



NAMI Ventura County

Ventura County's Voice on Mental Illness

Newsletter

April 2007

GENERAL MEETING

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

7:00 P.M., Tuesday, April 10, 2007
Special Needs Housing in Ventura County

Guest speakers:

Rick Schroeder - Many Mansions
Carolyn Briggs - Behavioral Health Department
Ed Moses - Area Housing Authority

FAMILY-TO-FAMILY

INFORMATION – INSIGHT – UNDERSTANDING –
EMPOWERMENT

NEW CLASS BEGINS MARCH 21, 6:30-9:00 P.M.
12 WEDNESDAYS

LOCATION: Conejo Valley Mental Health Clinic,
72 Moody Court, Thousand Oaks

TO REGISTER OR FOR MORE INFO:

E-MAIL: namiventura@gmail.com **OR**

PHONE: (805) 641-2426❖

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GENERAL MEETING

Two hours was too short a time for Deputy Director of Behavioral Health Meloney Roy to respond to all the NAMI members' questions at the general meeting on March 13, but she encouraged those gathered to continue in the stakeholder process: "We need you. We need your questions," she said.



With her recent promotion to Deputy Director from Children's Services, Roy acknowledged she is still in a learning process with Adult Services, but most of the upcoming expanded Proposition 63 funds are planned for implementation in the Adult Services sector. At the Deputy Director's request, seating at the general meeting was rearranged in a semi-circle to reflect the changing relationship between service providers and consumers/client families within the county. Rather than a dividing-line relationship, this new process will focus on collaboration and partnership, symbolized by the Circle of Care program name.

Roy and Proposition 63 Coordinator Susan Kelly provided all those attending with a Mental Health Services Act program update. In the Adult Services area, the Full Service Partnership continues in the search for personnel as a jail-based assessor. The Mobile Crisis Services team was implemented in West County in October and East County in December. The Adult Crisis Residential program is at a standstill, despite a county-wide real estate search effort by Telecare to identify a facility for the program. The Outreach and Engagement, Wellness Recovery Center, has been identified and secured. Refurbishment of the facility is underway and Pacific Clinics is looking at an opening day in May.



The difficulty in identifying and procuring real estate in the County for those individuals in mental health crisis, both short term (24-48 hr) and long term, and the continuing need for graduated treatment/housing for those with co-occurring disorders prompted several, if not the majority of questions from the audience. Also questioned was the concentration of services in West County (24-hour crisis response) and East County (12-hour crisis response), and the minimal services in Simi Valley, particularly (especially since this geographic area has seen a tremendous growth in population in the last five years).

Several members of the Behavioral Health Administrative Team were in attendance, including Barbara Kellner and Dr. Linda Gertson. ❖

MEET THE BOARD OF NAMI VENTURA COUNTY

(Sally Kosoff is a Board Member and the Corresponding Secretary)



My life as a mother of three (two teenagers and one in elementary school), and owner of a family business was quite challenging, but never impossible. That all changed in 1996 when a close family member was diagnosed with major mental illness. The following three or four years were a blur of disbelief mixed with chaos.

despair, denial and feeling convinced that things would never be right again. I only had a small inkling of hope that we would ever be out of the “craziness” that had taken over our lives. The sense of loss was overwhelming.

My family and I turned out to be very lucky in the sense that our loved one gradually responded to medication and care and returned to school and eventually work

and social life after a couple of years of hard work. I feel almost as if we have dodged a speeding bullet, although there have been relapses and setbacks along the way. As everybody knows who is familiar with major mental illness, you are never totally out of the woods. When things were at their worst and I was trying anything and everything, I tried prayer. I promised God that if he helped me that I would give back to others. Being involved with NAMI is my way of fulfilling my part of that promise.

I got involved with NAMI about six years ago when I started going to the “share and care” meetings and the general meetings. I was coming out of my own depression and had to be coaxed into participating. I was lucky to get phone calls encouraging me to come. The group was warm and sympathetic and I got good information. I took the Family to Family class shortly after and realized how “normal” my reactions to my situation were. All that guilt that I had heaped on myself when things were bad was really not necessary, but others had experienced that too. I now teach Family to Family and know that it gives emotional support and information to those in the class. I am amazed at the resilience and strength of family members, both well and ill. Knowing you are not alone really helps.

I think that advocacy for NAMI helps others and has helped me. I feel a sense of pride that I can do something even though at times it doesn't seem like enough. So many loved ones are not able to reach the level of recovery that my family has experienced, leading to heartbreaking circumstances, both on a personal and societal level. Many people need ongoing services for much of their lives and there are so many areas that need improvement. Areas of concern for me include supported housing, change in the judicial system to get more mental health courts and ongoing research for better medications and treatment systems. I am proud of California, too, for having the foresight to pass Proposition 63 so we can get more funding and better programs for those with major mental illness.

I don't consider myself an optimist, but more of a realist. I do believe we, as a NAMI group, can accomplish a lot if we work hard together and cooperate for the betterment of the lives of those with major mental illness. I've already seen progress and I'm sure with our advocacy efforts, we will see even more. ❖

CCJ PROJECT DRAWS 7 COUNTIES

Over 300 representatives from law enforcement, the judicial system and NAMI members from seven

counties gathered on Wednesday, February 28, 2007, at the Center at Cathedral Plaza in Los Angeles with the goal of improving treatment of the mentally ill in our law enforcement and judicial systems.

Presenters were experts in their field and ranged from Jessica Whalen, New York's Director of Assisted Outpatient Treatment, to Lieutenant Rick Wall, from LAPD's Crisis Response Support Section. Dr. Stephen Mayberg, Director of the California State Department of Mental Health answered questions from the audience, while Judge Stephen V. Manley encouraged the audience to fight for Proposition 63 funds (see separate article).

Topics presented at the day-long meeting were PERT (Psychiatric Emergency Response Team), Kendra's Law, CAMP (Case Assessment and Management Program), CIT (Crisis Intervention Team), Prop 63, Mental Health Court, and Comprehensive Jail and Post Custody Services. After the presentations, break-out groups met to continue the discussion in smaller group settings. Finally, each of the seven counties met in workshops to decide if there were services needed in their county, and if so, what services they would work to implement. Dates for regional county meetings were set and workshop leaders gave their reports at the end of the day.

Lt. Wall began his presentation with the observation that there are only 2,346 psychiatric beds in the Los Angeles County mental health system, which would leave few or none for the approximately 1000 inmates with chronic mental illness in the Los Angeles County jail. He described their MEU database, an expanded field interview card, which contains information from every mental health encounter. This database also contains a bank of resources for special language needs.

Ventura County's own Joyce Wilde, Program Administrator and Sergeant Mark Stadler of the Ventura Police Department, gave an excellent presentation of Crisis Intervention Training and its effectiveness in Ventura County. The CIT program is sponsored through a collaboration of the City of Ventura Police Department, the Oxnard Police Department, Port Hueneme Police Department, Simi Valley Police Department, Santa Paula Police Department and the Ventura County Sheriff's Department.

Ventura County NAMI members attending were Ratan Bhavnani, Sally Kosoff, Candace Jackson and Margaret Yun.❖

JUDGE URGES GENTLENESS

"We must build hope." "Less confrontation/more

gentleness." "Patience, patience, patience!" In a support group, these words of encouragement might be expected; coming from a judge, in a courtroom setting, such unexpected compassion moved many NAMI members to grateful tears. The setting was the Criminal Justice Collaboration Project and the 300 police officers, judges, attorneys, and family members had just seen a 10-minute video presented by Judge Stephen V. Manley, which documented the proceedings in Judge Manley's Mental Health Treatment Court.

The Judge's empathy and passionate advocacy on behalf of the mentally ill and dually diagnosed evoked a standing ovation from the crowd. Manley began by citing 2006 figures published by the Bureau of Justice: 60% of all jail inmates had symptoms of a serious mental health disorder and 49% of all state prisoners had symptoms of a serious mental health disorder. Among inmates with a mental health problem, local jail inmates had the highest rate of dependence or abuse of alcohol or drugs – 76%.

Judge Manley went on to describe why both the mental health systems and the court systems are not working for these defendants. According to the State Justice Institute, hospital commitments for treatment do not result in ongoing treatment, competency statues usually result in defendants standing trial in spite of their impairment and the majority of mentally ill defendants receive no special treatment from the Courts.

Manley advocates a team approach and advises judges to "Confront the stigma, build hope, engage the defendant, build trust, and learn new techniques of communication."

Furthermore, regions must "insist that the Court and Criminal Justice Stakeholders, including the Presiding Judge, Sheriff, District Attorney, Public Defender, Probation and Law Enforcement get to the Proposition 63 table and stay there!" Mental health defendants need to be encouraged to stay in treatment and take medications. Stable housing is a requirement for making the mental health court work. Jail should only be used to detox, stabilize and start over.❖

'60 MINUTES' REPORT SPURS OUTRAGE

The videotaped dehydration-caused death of Timothy Souders was the subject of a "60 Minutes" investigative report in early February. The videotaped chronicle of the four days in solitary confinement that ended in the death of the 21-year-

old mentally ill inmate of Southern Michigan Correctional Center prompted responses of outrage from NAMI members and reminded the public, once again, of the horrific consequences of jail or prison as a treatment modality for mentally ill offenders.

Prison officials had turned off the water in Souders' cell and placed him in "top of bed" restraints. The videotapes show his slow decline over the next four days. After Souders' death, federal Judge Richard Enslen, who oversees the prison, wrote that prisoners are at risk of an "unauthorized death penalty at the hands of a callous and dysfunctional health care system that regularly fails to treat life-threatening illness."

Souders suffered from bipolar disorder and according to Souders' mother, her son's troubles began when he was trying to get money to pay his rent so that he wouldn't be evicted – "he had gotten to the point where his thinking wasn't straight". He threatened two employees of a paintball store with a pocket knife, and received a 3-5 year prison sentence. In jail, Souder tried to commit suicide three times.

In response to the "60 Minutes" report, the American Psychological Association issued a statement noting that the rate of mental illness in prisons is three times higher than in the general population. Almost 1 million people with serious mental illnesses are jailed each year. According to the Mental Health Report in 1999, the Surgeon General advocated for better mental health services for the incarcerated, more supportive transitional strategies, and better post-incarceration services. ❖

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: Currently there is no support group in Ventura; however, plans are underway to reconvene this group at a new time and location. Once the new time and place have been determined, we'll include the information in this newsletter.

Thousand Oaks:

HUGS (Heads Up Group Support) - Support group for traumatic brain injury and its effects meets 2nd Thursday, 6:30-8 p.m. in Behavioral Health Training Room, 72 Moody Court, Thousand Oaks.

HUGS also meets 4th Thursday, 11:30 for brunch at Eggs 'N Things. For more information call Veronica (805) 498-6851

Mood Disorder Support Group – Meets 2nd and 4th Tuesday, 6:30-8 p.m. in Behavioral Health Training Room, 72 Moody Court, Thousand Oaks
Info: (805) 777-3500 ❖

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 T.O. (Mental Health Adult Services Center). Info: Irene King (805) 495-5031 or Kathleen Furness (818) 865-1558.

NAMI in Ventura – Meets at 6:30 pm, the 3rd Tuesday of each month at Ventura Missionary Church, Room 502-Upper. Info: Debbie Hurt (805) 660-1755. ❖



LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS – HOW ABOUT YOU?

They say the best way to make yourself feel better is to help someone else and NAMI Ventura County needs your help. We have lots of volunteer opportunities available – from "one time only" slots to monthly ongoing needs. A few of our volunteer opportunities are listed below. If you can fill one of these volunteer positions, please call our NAMI number (805) 641-2426 and let us know which slots you'd like to fill.

Adopt-a-Family-to-Family Night: Both our Ventura and Westlake Village Family-to-Family classes need someone to arrive ½ hour early and make coffee for the group, stay for the class (mingle with new F2F participants), and put the coffee supplies away. In total, this is about a 4-hour commitment. Can you do this for one class? If you say "yes", please call (805) 641-2426 and tell us which class you'd like to "adopt" for a night.

Outreach volunteer: The purpose of the outreach volunteer is to help make NAMI's presence known in your community. We need one person for East County and one person for West County to distribute flyers and brochures at doctors' offices, clinics, schools, colleges and faith communities. This would take about 2-3 hours and it is a one-time-only slot.

Staffing NAMI office: NAMI's new office will need someone to respond to walk-ins, provide information on NAMI programs, arrange brochures, flyers, and supply clerical support to NAMI Board and staff. We need

someone from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. on either a Mon., Tue. Wed., Thurs., or Fri. This can be a one-time-only or an ongoing commitment. ❖

E-SCRIP REMINDER!

Register your Von's, Pavilion's, Macy's, American Express and Visa card with E-Scrip and NAMI-Ventura County will benefit.

Just go to www.escrip.com, enter the N.A.M.I. group number: **5564290** and follow the simple steps to register your grocery cards, credit/debit cards, and store purchase cards.

Here's how it works:

1. You register any one or all of your existing grocery, debit and credit cards for use in the program.
2. Participating merchants will make contributions to your chosen group, based on purchases made by you, just by using the cards you have registered.

3. Your purchases are tracked and available to you online, allowing you to see just how much you are earning on our behalf. ❖

RALPH'S CONTRIBUTES TO COMMUNITY

NAMI Ventura County has a new Ralph's NPO number: 81209. For those of you with the old NPO number, please re-register under the new number. For those new to this program, just by registering your Ralph's Club Card, NAMI can earn up to 4% of your purchase each month.

Just go online at www.ralphs.com, click on community programs, then click on participant and follow the simple instructions to register your Ralph's Club Card. The NAMI NPO # is 81209. Be sure to have your Ralph's Club Card handy so you can enter its number into the online system.

For each card's monthly purchase up to \$200, NAMI receives 1%; \$200.01 to \$350, NAMI receives 2%, \$350.01 to \$500, NAMI receives 3% and over \$500 NAMI receives 4%. ❖

2007 NAMI Walk Annual Kick-Off Luncheon





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NAMI WALKS 2007 KICKS OFF!!

Ventura County's NAMI WALKS FOR THE MIND OF AMERICA 2007 Kick-Off Luncheon was held on March 23, 2007, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. The luncheon was attended by walkers, sponsors, walk team captains and volunteers.

SIGN UP NOW!!!

Become a team captain! Join a team! Donate on-line!

Register on-line: www.namiventura.org
(click on the Namiwalks logo)

WALK DETAILS

WHEN: SATURDAY, MAY 12, 2007

**WHERE: VENTURA BEACH PROMENADE
(BETWEEN CROWNE PLAZA &
ALOHA STEAKHOUSE)**

CHECK-IN: 9 A.M., WALK STARTS 10:30 A.M.

For sponsorship packets or donations, contact:

Debbie Hurt, Walk Manager

(805) 641-2426

Cell: (805) 660-1755

SUPPORT NEEDED TO END DISCRIMINATION IN MEDICAID!

Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D – Texas) has introduced a bill, HR 1155, to repeal the current prohibition on the use of Federal Medicaid dollars to pay for services for individuals between the ages of 22 and 64 in private and public inpatient psychiatric treatment facilities. If enacted, HR1155 would be extremely helpful both in addressing the ongoing crisis in inpatient services for people with severe mental illness and potentially expanding the availability of community-based services for these individuals. HR 1155 has been referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee for consideration. We urge you to write to your Representative and urge his support by co-sponsoring HR 1155.

For Ventura and Santa Barbara counties, contact Representative Elton Gallegly, 2829 Townsgate Road, Suite 315, Thousand Oaks, CA 91361; phone (805) 497-2224 or Toll Free (800) 423-0023; fax (805) 497-0039.

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

NAMI Ventura County Contact Information

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 25510, Ventura, CA 93002

Phone: (805) 641-2426

E-mail: namiventura@gmail.com

Website: www.namiventura.org

2007 Board of Directors

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Vice President	Candace Jackson
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Special Events	Sharon Robinson
Advocacy	Pat Russell

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Sonna Gray
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NAMI Ventura County Membership Application 2007

Please fill out the form completely, and mail with check payable to:

NAMI Ventura County, P.O. Box 25510, Ventura, CA 93002-5511

Check One: _____ New Member _____ Renewal Date _____

Memberships: (Check those that apply)

_____ Newsletter only (\$15)
 _____ Single (\$30)*
 _____ Family (\$40)*
 _____ Silver (\$50)*
 _____ Gold (\$100)*
 _____ Donation Amount
 _____ Total Enclosed

Name(s) _____

Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ E-mail _____

*A portion of your membership dues (\$20) is sent to NAMI National and NAMI California.

*Dues and donations to NAMI Ventura County are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

We are always in need of volunteers. Please mark the activities in which you would like to participate:

- NAMI Office Work Support Groups Family-to-Family Fundraising
- Legislation Membership Hospitality Publicity Speakers Bureau
- Newsletter Other

Non-Profit Org
US Postage
PAID
Oxnard, CA
Permit No. 00280

NAMI Ventura County
P.O. Box 25510
Ventura, CA 93002-5510
Address Service Requested

Walkers With The Dawn by Langston Hughes

Being walkers with the dawn and morning,
Walkers with the sun and morning,
We are not afraid of night,
Nor days of gloom,
Nor darkness--
Being walkers with the sun and morning.

**SAVE THE DATE – MAY 12, 2007
VENTURA COUNTY NAMIWALKS
WALKS FOR THE MIND OF AMERICA**

**TO DONATE ON-LINE, REGISTER FOR THE WALK, START A TEAM OR LEARN
MORE ABOUT THE WALK, LOG ONTO WWW.NAMIVENTURA.ORG AND CLICK
ON THE LEFT-SIDE COLUMN – SIGN UP NAMIWALKS VENTURA COUNTY.**