



THE VOICE

NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS
PALM BEACH COUNTY

FROM THE PRESIDENT—BY LIZ DOWNEY

NAMI/PBC is off to a good start for the New Year. On January 10th we held our second Strategic Planning Workshop. Not personally being familiar with this exercise, I quickly learned the value and importance of an organization having a strategic plan. With a clear understanding of NAMI/PBC's mission and vision for the future, we are well on our way to formulating a solid plan for accomplishing the goals we will establish in the coming workshops.

Very apparent is the need for people to help us accomplish those goals. Currently, we are far from our goal of reaching all areas of the county with our programs. I have made many pleas in the past for member involvement – I'm not giving up.

Peer-to-Peer Recovery Program - We glean capable peers from our Peer-to-Peer Recovery Education program to be trained as peer mentors. These mentors can extend our course offerings to other areas such as the correctional facilities, court diversionary programs and mental health facilities.

NAMI/PBC General Meeting at

**Main Library, 3650 Summit Blvd,
West Palm Beach**

**Wednesday, February 10, 2010
at 6:30 pm**

**“EATING DISORDERS:
A LOOK BEYOND FOOD
& WEIGHT ISSUES”**

**Dr. Juandalyn Peters
of The Renfrew Center**

Free & Open to the Public

NAMI Connections – We need peers who are in recovery to become trained in this structured, self-empowering support group. Currently, NAMI/PBC only has one Connections group held at South County Mental Health. More is needed.

Consumer Council – This group of peers, co-sponsored by DCF, meets once a month to work on advocacy issues, volunteer in the community and participate in social activities. Also, quarterly the Council has their “Movies & Pizza Outing”, which is free to Council members. We would like to see an increase in participation by people in recovery.

Family Support Groups - For people in crisis, a meeting once a month does not meet their needs. We need qualified, dedicated volunteers who are committed to helping us provide weekly support groups. You remember what it's like to be in crisis. Our support groups require only a two-hour commitment once a month. If you're a Family-to-Family graduate, you qualify.

Family-to-Family Education Program - We are looking for Family-to-Family graduates who are willing to be trained to become instructors so that we can offer this vital educational program to family members throughout the county. Help us help family members support and advocate for their loved ones. The waiting list for these classes is growing.

Provider Education Program – The mental health community wants this 10-week program. Unfortunately, we only have one team trained. We will be contacting graduates of our Peer-to-Peer and Family-to-Family courses when the next training is available. When we call for your help, please consider this much needed service work.

I implore the membership to consider volunteering for these beneficial programs. No teaching or leadership experience is required – NAMI will train you. For most programs, minimal time commitment is needed. We can only fix a broken system if we take action, and we need YOU to help.

FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS

BOCA RATON

West Boca County Library on State Rd 7

Meets the 4th Monday of the Month; 6:30–8 pm

Call 561.588.3477 for more info.

***BOYNTON BEACH/DELRAY BEACH**

Hagen Ranch County Library

14350 Hagen Ranch Road, Delray Beach

Meets the 2nd Wednesday of the Month; 6:30pm

Call 561.588.3477 for more info.

***GREENACRES (SPANISH-SPEAKING)**

Greenacres Library on Jog Road

Meets the 4th Saturday of the Month;

10:30am–12:30pm

Call 561.588.3477 for more info.

LAKE WORTH

NAMI/PBC Office on 10th Ave N.

Meets the 4th Monday of the Month; 3pm

Call 561.588.3477 for more info.

JUPITER

County Library on Military Trail

Meets the 3rd Thursday; 6:30–8pm

Call 561.744.2301 for more info.

WELLINGTON

Wellington Public Library on Royal Fern Dr

Meets the 2nd Monday of the Month; 6:30–8:30pm

Call 561.790.6070 for more info.

CONSUMER SUPPORT GROUPS

NAMI CONNECTION

RECOVERY SUPPORT GROUP

Jo's Place @ South County MHC

16158 S. Military Trail, Delray Beach

Mondays, 1–2:30pm

Call 561.588.3477 for more info.

CONSUMER COUNCIL MEETING

NAMI/PBC Lake Worth Office

1520 10th Avenue N, Suite D, Lake Worth

Call 561.588.3477 for more info.

***See Announcements**

STIGMA AND MENTAL ILLNESS

BY ALEXANDRA NORTON, PEER COUNSELOR

As a person with a mental illness, I was told it was my choice whether or not to tell people. For a while I tried to hide it with mixed results. For nearly 3 years I worked at Wachovia Securities in Alexandria, Virginia, as an account administrator. I was an assistant to several brokers. Right from the beginning there were some gaps in my history that I couldn't explain. Why had I not graduated from college? Why did I have long periods of time where I couldn't account for my activities? Handling other people's financial accounts really puts one under the microscope.

When stress on the job increased, it was impossible to hide my mental illness. They were putting so much pressure on me and I only wanted them to back-off a little and show a little mercy. It was taking me longer than my co-workers thought necessary to learn the ropes, and I wasn't getting any tolerance or mercy from them. At a performance review I was told I was, "following the learning curve." That assessment failed to inspire me. Finally I had to disclose that I was going to doctor's appointments and I wasn't going to fib about it. My boss did not seem happy about making this accommodation since it was my job to cover the phones. I would bet that she never expected to make any accommodations for "support staff."

Another broker once told me as she passed by my desk, "One day you might get your act together." Statements like this were a far cry away from the human, kind of support I needed.

When I had become withdrawn from others and isolated at home, I began to seek out people like me. So my motto is "Go Tell It On the Mountain." I am much happier now, I don't feel like a basket case, and I no longer compare myself to people who have "perfect records."

CREATING HOPE FOR CHILDREN WITH MENTAL ILLNESS TRANSITIONING TO ADULTHOOD

BY CRISTINA ANDREOLI

I attended a presentation by Lisa Pompa, Volusia Service Center Director, Devereux, Deland, Florida. This presentation was on the problems that arise when children with mental illness become adults and how to support them. It was a great power point presentation: I selected the information that would be most helpful to families of children with diagnoses. The children were defined as being between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five, maybe homeless and lacking independent living skills.

Lisa Pompa stated that these children often need educational support and therapeutic services. They often have difficulties in creating peer or good family relationships. A comparison of a typical teenager and a teen with a brain illness show that the "expectations, challenges and fears" of the latter surpass those of the former. Sometimes, the child at risk lacks the community and supports necessary for success. Likewise, there are many "challenges" facing the parents, including social stigma. The resulting instability for both groups constitutes a big problem.

The consultant then provided a list of issues and questions to be considered in creating the right mix of support for these children in the areas of employment, education, housing, finances, independent living skills, relationships and mental health services. These power point notes are available. (Please get in touch with me if you are interested and I will go over the points on the phone.)

It is noteworthy to point out, in reference to relationships, that children with strong family ties/relationships have higher success rates. Also, family involvement with the schools and agencies concerning

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2/3/10

Board of Directors Meeting
1520 10th Ave, Ste D, Lake Worth at 5:30pm
(Call office by 2/1 if attending)

2/4/10

Provider Education Course Begins

2/10/10

General Meeting (see front page)

2/12/10

Family-to-Family Alumni Reunion Potluck Dinner
(Call office by 2/7 if attending)

***Boynton Beach Family Support Group**

Please note the location has changed for this group.
See listing on page 2.

***Greenacres Spanish-Speaking Family Support Group**

Please note that the library is due to be closed for renovation in the near future. Until we have notification, please call the office to confirm that the meeting has not been canceled.

a "transition planning process" guarantees higher results. Parents have to strike a balance between guiding their children and helping them become independent adults. Creating support systems for these children with other families and community resources, such as churches, may be very instrumental in recovery. It was reported that family connections should continue throughout the consumers' lives, despite the difficulties encountered. The report concluded that having mentors and connections with other adults is also very important for the children.

I would like to add that the above information is not meant to be discouraging to either people with a diagnosis or families of loved ones with a mental illness. I thought the article can be a useful guide for all in the field, including NAMI workers.

CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM

The Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) is an international, national, state and local program providing a 40 hr. training course for law enforcement officers and first responders on how to deal with crisis situations involving persons with mental illness. The focus of the program is to work with persons who have brain illnesses and their families in de-escalating situations; and having those in crisis taken to a mental health treatment center, rather than being taken to jail. If you have a loved one in crisis and need the services of a CIT officer, you should call 911 and give the necessary information to the dispatcher. The dispatcher is trained to send a CIT officer to the scene. NAMI and the CIT work closely together in providing this service. There are currently over 800 officers in Palm Beach County.

HEALTH CARE REFORM: THE REAL MYTH?

For those who missed our January 14 General Meeting, with Dr. Abbey Strauss, all I can say is you really missed a good one. Dr. Strauss delivered a provocative, interesting look into the concept of Healthcare Reform at its core.

First, he pointed out the fact that not many know exactly what is contained in the 1,900+ pages of the Healthcare Reform bill in its current state. In probing the audience's ideas of how our healthcare system is broken, Dr. Strauss enlightened us to what some of the root causes and the roadblocks to truly "reforming" the system may be. One of the biggest problems is that the insurance companies and drug manufacturers are "for-profit" industries. Dr. Strauss suggested that each of us sit down and make a list of 10 things we want our healthcare system to provide and send it to our

congressional leaders. A gentlemen in the audience asked who, in Dr. Strauss' opinion, had the best healthcare system and his answer was Israel. When asked why, he explained that it was because that country has decided to make their citizens their first priority. He cited a case where he had treated a person with severe OCD for a number of years without success. The person moved to Israel, was put in a hospital for 18 months and is now in recovery – cost to his parents: \$500. For those of us who've paid thousands of dollars for a week-long hospitalization, that is incredible. A 30-day drug treatment can cost from \$10,000 up and that is WITH insurance! Advocacy is needed. Nothing will change unless we speak up and not enough of us are speaking up. Dr. Strauss' presentation entertained the idea that maybe the concept of healthcare reform is the real myth. When we decide to insist that our government put its people first, then we can talk about real healthcare reform. Keep a look-out for NAMI/PBC's "How to Write a Strong Advocacy Letter" workshop, coming soon.

STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP II

NAMI/PBC conducted its second Strategic Planning Workshop (SPW) at Jeff Industries' Café Maurice. The workshop was facilitated by Cristina Andreoli, our Executive Committee Secretary. With a well-prepared introduction and structured agenda, Christina set us out into two working groups to revitalize our mission statement and devise a strong vision statement for our affiliate. The energy in the room was electric! Ideas and perspectives were flowing, not to mention a good amount of humor.

Of particular joy and satisfaction to me, was

(Continued on page 5)

the extreme passion and dedication the ten participants reflected in the debates and discussions. At the end of the day, we had developed powerful mission and vision statements to assist us in the next steps of developing focused goals for NAMI/PBC. The mutual agreement of the mission and vision of our organization, made it clear that we will be successful in achieving the goals that we set.

NAMI/PBC would like to extend our gratitude to Claudia Roberts of Jeff Industries for offering Café Maurice and the delicious coffee and cookies to us for conducting our workshop. The next SPW will be held on Sunday, January 31, 1:00pm at the affiliate office.

ST. ANN PLACE

HYGIENE PROGRAM FOR THE HOMELESS PROVIDING
FOOD, LAUNDRY AND SHOWERS

St. Ann Place, located at 2107 N.. Dixie Hwy, West Palm Beach, FL 33407, provides drop-in assistance for the homeless. St. Ann Place is a community partner with DCF to assist with food stamp applications, their health advocate assists with Health Care District applications, they partner with Lenscrafters for free glasses and donations are made of women and men's clothing, shoes, and work boots. All of these services are for homeless clients only. Homeless clients taking showers are eligible for clothing and laundry services. St. Ann Place also has a feeding program consisting of coffee and donuts and a bag lunch. (St. Ann Place is not an overnight shelter.) The following free services are offered Monday through Friday:

8:15am-9am – Coffee, donuts, bagels

9:30am-11:30am – Open for various services
(including up to 25 showers)

10am-11:30pm – Bag lunches

1:30pm-3:30pm – (Mon through Thurs only)
Open for various services (including up to 25 showers)

St. Ann Place is in need of clothing, especially men's clothing such as jeans, shorts, good condition shoes, ball caps, belts, sweatshirts and jackets. Monetary contributions are also accepted. For more information, contact the Associate Director, Marsha Burkhardt, at 561-805-7708.

THE BOUTIQUE WITH A DIFFERENCE!

The **UMI Thrift Store** carries men's and women's clothes; bargains in designer apparel, books and knick-knacks. Prices as low as \$1.00. Visit us at:

600 N. Congress Ave,
Delray Beach, FL 33445-3464

Hours: 10am-4pm Mon-Fri.;
10am-2pm Sat.

Telephone: 561-274-0350

We're in the Lake Ida Shopping Center (Congress Ave. at Lake Ida Road), right next to the Children's Day Care Center.

NAMI/PBC wants to thank UMI for their most generous donation. Their donation will help us pay stipends to the people in recovery who volunteer their time for our valuable Peer-to-Peer and Provider educational programs.

National Alliance on Mental Illness for Palm Beach County
1520 10th Avenue North, Suite D
Lake Worth, FL 33460

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE PAID
WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33460
PERMIT NO. 1327

Or Current Resident

NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS
PALM BEACH COUNTY'S VOICE ON MENTAL ILLNESS
ADVOCACY, EDUCATION & EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ARE AT THE HEART OF OUR SERVICES.

NAMI/PBC Membership

- | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------|------------------------------------|------|---------------------------------------|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Voting | \$45 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$55 | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional | \$65 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate | \$250 | <input type="checkbox"/> Open Door | \$5 | <input type="checkbox"/> Student | \$15 |

1520 10th Ave N Ste D
Lake Worth, FL 33460-2069

T: 561.588.3477

F: 561.588.3499

WWW.NAMIPBC.ORG

INFO@NAMIPBC.ORG

NAMI Membership exists at 3 levels: Affiliate, State & National; with just 1 payment, you'll be joining all 3 at once! As a member, you will receive: cutting-edge newsletters & publications, like *The Voice & The Advocate*, action alerts & leadership opportunities, plus advanced notice of upcoming meetings, classes & events.

NAMI is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, charitable organization—contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. *Together*, we can continue to fight for all those affected by mental illness. *Thank you!*

Check here for renewal:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/St: _____

Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

I'd like to support NAMI with a donation of:

- \$5 \$10 \$25
other: \$ _____

I'm interested in volunteering with NAMI/PBC.

I wish to opt out of NAMI's solicitation.

Members are NAMI/PBC's lifeblood; your joining helps us continue to provide free outreach, support & education. In bringing mental health issues to wider attention, we advocate for better treatment... As our membership base grows, our voice becomes stronger...