methodist Church, 4300 Telegraph Road, Ventura. Info: (805) 641-2426.



NAMI CALIFORNIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2009

"Destination: Recovery!"

August 21 & 22, 2009

Torrance Marriott South Bay

3635 Fashion Way

Torrance, California 90503

Phone: 310-316-3636

PRE-CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES:

The Affiliate Leadership Institute will be held on Thursday, August 20, 2009. Pre-registration required.

CONFERENCE:

Early Registration opens Thursday, August 20 from 9-3:00
Registration opens Friday, August 21 at 8:00 a.m. Conference begins Friday, August 21 at 8:30 a.m. and closes Saturday, August 22 at 4:30 p.m.

CONSUMER FORUM:

The Consumer Leadership Institute will be held on Friday, August 21 at 12:00 noon. If you are a consumer, and would like to participate in the Consumer Leadership Institute, you must pre-register. See consumer registration below.

ACCOMMODATIONS:

Please make your hotel reservations by calling 888-228-9290 Ask for the specially negotiated rate of \$109 (single, double, triple or quad). This special rate is good from February 9, 2009 thru August 12, 2009. **Cut off date for this rate is August 12, 2009. NAMI California cannot guarantee rooms beyond the number that have been reserved in our**

block, so book now! Hotel directions will be sent with confirmation of registration.

SHUTTLE SERVICE AND PARKING:

Self parking at the hotel is \$8 per day.

EXHIBITORS WELCOME:

Exhibitors may rent tables for the NAMI California Annual Conference 2009. For forms and details please contact Catherina Isidro at catherina.isidro@namicalifornia.org or 916-567-0163.

CONSUMER SCHOLARSHIPS:

NAMI California encourages affiliates to offer consumers a scholarship to attend the NAMI California Conference. A limited number of consumer scholarships will be awarded by NAMI California and will be awarded on a first come, first served basis. Please contact Catherina Isidro at catherina.isidro@namicalifornia.org or 916-567-0163 for an application.

CONTINUING EDUCATION UNITS AVAILABLE

NAMI CALIFORNIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2009 REGISTRATION FORM

Register Today to Get the Early Bird Rate!

Copy this form and use one for each individual registration (please print clearly)

REGISTRATION FEES INCLUDING MEAL(S)

Early Bird Special

Paid by July 10, 2009

2-Day Rate: \$160/person

1-Day Rate: Fri. Sat. \$105/person

Paid after July 10, 2009:

2-Day Rate: \$185/person

1-Day Rate: Fri. Sat. \$120/person

On-Site Registration(No meal guarantee):

2-Day Rate: \$195/person

1-Day Rate: Fri. Sat. \$130/person

Consumer Registration:

2-Day Rate: \$115/person

1-Day Rate: Fri. Sat. \$75/person

I will attend the Consumer Leadership Institute

I will not attend the Consumer Leadership Institute

Cut-off Day: Deadline for receiving Registrations in our office is the 12th of August.

Cancellation Policy: A \$35 cancellation fee to cover operating expenses will be charged to those who register, but cannot attend. To cancel, you must notify the NAMI California office in writing no later than July 17, 2009. No refunds will be made after this date.

Returned check Policy: A processing fee of \$30 will be assessed for any returned checks due to insufficient funds.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

NAMI Affiliate: _____

MEALS:

Friday lunch will be on your own.

Friday Dinner: Chicken Fish Vegetarian

Saturday Lunch: Chicken Fish Vegetarian

NAMI California Conference Consumer Scholarship Donation: \$ _____

PAYMENT (Zip Code must be provided above for all credit card payments):

Visa Master Card American Express

Account #: _____ Expiration Date: _____

3-4 Digit Security #: _____ Signature: _____

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____

Make check payable to NAMI California – Conference 2009

Mail to:

NAMI California

1010 Hurley Way, Suite 195

Sacramento, CA 95825

Phone: 916-567-0163 Fax: 916-567-1757



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National Alliance on Mental Illness

Join us for the Fifth Annual
NAMIWalks Ventura County

Saturday May 2nd, 2009
Ventura Beach Promenade

REGISTER ONLINE!!!
Walk as an individual! Join a team!
Become a team captain! Donate online!

www.NamiWalksVentura.Info