



# NAMI

# Gwinnett

National Alliance on Mental Illness

The Official Newsletter of NAMI Gwinnett

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July 2008

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# NAMI Walks



National Alliance on Mental Illness

### 2008 NAMI WALK for the Mind of America!

The Gwinnett Steppers are ready to go again in 2008. In fact there will be a team for the consumers called the “Outabounds”. Our inspiration is “Turning the Tide”.

We encourage everyone to participate. Unlike the previous WALKs, the 2008 NAMI WALK will be held at Tribble Mill Park in Lawrenceville. If you haven’t visited this park, you are in for a treat! Instead of walking in downtown Atlanta, we will be enjoying a beautiful nature walk. Bring your entire family and take pleasure in the wonderful surroundings. It seems that time is flying past and we are missing the simple things in life. What can be more relaxing that walking for your loved one and spend quality time with your family and friends.

So mark September 13 on your calendar for the 2008 NAMI WALK and family/friend time.

Since the walk will be in our county, we want the NAMI Gwinnett to have the largest participation. (Hmm, I guess you can tell I’m a little competitive.)

For more information on the 2008 NAMIWALKS go to the Gwinnett Steppers or

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### CONTACT US!

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## Kudos to NAMI Gwinnett!

In 2007, numerous honors were bestowed upon NAMI Gwinnett, Inc. as an affiliate, and among several of its members. Among those honors include Exemplary Affiliate of the Year for Programs by NAMI GA, Alan McDaniel as Connections Facilitator of the Year, and Rena Phillips as Family Support Group

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*Congratulations to everyone!*

*(Continued from page 1)*

Facilitator of the Year. The late Wayne Taylor received a plaque in his honor for his contributions to the CIT Program.

We would also like to take this time to congratulate our newest Family Support Group Facilitators, Glenda Brown and Brenda Lee. Also, congratulations to our newest Connections Facilitators, Linda Fouts, Vicky Lewis, and Amanda Spencer. At our May General Meeting, we welcomed two new members to the Board of Directors,

Brenda Lee and Loren Schwab. As NAMI Gwinnett grows, so do our members, as volunteers within our organization and as people. Their experiences will surely help others on their journey of recovery from mental illness, and their families. Congratulations to everyone!

*Article by Jennifer Garrison, Editor*

## Family to Family

*Well, we did it again*

Well, we did it again. NAMI Gwinnett had another successful graduation for 11 family members. We started the class at the end of March and pushed through those 12 weeks like they were nothing. The class started out a little shy, but by the time the third class got going we couldn't stop them.... They kept Ralph and myself hopping with great questions and nightlong conversations. It was truly one of my most enjoyable classes. A special thanks and congrats goes out to Ralph Wade for being so successful with his first class completion. Many nights he kept me on track! I would like to congratulate Lois Damron, Beatriz Santeliz, Mike Moye, Mike Morris, Eric Hershman, Marion Stephens, Connie Cooper, Michael and Toni Oliver, Lori Spencer, and Jan Farr for their completion of the 2008 Spring Family to Family class! Hope to see all of you at our Tuesday support meetings!

Diane Turman

Director, Facilitator, Family to Family Teacher

## Demand action on mental health care

By Eric Spencer

For the Journal-Constitution

Published on: 06/19/08

It shouldn't surprise anyone that Georgia's mental health care system is in crisis. It's not just failing. It's broken.

The scathing 65-page report from the U.S. Department of Justice to Gov. Sonny Perdue about Georgia's regional hospitals, the transfer of "unspent" funds from the Department of Mental Health to the Division of Family and Children Services, and the shallow plagiarism reflected in the preliminary report from the Governor's Mental Health Commission all have gripped the headlines in recent weeks.

But these aren't the roots of the state's problems. They are only symptoms.

One in four Americans struggle with mental illness at some point in their lives. In Georgia, approximately 623,000 people struggle with major depression, 242,000 with bipolar disorder and 93,000 with schizophrenia. They are our parents, children, brothers and sisters, grandparents and friends. They are us.

In most cases, they don't make contributions to political campaigns. That is probably one source of the problem.

Mental illness does not discriminate between Republicans and Democrats. It can strike anyone at any time. For schizophrenia alone, more Americans live with the disease than those who live with HIV/AIDS.

But for most legislators, investment in the mental health care system is not a big priority. The result is the series of scandals that have rocked Georgia over the last two years — in which more than 136 deaths under suspicious circumstances in the state hospitals were documented in a six-year period. Horrible conditions exist because there is a lack of money overall and lack of organizational capacity — including training and competitive wages for qualified personnel.

There is an urgent need for proven, cost-effective, modern treatment programs. Treatment works — if you can get it.

*Mental illness does not discriminate between Republicans and Democrats. It can strike anyone at any time.*

*Let's walk together for  
ourselves and our loved  
ones!*

*This shows that people do  
care and are supportive to  
those facing mental illness.*

the Outabounds web-site:

Visit [www.nami.org/namiwalks08/GEO/Gwinnettsteppers](http://www.nami.org/namiwalks08/GEO/Gwinnettsteppers) OR [/Outabounds](#)

The Gwinnett Steppers co-captains are Debbie Taylor and Carol McEntee. The Outabounds consumer co-captains are Vicki Lewis and Amanda Spencer. You may register online at the above address. Once you have registered, you will receive a sample fundraising letter and a link to your personalized fundraising page. You can customize the letter to tell your story or just to add some personal touches. Each of us has a story to tell and you will be surprised at the number of people who have similar stories but have been afraid to open up. Your letter to friends, family, and co-workers might be just the key that will help someone on the road to support, education and recovery.

For more information, visit [www.namiga.org/Walk](http://www.namiga.org/Walk)

So dig out your team Gwinnett Steppers T-shirt or our 2007 NAMIWALK T-shirt. It is not just for the walk. Start wearing it now and get the word out about mental illness. Let's walk together for ourselves and our loved ones!

Just another reminder, the 2008 NAMI WALK information:

Location: Tribble Mill Park

Date: September 13, 2008

Check-in time: 11:30 am

Start time: 1:00 pm

## 2008 AT&T Classic

The crowds were a little thin this year at the AT&T Classic, but that didn't dampen the fun, laughter and hard work done at the 17<sup>th</sup> green concession stand this year. The grill stayed hot and the beer stayed cold! We only had one day of lousy weather and the rest of the week was nice and warm.

Even though we didn't hit a record in sales this year, we did collect a record in contributions for our cause. This shows that people do care and are supportive to those facing mental illness. I am happy to say that we still made enough to fund our Thanksgiving luncheon for the consumers of Gwinnett County.

I would like to thank each and every one of you that volunteered your time this year and hopefully there will be a new sponsor next year so we can do it all over again.

I would once again like to thank all of NAMI Gwinnett for the opportunity to serve as the lead in the AT&T Classic, with my right hand gal Carol McEntee. It was my pleasure to stand by each and every one of you, hand in hand, to fight for the cause to help the mentally ill.

Diane Turman  
Director, Facilitator,  
and Family to Family Teacher

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Ironically, the plagiarism in the Governor's Mental Health Commission of recommendations from the Michigan Governor's Task Force proves the point. We don't need more commissions. We already know what to do.

The U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Mental Health, President Bush's "New Freedom" Commission on Mental Health and the National Alliance on Mental Illness' "Grading the States" report have all pointed the way to transformation in recent years. Even before the scandals broke, Georgia's mental health care system received only a D grade. To his credit, Perdue has acknowledged that a D is unacceptable.

We need action — real, funded, sustained action. Too often, legislators are afraid they will take a beating at home in an election year if they dare to increase spending to transform a system. We need to show them they'll take a beating if they don't.

This is an election year. It doesn't matter whether you are a Republican, Democrat or Independent. Learn the facts about mental illness. Talk with your family members, friends, neighbors and co-workers about the terrible scandals that have rocked the state —

and talk to legislators and candidates.

Demand action. It's better that Georgia come together to make choices as a community rather than have them imposed on us by the federal government — - which is what the Justice Department investigation will mean if we don't rise to the challenge ourselves.

*Demand action.*

Every individual or family affected by a mental illness should stand together with doctors, ministers, teachers, police officers, business leaders and other ordinary taxpayers to demand change. It means standing together at the polls.

It means helping people struggling with illnesses that are no fault of their own. It means Georgians helping Georgians.

> Eric Spencer is Georgia director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

## ***My Two Cents Worth... Alan McDaniel***

You have no doubt heard the phrase, “thinking outside of the box”. What does that mean to you? Surely it means different things to different people. It likely depends on what our lives consists of on a daily basis. As our lives change, the meaning of the phrase may, and actually should, change.

It is time for NAMI Gwinnett to start thinking outside the box when it comes to fundraising.

*“thinking outside of the box”.*

The major fundraiser, other than the annual NAMI Walk, for NAMI Gwinnett has been the AT&T Golf Classic. In case you have not heard, this year was the last year of the AT&T Classic. As I understand it, the PGA (Professional Golfers Association) is looking for another golf event to take the place of the AT&T. Can we count on that happening? No. Are we willing to assume that we can do without those funds? The total that we actually receive from this event has dwindled in the last couple of years but, while the impact on our operating budget may not be as great it once was, it is still important to us. It looks like we will net about \$1,400.00 from the 2008 event.

In addition, we have the NAMI Walk. Of the money that we raise during the walk, NAMI Gwinnett gets 40% and the rest is split between the state and national organizations. That’s fair. Without their support and the training they provide, we could not do what we do. We received about \$2,600.00 from the 2007 walk. We do expect to double that, or more, this year since the walk is in our own backyard.

Speaking of the walk, again, how are you doing on that? Have you joined a team yet? Sponsored a walker? Gotten any donations?

At last count, it takes about \$14,000.00 per year to run our local organization and that will only continue to go up. Our treasurer, Carol McEntee, and the rest of the board of directors watch our investments very closely. We watch the interest rates and move money when we see a way to receive a better return. At our best, we could not receive enough return on our current investments to cover our operating costs.

We get other random donations, membership dues, etc. and the interest on investments helps but every year is a struggle for survival. And if we want to grow and be able to provide more services, help more people and get more done through our elected officials, that just adds to the cost.

So, how do these tie together, the budget and the box?

It’s simple: If we want to maintain or grow our financial resources, we need to

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think outside of the box to find new ways to raise money.

I don't want you to stay up at night and loose sleep about it. I'm doing enough of that for ALL of us.

What I want ALL of us to do is to keep our eyes open for funding everyday!

We need to look for every opportunity to get donations. We need to consider the places where we work, the businesses that we frequent, the businesses of family and friends, our churches, clubs and community organizations.

We need to come up with new, fresh ideas for fundraising. What can we do? Very little is off limits really and every little bit helps.

What if we put on our own golf tournament, our own motorcycle ride for a cause, a car show? The what-ifs are endless. How can we take the things that we enjoy doing on a personal level and find like-minded people to have the fun and raise the funds? How can you use your talents and connections to help NAMI achieve its goals?

We have the people to make this kind of stuff work for us. We have about 147 members! We could have multiple fundraising events each year and never ask anyone to work more than one event if they didn't want to. That's more than reasonable, isn't it?

Speaking of members, how can we get new members? New members bring new ideas and new contacts and the more members we have, the more the politicians will pay attention to what we have to say.

With the economy in the state that it is in today, donations are down everywhere. What used to work just won't be enough now. How "we've always done it" is not going to get it done now.

Please join me in thinking "outside of the box". Way outside. The only foolish ideas are the ones that never get considered. Bring any and all ideas to the attention of any of the board members. Let us take a look at it. Not much is off limits... It's a matter of survival.

*Article written by Alan McDaniel, NAMI Gwinnett President*

*We need to come up with new, fresh ideas for fundraising. What can we do? Very little is off limits really and every little bit helps.*

# Christmas Goody Bags

## For the attendees of Beacon Place and Five Points.

*It is hard to believe  
that we need to start  
thinking about  
Christmas again, but  
it's a fact!*

It is hard to believe that we need to start thinking about Christmas again, but it's a fact! It is important to start early on preparing things for the consumers that attend the day programs at Beacon Place and Five Points. This is something NAMI Gwinnett has done for years and it brings the true meaning of Christmas to all of our hearts! Last year one attendee even wrote that it was the highlight of the season for him to be able to go to eat with the other program attendees, and to then receive the goodie bag and present from NAMI Gwinnett.

This year we are going to try something new. We are going to ask the membership to please help us fill the goodie bags. We are going to designate each month as a special item month until December for NAMI Gwinnett. For what ever item we are requesting for the month, if you can find it while you are out, and purchase it for under \$1 or under you can bring it to the membership meeting or support group meetings and place it in a box that we will have designated in our cabinet at the church. In this way it will defer the cost for NAMI Gwinnett and help everyone to participate in this worthy cause. You can also give your items to Lori Spencer, Debbie Taylor, Daphne Nash, Janet Fienemann, or Winnie Stoakley - the committee that is handling the Christmas goodie bags and presents this year.

Here are the items that are needed each month until Christmas:

July – chap stick/lip stick (check-out Dollar Days)

August – mechanical pencils, ink pens, or pencil boxes (remember tax free weekend)

September – dental floss

October – calendars (cheap kind that you can get at a bank or Hallmark)

November - Come and help with the Thanksgiving dinner!

I also want to give a big thank you to Carol McEntee. She did this all by herself since 1995! Carol you did a fantastic job and we are grateful at NAMI Gwinnett for all your hard work with this. Carol did have Debbie Taylor's help last year – thank you Debbie too!!!

*Article written by Lori Spencer*

## **A Commentary on Prisons Housing Those Coping With Mental Illness to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution**

To the Editor:

An alternative view to “Mentally ill strain prisons” (AJC 3/26) is that jails and prisons greatly strain the mentally ill. Having borne a major mental illness for years, I can attest to its pain and horror, and to the added terror of possible confinement, neglect and abuse for behaviors arising from it. The routine use of jails and prisons as “de facto treatment centers” (versus their necessary use for the criminally insane) is an outrage bordering on a crime, and dates back, at least, to the “deinstitutionalization”, read abandonment, of the Reagan years. These policies expose our society’s specific fear and hostility toward the mentally ill, and our broader indifference to the values of human equality and dignity.

Sincerely,  
John Hector

**\*Editor’s Note: At the August 5th General Meeting, our guest speaker will be Mike Beaudreau, Representative from District 3 for Gwinnett Co. He will be addressing the issues of bringing a Mental Health Court to Gwinnett County.**

## **Editor’s Corner**

By Jennifer Garrison, Editor

As we gear up for our 4th Annual NAMI WALK, and upon reading our writers’ fine articles on fundraising and various issues, I find myself reflecting on what NAMI, and mental health, mean to me. For me, these fundraisers and other activities over the past three years have given me purpose, camaraderie, and new skill sets that I have since transferred to the workplace. But more importantly, I have been given perspective from people who have walked the journey beside me. I have learned from these precious people that we are so much more than our mental illness, no matter what anyone says. Life is what we make of it; how we cope with what we are dealt in this life is what builds our character. Being able to grow beyond the ashes of a devastating illness and rebuild your life among friends is a beautiful thing.

# Calendar of Events

## July 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 General Mtg. 7:00 PM	2	3	4 Independence Day (no SAFE)	5
6	7	8 7:30 PM Connections/ Family Support	9	10	11 8:00 PM SAFE	12
13	14 7:00 PM BOD Meeting	15 7:30 PM Connections/ Family Support	16	17	18 8:00 PM SAFE	19
20	21	22 7:30 PM Connections/ Family Support	23	24	25 8:00 PM SAFE	26
27	28	29 7:30 PM Connections/ Family Support	30	31		

## August 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 8:00 SAFE	2
3	4	5 General Mtg. 7:00 PM	6	7	8 8:00 SAFE	9
10	11 7:00 PM BOD Meeting	12 7:30 PM Connections/ Family Support	13	14	15 8:00 SAFE	16
17	18	19 7:30 PM Connections/ Family Support	20	21	22 8:00 SAFE	23
24	25	26 7:30 PM Connections/ Family Support	27	28	29 8:00 SAFE	30
31						

# September 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 General Mtg. 7:00 PM	3	4	5 8:00 PM SAFE	6
7	8 7:00 PM BOD Meeting	9 7:30 PM Connections/ Family Support	10	11	12 8:00 PM SAFE	13 11:30 AM NAMIWALKS Tribble Mill
14	15	16 7:30 PM Connections/ Family Support	17	18	19 8:00 PM SAFE	20
21	22	23 7:30 PM Connections/ Family Support	24	25	26 8:00 PM SAFE	27
28	29	30 7:30 PM Connections/ Family Support				



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*Meeting Schedule:*

General Meeting

*1st Tuesday*

*7:30-9:00pm*

*Dinner at 7:00pm*

*Fellowship Hall*

Support Group Meetings

*Every Tuesday*

*7:30pm-9:00pm*

*Consumer Support—Room C6*

*Family Support—Room C5*

Other Support for Consumers

SAFE

*Fridays 8:00-9:00pm*

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

*This newsletter published quarterly by NAMI-Gwinnett, Inc. It attempts to present a variety of views on issues relating to mental illnesses with depression, bipolar and schizophrenia as primary interests. Ideas and articles are welcome. Articles do not necessarily reflect the views of NAMI. The right to edit material is reserved. Deadline is the 1st day of December, March, June, and September. Email articles and ideas to: [newsletter@namigwinnett.org](mailto:newsletter@namigwinnett.org) or mail to: Newsletter, NAMI Gwinnett, P.O. Box 464053, Lawrenceville, Georgia 30042*

**National Alliance on Mental Illness**

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