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Reports from National Convention to be Topic of July 14 Education Meeting

Several NAMI Mid-Carolina members are fortunate enough to be able to attend the NAMI National Convention in San Francisco this month. At the July Education meeting, several people will give a report on the session they found most helpful or interesting. Here is your chance to hear about a particular illness, the latest research, national advocacy issues, or promoting employment and financial stability. Join us for this informative session on Tuesday, July 14, at 6 pm in the parlor of Trenholm Road United Methodist Church, 3401 Trenholm Road.

Scholarships Available for DBSA Conference

The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) will hold a National Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana, on September 10-13, and the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), in the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), is planning on providing financial support to consumers of mental health services who would like to participate. The purpose of the scholarships is to foster transformation of mental health care to focus on recovery.

Please note: To be eligible for this scholarship, a completed application and letter of recommendation must be received via U.S. mail and postmarked by July 10, 2009. Also note these scholarships are contingent on funding and availability. A scholarship application and more information about the conference are available at: www.DBSAlliance.org/conference2009.

President's Letter

By Buddy Wier



All of us should be very pleased with the opportunity NAMIWalks and NAMI present to create an atmosphere in our community where mental illnesses are recognized as treatable illnesses of the brain. On behalf of NAMI Mid-Carolina, I would like to thank the 2009 NAMIWalks Committee and Walk Chair Eileen Schell for a grand success. Would you like to work on the 2010 Committee? Please let us know.

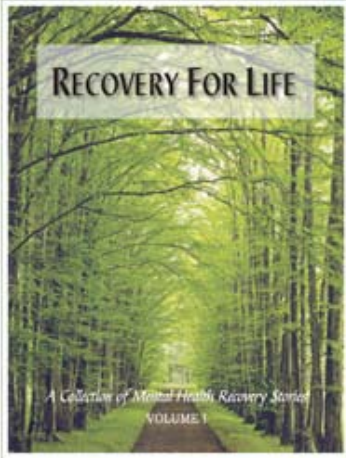
A year ago when new officers were elected, the board was asked to adopt the philosophy "Let's go out and make some mistakes". Of course, I did not want us to really make mistakes. I wanted everyone to adopt the philosophy that it is okay to try something new. Even if one makes a mistake, most are not awful. The May 20th Funky Winkerbean comic espoused this same idea in a commencement ceremony address, "Don't be afraid to risk making new mistakes because they might not turn out to be mistakes after all."

I sense the success and excitement of NAMIWalks has put a new spring into NAMI Mid-Carolina's step. May I ask each of you to seize the ideas you have about what NAMI can do to make the lives of those with mental illness better by acting on your ideas? Everyone has many good ideas! We need to bring some of them to reality.

We all sense NAMI's enhanced energy and ability. There are so many successes and areas where NAMI has grown that I cannot mention them all. As an example of taking a risk let me highlight the *In Our Own Voice* (IOOV) program. Michael Stockdell took a risk creating a bold plan with lofty goals back in the fall. Remarkably, in less than five months, the IOOV presenters have exceeded their goal to have 20 IOOV presentations in front of 500 people during the year. IOOV has actually made 26 presentations to over 600 people, and over half the year remains! Congratulations! How high will the numbers go? By trying new things and new ways, we make progress, and we help more people. Thank you for all you do to help others.



SC SHARE's Effort to Reach Young People Receives National Funding



In August 2007, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) announced the availability of award funds to support state efforts to promote and expand the Campaign for Mental Health Recovery (CMHR). Specifically, the awards provided resources for infrastructure development of state consumer run

organizations to facilitate the provision of statewide technical assistance, training, and materials that supported the Campaign's goals of recovery and the promotion of social inclusion. Twelve organizations were selected to receive the awards, including SC SHARE in West Columbia.

SC SHARE's project was designed to reach young people between the ages of 18 and 25 who are not necessarily college students, but rather those who live in rural areas of the state. SC SHARE delivered a message of hope by enlisting the help of a young adult spokesperson, Lloyd Hale, who shared his story of recovery with audiences in South Carolina. The project also developed and made available a booklet of mental health consumer stories. The booklet includes stories of recovery from several individuals who encountered a variety of situations which could have deterred their recovery.

The booklet *Recovery for Life*, can be downloaded at: www.scsshare.com. The project continues to move forward, and Mr. Hale has been invited to present in a CMHR Webcast in the upcoming months.

Acupuncture for Mood and Stress Related Disorders

By Bill Skelton, D.Ac.

As the popularity and availability of acupuncture increases, so has our understanding of how useful it can be as an adjunctive therapy in traditional western medicine. Research into the benefits of acupuncture for anxiety, depression, posttraumatic stress and substance abuse is producing promising results. There is a wide range of research to investigate acupuncture as a treatment modality for mood disorders.

The National Institutes of Health has funded over 20 clinical trials for acupuncture and depression, 25 for acupuncture and anxiety, and three for acupuncture and posttraumatic stress. In 2008, the Pentagon began research into using acupuncture and other therapies to treat troops impacted by combat stress and brain damage. A University of Arizona study of pregnant women with mild to moderate depression treated with acupuncture found that 70% of the women experienced at least a 50% reduction of symptoms. Those results were comparable to the success rate of psychotherapy and medication.

Physicians are embracing acupuncture treatment as part of their standard care for mood and stress related conditions because of the strong evidence of its effectiveness. They recognize the value in having another treatment resource to assist in the cases where patients are not helped by conventional treatment, have need of additional treatment, or have compliance issues. The safety, efficacy and cost effectiveness of acupuncture make it a sensible fit in modern medicine.

Photos from NAMI Walks Awards Dinner



NAMI Board Member, Mike Stockdale and his wife, Susan.



Shamala McFadden accepts an award on behalf of Long's Drugs.



Bobbie Lesesne, Peer Support Coordinator for the South Carolina Department of Mental Health, leads one of NAMI Mid-Carolina's Connection groups on Thursday nights at 6 pm. NAMI Connection is a peer-led support group for people who have a mental illness.

Through her experience as a peer support trainer for the Columbia Area Mental Health Center, Ms. Lesesne began to take more and more trainings through NAMI and other mental health agencies that have qualified her to lead a Connection support group for NAMI Mid-Carolina.

She says her current group was formed in the spring and has just taken off to have several regularly attending members. She feels very dedicated to this group and is excited to help provide more options for others to get involved with NAMI Mid-Carolina through this new Thursday night group.

There are now four NAMI Connection groups a week, and a support group for family members is also held concurrently with the Tuesday and Thursday groups:

- Mondays at 6:00 pm, Bridges Clubhouse, 2015 Commerce Dr., Cayce
- Tuesdays at 6:00 pm (except for the second Tuesday of each month), Trenholm Road United Methodist Church (TRUMC), 3401 Trenholm Rd.
- Wednesdays at 3:00 pm, Dorn VA Hospital, Building 106, Room A-237
- Thursdays at 6:00 pm, TRUMC

Ms. Lesesne says one of the most important principles of her group is that she is a facilitator, not a clinician. She has several tools to help people find understanding on their own, such as emotional and crisis identification posters. However, she says her role is to "offer support, build trust and a sense of confidence without trying to solve the person's problem for them."

Interview by Anita T. Baker

New and Renewing Members

Richard & Annie Blencowe
John Higgins
Jane Lawther & Don Robinson
Bobbie Lesesne
Sarah McCrory
Ernest J. Williams, Jr.

Donations and Memorials

Richard & Annie Blencowe
John Higgins
Marilynn Knight (in memory of Alex Wier)
Myrestine and Regina Malloy (in memory of Alex Wier)
Trinity Presbyterian Church

Journaling Has Power

By Jessica L. Burton

Journaling is what can keep you from feeling hopeless. I've been writing in a journal since the fourth grade, and with every new entry—there is a new beginning. No matter what is going on in my life, I always make the effort to set aside a good 30 minutes alone with my journal. Through my words, I write about my thoughts, my aspirations, and anything random that would happen to me. Journaling offers a sense of release, and it allows me to breathe.

Living with a mental condition is no easy feat. For me, it can sometimes feel as though I have the weight of the world on my shoulders, and I sometimes feel like there is no method of being able to express myself. But as soon as I pick up a pen and start writing, I am on a journey to being creative and feeling like that weight, no matter how heavy it is, will be lifted piece by piece.

I know that with every line I write, no one can enter my world, snatch my joy, rob me of my ambition, or do anything to separate me from myself. That's what I hope will happen to you. When you use journaling as an escape, try to realize that it will help you to understand that your life belongs to you, and any anxiety you have will be almost eradicated. The size of your journal makes no difference; what matters are the emotions you build upon and all that you allow yourself to feel.

***"I am very proud to be a part of NAMI – [NAMI] does a phenomenal job of helping people cope with mental illnesses."
- Bobbie Lesesne, NAMI Connection group leader***

Return Service Requested

You can also view the Brain Storm
at www.namimidcarolina.org

Wednesdays 7/1, 7/8, 7/15, 7/22,
7/29: 3 pm NAMI Connection
Dorn VA Bldg 106, Room A-237

Thursdays 7/2, 7/9, 7/16, 7/23, 7/30
6 pm NAMI Connection and Family
Support Group, TRUMC

Mondays 7/6, 7/13, 7/20, 7/27
6 pm NAMI Connection, Bridges
Clubhouse, 2015 Commerce,
Cayce

Tuesdays 7/7, 7/21, 7/28
6 pm NAMI Connections and
Family Support Group, Trenholm
Road United Methodist Church
(TRUMC), 3401 Trenholm Rd.

Tuesday 7/14
6 pm, Education Meeting, TRUMC
(see story page 1)

Sunday, Oct. 11, 2 pm
Out of the Darkness Walk for
Suicide Awareness and Prevention

Nov. 13-14, NAMI State
Conference, Charleston



American Foundation *for* Suicide Prevention

AFSP, SPAN USA Merger Complete; National Suicide Prevention Efforts Strengthened

As of May 1, two of the nation's leading suicide prevention organizations, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) and Suicide Prevention Action Network USA (SPAN USA), have merged to strengthen advocacy and to have a greater influence on public policy. SPAN USA is now the public policy division of AFSP and will spearhead the Foundation's advocacy and policy initiatives from Washington, DC.

"Suicide is a public health problem that claims a life every 16 minutes in the United States. Despite this fact, the issue is rarely discussed, often surrounded by stigma, and not seen as a national priority," AFSP Executive Director Robert Gebbia said. "This merger and the establishment of AFSP's new public policy council seek to address this by expanding grassroots advocacy and bringing more awareness to this issue."

"The public policy council's initial goal is to advance suicide prevention efforts within the current national debate surrounding healthcare reform. The long-term goal will be an aggressive policy agenda for suicide prevention at the national, state and local levels," said Michael Ballard, chair of AFSP's new public policy council and former chairman of SPAN USA.