

# NAMI GWINNETT NEWSLETTER

Volume 16, Issue 1

October 2004

## Planning Committee

Committee Members include Kathy Trimble, Lois Damron, Debbie Elrod, Virginia McVay, Marcia Littlefield, Gail Hogan and Ted McVay.

The purpose of this committee is to identify the issues we need to address during our 2005 fiscal year (starting April 1, 2005). The committee will then develop a detailed action plan that will be recommended to the NAMI Gwinnett Board of Directors for approval.

I want to thank each and every member of this planning committee for their courage to suggest tough and thorny issues much less believe that something can be done to help. These are fiscal year issues and we have a lot of work to do. I am excited by the possibilities and vision this group is demonstrating and I know you will be too.

Ted McVay, President of NAMI Gwinnett.

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## Seasons Greetings

### T'is the Season!

The holiday season is a time for reflection and a time for remembering people who are important to us. Everyone is busy preparing for the parties, family gatherings, and gift exchanges. To NAMI Gwinnett, the people who attend the Day Treatment Centers are important part of our family. Though NAMI Gwinnett's primary objective is to help and support the family members of loved ones who suffer from a mental illness, we also recognize the need to remember the people who were stricken with the illness. For over 14 years, NAMI Gwinnett has provided consumers a reason for celebrating the Thanksgiving and Christmas Holidays. This year we plan to continue these traditions.

#### Thanksgiving Day Party/Luncheon:

On November 19, NAMI Gwinnett will be hosting the Consumer's Thanksgiving Day Luncheon at the Day Treatment Center. This event is an excellent way to visit and connect with some super people. It reminds us why we are supporting these individuals through our advocacy and educational programs. We all have loved ones who suffer from a mental illness but we tend to forget those people who don't have family members active in their lives. That is why the Thanksgiving Day event and Christmas gifts are so important. Support starts at home and our extended family attends these Day Treatment Centers.

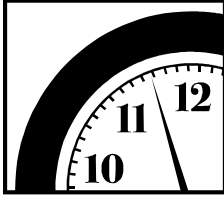
So are you ready to prepare some food and mingle with some great people? Well, someone will be calling you in the next couple of weeks. Food such as drinks, vegetable trays, side dishes, dessert, or any other food will turn this average day into something to remember. So mark your calendar for November 19!! Though the luncheon will

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# Meeting News



## Minutes - NAMI Gwinnett Meeting September 7, 2004

President Ted McVay called the meeting to order at 7:30. In preparation, he passed out the following for each table to share: 1) Meeting agenda, 2) Letter to psychiatrists, 3) Letter to GA legislators, and 4) By-law changes.

He introduced special guest Dave Lushbaugh, President of NAMI Georgia, and his wife, Linda.

President McVay highlighted the recent actions of our local board, including the legislative and psychiatric letters, and changes to the By-laws. He then asked for a motion from the floor to accept the By-law changes.

Motion: Daryl Myers moved that changes in the By-laws be accepted; Carol McEntee seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Cindy Collard announced that Rich's still does not have our fundraising tickets.

President McVay announced the new editor of NAMI Gwinnett newsletter, Debbie Taylor. He thanked Carol McEntee for her outstanding job as our past editor. He then announced that the MILO and Mil-Anon support groups are meeting yet another night each week here at Lawrenceville Presbyterian Church. The meetings are now every Monday and every Friday, at 8:00 p.m.

Tonight's speaker was Sylvia Kyle of GRN. She spoke not about mental illness, but about how to take care of ourselves as the caretakers of our loved ones. Her enthusiastic, prop-filled presentation covered the emotional, spiritual, physical, and mental aspects of self-care. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sara Burns, Secretary

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## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT – SALLY HENK

NAMI Gwinnett has continued to develop since our support group was first organized. Along the way, many people were a positive influence by starting “family” traditions and being there to provide comfort and support for those in crisis. Sally Henk has been a member who has made numerous contributions to NAMI Gwinnett.

Sally joined NAMI Gwinnett after moving to Georgia from Chicago. Many of the customs that we have today were initiated by Sally. In 1990 and 1991, Sally was the President of our organization. In 1991, she started the telephone tree, name tags, and guest book. She remained the custodian of the name tags and guest registry until these tasks were turned over to Daryl Myers in 1995. The telephone tree was turned over to Scotty and Marilyn Boulware about the same time.

Remembering those who suffer from a mental illness has always been one of her other initiatives. Sally started the Christmas “Goody Bags” program for consumers and managed the program for six years. During the 1990s, there were three Day Treatment Centers and over 200 consumers attending these centers. Though the program is now chaired by others, Sally has continued to participate with donations and lending a helping hand on “bagging” night.

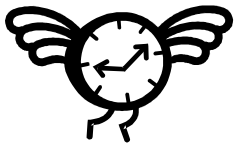
Sally's other activities included being an instructor for the “LeGacy Family Training” course. This was the educational program for families sponsored by the GRN-CSB and NAMI Gwinnett prior to the advent of Family to Family.

But most of all, Sally has the superb ability to counsel those in need due to her compassion, knowledge, and sincerity.

Sally, we appreciate all of your hard work and support throughout the years. Your actions set the example for us to continue our work as educators, advocates, and supporters for the families of loved ones who suffer from a mental illness.

Article written by: Carol McEntee, NAMI Gwinnett Member

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## Time to move on

For some members who are not able to attend our meetings, the NAMI Gwinnett newsletter is their only connection to our organization. Fresh ideas are needed for this newsletter to remain a valuable communication tool. This requires a rotation of responsibilities.

For the past four years, I have been the editor of the NAMI Gwinnett Newsletter. I am announcing that this 16<sup>th</sup> issue will be my last newsletter as editor. Debbie Taylor will be the next editor of our newsletter.

Debbie is an active board member. Along with being the NAMI Gwinnett historian, she has also attended the facilitators' training that was held in August.

Remember the newsletter is not a one person show. The editor needs volunteers to help identify articles that will be of interest to NAMI Gwinnett. Debbie will be a wonderful editor for the NAMI Gwinnett. Congratulations!

Written by: Carol McEntee, NAMI Gwinnett member

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Thank you Carol! You have done a great job as editor. I'm looking forward to the challenge.

As Carol has written, I will need your help to identify articles of interest. I will also take suggestions on anything that you would like me to include in the newsletter. Feel free to email me at [debtay16@bellsouth.net](mailto:debtay16@bellsouth.net) or call my cell at 770-633-4012 with your suggestions.

I am also Nami-Gwinnett's Historian, and I need your help. If you have any photos and memorabilia from past events that you would like included in the scrapbook, please contact me.

We have a new **NAMI Gwinnett web-site** at:

[www.nami.org/sites/namigwinnett](http://www.nami.org/sites/namigwinnett)

Ted McVay did a great job of getting it set up and running. Thank you, Ted. Our web-site contains a lot of information aimed at assisting friends and families of people who suffer from a mental illness. I now have the responsibility of managing the site; I am open to suggestions on what more you would like included on the web-site. Feel free to contact me.

Written by: Debbie Taylor, NAMI Gwinnett member



## GOING TO THE DOGS

Now a days it's amazing to me the things people come up with. The media will take a rumor and turn it into headlines – not stopping to find out what's the truth and what's a lie - all trying to outdo the other wanting to be the first to cast the stone against a brother.

I've lobbied to get legislation passed so that the mentally ill could have the right to receive insurance coverage the same as everyone else with any other affliction, mostly because I was a victim of not being able to receive coverage because I have Bipolar disorder an some years back, while at public work, my diagnosis was the reason insurance for me was denied.

But the other day while watching the news I heard a story that really rubbed me the wrong way! It seems that because of the rising bills to the Vets, you can now get insurance for pets. This left me angry and a little upset wondering if the only way I'll ever get insurance is to become somebody's pet. I'm house broke and hardly ever whine. I've been fixed, I got no fleas and Lord knows I always try to please. So what's the difference between them and me? Except for the fact they have four legs and I walk on two. I think I deserve insurance coverage—what about you?

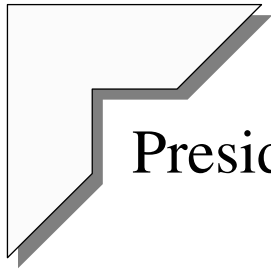
Sandi Bentley

Taken from the "Five Points Press"

Gwinnett Day Treatment Center

Lawrenceville, Ga.

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## Presidents Corner

One of the many things the president of an organization like NAMI Gwinnett needs to prepare for is our future. Is that important to you members? Is it possible that NAMI Gwinnett could dwindle and fail? While I think the answer to both questions is yes let me explore this a little further.

What if no one was willing to do anything to not only help us develop a vision of where and what we want to be in the future but, not willing to be committee chairpersons or be on the board. Make no mistake about this, without you members there is no future for NAMI Gwinnett. What if we were happy with the status quo or happy with what we have been for the last several years? What do you think would happen?

Let me share with you what my wife Virginia and I have seen as we visited many of the other NAMI affiliates in this state from the gulf coast to the mountains of West Georgia. We visit the other affiliates for two reasons with the first being so that we can learn what the other affiliates are accomplishing and to share with them our experiences. We have visited 11 other affiliates and we have gained a lot of insight as a result.

**NAMI – Savannah is currently has 158 members and a clear vision of where they want to be in the future which they update every year.** They have a large fund of money set aside to build a 47<sup>th</sup> Street style clubhouse and are seeking a two million dollar grant next year to start construction on this important facility for the mentally ill. That is only part of their vision of the future but what makes them successful is that they are not afraid to dream about the future.

OK, so you say well this is a big successful affiliate that has been around for a long time. That is what I thought but I was wrong. The membership of NAMI Savannah three years ago was down to 6 active members and 9 more that never came to meetings. I could go on about the success of this group because it is in such a stark contrast to so many other affiliates in this state.

**Most of the affiliates within this state are down to one to ten member families and several have**

*Presidents Corner – Continued to page 7.*

## Congress Passes Major Suicide Prevention Legislation

This article (Vol 4-33) appeared in the NAMI E-News, dated September 11, 2004. 4-33

Congress Passes Major Suicide Prevention Legislation, Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act Cleared for President's Signature; House Kills Effort to Block Mental Health Screening.

On September 9, both the House and Senate overwhelmingly approved legislation to support state and local suicide prevention programs. The legislation, known as the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act (S 2634) was approved by the House 352-64 and later cleared the Senate by unanimous consent. President Bush has pledged to sign the bill into law.

S 2634 is named in honor of the late son of Senator Gordon Smith (R-OR). Immediately after House passage, Senator Smith addressed NAMI's 25th annual convention in Washington. In moving words, he spoke of his son's memory and his family's dedication to promoting suicide prevention and treatment for mental illness. Senator Smith's wife also attended the NAMI convention and met with the growing network of NAMI affiliates that are being formed on college campuses across the country.

S 2634 authorizes \$82 million over the next 3 years to support state development of comprehensive youth suicide prevention and early intervention strategies. It also authorizes a new federal Suicide Prevention Resource Center to develop model early intervention programs. Finally, S 2634 also authorizes new assistance to colleges and universities to support on-campus mental health services.

It is important to note that S 2634 is an authorization bill and that Congress must follow through to actually appropriate funding for the programs and activities authorized the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act. NAMI members are strongly encouraged to contact their members and Congress and urge them to support appropriations for suicide prevention activities authorized S 2634 in FY 2005.

### House Kills Effort to Cut Off Mental Health Screening

On September 9, the House defeated an effort to cut off all federal funding for state and local mental health screening programs. The overwhelming bipartisan vote was 95-315 as part of an amendment to the FY 2005 Labor-HHS Appropriations bill (HR 5006).

Representative Ron Paul (R-TX) offered the amendment to express opposition to what he termed "federally mandated universal mental health screening." In fact, no such program exists at SAMHSA. At the

*Prevention – Continued to page 5.*

begin at 11:30, the food needs to be delivered to the Day Treatment Center by 11:00 am. Join us and experience a wonderful day.

**Christmas Gifts:**

This year we will continue our gift giving tradition. For a number of people who attend the center, this is their only Christmas gift. Last year, NAMI Gwinnett remembered 126 consumers with gifts such as sweat shirt, sweat pants, underwear, and hair dryers. Along with the “wish list” gift, they provided goody bags which contained socks, soap, shampoo, toothpaste, and other personal items. At our December support meeting, we have a big gift wrapping party. On **Monday, December 13<sup>th</sup>**, we meet and fill the goody bags. The goody bags and the Christmas gifts are taken to the center in time for their holiday party.

If you would like to make a contribution to these consumer/client activities, please contact Carol McEntee at 770-339-1149. At the November and December support meetings, a map will be available for people interested in helping fill the goody bags.

Article written by: Carol McEntee, NAMI Gwinnett Member

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same time, SAMHSA - as part of recommendations in President Bush's White House Mental Health Commission report from 2003 - is moving forward to support development and replication of evidence-based screening tools that can be used in juvenile justice facilities and schools. NAMI supports these activities at SAMHSA. These efforts would have been cut off under the Paul Amendment.

After defeating the Paul Amendment, the House went on to clear HR 5006 by a 388-13 margin. HR 5006 includes FY 2005 funding for both SAMHSA and the National Institute Mental Health (NIMH). Under the bill, NIMH funding is increased to \$1.421 billion (a \$38.8 million increase over current year funding). This is the same amount requested by President Bush. HR 5006 also includes \$20 million in new funding for the Bush Administration's "Mental Health Transformation Initiative" - state incentive planning grants to support the findings and goals in the 2003 White House Mental Health Commission report.

The Senate has yet to begin work on its version of the FY 2005 Labor-HHS Appropriations bill and it is unlikely to pass the bill before its expected pre-election adjournment on October 8. It is expected that the bill will not be completed until November, and will likely end up being part of a year-end "omnibus" spending bill.

This article (Vol 4-33) appeared in the NAMI E-News, dated September 11, 2004. 4-33

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***The world is blessed most by people who do things,  
And not by those who merely talk about them.***

***James Oliver***

## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY FOR MENTAL HEALTH, MENTAL RETARDATION AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The following are excerpts from the Governor's Advisory Council Report for Governor Perdue dated July 22, 2004 (if you wish to have a copy of the full report, contact me at [vmmcvay@bellsouth.net](mailto:vmmcvay@bellsouth.net) and I will email it to you):

Georgia law stipulates that the Governor's Advisory Council for Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse is to advise the governor, DHR, and DMHDDAD as to the efficacy of the state disability programs, the need for legislation relating to people with disabilities, the need for expansion or reduction of specific disability services programs and the need for specific changes in the state disability services programs. The GAC is also to provide guidance and assistance to the regional boards, hospitals, community service boards and other private or public providers in the performance of their duties.

The President's New Freedom Commission identified six goals. These goals present opportunities for system improvement that are applicable to Georgia MHDDAD programs. Below are the six goals, as stated by the Governor's Advisory Board.

Goal 1: America understands that mental health is essential to overall health.

Goal 2: Mental health care is consumer and family driven

Goal 3: Disparities in mental health services are eliminated.

Goal 4: Early mental health screening assessment and referral services are common practice.

Goal 5: Excellent mental health care is delivered and research is accelerated.

Goal 6: Technology is used to access mental health care and information.

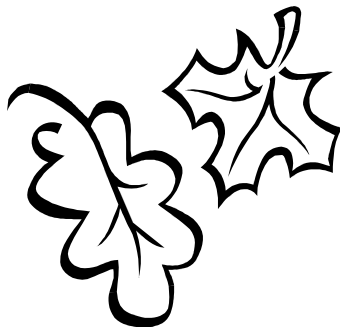
This report is an urgent call for action. As is demonstrated by the quote below from the most recent issue of Governing magazine, the turmoil in Georgia's system is nationally known.

Georgia's mental health system has been plagued by confusion and corruption. Two of the state's 25 community service boards, which deliver mental health services on a regional basis, are under investigation for Medicaid fraud, and the state hired a consultant to fix a projected \$6.5 million deficit in a third. Oversight of the boards has reverted back to the state from regional governing boards and Governor Sonny Perdue has ordered audits of every community service board – Governing, February 2004

The Governor has been urged to initiate a formal process that includes consumers, family members and advocates planning and implementing improvements for the MHDDAD system.

Written by: Virginia McVay, NAMI Gwinnett

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**completely vanished.** Many do not have a board of directors, have no by-laws and basically have no future. What is so sad is that every one of these affiliates at one time had a large and active membership for their geographical area. So what happened to cause such a dramatic loss? Is it apathy of the members? The members did not care enough? Or is it lack of leadership? It is probably due to a lot of factors but there is one basic and well understood business process that helps explain what can happen. (Yes, your affiliate is a business although it is not for profit. We are in the business of providing the many types of support for our members and like any other business we have costs and we have to raise money)

**All organizations must challenge their status quo and develop a vision of their future.** Here is why: without a vision of where we are going we tend to look back to our past to see where we are going and like driving a car by only looking through the rear view mirror can only lead to - - well, going backwards. What is terribly wrong with this picture is that over time we tend to accept mediocrity. We all have choices to make about our future because we alone are in control of the future for our personal lives, families and this affiliate. If your minimum expectations are set no higher than last year's expectations then we not only cannot make progress because we are focusing on the past and not to the future, we will also not have a future.

**We can only change what happens right now.** We obviously cannot change what has already happened in the past but we sure do not want it to lead our future. However, **if we spend some time today planning what we want to accomplish in the future and develop a "road map" of how to do that then we will not only know where we are going in our future but we will also have changed our past.** Think about it.

But what can happen without a Vision of the future we have no proverbial "road map" and no control of our destiny and our past becomes random. Our standards or minimum expectancies become reduced very slowly over several years (one day at a time) until we suddenly wake up one day and realize that we have lost our critical mass or membership of the affiliate. There are not enough folks to accomplish anything except to continue down the slippery slope of lost causes. Savannah was lucky because a new person came along with a dream and was willing to expend lots of hard work to change the future and then the past we now refer to. We in NAMI Gwinnett are lucky because we are right now trying to plan our future so that we can be assured of a successful past. Please read about the hard work of the planning committee in this news letter. But it is not enough to just be lucky and plan our future which soon becomes our past. We need you members helping us because we are doing it for your and your loved one.

**Do not stop dreaming about what the future of your mentally ill loved one could be.** Do not stop dreaming about how NAMI Gwinnett can help change the past by having the guts and courage to think and plan about a better future. If we put a process in place that is well understood and supported by our membership now then we will have a sure future and a successful past we can be proud of. We know that if we do not knock the door will not open. We know that if we do not ask we may not receive. We know that if we do not search we will not find. If we do not sow then we probably will not reap. These seem to be some of the laws of the universe that we must live by. So to answer the questions raised at the start of this article, we either progress into the future or we regress into the past. It is clear that we cannot maintain the status quo and stay the same.

The responsibility of the future of your Affiliate clearly rests on you members. Members are needed to become facilitators, to be directors on the board, to be chairpersons of our many activities and to be involved with us to change our past. So we ask our members to be as active as they can in some part of NAMI because others need us to be there for them.

So now I double dog dare you inactive members to become involved in NAMI Gwinnett and help us make a difference for our loved ones. What difference you say? Georgia is right now considering a 37% funding cut to the mentally ill at a time when the economy is slowly returning and the state is collecting higher and higher revenues. This is on top of their 10% cut last year. So you think the mental health community service providers will be there tomorrow? (Not necessarily) You do not care? You cannot make any difference? That's right. You will not make any difference if you do not at least try. **Do nothing and you get nothing but our mentally ill deserve more! So I double dog dare you to get involved.** If you do not then I would have to agree that you do not care but, I know better. I know you do care. Can't drive at night? That is not an excuse to do nothing. So get something started in the daytime. We have a large part of our membership that is retired and could meet to get things done in the day time. Don't give me excuses about today and my past – just give me your time and effort and we will change the future.

Ted McVay, President NAMI Gwinnett

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## **NAMI StigmaBusters Alert: August 30, 2004**

**Contact: [smarch@nami.org](mailto:smarch@nami.org)**

### **Halloween Horrors To Drive "Visitors Insane" At Universal Orlando Theme Parks**

NAMI members in Florida reported shock and dismay to learn about the stigmatizing mental illness theme for Universal Orlando Theme Parks Halloween Horrors Events for the Month of October 2004. This Theme Park attracts tourists from around the U.S. and the world to Orlando.

Publicity media kits including a committal form to a fictitious psychiatric ward for a visitor who might be "driven insane" by the planned Halloween Horror event and a personalized straight jacket for each reporter indicates insensitivity and ignorance.

Their [web site](#) features a man in a straight jacket with horrific head movements and facial expressions, headlined "Halloween Horror Nights® at Universal Orlando® the biggest, most terrifying Halloween event ever including all new haunted houses and four inescapable scare zones."

A NAMI StigmaBusters letter sent to Robert Gault, President & CEO of Universal Orlando Studios Theme Park has not been acknowledged.

Please send or fax your message to:

**Mr. Robert Gault, President & CEO**

**Universal Orlando Studios**

**1000 Universal Studios Plaza**

**Orlando, Florida 32819-7610**

**General Information: (407) 363-8000**

**FAX: (407) 224-6922**

And to an important corporate partner at the theme park

**E. Neville Isdell, Chairman & CEO**

**The Coca-Cola Corp**

**One Coca-Cola Plaza**

**Atlanta, GA 30301**

**(404) 676-2121**

**Fax: (404) 676-6792"**

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCTOBER NAMI BUSINESS MEETING  
LAWRENCEVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
OCTOBER 12, 7:00 P.M.

NOVEMBER NAMI GWINNETT SUPPORT MEETING  
LAWRENCEVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
NOVEMBER 2, 7:30 P.M.

NOVEMBER NAMI BUSINESS MEETING  
LAWRENCEVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
NOVEMBER 9, 7:00 P.M.

CONSUMER THANKSGIVING LUNCHEON  
BEACON PLACE & FIVE POINTS DAY TREATMENT  
CENTERS  
NOVEMBER 19, 11:30 AM

DECORATE NAMI GWINNETT CHRISTMAS TREE  
GWINNETT JUSTICE & ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING  
NOVEMBER 27, 9:30 AM

DECEMBER NAMI GWINNETT SUPPORT MEETING  
CHRISTMAS GIFT WRAPPING  
LAWRENCEVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
DECEMBER 7, 7:30 P.M.

FILLING CHRISTMAS GOODY BAGS  
CAROL MCENTEE'S HOME  
DECEMBER 13, 7:00 p.m.

REMOVE THE NAMI GWINNETT CHRISTMAS TREE  
GWINNETT JUSTICE & ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING  
JANUARY 1, 2005, 9:30 AM

## NAMI Gwinnett Christmas Tree

Every year NAMI Gwinnett decorates our Christmas Tree at the Justice and Administrative Building. This is one of our ways to advocate for the mentally ill. Beside the tree are the NAMI Gwinnett brochures and the Community Help Booklets.

On November 27<sup>th</sup>, we need volunteers to help decorate the tree. Our tree is located on the second floor.

The tree must be removed on January 1, 2005. Again we need a few volunteers to help pack up our ornaments. These activities take about 1 to 1 ½ hours to complete. If you have taken the time to see the NAMI Gwinnett tree, please stop by the Justice and Administration Building during the holidays.

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## December Support Meeting

We are having a big gift wrapping party at the December Support meeting of the gifts for the consumers at the Day Treatment Center. **Please remember to bring tape and scissors!**

## Officers:

- Ted McVay, President
- Daryl Myers, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President/Program Chair
- Evelyn Triana, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President/Membership Chair
- Carol McEntee, Treasurer
- Sara Bums, Recording Secretary
- (Vacancy), Corresponding Secretary

## Directors:

- Bruce Beck
- Cynthia Collard
- Debbie Elrod
- Virginia McVay
- Debbie Taylor

## Moving:

To ensure that you continue to receive the National, State, and NAMI Gwinnett mailings, please notify us whenever you have a change of address.

NAMI Gwinnett  
P.O. Box 464053  
Lawrenceville, Georgia 30042-4053

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*Wishing everyone a happy and safe Holiday season*

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*NAMI Gwinnett Newsletter:*

*Articles furnished by: Sara Burns, Carol McEntee, Ted McVay, Virginia McVay, Debbie Taylor*

*Editors/Publishers: Carol McEntee, Debbie Taylor*

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**The Nation's Voice on  
Mental Illness**