



# NAMI Ventura County

Ventura County's Voice on Mental Illness

Newsletter

February 2007

## GENERAL MEETING

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

**7:00 P.M.**  
**Tuesday, February 13, 2007**

**Kevin J. Staker, Esq.**

### "Special Needs Trusts with Living Trusts"

An important educational session on Estate Planning,  
for families of those affected by mental illness.

Mr. Staker is an attorney, certified as a specialist in  
estate planning and taxation law. ❖

### *THERE'S STILL TIME!!*

There's still time to enroll in the two newest Family-to-Family  
classes. To register or for more information, please call  
(805) 641-2426 or e-mail [namiventura@gmail.com](mailto:namiventura@gmail.com).

Class 1: Wednesdays, beginning January 24, 2007  
6:30 – 9:00 p.m.  
Community Memorial Hospital  
Ventura, CA

Class 2: Thursdays, beginning January 25, 2007  
6:30 – 9:00 p.m.  
Calvary Community Church  
Westlake Village, CA ❖

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## Message From the President

Five years ago, my wife Nina and I were confused and lost, confronted with a problem we were totally unprepared to deal with, the mental illness of our son. Someone told us about NAMI and we began a journey that continues each day. It is a journey of Recovery for our loved one and the opportunity to help other families.



I am honored to serve you for a second year. I pledge to be an advocate for the recovery, respect and healing we all deserve. Our Board, which consists of about 12 active members, is a terrific team to guide the direction of NAMI Ventura County, and it is a pleasure to work with them.

This year will be another year of growth and opportunity for NAMI Ventura. As funds from Prop 63 (Mental Health Services Act) flow into the County system and new projects are started, this presents new challenges for NAMI. One such project is NAMI's Provider Education Program.

This is a 10-week training course that presents a penetrating, subjective view of family and consumer experiences with serious mental illness, to line staff at public agencies who work directly with people with severe and persistent mental illnesses. The course helps providers realize the hardships that families and consumers face and appreciate the courage and persistence it takes to live with and recover from mental illness.

There are about 14,000 families in Ventura County who are affected by mental illness, which means there are many families just like yours who are struggling; alone, confused, angry and desperate for help. I believe that we have an obligation to seek them out and share what we have found here. We hope to expand our Family to Family and our Care & Share programs. There continues to be a demand for more consumer directed programs. We are in the process of obtaining an office space to better organize and centralize our activities.

To do all this we need your help. In 2007 you will be given opportunities to volunteer and work with us to achieve our goals. If you believe in us, we need you. If you can spare only an hour or two, we need you. If you would like to become much more involved and teach a class or lead a group, we need you too. Join with us. With your help, NAMI can accomplish great things.

Regards,  
Ratan Bhavnani ❖

## **VENTURA GETS FULL \$1 MILLION FOR MENTAL HEALTH COURT**

Ventura County was awarded \$1 million from the Mentally Ill Offender Crime Reduction initiative to establish a mentally ill offender court in Ventura County. Representatives from the County Probation Agency, Public Defender's Office, District Attorney's office, Behavioral Health Department, Sheriff's Department, Superior Court and NAMI are beginning meetings to work out the nuts and bolts of how this program will operate. Members of the Ventura County Mentally Ill Offender Crime Reduction Strategy Committee are: Judge Brian Back, Ventura County Superior Court, Cal Remington, Chief Probation Officer of Ventura County, Linda Shulman, Director of the Behavioral Health Department, Public Defender Kenneth Clayman, Oxnard Chief of Police John Crombach, Assistant District Attorney James Ellison, Assistance Chief of Police for the City of Ventura Skip Young, and Ratan Bhavnani, President of NAMI Ventura County.

Last month's newsletter detailed the referral system and eligibility criteria for the program. At the first meeting of the group since being awarded the grant, it was noted that both mental health professionals and justice system workers need to establish a common ground of vocabulary and mutual understanding of how to interact with the mentally ill individual.❖

### **2007 NAMI NATIONAL CONVENTION – SAN DIEGO! HERE WE COME!!**

The 2007 Annual NAMI Convention will be held at the Town and Country Resort in San Diego, CA, June 20-24, 2006.

Both NAMI members and non-members are encouraged to attend the convention. NAMI is the nation's largest and most influential grassroots advocacy group working on behalf of consumers and families. Whether or not you are a member of NAMI, you will benefit from the information offered at the convention, as well as the chance to network with some of the most savvy mental health advocates in the nation.

Go to NAMI National's web site at [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org) and on the left side menu click on 2007 NAMI national convention. If you're a first-time attendee, check out "For First Time Attendees" and "Frequently Asked Questions" for answers to questions like, "What does my registration fee include?" "What's the program schedule?" "What hotel is NAMI using and how much does it cost?"

For those of you who have attended the California state convention and been impressed by the information and workshops there, this national convention which is almost at our doorstep (next year it's in Florida!) is a rare opportunity that you won't want to miss.❖

## **10-YEAR STRATEGY TO END HOMELESSNESS**

Ongoing meetings continue to develop strategies for implementing Ventura County's 10-year plan to end homelessness. After a well-attended conference attended by a broad spectrum of county representatives on December 11, the Ventura County Star ran a comprehensive article on December 12. Some of the recommendations in the draft strategy were: 1. Homeless Prevention Program. 2. Permanent Affordable Housing. 3. Housing Trust Fund. 4. Inclusionary Housing Policy. 5. Permanent Supportive Housing. 6. Assertive Community Treatment. 7. Discharge Planning. 8. Mainstream Resources. 9. Shelter Beds. 10. Transitional Housing. 11. Homeless Management Information System. 12. Community Education Campaign. 13. Faith-Based Coordinating Body. 14. Private Foundation Grants. 15. Public Agency Grants. 16. Annual Special Events. 17. Dedicated Sources of Funding. 18. Interagency Council on Homelessness for Ventura County. 19. Ventura County Homeless and Housing Coalition. 20. Homelessness 101 Training. The plan itself was developed by a working group consisting of representatives from public and private organizations who have been meeting on a monthly basis in order to obtain community input into the strategy. The plan consists of seven sections: 1) Establishing the Community's Commitment. 2) Adopting "Guiding Principles". 3) Determining the number of Persons to be Served. 4) Recommending Service and Housing Needs. 5) Developing Community Involvement. 6) Funding the Strategy, and 7) Implementing and Measuring Performance. There is an additional section that addresses "community issues" – such concerns that mainly involve activities by homeless persons which are related to law enforcement, parks and libraries.

The initial goal is to reduce homelessness within the county by 50% during the first five years (2008-2012) of implementation.❖

## **COUNTY SHOULD EXTEND USE OF 300 HILLMONT BUILDING**

Opposition to the plan for demolition of the Behavioral Health Building in Ventura has been strongly expressed by several NAMI members on grounds that its destruction would be wasteful of a valuable resource. The building was designed and built specifically to care for clients returning to the community from state hospitals. It is barely 30 years old, and the plan for destruction flies in the face of a critical and long-standing need for more resources.

The firmness of the decision and timeline for destruction are not yet known, and no public announcement has been made giving opportunity for citizen comment.

Also opposed is the plan to build a parking structure on the building's site just steps away from the Hillmont House residential facility that is home to fifteen clients, and was only recently remodeled and occupied. An extension of the Hillmont House program is but one possibility for the building's use. There are alternative sites for a parking structure. "A bird in the hand is better than a bird in the bush." ❖

## **INVEGA Approved By FDA As New Treatment For Schizophrenia**

### **First Oral Extended Release Medication to Treat Schizophrenia**

**From PR Newswire by Staff writer, December 20, 2006**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved INVEGA(TM) (paliperidone) Extended-Release Tablets, a new atypical antipsychotic, for the treatment of schizophrenia. The once-daily oral medication is specifically designed to deliver paliperidone -- the active ingredient derived from risperidone -- through the innovative OROS(R) extended-release technology, demonstrating powerful efficacy and a proven safety and tolerability profile. INVEGA will be marketed by Janssen, L.P., based in Titusville, N.J. and will be available in the U.S. in January 2007.

"A well-designed series of worldwide clinical trials involving more than 1,600 patients in 23 countries, have demonstrated that INVEGA provided significant improvement in multiple domains for the symptoms of schizophrenia," said Henry Nasrallah, M.D., Professor of Psychiatry and Neuroscience and Director of the Schizophrenia Research Program at the University of Cincinnati Academic Health Center. "In addition, in these clinical trials, INVEGA demonstrated not only efficacy in treating the symptoms of schizophrenia, but also improvement in the Personal and Social Performance (PSP) Scale, which measures personal and social functioning. At the recommended dose of 6 mg per day, INVEGA had a tolerability profile that was similar to placebo."

Leading national mental health advocacy and patient organizations also recognize the importance of new treatments for schizophrenia.

"We are pleased that innovative delivery technologies are being applied to new treatments for schizophrenia," said Michael J. Fitzpatrick, MSW, Executive Director, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). "New and efficacious treatment options, like INVEGA, provide significant opportunities for more people with schizophrenia to manage

their disease as they work with their treatment teams to live more fulfilling and productive lives."

INVEGA is the first new prescription treatment for schizophrenia to be approved by the FDA since 2003.

The primary measure of efficacy was the Positive and Negative Syndrome Scale (PANSS), a tool commonly used in schizophrenia research that measures the severity of positive and negative symptoms. Personal and Social Performance, another measure of efficacy, as well as safety and tolerability were also included in the trials that supported the approval of INVEGA. The recommended dose of INVEGA is 6 mg per day, with a dose range of 3 mg to 12 mg per day, depending on patient need.

Key findings of the program include:

- In six week clinical trials, INVEGA demonstrated statistically significant symptom improvement versus placebo across all doses investigated. INVEGA was also superior to placebo on the PSP in these trials. INVEGA is the first treatment for schizophrenia to receive FDA approval to include PSP in product labeling.
- Treatment-emergent adverse events(i) (TEAEs) reported in 5% or more of subjects treated with INVEGA and at least twice the placebo rate for at least one dose included: akathisia (i.e. restlessness) and extrapyramidal disorder (e.g. involuntary movements, tremors or muscle stiffness).
- Discontinuation rates due to TEAEs for all INVEGA dose groups were low and comparable to placebo (5% for placebo and for INVEGA: 2% for 3 mg, 6% for 6 mg, 4% for 9 mg, 5% for 12 mg).

Source: PR Newswire❖

## 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:** Support group meets every Wednesday, 6:30-8:30 p.m. in Behavioral Health Training Room, 72 Moody Court, Thousand Oaks. Info: (805) 777-3500.❖

## LOOKING FOR A SUPPORT GROUP?

**NAMI in Camarillo** – Meets at 5:30 p.m., the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month at St. Columba's Episcopal church, 1251 Las Posas Road, Camarillo. The meeting is prior to the General meeting. Info: Jane Sheehan (805) 484-5132.

**NAMI in Thousand Oaks** – Meets at 7:00 p.m., the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 p.m., the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month at Ventura Missionary church, Room 502-Upper. Info: Debbie Hurt (805) 660-1755.❖

## HEALTHCARE A HOT ISSUE IN THE STATE

Governor Schwarzenegger released his health plan on January 8 amid press that was both positive and negative. His plan will require individuals to buy healthcare, and provides a variety of plans scaled for coverage and cost. Three additional plans are in the wings. Senator Sheila Kuehl will reintroduce her single-payer plan in February, (SB-840). It passed the State Legislature last year, but was vetoed by the Governor. Deborah Burger, RN, President of the California Nurses Association rated Senator Kuehl's plan the best of the four.

Senator Kuehl, Chair of the Senate Health Committee, pledges to work with all stakeholders, the governor, the legislature, medical professionals, labor, business and consumers, to work out whatever reform can be developed. She invites the public to register on her website to receive updates on the progress of healthcare reform. Her Web site is: [www.sen.ca.gov/kuehl](http://www.sen.ca.gov/kuehl).❖

## LEND A HAND! NAMI NEEDS 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 slot 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 ongoing commitment❖

## Advocates Renew Push for Mental Health 'Parity' Bill

A bill has long lingered in Congress that would require health insurers to provide equal benefits for mental and physical ailments. President Bush has vowed to sign such a mental health "parity" bill on several occasions, but a Republican-controlled House repeatedly blocked it. Now with Democrats in control of Congress, mental-health advocates are quietly planning a quick campaign for the bill's passage.

*Editor's Note: The above is a summary of a story on National Public Radio's Morning Edition, January 8, 2007. To listen to the 5-minute feature, go to [www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org) and type the Story ID number 6740128 in the Search box.❖*

## MEMORIAL DONATIONS

### *In Memory Of Carole Engelsiepen*

Debbie Hurt

### *In Memory Of Gene King*

Marita & Keith Montgomery

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## THANK YOU HOLIDAY PARTY DONORS!

A big, heartfelt "THANK YOU!" to the thirty-five donors whose contributions enabled Sharon Robinson and her crew to bring the client Holiday Party together. We especially want to recognize the generous donations of Fred and Teresa Zullo, and Gary and Kathleen Furness. Thanks to all of you!!

## CAMARILLO CONNECTS WITH DR. MICHAEL GREEN

Dr. Michael Green returned to his roots on Tuesday, January 9, when he was the featured speaker at NAMI's General Meeting. Dr. Green spoke of several connections with Ventura County, not the least of which were the beginnings of his work in cognition in schizophrenia at the Camarillo State Hospital. Key points of his presentation were familiar to those NAMI members who attended his workshop at the recent NAMI California state conference.



Important factors in cognition are:

- Memory
- Inhibition
- Verbal language

- Ability to acquire, store and retrieve verbal information for more than a few moments
- Attention/Vigilance
- Ability to respond to targets, and not respond to non targets. For example, identify relevant information in social interaction, such as reporting information to MD
- Working memory; for example, carrying on a social conversation, switching between different tasks.
- Problem solving
- Speed of processing

Dr. Green and his associates are looking for NAMI members' help in solving the schizophrenia puzzle. Relatives are thought to have some of the same cognitive risk factors in lesser degrees, including memory, attention, and problem solving. Families are needed to help further this research. They are looking for families of 4 or more. To be eligible for the study you must meet the following criteria:

- Age 18-65
- Have a current diagnosis of schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder
- At least two other relatives who may be interested in participating
- Willing to give blood and urine samples.

If you are interested in this study or for more information, please call Christen Walden, MSW at 310-478-3711, ext. 49234 or you may contact them through their website: [www.schizophreniaresearch.net](http://www.schizophreniaresearch.net).❖

## NAMI CELEBRATES 21<sup>ST</sup> MLK CELEBRATION

Monday, January 15, 2007, marked the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Celebration of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life, hopes and dreams. The day began with a march from Plaza Park to the Oxnard Performing Arts Center where approximately 500 participants enjoyed a program, breakfast buffet and an opportunity to learn more about non-profit organizations in Ventura County. The program was highlighted by the MLK Celebration Choir led by Janetta Nix, composed mainly of elementary and intermediate grade level young people who had the audience on their feet for every selection. Twenty-one outstanding young scholars representing eleven county high schools were honored with academic achievement awards. The Keynote Speaker was Dr. W. Gregory Sawyer, founding Vice President of Student Affairs for Cal

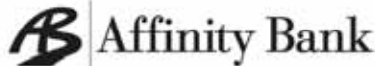
State Channel Islands. The buffet area was circled with tables staffed by representatives of several local non-profits and agencies including Luis Tovar and Irene Mellick at the Behavioral Health Department table, representatives from CAUSE advocating for a living wage in Ventura County, Cumulus Media, the NAACP Saturday School program, as well as NAMI.

*(Note to readers: If you've been to similar events, you've probably seen the nice looking table cloths and display boards some of the groups have. If you have ideas about where or how NAMI Ventura County could go about getting a nice looking table cloth with National Alliance for Mental Illness printed on it, along with the NAMI logo, let us know at 805-641-2426--Thanks!).❖*

# **NAMI VENTURA COUNTY**

## Thanks Our 2006 NAMIWalks Sponsors

Saturday May 20, 2006



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NAMI Ventura County Contact Information

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

Phone: (805) 641-2426

E-mail: [namiventura@gmail.com](mailto:namiventura@gmail.com)

Website: [www.namiventura.org](http://www.namiventura.org)

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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 \_\_\_\_\_

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\*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

*For more information, please call NAMI Ventura County at  
805-641-2426.*

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**SAVE THE DATE!! MAY 12, 2007**



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