



# NAMI Ventura County

Ventura County's Voice on Mental Illness

Newsletter

September 2007



## **SPEAKER'S MEETING**

**7:00 P.M., Tuesday, September 11, 2007**

**Guest Speaker:**

**MICHAEL POWERS**

**Director,**

**Ventura County Health Services Agency**

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

PLEASE ARRIVE EARLY IF YOU CAN. WE NEED  
HELP TAKING DOWN TABLES AND ARRANGING  
CHAIRS



## **LOOKING AHEAD:**

Don't miss our October 9 speaker's meeting, "CHOICES IN RECOVERY". This is one of our most popular, well-attended meetings of the year. We will have a light dinner at 7 p.m., followed by our speaker at 7:30. Reserve early by calling: 805-641-2426.

## **INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

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## **FAMILY TO FAMILY**

### **3 CLASSES – 3 LOCATIONS**

**Class begins: August 30, 2007**

12 Thursdays, 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.  
Calvary Community Church, 5495 Via Rocas  
**Westlake Village**

**Class begins: September 10, 2007**

12 Mondays, 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.  
NAMI Ventura County conference room,  
1339 Del Norte Road  
**Camarillo**

**Class begins: September 13, 2007**

12 Thursdays, 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.  
Community Memorial Hospital, 8<sup>th</sup> floor,  
147 N. Brent Street  
**Ventura**



## **FAMILY TO FAMILY GRADUATES:**

Did the F2F program enrich your life?  
How about passing it forward?  
We are in urgent need of new F2F teachers.  
Trainings will be held November 2-4.  
Please contact Chris at 805-641-2426 or  
e-mail at [www.namiventura.org](http://www.namiventura.org)

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## ***BUILDING COMMUNITY – TAKING ACTION***

### **Mental Illness Awareness Week/Bipolar Disorder Awareness Day October 7-13, 2007**

Established in 1990 by Congress, the first week of October is designated as "Mental Illness Awareness Week" (MIAW) in recognition of NAMI's efforts to raise mental illness awareness. "Bipolar Disorder Awareness Day" (BDAD) is held each year on the Thursday of MIAW to encourage further understanding and promote early intervention and treatment for this mental illness.❖

## MEET THE STAFF: Program Coordinator Chris Novak



How do I sign up for Family to Family classes? When is there a Care and Share support group in my area? How can I get help for myself and for my loved one? If you have called the NAMI Ventura County phone number and asked these questions in the past eighteen months, chances are you've talked to Program Coordinator Chris Novak.

Since joining the NAMI team in February, 2006, Chris has answered an average of five phone calls per day and has been the first point of contact for most folks who have called NAMI in the past year and a half.

Additionally, Chris is Ventura County's "go-to" person for coordinating Family to Family classes, securing locations, distributing flyers, handling publicity and taking registration for Family to Family participants. Chris provides binders and materials for all the classes and collects end-of-class evaluations and volunteer forms. She also collects and formats membership data, and recently coordinated Care and Share facilitator training, sponsored by NAMI Ventura County.

Novak explained, "I love meeting and working with the people involved in NAMI because they're very passionate about their work and the organization." Chris played a key role in this year's NAMI Walks for the Mind of America, assisting walk manager Debbie Hurt at the Kick-Off Luncheon, and working behind the scenes to secure donations for walk day, where the entire Novak family pitched in as volunteers.

Novak, herself, has strong ties and a long history as a Ventura County resident, having first lived in the County from 1969 to 1975 and then returning in 1978 to the present. She and her husband Joe have been active in the Ventura County community, raising their two children, Tiffany – now 24, and Shane – 21. In addition to her NAMI work, Chris works as a travel agent for Friendship Cruises and Tours, and with her husband Joe manages and owns Channel Islands Plumbing.

Chris enjoys working at the new NAMI office in Camarillo, where all program data and materials are centrally located and easily accessible.❖

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*Education leads to understanding.  
Understanding leads to empathy.  
Empathy leads to loving,  
Compassionate care.*

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## TREATMENT-LIMITING SYMPTOMS David Gudeman, M.D.



NAMI Ventura County's General Meeting on 11th July featured Dr. David Gudeman, a well-known local psychiatrist. Dr. Gudeman gave a stimulating presentation on the reasons why treatment of the mentally ill is so difficult.

He began by drawing a picture of a house, equating the three components to a treatment regimen: Biology as the foundation may include medications. Psychology was the outer walls, indicating a need for psychotherapy. Sociology was the roof, showing the need to integrate into society. Consumers need all three components to move into recovery. The general population will support helping the physically and mentally handicapped, or children with mental disorders. But when it comes to mental illness, stigma & fear keep people from seeking and getting treatment.

Dr. Gudeman explained that in mental illness, the brain and the cortex are not working correctly in three different ways. In the first instance, the mind has too much function, and may add information, for example in the form of auditory hallucinations. In the second, the mind has less function and may enter a depressed state. In the third instance, the mind is disorganized, leading to a lack of cognition.

What would a good society do to help the mentally ill? Instead of stigmatizing and fearing, Dr. Gudeman was clear that such a society would intervene aggressively. This might include hospitalization and medications against their will, just to be able to get them to recognize that there was a mental disorder. Several family members gave their own examples to show agreement with Dr. Gudeman.

The Board of NAMI Ventura County has recently added Dr. David Gudeman to its Advisory Panel and looks forward to an ongoing relationship with him.❖

## STATE TRAINER COMES TO VENTURA COUNTY

NAMI California's Program Director, Lynn Cathy, came to Ventura County in July for an intensive 20-hour facilitator training. Lynn, assisted by Glendale NAMI board president, Jonee Shady, trained nine Ventura County NAMI members and fourteen participants from NAMI Santa Barbara, Glendale, Manhattan Beach, Los Angeles and San Gabriel Valley as Care and Share support group facilitators.



During the training, which was sponsored by NAMI Ventura County, facilitator trainees were divided into two groups and then led through a NAMI support group "model". Participants were asked to "role play" in several different scenarios, to help them become familiar with the Principles of Support:

- WE WILL SEE THE INDIVIDUAL FIRST, NOT THE ILLNESS.
- WE RECOGNIZE MENTAL ILLNESSES ARE BRAIN DISORDERS.
- WE AIM FOR BETTER COPING SKILLS.
- WE FIND STRENGTH IN SHARING EXPERIENCES.
- WE REJECT STIGMA IN OURSELVES AND OTHERS.
- WE WON'T JUDGE ANYONE'S PAIN AS LESS THAN OUR OWN.
- WE FORGIVE OURSELVES AND REJECT GUILT.
- WE EMBRACE HUMOR AS HEALTHY.
- WE ACCEPT WE CANNOT RESOLVE ALL PROBLEMS.
- WE EXPECT A BETTER FUTURE IN A REALISTIC WAY.
- WE WILL NEVER GIVE UP HOPE.

Each participant had the opportunity to lead a support group session. Among the new trainees in Ventura County were Nina Bhavnani – who will be leading the Care and Share Support Group in Camarillo, Sally Kosoff and Kira Sutton – who will be co-leading the Care and Share Support Group in Ventura, which is now meeting on a twice monthly basis, Lou and Lynn Gates, and Connie Hall. ❖

## NAMI HONORS "CANVAS"

At its annual convention in San Diego, NAMI honored the film "Canvas", with an "Outstanding Media Award" for a dramatic motion picture. The film, which is scheduled to be released October 12, stars actress Marcia Gay Harden, actors Joe Pantoliano and Devon Gearhart, and was directed and written by Joseph Greco.

Academy Award winner Marcia Harden plays Mary Marino, a mother who becomes ill with schizophrenia. Emmy Award winner Pantoliano plays her husband, John Marino.

The movie is inspired by a true story and the award by NAMI praised the film for its "accurate, balanced, and compassionate" portrayal of a family transformed by mental illness.

"Canvas is marked by intense, tragic emotions, touches of humor and an enduring spirit of hope," said NAMI executive director Michael Fitzpatrick. "It is one of the few films that is authentic in its portrayal of schizophrenia. It has the potential to touch the general public even more than the movie *A Beautiful Mind*, because it focuses on the experience of an average family, rather than that of a Nobel Prize winning mathematician. It is a film that ordinary people can identify with." (Excerpts from NAMI National Web site) ❖

## SONNA GRAY AND DEBBIE HURT INDUCTED INTO NAMI "HALL OF FAME"

NAMI Ventura County proudly congratulates Sonna Gray and Debbie Hurt on being recognized for their outstanding commitment to the Family to Family program, by teaching ten or more Family to Family classes.

Teachers Gray and Hurt join a select group of eighteen Family to Family teachers throughout the country who were inducted into the Hall of Fame at the 2007 NAMI National Convention.

Congratulations and heartfelt thanks from all those who have been touched, healed and helped through your dedication. ❖

## NAMI VENTURA COUNTY THANKS JANE SHEEHAN AND DEBBIE HURT

NAMI members and friends throughout Ventura County owe a debt of gratitude to Jane Sheehan and Debbie Hurt for their years of voluntarily facilitating the Care and Share Support groups in Ventura and Camarillo. Each of these dedicated NAMI volunteers have provided help and encouragement to countless families affected by mental illness.

**THANK YOU JANE, DEBBIE AND SONNA**

## PROVIDER EDUCATION HITS GROUND RUNNING

In July, NAMI brought the first Provider Education Program training class to Ventura County. Meeting together for ten weeks at the Interface Community Room in Camarillo, mental health workers from a variety of perspectives – housing, hospice, jail, private practice – have heard about mental illness from the family and consumers’ perspectives. One MFT intern’s response summed it up for the group, “I’ve taken lots of classes in the internship program, but this is by far the best. I actually look forward to coming to this class.” The class, which is free and applicable to all who serve those with serious mental illnesses, is funded through a grant from the Mental Health Services Act. CEU’s are available.

Registration is Open:

OXNARD – Class begins September 14, 2007  
Meets for 10 Fridays, 1:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Williams Drive Training Room, Behavioral Health  
Department

THOUSAND OAKS – Class begins September 21, 2007  
Meets for 10 Fridays, 1:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Conejo Mental Health Clinic, 72 Moody Court,  
Thousand Oaks

Call 805-641-2426 for more information or e-mail  
namiventura@gmail.com.

## PROVIDER EDUCATION BACKGROUND by Sally Narkevic

Joyce Burland, Ph.D., has prepared a comprehensive overview of mental illness with the inclusion of two family members of those with mental illness, two consumers and a professional to share their personal experiences and present the material. The current program is in its fifth week and the feedback from professionals, seasoned Family to Family teachers, and consumers has been very encouraging.

The class participants have been forthcoming with ideas, knowledge and sharing their experiences. The informative exchanges of wisdom and understanding have worked toward achieving the goal to erase stigma and improve the treatment for those suffering with mental illness and help all those involved. The innovation of the program is a step forward to increase awareness of what families, professionals and consumers are up against and fighting to alleviate. The program is a positive approach to education, advocacy and enlightenment. ❖

## SAN DIEGO NAMI NATIONAL CONVENTION IMPRESSES

“I was extremely impressed by the dedication of the people, the caliber of the presenters and the quality of the workshops!” exclaimed NAMI board member

Gail Beeker after attending the 2007 NAMI National Convention in San Diego.



The convention which was held at the Town and Country Resort in San Diego, from June 20-24 offered a variety of speakers and workshops, with guest speakers such as Kitty Dukakis, wife of former governor and presidential candidate Michael Dukakis, who presented a reading from her book “Shock”.

After the speaker presentations, conference attendees could choose from among dozens of workshops each day. Some of the tantalizing workshop titles were: Building and Mobilizing Coalitions, Spanish Language Community Forum, How NAMI Walks are Changing the Community, Strategies for Addressing the Criminalization of the Mentally Ill, Building Capacity and Outreach through IOOV, and NAMI and Multicultural Outreach. Beeker stated, “The amount of information that NAMI National offers and the resources for help are truly amazing.”

CD’s and power point presentations of some of the workshops continue to be available (as of this newsletter printing) on the NAMI National website at: [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org).



NAMI leaders attend a session on making NAMI a household name.

Several Ventura County representatives also made the trek South for the convention, including NAMI board president Ratan Bhavnani and his wife Nina, NAMI vice-president Candace Jackson, board member and Family Education Chair Gail Beeker, and PEP team member Kimo Watanabe. ❖

## **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:** DBSA Support Group 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Ventura County Church of Religious Science, 101 S. Laurel St., Ventura (at Santa Clara Street). For more information, see: <http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/DBSAVentura/>.

**Oak Park:** The Conejo Valley DBSA Depression Support Group meets every Monday from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. No meeting Sept 3rd. Meetings resume Sept 10th at a new location: Church of the Epiphany, 5450 Churchwood Dr (Churchwood & Kanan) Oak Park. Watch for sign "CVDSG". Info: Vincent F. Caimano, Ph.D., (818) 707-9799 home, (818) 292-8551 office. ❖

## **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 Thousand Oaks (Mental Health Adult Services Center). Info: (805) 641-2426.

**NAMI in Ventura** – Meets at 6:30 pm, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3rd Tuesday of each month at College United Methodist Church, 4300 Telegraph Road, Ventura. Info: (805) 660-1755. ❖

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## **ADULT WELLNESS CENTER Opens in Ventura**

The Adult Wellness and Recovery Center is now open. With funding from the Mental Health Services Act and operated by Pacific Clinics, this is a peer run socialization and outreach center.

Wellness Center

Hours: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Days: Tuesdays through Saturdays

Address: 56 E. Main St., Ventura

For all county residents recovering from mental illness

Information: 653-5308

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## **NAMI REACHES OUT**

El 24 de Julio NAMI del El Condado De Ventura comenzo la primera clase, de Familia a Familia en Fillmore. Esta clase de NAMI Del Condado De Ventura es un programa de lenguaje en espanol de primera calidad. En los proximos meses NAMI trabajara para proveer el programa con lo siguiente:

Grupo de ayuda y apoy en espanol

La revista Avanzamos de NAMI en espanol

Informacion en espanol en la pagina de internet [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

NAMIWALKS publicacion en espanol

Publicar una columna en espanol en la revista mensual de NAMI

Grabar un mensaje en espanol para linea de mensajes

Comenzar otra clase de Familia a Familia en Oxnard

Neseditamos voluntarios que hablen espanol para traducir y contestar los mensajes recibidos en la linea de mensajes.

Por favor de hablar a (805) 641-2426 si tiene una o dos horas por mes para asistir. ❖



## **LITHIUM HELPS BRAIN AND MOOD**

The *Journal Watch Psychiatry*, August 13, 2007 issue reports that in bipolar patients, lithium seems to increase gray matter in areas that regulate mood and cognition. Mood disorders are associated with brain-volume loss, which may be related to neurotoxicity. To determine whether lithium might protect against the neurotoxicity of chronic bipolar disorder, researchers used MRI to compare gray-matter density in outpatients with bipolar disorder and health controls.

The bipolar group had significantly larger gray-matter volumes than the control group did, and this difference was entirely explained by the 9% greater gray-matter volumes in the frontal, parietal and temporal lobes of the lithium-treated group. Gray-matter volumes were similar between controls and patients not taking lithium.

The largest difference in gray-matter volumes occurred in areas that regulate mood or cognition. Lithium might help to correct the structure and function of systems that work poorly in mood disorders. Considering similar findings from other studies (e.g., *Journal Watch Psychiatry*, February 8, 2006), there may be reason for the bipolar patient to continue taking lithium to protect the brain as well as his or her mood.

*From an article by Steven Dubovsky, M.D. published in Journal Watch Psychiatry, August 13, 2007. ❖*

## ATTENTION: PAXIL CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT

There has been a national settlement in a lawsuit that alleged that the company GlaxoSmithKline concealed information about the safety and effectiveness of prescribing Paxil for children. Anyone that purchased Paxil or PaxilCR/TM for a minor child is entitled to recover as much as 100% of their documented out-of-pocket costs. A claim form must be received by 8/31/07. For more information, or to download or request a claim form, you can visit [paxilpediatricsettlement.com](http://paxilpediatricsettlement.com), or call toll-free (866) 494-8404. ❖

### ATTENTION RALPH'S SHOPPERS!!

We have received notice from Ralph's that **all our members who are enrolled** in Ralph's Community Contributions Program **need to re-register**. Those who are currently enrolled will remain active until August 31, 2007. **All current members (and any new members!) are required to register for the new term at [www.ralphs.com](http://www.ralphs.com) – and this will be effective on September 1, 2007.**

Just go online at [www.ralphs.com](http://www.ralphs.com), click on community programs, then click on participant and follow the simple instructions. **The NAMI NPO # is 81209**. Be sure to have your Ralph's Club Card handy so you can enter its number on the online system. For each monthly purchase up to \$200, NAMI receives 1%; \$200.01 to \$350, NAMI receives 2%; \$350.01 to \$500 – 3% and over \$500 – 4%.

### 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



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**SAVE THE DATE!!**  
**NOVEMBER 9, 2007**  
**5:30 - 9:00 P.M**  
**NAMI VENTURA COUNTY**  
**&**  
**VENTURA COUNTY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION**  
**INSTALLATION DINNER, CASINO NIGHT AND SILENT**  
**AUCTION**

