



# NAMI

# Metropolitan Houston

National Alliance on Mental Illness

January/February 2008

The Education You Need, The Support You Deserve

## 3rd Annual Houston NAMIWalks - Get Ready!

It's time to dust off your walking shoes and stretch your hamstrings, and maybe take a practice hike or two. NAMI Metropolitan Houston is gearing up for its 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual NAMI Walks for the Mind of America. Meet us there on May 3<sup>rd</sup> for a three-mile jaunt along Allen Parkway starting at Sam Houston Park. Look for the blue balloons!

If last year's Walk is any indication, the 2008 event promises to raise awareness of this cause to a new level and highlight the promise of recovery, says this year's Walk Manager, Mary Robins.

She's hoping to top last year's number of participants – and, of course, the fundraising total as well.

"In raising awareness, numbers count," Robins said. "The more people who participate in the Walk, the more visible NAMI Metropolitan Houston will be. That puts a public face to mental illness."

Last year's walkers totaled 1100. The goal for this year — 1500 and a fundraising goal of \$225,000.

Though relatively new in Houston and in Texas, the Walk events have raised more than \$1 million in this state. Last year's Houston total surpassed expectations, bringing in more

than \$180,000. What's important about that number is what it allows the organization to accomplish in terms of bringing education and support to an increasing number of area residents whose lives are impacted by mental illness.

NAMI volunteers made this possible with an outpouring of hard work and imagination. This year's group is already meeting to secure sponsors, prepare for the Kickoff Luncheon in March, develop media and marketing strategies and most importantly, to help develop the walk teams that are critical to success. Last year, 61 teams walked, with lots of encouragement from Team Captain Susan Raffle. Susan will serve as Captain again this year.



Other chairs are: Media – Alice Brink; Sponsorship – Sandra Reimold; Printed materials – Eileen Baker; Food – Fred and Dot Yondorf. To get involved in one of these areas, please e-mail

Mary at: [namimetrowalks@sbcglobal.net](mailto:namimetrowalks@sbcglobal.net).

What's needed most for a record-breaking, jaw-dropping, stigma-busting, all-around great Walk? Why, you, of course! Don't wait to register your team online, round up your good friends, and get ready for fun!

## I am a member of NAMI! Let me count the ways

Many people around the country believe that they are NAMI members. Well, what does that mean? Do they pay annual dues every year to local or state? Did my donation to NAMI either at the National, State or local level, entitle me to be a "member?" There is a difference between Donor and Member.

It is important to distinguish between Donors and Members. NAMI National accepts and requests donations. Donors do receive the National quarterly publication but they do not become NAMI members without indicating this specifically on the form that is sent. NAMI National does not share a donor's information with the state and local organizations unless requested to do so.

Membership in NAMI offers many benefits, from its excellent publications to its national advocacy to a cherished local support group. Joining together in a common cause means strength and added power to our advocacy. In short, there are lots of reasons to join.

To the confusion of some, it is possible to join NAMI in several different ways.

The greatest advantage to local affiliates like NAMI Metropolitan Houston is to encourage potential members to join through the local affiliate. In the Greater Metropolitan Houston area, new members can join by filling out a local membership form like that included in this issue's Resource Page Pullout.

Our annual dues are \$35, with renewal notices mailed annually. When members join locally, the affiliate (such as NAMI Metropolitan Houston) completes the paper work, sending a portion of the annual dues to NAMI National (\$10.00) and to NAMI Texas (\$10). The remainder benefits the local affiliate. Other local affiliates in the Greater Metropolitan Houston area include NAMI West Houston, and NAMI Ft. Bend.

*(Continued on page 11)*

## Affiliate And Chapter Monthly Meetings (Open to the public)

**NAMI Metropolitan Houston Area Chapter Meetings:**  
*Contact: 713-970-3455 or local chapters below to confirm meeting times, speaker and programs.*

**Bay Area (Baytown/Clear Lake/Southeast)**

**3rd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.**  
 United Way Service Center, 1300 Bay Area Blvd. at Saturn Dr., 2nd Floor, Clear Lake 77058  
*Contact:* Eileene Chappelle at 281-922-7032 or recasail@sbcglobal.net

**January 15:** Jane Malin -An Interfaith Approach To Mental Health Recovery - a Clubhouse Model

**Central (Bellaire/Houston/Southwest)**

**2nd Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m.**  
 Seven Acres Jewish Senior Care Services, 6200 N. Braeswood 77074 (**Note change in location**)  
*Contact:* Susan Raffle or Evelyn Johnson at 713-729-1242

6:00 p.m. – Consumer and Family Support Group  
 7:30 p.m. – Speaker/Program

**January 10:** Officer Mike Lee - Houston CIT Program (Crisis Intervention Team)

**February 14:** Mike Erikson - Neuropsychiatric Center- Mental Health Emergency Program

**March 13:** Steve Rhatigan & Osa Harris - Estate Planning and Special Needs Trust

**Northeast (Humble/Kingwood)**

**4th Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m.**  
 Second Baptist Church, North, 22770 Highway 59 North, Building A, Room 306, Kingwood 77339  
*Contact:* Gwen Coleman, 281-459-1518 or gcoleman2@sbcglobal.net

6:30 p.m. – Refreshments; 7 p.m.–speaker/program  
 8:00 p.m. – Consumer and Family Support Groups

**January 22:** Stephen C. Rhatigan - Estate and Financial Planning for Special Needs

**February 26:** Kathryn LaPointe, PhD - Addictions and Recovery

**March 25:** Philip Jenkins - Help with the Criminal Justice System

**Northwest (Cypress/Spring/Tomball)**

**2nd Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m.**  
 Tomball Community Center, 221 Market Street, Tomball 77375  
*Contact:* 281-376-5368

**January 8:** Rebecca Higgins - Asperger's Syndrome, Effects on the Entire Family

**February 12:** Roy Wooten - SBCC - Providing Low Cost and No Cost Services depending on Need (Shield-Bearer Counseling Center)

**NAMI Ft. Bend**

**1st Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m.**  
 St. Laurence Catholic Church, 3103 Sweetwater Blvd., Religious Education Ctr., Small Gathering Room, Sugar Land 77479

*Contact:* Larry Davis at 281-494-5193 or namifortbend@alltel.net

**January 3:** Ashley Montondon - NAMI Educational Opportunities

**February 7:** To be Determined

**NAMI West Houston**

**3rd Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m.**  
**(Note: Our location has changed)**  
 Main Campus - Memorial Drive United Methodist Church, 12955 Memorial Dr., Houston 77079

*Contact:* Bonnie Cord, 713-984-2538 or bccord@swbell.net

Website: www.namiwesthouston.org

7:00 p.m. – Social time and refreshments

7:30 to 9 p.m. – speaker/program

**January 21:** Laura Laviage, Director of Supportive Housing Development MHA - Housing

**February 18:** Bobbie Whitaker, Professional Case Manager - Tips on Managing Treatment

**NAMI Metropolitan Houston**

**a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization**

**www.namimetrohouston.org**

**713-970-3455**

**Email: namimetrohouston@sbcglobal.net**

**Board Members**

**President:** Carolyn Hamilton

**Vice President:** Susan Denyes-Moody

**Treasurer:** Vacant

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Gwen Coleman, Northeast

Carol Motry, Bay Area

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Larry Davis, NAMI Ft. Bend

Bonnie Cord, NAMI West Houston

Leslie Gerber, Managing Director

Ashley Montondon, Program Coordinator

Kathy Busby, Office Assistant and Newsletter Coordinator

Kathi Gray, Membership and Website Coordinator

## NAMI Metropolitan Houston President's Message - *Carolyn E. Hamilton*



As we enter another New Year, I want to wish everyone a safe and healthy 2008. Time seems to fly by so fast that it is hard to stop and give thanks for all we have.

In our family, we are very thankful for finding NAMI and the extended family it offers. At first, when we learned about NAMI and met the many people who accepted us, no matter what was happening in our lives, we did not know exactly how to react. But as years went by, we knew we could always count on certain people never giving up on us and giving all of us support, love and understanding. Our relatives and friends in Ohio have been understanding and educated themselves about NAMI and mental illness, but they were not close to us in Texas.

For all the years past, we thank all who have been there for us. And we are grateful for the opportunities ahead.

In 2008, NAMI Metropolitan Houston will go through more changes and transitions to become an affiliate that works smarter and better. In February, the Board will spend part of a day-long retreat working on an education plan for the Greater Metropolitan Houston area that will be the basis for our applications in 2008 for foundation funding. The plan

will offer an opportunity for participation of our member affiliates.

In June at our annual meeting a new President and Treasurer will be elected by you, the members of NAMI Metropolitan Houston. Our bylaws call for a limit of two 2-year terms for all officers, a standard in many non-profit organizations.

The Nominating Committee is seeking candidates for both President and Treasurer. These two offices are so important to setting our course for the future. The new President will continue to lead the organization through its transition brought about by our successful Walks. The Treasurer, a position that is currently vacant and needs to be filled, will have a very important role in planning for our financial health as an organization. It would be wonderful to find a volunteer with some financial expertise who could step in at this point and who might consider a new two-year term in June.

Thank you to all the many volunteers that have given so much of their time over the last few months, not all of whom are NAMI members. Many outside of NAMI donate their time to speak at our monthly meetings, to attend workshops we co-sponsor and sometimes just to listen. So many times, we want someone to listen to us rather than advise or judge us, to just be available, when we need you. I can't list them all and shouldn't without their permission, but ...for all of you reading this newsletter, you know who you are. THANKS!!!!!!

## Harris County Advocates Receive NAMI Texas Awards

The outstanding work of Harris County advocates was recognized by NAMI Texas in the awards presented at the Texas 2007 Annual Recovery and Renewal Conference held in Austin on October 6-7.

Receiving the award for Professional of the Year was Dr. Steven Schnee, executive director of Mental Health and Mental Retardation Authority of Harris County. Dr. Schnee has demonstrated exemplary dedication to providing mental health services as well as including consumers and advocacy groups in the decision-making process at MHMRA. Dr. Schnee has been a NAMI member and supporter for many years.



Dr. Steven Schnee received the Mental Health Professional of the Year Award, presented by Vernell Jesse.



MHMRA Consumer Council members received statewide recognition at the Award Ceremony.

Also recognized were a group of MHMRA consumers who, with leadership from Herb Bateman at MHMRA, have done a tremendous job of outreach through sharing their stories in the community.

They were presented with the Mark Korenek Consumer Quality of Life Award, named in memory of Mark Korenek, a Katy resident and consumer advocate who was shot in a parking lot. Mark's parents, James and Nancy Korenek presented the award, speaking of Mark's dedication to changing the mental health system in Texas.

*(Continued on page 11)*

## Harris County Seeks to Improve Mental Health Treatment in Jail System



All too often the scarcity of mental health resources in Texas results in persons with mental illness intersecting with the criminal justice system. The Harris County Jail has been called “the largest mental health facility in the state.” Approximately 20 percent of the inmates in the Harris County jails have a history of mental illness.

The best solution for this longstanding problem is more public mental health care and better insurance parity. With adequate treatment and support, that percentage could be vastly reduced.

But, knowing that approximately 1500 of the 10,000 individuals placed in the jail each month are using psychotropic medications, it is good news that Harris County is working to improve its response to inmates with mental illness.

In 2006 and 2007, through the Sheriff’s Office, the county created a mental health unit in collaboration with Mental Health Mental Retardation Authority of Harris County and the UT-Harris County Psychiatric Center under the medical supervision of Dr. Michael Seale, the Executive Director of Health Services.

The unit would have been augmented by the creation of a new facility to help process individuals who have medical or mental health issues. The fate of this processing facility is uncer-

tain, however, since voters failed to pass the necessary bond measure in the November elections.

The resources that are now available through the Mental Health Unit include 61 deputies and detention officers who have been extensively trained to respond to inmates with mental health issues as well a newly opened diagnostic unit with expanded capacity to cope with medication issues and management of individuals who can benefit from psychiatric intervention.

Another change in the Mental Health Unit makes greater resources available earlier in the booking process to assess the need for medication and for alternative placement within the jail. Nurses screen inmates as they are booked and those with mental health concerns are further evaluated before being placed in a unit. Access to psychiatric care has been improved through the reorganization and mental health status is conveyed to the courts electronically, making it available sooner to key personnel in the criminal justice system.



The treatment and diversion of those with mental illness in the criminal justice system continues to grow in importance as an advocacy issue. NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) members who have experiences in this system have valuable expertise to offer and future activities of NAMI Metropolitan Houston may create this opportunity.

## Advocacy Handbook Helps to Navigate the Criminal Justice System

People with mental illness are falling through the holes of this country’s social safety net and landing in the criminal justice system at an alarming rate: so states the introduction to The Consensus Project Advocacy Handbook.

It’s a 50-page, 5-step guide on how to advocate to reverse this trend that has been widely recognized in Harris County, in Texas and throughout the country. NAMI participates at the national level in the Consensus Project, a larger collaboration that seeks improvement in this area.

The handbook urges those with personal experience, such as the arrest of a family member, to recognize that they are part of a much larger problem: the escalation in the past few decades of people with mental illness intersecting with the criminal justice system.

The U.S. Department of Justice reports that about 16 percent of the population in prison or jail have a mental illness, com-

pared to 5 percent of the U.S. population. To become an active advocate, the first step is to learn about the extent of the problem.

This overrepresentation of people with mental illness in the criminal justice system has wide-ranging implications that include danger to both people with mental illness and law enforcement officers, difficulty obtaining mental health treatment while incarcerated, trauma for family members and much more.

The advocacy handbook describes the perpetuation of a terrible cycle of repeated arrest and incarceration of low-level offenders whose needs for mental health treatment have not been adequately addressed.

You can download the Handbook <http://consensusproject.org/advocacy/>

# NAMI Metropolitan Houston

## Resource Pullout Pages

### Education Programs

NAMI Metropolitan Houston offers three distinctive education programs to meet the needs of family members, parents and caregivers of children and adolescents and persons dealing with mental illness. Each is offered **at no cost** to participants on a space-available basis. When needed, a waiting list is maintained for those unable to enroll immediately. The NAMI education program is central to recovery for thousands of individuals in the Houston metropolitan area.

#### Family-to-Family Education Course

This FREE course consists of 12 weekly 2 ½ hour sessions that are geared toward family members of adult persons diagnosed with brain disorders, such as schizophrenia, depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders and OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder). Communication skills, problem solving, coping skills, problem management, recovery, rehabilitation and more will help the participant understand and deal with mental illness in the family. Trained family member volunteers co-teach the classes. **Pre-registration is required.** For information, call:

NAMI Metropolitan Houston – 713-970-3455  
Bay Area/Clear Lake – 281-992-7032  
Central – 713-729-1242  
Northeast – 281-459-1518  
Northwest – 281-376-0206  
NAMI Ft. Bend – 281-494-5193  
NAMI West Houston – 281-893-2493

#### Visions for Tomorrow Education Course

This is a FREE educational course offered to direct caregivers of children and adolescents with brain disorders. Childhood depression, schizophrenia, ADD/ADHD, OCD, conduct disorder, PDD (pervasive developmental disorder) are just a few of the disorders that will be covered. The materials also offer

#### Visions for Tomorrow (Continued)

coping and communication skills, problem solving, rehabilitation and recovery. Trained family member volunteers co-teach the classes. **Pre-Registration is required.** For information, call or e-mail:

NAMI Metropolitan Houston: 713-970-3455 or  
namimetrohouston@sbcglobal.net or  
vfthouston@hotmail.com  
Central Houston area: Linda Lamb, llamb53@hotmail.com  
East Harris County contact:  
Eileene Chappelle, 281-992-7032 or recasail@sbcglobal.net  
West Houston area: Bonnie Cord, 713-984-2538  
Fort Bend area: Larry Davis, 281-494-5193

#### Peer-to-Peer Education Course

This FREE nine-week, two-hour-per-week course covers the topic of recovery for persons with mental illness who are interested in establishing and maintaining wellness. The course uses a combination of lecture, interactive exercises and structured group processes. The teachers are trained peer mentors who are themselves experienced at living well with mental illness. **Pre-registration is required.** For information, call:

NAMI Metropolitan Houston – 713-970-3455; or  
Ashley Montondon: 281-441-1312

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## Spread the Word - Upcoming Classes Open for Family Members and Caregivers

*Visions for Tomorrow can help with  
children and teen-agers*

Do you know a parent or other direct caregiver who needs help coping with a child or teen who has problems with a brain disorder such as depression or ADHD? NAMI Metropolitan Houston and MHMRA of Harris County are presenting two opportunities for caregivers to take FREE Visions for Tomorrow classes beginning in 2008.

The classes will be held at the MHMRA Conference Center, 7033 Southwest Freeway, Houston 77074 in Conference Room B. The classes will be offered in two formats – a series of three weekend classes in January and an 8-week series held from 6 to 9 p.m. during February and March.

Pre-registration is required and those interested need to contact Debbie Shelby at 713-970-3303 or debbie.shelby@mhmraharris.org or vfthouston@hotmail.com.

*When you care about a person with mental illness,  
Family to Family is there*

NAMI Metropolitan Houston's Central Chapter will offer two Family to Family classes in early 2008. These FREE classes can offer life-changing information for those who have a close family member with mental illness. Taught by family members who have previously taken the course, the experience, wisdom and connection offered is unmatched. The classes offer valuable information and problem-solving skills.

The first course will be offered on Monday evenings beginning January 14 at the Jewish Family Services, 4131 S. Braeswood. The second course will begin February 27 at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, 6800 Buffalo Speedway.

Pre-registration is required. Please contact Susan Raffle at 713-529-5446.

# NAMI Metropolitan Houston

## Resource Pullout Pages

### Support Groups

NAMI offers support groups for those whose lives are affected by mental illness – both those with the illness and for family members and friends. In a supportive environment in which confidentiality is respected, support group members can share their concerns, solutions and hope with one another.

<b>1st Tuesday</b> 7:00 p.m.	Anahuac	Joy Center, 610 Washington Avenue, Anahuac (F/C) <b>Contact:</b> Wayne or P.D. Hankamer at 409-374-2258
<b>1st Tuesday</b> 7:00 p.m.	Tomball	Tomball Community Center, 221 Market St., Tomball 77375 (F/C) <b>Contact:</b> Kathy Busby at 281-376-0206
<b>2nd Tuesday</b> 7:00 p.m.	Northeast Harris County	Lamb of God Lutheran Church, 1400 FM 1960 East Bypass, Humble 77338 (F/C) <b>Contact:</b> Gwen Coleman at 281-459-1518 (F) or Finis Hay at 281-324-1759
<b>3rd Tuesday</b> 7:00 p.m.	Clear Lake	United Way Bldg., 1300 Bay Area Blvd., 2nd Floor, Clear Lake 77058 (F/C) <b>Contact:</b> Eileene Chappelle at 281-922-7032
<b>4th Tuesday</b> 8:00 p.m.	Northeast Harris County	Second Baptist Church-North, 22770 Highway 59 North, Bldg. A, Rm. 306 Kingwood 77339 (F/C) <b>Contact:</b> Gwen Coleman at 281-459-1518
<b>1st Wednesday</b> 7:00 p.m.	West Houston	Pines Presbyterian Church, 12751 Kimberley, Room C-10 Houston (F) <b>Contact:</b> Carolyn Searles at 713-461-5269
<b>4th Wednesday (Spanish)</b> 7:00 p.m.	West Houston	St. Cecilia Catholic Community, 11720 Joan Of Arc, Houston 77024 (F) <b>Contact:</b> Sara Frost at 713-206-2807 or Fifi Wetherhead at 713-465-8518
<b>2nd Thursday</b> 7:00 p.m.	Sugar Land	St. Laurence Catholic Church, 3100 Sweetwater Boulevard, Sugar Land (F) <b>Contact:</b> Ken Sumner at 281-265-1554 or sumnerstars@excite.com
<b>2nd Thursday</b> 7:00 p.m.	West Houston	The Well, Grace Presbyterian Church, 10234-A Westheimer, Houston (Y/F) <b>Contact:</b> Diane Goyette 713-896-1153 or Madeleine Elmer 281-293-7717
<b>3rd Thursday</b> 6:00 p.m.	Southwest Houston	Seven Acres Jewish Senior Care Services, 6200 North Braeswood, Houston 77074 (F/C) <b>Contact:</b> Susan Raffle or Evelyn Johnson at 713-729-1242
<b>3rd Thursday</b> 7:00 p.m.	Spring	Family Life Christian Center, 2414 Spring Cypress, Spring TX, 77388 (F) Meeting in Family Ministries Building - behind the Church off Foster Rd. <b>Contact:</b> Jerry or Karen Lashley at 281-353-1925
<b>3rd Thursday</b> 7:00 p.m.	Sugar Land	St. Laurence Catholic Church, 3100 Sweetwater Boulevard, Sugar Land (F) <b>Contact:</b> Ken Sumner at 281-265-1554 or sumnerstars@excite.com
<b>3rd Thursday</b> 7:00 p.m.	Katy	St. Peters United Methodist Church, 20775 Kingsland Boulevard, Katy (F) <b>Contact:</b> Joyce Hess at 281-395-3582
<b>4th Thursday</b> 7:00 p.m.	Sugar Land	St. Laurence Catholic Church, 3100 Sweetwater Boulevard, Sugar Land (F) <b>Contact:</b> Ken Sumner at 281-265-1554 or sumnerstars@excite.com
<b>2nd Sunday</b> 2:30 p.m.	West Houston	Pines Presbyterian Church, 12751 Kimberley, Houston Room C - NAMI C.A.R.E. (C) / Room C - Support Group (F) <b>Contact:</b> Vi Napolitano at 281-893-2493
<b>4th Sunday</b> 2:30 p.m.	West Houston	Pines Presbyterian Church, 12751 Kimberley, Houston Room C - NAMI C.A.R.E. (C) / Room B - Support Group (F) <b>Contact:</b> Vi Napolitano at 281-893-2493

(F) Family

(C) Consumer

(VFT) Visions For Tomorrow

(YF) Young Family

# NAMI Metropolitan Houston

## Resource Pullout Pages

### BEYOND NAMI EDUCATION — New Decisions for a New Year

*"I don't really remember the psychotic episodes before age eight or nine. I do remember the roller coaster ride through childhood: my mother's stays at the state hospital; the endless attempts to bring her back through love. The whole family thought love would make my mother better (my father, my sister, and I). We banded together in a little ball of survival." 1994 Psychiatric Rehabilitation & Community Support Monograph*

*~ One family's response to mental illness as recalled by a woman whose mother had schizophrenia.*

***Banding together in a little ball of survival.*** It is how almost all of us start out when confronted with mental illness in our families. You've done a wonderful thing for yourself by attending NAMI education. In classes like Family to Family or Visions for Tomorrow, you have acquired so many more resources and ways of handling the illnesses of your loved ones. However, we would like to spend a moment discussing the choices you will be making in the new year ahead, perhaps even as soon as you get home from attending the class. When you get home and pull the car in the garage, by the time the garage door closes will you be back in your ball of survival? Alone again, except that now you have a big thick NAMI manual in your lap?

Of course, the manual is wonderful! It represents a brave commitment you've made to better understand mental illness, the health care system, the treatments, and even your own feelings about it. But what you have also participated in for

the past 8-12 weeks is a group of 20 people who, just like yourselves, are dealing with mental illness in their lives, too.

***We would like to call your attention to the network of help, advice, and support that you have been providing for each other during these past several months. And the choice you get to make now is to continue from this point on as a ball of survival, or as a network of survival.***

We encourage you, in the private recesses of your own mind where these decisions get formed, to choose network. Whatever that means to you. Put your Family-to-Family or Visions for Tomorrow instructor's phone number near your doctor's as a reminder that you are not alone. Promise yourself to call that nice person you sat next to in class and have coffee together next week. Attend one NAMI monthly meeting or support group in the new year. Whether it's advice over lunch or an advocacy trip to Austin, we hope that you chose to remain connected.

Staying connected to other families is a choice. Banding together in a little ball of survival is a reaction, and a very understandable one. We only call attention to your education experience from the past and ask if perhaps it is time to choose differently.

***The choice to stay connected is yours alone, and we ask that you make it for yourself. And mean it for yourself.***

Written by a NAMI member, Pamela Lucia  
Her words could apply equally well to the newer Peer to Peer program.



#### MHMRA HELPLINE FOR PSYCHIATRIC EMERGENCY

The MHMRA HelpLine is the first point of contact with mental health consumers and their families seeking information regarding MHMRA services as well as anyone else who needs community information or assistance. HelpLine Phone Counselors assess for risk, screen callers for appropriate programs, provide immediate crisis intervention, and give community referrals to callers 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

#### BOTH SIDES NOW

Both Sides Now, a group of consumers, friends and families, meets for sodas, coffee and conversation from 3 – 5 p.m. Sundays at Starbucks on Westheimer and Post Oak, near The Container Store and Jamba Juice.

The group discusses anything that is on people's minds, from problems and issues to personal interests such as books, movies, politics, etc. Anyone who would like to join is welcome. Look on the patio for John Aycock and/or Pate Pecora. For more information, call Pate at 713-349-0049.

#### THE GATHERING PLACE

The Gathering Place, a psychosocial rehabilitation program for adults with serious mental illness, was founded 15 years ago by concerned family members. Services are provided that are necessary for people with serious mental illness to live successfully in the community. The Gathering Place is located in southwest Houston.

For additional information, visit [www.gplace.org](http://www.gplace.org) or call 713-729-3499.

## WEB SITES

[www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org) - NAMI "The Nation's Voice on Mental Illness"

[www.namitexas.org](http://www.namitexas.org) - NAMI Texas

[www.namimetrohouston.org](http://www.namimetrohouston.org) - NAMI Metropolitan Houston

[www.namiwesthouston.org](http://www.namiwesthouston.org) - NAMI West Houston

[www.dbsahouston.org](http://www.dbsahouston.org) - DBSA (Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance) of Houston is a self-help non-profit organization for individuals with clinical depression or bipolar disorder, manic depression, as well as their families and friends. 713-600-1131

[www.adda-sr.org](http://www.adda-sr.org) - ADDA – SOUTHERN REGION (Attention Deficit Disorders Association Southern Region) Call 281-897-0982 for meeting and support group information

[www.mhmraofharriscounty.org](http://www.mhmraofharriscounty.org) - Mental Health Mental Retardation Authority of Harris County. 713-970-7000

[www.mhahouston.org](http://www.mhahouston.org) - Mental Health Association of Greater Houston. 713-523-8963

[www.gplace.org](http://www.gplace.org) - A psychosocial clubhouse providing rehabilitation services to persons with mental disorders. 713-729-3799

<http://familyaware.org> - A nonprofit organization helping families members and friends of those with depression, recognize and cope with depressive disorders.

[www.mcmanweb.com](http://www.mcmanweb.com) - McMan's Depression And Bipolar Weekly Newsletter

[www.schizophreniadigest.com](http://www.schizophreniadigest.com) - Schizophrenia Digest

[www.borderlinepersonalitydisorder.com](http://www.borderlinepersonalitydisorder.com) - National Education Alliance for Borderline Personality Disorder (NEA-BPD)

[www.reintegration.com](http://www.reintegration.com) - The Center for Reintegration

[www.phrma.org/pap/](http://www.phrma.org/pap/) - Free Meds For The Financially Challenged - Directory of Patient Assistance Programs that PhRMA member companies offer to ensure their medicines are made available to those who can't afford to purchase them. 800-762-4636.

[www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov) - National Institute for Mental Health

[www.narsad.org](http://www.narsad.org) - National Alliance for Research on Schizophrenia and Depression

[www.mentalhealth.com](http://www.mentalhealth.com) - A good website containing a great deal of information about all the various disorders, how to treat them, get help, and contact information, etc.

[www.txhealthpool.org](http://www.txhealthpool.org) or [texasriskpool@bcbstx.com](mailto:texasriskpool@bcbstx.com) - Texas Health Insurance Risk Pool. Can't find health insurance? Have preexisting conditions? The Texas Health Insurance Risk Pool can help. 1-888-398-3927; TDD 1-800-735-2989

[www.capitol.state.tx.us](http://www.capitol.state.tx.us) - Texas Legislature online

[www.senate.state.tx.us](http://www.senate.state.tx.us) - Texas State Senate

[www.house.state.tx.us](http://www.house.state.tx.us) - Texas State House of Representatives

[www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com) - Now you can raise money for NAMI Metro..Houston just by searching the Internet at Goodsearch

**NAMI** Experience  
the Revolution

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ JOIN TODAY!

## Membership Form

All dues and donations are tax deductible. Membership includes annual dues to your local designated NAMI affiliate, NAMI Texas, and NAMI National, plus newsletters.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

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Yes  No

Membership Status:  NEW  RENEWAL

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Donation In Memory/Honor of:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Designate your affiliate (and mail this form with your check to the address listed for that affiliate):**

**NAMI Metropolitan Houston:** , Treasurer, P.O. Box 740169, Houston, TX 77274

When you join NAMI Metropolitan Houston, you may designate a chapter where you attend meetings:

Bay Area

Central

Northeast

Northwest

**NAMI Fort Bend:** Jorge Alonso, Treasurer, P.O. Box 1223, Sugar Land, TX 77478-1223

**NAMI West Houston:** John Anderson, Treasurer, P.O. Box 218989, Houston, TX 77218-8989

**Please check all that apply:**

I am a consumer of mental health services.

I am a parent of an adult who has mental illness.

I have a minor child who has mental illness.

I have a sibling who has mental illness.

I have a spouse who has mental illness.

I have a parent who has mental illness.

I have a friend who has mental illness.

I am a professional care provider.

Other

## Peer-to-Peer — Recovery is Possible!

My name is Finis Hay. I have a mental illness but you must understand that this illness is what I have, not who I am. I found that I had to accept my illness in order to live a happy and productive life. Actually, I feel a loving God allowed this struggle in my life so I could recover and help others with this as well. I am passionate about people getting back their hopes and dreams.

I have been privileged to be a mentor with Ashley Montondon and Gwen Coleman for the Peer to Peer Recovery Education Course. I am looking forward to being a mentor again in the next class where we find sincere and uncritical acceptance.

This course is a nine-week intense study in mental illness where we make a serious commitment to attending every class. During these classes we study the stages of emotional response to trauma including the catastrophic events, learning to cope, and moving into advocacy.

My perspective of the Peer to Peer course is that it is an excellent program for persons with mental illness with classes that are designed to meet your needs in whatever level of wellness you are functioning. I found that I gained a tremendous amount of knowledge about mental illness and the recovery process. I believe you get as much as you are willing to put into the educational material. There are group interactions

which I found were great for building the group as a whole, and by gathering this material each week it builds on the next week which makes me more eager to continue the process of recovery.

Storytelling is my favorite class because you come away with a better understanding of yourself and with relating to others as a whole. The relapse prevention plan is a good tool for looking at yourself in a whole new perspective and realizing that you have a choice in making your recovery successful. I identified with the part of spirituality in the twelve step program since spirituality was my main focus of recovering and continuing the recovery process.

In week seven the material talks about empowering yourself to be an advocate which I find very useful. If you weren't involved with advocacy before the class you will find that you want to start being more active in the advocating process. The advanced directive is the final product of the course and lets me decide what happens when there is a crisis. I make the decision on my care, doctors, and hospital which makes me feel in control of my circumstances. The closing ceremony is very touching. And now I'll let you decide if you want to pursue the class.

So what does the future hold for us? Recovery — it's possible with support and Peer to Peer education.

## Veteran's Resource Center Established by NAMI

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) has established an online Veterans Resource Center [www.nami.org/veterans](http://www.nami.org/veterans) to help support active duty military personnel, veterans and their families facing serious mental illnesses such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and schizophrenia.

"We are a nation at war," said NAMI executive director Michael J. Fitzpatrick. "The war includes mental illness. Many veterans who return from active duty face a second war at home, confronting profound mental health problems. Their families also are affected."

The Center's resources include a growing compilation of fact sheets, self-help information, online discussion groups, research and policy updates, and links to government agencies and other private organizations. NAMI has made the Center a priority to meet a growing need.

- Almost a third of veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq confront mental health problems. In 2006, the suicide rate in the Army reached its highest level in 26 years.
- Approximately 30% of veterans treated in the Veterans health system suffer from depressive symptoms, two to three times the rate of the general population.
- Earlier this year, the chairman of the Veterans Affairs

Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives told NAMI's annual convention that more Vietnam veterans have now died from suicide than the 55,000 who were killed directly during the war in the 1960s and 70s.

- Approximately 40% of homeless veterans have mental illnesses. Approximately 57% of this group are African American or Hispanic veterans.
- Families of soldiers deployed in Afghanistan or Iraq face increasing pressures from repeated and longer tours of duty. Unlike civilian suicide rates, greater numbers of young soldiers are taking their own lives, with broken relationships or marriages considered to be factors.

"The human toll of any war is felt for years to come," Fitzpatrick said. "NAMI hopes to expand the Center's resources over time and provide whatever support we can through our other programs."

The Center's resources are organized into 12 on-line categories. They are Posttraumatic Stress Disorders; Traumatic Brain Injury; Suicide Prevention; Veterans & Mental Illnesses; Veterans Affairs and Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN); Families, Children and Spouses; Women Veterans Resources; Multicultural Resources; Homelessness & NAMI's Missing Person's Network; NAMI Veterans Council; and Online Discussion Groups.

(Reprinted with permission from NAMI)

## Chapter and Affiliate News

### Central Chapter

The Central Chapter announces a new date and location for its monthly meetings beginning in 2008! Meetings which have occurred at the Community Bank in Bellaire will now be held at **Seven Acres Jewish Senior Care Services** at 6200 N. Braeswood, 77074-7599 on the **2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month**. Traveling west on N. Braeswood from the intersection at Hillcroft, go down a few blocks until the road forks. Take the right hand fork and you will go straight to the new location.

As usual, support groups will begin at 6:00 p.m., with the speaker following at 7:30 p.m. The Central Chapter has scheduled an excellent roster of speakers for the New Year. (See Page 2 - Monthly Meetings)

Central Chapter is offering two Family to Family Education courses in the first months of 2008. These free courses are provided to people having a close adult family member with a mental illness. The course is excellent, consisting of education, practical skill training, and support.

The first course is planned for Monday evenings beginning January 14 at the Jewish Family Services on South Braeswood. The second course will begin on February 27 at St. Vincent DePaul Catholic Church on Buffalo Speedway near Holcombe. For more information, call Susan Raffle, Central Chapter President, at 713-529-5446.

### Northwest Chapter

Happy New Year 2008 to all our friends and families! We look forward to another year of successful outreach and growth. We plan to offer Family to Family classes, Visions for Tomorrow Classes, Peer to Peer Classes, as well as bring enlightening speakers to Tomball Community Center for our regular monthly meetings on the second Tuesdays of each month.

November 15, 2007, was Graduation Day to fifteen Family to Family attendees, three of whom have decided to train to become Family to Family teachers. The class was co-taught by Karen Lashley and Kathy Busby. Resource for the class was coordinated by Jane Easterwood and Lana Hand. Everyone involved formed a cohesive group of caring and sharing individuals and they are proud of their growth in twelve weeks. We hope to begin a support group to facilitate a continuance of our mutual care.

Eisenhower Eagles' Wings has resumed for a second year at Eisenhower High School. Working with Vicki Thibodeaux, Crisis Intervention Counselor, NAMI volunteers Kathy Gosselin, Stefanie Gosselin and Lana Hand hold a support group for teens struggling in the school setting due to overwhelming or extenuating circumstances in their lives.

### Northeast Chapter

For Mental Illness Awareness Week Northeast Chapter presented information and handouts at Kingwood, Atascocita and Humble libraries. Even with many scheduling difficulties, we had a very successful event. We are very proud of our newest NAMI supporters who dedicated their Saturday to come and handout literature and talk to interested people.

In December we offered free gift wrapping at the Barnes and Noble in Deerbrook Mall. We had the opportunity to accept donations and to hand out our NAMI Metropolitan Houston brochure to hundreds of holiday shoppers. With the donations raised we hope to offer a year of free memberships to our consumers.

The New Year looks very promising with hopes of offering two Family to Family classes and Peer to Peer classes. Another goal is to have NAMI Metropolitan Houston brochures in the offices of every doctor and church that our members attend. At this time our greatest need is to increase the number of support groups. We hope to double from two to four groups and have the ability to offer different days of the week with a day group, or weekend group.

Our team is already forming for the NAMIWalk 08. We are holding a contest for our members to pick the third tag line of our slogan. Our team name is NAMI HumbleBees. Our first year slogan was "The Buzzzz on Mental Illness" and the second tag line was "The Sting on Stigma." Our creative members can send in their suggestions for the third tag line and register to join the NAMI HumbleBees for the 2008 NAMI Walk.

2008 is already shaping up to be a promising year.

### NAMI Fort Bend

NAMI Fort Bend celebrated the holiday season with its first annual Holiday Party on December 6<sup>th</sup>. The Holiday Party substituted for our December regular meeting and included caroling, pot-luck Christmas goodies, and a fun white-elephant gift exchange! A good time was had by all.

NAMI Fort Bend had so much to be thankful for in 2007. For the first time we offered and completed two courses each of Family-to-Family and Visions For Tomorrow. We hope to be able to do the same for 2008 and maybe even add a Peer-to-Peer class.

NAMI Fort Bend's January 3, 2008, program will focus on NAMI Educational Opportunities beneficial to both those suffering from mental illnesses and their caregivers. Ashley Montondon, Area Coordinator for Peer-to-Peer, is our primary speaker and will discuss the advantages of that program. The Family-to-Family and Visions for Tomorrow programs will also be briefly covered.

## Chapter and Affiliate News

### NAMI West Houston

**PROGRAMS.** The location of our monthly programs has changed! We will be meeting at the main campus of **Memorial Drive United Methodist Church, 12955 Memorial Dr., Houston, TX 77079, (on the south side of Memorial Drive between Beltway 8 and Wilcrest) Room D125.** Enter through the east driveway, drive to the back and park, and come in through the entrance that is marked **Education**.

**NEW BOARD MEMBERS.** We welcome three new members to the Board: Jean Rainoshek, Secretary; Jo Parshall, Director; and Joel Parshall, Director. We are so pleased to have these competent and dedicated people offer their talents to help people dealing with mental illness.

**EDUCATION.** In 2007, we provided education on mental illness to about 125 people. Through outreach efforts and presentations, we provided many more people with information. Beginning in January and February, we are offering new Family-to-Family and Visions for Tomorrow classes, including our first Spanish-speaking class. For more information, contact: Family to Family (English), Vi Napolitano 281-893-2493, philnapolitano@yahoo.com; Family to Family (Spanish), Camilo Merendoni 713-291-3203, cmerendoni@comcast.net; Visions for Tomorrow, Bonnie Cord 713-984-2538, bccord@swbell.net.

*(Continued from page 1)*

It is also possible to join NAMI directly through the NAMI National website. In this case, the member's information is sent to NAMI Texas and assigned to a local affiliate by zip code.

Members of NAMI Metropolitan Houston, Ft. Bend and West Houston receive this newsletter bi-monthly as well as a quarterly publication from both NAMI National and NAMI Texas. Other local affiliates publish additional newsletters.

A member of NAMI is actually a member at all three levels: local, state, and national. Each level is critical to NAMI's success, with each serving its own distinct functions, operating from its own budget.

*Are you a NAMI member?*

*We certainly hope so and we certainly thank you!*

*(NAMI Texas Awards - Continued from page 3)*

The award winners were Don Carruthers, Clarice Anthony, Alexandria Foote, John Cox, Betty Harvey, Angela Knight and Felix Martinez. All the recipients serve on MHMRA consumer councils in their area clinics.

Don Carruthers and John Cox played an important role at the NAMI Metropolitan Houston Prayer Breakfast held at Rice University earlier this year, speaking eloquently at the service of their experiences with mental illness. It is this kind of outreach that breaks the barriers of stigma and offers others hope for recovery. Congratulations to the awardees!!

Five new Visions for Tomorrow teachers were trained in November. Thank you to Debby Brown, Beth Rainey, Robert and Susan Steed, and Carly Thom for their willingness to step forward and educate other families on mental illnesses. If you would like to help in this effort and become a teacher, please contact me.

**SUPPORT GROUPS.** Our support groups remain available to those seeking support. We would like to urge those of you who do not feel personally in need of support at the moment to consider attending a support group to help those who are currently in crisis or new to dealing with mental illness. Your information, experience and support can be very valuable to someone who doesn't know where to turn.

Wishing you a happy, happy 2008!

#### *NAMI West Houston's Officers and Directors*

<i>Bonnie Cord, President</i>	<i>Alice Brink, Director</i>
<i>Fifi Wetherhead, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President</i>	<i>Debby Brown, Director</i>
<i>Vi Napolitano, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President</i>	<i>Sharyn Coffer, Director</i>
<i>Jean Rainoshek, Secretary</i>	<i>Jo Parshall, Director</i>
<i>John Anderson, Treasurer</i>	<i>Joel Parshall, Director</i>
<i>Eileen Baker, Director</i>	

#### **Multiple Ways to Raise Funds for NAMI** — Fast and Easy —

- Many corporations and businesses will match employee contributions to a qualifying non-profit charitable organization within specified limits that may include total amount or within a certain time period. Please check with YOUR employer through the Human Relations Manager or Corporate Contributions Officer to see if there is a Matching Gifts Program that you can join.
- Kroger Share Card and Randall's Charity program participation has changed. **The old programs expired in 2006.**
- The new Randall's charity number is **11446**. By offering this number when you check out, you will be contributing 1 percent of your purchases to further the education classes, support groups and advocacy of NAMI.
- Please see your chapter president or coordinator for a new Kroger Share Card.
- Former affiliates that have merged in NAMI Metropolitan Houston are no longer separate 501(c)3 organizations. For tax-deductible contributions, please use the new cards and numbers so that NAMI Metropolitan Houston can benefit. Please spread the word!

NAMI Metropolitan Houston  
P.O. Box 740169  
Houston, TX 77274

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