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Wilkes-Barre Newsletter

National Alliance on Mental Illness

The Official Newsletter of NAMI Wilkes-Barre

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A Message From the President



Dear NAMI Members,

The proposed state budget this year contained a 20% cut to seven human services line items, including community mental health. The final budget contained a 10% cut.

Although a true victory would have been no reduction in funding, a partial victory can be celebrated. Thanks to the many advocacy organizations that sent letters and petitions to Governor Corbett and state legislators. Here at NAMI Wilkes-Barre, we forwarded a petition with almost 400 signatures and dozens of cards and letters to our local legislators. NAMI-PA State Office lobbied and met several times with Governor Corbett's staff and secretary, along with Gary Alexander, secretary of public welfare.

The battle is not over. The

coming year will bring more challenges. An election will be held on November 6, 2012 to elect state senators and representatives. These elected officials will decide on next year's budget. It is important that you educate and inform yourself how the candidates stand on mental health issues.

Included with this newsletter is a voter registration form and a time line to the next election. If you need help filling out the form, ask a family member or friend to help you. Then, go to the polls on November 6th.

Remember, MENTAL HEALTH GETS YOUR VOTE!

Sincerely,
Paul Radzavicz, President

P.S. You can get more information online at www.votespa.com

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Osterhout Library Program — May 19, 2012

To celebrate mental health awareness month, NAMI members Lisa Tricarico and Audrey Gozdidowski made an "In Our Own Voice" presentation at the main branch of the Osterhout Library. Also

present was Glenda Race, who had her book of poetry on recovery available for sale. The members gave their presentation, handed out informational pamphlets, and gave a poetry reading from Ms. Race's book.

2012 Diversity Picnic

Saturday, June 23, 2012, the Wilkes-Barre chapter of the NAACP hosted it's 13th annual diversity picnic. An afternoon of food and games were enjoyed by a large crowd. NAMI Wilkes-Barre and other non-profit groups provided information tables

on various subjects. Lisa Tricarico, a NAMI Wilkes-Barre board member, was the chairperson for this year's event. NAMI Wilkes-Barre member Glenda Race was also in attendance, manning the information table on mental health for our chapter.

"An afternoon of food and games were enjoyed by a large crowd."

Stigma Stands as a Hurdle for Teens

(By Zachary Culler, a NAMI Media Relations Intern)

In a recent article, researchers at Case Western Reserve University called for more exhaustive measures to gauge mental illness stigma in adolescents.

The authors of the article, which appeared in the Journal of Nursing Measurement, acknowledged rampant stigma surrounding mental health treatment among adolescents.

"Millions of young people do not receive mental health treatment every year. There are modifiable barriers to treatment, with an important barrier being stigma," says Melissa Pinto, one of the authors. "Working to achieve a supportive social culture toward mental health, by removing stigma, will hopefully result in more young people receiving mental health treatment earlier in the course of illness."

Pinot admitted that experts must better understand the nature of adolescent stigma before they can effectively combat it. Due to a scarcity of meaningful research on the topic, experts lack concrete metrics and data to explain the phenomenon.

"We need to find a reliable and valid way to measure the presence of stigma associated with mental illness among adolescents," Pinto explained in a news release.

The researchers used an existing measure, the Revised Attribution Questionnaire, to test its validity and reliability among 210 high school students in the southern United States. While they deemed the self-report survey valid and reliable for that sample, the researchers advocated the need to study more diverse age groups throughout the country in order to attain a broader understanding of adolescent stigma.

"I hope that this study serves as a foundation to build on the science in this area," Pinto says. "Peer culture is strong during the teen years, and mental disorders often first appear at this same time. It's important that we tackle this problem during this period of development."

While NAMI cannot do much to remedy the deficiencies of research institutions, its Child and Adolescent Action Center (CAAC)

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(continued from previous page...) works to alleviate such stigma in teens and young adults. Most notably, NAMI hosts StrengthOfUs.org, a social networking site that provides community resources for youth living with mental illnesses. The CAAC plans to re-launch this resource in the coming months, possibly involving the introduction of an all-youth blog.

StrengthOfUs.org also fights stigma by offering educational support to loved ones of youth living with mental disorders.

In addition to these ever-green resources, the CAAC also works to host youth-targeted programs, such as Ending the Silence, at the state and local levels.

“It’s not only important for young people to understand what early-onset mental illness is, but also what it isn’t,” explains CAAC Director Darcy Gruttadaro. “We understand that we have to convey those messages online, in print, and in person.”

“StrengthOfUs.org also fights stigma by offering educational support to loved ones of youth living with mental disorders.”

Lisa Tricarico’s Trip to the Annual Seattle NAMI Conference

(By Lisa Tricarico)

I had the great fortune to travel this year to the NAMI National Convention, which was held in Seattle, WA this year. I learned a great deal on various mental health issues which affect Americans every-day.

One of the seminars dealt with fundraising and effective ways in which you could start a fundraising campaign for your non-profit organization. The speaker went through various methods you can use to raise money and awareness for your group. She also highlighted some key factors to consider when handing down the organization’s business to someone else for future administration.

The topic of Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) was prevalent in some of the seminars which I attended. There was a seminar on validation of one’s thoughts and symptoms while trying to help the person with the disorder. It went

through some practical dialogue and effective responses to have for when the person is experiencing symptoms without invalidating how they feel inside.

One of the most notable seminars was with NFL football player Brandon Marshall titled “Project Borderline.” He is a wide receiver for the Chicago Bears and has lived with BPD for many years now. Some of the information he offered was his diagnosis, treatment plans, and wellness/recovery plans. He was very inspirational and spoke to all in such a warm and sincere manner. Not to mention all the women got their picture taken with him (had to add that in).

Dr. Marsha Linehan spoke about the empirical research aspect of her findings with BPD treatment. She showed that Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) is by far a better and less costly form of treatment for BPD and chronically suicidal individuals than other forms of therapy.

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“There was a seminar on validation of one’s thoughts and symptoms while trying to help the person with the disorder.”

(continued from previous page...) It was broken down by each traditional therapy format and its cost comparison to these other formats.

One of the notable aspects of this conference was NAMI and the Arts night. It featured a poetry slam, comedy routines, and other forms of artistic expression by those living with mental illness and their loved

ones. The comedians were very entertaining and enlightening as well.

Overall, this conference was a very positive experience and I learned a wealth of valuable information and got many helpful resources from the seminars and everything else. Hope to go to San Antonio next year!

“One of the notable aspects of this conference was NAMI and the Arts night.”

NAMI Wilkes-Barre/Mental Health Community Awareness Walk

NAMI Wilkes-Barre, along with the Mental Health Community, held the 11th Annual Mental Health Awareness Walk. Approximately 350 people attended the Walk and enjoyed a picnic and entertainment. Mary Dysleski, acting Luzerne County Human Services Director, offered encouraging words, and Jim Bobeck Jr. presented a proclamation to Pat Mentis, this year’s chairperson.

Marty Reynolds and friends provided the musical entertainment

this year. Young’s Funny Farm had their therapy animals on hand to feed and pet. A Chinese auction ended the festivities that afternoon. It was a beautiful day and everyone enjoyed themselves.

NAMI Wilkes-Barre would like to thank everyone involved for their hard work and dedication to the event, making it another wonderful success. A special “thank you” to Phill Williams for the wonderful t-shirt design for this year.

“Approximately 350 people attended the Walk and enjoyed a picnic and entertainment.”



**Bridge the Gap
Walk into Recovery
May 20th, 2012**

Mental Health Awareness Month Proclamation Ceremony

On Tuesday, May 10th, 2012, a Mental Health Awareness Month Proclamation Ceremony sponsored by NAMI Wilkes-Barre and the local Mental Health Community was held at the Luzerne County Courthouse in Wilkes-Barre. The proclamation was presented by Steven Urban Sr., county council member, and read by Community Counseling's Peer Specialist, Claire Holly.

The program included a medley of inspirational and patriotic songs sung by the Holy Redeemer High School Royal Singers. There were also poetry readings and remarks by various members of the mental health community.

A special thanks to URS who provided the refreshments for the event.

"The proclamation was presented by Steven Urban Sr., county council member, and read by Community Counseling's Peer Specialist, Claire Holly."

Voter Registration Check-List & Timeline

When registering to vote for the upcoming election, it is more important than ever to make sure that you know the requirements and are armed with the correct information regarding your rights and the materials you will need to complete the process.

First you will need to make sure that you have a state-issued photo I.D. If you do not, you can obtain one at your nearest PennDOT location, but be sure to bring a copy of your birth certificate and proof of your residence (such as a piece of mail or utility bill with your current address).

Once you have applied to receive your photo I.D. and have fol-

lowed the steps outlined by the PennDOT employee helping you, make sure to tell the clerk that you intend to register to vote. Then, the employee should hand you a Voter Registration form that you will be able to fill out and give back to the clerk. You will then be given a "voter registration receipt" to serve as proof of your registration (should the next election date come before you receive your official voter ID card in the mail—about 14 days after you've registered).

If you are unsure as to whether or not you are already registered to vote in the state of Pennsylvania, you may call (877) 868-3772 to verify your voter status.

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Important Dates to Remember for this 2012 Election Year:

1. October 9, 2012 — The General Election Registration Deadline
2. October 30, 2012 — The last day to apply for an Absentee Ballot
3. November 2, 2012 — The last day for County Board of Elections to receive completed Absentee Ballots
4. November 6, 2012 — The General Election

For more information, visit www.voteпа.org or www.registertovote.org

NAMI Wilkes-Barre Board Nominations

NAMI Wilkes-Barre is accepting nominations for our board of directors. There are three openings on the board. Board members serve for a period of two years, and may serve for two consecutive terms. Nominees must be a member in good standing with NAMI Wilkes-Barre, and must be able to attend monthly meetings. Nominations will be accepted at the Wilkes-Barre Office until the September 10, 2012 board meeting, at which time the elections for the open positions will be held.

Nominees for the Lester Verano Advocacy Award

The Lester Verano Advocacy Award is a distinguished award that the NAMI Wilkes-Barre Area Chapter awards to an individual or organization in recognition of the efforts they've made toward improving the lives of people with mental illness. The award celebrates exception work, commitment, and advocacy in helping people living with mental illness. Nominations will be accepted until September 10, 2012. All nominations must be made by filling out the official nomination form. Nominations should explain how the nominee has improved the lives of people living with mental illness. Call (570) 371-3844 or come by our NAMI Wilkes-Barre Office to request a nomination form.

The award will be presented to the selected recipient at the Annual Candlelight Vigil held October 10, 2012 at the Luzerne County Courthouse in Wilkes-Barre. (Please note: prior recipients of the award are not eligible for nomination).

Upcoming Events & Dates to Remember

- August 27th — NAMI Connections and Family Support Meetings held at 6:00PM
- September 10th — NAMI Wilkes-Barre Board meeting at 6:00PM, followed by Family Support and Connections meetings beginning at 7:00PM. This is also the day that board member nomination forms and Lester Verano Advocacy Award nomination forms are due.
- September 24th — NAMI Connections and Family Support Meetings held at 6:00PM
- October 8th — NAMI Wilkes-Barre Board meeting begins at 6:00PM, followed by the Connections and Family Support meetings at 7:00PM
- October 9th — General Election Registration Deadline
- October 10th — The Annual Candlelight Vigil will be held at the Luzerne County Courthouse