

**October 2009**

Circulation 2500+

## Cognitive Behavior Therapy to be topic of October 13 Education Meeting

Louise Will-Wallace, Ph.D., will be the speaker for the October Education meeting. Dr. Will-Wallace graduated from Vanderbilt with a doctorate in Clinical Psychology in 1988. She has been working at the VA Medical Center since 1991 and has had a private practice for over 10 years. She has been extensively involved in treating depression and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and emphasizes the importance and impact of our self-esteem and relationships in our quality of life and overall mental health.

Dr. Will-Wallace's subject will be Cognitive Behavior Therapy, also known as CBT. CBT is the therapy most extensively researched and has proven to be effective in treating depression, anxiety and PTSD and other disorders.

Please plan to attend this informative session on Tuesday, October 13 at 6 pm at Trenholm Road United Methodist Church, 3401 Trenholm Road.

## Suicide Awareness and Prevention Walk on Sunday, October 11

Did you know over 500 people die by suicide in South Carolina every year? Come help raise awareness about this important issue at the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Out of the Darkness Walk. Register ahead of time online at [outofthedarkness.org](http://outofthedarkness.org). Or just come to Riverfront Park on Sunday, October 11. Registration begins at 1 pm, and the Walk is at 2 pm. At 3:30 pm, there will be a special remembrance ceremony for those who have died.

**Past President's Letter**

By Caroline Meyer



There is a wonderful scene in the movie "Alfie" in which Lynn Redgrave is at a fancy hair salon, hoping for a new style that might lure a boyfriend, or at least help her feel better about herself. However, when she looks in the mirror, she realizes that she has spent another wad of money on a hairdo that clearly makes her feel no less miserable. The next scene shows her dousing her newly styled hair in a public water fountain! Then, as she walks home you get the impression by the determined expression on her face and spring in her step that she isn't about to give up. The movie's theme song then begins to play "What's it all about, Alfie?"

Which leads me to this: "What's it all about, NAMI?" We know that it's not about NAMI: how good we look, how many paid members we have, or even how much money we make on the NAMIWalk.

What it is about is NAMI being there when one more family is brought to its knees, when an outstanding teenager with a college scholarship in the bag suddenly begins to act so strangely that even graduating from high school is in doubt, when a spouse's fears become so consuming that even leaving the house is impossible, and yes it may even be you, who dreads each day, whose most compelling imaginations are how to end it all.

As I think back to how NAMI Mid-Carolina has been here for us, not only at the beginning of our stunning reality but even now, my heart beats contentedly. I still don't know doodle about all the medical stuff, but that's okay. I can call NAMI South Carolina, and Bill or Corinne can tell me.

I think of other families and friends whom I have come to love and respect. It makes me smile to remember those who insisted that NAMI material come in a plain brown envelope but who now have seen (mainly through *Family-to-Family*) that there is no blame or shame in having a mental illness.

What it is all about is NAMI working with the other mental health organizations, such as Mental Health America, SC SHARE, Work in Progress, Columbia Area Mental Health, and any other individual or organization whose heart is on the goal.

So. What's it all about? It's about not giving up – never, ever, ever giving up; and finding out for yourself how NAMI can be here for you.

XOXOXO, Caroline Meyer

PS: Thanks to Buddy, who gave me his space this month, while he trekked across Europe!





## **Mental Awareness Week Presentations at Dorn VA**

In honor of Mental Illness Awareness Week, the Dorn VA will have presentations and displays in Room D100 of Building 106 on Thursday, October 8 from noon until 4 pm. The public is invited. Presentations are scheduled on the hour, and include In Our Own Voice, The Alzheimer's Epidemic, Double Trouble (about the dual diagnosis of substance abuse and mental illness), and Mental Health Resources. For more information, contact Louise Will-Wallace at 776-6395.

## **New and Renewing Members**

JoAn and Sparky Douglas  
Warren Garrison, MD  
Debbie Horton  
Carolyn Logue  
Shelly McGeorge  
Michael Stockdell  
Ruth Weaver

## **Donations and Memorials**

Warren Garrison, MD  
Debbie Horton

## **NAMI SC Conference in Charleston November 13-14**

The 2009 NAMI South Carolina Annual Conference will be held at the Charleston Embassy Suites, November 13-14, 2009.

The conference begins Friday evening at 5:30 pm with a social hour, followed by an awards ceremony and DJ Sugar Ray Allen.

The conference continues Saturday, November 14, from 9 am until 4 pm. The morning session will feature NAMI National's Director of Legislative Affairs, Andrew Sperling.

Morning breakouts will feature sessions on mobile crisis and urgent care, Breaking the Silence, the Recovery Model, and "Ask the Lawyer".

The luncheon speaker will be Mindy Harmon, who will tell her personal story and screen her film "To Ride A Dark Horse."

Afternoon sessions include Council Meetings and breakout sessions on why adolescents are at risk for substance abuse, dual diagnosis, recovery, and "Ask the Doctor".

Finally, the closing speaker will be Mark S. George, MD, Distinguished Professor of Psychiatry, Radiology and Neurosciences and Director of the MUSC Center for Advanced Imaging Research (CAIR) and the Brain Stimulation Laboratory (BSL). He will speak on "Horizons for Treatments."

The cost is \$60 for current NAMI members and \$25 for current client/consumer members. A limited number of scholarships are available from NAMI Mid-Carolina. For an application, please call 803-296-5621 and leave a message or e-mail Eileen.Schell@PalmettoHealth.org.

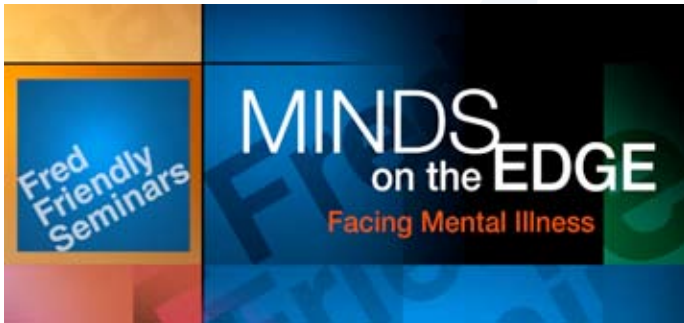
For reservations contact Embassy Suites, 5055 International Blvd., North Charleston, SC 29418, (843) 747-1882. Please reference "National Alliance on Mental Illness." All accommodations are two-bed suites with a pullout sofa. Room rates are \$139 for Nov. 13 or 14, 2009.

For more information or to register, contact NAMI South Carolina at (800) 788-5131.

## **Invitation to Free Informational Webinar on Prescription Savings Program on Oct. 8**

On October 8, from 1-2 pm (Eastern Time), NAMI will host an informative webinar about ways in which you can help uninsured Americans gain better access to prescription medicines. This event, moderated by Liz Smith, director of NAMI's Center for Leadership Development, will feature Amy Niles, chair of Medical Relations/Advocacy of Together Rx Access, to discuss the impact of being uninsured and how Together Rx Access, a prescription savings program, can help eligible uninsured residents gain immediate and meaningful savings on hundreds of brand-name prescription products right at their neighborhood pharmacy.

To register and receive more information about this valuable webinar, e-mail Annie Suliga at annies@nami.org. Once you are registered, more details and information on Together Rx Access will be sent to you.



## Minds on the Edge to be Broadcast on PBS October 9, 10 pm

*MINDS ON THE EDGE: Facing Mental Illness* connects the dots between personal dilemmas facing individuals and families who are living with mental illness, medical practices that can be obstacles to treatment, and public policies that all too often fall short in providing support that could make a positive difference.

The one-hour television program zeros in on wrenching and confounding situations that are playing out every day in homes and hospital ERs, on city streets and school campuses, in courtrooms and in jails, as Americans struggle with the challenges of severe mental illness.

Produced for PBS by the Fred Friendly Seminars using their signature format of a hypothetical scenario, the program considers the case of a college student who develops mental illness while at school. Her professor knows something is wrong, but is unsure how to approach her and whether it is even legal to contact her parents. Upset and confused when they see their daughter, her parents do not know where to turn and are shocked to discover how limited their options are when they try to seek medical help.

The program also explores the circumstances of an adult who has coped with his mental illness until his mother dies, and then he is left without critical support. As his mental health unravels, and he is unable to get treatment or maintain his home, he is arrested for a minor crime and absorbed into the criminal justice system. For him it is the beginning of a merry-go-round of homelessness and jail that has become all too common for many individuals who are living with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and other severe mental illnesses.

On the interactive website, [mindsoneedge.org](http://mindsoneedge.org), *House* star Peter Jacobson says, "If I can talk about mental illness, so can you." This is an important opportunity to engage the public and fight stigma with open dialogue. The website is full of ideas about getting the word out via social networking, as well as more traditional options such as inviting your friends and family over to watch together, or by organizing a screening at your place of worship.

**Be a part of it, and a voice for progress.**

## Mike Fitzpatrick, Executive Director of NAMI, Issues Call for Health Care Reform

Washington, D.C.—Michael J. Fitzpatrick, executive director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) released the following statement on President Obama's remarks on health care to the Joint Session of Congress:

"NAMI agrees with President Obama that the time for action on health care reform is now. It is time for both Democrats and Republicans to come together and deliver on what, for too many years, have only been promises.

Mental illness—like most illnesses—does not discriminate. It affects Democrats and Republicans alike. It affects the young and the old. Too many parents are forced to confront "the sheer helplessness and terror" that comes when their children—at any age—become gravely ill.

That is the experience of NAMI members. It is the experience of too many Americans. For those who already have health insurance, health care reform will prohibit denial of coverage due to pre-existing conditions, arbitrary caps on annual or lifetime coverage or excessive charges for out-of-pocket expenses.

NAMI also will continue to work for four key areas of reform.

- Full parity of insurance coverage for mental illness and addictive disorders in all private and public health plans.
- Full integration of mental and physical health care, including early identification and intervention for mental illness in children and adolescents. People with serious mental illness die on average 25 years younger than the rest of the population. On average, a gap of almost 10 years exists between the onset of symptoms and intervention.
- Elimination of the existing prohibition against Medicaid dollars being used for inpatient psychiatric or substance abuse treatment—the kind of discrimination that leads to dumping people from hospitals into homeless shelters.
- Improved data collection, outcomes measurement and accountability. Good numbers are essential to reform and the measurement of progress, failure or success. Data collection in mental health care lags far behind other health disciplines. Federal health care reform must create a framework for state mental health care systems to develop comprehensive, uniform, meaningful data in order to move into the future.

We call on Congress to move forward.

Do not retreat. Do not stand still.

Do not forget that mental illness can strike anyone at any time. The time for action is now."

Return Service Requested

You can also view the Brain Storm  
at [www.namimidcarolina.org](http://www.namimidcarolina.org)

Thursdays 10/1, 10/8, 10/15, 10/22,  
10/29, 6 pm NAMI Connection,  
Trenholm Road United Methodist  
Church (TRUMC), 3401 Trenholm Rd.

Mondays 10/5, 10/12, 10/19, 10/26  
6 pm NAMI Connection, Bridges  
Clubhouse, 2015 Commerce, Cayce

Tuesdays 10/6, 10/20, 10/27  
6 pm NAMI Connection and Family  
Support Group, TRUMC

Wednesdays 10/7, 10/14, 10/21,  
10/28, 3 pm NAMI Connection  
Dorn VA Bldg 106, Room A-237

Thursday, 10/8, 12-4 pm  
Mental Illness Awareness event,  
Dorn VA (see story page 2)

Sunday, 10/11, 2 pm  
Out of the Darkness Walk for Suicide  
Awareness and Prevention  
(see story page 1)

Tuesday, 10/13  
6 pm, Education Meeting, TRUMC  
(see story page 1)

Nov. 13 & 14  
NAMI State Conference, Charleston  
(see story page 2)

## NAMI Launches New PSA Campaign: "Connect, and you'll find out you're not alone."



The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) has released "Puzzle Pieces," a new public service announcement (PSA) initiative that encourages people to connect with each other through NAMI to help themselves, their families and their friends who live with mental illness.

The "Puzzle Pieces" campaign includes four 60-second and three 30-second radio PSAs featuring testimonials from individuals and families that describe their experiences with mental illness and the role NAMI played in their recovery. The television PSA is a 30-second spot that conveys the support and strength NAMI members give each other. Print PSAs are also available.

To view and listen to the NAMI PSA spots, visit [www.nami.org/psa](http://www.nami.org/psa).

NAMI leaders and members are dedicated to improving the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness. As a national organization, NAMI focuses on mental health education, support and advocacy efforts to offer hope, raise awareness and initiate change throughout the United States.