

Daddy's Girl No More

By Wendy McNeill
Advocate Editor

When I was eight, my father asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up, and I said, unequivocally, "an artist and a cheerleader." He laughed and laughed and would make me repeat my ambitions on cue for his friends whenever he prompted me. He thought I was such a kick.

And for his part, I thought he was a kick, too. He had been a swimmer in college and could perform the butterfly with passion in our pool, executing the cool flip turn with every lap. I practiced the flip turn until my head was raw from my bumpy miscalculations. But I never quit, and by gawd, now I can flip turn with the best of 'em. (Butterfly, not so much.)

My Dad was very much My Dad. He was an unquestionable force in my life, one whom I embraced wholeheartedly. My only problem with him, perhaps, was that he didn't take me as seriously as I took myself. I was going to be an artist and a cheerleader, so help me god.

A decade later, after my dramatic utterance about my future, when I was eighteen, the last day of my freshman year in college, I came back to my apartment to find it stripped of my possessions. As I was shuffled out and hustled through the hallway to the elevator by my mother, amidst confusion and protest, I was informed that my father had committed suicide. This knowledge exploded in my mind, practically incomprehensible.

On the way back home, I was also informed that my grandmother, my father's mother, who I previously believed had died of a stroke, had in fact died of suicide as well.

I was completely psychologically unprepared. Over the next six months, my sanity progressively deteriorated, and eventually I was hospitalized for a

"Daddy's Girl," cont. at right...

NAMI's Annual Meeting

Thursday, December 1, 2005

6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

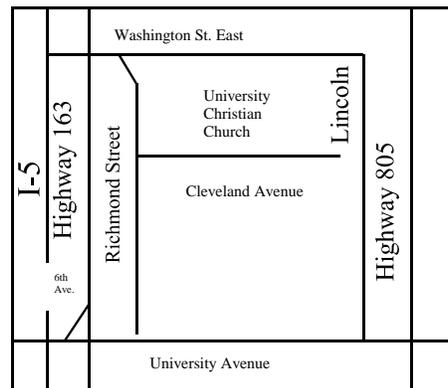
6:00 p.m.: *POTLUCK*

Call Karen Ross, 858.694.8379 or
Judy Wasik, (w) 619.545.0039 or (h) 858.259.9373
regarding contributions to the dinner.

Annual Meeting and Board of Directors Election

7:00 p.m.: *PROGRAM*

"The Metabolic Syndrome and Schizophrenia" by Jonathan Meyers, MD.



University Christian
Church Friendship Hall
3900 Cleveland Ave
San Diego, California

...Daddy's Girl, cont. from left

severely crippling manic episode. In fact, I was indeed Daddy's Girl, but in a way that I never could have expected.

During the years that passed, I began to associate with the suicides of my forebears, and with the severity of my illness, albeit primarily manic rather than depressive, as a curse, a specter of death that clouded my life. I felt I was a walking time bomb, the third on a family tree whose destiny it was to cut time short.

However, a part of me always fought these negative impulses. I had great family, friends, doctors, therapists, support group members, who validated my positive qualities, who assured me that I was different, that the times were different. I began to forge my own path.

It was my therapist, ultimately, who clarified things simply: You are not your father. You are not your grandmother. You are you.

Yes, it is true. I am me. Third on that family tree. But I am the one that will live on, and I will pass on gently from this life, hopefully.

So, I am not exactly my Daddy's Girl. But what I am, in my own way, is...an Artist. And a Cheerleader. A McNeill. Amen.

NAMI's Workin'!

By Bettie Reinhardt
Executive Director

We frequently suggest that you refer to the NAMI San Diego web site, www.namisaniego.org, to stay up to date on classes, meetings, and other happenings. Here's a flash! The NAMI Web Site is one of NAMI National's very best tools, not only for public outreach, but for empowering NAMI's leaders and members. Here are some powerful numbers about the web site's outreach value. One out of four internet users have searched for depression or other mental illness information. The top three search engines put NAMI at the top of the list when people search for "mental illness." Hits on the site increased 40% from 2004 to 2005. Of the 90,000 unduplicated people who signed in during the last year, over 80,000 were new to NAMI or at least not members.

By the way, 60 new pages of information are added to the site every month.

Getting Started:

(1) Go to www.NAMI.org; (2) create your sign-in account – *psst*, here's the neat part for members – use your member # for your user name when you create your account (find the number on the mailing label on your Advocate from National or click the "help" link in the sign in box and follow the directions to find your number), you can change it later to something easier to remember; (3) click "myNAMI" (you will find it on the left side of the screen) and personalize by filling out "myProfile", indicating your interests in "myPreferences", selecting options in "mySubscriptions" to receive e-mail communications, and completing "myBio."

Getting Things Done:

Purchase NAMI materials online in the "NAMI Store;" register yourself and others for the NAMI Convention online; register

for NAMIWALKS online; find resources in the Leader's section (www.NAMI.org/leaders); access NAMI logos and graphics (www.NAMI.org/leaders/graphics); use the "Contact Us" link at the top of the page to reach national staff; shop through Amazon.com (www.NAMI.org/amazon); even contribute to NAMI when buying or selling real estate (www.NAMI.org/realestate) -

"The NAMI Web Site is one of NAMI National's very best tools..."

through a partnership with Coldwell Banker/Nationwide Realtor Guide, a percentage of the sale can be donated to NAMI when you buy or sell real estate, at no additional cost to you.
While You're Surfing:

1. The Oprah Winfrey Show is looking for people who can share their experiences of what it is like to LIVE WITH someone who has one of the major mental illnesses. This is for a future show. Respond ONLY if you are willing to be on TV, and your family member agrees.

<https://www.oprah.com/plugger/templates/BeOnTheShow.jhtml?action=respond&plugId=176700001>

2. The show is also looking for people WITH a mental illness such as schizophrenia, dissociative disorder, delusional disorder, multiple personality disorder, bipolar disorder, or paranoid personality disorder. What is it like to live with a mental illness? Respond ONLY if you are willing to be on TV.

<https://www.oprah.com/plugger/templates/BeOnTheShow.jhtml?action=respond&plugId=176700002>

If Oprah gets enough replies, she may start a DAILY PSYCHIATRY segment.

Getting to Know Amy

You have seen mention of my daughter Amy on this page and you will get to meet her on April 15th because my team is Walk With Amy. She is flying in from Georgia for our special event. Amy likes to write poetry and was thrilled to win a Creative Arts Consortium prize for her effort one year. I am using some of my space this month to share some of her poetry, and share her, with you.

FEELING BLUE

ARE YOU FEELING BLUE?

I DO.

WHAT DO YOU DO

WHEN YOU'RE BLUE?

WHAT DO YOU DO FOR

YOUR OWN

RESCUE?

I'M FEELING BLUE.

WHAT CAN

I DO?

SO I COME TO YOU

AND I ASK YOU

WHAT DO YOU DO?

MAYBE IT

WILL WORK FOR ME

THE WAY IT DOES

FOR YOU.

ARE YOU BLUE?

ME TOO.

cool and calming
drifting floating
peace and quiet
some days I feel
this way

nervous and anxious
that's me most days
I don't like feeling
this way

tired and drained
shaky and sore
I don't like the
feeling

happy and mellow
peaceful and content
I want to feel this way

The Advocate

NAMI San Diego, a non-profit organization, provides education, support services, and advocacy to improve the quality of life of everyone affected by mental illnesses.

NAMI San Diego is an affiliate of NAMI and NAMI California

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Bettie Reinhardt
exudir@namisandiego.org

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Articles received by the 15th will be considered for publication in the following month's newsletter.

The opinions expressed in the newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of NAMI San Diego.

To register your opinion, call Bettie Reinhardt at 619 584-5564 or write to P.O. Box 710761, San Diego, 92171 or fax to (619)584-5569 or email at exudir@namisandiego.org or contact any of the people mentioned in the articles.

Sally's... What's New?

NAMI Highlights Helpful Resources for All

By Sally Shepherd
NAMI San Diego Board President

We all get pounds and pounds of paper in our mailboxes every year. Who has the time to give it all their full attention? The same goes for journals and magazines. Here are some helpful items you may have missed from our NAMI websites and journals.

Help in the Emergency Room

NAMI has published a special set of guides to help people who attempt suicide and come into contact with hospital emergency rooms. Each set consists of three brochures in English and two in Spanish. The brochures seek to educate the key participants in the crisis: medical professionals, family members, and patients themselves, in order to reduce the risk of further attempts. The guide for medical professionals has already been distributed to over 400 hospital emergency departments around the country. You can order the brochures and/or download them at www.nami.org

Help with Medicare Part D

Leading mental health organizations have joined together to create a central resource on Medicare's new prescription drug benefit. The new website, www.mentalhealthpartd.org, contains easy-to-understand, top-line information tailored specifically to psychiatrists and other physicians, providers at community health centers, and consumers and their families. The Mental Health Part D website will be continually updated to include the latest on enrollment, costs (including low-income subsidies), prescription drug lists, and the appeals process. Notably, it will grow to include comparisons of prescription drug plan formularies to help physicians, providers, and consumers choose a plan to cover all or most of their medications, as

well as an interactive tool to provide feedback and assistance on an individual's situation as the new prescription drug benefit begins on January 1, 2006.

Help with Life

The end of the year typically signals the announcement of many annual "best" and "worst" lists. So in that spirit, NAMI has compiled a list of some of the best books, movies, and television of the past year. From a novel to a historical biography, from a reference guide to an Emmy-winning television comedy, 2005 provided an array of positive portrayals of the issues related to mental illness. Here's hoping that 2006 provides even more.

Books:

72 Hour Hold, Bebe Moore Campbell
Lincoln's Melancholy: How Depression Challenged a President and Fueled His Greatness, Joshua Wolf Shenk

Divided Minds: Twin Sisters and Their Journey Through Schizophrenia, Pamela Spiro Wagner and Carolyn Spiro, M.D.

Will's Choice: A Suicidal Teen, a Desperate Mother, and a Chronicle of Recovery, Gail Griffith

Fear Is No Longer My Reality: How I Overcame Panic and Social Anxiety Disorder and You Can Too, Jamie Bly

Never Have Your Dog Stuffed: And Other Things I've Learned, Alan Alda

50 Signs of Mental Illness: A Guide to Understanding Mental Health, James Whitney Hicks, M.D.

Against Depression, Peter Kramer

Movies:

The Aviator
Stateside

Television:

Monk

Happy reading!

NAMI San Diego Meeting Schedule

NAMI San Diego

4480 30th Street
San Diego, CA 92116
(619) 543-1434 or (800) 523-5933

Morning NAMI-SD Support Group
Third Tuesday, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
NAMI-SD Office, 4480 30th Street

Sibling and Adult Children's Group
Second Wednesday, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Scripps-Mende Well Being Center
Adjacent to the UTC Mall
Call Michelle Cauble at (858) 756-3140

Clairemont NAMI Support Group
Second Monday, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
St. David's Episcopal Church (Library)
5050 Milton St., (619) 276-4567

La Jolla NAMI Support Group
First Tuesday, 7:15 - 9:00 p.m.
La Jolla Presbyterian Church
Enter on Eads Avenue, Room #9
(858) 457-5057

South Bay - Spanish
First Monday, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
South County Family Resource Center
690 Oxford Street, Chula Vista
Call Luz Fernandez (East County clinic)
(619) 401-5500

**New support groups for
families and caregivers of
children and adolescents**

La Mesa Group
2nd Tuesday, 6:30-8:00 pm
Lake Murray Evangelical Free Church
5777 Lake Murray Boulevard, La Mesa
1st Floor, Fellowship Hall
Now meeting once a month
Peggy & Bob Chambers: (619) 464-0476

San Diego Group
3rd Monday, 6:00-7:30 pm
NAMI San Diego Office
4480 30th Street, San Diego
Now meeting once a month
Karen Malsack (858) 560-0030

La Mesa NAMI Support Group
Second Wednesday, 6:30 - 8:00 pm
San Carlos Library
7265 Jackson Drive
Contact Karen Robinson, (619) 698-4711
E-mail: krsd@cox.net

Rancho Bernardo NAMI Support Group
Third Thursday, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
Community Presbyterian Church
(Upper Fireside Room)
17010 Pomerado Road, San Diego
(corner of Pomerado Road & Rancho
Bernardo Road)
Contact Jim at (858) 487-0519

NAMI Patton
c/o Patton State Hospital
3101 E. Highland Avenue
Patton, CA 92369
Tel: (909) 425-7000 Fax: (714) 963-9961
Third Sunday, 11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.
Administrative Meeting Room

NAMI-SIT

Schizophrenics in Transition

Board Meeting
2nd Wednesday at Noon
144 Copper Avenue, Vista 92083
(760) 941-2153 or
(858) 481-7069

NAMI-SIT includes the following :

- Copper Hill Living & Learning Center
- Creative Arts Consortium
- Friends
- Advocacy Works
- Jardin Cesar Chavez

NAMI North Inland

P.O. Box 300386
Escondido, CA 92030-0386
(760) 745-8381

Education Meeting
Second Tuesday at 7:00 pm.

Bradley Center (Kinesis North)
474 W. Vermont Ave, Escondido
(760) 745-8381 or 1-800-523-5933

Tuesday Share & Care Meeting
Every Tuesday Except the 2nd Tuesday of
each month., 4:00 - 5:30 pm.
at Joslyn Senior Center
210 East Park Ave, Escondido
(760) 745-8381

Weekly Share & Care in Fallbrook
Mondays, 5:00 - 6:30 p.m.
Fallbrook Healthcare Foundation
Corner of Mission and Fig
Call for address (760) 745-8381

NAMI North Coastal

P. O. Box 2235
Carlsbad, CA 92018
(760) 722-3754

Education Meeting
Third Thursday, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

St. Michael's by the Sea Episcopal Church
Parish Hall, 2775 Carlsbad Blvd.
(760) 722-3754 or (800) 523-5933

*Education Meeting followed by
NAMI Facilitated Support Group*

Share and Care
Second Thursday at 12:30 - 2:00 p.m.
Tri-City Medical Center, Behavioral Health
Unit, 4002 West Vista Way, Oceanside
(760) 639-1433

Share and Care
Second Thursday at 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Tri-City Medical Center, Behavioral Health
Unit, 4002 West Vista Way, Oceanside
(760) 940-7396

**TARA Borderline Personality Disorder
Support Group**
First Tuesday monthly at 6:30 - 9:00 p.m.
Carlsbad Community Church
3175 Harding Street, Carlsbad CA 92008
(760) 729-2331

Legislative Update

By Caroline Hamlin

Propositions

The good news is that Proposition 76, which NAMI opposed, and which could have resulted in reductions in mental health funding, was soundly defeated. Proposition 78, the CalRx drug prescription program, supported by NAMI, was also defeated. Medicaid Cuts Congress is now hotly debating how to cut \$ 10 billion in Medicaid cuts over the next five years. They hope to reach agreement on this budget "reconciliation" legislation by Thanksgiving.

NAMI opposes the following:

- A House proposal that would allow states to require beneficiaries to pay higher cost sharing (co-pays).
- A House proposal that would require beneficiaries to pay higher enrollment premiums.
- A House proposal that might permit states to offer alternative benefit packages that might exclude mental illness treatment.

We are thankful for our San Diego representatives, as well as our California senators, who have opposed Medicaid cuts which could diminish mental illness treatment services.

Renewal Time for Membership or Newsletter Subscription?

If you are a dues-paying member of NAMI San Diego, or if you simply subscribe to this newsletter, we hope you will continue to support our mission by maintaining your membership or subscription.

You can do this easily. Look at the address label on this newsletter. If there is a date at the top of the label, it is the expiration date for your membership or subscription. Inside the back page you will find the instructions to complete, and you can submit that page with your payment or charge card information when your renewal is due.

Questions? Call us at (619) 584-5564.

Personal Narrative

Find Happiness During Season of Stress

By Lee McNeill-West
Mother of Wendy McNeill, Editor

The holidays have always been a difficult time for the McNeills. I have never been quite sure if my daughter, Wendy, would be well enough to attend the family holiday gatherings.

Wintertime was often her "manic" time, which included her birthday, her brother's birthday, and my birthday. Since my birthday was the day after hers, I always prayed: "Dear God just let Wendy be well for our birthdays." If she were in the hospital on her birthday, then I would hope that she would be well for Christmas!

My thoughts often were: Can we be a family like we used to be... prior to her father's death and before she became sick? Would Wendy be her vivacious, charming, and witty self, or would she be sick and unable to join us? Would she be able to relate to my friends and family? Would she take her medication when she was here?

Then of course, there was always Wendy's concern: "Mom, I have no money to buy nice gifts. Mike has plenty of money to buy you nice things." In reality, Wendy was very clever and always gave unique and wonderful gifts. One Christmas, when Wendy was in the Board and Care, she painted a scene of a goose on a pond with some old watercolors she had found. It was a very creative gift.

After many years, I became more realistic about the holidays. I often asked friends to join her brother and me for the holidays. If Wendy could not attend, I would still have the com-

fort and love of my son and close friends. I also learned not to be embarrassed if she did not come. When Wendy decided to spend Thanksgiving with her friends I was disappointed, but finally I had made some realistic expectations of her choices and desires. I wanted her to be happy, too.

Since I am now married and am a part of a larger extended family, we cannot always be together. On those occasions I know that she has the love and support of her friends. Her happiness is her birthday and holiday gift to me. No money or material gift can exceed that!

Love, Wendy's Mom

"...finally I had made some realistic expectations of her choices and desires."



Client/Consumer Resources

NAMI C.A.R.E. Support Groups

Consumer Support Groups
For more information call the
Albright I & R Center at
(619) 543-1434 or 1-800-523-5933

NAMI San Diego Office

4480 30th Street
San Diego, CA 92116
Every Thursday: 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Gifford Clinic (Cafeteria)

140 Arbor Dr.
San Diego, CA 92103
1st & 3rd Wednesdays: 2:00 - 3:30 p.m.

Sharp Mesa Vista Hospital

(Activity Room)
7850 Vista Hill Ave.
San Diego, CA 92123
Every Thursday: 12 Noon - 1:00 p.m.

Joslyn Sr. Center

210 Park Ave
Escondido, CA 92025
1st & 3rd Tuesdays: 4:00 - 5:30 p.m.

Another site for NAMI C.A.R.E.
(consumers advocating recovery through
empowerment) is now in place.

Peer support groups are an important resource for people who live with severe and persistent mental illness in their daily lives. Learning that others have been able to work out some of the problems associated with mental illness can inspire new hope in consumers who attend a NAMI C.A.R.E. support group. Members of this group often come away with positive ideas for improving their situations. The facilitators (also consumers) guide the group toward problem solving through shared experiences.

Upcoming Dates:

Monday, December 12, 2005, 10am to 11am
Monday, December 26, 2005, cancelled due to Christmas

Location: Mariposa Clubhouse
560 Greenbrier Drive
Oceanside, CA
(760) 439-6006

For more information about the new group, call: NAMI North Coastal San Diego County
(760) 722-3754

For the complete list of NAMI C.A.R.E. meetings, see page 6.

Patient Advocacy Program

5998 Alcalá Park, AW 304, San Diego, 92110
(619) 260-7660 or 1-800-479-2233
Monday - Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

The Consumer Center for Health Education and Advocacy

1475 Sixth Ave., 4th Floor, San Diego, 92101
Toll Free: 1-877-734-3258
Mon, Wed, Thurs & Fri: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Tuesday: 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

If you need help getting mental health services or if you have a complaint or grievance, call or write us. We are ready to help you.

Bayview Clubhouse

330 Moss Street, Chula Vista, 91911
(619) 585-4646 • Fax: (619) 585-4625
Mon, Tue, Wed & Fri: 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Thursdays: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Casa Del Sol Clubhouse

1157 30th Street, San Diego, 92154
(between Coronado Ave. & Del Sol Blvd.)
(619) 429-1937 • Fax: (619) 429-5205
Monday: 8:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Tue, Thurs & Fri: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Wednesday: Noon - 8:00 p.m. (Bilingual)

Corner Clubhouse

2864 University Ave. (at Utah)
San Diego, 92104 (North Park, #7 Bus Line)
(619) 683-7423 • Fax: (619) 683-7428
Monday - Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

East Corner Clubhouse

1060 Estes Street (off Chase Avenue)
El Cajon, 92020
(619) 440-5133 • Fax: (619) 440-8522
Mon, Tue, Thurs & Fri: 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Wednesday: 8:00 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Eastwind Clubhouse

2359 Ulric Street, San Diego, 92111
(858) 268-4933 • Fax: (858) 268-0244
Monday - Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Escondido Clubhouse

474 West Vermont Ave., Suite 105
Escondido, CA 92025
(760) 737-7125 • Fax: (760) 741-6645
Monday - Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Friend-to-Friend

1009 "G" Street, Suite A, San Diego, 92101
(619) 238-2711 • Fax: (619) 238-1127
Monday - Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
An SSI advocate is available

Friends In Hand Clubhouse

144 Copper Ave., Vista, 92083
(302 Bus Route)
(760) 631-2206
Saturdays: 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Mariposa Clubhouse

560 Greenbrier, Suite 102, Oceanside, 92054
(760) 439-6006 • Fax: (760) 721-8542
Monday - Thursday: 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Saturday: 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

The Meeting Place, Inc.

4034 Park Blvd., San Diego, 92103
(619) 294-9582 • Fax: (619) 294-9588
Monday - Friday: 8:00 am. - 4:00 p.m.
1st & 3rd Saturdays: 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Neighborhood House Association (NHA)

Friendship Clubhouse
286 Euclid Ave., #104, San Diego, 92114
(619) 266-2111 Ext. 105 • Fax: (619) 266-0496
Monday - Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Visions

226 Church Avenue, Chula Vista, 91910
(619) 420-8603 • Fax: (619) 420-0385
Mon, Thurs, Fri & Sat: Noon - 7:00 p.m.
Sunday: Noon - 5:00 p.m.

The Access Center of San Diego

1295 University Ave., Suite 10, San Diego, 92103
(619) 293-3500
Monday - Friday: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Employment Services

1202 Morena Blvd., Suite 201, San Diego, 92110
(619) 276-8071
Monday - Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Job Options

3465 Camino del Rio South, San Diego, 92108
(619) 688-1784 (Valorie)
Monday - Thursday: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

San Diego Park and Recreation Therapeutic Recreation Services

(619) 525-8247
Monday - Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Serves over 50,000 participants each year. The goal of the program is to provide year round recreational experiences for individuals with disabilities.

The Creative Arts Consortium

P. O. Box 3053, San Diego, CA 92163-3053
Director - July Rose
(619) 282-4627 or (619) 563-2708

DBSA-Depression Bipolar Support Alliance

There are meetings in different regions of the county. Call for meeting information:
1-800-826-3632
or go to the DBSA website at: www.dbsalliance.org



Membership

NAMI San Diego relies on its membership and your generous contribution to continue providing education and other services to people with mental illnesses, their families, and the community. To join NAMI San Diego, renew your membership, or make a contribution, complete the information below and enclose your check payable to: **NAMI San Diego.**

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

____ Please mail my newsletter via post office

____ Please email my newsletter

____ Membership \$40.00
() New Member () Renewal

____ Professional Membership \$75.00

____ Organizational Membership \$100.00

____ **Please contact me about a Scholarship Membership**

____ Donation* _____

____ Please contact about volunteer opportunities

To pay by Credit Card:

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_____ card number

____/____ expiration date

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The Advocate

Vol. IX, Issue 12, December 2005



4480 30th Street
San Diego, CA 92116

Non-Profit
Organization
U. S. Postage
Paid
San Diego, CA
Permit No. 2695

1st Thursday!!!

Annual Meeting!

December 1, 2005

6:00 p.m.

Potluck! See page 1



Return Service Requested

Get Empowered!

*By Jean Selzer, R.N.
Education Director*

We know that education is empowering. Why else do we go to classes to learn about mental illness and how to help our loved ones? But, perhaps we overlook that education comes in a variety of forms. Do you know that NAMI offers one of the most unique opportunities for on-going education in our Family Support Groups?

NAMI-trained facilitators, who have experienced what you –the caregivers are experiencing, lead family Support Groups. They lead these Support Groups because of their desire to help and their belief in the model of group wisdom and group experience. It has been shown through many group models (AA, NA, OA, etc...) that by

attending, sharing your experiences, problem solving and sharing resources, people become more knowledgeable and empowered to live with day-to-day issues that arise. When we hear how someone solved a problem that is similar to ours, when we ask for ideas because we're stumped, when we ask for, hear, or give information about new resources, or we're tired and need respite-and somebody gives us leads-what could be more educational than that?

Please don't overlook the various Family Support Groups that are listed under the Meeting Schedule in this newsletter and experience an on-going empowering education that can make a difference in your life.

*WALK Kick Off
Luncheon!*

Please join NAMI at the
Annual NAMIWalks for the
Minds of America
Kick Off Luncheon!

Thursday, February 16, 2005
Mission Valley Marriott

**Be a Team Captain!
Learn about Sponsorship!
Get Enthusiastic!**

Be There!

State: Board of Directors

The following individuals will be presented as candidates for the NAMI San Diego Board of Directors at the Annual Membership Meeting on Thursday, December 1, 2005, which is being held at the University Christian Church Friendship Hall.

Gay Ames is currently the Program Committee Chair and a past Board member. She serves as a family member representative on several County Mental Health groups. Gay has a social services and education background.

Louise Groszkruger is currently working toward development of a non-profit agency to support employment and housing stability for individuals with bipolar disorder. She is also working as a contract grant and proposal writer. She has written two grants for NAMI San Diego since joining the Board in June, 2005.

Patti Jakobcic is the Manager of Social Services at Sharp Mesa Vista Hospital. She was the previous Director of UPAC Mental Health Services, as well as a previous Board member. She also is a Co-Facilitator of the Schizophrenia Family Education Course.

Phyllis Meagher has over 20 years of experience in healthcare, including CEO of a 66-bed free-standing psychiatric hospital. Her experience with primary care, specialty services, and complementary care, and her personal experience allows her to approach total patient wellness with a well-rounded view.

Sally Shepherd is a continuing Board member, has been the president for the past year, and developed the outreach committee. She is on various community boards and is an older adult advocate.

Isabel Vidales has been an advocate for mental health for 11 years. She is a parent advocate and facilitator amongst the Latino population and children with special needs and learning disabilities. She is the mother of three and an immigrant to this country. She helped develop the Moses Project - a program that enables Hispanic families with limited English to be educated about life, empowerment, family, and community.

Judy Wasik is continuing in her Board position and is a Family-to-Family teacher. She is employed with the U.S. Navy and continues to provide a wealth of knowledge in program development and strategic planning.

October 2005

Major Changes Ahead for People with Medi-Cal and Medicare

Big changes are coming for you if you have Medicare. As of January 1, 2006, you will now have most of your drugs paid for by one of the many Prescription Drug Plans that has contracted with Medicare. This new program is called Medicare Part D.

What is Medicare?

Medicare is a federal program that provides health insurance for people over 65 and people under 65 with a disability. Medicare helps pay for hospital care, doctor visits, and some other medical costs.

What are the changes to Medicare?

Starting January 1, private companies will offer Prescription Drug Plans (“Plans”) to all people on Medicare. These Plans will have a list of drugs that you can get if you sign up with that Plan. If you do not have Medi-Cal, you do not have to sign up for a Plan. It is a voluntary program. The coverage you have now might suit your needs better. However, if you do not sign up until after May 15, 2006, you might have a late penalty applied to your monthly premium.

What if I have Medicare and Medi-Cal?

As of January 1, 2006, if you have Medi-Cal and Medicare, you will get prescription drugs from a Plan that has contracted with Medicare. Medi-Cal will stop paying for most of your drugs and Medicare will start to pay for them on January 1, 2006. Medicare will automatically assign you to a plan in October 2005, but you may switch plans before December 31, 2005 and every month thereafter. It’s important to know which drugs you are on so that you can make the best decision for your needs.

What does that mean when I am automatically enrolled in a Drug Plan?

If you have Medicare and free Medi-Cal, Medicare might automatically enroll you into a plan that might not cover all of the drugs you need. You need to check that the Plan includes the medications you take. It is also important to know if your pharmacy is in the Plan’s network. You can get the list of medications drug plans cover by calling 1-800-MEDICARE or visit www.medicare.gov.

How much will a Plan cost me?

If you have Medicare and free Medi-Cal, you will automatically receive assistance from the government to help pay for your Plan. However, you might have to pay \$1-2 for generic drugs or \$3-5 for name brand drugs per prescription.

If you have Medicare and/or Medi-Cal with a share-of-cost, and you would like assistance in paying for your Plan, you can apply for “Extra Help” at Social Security, The County of San Diego Family Resource Centers, or the Consumer Center. The “Extra Help” application is also available on-line at www.socialsecurity.gov.

How can I pick the Plan that will provide me most of the drugs I need?

The best way to prepare for this change is to make a list of the drugs you currently take. Write down the drug’s strength and daily dosages. You should talk to your doctor about your drug options. Make sure that your preferred pharmacy cover the Plan in which you are interested. Also, keep information sent by Medicare and Social Security. These agencies will send you important information about how you will be personally affected by these changes. Put all of these letters in a safe place.

Who can help me with these changes?

There are many resources that can help you. HICAP, a local program that helps people with Medicare, can be reached at 1-800-434-0222. The Consumer Center also has many resources to help you. There are planning brochures that can help you organize your information to prepare to choose the best plan for you. You can get brochures and other resources from Colleen J. Cook, the Consumer Center’s Project Coordinator, who helps people with the changes to Medicare. If you have questions, e-mail Colleen at ColleenC@cchea.org or call her toll-free at 1-877-734-3258.