



NAMI

Ventura County

National Alliance on Mental Illness

Newsletter

July/August 2009

GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday July 14th, 2009, 7:00 pm

Open to the Public ■ All are Invited

MENTAL HEALTH CONSERVATORSHIPS

with

Cynthia Krause

If an adult refuses treatment for his or her serious brain disorder, it may become necessary for someone else to make certain decisions for the person with the mental illness when they are unable to take care of themselves.

What is an LPS Conservatorship? When is it appropriate? How is it initiated? How long does it last?

How is the Public Guardian's office involved? Who decides placement and mental health treatment?

Join us as Ms. Krause answers these questions and more as she explains the LPS process in Ventura County.

Cynthia Krause is an Assistant County Counsel with the office of the Ventura County Counsel. Among her various assignments, Ms. Krause represents the office of the Public Guardian in the area of LPS conservatorships, including the mental health calendar and trials.

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

A Family Support Group is held at the church prior to the General Meeting, from 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm

Note there is no General Meeting in August

GRAND JURY RELEASES REPORT ON MENTAL HEALTH COURTS

The Ventura County Grand Jury has released a report titled: "Mentally Ill Housed in Ventura County Jails". They received briefings on issues related to mental health from several agencies, including NAMI Ventura County, and several members of the Grand Jury also attended the NAMI class "Court Education Program on Mental Illness".

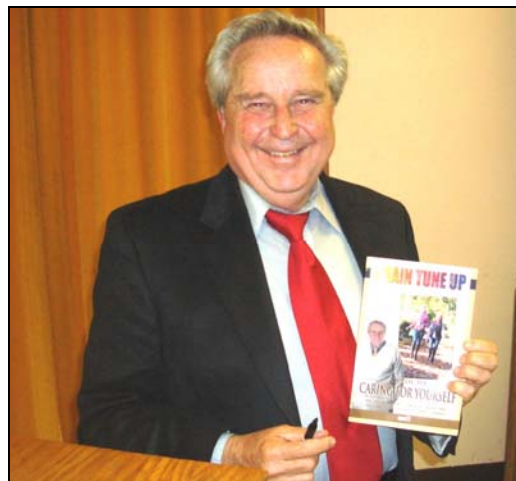
The report recommends the formation of a permanent mental health court in Ventura County, with appropriate funding and personnel. It also recommends suitable housing be made available to support the mental health court system.

NAMI Ventura County commends the Grand Jury for their clear analysis and recommendations, and we pledge to continue working toward the creation of a mental health court. For a copy of the full report, see <http://grandjury.countyofventura.org/reports.html> ❖

Memory is Life

by Lisa Severns

Arnold Bresky, M.D., preventive gerontologist, award-winning author, renowned lecturer, and practicing medial doctor, delivered good news as the speaker at NAMI Ventura County's General Meeting on June 9th.



Dr. Bresky assured all in attendance that the brain can and does heal itself, which is good news for NAMI members and their loved ones. The good doctor then outlined his scientific, evidence-based Brain Tune-Up Nine-Point System, which is proven to optimize brain function mainly for older people but can work for people of any age or capacity.

The Nine-Point System emphasizes a natural way to tune up the brain while avoiding medication, which has unwanted side-effects. It involves maximizing the functioning of both the brain and immune system in order to keep memory working at top capacity. For, as Dr. Bresky puts it, "memory is life," providing a context for the present and the means for planning for the future by accessing what worked or did not work well in the past.

The Nine-Point System involves the following:

- 1) **Fun and laughter:** Dr. Bresky recommends at least nine big laughs every day as part of optimal brain function. Frequent and heart-felt laughter opens and relaxes the mind.
- 2) **Relaxation and meditation:** One may meditate on and/or pray for integrity, humility, and compassion.

(contd on page 2)

Memory is Life (Contd)

- 3) Music therapy: Dr. Bresky suggests music as a possible alternative to some medications. He highly recommends Mozart's Piano Concerto #21.
- 4) Sleep: Because memories are formed during sleep, an average of seven to eight hours nightly is recommended.
- 5) Physical exercise: This will help whatever disease a person has. The recommendation is a brisk walk of at least fifteen minutes, preferably in the early morning sun. Walking helps to grow brain stem cells, helps to create serotonin (important to one's sense of well-being), and lowers blood pressure.
- 6) Healthful diet: After all, we are what we eat. Dr. Bresky recommends a Mediterranean diet, rich in anti-inflammatory foods, such as olive oil, whole grains, vegetables, and lean meat.
- 7) Hydration: Drinking six to eight glasses of water daily is important to optimal brain function and over-all health.
- 8) Brain exercises and art therapy: Doing cross-word puzzles, painting, drawing, and learning a musical instrument are examples of activities that can help the brain stay sharp. People with mental illness can greatly benefit from these activities.
- 9) A healthy soul: Life needs meaning from God or some higher power and gains purpose from good deeds. Dr. Bresky recommends doing at least one good deed daily, without thought of recognition or reward.

For more information about Dr. Bresky and his work, including his book, workbook, and CD, one may access his website at www.mybraintuneup.com. ❖



NAMIWalks 2009 - A Great Success!

NAMIWalks Ventura County 2009 was a tremendous success thanks to the participation of over 700 walkers and our generous sponsors who together brought in over \$53,500 for NAMI programs.

DJ Matt Worrell was assisted by Cyndy Ovalle. Together they kept the crowd's energy level high, helped coordinate team photos and gave out over a hundred door prizes! Speakers included County Supervisor Kathy Long, family member Doug Bungert and peer representative Michael Baity.

The record crowd enthusiastically walked the scenic 5K route, checked out the provider resource tables and enjoyed snacks and ice cream sundaes.

A big thank you to all and to our 2009 Walk Sponsors.

Silver Sponsors: *Ventura County Star, Janssen Pharmaceutica, Astra Zeneca International, Crowne Plaza Ventura Beach*

Start/Finish Line Sponsor: *Borchard Companies, Inc.*

Bronze Sponsors: *Jim & Lou Matthews ■ Debbie Hurt ■ David M. Gudeman, M.D. ■ Cabrillo Economic Development Corp.*

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CUTS IN MANAGED CARE MENTAL HEALTH

Some Medi-Cal managed care services for mental health will be terminated in Ventura County effective July 31st.

Each county's mental health department administers the mental health plan on behalf of the state for Medi-Cal insurance recipients.

No changes are planned in specialty mental health care, which includes those services requiring a specialist in mental health. These services are provided by the Ventura County Behavioral Department (VCBH). This covers people with serious mental illnesses (SMI) such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression etc, which may lead to significant functional impairment.

Managed mental health care covers those needs which can be met by a general health care practitioner. Private providers who provide managed care therapy services will no longer be able to do so. Note that Medi-Cal managed care psychiatric service providers are not affected and will continue to be reimbursed. The county says it is forced to take this step because the managed care allocation from the state is being reduced by 50% and there are shortfalls of over \$3 million in other funding for mental health.

A letter was recently sent out by the Director of VCBH to all managed care providers, which stated in part:

"Due to the ongoing decreases in state funding for county-operated mental health programs, it is with regret that I inform you that VCBH is no longer able to financially support outpatient mental health services provided by the managed care private provider panel after July 31, 2009.

Effective immediately, there will be no new managed care authorizations for service. You must ensure that any cases currently in your treatment are referred to an appropriate level of care or support. Therefore, Medi-Cal eligible individuals seeking mental health services who continue to meet medical necessity criteria for Mental Health Plan reimbursement for Specialty Mental Health Services as defined by Title 9, Chapter 11, Article 2 and continue to have a significant functional impairment, should be directed to the county-operated VCBH STAR (Screening, Triage, Assessment & Referral) Program at 866-998-2243. Individuals who do not meet criteria for continued treatment, but who would benefit from community support or resources should be directed to contact the 211 Hotline. VCBH has been working closely with 211 to prepare for this transition.

If your current clients will require, or are already authorized for services during the month of July, you must have an executed Managed Care 09-10 Contract in place to be paid for services rendered during the time period July 1-31, 2009. If you have clients, who are not already authorized for service during the month of July, who will require transition and/or termination sessions in July, please request those authorizations per the normal authorization process by calling (805) 981-5404. Authorizations will be considered on a case-by-case basis, as is clinically

indicated."

If you are a Medi-Cal client who receives mental health care from your private provider and believe you qualify for specialty mental health treatment, please call the VCBH STAR team at 1-866-99-STAR-3. Else call 211 to learn about other community resources. ❖

ACTIVITIES FOR CONSUMERS/CLIENTS

ADULT WELLNESS & RECOVERY CENTER (AWRC)

This drop-in center is open to all clients, whether or not they are enrolled with Ventura County Behavioral Health (VCBH). Many activities and classes scheduled daily. Some clients are "Peer Counselors", and they engage new members and help them navigate the mental health system. The Center is run by Pacific Clinics, with funding from VCBH; open to all clients.

AWRC, 56 E. Main St, Suite 103, Ventura

Tel: (805) 653-5045

Open Tuesday through Saturday, 9 am to 5 pm

TAY TUNNEL

Also run by Pacific Clinics, this drop-in center is aimed at helping Transitional Age Youth (TAY), age 18-25, and connecting them with services. Many activities daily. Open to all TAY clients.

TAY Tunnel, 141 W. 5th Street, Suite D, Oxnard

Tel: (805) 240-2538

Open Monday through Friday, 10 am to 6 pm

WRAP PROGRAM

VCBH contracts with Recovery Innovations of California, Inc. (RICA) to run a WRAP program for clients – "Wellness Recovery Action Plan". Contact RICA at (805) 981-5439.

WRAP graduates are eligible to be hired to work at the County's mental health clinics as Peer Counselors.

Note that

- the program is open to all clients.
- clients may join the WRAP program at any time, and go at their own pace. Eight sessions are required.
- Graduates may enter the Peer Employment Training; starts every few months. 72 hours, over 2-3 weeks.
- RICA does the hiring of and employs Peer Counselors on behalf of the County.

CLUBHOUSE

The Turning Point Foundation has announced that the Oxnard Clubhouse has moved to a new location effective July 6, 2009.

Their two community rehabilitation centers offer unique socialization activities and rehabilitation services.

Open only to VCBH clients.

Oxnard Clubhouse, 426 W. Fifth Street, Oxnard

Tel: (805) 247-0750

Open Monday through Friday, 9 am to 2 pm

New Visions Clubhouse, 1065 E. Main Street, Ventura

Tel: (805) 652-0596 ❖

MEET THE BOARD OF NAMI VENTURA COUNTY

Michael Ford receives Commendation from the Ventura County Mental Health Board

Mike Ford has been on the Board of NAMI Ventura County since February 2008. On June 15th, 2009 he received a commendation from the Mental Health Board that reads:

"The Ventura County Mental Health Board presents this Certificate of Commendation to Michael Ford, Esquire in recognition of his extraordinary contributions to our community. Michael offers pro bono legal services to individuals with mental illness and the homeless people of Ventura County who become involved with the criminal justice system. For the last eight years he has held a free clinic at Catholic Charities every Friday morning. He has dispensed sound legal advice and has given thousands of hours of his time each year representing clients without expecting anything in return. After he retired as a Navy Commander, Michael joined the aerospace business while taking classes at the Ventura College of Law and at the same time clerking for the Public Defender's Office. He passed the bar in 2001 with the specific intention of assisting underrepresented individuals and communities, and without question he has stayed true to his commitment. The Mental Health Board, with deepest gratitude, presents this certificate of commendation to Michael Ford, Esquire."

Mike shares an office with his wife, Kay, in Fillmore, where he works with a few paying clients.

I'm fond of telling people it's a hobby, he says, his white beard nearly hiding the laugh lines. But it's serious business. You can't treat it casually when someone's life, liberty or property is on the line.

Mike helped a woman who lost her camper - one of his first clients - to retrieve her clothes, cats and some personal documents before winter closed its grip on Ventura.

Superior Court Judge John Dobroth remembers the case -- and his surprise that an attorney would ask for a court order to permit a woman to collect her belongings. According to Dobroth, who signed the order, no attorney has ever entered his courtroom and offered to help a client without the promise of some reward.

That's really going above and beyond the call of duty, Dobroth said. He doesn't ask for praise or money, and he goes out of his way to help this woman. ... That's cool.

Mike continues to help numerous NAMI families and clients who ask for legal assistance. He is selfless and humble and manages difficult situations calmly with a sense of humor. If you have a legal problem, call the NAMI office to get in touch with Mike.

NAMI Ventura County is proud to have Mike Ford on its Board of Directors. ❖

In-Home Support Services

May General Meeting

by Kimmie Jordan

Robert Jenkins, the executive director for Public Authority since 2005, discussed In-Home Support Services which assists low-income elderly and disabled individuals remain in the community if they require non-medical assistance with activities of daily living to remain independent in their homes. In-Home Support services provide domestic and related services including: light housekeeping, laundry, meal preparation and clean up, shopping and errands. Other services provided include personal care such as assistance with eating, bathing, dressing, and personal hygiene. Providers can also provide assistance to and from medical appointments.



He reports noticing an increase in clients with psychiatric disabilities about two years ago as their primary focus was persons with physical disabilities and the elderly. He reports there being 5 full days of training required for all individuals wanting to be on their registry to be providers of In-Home Support Services and there now being 3 hours of behavioral health training to address this increased need. The individuals who provide services to individuals are usually friends or family members, but they also will match providers from their registry with individuals needing services in situations when the person in need of services does not have someone they know able to assist them.

To request an in home assessment for services, contact 805-654-3236 and within 48 hours your call will be returned by an employee of In-Home Support Services to discuss individual needs and schedule an in home assessment when appropriate. In-Home Support Services are limited to individuals who have Medi-Cal at this time. ❖

Coming in November:

EMPOWERING THE SERIOUSLY MENTALLY ILL WITH SKILLS TRAINING

Robert Paul Liberman, M.D.

Distinguished Professor of Psychiatry, UCLA School of Medicine
Director, UCLA Psych Rehab Program
UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

The MHSA Community Leadership Committee (CLC) leads the review of performance outcomes and goals for programs funded by the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), and makes recommendations to the Ventura County Behavioral Health Department (VCBH) based on its review. The committee meets quarterly. Its third meeting was held on June 25th. The members of the CLC are listed in the table below.

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	MEMBER	ALTERNATE
Board of Supervisors (Co-Chair)	Linda Parks	
Mental Health Director (Co-Chair)	Meloney Roy	
Mental Health Board - Children's Rep	Pam Roach	Candy Kaminsky
Mental Health Board - TAY Rep	Joan Blacher, PhD	Dave Holmboe
Mental Health Board - Adult Rep	Karyn Bates	Lou Matthews
Mental Health Board - Older Adult Rep	Irene Mellick	
Mental Health Board - Consumer	Gane Brooking	Pete LaFollette
Co-Occurring Disorders Committee	Nancy Borchard	Sonna Gray
Family Member - Children	Donna Foster	Elizabeth Rice
Family Member - TAY	Annette McComas	Mindy Dorfman
Family Member - Adult	Debbie Hurt	Judith Beay
Family Advocate	Ratan Bhavnani	
Consumer Adult - West County	Dan Lara Jr.	Elizabeth Campos
Consumer Adult - East County	Robyn Gantsweg	Ann-Marie O'Connor
Consumer TAY	Anthony Marron	Asencion Olea
Underrepresented TAY	Alondra Gaytan	Connie Barrajas
Underrepresented TAY		Elizabeth Fernandez
Community - Faith Based		
Community - Underrepresented	Alex Villalobos	Yolanda Soliz
Education - Regular Education	Roger Rice, PhD	
Education - Special Education	Frida Friend	
Health Care Agency (HCA)	Michael Powers	Curtis Ohashi
Probation	Karen Staples	Mark Varela
Human Services Agency (HSA)	Barry Zimmerman	Judy Webber
Law Enforcement	Ch. Dy. Gary Pentis	
Media Outreach	Cynthia Ovalle	
VCBH Reps & Technical Advisors		
Alcohol & Drug Division	Patrick Zarate	Lucianne Ranni
Ethnic Services	Luis Tovar	
MHSA	Susan Kelly	David Hollinger
Children's Services Division	Pam Fisher	
Adult Services Division		
QM/QI	Henry Villanueva	Jason Miller

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Schizophrenia May Be Linked To Immune System

(NPR Radio - All Things Considered, July 1, 2009)

Three new genetic studies are providing some tantalizing hints about what causes schizophrenia.

The studies, published in the journal Nature, identify sections of our genetic code in which small changes can affect a person's risk for developing the disorder.

The studies found such changes in stretches of code involved in brain development, memory and the immune system.

The findings are important because schizophrenia has been so hard to study, says Kari Stefansson, CEO of the Icelandic company deCODE Genetics and an author of one of the studies. One reason is that schizophrenia doesn't occur in animals.

"It's a disease of thoughts and emotions," Stefansson says, "the two functions of the brain that define us as a species and define us as individuals."

Scientists have tried for decades to find differences between the brains of typical people and those with schizophrenia, but without much success. So Stefansson and a consortium of researchers from around the world decided to look for subtle differences in the genes of thousands of people. Some had schizophrenia; some didn't.

One place the studies found a clue about what might be going wrong in the brains of people with schizophrenia was in a gene responsible for a

protein called neurogranin, which can affect memory and thought.

"The neurogranin pathway could be one of the biochemical pathways that lead to this disturbance of thought," Stefansson says.

But he says a more provocative finding is a genetic hot spot in a stretch of code that affects the immune system.

"It raises the question that somehow the tendency to develop schizophrenia may have something to do with infections of mothers during pregnancy."

The idea is that some families carry a genetic variation that affects the way the immune system responds to infection, Stefansson says. If a mother gets the flu while she's pregnant, this immune response may affect her child's brain.

It's also possible that the immune system is involved in schizophrenia in some other way, says Dr. Tom Insel, director of the National Institute of Mental Health, which helped fund the new studies.

He says the stretch of genetic code affecting immunity is pretty mysterious.

"In some ways it's a little bit like the Bermuda Triangle of the human genome," he says. "It's an area with tremendous amounts of variability. And it's an area where we often find variation that's associated with many different disorders: diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, Crohn's disease."

In those diseases, the immune system attacks the body's own cells, a process that could also affect the brain. Researchers have suspected the immune system before, Insel says. Now, they'll probably take a harder look.

Insel says he's particularly intrigued by the finding that some genetic variations linked to schizophrenia are also linked to depression and bipolar disorder.

"It suggests, potentially, that when we're talking about the genetic factors that contribute, what we're really thinking about are genetic factors that contribute to how a brain gets built," he says.

That would mean problems in the brain start very early in life, even though the symptoms of schizophrenia may not appear for decades.

One thing the genetic studies clearly show is just how many different systems in the brain may contribute to schizophrenia, says Harvard's Dr. Pamela Sklar, an author of one of the studies.

"That's a hopeful finding because the implication is that there may be more places to intervene," she says, "if we understand the biology." ❖

SUPPORT GROUPS FOR CONSUMERS/CLIENTS

Please note – These groups are for consumers/clients. Family member support groups are listed separately.

Depression/Bipolar Support Groups:

Ventura: DBSA Support Group meets every Tuesday, 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Bible Fellowship Church, 6950 Ralston Street (& Johnson Drive), Building 300, Room 301, Ventura. For more information, call (805) 201-0619. Also see:

<http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/DBSAVentura/>.

Ventura: DBSA Support Group meets 1st and 3rd Saturdays, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Adult Wellness and Recovery Center, 56 E. Main Street (at Ventura Avenue in Ventura). For directions and information, call (805) 671-5038.

Oak Park: DBSA Conejo Valley Depression Support Group meets Mondays at 7:00 p.m. at Church of the Epiphany, Mitchel Hall, Room 6, 5450 Churchwood Dr. (Kanan & Churchwood) Oak Park.

Info: Vincent F. Caimano, Ph.D., (818) 292-8551 office or email depressiongroup@mindspring.com.

Friendship Line: Telephone support is available to clients on weekend nights. The Friendship Line offers a friendly voice when you are lonely or having a hard time. Open Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays, 7 pm to 10 pm. Each call is limited to 15 minutes, with a maximum of 2 calls per night.

Toll Free: 1-877-672-AWRC (1-877-672-2972)

This Confidential Friendship Line is staffed by Peer Support Specialists from the Adult Wellness & Recovery Center.

NAMI FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS

Please note –These groups are for family members. Consumer/client support groups are listed separately.

NAMI in Camarillo – Meets at 5:30 p.m., the second 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 p.m. the third Monday of each month at 72 Moody Court in Thousand Oaks (Behavioral Health, Conejo Clinics). Info: (805) 641-2426.

NAMI in Ventura – Meets at 6:30 p.m., the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month at College United Methodist Church, 4300 Telegraph Road, Ventura. Info: (805) 641-2426.

**Ventura County Behavioral Health
Adult Outpatient Service Sites**

Main Number, STAR Program: **(866) 998-2243**
(Screening, Triage, Assessment & Referral)

If You Live In:	Contact The Officer of the Day:
Ojai or Ventura (excluding Zip code 93004)	Ventura Outpatient Clinic 4258 Telegraph Rd Ventura, CA 93003 477-5700
Fillmore, Piru or Ventura 93004	Santa Paula Outpatient Clinic 333 W. Harvard Blvd. Santa Paula, CA 93060 933-4868
Oxnard, Port Hueneme or El Rio	Oxnard Outpatient Clinic 1911 Williams Dr., Suite 110 Oxnard, CA 93036 981-4200
Camarillo, Thousand Oaks, and Ventura County areas of Agoura, Westlake, Bell Canyon	Conejo Outpatient Clinic 72 Moody Court Thousand Oaks, CA 91360 777-3500
Simi Valley or Moorpark	Simi Valley Outpatient Clinic 3150 Los Angeles Avenue Simi Valley, CA 93065 577-0830

**NAMI Ventura County
Contact Information**

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1613, Camarillo, CA 93011
Office: 1339 Del Norte Road, Camarillo, CA 93010
Phone: (805) 641-2426
Fax: (805) 275-2188
e-mail: namiventura@gmail.com
Website: www.namiventura.org

Executive Director: Ratan Bhavnani
Program Coordinator: Chris Novak

Board of Directors

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**NAMI Ventura County
Membership Application**

Please fill out the form completely, and mail with check payable to:
NAMI Ventura County, P.O. Box 1613, Camarillo, CA 93011-1613

Check One: _____ New Member _____ Renewal Date _____

Name(s) _____

Address: _____ City _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Membership Level (check one):

_____ Single (\$30)* _____ Family (\$40)* _____ Silver (\$50)* _____ Gold (\$100)* _____ Open Door** (\$5)

Membership Dues \$ _____

Donation Amount \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

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

*** An open door membership is available to anyone who cannot afford to pay full membership.*

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

NAMI Ventura County needs your help. Please mark the activities in which you can volunteer:

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> NAMI Office Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Support Groups | <input type="checkbox"/> Family-to-Family | <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outreach | <input type="checkbox"/> Legislation | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity | <input type="checkbox"/> Speakers Bureau | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |



NAMI Ventura County
P.O. Box 1613
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NEW FALL CLASSES

No charge

Sign up now – call or email

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FAMILY TO FAMILY PROGRAM

WESTLAKE VILLAGE

Class begins: August 27, 2009
12 Thursdays, 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm

VENTURA

Class begins: September 2, 2009
12 Wednesdays, 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm

SIMI VALLEY

Class begins: September 14, 2009
12 Mondays, 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm