



Newsletter

Volume 25, Issue 1

January 2007

Special points of interest:

- NAMI Walks
- Family to Family
- Advocacy
- CIT

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NAMI WALKS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ FOR THE MIND OF AMERICA

NAMIWALK 2006- Another Leap for the Gwinnett Steppers

The 2nd annual NAMIWALK Georgia was a success for the state and our affiliate. The weather was crisp and clear for us this year, and was enjoyed by everyone who participated. We came in 3rd place for funds



raised, which will be disbursed between NAMI National, Georgia, and NAMI Gwinnett. Our share

will be utilized for education and outreach programs, including the third

(Continued on page 3)



About Mental Illness

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Schizoaffective Disorder

Article from NAMI National's Website

What is Schizoaffective Disorder?

Some psychiatric disorders are very difficult to diagnose accurately. One of the

most confusing conditions is schizoaffective disorder.

This relatively rare disorder is defined as "the presence of psychotic symptoms in the absence of mood changes for at least two weeks in a patient who has a mood disorder." The

diagnosis is used when an individual does not fit diagnostic standards for either schizophrenia or "affective" (mood) disorders such as depression and bipolar disorder (manic depression).

Some people may have symptoms of both a depressive disorder

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Thanksgiving Luncheon



This year we had another great Thanksgiving Feast at Beacon Place/Five Points Center. For all who volunteered, I want to thank each and every one of you for taking time out in your busy schedule. It was such a blessing to be able to give up our time for such

great day. I would like to express a special thank you to my committee: Helen Barclay, Bonnie Griffin, Patsy Illick, Dottie Daniel and Kathy Tremble. A special thank you goes out to a last minute volunteer, Rita Scheidt, on helping with preparing the food. We had such a blast preparing the food, including watching Patsy stirring up the salad. She was really doing some stretching. Cindy Lee thank you for fixing the stuffing. It was so nice to have Eric Kristianson back this year with his music.

Penny C., Eric M, Evelyn W. From the center: We thank you for helping out on the serving line. Also Adelen T., Beverly B. & Lisa for helping set up.

We started off with the chicken dance; Diane you did a great job leading! Wayne, again thank you for the Karaoke. I do believe you and Jennifer could team up again next year. There were a lot of happy folks who received a gift for participating. Thank you to the following contributors to the dinner: Charles Beasley for turkeys, stuffing, sweet potatoes, and a great variety of cakes. Patsy Illick, for a cash donation. Tabernacle Church International for the use of their Kitchen and their huge oven.

NAMI Gwinnett says thank you to Robert Damron with Equipment Sales & Service for renting a van to store the tables and chairs during the rain so we could have them at the center on schedule.

A special thank you to Gary Lewis, owner of Lightning R. V. in Lawrenceville. He donated his tables and chairs, and even a large cooler. Also to Richard for his hard work on serving and helping me return the chairs and tables.

Meeting Street Ministries from Hartselle, Alabama did another great job on the table decorations.

Thank you for all the donation of pies, brownies and help from NAMI Gwinnett Board Members.

Article written by: Lois Damron



New Year, Fresh Start for Advocacy Committee

Are you looking for an opportunity to serve in the New Year within NAMI Gwinnett? Do you have a passion for educating people about the truths and dispelling the myths about mental health? We need your passion and talents in the Advocacy Committee! Formed in the beginning of 2006, the Advocacy Committee has spoken with local legislators, addressed congregations within the faith community, and participated in the CIT program. We look forward to continuing and growing in 2007. As the new Advocacy Committee Chair, I would like to address the membership, asking for your continued support of our efforts. Several Family-to-Family graduates have expressed an interest in the work of our committee. They need your encouragement and experience as long-time members. In the year 2007, I will be looking at changing the time and day of the meetings, so that more members can participate. Due to low attendance at the past several months' meetings, I feel that it is time to do so. Please feel free to address me with your ideas, suggestions, and concerns via e-mail at jengarrison1205@yahoo.com or call me at (770) 921-1961. We have an opportunity to start afresh in January 2007. Let's continue to serve our community through education, action, and most importantly, a united voice.

Article written by Jennifer Garrison, Correspondence Secretary and Advocacy Chair

(Continued from page 1)

edition of the Community Help Book and support for Crisis Intervention Training (CIT). We would like to extend appreciation to all who walked, donated, and gave of their time toward this fundraising effort. When we come together in unity, our voice becomes stronger.

NEW SUPPORT GROUPS!

We are excited to announce the addition of NAMI C.A.R.E. and NAMI Family Support Groups. Beginning January 2, 2007, we will begin to have Support Group Meetings EVERY TUESDAY NIGHT.

We look forward to growth in our NAMI C.A.R.E. and NAMI Family by offering these meetings EACH WEEK. There was always a lot of confusion and we had many people show up when we were not meeting and many people forgetting to come when we were having a meeting.

The facilitators are excited and see this as another positive way to help each other out and provide more services to the community. The people now attending the groups say it is a very positive influence in their life and we look forward to this change making way for more people being helped through NAMI Gwinnett.

See you on Tuesdays!

Article Written by Lori Wade

Newsletter Delay

I sincerely appreciate your patience for this newsletter. The delay has been due to my physical health. During my illness I have seen firsthand how the stress of my care has affected my husband who is bipolar and OCD. This is an area that we have had no previous experience with before. I personally did not realize the effect of added stress on my husband and how he depends on me for support. During my illness it was he who had to be care giver and the additional stress was noticeable. We have come very far in this issue, but I was not aware of the added stress my illness caused and my husband was not aware of what it meant to be the primary caregiver. Even though my illness was physical it can be said that changing places is difficult in a relationship. We now know what the other experiences on a daily basis. This is an issue with which one day each of you may experience. Thankfully this didn't affect my husband's stability adversely. Again thanks for your patience.

Article written by Debbie Taylor



The Nation's Voice on Mental Illness

We're on the web

www.nami.org/sites/namigwinnett

Single Point of Entry


**Georgia Crisis &
Access Line**

1-800-715-4225

Access mental health, addictive disease,
and crisis services 24/7

Online at mygcal.com



Sponsored by the
Georgia Department
of Human Resources 

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Daphne Nash

Diane Turman

Lori Wade

Vacancy

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 FAMILY-TO-FAMILY EDUCATION PROGRAM

FREE for family members, partners and friends

Of individuals with

Major Depression

Bipolar Disorder (Manic Depression)

Schizophrenia and Schizoaffective Disorder

Panic Disorder and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Co-occurring Brain Disorders and Addictive Disorders

A series of 12 classes structured to help caregivers understand and support individuals with serious mental illness while maintaining their own well being. The course is taught by a team of trained NAMI family member volunteers who know what it's like to have a loved one struggling with one of these brain disorders. There is no cost to participate in the NAMI Family-to-Family Education Program. Over 80,000 people in the U.S., Canada and Mexico have completed this course. We think you will be pleased by how much assistance the program offers. We invite you to call for more information.

Classes Start: Thursday, February 1, 2007

Lawrenceville Presbyterian Church

800 Lawrenceville Hwy

Lawrenceville, GA 30045

7:00 - 9:30 p.m.

Co-Teachers: Brenda Vinson, Carol McEntee, Debbie Taylor

(770-338-0468) (770-339-1149) (770-633-4012)

For caregivers only

Registration required.

Classes limited to 25 persons

This NAMI Family-to-Family Education

Program is sponsored by NAMI

Family to Family Graduates

I would like to congratulate the Family to Family fall class of 2006! It was a fun 12 weeks and everyone, as usual, learned a lot and we were like family by the time it was over. This was my first experience teaching the 12 week course and it was a pleasure. Everyone quickly got on board and were like sponges. Through the NAMI education book, guests/speakers and the experiences shared by others, not only did the class learn but so did I. We had a full class of 20 starting in August and finished with a strong 18 at the time of graduation. I am very proud to say that most of the graduating class have already found their spots in NAMI Gwinnett. They have been seen on hospitality committees, walking in the walk-a-thon, serving Thanksgiving dinners, on the advocacy committee, wrapping presents for the consumers of Gwinnett County, and last but not least running some of the Friday night support meetings! This says a lot about NAMI Gwinnett and the people we have as members. Again thank you for letting me serve NAMI Gwinnett and CONGRATS to the Fall class of Family to Family!



Class graduates: Bonnie Griffin, Eve Schoepf, Tracey Nesselrote, Becky Dalton, Helen Barclay, Shirley Haselow, Brenda Lee, Linda Kessler, Keith Kessler, Kathy Fritz, Kara Kessler, Jeff Pruitt, Marcia Pratt, Kathy Stewart, Nancy Mills, Charles Mills, Thelma Kramer, Miriam Ferguson.

Article Written by Diane Turman Family to Family Instructor, Director - NAMI Gwinnett

Alzheimer's – Safe Return

As a support family for people living with a mental illness, NAMI Gwinnett empathizes with people dealing with disorders affecting the brain. For this reason, we want to pass some life saving information about Alzheimer's. On the news, we heard about someone with Alzheimer's lost and their family desperately trying to locate them. Because of this situation, the Alzheimer's Association has a program called "Safe Return". They encourage families to register their loved ones who have Alzheimer's. This makes it easier in time of crisis.

If you or someone you know has a loved one with Alzheimer's, please pass this information to them. These phone numbers can truly be the difference between life and death.

Registration: 1-888-572-8566

Safe Return Crisis Line: 1-800-572-1122

Merry Christmas...and Good Will Towards Men!

To provide some Christmas cheer, NAMI Gwinnett's Christmas tradition includes giving gifts and goody bags to people who attend Beacon Place and Five Points Day Treatment Centers. This year we wrapped over 90 gifts. On December 11, several people met at my house to assemble the Christmas goody bags. These goody bags contain soap, shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste & brushes, combos, pens, pencils, paper, calendars, pocket size tissues, Q-tips packets, lip balm, and socks. For most of us, these are items that we take for granted. But when you have limited funds and don't have family to help furnish these personal care items, they can quickly become luxury items. Special thanks to Bee Hunt, Daryl and Lois Myers for helping me organize the items for the goody bag "assembly" party. Another "thank you" goes out to Bruce Bufano, Nancy Mills, Daryl Myers, Marcia Pratt, Debbie Taylor, and Diane Turman for assembling the goody bags and loading them into the cars for delivery to the day treatment centers.

The people who attend Beacon Place and Five Points look forward to their Christmas party and the gifts they receive from NAMI Gwinnett. For many of them, these gifts will be the only ones they will receive for Christmas. Therefore many wait to open their gift and goody bag on Christmas day.

This year I was invited to the Christmas party at Five Points. The party was to begin at 10:00. Everyone was too excited to wait and the party started earlier. Though I missed them opening their gifts, I did have the opportunity to see the happiness and Christmas joy on everyone's face. The smiles and hugs I received had me floating on clouds by the time I left the center. I don't recall ever witnessing such true appreciation as I did at their Christmas party.

Have you wondered why NAMI Gwinnett holds fund raisers? Hosting the Thanksgiving luncheon and providing Christmas for the day treatment centers are some of the activities made possible by fund raiser events such as the Bell South Classic. "Hats off" to everyone who volunteered for the 2006 Bell South Classic!!!! Because you dedicated your time to help, NAMI Gwinnett was able to make Thanksgiving and Christmas a special time for so many wonderful people.

I wish everyone a Happy and safe 2007!

Article written by Carol McEntee

Decorating of the Christmas Tree

One of our holiday traditions is decorating the NAMI Gwinnett Christmas tree at the Gwinnett Justice and Administrative Building. Besides just being a pretty decoration, our tree display includes our brochures and Community Help Booklet. The gifts include "Housing", "Education", "Medication", and "Understanding". This is another way for the public to learn about NAMI.

We would like to thank the following volunteers who were there for the lighting and decorating of the tree on November 25 Carol and Jim McEntee, Lois and Daryl Myers, Carol Murphy.

We would like to thank the following volunteers who were there for the taking down of the decorations and the tree on December 30th. Lois and Daryl Myers, Nancy and Charles Mills, Eric Spencer, Debbie Taylor.

Article written by: Debbie Taylor

C. I. T.

During the C.I.T. program, I have been very fortunate to speak to the police officers, and their related support personnel, from the consumers' point of view.

I have tried to give them, as best as I am able, an idea of what might occur in the mind of a person with a mental disorder during an encounter with Law Enforcement.

From the standpoint of the Bipolar, who might be so filled with anxiety and apprehension that they are actually too afraid to be approached by police officers in any circumstance; of the Schizophrenic, who cannot actually hear the police officers' commands, due to the voices they hear being much louder and stronger.

I have covered subjects such as the person who may be so deep in depression, they have no further will to live, and those persons who may be so aggressive, the police are forced to take measures to protect themselves, and their fellow officers.

I believe it is a privilege to address these officers. The ones willing to take time to learn about persons who may not be in control of themselves. I am deeply grateful for them in doing this.

I also tell them that they may have to deal with family members, mental health, and Emergency Room professionals, but the bottom line is that they are learning this for me, and those like me. This is what C.I.T. is designed around. Those with disorders. For without us, there would be no need to come in contact with the others named above.

I ask all of you to please try and attend one of the C.I.T. sessions if at all possible. See what a difference this wonderful program is making in all of our lives.

Article Written by Wayne Taylor

CIT branches out into our public schools

The GBI and our very own NAMI Gwinnett President, Eric Spencer attended a meeting at Gwinnett County's Superintendent's Office the 18th of December. This meeting was scheduled to introduce the CIT Program to the Gwinnett County School System with focus on School Resource Officers (SRO's), Administrators, and Special Education Teachers. It was explained to Assistant Superintendent Crowson that CIT was flexible and can be tailored to address school system issues. He expressed tremendous interest, and suggested that their greatest difficulty would be in selecting which group gets trained first. We look forward to hearing back from the school system to discuss a prioritized training schedule.

Article Written by Daryl Meyers

From the President's Desk

On the NAMI website, our mission is described as *“Dedicated NAMI members, leaders, and friends work tirelessly across all levels to meet a shared NAMI mission of support, education, and advocacy”*. Support, Education, Advocacy. Again and again, you see these three fundamental areas, and significantly, in that order. NAMI describes it as the *“evolution from support to education to advocacy [which] can take a few months or a few years, depending on the member and the circumstances. The healthiest affiliates have members at all three stages at all times.”*

NAMI Gwinnett, in partnership with NAMI Georgia, is expanding our Support role. While many of our activities have been called support, they have really been education and advocacy. These activities have been at the core of NAMI Gwinnett and NAMI Georgia. These activities will remain as significant parts our affiliate's and state organization's mission. Expanding the Support programs will increase our effectiveness in these and all other areas. By expanding this vital 'front-end' component, we will increase both our membership and community awareness, key ingredients to successful advocacy efforts.

Ahead of us in this area is Massachusetts. Claire Boudreau is the coordinator for the NAMI Support Group Facilitator Skills Training and NAMI-CARE (Support group facilitation training for consumer peers) programs in Massachusetts. She believes these programs have increased the awareness about mental illness in the community because it helps family members find a voice with lawmakers and doctors, as well as their own families and acquaintances. Through this program, family members are able to advocate better for their loved ones, and they learn that their feelings and thoughts are normal. Most importantly, they realize that others share their feelings. Family members are able to receive information about NAMI education courses as well as other valuable local resources on mental illnesses through the support groups.

The NAMI Support Group model differs from the more traditional “share-and-care” model in that it offers an innovative set of group structures and processes specifically designed to help facilitators in their support work with caregivers dealing with mental illness. These various procedures come with clear guidelines and when used together, they encourage full-group participation which results in upbeat, constructive support group meetings. Both seasoned and less experienced facilitators have found these new methods easy to learn and a joy to utilize because they steer the group process through many problematic situations, which commonly undermine support group effectiveness. This Support Group Facilitator Skills Training model is being run in 37 states. Claire says the key to success is recruiting and training facilitators by educating the affiliates officers and their members of the benefits of this type of support group format.

NAMI Massachusetts has several goals for the Support Group Facilitator Skills Training

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and schizophrenia at the same time, or they may have symptoms of schizophrenia without mood symptoms.

Many individuals with schizoaffective disorder are originally diagnosed with manic depression. If the person experiences delusions or hallucinations that go away in less than two weeks when the mood is "normal," bipolar disorder may be the proper diagnosis. Someone who experiences psychosis for three or four weeks while in a manic phase does not have schizoaffective disorder.

However, if delusions or hallucinations continue after the mood has stabilized and are accompanied by other symptoms of schizophrenia such as catatonia, paranoia, bizarre behavior, or thought disorders, a diagnosis of schizoaffective disorder may be appropriate. Accurate diagnosis is easier once the acute psychotic episode is under control.

Distinguishing between bipolar disorder and schizophrenia can be particularly difficult in an adolescent, since at that age psychotic features are especially common during manic periods.

Because schizoaffective disorder is so complicated, misdiagnosis is common. Some people may be misdiagnosed as having schizophrenia. Others may be misdiagnosed as having bipolar disorder. And those diagnosed as having schizoaffective disorder may actually have schizophrenia with prominent mood symptoms. Or they may have a mood disorder with symptoms similar to those of schizophrenia.

What is the treatment for this disorder?

Psychiatrists often treat this disorder with an anti-psychotic medication and lithium, or with carbamazepine (an anticonvulsant medication) and lithium.

As a practical matter, differentiating between schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and schizoaffective disorder is not absolutely critical, since antipsychotic medication is recommended for all three. If a mood problem is suspected, lithium or an antidepressant should be added.

What is the prognosis for those with this disorder?

The prognosis for individuals diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder is generally better than for those diagnosed with schizophrenia, but not quite as good for those diagnosed with a mood disorder. (Schizophrenia is a chronic brain disorder interfering with a person's ability to think clearly, manage emotions, make decisions, and relate to others. Persons with schizophrenia may experience hallucinations and delusions. Mood disorders, including depression and bipolar disorder, are chronic illnesses in which the person's mood may return to "normal" between depressive or manic episodes.) Those with schizoaffective disorder generally respond to lithium better than those with schizophrenia, but not as well as those with mood disorders.

More research is needed to fully understand this illness and why it resists conventional treatment. New medications may be developed to treat this disorder more effectively.

Further information:

Overcoming Depression by Dimitri F. Papolos, M.D. and Janice Papolos

Manic Depressive Illness by Frederick K. Goodwin, M.D. and Kay Redfield Jamison, Ph.D.

Reviewed by Elliot Gershon, M.D., Chief, Neurogenetics Branch, NIMH

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program in 2007. They want to expand the program into more of the local and smaller affiliates. NAMI Massachusetts's long-term goal is to have a weekly support group in every affiliate. Currently, they have three out of 25 local affiliates running a weekly support group. In January 2007, NAMI Gwinnett will begin weekly Support Meetings. Other Affiliates in Georgia have also begun to expand their Support Group Programs. NAMI Georgia is developing its long term plan for Support Groups.

Claire Boudreau (NAMI Mass.) has been with the program since it started. She is a family member and consumer and has trained 120 facilitators of which an approximated 100 are still active. Last year alone, 20 facilitators were trained. When Claire was asked about the Support Group Facilitator Skills Training program's effect on others, she stated "I personally feel that support groups are the backbone of NAMI. Education courses are excellent, but they only last 12 weeks whereas the support groups run year-round. Support groups are the entrance for many to NAMI."

Most of NAMI Gwinnett's newer members have come in through the support groups. The support groups have also increased member retention. These two factors have contributed significantly to NAMI Gwinnett's growth over the last year. We need to sustain this growth, but we need help. At the core of a support meeting is the sharing of experience, strength and hope. If only those in crisis attend the support meetings, where will the experience and hope come from? Many of our veteran members have made NAMI their home without a significant Support Group role in their experience. They may not feel a personal need for a Support Group meeting, but NAMI Gwinnett needs them. If each member could attend at least one Support Group meeting each month, the amount of shared experience we can offer to those in need would be astounding. Will you be a part of this? The Support Group Facilitators of NAMI Gwinnett and NAMI Georgia challenge all members, both new and veteran, to attend a few Support meetings, to see this new format, and share with our fellow members.

Article Written by Eric Spencer, President NAMI Gwinnett

Facilitator Training
Family Support Group Facilitators
and
NAMI C.A.R.E. Facilitators

January 26 – 28, 2007

Alcovy River Training Center

1600 Alcovy River Drive

Dacula, GA 30019

If you are interested in being trained to become a facilitator Please call:

Lori Spencer at 404-542-2795 (Family)

Lori Wade at 678-516-6116 (C.A.R.E)

2007 Membership and/or Donation Form

Sign up for:

- Individual/family Annual Membership \$28.00
- I am unable to pay—please waive \$00.00
- Donation

Method of Payment

- Check
- Cash

Name _____
 Address _____

 Phone _____
 Email _____



Become a Member of NAMI Gwinnett

Memberships are available for Individual/Family or Consumers. Additionally, donations are accepted. Donations are tax deductible. If you prefer, donations and support are accepted on a non-membership basis.

Thank you for your interest and support.

NAMI Gwinnett is a family based, grassroots, self-help and advocacy organization, dedicated to improving the lives of people with severe mental illness.

An affiliate of NAMI and NAMI Georgia

Building a better future for people with mental illness.

NAMI GWINNETT

P.O. Box 464053
 Lawrenceville, GA 30042-4053

SAVE THE DAY
 Hope to see you there!



The Nation's Voice on Mental Illness

January 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 Speaker	3	4 Safe	5 SAFE/ SAFE F&F	6
7	8	9 Support/ BOD	10	11 Safe	12 SAFE/ SAFE F&F	13
14	15	16 Support	17	18 Safe	19 SAFE/ SAFE F&F	20
21	22	23 Support	24	25 Safe	26 SAFE/ SAFE F&F/ Training	27 Training
28 Training	29	30 Support	31			

February 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 SAFE/ F2F	2 SAFE/ SAFE F&F	3
4	5	6 Support	7	8 SAFE/ F2F	9 SAFE/ SAFE F&F	10
11	12	13 Support	14	15 SAFE/ F2F	16 SAFE/ SAFE F&F	17
18	19	20 Support	21	22 SAFE/ F2F	23 SAFE/ SAFE F&F	24
25	26	27 Support	28			

March 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 SAFE/ F2F	2 SAFE/ SAFE F&F	3
4	5	6 Speaker	7	8 SAFE/ F2F	9 SAFE/ SAFE F&F	10
11	12	13 Support- BOD	14	15 SAFE/ F2F	16 SAFE/ SAFE F&F	17
18	19	20 Support	21	22 SAFE/ F2F	23 SAFE/ SAFE F&F	24
25	26	27 Support	28	29 SAFE/ F2F	30 SAFE/ SAFE F&F	31

Schedule of Events

☪

Speaker Meetings

January 2nd

7:30pm

TBA

March 6

7:30pm

TBA

Deli Meal at 7pm before meeting

☪

Support Meetings

NAMI C.A.R.E. and NAMI Family Support

Every Tuesday

***Deli Meal at 7pm before meeting

On the First Tuesday of the Month***

☪

SAFE

"Survivors Achieving Functional Equilibrium "

Thursdays and Fridays

8:00pm

☪

SAFE Family and Friends

"Step Based Support"

Fridays

8:00pm

☪

BOD

January 9

March 13

7:00pm

☪

Facilitator Training

NAMI CARE and Family Support Group

January 26-28

☪

Family to Family Class

February 1– April 19

Thursdays

7:00pm-9:30pm

☪

NAMI GWINNETT

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Editor/Publisher: Debbie Taylor

This newsletter published quarterly by the 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: debtay16@bellsouth.net or mail to: Newsletter, NAMI Gwinnett, P.O. Box 464053, Lawrenceville, Georgia 30042