



**NAMI**

National Alliance on Mental Illness

Northern  
Illinois

*Changing  
Minds*

**The Newsletter of NAMI Northern Illinois**

**January and February 2009**

**Inside This Issue:**

Seasonal Affective Disorder And Hard Economic Times	1
Membership Form	2
Fall 2008 Promotions & Fundraising Report	3
Family-to-Family	3
President's Letter	4
Support Groups	6
Learning to Meditate	7
NAMI Northern Illinois Schedule	8

**SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER AND HARD ECONOMIC TIMES**

Winter in this part of the world is a period of cold, darkness, death, and serenity. For most animals it is a time to pack in the collected resources of the fall and wait out the winter months in the nest. For people, it is also an opportunity to reconnect in our relationships with our family, communities, and ourselves. It is also a period for contemplation and creativity within our confines. Our reading lists get longer and we decide to take up a new hobby or project. Yet too often we find ourselves spending too much time indoors with the heat cranked up and the blinds closed.

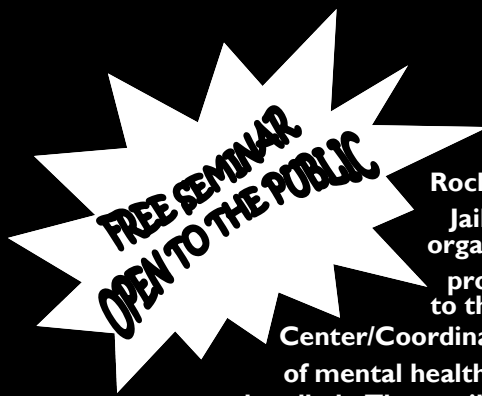
Too little natural, full-spectrum light exposure can seriously degrade both our physical and mental health. Psychologists describe Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) as a condition whereby one experiences significant disturbances in their normal patterns of sleep, fatigue in their wakeful activities, changes in their eating habits including overindulgence in carbohydrate-rich foods, and what we would call typical depressive moods. Unlike Major Depressive Disorder, people that are afflicted with SAD will have an onset of symptoms in the fall, as the days get shorter, and relief from symptoms in the spring. Most researchers agree that SAD is directly caused by a lack of exposure to natural light. And for most of us in the modern industrial world, we leave the house each morning in darkness, go to our indoor jobs, and leave each evening shortly after the sun has passed beyond the horizon.

*Continued on page 5*

**DON'T MISS IT!**

Health Care Program at the  
Winnebago County Jail

Dr. Eric Henley, UIC College Of Medicine at Rockford/Medical Director of the Winnebago County Jail Health Program, will discuss how health care is organized in the new jail. The multi-faceted program provides mental health, medical, and dental services to the 800+ adults in jail. Megan Cox, Janet Wattles Center/Coordinator of Forensic Services, will provide an overview of mental health issues and how evaluations and treatment are handled. There will be time for questions following the presentation.



January 6, 2009 6:30 PM

Stepping Stones

706 N. Main St Rockford, IL 61103

**CONTACT US:**

NAMI Northern Illinois  
P.O. Box 6971  
Rockford, IL 61125  
815-963-2470  
www.nami.org\*

*\*The NAMI Northern Illinois website is being updated; check out the national website in the meantime.*

# Youth in Transition to Adulthood

A program for 16-17 year olds that provides assessment, planning, and case management in an effort to help the adolescent better transition into adulthood. The focus is on setting long-term goals and on skill building with a special emphasis on vocational planning. Case mgrs with youth in four primary areas: daily living skills, educational planning and achievement, community integration and linkages, and employment.

February 3, 2009 6:30 PM  
Mildred Berry Center  
866 Northern Ave Rockford, IL, 61107



## **BECOME A MEMBER—SUPPORT NAMI NORTHERN ILLINOIS!**

NAMI Northern Illinois is a non-profit organization affiliated with NAMI, The National Alliance on Mental Illness.

### ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

**Individual-\$30**

**Family-\$40**  
(please list family members below.)

**Advocate-\$50**  
(for those who wish to make an additional donation.)

**Open Door-\$5**  
(for those whose funds are limited at the present time.)

### **Membership brings you these publications:**

NAMI *Advocate* (quarterly) • NAMI Illinois *Stateline* (quarterly) • NAMI NI *Changing Minds* (bi-monthly)

**Please list your name(s) as you wish it to appear in our membership roll:**

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_  
State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_



# Northern Illinois

Membership Level : \_\_\_\_\_ Additional Donation: \_\_\_\_\_ Total enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

**NEW!!!**  
Now you may join NAMI online. Just go to [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org), click "Take Action", then "Register and Join."

Please mail this form with your check to:  
NAMI Northern Illinois • P.O. Box 6971 • Rockford, Illinois 61125

Thank you for your membership!

## ***"You are not alone."***

*Confused? Afraid? Alone?*

**Someone you love has a mental illness.**  
That's why there's NAMI's Family-to-Family  
Education Course.

**FREE!**



Family-to-Family is a **FREE** series of 12 weekly classes structured to help family members understand and support an ill relative while maintaining their own well-being. The course is taught by a team of trained volunteer family members who know what it's like to have a loved one with **schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, bipolar disorder, major depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic disorder, borderline personality disorder, and/or co-occurring brain disorders and addictive disorders.** The course will focus on the following areas: diagnosis and characteristics of illnesses; medications; coping skills and emotional support; communicating and listening; understanding the experience of brain disorders; problem solving; recovery; advocacy; community resources. Over 50,000 family members have completed this course. We invite you to call for information.

**Evening classes start February 25, 2009.**

**Stepping Stones**

**706 N Main St— Rockford, IL 61103**

**Please call NAMI Northern Illinois to register.**

**815-963-2470**



### What You'll Find At NAMI

Friends who care and understand. • Ideas that can help you take care of yourself and your family. • A chance to share your experience and learn from others. • Information about brain disorders, treatment and services. • Help. Hope. Healing. You are not alone.

### Fall 2008 Promotion and Fundraising Report

We want to thank all those who helped sell Bergner Community Day coupon books and the cookie dough tubs this past fall. A special thanks to Sandy DiBenedetto who sold 20 coupon books and 65 tubs of cookie dough. Eldon Wigget also sold 15 coupon books. With all of your help we realized a profit of over \$1,000.

We want to welcome Cheryl Rodgers from Shelter Care Ministries as the new Grant committee chair. She will help Angie Kelly, Mary Caruana and Robin Garvey get organized as a committee.

Thanks Beverly Capone and all your helpers for getting the appeal letter printed and mailed out.

***“With all of  
your help  
we realized  
a profit of  
over  
\$1,000.”***

**President's Letter**

**“Of course there are many more activities and accomplishments that took place over these 25 years, but there still remains more to be done.”**

In November NAMI Northern Illinois celebrated 25 years of advocacy and support for persons with severe mental illness and their families. In these 25 years we have grown from a small group of 31 to a stable group of over 150 members. We have been able to hold Family-to-Family educational courses consistently since 2000; revise the Family Resource Guide five times; begin a support group and educational series, called Visions, for parents who have children and adolescents with a diagnosis; partner with Janet Wattles Mental Health Center to bring Crisis Intervention training for Law Enforcement officers to our area and also assisted in creating a Family Resource Center at the new Mildred Berry campus. Of course there are many more activities and accomplishments that took place over these 25 years, but there still remains more to be done.

At our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration event two awards were presented:  
 Outstanding Clinician of the Year - Ben Essex, Janet Wattles Center.  
 Special Friend of NAMI – Steve Langley, Stepping Stones, Inc.  
 We thank Mary Ann Holmes, Mary Ann Hughes and Dale & Pedro Lara-Oliva for their presentations.

We thank the following people who have made a commitment to be more involved in our affiliate:

- Karen Platzbecker – Newly elected Board member
- Pedro Lara-Oliva – New Educational Committee chair
- Cheryl Rodgers – New Grant Committee chair
- Nancy Sommer - New Program Committee member
- Sheila Johnson – New Membership Committee member
- Sandy DiBenedetto – New Fundraising and Promotional Committee member
- Mary Caruana – Volunteered to be a Peer-to-Peer Mentor
- Marilyn Olsen – Volunteered to be a Peer-to-Peer Mentor

At our December meeting 120 “Bags of Hope” were filled with donated items to give to those hospitalized over the holidays at Singer Mental Health Center, SwedishAmerican Center for Mental Health and Rockford Memorial Hospital. We thank those who helped with this project. We were delighted that Lora Thomas, Executive Director NAMI Illinois, was our special guest.

NAMI Northern Illinois congratulates Dick Kunnert winner of the 2008 Excalibur award. Dick has served on the state NAMI board and supports our endeavors locally. We know he is a man dedicated to the needs of those diagnosed with a mental illness and to many other causes in our community. He well deserves this recognition.

I hope to see you at one of our functions in the coming months and at this time wish you a safe and happy New Year.

**Jean Morrow**

Board of Directors 2008-2009
Vicky Braun
John Burns
Mary Caruana
Robin Garvey
Jean Morrow
Bruce Parks
Karen Platzbecker
Eldon Wigget

**SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER AND  
HARD ECONOMIC TIMES** *continued*

This doesn't even begin to address those of us who perform our labor in the evening and sleep during those precious few hours of daylight.

SAD can sometimes be so severe that it fosters suicidal thinking. People experiencing suicidal thoughts are advised to seek immediate professional help. Most cases of SAD, however, do not include suicidal thinking. This does not mean that it is not to be taken seriously. There are many techniques that can help alleviate the symptoms of SAD. Three decades ago, researchers collaborated with industry to create full-spectrum lights and light boxes. They found that if a SAD sufferer begins Light Therapy in the fall and exposes themselves to full-spectrum light for 30 minutes to 3 hours each day, most of the symptoms of SAD for most are diminished. Two decades ago, Prozac entered the pharmaceutical market as a treatment for depression. 55% of SAD sufferers report a lessening of symptoms when taking Prozac regularly for more than four weeks at an appropriate dosage. And both of these treatments together work even better than either one alone. Now there are a wide variety of products on the market that have shown effective to greater or lesser degree in the alleviation of SAD. But in these hard economic times, many find it difficult to finance their treatments when they have scrape by just to pay their living expenses.

Fortunately, you do not have to spend a lot of money to take care of yourself if you suffer from SAD. Sunlight is free and sufficient, even on overcast days, for symptom reduction. Obtain sufficient winter gear like a hat, gloves, boots, a warm coat, and a scarf. Or use what you got to get yourself outdoors this season and pick up these items on sale in late-winter and early spring. Most retailers are anxious to get rid of last year's inventory and will practically give these items to you. Early preparation is everything, so plan your winter activities in the fall while you still have some motivation. Make sure that your routine accounts for cold and/or wet weather (this is where your gear is useful!) In the winter, do grocery shopping on a weekly basis.

Plan ahead and focus on protein, fruits, and vegetables. Minimize carbohydrate consumption. Plan a vacation with vacation being defined simply as somewhere NOT HOME. Before you go to bed each night, open the blinds so that you can get some good light therapy in the morning before you wake. Our eyes don't even need to be open for us to benefit from natural light. Turn off the TV and go to bed earlier. Wake up earlier than usual and pull open a blind. Read a book or the morning paper in the morning light before you bathe. Take fifteen minutes during your afternoon break to bundle up and go outside for a walk. Take up a simple hobby or activity and challenge yourself a bit. Your brain will thank you with a sense of accomplishment and a boost in your serotonin levels. And winter for us will not be the lost months that they have been in the past.

By Jason Peckels, MSED, LCPC

*I am a counselor currently practicing at Mathers Clinic in Rockford. I work with adolescents and adults with a variety of mental health needs including SAD. You may reach me at 815-397-7654 ext. 2007.*

**“Before you go to bed each night, open the blinds so that you can get some good light therapy in the morning before you wake.”**

# S U P P O R T G R O U P S

## NAMI Support Groups

### Belvidere

This group is for family members of persons with mental illness. Meetings are held at Grandma's Restaurant, 329 Chrysler Drive in Belvidere. Meetings are held at 8:00 a.m. on the 3rd Monday of the month. Call Jean Morrow at 815-332-4744.

### Family to Family

This family member support group meets at 7:00 pm on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, at 3300 Rural St., Rockford. Contact Mary Ann Holmes at 815-877-0670.

### Park

This family member support group meets at 11:00 am on the 2nd Saturday of every month at North Towne Mall Swedish Pancake House. Contact Bev Peterson at 815-633-0582.

### Bright Futures

A support group for family members of children and adolescents with emotional disorders. Meeting in the SwedishAmerican Conference Center at Mildred Berry Center, 8616 Northern Ave., Rockford, IL. Contact Robin Garvey at 815-332-6064, for dates and times.



## Other Local Support/Education Groups

### Group Hope

A Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) support groups for consumers, their families and friends.

BELVIDERE: Second & fourth Tuesday, 5:45 pm, Immanuel Lutheran Church,

ROCKFORD: Sundays: 3:30 pm, ABC Collision, 4141 Morsay Drive;  
Mondays: 6:30 pm, Bethesda Covenant Church, 2101 E. State St.;  
Wednesdays: 7 pm, Crash Collision, 4141 Morsay Drive;  
Thursdays: 10:00 am, Carpenter's Place on Railroad Ave.;  
Thursdays: 6:15 pm, Camelot Tower, 1415 E. State St., 9th floor.

ROCHELLE: Mondays 6:30 pm, Rochelle Hospital, Private Dining Room Downstairs

OREGON: Second & fourth Thursday, 6:30 pm, First Presbyterian Church, 200 S. 5th St.; one block south from 4th St. (Route 2)

FREEPORT: First & third Tuesday, 7:00 pm, Grace Episcopal Church 10 S. Cherry St. (Call 815-235-6171)

For information call Dr. Charles Smith  
815-398-9628 .

## Learning to Meditate

There are many forms of meditation, and no one approach is best. What all have in common is providing a way to calm the mind—either by concentrating on something like breathing, or simply sitting quietly and becoming aware of the ebb and flow of sensations and thoughts. Meditation courses are available in many cities and towns. Mindfulness meditation tapes created by psychologist Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD, can be purchased online at [mindfulnessstapes.com](http://mindfulnessstapes.com). You can also get started by creating your own program.

- **Meditation in motion.** If you like to walk, try meditating while you stride. Focus on the sensation of taking each step, repeating a calming word or phrase in rhythm as you walk. You can use the same approach if you swim or use a stair machine or treadmill for exercise.



- **Quiet contemplation.** Set aside 15 to 20 minutes at least once a day to sit quietly and calm your body and mind. Breathe deeply and slowly concentrating on the sensation of inhaling and exhaling. Become aware of your body, gently relaxing muscle tension. Repeat a calming word or phrase.

- **Practice mindfulness.** Stop now and then to focus your mind on what your senses are taking in. At meals, eat slowly and concentrate on the taste and feel of each bite. Put on a favorite piece of music and really listen to it.



Whatever you try, stick with it long enough to make meditation a habit. “I had to push myself at first,” says a 36-year-old woman who has suffered bouts of depression and who began using mindfulness meditation tapes last year. But after a while, she said, “it just became part of my life, and something as essential to me as breathing.”

Author: Peter Jaret  
BP Magazine  
Winter 2008

***“But after a while, she said, ‘it just became part of my life, and something as essential to me as breathing.’”***



PO Box 6971  
Rockford, IL 61125  
Return Service Requested

**\*Planning to move?\***  
Please let us know your new address, so  
*Changing Minds* can follow you to your new home!  
Call 815-963-2470 or email  
joebevrox@comcast.net

**Non-Profit Organization**  
**U.S. Postage**  
**PAID**  
**Rockford, IL**  
**Permit NO. 757**

		<b>Meeting Schedule</b>		<b>Page 8</b>
<b>January 2009</b>				
6th 6:30 p.m.	<b>Health Care Program at the Winnebago County Jail</b>		Regular NAMI Meeting at Stepping Stones 706 N. Main St. Rockford, IL 61103	
27th 6:00 p.m.	<b>Board of Directors Meeting</b>		Stepping Stones 706 N. Main St. Rockford, IL 61103	
<b>February 2009</b>				
3rd 6:30 p.m.	<b>Transitions Program for Youth With Mental Illness</b>		Regular NAMI Meeting at Mildred Berry Center 8616 Northern Ave Rockford, IL 61107	
24th 6:00 p.m.	<b>Board of Directors Meeting</b>		Stepping Stones 706 N. Main St.	

