

NAMI Lexington

Black & Williams
Neighborhood Center
Suite 201
498 Georgetown Street
Lexington, KY
40508

Office Hours:
12:00pm-5:00pm

Office # (859) 272-7891

Email Us At
NAMILEX@alltel.net

Visit Our Website:
<http://lexington.nami.org>

**Consumer/Family
Support Groups:**

Every Sunday

The Faye Morton
Consumer & Family
Center
Eastern State Hospital
677 West 4th Street
Lexington, KY
2:30pm-4:00pm

Adolescent Support Group

2nd Sundays

The Faye Morton Consumer &
Family Center
Eastern State Hospital
2:30pm-4:00pm

NAMI Winchester

1st & 3rd Mondays

Victory Heights
Achievement Center
150 Maryland Avenue
Winchester, KY
7:00pm-8:30pm
(859) 744-6985

NAMI Lincoln/Garrard

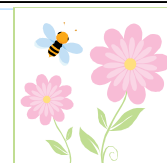
3rd Tuesdays

Frontier Rehabilitation
Stanford, KY
5:00pm
(606)365-4197

NAMI Richmond

3rd Thursdays

Madison County Library
Richmond, KY
6:30pm-8pm
(859) 544-7131



May is Mental Health Month!

Valerie R. Mudd, Editor

May/June 2008

GROWING FORWARD

*POSITIVE...FRESH...INNOVATIVE...OPTIMISTIC...POSSIBILITIES
GROWTH...CREATIVE...INCLUSIVE...FUN!!!!*

These terms all evoke "spring-into-summer-happy-to-be-alive" feelings of warmth and satisfaction as I write them. They actually make me smile. I see daisies and can just feel sunshine and warm breezes on my skin as I allow myself to think the thoughts these words deliver. NAMI Lexington is literally floating on the leftover positive energy from Friday, April 25, 2008. Please write down that date, record mementos of the day and pause to remember the historical event that we all **WITNESSED**. Savor...immerse yourself...take it in...like a cool beverage on a warm day. We truly did participate in a transformative, once in a lifetime event. They say good things are best when shared; this could not be truer than in the case of the celebration April 25. To look out and see the faces of all our partners from Bluegrass, the legislators and cabinet members, the mayor and council members, the community of friends, family, consumers and Governor Beshear...WOW!!! What a victory for everyone. A sun-shining moment!

These terms also remind me of the direction that we want to continue to go in as we push on in our Mission and with our agenda to evolve the concepts of mental health, awareness, advocacy and support. We have reason to believe that we have moved to another level of intensity and focus. We have reason to believe that our voice is important, that our message will be delivered and deemed noteworthy and that our ideas merit action. Together, with all of our partners we achieved what some said was an impossible feat at an impossible time. We must remain strong, solid and undaunted as we continue our metamorphosis. We are mighty, we are many and together, like those "spring-into-summer-happy-to-be-alive" moments...we are magic. Here's to "growing forward". (thanks,gg)

Kelly Gunning, Executive Director
NAMI Lexington

WTVQ Channel 36 Special Series

On May 13, 14, & 15 at 5:00pm & 6:00pm, WTVQ will be airing a series of feature stories focusing on mental health issues.

- **May 13 - Depression**
- **May 14 - Bipolar/Schizophrenia**
- **May 15 - Suicide**

During these three nights, NAMI Lexington & Bluegrass will man a phone bank for 1 1/2 hours to answer questions and offer referrals to mental health services. What a way to celebrate

**Mental Health Month!
Thanks WTVQ!**

Bluegrass Consumer Conference

The Bluegrass Consumer Conference sponsored by the Bluegrass Mental Health/Mental Retardation Board will be held on **May 29th-30th** at the Holiday Inn on Newtown Pike in Lexington. NAMI Lexington provided 50 scholarships for consumers to attend the conference. NAMI Lexington will be facilitating various workshops. Enjoy the Conference!

5th Annual Derby Party

On **May 3rd**, NAMI Lexington hosted their 5th annual Kentucky Derby Party. It was a great time to have fun and enjoy some great food. Ella Hunter supervised the "betting" process, as usual. Lots of ladies remembered their derby hats too. Thanks to all who attended!

Gourmet Social

On **June 12th** at 7:00pm, NAMI Lexington will host the first NAMIWALKS event. Our Gourmet Social will be held at the Bluegrass Board Room on Newtown Pike in Lexington. Everyone is welcome to this special event to find out more about participating in our Walk!

NAMI National Convention

On **June 13th-16th**, NAMI National will be hosting their annual National Convention in Orlando, Florida. For more information go to www.nami.org.

Shopping at Kroger and Supporting NAMI Lexington!

Do you shop at Kroger on a regular basis? If yes, then you can support NAMI! You can purchase a \$5 Kroger gift (debit) card from the NAMI Lexington office. For your loyalty to Kroger, Kroger will donate 4% of the amount of food, prescription and gas purchases you put on your gift (debit) card to NAMI. Since January 2008, NAMI Lexington has received \$598.74 in donations from Kroger because people are reloading their gift cards! Last year we received \$2,248.81! **Please contact NAMI Lexington's office and we will be glad to explain how to get started on this easy way to support NAMI!**

Membership

Your membership & donations help NAMI Lexington to:

- Support Consumers & Family Members through support groups and community resources.
- Provide a bi-monthly newsletter to more than 1,500 families and professionals.
- Provide FREE NAMI Family-to-Family 12 Week Education Classes
- Provide a resource center and lending library
- Expand our Multicultural Outreach
- Advocacy to improve the lives of people living with mental illnesses
- Public awareness and educational activities



Go Paperless! Save the Trees! Go Green!

If you would like to receive all your correspondence from us via email, just call our office at (859) 272-7891 or email Angelina at angelinab@alltel.net.

Don't forget to log on to <http://lexington.nami.org> for the latest information about NAMI Lexington!

Final Spring Family-to-Family Class

On Monday **May 12th**, NAMI Lexington will be having its final Family-to-Family class for the spring. Summer classes will be coming very soon. Please call the office for more details (859) 272-7891.

Adolescent Support Group

Destin Strauss will begin facilitating the new adolescent support group starting Sunday, **June 8th** from 2:30pm - 4:00pm at the Faye Morton Consumer & Family Center in the Wendell Building on the grounds of Eastern State Hospital. This group is for adolescents ages 11-15. For more information call our office at (859) 272-7891.

Dates to Remember

WTVQ Channel 36 - 3 day feature series -May 13th-15th
NAMI Somerset Walk and Chrysalis House Walk - May 17th
Election Day - May 20th VOTE!
Bluegrass Consumer Conference - May 29th-30th
Adolescents Support Group begins - June 8th, 2:30pm-4:00pm
NAMIWALKS Gourmet Social - June 12th, 7:00pm
NAMI National Convention - June 13th-16th, Orlando, FL

WE'RE GETTING A NEW HOSPITAL, WE'RE GETTING A NEW HOSPITAL!

Thank you Governor Beshear and all the legislators for attending our incredible, historical celebration. The action taken by our legislators and the governor, insures that Eastern State Hospital will finally be replaced with a state of the art psychiatric facility. The action also specifies Bluegrass Mental Health/Mental Retardation Board as having first rights to submit a proposal to operate the new facility. It was truly a MAGNIFICENT day for consumers, family members and the community. Thank you, thank you, thank you for all your hard work and diligence!!!

Multicultural Action Committee Report - Yolonda Clay

Spring is here for the Multicultural Action Committee—MAC DIVAS (Diversity In Victorious Active Service) and the MAC DADIS (Dedicated Assertive Devoted Inspiring Servants). The MAC Committee welcomes a new member, Ralph Clay. Ralph and Yolonda Kelsor were married on April 8, 2008. Ralph has been assisting with many activities for the Outreach Committee. **March Outreach**-- Yondi attended the Migrant Network Coalition meeting. Yondi, Valerie Mudd and Kathy Schneider attended Peer Support CEU video teleconferences at the Dept. for Mental Health in Frankfort. Yondi and Jennifer Dishman met with representatives of the Radio Eye of Central KY to collaborate on upcoming mental health programs for disabled and visually impaired listeners. Yondi and Destin Strauss presented a workshop, "Stress Management and the Over-Achiever" at the YMCA Black Achievers Conf. at Transylvania University. Yondi, Destin, Lisa Miller, and Jackie Frazier had an outreach table at the 14th Annual Black Women's Village Experience held at Shiloh Baptist Church. Yondi and Destin attended the Town Hall Meeting at UK. Yondi, Destin, Vickie M. and Lisa M. had an outreach table and attended the seminar and luncheon at the Conference. Yondi attended "Erase Hate, Bias and Violence Seminar" hosted by the LFUC Human Rights Commission. Vickie Miller and Yondi had an In Our Own Voice Presentation at the Ridge. On the 28th-30th, Yondi and Jackie F. flew to St. Louis, MO to attend a NAMI National MAC Leadership Summit. 50 people selected from across the country for their Affiliate Outreach activities. Jennifer D. and Jackie F. presented an IOOV to the Family class at NAMI Danville.

April Outreach-- Yondi, Destin, and Ralph attended Peer Support CEU training at the Dept. Yondi, Val M., Kathy Schneider, and Faye Morton attended the Olmstead Coalition Meeting in Frankfort. Vickie M. spoke at the Richmond/ Madison Co. Homeless Awareness Day while Yondi and Jackie F. had an outreach table. Ralph and Yondi traveled to Rough River Dam State Resort Park and to Natural Bridge Resort for Case Manager Training for the Dept. where Yondi helped as a Peer Support Specialist. Gina Burns and Yondi participated in a panel discussion lunch workshop at Bryan Station High School. Ralph, Yondi, and Destin traveled to Mt. Vernon, KY for an IOOV presentation. Jennifer D. and Jackie F. had an IOOV at the Morehead Family class. Jackie F. and Lisa M. had an IOOV at the Family class in Winchester. Lisa M. and Harold Jarboe presented an IOOV at the Ridge. Yondi and Lisa M. had an outreach table at Kidney Foundation Appreciation Dinner at Calvary Baptist Church. Kelly Gunning, Val M., Faye M. and Yondi spoke for a class at ECU, Richmond. Staff attended the KY Mental Health Coalition 26 yr. celebration in Louisville. Staff members also attended a reception for the LFUCG workgroups that studied health and human services issues in Fayette Co. Highlighting the month was the celebration for replacing Eastern State Hospital. Kelly G., Val M. and Faye M. spoke at St. Luke UM Church. Members of Yondi and Gina B's Family class attended the "Get Motivated Seminar" held at Rupp Arena.

From Jenny Jones with the Kentucky Suicide Prevention Group

And My Life Was Forever Changed

Jenny E. Jones

Monday, March 9, 1998, began like any other day, but little did I know that I would continue to relive that day for many years to come. That was the day my mother died. Six weeks later I would begin the most intense, emotional journey of my life.

My mother's death devastated me. My father, who suffered from vascular dementia, had been living with me and my family since I had taken Mom to the hospital 2 ½ weeks before she died. Dad retreated somewhere in his mind the day Mom died—a place from where he never fully returned. For six weeks after her death I had grieved so and could not figure out how Mom could have died so suddenly. She hadn't even *really* been sick. Sure, I had taken her to the hospital...but they told me she would "be fine" the day I brought her home. She came home from the hospital and stayed with me and my family for the last five days of her life. She seemed a little tired and distant at times, but she also seemed to be getting better each day.

Sunday, the day we took Mom and Dad back to their own home, Mom hugged me and told me how much she loved me and appreciated all that we had done for her and Dad—especially during the past few weeks. I attempted to tell her that I loved her too and that I had done only what any compassionate daughter would do. She then hugged me tight and became quiet for a few seconds. This time when she said that she loved me something scared me, and I pulled back and began telling her that I would always be there for her. Little did I know that it would be the last real hug from my mother.

My husband and I took them home, got them settled in, laid out their medicines, kissed and hugged Mom and Dad goodbye, and headed for home. The next day Mom died sitting in her recliner in the den as she and Dad seemingly watched television. I got the call from the paramedics and my life was forever changed. Mom was gone. The thought of her dying had never before crossed my mind. How could this have happened? She seemed much better yesterday. How could I go on without my mother?

My brothers and I went through the motions of calling family and friends, choosing a casket, planning a funeral, and burying our mother. *Life would never be the same.* The day Mom died, my dad began looking for her. For the next four years he would ask daily, hourly, sometimes repetitively "where's your mother." The answer never changed.

For six weeks, before the autopsy report came, I would wonder how her heart could simply quit beating. For six weeks I had fleeting thoughts of the possibility of suicide followed by waves of massive guilt for even thinking that my mother would choose such a devastating act when she had a family who adored her. How could she do this to me—her daughter and most importantly me, whom she considered her best friend? For six weeks I was overwrought with guilt for having her admitted to the psych unit of the hospital instead of the coronary care unit. Over and over again I was tormented by thoughts in my mind for having made such a fatal mistake. The ER staff admitted her for psychological and emotional distress—why didn't they realize it was really her heart? After all, heart problems can kill you! Why did they not know the difference? I had never heard of depression killing anybody. Surely, there had been a mistake.

On a sunny April morning the phone rang. The deputy coroner wanted to explain the autopsy report that would be arriving at my house within a few hours. As God in His infinite wisdom would orchestrate my day that morning even before I awoke, my husband had called in and taken a vacation day at work.

Normally when the alarm went off, I would drag myself out of bed, through the shower, and on to the business of getting my daughter off to school, and then taking care of Dad. But that day I awoke to daylight and the smell of coffee and bacon. Quite to my surprise my husband was sitting on the couch with Dad, who was showered, dressed, fed, and settled in front of the television. So when the phone rang, I was rested—and most importantly, not alone.

The deputy coroner was thorough, apologetic, expressed his condolences, and asked if I needed anything. He explained that Mom had taken a lethal dose of a prescription that was not on her current list of medications. I explained that it was the antidepressant that she had been on for 28 years until the doctor changed her medication during her last hospital stay. [*Was this what was going on the day that I took her to the hospital? Had she been suicidal that day and not told me? Is that why she had enough medicine at home to kill herself?*] I was glad that the deputy coroner said he was sorry—I needed someone to blame! I do not remember most of what he said but he gave me his name and number in case I had any questions. By the way, I had a question: Why did she do it?

Suicide didn't make sense. How could a loving, wonderful, Christian mentor to so many people choose to end her own life? She was so admired by her family, friends, and church community; and, she hid her depression and numerous hospital stays over the years so well. How could she die by suicide—such a seemingly socially unacceptable way to die? Were we not supposed to just "pull ourselves up by the bootstraps" and make the most of life? Interestingly, I didn't have the same thoughts about my aunt who had died with cancer. Could it be that complications of depression really can kill you?

Did I know that an average of 1 person every 16.2 minutes dies by suicide? Did I know that suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in the United States? Did I know that the risk of suicide increases in the elderly? Did I know that the elderly make up approx. 12.4% of the population but represent 16.0% of the suicides in the United States? Did I know that one of the leading causes of suicide among the elderly is depression? No. My understanding of suicide was simple—in our family, it was kept a secret.

When the news came, my brothers and I did what we had been taught to do—we didn't talk about it. After all, what were we supposed to do, call everybody that we knew and tell them that the preliminary autopsy report had been a mistake? Mom wouldn't have wanted that—she was the one who had taught us to not talk about it. Yes, it was subtle. There were multiple suicides in her family but rarely were they mentioned. We weren't taught to lie; she just didn't want anybody to see the pain associated with being a survivor of suicide. We decided to do what Mom would have wanted—we made the decision to not talk about it. The decision would later be overturned by panic attacks, guilt, depression, and the risk of perpetuating suicide.

The possibility of her dying had never crossed my mind—and I certainly had never considered her ever choosing to leave us. How could I have had such a thought on the night that she died! One of my brothers would later tell me that he stood by Mom's casket looking at her and thinking, "I don't know what Mom did, but when the toxicology report comes back we will know what was powerful enough to take somebody as strong as Mom down." In our defense, we did not have the privilege of being straightforward about her suicide from the beginning—the preliminary autopsy report stated that she had died of coronary failure. It made sense to us—she'd had a mechanical heart valve for ten years.

Someone asked me a few years ago if I had completed all of the stages of grief—as if the stages were a specific, chronological set of phases that you progress through and complete in a timely manner. Had I progressed through denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance? A better question to me was, "would it ever end?"

Denial? Yes, sometimes I still cannot believe that my mother is gone. For many years I could not believe that she *chose* to leave me. Is suicide a conscious choice, or is it the fatal result of depression? Mom was diagnosed with melancholia at 4 years of age in 1927. She continued to battle depression for the remainder of her 74 years of life. The doctors described it as a chemical imbalance—most likely hereditary and sometimes situational. Should we *blame* her for the result her illness? Do we blame other people for the result of their illness when it is cancer, coronary disease, stroke, or diabetes? Had she taken care of herself? Yes, she had been on antidepressants virtually since their existence, endured numerous stays in psych units, experienced shock therapy, and gone to counseling throughout much of her adult life.

Anger? Yes, I have experienced anger, as do many of my aunts, uncles and cousins who have experienced the result of suicide during their life. Most of my anger stemmed from one question: How could my mother do this to me when she knew *exactly* how it felt for a daughter to lose her mother to suicide? Mom was only 19 years of age when she lost her mother to suicide—during the following years she also lost a sister, a niece, a nephew and other family members to suicide. Those are personal, family experiences which helped me to realize that not talking about suicide was killing our family.

Keeping suicide a secret perpetuates suicide. Some people believe if you mention suicide it will give someone the idea to kill one's self. That has proven to be a myth. Asking about suicidal intent has been shown to lower anxiety, open communication, and lower the risk of an impulsive act for a person considering suicide. In fact, most people do not want to die—they just want the psychological pain to end.

Bargaining? Yes—mostly with God. Searching for the answer to the unanswerable question, *Why?* Eventually, I came to learn that finding the answer to *Why?* is not nearly as important as finding the answer to *Why do people not know that depression can be deadly?*

Depression? Yes, it is like a toxic autoimmune disease which affects the whole body. Is it treatable? Yes. Does everybody who experiences depression die by suicide? No, does everybody who experiences a headache need brain surgery? Do treatable diseases of all different origins have the propensity to kill a person? Yes.

Acceptance? I have learned that accepting is not the same as agreeing. Yes, I have accepted that my mother had a disease that ultimately caused her to end her life. I have accepted that the real question of *Why?* may never be answered for me in this lifetime. I have accepted that I did everything I knew to do during my time of caring for her and for my dad. And I have accepted that the circumstances of my mother's death do not define her life.

I am dedicated to suicide prevention and the efforts of the Kentucky Suicide Prevention Group. My earnest belief is that if even one person will be spared the pain associated with being a survivor of suicide then my mother's death will not be without purpose.

Jenny E. Jones is a CPA, has a degree in accounting, a master's degree in business administration, a master's degree in mental health counseling, is an associate professor of accounting and office systems technology at Bluegrass Community and Technical College, currently serves as chair of the steering committee of the Kentucky Suicide Prevention Group, and works with survivor's of suicide and survivor groups.

NAMI Lexington (KY), Inc.

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Lexington, KY 40508

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By joining NAMI Lexington, you also become a member of NAMI Kentucky and NAMI National. Please return this membership dues/donation form with your check to:

NAMI Lexington (KY), 498 Georgetown Street Suite 201, Lexington, KY 40508

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CHECK ONE:

_____ Student-\$10.00

_____ Individual-\$20.00

_____ Family-\$35.00

_____ Professional-\$50

_____ Organization-\$100.00

_____ Corporate-\$250.00

_____ Open Door-Those With limited means/fixed income are invited to join at a reduced rate (minimum of \$3.00)

If you change your address, please let us know so that we may change your information in our database.

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DONATIONS

If you wish to make a donation, please list the amount here and make check or money order payable to NAMI Lexington and send it to the address listed above.

Amount of Donation \$ _____

You may also make a donation ONLINE only with a Visa or MasterCard ! <http://lexington.nami.org> under Membership.