



The Times

NAMI Pinellas County, Florida
National Alliance on Mental Illness

Clearwater - Dunedin - Largo - Oldsmar - Palm Harbor - Pinellas Park - St. Petersburg - Tarpon Springs

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Thursday, Sept. 4th
7:00 pm - NAMI Pinellas Education Meeting.
Dr. Kevin Butler discusses "Symptoms of Suicide"

Monday, Sept. 8th
Family-to-Family Training
Sept. 8th - Nov. 24th

Thursday, Sept. 18th
7:30 pm - Family Support Group Meeting

Thursday, Oct. 2nd
7:00 pm - NAMI Pinellas Education Meeting features Dr. Linda Lefler from Suncoast Community Mental Health Center, Inc.

Friday, Oct. 10th, 6:30 pm
AWARDS DINNER
CHOCOLATE
EXTRAVAGANZA

Sunday, Oct. 12th
END THE MYSTERY
SUNSET STROLL

Thursday, Oct. 16th
7:30 pm - Family Support Group Meeting

All meetings are held at:
Hospice of the Florida Suncoast
5771 Roosevelt Blvd.
Building 100
The Gathering Place
Clearwater, FL 33760

HELP "END THE MYSTERY" WITH CHOCOLATE!

IT'S A FACT! The most frequently asked question in the world is.....Where's the chocolate? OKAY, I made that up. I personally believe it is one of the major food groups. Dieticians disagree. But it is a lot of fun; so, NAMI Pinellas decided to use chocolate as a theme during Mental Illness Awareness Week October 5th - 12th.

Our annual awards banquet will be a **CHOCOLATE EXTRAVAGANZA** on Friday, October 10th. Please consider being a major sponsor to support NAMI. Sponsor levels are on our web site, or you can call 727-209-0890 for more information. We've planned a sponsor reception so you can interact with our chocolatiers before dinner, so don't miss out on this celebration!

Your sponsorship at this major event helps NAMI provide education, advocacy and support programs in Pinellas County for consumers and their families.

'SUICIDE PREVENTION' BY DR. KEVIN BUTLER TOPIC FOR SEPTEMBER 4TH

Psychiatrist **Dr. Kevin Butler** will tell us how to recognize the symptoms of suicide and what to watch for if you think a person has suicidal thoughts, plans, or previous attempts at the Education meeting September 4th during Suicide Prevention Month.

Dr. Butler is the Director of the Crisis Stabilization Program at Windmoor Healthcare, as well as the Crisis Unit Director at PEMHS.

Dr. Butler is the President of Behavioral Healthcare Options, his private practice in Clearwater, and has been a psychiatrist in the Tampa Bay area for the past 20 years.

Elliott and Dianne Steele also will speak at this session to provide an overview of the upcoming Showcases at **Vincent House**.

The awards banquet gives us a chance to honor individuals in the community for their leadership, advocacy and commitment to consumers. The night is always a lot of fun, so please join us as a sponsor or purchase tickets for your friends and family.

The weekend ends with our **End The Mystery Sunset Stroll** at North Straub Park on Sunday October 12th. There's a registration form on page 6, so please gather a team together and stroll around the park to help us fight stigma, advocate for insurance parity and enhance awareness of the illness.

The slogan **End The Mystery** helps us focus attention on mental health issues. We strive to explain the concept of recovery, to erase stigma associated with mental illness and to enhance public awareness of the problems faced by consumers and families.

Until there is no "mystery" associated with mental illness, NAMI will continue to sponsor our annual events, creating a forum for community education and action. Please join us and become empowered to end the misconceptions and de-mystify the fear and misunderstanding people have about mental illness. Thanks for your support!

Gay Hawk
Vice President, Board of Directors

OCTOBER EDUCATION MEETING FEATURES DR. LINDA LEFLER

Our October 2nd Guest Speaker is **Dr. Linda Lefler**, Medical Director, at Suncoast Center for Community Mental Health, Inc. in St. Petersburg. Suncoast Center offers 40 different programs for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services for Children, Adults, Seniors, and Families. They include assessment, prevention, outreach, therapy, case management, support and intervention, medication management, social support, and jail diversion. Suncoast Center is celebrating 60 years of service to the community, and we are honored Dr. Lefler can speak at our October education meeting.

THIS ISSUE OF
The Times
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YOU FOR YOUR
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SUPPORT.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

NAMI PINELLAS COUNTY

Summer is almost over – I cannot believe it! Where did it go? It must have evaporated! And, now, it is time to get back to work as the next two months are chock-filled with lots of exciting events.

To be honest, “**chocolate**” is on my mind – especially, since our October “**Mental Illness Awareness Week**” theme this year is “**Chocolate Extravaganza.**” Of course, sitting here at the computer looking at the “Savor the Date” card we sent out so you could mark your calendars, only makes me crave more chocolate! (Samples? What samples?)

We are so excited that the following **Chocolatiers** will be featured at the Special Sponsors Reception — **Chocolates by Michelle, Vanessa’s Fine Chocolates**, and **Choxotica Chocolates**, to name a few. This is our way of thanking Sponsors for supporting our events! Won’t you consider being a sponsor so you can attend the special reception?

As you know, this is our annual fundraiser and we encourage all of you to please participate. We need the funds so that we can continue to produce this newsletter, conduct our signature educational programs, Picnic in the Park, Holiday Party, and operate our affiliate.

The Awards Dinner will be filled with fun, (**chocolate**), delicious dinner, (**chocolate**), dancing to our favorite DJ, (**chocolate**), gift baskets to win, (**chocolate**); and, of course, awards to honor those in the community who have gone above and beyond; and did I mention “**Chocolate**”?

We are honored to have **Maxene Obenschain Kleier**, author of “**Possessed Mentalities**,” as our Guest Speaker. Her riveting book



President Judy Turnbaugh

will make you cry as she tells the true story about her two daughters who both developed schizophrenia; then, one killed the other. Ms. Kleier recounts the circumstances and makes the reader realize how cruel the disease can be. As a long-time NAMI advocate, Ms. Kleier wrote the book with the hopes of helping others understand the importance of advocating for appropriate treatment for persons with mental illnesses.

You can purchase the book prior to the event so you will be able to follow along with her presentation. The book can be purchased at South Florida University Barnes and Noble (5th Avenue and 3rd Street, South, St. Petersburg) and at Haslam’s Book Store (2025 Central Avenue in St. Petersburg). A limited number will be on sale at the event. She will generously donate \$4 for each book purchased and will autograph books you already have purchased.

As you can see, we have lots planned, but, we need **Y-O-U-R** help to obtain sponsors for the

Continued on page 3

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This newsletter is written and published by the Board of Directors of NAMI Pinellas County, Florida. Edited and designed by Board Member Gay Hawk of Windmoor Healthcare. To contribute articles, e-mail to: turnj@aol.com

**BECOME A MEMBER OF
NAMI PINELLAS COUNTY**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

dinner; donors for the gift baskets; and to purchase tickets to the events. The individual ticket price will be \$60 and includes the Awards Dinner, the Sunset Stroll, and a T-shirt, of course!

We also need "**Stroll Teams**" for the **Sunset Stroll!** This event is to bring public awareness to mental illness. So grab your friends, family members, co-workers and form a team. We stroll within the confines of N. Straub Park at a leisurely pace and then participate in the heart-warming candlelight presentation by **Elliott Steele**.

Invitations will be mailed soon. Please RSVP to Jane Watters or Cheryl Harris at (727) 209-0890, and they will provide all of the details. I hope to see you at all of the fabulous (**chocolate**) events!

RESURRECTION HOUSE

Resurrection House is accepting applications at this time. As the economy spirals downward, I wanted to ensure that you were aware our program is for not only the homeless family with minor children, but also for the working poor family with minor children. Many are hanging on by their fingernails at this time and one paycheck away from disaster.

These families are trying to do all the responsible things, get to work, pay the bills, etc., but it is so much more challenging now. Refer them for a telephone intake, 823-4742. We will conduct a brief telephone interview that determines suitability. If you are unfamiliar with our program, visit our website, www.floridaresurrectionhouse.com.

**Cynthia H. Sinclair, President/CEO
Florida Resurrection House, Inc.
800 11th St., N., St. Petersburg**

CIT UPDATE

REFRESHER TRAINING HELD

By John Jones, NAMI Pinellas County, CIT Coordinator

It's a very exciting time for CIT here in Pinellas County. Sgt. Thomas Acker of the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office (P.C.S.O.) has been very busy promoting CIT. In July they conducted two Mental Health Seminars for civilian personnel. Thanks to the Medical Examiner's Office for providing training space. NAMI provided coffee, snacks and brochures to attendees.

Also in July, Sgt. Acker and the P.C.S.O. conducted a refresher CIT training for Sheriff's department law enforcement officers.

In addition, Sgt. Acker, PCSO, and Larry Thompson, Florida Mental Health Institute, conducted the first Regional CIT Refresher Training (8 hours) at FMHI – USF in Tampa in July. This training was for law enforcement personnel from surrounding counties including Pinellas, Hillsborough, Pasco, Polk, Manatee and Sarasota with officers attending from as far away as Ft. Myers. There were 52 officers in attendance.

Special thanks to Florida Partners in Crisis and Astra Zeneca who also sponsored this event, along with NAMI Pinellas County. ***Eight of the attending officers joined NAMI Pinellas County.***

The Mental Health Substance Abuse Coalition of Pinellas County will have our next CIT training from October 27 – 31, 2008.

CIT National Conference

The Georgia CIT Advisory Board, its statewide community partners, and trained CIT officers will proudly host the Fourth Annual **National CIT Conference in Atlanta, November 4 – 6, 2008.**

The conference will feature workshops designed to enhance practical law enforcement skills, and share highlights of national CIT models, community collaborative best practices, and issues relevant to the criminal justice, corrections and mental health professions.

The conference provides a platform for law enforcement officers to learn about and discuss innovative programs that address the needs of people with mental illness and other brain disorders who come in contact with the criminal justice system. To learn more about the conference, including how to register, donate as a sponsor, or exhibit, contact Pat Strode at 770-234-9347 or visit the NAMI Georgia Website at www.namiga.org.

Please note: November 4th is Election Day; if you plan on attending the conference, remember to cast your absentee ballot before you go!

NAMI HELPS CELEBRATE INDIA INDEPENDENCE DAY

NAMI was privileged to participate in the India Independence Day Celebration on August 16th. We had so much fun learning about the Indian culture. Dr. Krishan Batra, member of our Advisory Board, is also the President of the Federation of India Associations of Tampa Bay. All he had to say is "party" and we were "in."

The celebration included food, dancing, singing, exhibits, special guests, keynote speakers, and many wonderful exhibitors. It culminated in beautiful fireworks. NAMI shared an exhibit table with our friends from Vincent House. It was a great opportunity for us to share information about our organizations and meet new friends.

FAMILY-TO-FAMILY STARTS SEPTEMBER 8TH

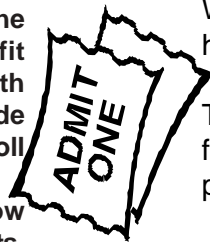
Family-to-Family is a *free* 12-week course for family and friends of individuals with serious mental illness. It is taught by trained NAMI family members. Course participants are required to attend all 12 classes on Mondays from September 8th through November 24th.

Learn about illness signs and symptoms, advocacy, coping skills, stigma, medications, problem solving and treatment resources.

Classes are held at The Hospice of the Florida Suncoast, Roosevelt Blvd., Clearwater. For more information call the **NAMI HELP LINE (727-791-3434)**

Pre-registration required.
Contact: Marianne Martin
(727) 443-3149 or email:
memartin1943@yahoo.com

Individual tickets for the annual awards benefit dinner on October 10th are only \$60 and include registration for the stroll on October 12th. Call 727-209-0890 now to purchase your tickets.



Editor's Note:

A special thanks goes to **Judy Turnbaugh, Donald Turnbaugh, John Jones and Anne Jones** for their significant contributions to this issue (and all issues, actually) of The Times. Without their writing about the many community events, meetings and topics of interest for NAMI members, we would not have a newsletter. **Thanks for all your energy and hard work !**

√ **REMEMBER TO VOTE
NOVEMBER 4TH**



Patricia Adams, left, and Pat Curtin are co-facilitators of the new Recovery and Resiliency Taskforce--Pinellas County R & R

RECOVERY AND RESILIENCY -- A NEW APPROACH

We would like to welcome you to participate in the Pinellas County R & R Taskforce. The Mission of the R & R is, "To educate, advocate and improve resources for persons within the mental health system and throughout the community while promoting recovery through choice, respect and hope."

The mental health system is changing. Recovery and Resiliency are words that are being used in relation to mental illness and or co-occurring disorders within the State of Florida. The R & R is a grass roots organization that creates more productive change within the community. We will need your participation to continue the growth that Pinellas County has already begun.

The R & R brings a message of Hope and Possibility. All consumers, family members, providers, friends and anyone else who has a stake in promoting Recovery and Resiliency are welcome at our table.

We are not about the "Best and Brightest." We are about the people, the community.....**Our Community.** We are about hopes and dreams, ideas, growth and change. Recovery and Resiliency are not just rhetoric; they are becoming reality for more and more people.

Please join us on the third Wednesday of every month and let's unite! The location is: Suncoast Wellness Center at 3822 Central Ave. in St. Petersburg. The time is 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

BUTTERWORTH RESIGNS AS HEAD OF DCF

Bob Butterworth resigned as Secretary of the Department of Children and Families In August. A hallmark of his tenure was a commitment to open government, a philosophy he carried into his role as secretary at DCF. He declared that the agency would be "transparent" and that public scrutiny would make the agency better. We congratulate him on his efforts and wish him well with future endeavors.

CONSUMER CORNER

In Memory of Chip Corell

by Steven Thompson, Co-Chair, Consumer Council

It is almost Fall here in Pinellas County and our consumer group is ready to teach our third Peer-to-Peer course. The course is a relapse prevention, consumer education course taught by consumers for consumers. We touch on areas such as diagnostic criteria for the major mental illnesses, spirituality, consumer etiquette, and much more. We are leading a course now and planning a course for the Spring of 2009.

Our consumer group is also planning a trip to the Dali Museum in St. Petersburg with Vincent House members. This trip will be paid for by the NAMI Pinellas County Consumer Council.

Speaking of the Consumer Council, we are still looking for dedicated consumers who wish to donate their time and effort in the advocacy for themselves and other consumers. We need people to attend meetings, brainstorm for ideas to help other consumers and be involved in advocacy on a National, State and local level.

If anything here interests you, please call me, Steven Thompson, at (727) 443-4715, cell (727) 709-2611 or e-mail me at: sthompson134@tampabay.rr.com. Thank you for your interest.

NAMI CONNECTIONS

NAMI Connections Consumer Support Group Meetings are well attended and continue to meet every Monday evening from 6:30 to 8:30 pm, at the Hospice of the Florida Suncoast, Bldg. 100, 5771 Roosevelt Blvd., Clearwater, FL 33760. We want to thank Terry Taggart, NAMI Connections Facilitator, for doing such an excellent job.

NAMI Connections Consumer Support Group Meetings previously held at Directions for Mental Health at New Beginnings Recovery Center on Tuesdays in Largo will be discontinued temporarily. We will notify you when it plans to resume. Sorry for the inconvenience.

If anyone is interested in becoming a NAMI Connections Consumer Support Group Facilitator, please contact Judy Turnbaugh (turnj@aol.com).

MEDIA REPORTS HMO KEPT 50% OF FLORIDA'S MEDICAID MONEY

Florida's two largest Medicaid HMOs kept 50 percent of the state money they received last year for mental health care. Florida law requires them to spend at least 80 percent on patients! **WellCare subsidiaries HealthEase and Staywell** were required to refund the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) almost \$10-million to cover the "lapse." If this has been WellCare's practice in previous years, they face many more millions in refunds, not counting any fines that may be imposed for having turned in "erroneous" reports.

Bob Sharpe, CEO of the Florida Council on Community Mental Health, called WellCare's actions "unconscionable." He added, "WellCare has never played it straight." Tampa-based WellCare had no immediate comment, but they are "revising" past financial statements to correct any "accounting errors."

WellCare says, "The Board of Directors and the entire management team are committed to the highest standards of business conduct, compliance, financial reporting and controls.

The repayment for last year could do some good if it were funneled into community mental health programs that treat low-income patients. Unfortunately, repayments tend to go back into general revenue. NAMI Pinellas County has requested that the refunded money be sent back into mental health. For example, in Pinellas County, the funds could be used to: bring back the SRT Beds; or, cut the waiting time for an appointment to a community mental health provider for a doctor's appointment from nine months to two weeks or less.

WellCare is under investigation by the Tampa U.S. Attorney's Office for suspected Medicaid fraud, after a whistleblower filed suit. Since the FBI raided WellCare's Tampa headquarters, the company's senior management has been overhauled. No criminal or civil charges have been filed, but the top three executives at the company have been replaced. Talks are underway with the U.S. Attorney that could lead to a settlement, aka plea bargain.

Florida already spends less on mental health ranking 48th on per

patient spending! The mental health and substance abuse program is the only part of Florida Medicaid that requires plans to spend a certain percentage of the money on services to patients, says AHCA. The state allows plans to use 20 percent for other things, including administration, marketing, and profits.

In 2002, the Florida Legislature created the reporting requirement and told HMOs they would have to refund some of the money to the state if they spent less than 80 percent on patient services. Last year, health plans successfully lobbied the Legislature for a provision attached to a budget bill that eliminated the 80-percent spending requirement. But, fortunately for consumers, news reporters found out about it and exposed what was happening. **Governor Crist** vetoed the provision, which reinstated the 80-percent spending requirement.

NAMI members must be vigilant during the 2009 Legislative Session, as most certainly, attempts will be made to once again increase the company's share as consumers are deprived of needed services.

A letter to the editor--August 2008
St. Petersburg Times

by Donald Turnbaugh, Past President, NAMI Pinellas County



ATTENTION CHOCOLATE LOVERS

Join us for a decadent sunset stroll
with marvelous chocolate delights at the
NAMI "END THE MYSTERY" SUNSET STROLL

SUNSET STROLL INFORMATION

- WHAT:** Sunset "Stroll" around North Straub Park, St. Petersburg
- WHEN:** Sunday, October 12, 2008—Registration at 5:30 p.m.; Stroll ends at 8 p.m.
- WHERE:** North Straub Park, Corner of 5th Ave. N. & Bayshore Drive
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
- WHY:** "End the Mystery" Mental Illness Awareness Week
The Sunset Stroll focuses on mental illness awareness
- MISSION:** Education, support and advocacy for persons with mental illness and their families—NAMI PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA

REGISTRATION (includes the stroll, t-shirt and refreshments)

PLEASE NOTE:

If you purchased a ticket to the awards dinner, your registration fee for the stroll was included!

Individual: \$ 20.00 Team Sponsorship: # _____ on team x \$20 = \$ _____

Individual Name: _____

Team Name: _____ Team Captain: _____

Address: _____ Phone No. _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____ e-mail: _____

Mail this form and check to:

NAMI Pinellas County, Florida
466—94th Avenue North
St. Petersburg, FL 33702

For information or questions:

Call Jane or Cheryl [727] 209-0890
Fax: [727] 578-9982
E-mail: Admin@NAMI -Pinellas-FL.org

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IT'S TIME ONCE AGAIN FOR THE NAMI PINELLAS AWARD DINNER & "END THE MYSTERY" SUNSET STROLL

By John and Anne Jones
Co--chairs, NAMI Pinellas Awards Banquet

Yes it's that time again--time to prepare for Mental Illness Awareness Week. We have two major events planned. First the **Awards Banquet** will be held Friday evening October 10th at Banquet Masters, 8100 Park Blvd., Pinellas Park at 6:30 pm. Our theme this year is a "Chocolate Extravaganza"-- just let your imagination run wild. We know it's going to be a lot of fun with chocolate delights for everyone.

We really need your help to make this as successful as possible. As you know we recently started conducting Peer-to-Peer courses and we have people trained to start Provider Education classes in addition to our Family-to-Family, CIT and consumer sponsorship we already support.

This awards banquet is our major fundraiser of the year. We really need you, our members and supporters to help with sponsorships for this event. Sponsorship forms can be printed off our website at www.nami-pinellas.org

Please accept the challenge to find one sponsor of any level to help support our on-going programs. This banquet is the tool we need to go outside our NAMI community and solicit support from family, friends or business associates. We have the paperwork to give them and the opportunity for them to donate to our

cause. But no one will donate unless we ask them. Please reach out and give them the opportunity to help, many people are willing to help once they know what NAMI does and they know how to help.

In addition to finding a sponsor, we also need you to join us at this fabulous event. The tickets cost \$60 and you receive a great buffet style meal, open all evening with decadent chocolate desserts and surprises. Also your ticket includes registration for the Sunset Stroll, Sunday Oct. 12th, at N. Straub Park, downtown St. Petersburg at the corner of 5th Avenue North and Bayshore Drive. The stroll registration includes hot dogs, snacks and beverages, tee shirt, chocolate delights, plus all the fun you can stand. All this and you will be doing a great service to Mental Illness Awareness. The stroll registration starts at 5:30 p.m., with the actual stroll starting at dusk.

This is a great opportunity to bring public attention to the problems faced by people with mental illness and their families. Bring family and friends to join in this memorable event. **Elliott Steele** will speak about the history of **End the Mystery**, the prospects of future clubhouses in Florida, and about dealing with mental illness through meaningful work. This talk will be conducted after sunset by candlelight and is an experience you don't want to miss.



John and Anne Jones enjoy the 2007 NAMI Pinellas Stroll.



Volunteers stroll around Straub Park last year for the END THE MYSTERY Mental Illness Awareness event. The stroll will be held in 2008 on Sunday, October 12th. Come and help us educate the public about mental illness, stigma, discrimination and recovery. If you don't attend the banquet, separate registration for the stroll is \$20. (See page 6.)

SEPTEMBER IS SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

The following is a partial Executive Summary of the 51-page report, *Suicide Prevention Efforts for Individuals with Serious Mental Illness*, prepared by the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors, March 2008. The full report can be found at: www.nasmhpd.org.

Individuals with serious mental illness (SMI) constitute about 8% of the U.S. population, but account for several times that proportion of the 32,000 suicides that occur each year in the country. For people with virtually every category of SMI, suicide is a leading cause of death.

PREDICTING SUICIDE IS DIFFICULT

Inadequate assessment of suicide risk and insufficient access to effective treatments are major contributing factors. Still, a large majority of those with SMI neither attempt nor die by suicide and predicting those who will presents a daunting clinical challenge. **There are no foolproof methods to predict suicidal behavior.** Mental health professionals must rely on clinical skills and judgment to identify, accurately assess, and manage the care of those at heightened risk for suicide.

SUICIDES COST 25 BILLION A YEAR

Suicide attempts and deaths by suicide send ripples through the U.S. economy, costing up to \$25 billion per year. However, the cost cannot be measured solely in dollars. One must also factor in the emotional toll extracted from attempt survivors and the family members and friends who are so deeply affected by both attempted and completed suicides.

Stigmatizing reactions add to the burdens survivors already bear, often intensifying isolation and secrecy. The complicated grief that can accompany surviving a loved one's suicide may itself elevate the risk for suicide. People with SMI, who have previously attempted suicide, advocate for a more robust and supportive system of care.

They also seek opportunities to share their personal experiences with others facing similar situations and find relief when they do. Survivors of a loved one's suicide seek greater access to survivor support groups for all who are bereaved by suicide—places where they can connect with others who are experiencing similar grief.

CALLS FOR HELP

Many of those who die by their own hand have sought services from an array of community-level service providers in the days and weeks prior to their suicides. Consequently, telephone crisis services, emergency departments, inpatient and outpatient mental health services, and primary care settings all hold the potential of significantly reducing the toll of suicide by improving internal practices and inter-agency collaboration.

These improvements must include training staff to deliver the various effective treatments that have been shown to reduce attempts and completed suicides in those with mental illnesses. These evidence-based treatments must be combined with more comprehensive risk management strategies, including reducing access to lethal means such as firearms and pharmaceuticals.

Delivering effective care through integrated delivery systems is key to achieving meaningful reductions in suicidal behaviors by people with SMI. These improved delivery systems should be complemented by initiatives to reduce stigma and increase understanding and support for individuals with mental illness.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a 24-hour, toll-free suicide prevention service available to anyone in suicidal crisis.
If you need help, please dial 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

SUICIDE RESOURCES

[Suicide in Youth](#)

NAMI's Fact Sheet on Suicide in Youth

RELATED RESOURCES

[Find Support](#)--Learn more about the full spectrum of programs and services that NAMI provides across the country for people living with mental illnesses, and their families and loved ones.

[Mental Illness Discussion Groups](#)
Dozens of online groups for consumers, parents, spouses, siblings, teens and more. Get connected and find support.

RELATED LINKS

[American Association of Suicidology](#)
A membership organization of suicide experts aimed at educating about suicide and its prevention; and support research to achieve these goals.

[American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#)--Dedicated to research and education to prevent suicide.

[Center for Suicide Prevention](#)
A Canadian organization providing information, training, and research.

[Clinicaltrials.gov](#)
Suicide/HD research studies identified through the U.S. National Library of Medicine's link to federally and privately funded studies worldwide.

[Heartbeat](#)--A support group for individuals who survive the loss of a loved one to suicide.

[National Center for Health Statistics](#)
Data from the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention on suicide in the United States.

[National Institute of Mental Health](#)
NIMH overview of suicide information.

[National Organization for People of Color Against Suicide](#)
A not-for-profit organization founded by three African American suicide survivors with the goal of educating the minority community about suicide and suicide prevention.

[National Strategy for Suicide Prevention](#)--A collaborative led by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.



What is a Vincent House Showcase?

- Just **IMAGINE** a place where people with a psychiatric diagnosis could participate in a restorative community. Where they could practice work in a work-ordered day.
- Just **IMAGINE** what life would be like if everyone living with a mental illness could contribute to society instead of feeling like a burden.
- Just **IMAGINE** a place of opportunities, challenges, acceptance, rekindled dreams, a place to feel useful and valued, a place where diverse abilities, beliefs, and cultures are valued.
- Just **IMAGINE** a place where people are not defined by their mental illness, but rather by their indomitable spirit and resiliency.

This is Vincent House!

A Vincent House Showcase affords the opportunity for all in the community to tour the Clubhouse, see the work of the units, and meet the founders, several members, and a representative of the Board of Directors.

COME SEE HOW A VISIT TO VINCENT HOUSE CAN BE A LIFE CHANGING EVENT!

JOIN A VINCENT HOUSE SHOWCASE ON THE FOLLOWING DATES

- Tuesday, September 9, 2008, 5-6 p.m.
- Wednesday, September 24, 10-11 a.m.
- Tuesday, October 14, 2008, 5-6 p.m.
- Wednesday, October 28, 10-11 a.m.

BREAKFAST OF HOPE TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2008 8-9 A.M.

PLEASE R.S.V.P. 727-541-0359

...BREAKING NEWS...

Vincent House has been chosen as the host of the 2008 International Conference of ICCD Clubhouses! The conference will be held at The Tradewinds Resort St. Pete Beach October 24th-29th

ATTENTION ALL PROCRASTINATORS

In Pinellas County, citizens are registering to vote in the Presidential Election on November 4, 2008. But to do so, you must get moving! It's time to "Get 'er done."

August 26th--Primary Election / November 4th--Election Day

Register to Vote at any Public Library or Driver License Office or Download an Application at www.votePinellas.com
Make sure the Elections Office has **your current name, address, party and signature on file.**

Election Day: Remember to take a Photo and Signature ID to the Polls to avoid delays and extra paperwork.

Vote by Mail: Pinellas County 727-464-6788. Why stand in line for the same ballot you can have mailed to you? Vote at home, then mail or drop-off your Ballot at one of numerous convenient locations throughout the county.

Pinellas Supervisor of Elections: 727-464-6788 www.VotePinellas.com



Joan Trahman Memorial Fund

It has been a year since NAMI lost our dear friend, but her spirit and many acts of kindness live on in a memorial fund named in her honor. Each time you donate "in honor" of or "in memory" of someone you love, your donation has been added to this fund.

Our many thanks for donations to the Joan Trahman Memorial Fund which recently have been made by the following donors:

- James Crimmins*
- Dianne Franz*
- 'Chelle Grooms*
- Patricia Hall*
- Carolyn Hammond*
- Gay Hawk & Bonnie Hill*
- Vicky Holder*
- John & Anne Jones*
- Marianne Martin*
- Marie Navin*
- Judith Osborne*
- Rebecca Rudman*
- Dr. Rizalina Tan*
- Judy & Donald Turnbaugh*
- Norman White*
- Eileen Williams*

Donations were made In Memory of:

- Rochelle Adler*
- Donna Hicks*
- Robert Jones*
- Brian D. Lee*
- Annette Merson*
- Joan Trahman*

*In Honor of:
Michele Anderson
of Anderson Marois & Associates*

When you send NAMI a memorial gift, please be sure to tell us in whose memory you are donating. We have listed recent donations in this issue. Thank you for honoring the special people in your lives with donations in their memory.

COMMUNITY EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR PINELLAS COUNTY

OPERATION PAR CANDIDATE FORUM

Operation PAR will be hosting a Candidate Forum On **September 10th** from 6-7:30 p.m. at the Young Center--13800 66th Street North--Largo, FL, 33771. All State Legislative Candidates who have a contested race have been invited. The focus will be Substance Abuse and Mental Health conversations with the candidates. A strong turnout will help during this upcoming difficult Legislative Session.

2008 GUARDIAN ASSOCIATION EXPO

Friday, September 19, 2008

7:45 a.m. to 5:15 p.m.

St. Petersburg Yacht Club

11 Central Avenue

Downtown St. Petersburg by the Waterfront

Information – Patricia Hall: (727) 323-9380

MACY'S SEMI-ANNUAL CHARITY EVENT

Macy's Charity Event will take place on Saturday, **September 20th**, 8:00 am to 9:30 pm, tickets are \$5 and enables purchasers to shop earlier than regular store hours to avoid crowds. Discounts of 20% are offered on most items and apply the entire day at any Macy's location. NAMI will retain the entire \$5 per ticket sold thanks to Macy's.

Proceeds from this fundraiser go directly to the Consumer Council. Volunteers are also needed to sell tickets and represent NAMI at either the Countryside or Tyrone locations the day of the sale. This enables NAMI to earn additional money for their participation that day. Please contact Steven Thompson 727-443-4715 -or-(sthompson134@tampabay.rr.com) to volunteer or to purchase tickets.

2008 PACE* Awards Dinner

**PEMHS Applauds Community Endeavor*

Thursday evening, **September 25th, 2008**

Social Hour: 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Dinner: 7:00 p.m.

at the historical
BELVIEW BILTMORE RESORT

25 Belleview Boulevard

Clearwater, FL.

For information, call Dee Cash at
727-545-6477, extension 316

"ILLUMINATING HOPE" FOR RECOVERY--ART SHOWCASE

Come and join us in "Illuminating Hope" for recovery with Suncoast Center for Community Mental Health. "Illuminating Hope", a very special multimedia art showcase will be on Friday, October 17th from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on the third floor of the St. Petersburg Pier. The event will include a variety of artistic expressions created by individuals served by Suncoast Center and community artists. The event is free and open to the public.

A silent auction of artistic lampshades celebrating "Illuminating Hope" will complete the event. All proceeds will support the accessibility of mental health services for those in need. We look forward to seeing you there.

PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT

Project Homeless Connect is a one-stop location to get services (e.g., health screenings, social and legal services). Also available will be grooming services (hair cuts), spiritual counseling, and educational opportunities. It will be held on Saturday, September 27th at Harborview Center in Clearwater, Florida.

NAMI Pinellas County volunteers will help at this event. Would you like to participate?

Check out www.pinellasconnect.org.

STAND

**Statewide Advocacy Network on Disabilities
Presents**

SPARC 2008

[STAND Pinellas Accessing Resources Conference]

"It's Going to be Great!"

Saturday, September 20, 2008

8:00am - 4:30pm

***Morgan Fitzgerald Middle School
Largo, Florida***

Come visit the NAMI Pinellas Exhibit

For more information: <http://www.standadvocates.org>

GRADING THE STATES--A NAMI REPORT

This is a "heads up" that **NAMI National has e-mailed our 2008 Survey of State Mental Health Agencies (SMHAs) to the heads of these agencies on August 4, 2008.** SMHAs can complete the survey electronically or in hard copy. Responses are due back to NAMI by Friday, September 12. The survey is also available on NAMI's web site at: www.nami.org/GTSDocs.

In addition, please know that NAMI has begun conducting (in partnership with TeleSage, a leading independent survey technology company) **an anonymous, web-based survey of consumers and family members.** The goal of the survey is to find out about people's experiences with the public mental health service system in each state. It is **open to any adult with a serious mental illness or his/her family member** (not just NAMI members), and will be "live" through **September 30, 2008.** The survey is accessible through

NAMI's home page (www.nami.org) and via e-mails that will be sent out through a host of e-mail listings, listservs, and partner organizations. The results of this consumer and family survey will **not** be part of the *Grading the States* scorecard, but will provide us with critical background and context as we assess each state's adult public mental health service system. It also will provide us with powerful (anonymous) quotes that we can use to support our activities and projects in communications.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Laudy Aron, Director Senior Policy Research at Laudan@nami.org or by phone at 703-600-1110 OR Kim Meltzer, Research Associate, NAMI National, at KimberlyM@nami.org or 703-516-7996. The previous Grading the States was a result of information providers submitted. It is important that families and consumers voice their opinions by completing the survey.

DCF APPOINTS ACTING SECRETARY

Governor Crist just announced the **Acting Secretary of the Dept. of Children and Families** will be Assistant Secretary for Operations **George Sheldon.**

In that position, he led the Department's statewide management team to a record-breaking year in adoptions while directing innovative projects such as "Home for the Holidays" and "Operation Full Employment." Sheldon also supervised the leadership of Children's Legal Services, the Florida Abuse Hotline, the Child Location Unit and the ACCESS Call Centers.

Prior to joining the Department, Sheldon spent 40 years in public service and education including eight years in the Florida Legislature.

Become a Member of NAMI Pinellas Today!

Name: _____
(Title) (First) (Last) -or- (Name of Organization)

Address: _____
(Street Address) Apt./Unit # _____

(City) (State) (Zip Code)

Phone [____] _____ E-mail: _____

New Membership: Yes No -or- Membership Renewal: Yes No

Type of membership (Please check):

- Individual (\$40) Family (\$50) Supporter (\$100)
- Open Door (\$3) Student (\$15) Corporate-Business (\$250)
- I believe in NAMI's mission and wish to donate \$ _____.

Relationship to Consumer (please check one if applicable):

- Parent of Adult Child Parent (child under 18) Spouse Adult Child
- Consumer (Self) Sibling or Other Relative Friend Professional

Reason for joining (please check all that apply):

- Family to Family Peer to Peer CIT
- Support Group Education Programs Membership Drive
- Other: _____ (September-October 2008)

Please make checks payable to: **NAMI Pinellas County, Florida, Inc. and mail to NAMI Pinellas County, Florida, Inc., 466 94th Ave. N. St. Petersburg, FL 33702**

SRT CLOSES--BUT NO OUTCRY FROM THE COMMUNITY

By Donald Turnbaugh, Past President--National Alliance on Mental Illness

If beds were taken out of the heart wing or cancer wing of any local hospital, not because they weren't needed, but because they weren't funded, there would be a loud and lengthy outcry from the community. However, this is exactly what has happened at PEMHS, as SRT services were cut and the patients released with barely a whimper from the community, save a small article in the North Pinellas *Times*.

Is it because PEMHS is a public facility heavily utilized by indigent persons; is it because the patients have severe mental illnesses; or, is it because law makers didn't think it was a critical component of the county's health system? Whatever the reason, it has started a chain-reaction that will not only leave desperately ill citizens without treatment, but also will increase expenditures for taxpayers.

You see, when persons with mental illness don't get treatment; that is exactly when the cost for the non-treatment goes up—exponentially. Off or without their meds, unstable, delusional, hallucinating is when they are most likely to cause or get into trouble. Usually it's simple things like drinking from an open container in public; urinating in public; hearing voices the rest of us don't hear; seeing things no one else sees; and, fearing persons who most of us trust, like the police.

Any one of these so-called 'behaviors' can put them on the fast-track for jail where the duration and cost for incarceration, food, clothing, medications (if they're lucky) and companionship will far exceed the cost of the three months, or less, at PEMHS.

So, the money saved, not spent, or reallocated by not funding those life-saving, stabilizing, and necessary few beds for seriously ill persons now will be invisibly 'shifted' to the criminal justice system in greater amounts than one can imagine.

In 2008, we are coming full circle. We are back where we were ten years ago. No short or long term beds can be found; there are fewer beds in the state hospitals; more people can be found on the streets needing treatment; and more families are at wits end. NAMI will continue its support, education, and advocacy efforts to get back to where we were.

In the 1840's, Dorthea Dix raised public awareness to get the mentally ill out of prisons. Unfortunately, we haven't come very far since we're right back where we started. Where is Dorthea now that we really need her— again?

If anyone wonders why the mentally ill person doesn't just go to another provider for treatment, it's because they can't get an appointment until April 2009!

NAMI **Meetings Schedule**

Education Meetings

1st Thursday--7:00 p. m. Monthly

Board Meetings

3rd Thursday--6:00 p.m. Monthly

Family Support Groups

3rd Thursday--7:30 p.m. Monthly

NAMI Connections

Consumer Support Groups
Every Monday, 6:30 p.m.

All meetings are held at

Hospice of the Florida Suncoast
5771 Roosevelt Blvd.
Building 100
The Gathering Place
Clearwater, FL 33760

NAMI Pinellas County, Florida, Inc.
466 94th Avenue North
St. Petersburg, FL 33702

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PLAN TO ATTEND THE NAMI
CHOCOLATE EXTRAVAGANZA EVENTS
FOR MENTAL ILLNESS AWARENESS WEEK

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP
SPONSOR THE NAMI
CHOCOLATE EXTRAVAGANZA
BANQUET OR STROLL PLEASE
CALL JANE OR CHERYL AT
727-209-0890.
SPONSORSHIP LEVELS RANGE
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