



National Alliance on Mental Illness

nami Hillsborough

NEWS and VIEWS

The Official Newsletter of NAMI Hillsborough, Inc.

Volume 3 No. 1

Spring 2010

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**NAMI
Hillsborough
(813) 273-8104**

**NAMI HelpLine
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211**

**Please visit our
website or contact us
for a list of support
groups**

*NAMI Hillsborough, Inc.
P. O. Box 4352
Brandon, FL 33509-4352
Tel: (813) 273-8104*

support@namihillsborough.org
www.namihillsborough.org

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

**NAMI HILLSBOROUGH IS PLEASED TO OFFER TWO
INFORMATIVE AND INSPIRING PRESENTATIONS .**

**Out of the Ashes, a Talk by Charrie Hazard
Tuesday, April 27
6:30pm-8:00pm**

Charrie Hazard, an award-winning journalist and novelist, will speak about her experiences raising an increasingly volatile child, whose violent behavior doctors ultimately attributed to a mood disorder, and the steps her husband and she took to cope with and ultimately rise above the chaos, violence and broken relationships his illness spawned. Today her son, now 22, is a successful student at the University of South Florida. Hazard's novel, *Falling into the Sun*, unfolds the spiritual journey of a mother intent on helping her son negotiate the labyrinth of bipolar disorder and is loosely based on the author's own experiences. Says Wendy Walker, editor of *Chicken Soup for the Soul—Power Moms*, "This honest, heart-felt novel not only chronicles a mother's journey to save her son, it reveals the remarkable ability of the human spirit to forgive, heal and love."

AND

**Suicide Prevention: What You Need to Know
Dr. Laura Elder, Psychiatrist-James A. Haley Veterans Hospital
Tuesday, May 18, 2010
6:30pm-8:00pm**

Both presentations are free and open to the general public. They will be held at the Jimmie B Keel Regional Library (2902 East Bearss) in Tampa.

2009 for NAMI Hillsborough in Review, by George Thomas

NAMI Hillsborough's mission is to improve the lives of persons affected by mental illness. Here are some of the ways in we pursued that mission 2009. To increase awareness of the needs of persons affected by mental illness, we attended six events designed for the general public: four health fairs, a suicide awareness event, and a candle light vigil for the homeless, We created two events for Mental Illness Awareness Week (the first full week in October), one a noon-time observance and the other a candle light vigil. Increasing awareness of mental illness among the general illness may lead people to seek help more quickly or treat the next person with mental illness they meet more kindly. Because it is important to increase awareness among professionals as well as the general public, NAMI Hillsborough made presentations to discharge planners at St. Joseph's Hospital and to case managers and residential property managers with Mental Health Care, Inc. and participated on a regular basis in Hillsborough County acute care meetings and the Hillsborough Recovery and Resiliency Task Force.

We provided support groups that gave some of the people who attended their first chance to speak about their experiences in a safe environment. By the end of the year, we were providing eight support groups a month. NAMI Hillsborough also helped over 50 people have a happier holiday by sponsoring a holiday party for persons living in mental health housing.

Like the more than 1,200 other NAMI affiliates nationwide, NAMI Hillsborough believes that education is the key to empowering persons with mental illness and their families. This can be as simple as referring people to community resources through our information and referral line or as intensive as providing NAMI's Peer-to- Peer and Family-to-Family programs. In 2009 NAMI Hillsborough established a voice mail for our informational and referral services, continued to provide information through our website and offered two Family-to-Family and one Peer-to-Peer class. Developed by our national organization and used nationwide, these programs give people whose lives have been devastated by mental illness the information and control they need to take control. Family-to-Family is a 12-week class for the families of people with mental illness that meets once a week for 2.5 hours. Peer-to-Peer is a 9 week class for persons with mental illness that meets once a week for two hours. Debra Allberg, who will teach her fifth Family-to-Family class this fall says that...

Coming into a group where everyone understands the shared experience of living with a loved one's mental illness is a great relief for most family members. Class members are able to relate to each other in a compassionate, supportive way, as they work through the many emotional stages of navigating through serious mental illness.

David Harkins who has taught at least ten Peer-to-Peer classes says that...

Peer-to- Peer is an exciting program where peers interact with other peers who are mentors to explore our illnesses together. This camaraderie and common bond expedites the learning experience and allows true interaction in a very wholesome and safe environment for all participants.

In 2009, NAMI Hillsborough became a stronger organization. We finalized our bylaws, and added two members trained to teach the Peer-to-Peer Program, two members trained to teach the NAMI In living Color Program, and two members trained to lead NAMI Connections support groups. With this new strength, we look forward to doing more for people affected by mental illness in 2010. A Family-to-Family and a Peer-to-Peer class are almost complete and we have already offered more educational presentations than we did in all of 2009.

CONSUMERS' CORNER

Faith and Recovery: NAMI Faith Net

” by Wanda Dobrogowski

Many people believe that faith can play a significant role in their recovery process, not only where mental illness is concerned, but through all kinds of painful conditions. It is not blind belief, but belief fashioned according to our own faith sorting as it does through our troubles and reaching some sort of understanding that helps to sustain us. It does not have to be very heady; it may be so simple as deciding to smile one day. Simple, yet so profound.

Sometimes our suffering can seem so senseless, yet we may come to understand, perhaps through the help of a higher power, and however you might experience that, that we are capable of hitting the balls pitched to us and that things will get better. We tend to isolate during the most difficult times. Belonging to communities of faith can aid in bringing us outside ourselves enough to see circumstances we find ourselves more objectively. We can learn from others and rest in the knowledge there are those who share our beliefs, understand us and will help care for our well being.

Watch each issue for a box on the Faith Net page for links to web sites that address our illnesses in relationship to our faith.

Ode to My Mother

by Tony S. Garner

Unto ye who says I care, I hope in time of dismay will always be there. She will help when I am feeling down. Upon this face, a smile. Where there's a horrid frown, she's the one to tell me why there's a need to feel down and cry.

The battle of pain she will always win, because of suffering the nine months that brought me in.

She may be old and some time's cold, yet in our eye sight she is bold!

She helps us counter fears with love. She wipes away our tears like God above. So with love, this we say.

Happy Mother's Day

Resources

NAMI FaithNet. NAMI FaithNet is a network information resource initiative of NAMI members, friends, clergy, and congregations of all faith traditions who wish to create faith communities who are welcoming and supportive of persons and families living with serious mental illness.

Contact: NAMI FaithNet, 3803 N. Fairfax Dr., Suite 100, Arlington, VA 22203-1701; 703-524-7600
703-524-9094 (fax); E-mail: faithnet@nami.org Website: www.nami.org/faithnet

Mental Illness and Families of Faith: How Congregations can help. This resource/study guide is designed, in the words of the introduction, to be used with clergy, members of congregations, family members and anyone desiring to learn more about mental illness and how to respond with compassion and care. It is available online at http://mentalhealthministries.net/links_resources/study_guide/mental_illness_study_guide.pdf

SUPPORTING NAMI HILLSBOROUGH'S MISSION

There are many ways to support NAMI Hillsborough's mission to improve the lives of persons affected by Mental illness. Here are a few.

1. Be a candidate for the NAMI Hillsborough Board.

One way to use your energy, skills, knowledge, and experience to support our mission to improve the lives of persons affected by mental illness is to serve on the NAMI Hillsborough Board. We will elect new board members in June.

We ask a lot from our board members. They are expected to complete their full 3-year term, barring special circumstances, and serve on at least one committee and one special events subcommittee. The current committees are listed below. If you are passionate about the needs of people affected by mental illness, are a member of NAMI Hillsborough or are willing to join before the election, please consider becoming a candidate. To contact the Nominating Committee for an interview, call Kathy or George at 273-8410.

2. Serve on a one of the NAMI Hillsborough Committees listed below.

A. Nominations Committee: Kathy Troy, Chairperson.

B. Communications Committee: George Thomas, Chairperson.

Maintains website, publishes quarterly newsletter, identifies/ develops marketing materials, maintains media contact list and takes additional steps needed to keep the NAMI Hillsborough membership and the Hillsborough County community informed of the activities of the organization.

C. Program Committee: Susan Lang, Chairperson

Organizes Family to Family and Peer To Peer classes, identifies persons to have trained to present education programs, provides group facilitator training, arranges the monthly general education meetings, provides technical assistance and resources for the family and consumer support groups.

D. Membership Committee: Ursula Perry, Chairperson.

Maintains the membership roles, welcomes new members, and solicits new members.

E. Fund Raising Committee: Kevin Edwards, Chairperson.

Plans and organizes fund-raising activities and events.

F. Advocacy Committee: Alfred Jefferson, Chairperson.

Educates the membership and the general public about legislative and other policies that affect the lives of persons with mental illness.

SUPPORTING NAMI HILLSBOROUGH'S MISSION

(Continued from page 4)

To volunteer to serve on a committee, leave a message for the chair at 273-8104 or send an email to support@NAMIHillsborough.org.

3. **Become a volunteer.**

We would love to hear from people who share our dream of a better life for persons affected by mental illness but don't feel that serving on the board or a committee is right for them. If you want to discuss other ways that you could support our mission, contact us at the phone number or email above and let us know that you want to help.

4. **Advertise in the NAMI Hillsborough Newsletter.**

5. **Send a donation to: NAMI Hillsborough, Inc., P. O. Box 435, Brandon, FL 33509-4352.**

NEWS FROM THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMUNITY

The Recovery and Resiliency Task Force *by Leslie Pandolfo*

The Recovery and Resiliency Task Force Committee meets on the second Friday of every month at the Department of Children and Families (DCF) building located on Florida Avenue near Busch Boulevard. When you arrive, check in at the front desk and just ask for the room location.

The Recovery and Resiliency Task Force meeting includes people with a mental illness, family members, professionals and other stakeholders dedicated to the welfare and recovery of those suffering from mental illness. If you or someone in your family receives mental health services, you are invited and encouraged to attend the monthly meetings. The mission statement of the Recovery and Resiliency Task Force is as follows:

We desire to provide a forum to consumers, providers, and other stakeholders to have an opportunity to examine the current systems of care and explore new or alternative models of care that might better promote recovery

Recovery means leading a satisfying life filled with meaningful activities even if the illness never entirely goes away. Resiliency means recovering from traumatic experiences.

Continued on page 6

Recovery and Resiliency Task Force (cont. from page 5)

The meeting in December, 2009, included an informative film, entitled, "Inside/Outside" which interviewed several patients who had been inpatients at a mental hospital for long periods of time. They had re-entered the hospital several times during their lifetime. The film explained the system of the revolving door that many patients experience. Patients talked about being hospitalized for a long period of time. The highlight of this film was the success of the patients who finally left the hospital and led successful lives in the community. Each individual explained how they arrived at that point and what it was that led them to gain their freedom and have a positive impact on the community.

The January meeting included a presentation entitled Suicide Prevention. The guest speaker was Dr. Laura Elder, Psychiatrist and Coordinator of the Suicide Prevention team at the Veteran's Hospital on Bruce B. Downs Boulevard. She started out with some alarming statistics on suicide:

- o There are 3 suicides to each homicide
- o More suicides are committed by men.
- o Men are more successful and are likely to attempt suffocation such as by hanging
- o Women are more likely to overdose on pills
- o Veterans are twice as likely to attempt suicide as part of post traumatic stress disorder

Great tips were given for the prevention of suicide with a main focus on getting a person with suicidal signs to seek treatment and to stay in treatment. Medication can help with moods and sleep patterns. Interesting to note, is that suicides are often done "in the moment" when the pain of living is overwhelming. Several myths were discussed including, that if we talk about suicide, we are planting it into the person's mind. However, the fact is that 80% of those who commit suicide talk about it first and that is the time that we can help them by listening and getting them into treatment before it is too late.

Dr. Elder (813-610-6557) is available to give presentations on suicide prevention.

I hope that after reading this article, that many of you will consider attending a meeting, whether you have a mental illness or work in the mental health field.

Membership Form

NAMI Hillsborough, Inc. is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) charitable organization and all contributions are tax-deductible. Annual dues include membership in NAMI Hillsborough County, NAMI Florida, and NAMI National, with subscriptions to each of their newsletters.

- Individual/Family \$ 45.00
- Open Door \$ 8.00
- Supporter \$ 50.00
- Patron \$100.00
- Corporate/Business \$250.00
- Donation \$ _____
- In memory/honor of
_____ \$ _____

Name _____
 Address _____
 City/State/Zip _____
 Phone _____
 E-mail _____

Note: Membership Valid for One Year

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 Brandon, FL 33509-4352
 (813) 273-8104

Do you have an idea you'd like to share? Do you have a suggestion for the Board? Would you like to write an article? We want to hear from you. Please submit to editor@namihillsborough.org. Thank you.

Central Intake Ribbon Cutting *by David Harkins, AA, BA, CRPS-A*

The Honorable George Sheldon, Secretary of the Florida Department of Children and Families joined Guy King, Chairman of MHC Board of Directors, and Michael Peacock, Assistant Public Defender along with MHC Board Members, local elected officials, community members and many MHC staff joined together on February 5th 2010 at the entrance to the newly remodeled Central Intake Unit, otherwise known as the Hillsborough County Baker Act Receiving Facility to participate in a ribbon cutting ceremony to commemorate the official opening of this remodeled unit.

On this crisp, cloudy, blustery day, the assembled dignitaries along with the rest of the crowd after the normal speeches and hoop-la all toured the wonderfully modernized accommodations. Central Intake is the interim home for persons who are in acute distress due to crisis for mental health issues and have been transported to the building to be evaluated to see how they can be assisted and to determine whether they meet criteria to be admitted (commonly referred as being Baker Acted) to a Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) such as one of the two that MHC houses in another part of the same building. This process starts with an evaluation as to their immediate mental and physical health needs which includes a triage and possible admittance to one of MHC'S units or being sent to another CSU or other mental treatment facility in the county or being discharged back to the community if and when the consumer stabilizes enough while waiting for admission to be released on their own recognizance.

All of the persons who toured the facility were impressed with its new modern and consumer friendly and ergonomic and practical design. Many of the comments that emanated from the attendees were of high praise and the Board Members, Management and Staff of MHC all felt honored and proud to display their new facility that is truly a very amenable and practical facility.

Many of the visitors took turns sitting in the furniture that was designed for maximum comfort and practicality with the Consumers in mind. Many of the consumers are experiencing very difficult times emotionally, mentally and physically and this new facility enhances their treatment and adds to their comfort which goes a long way to increasing the therapeutic equation while waiting for their final disposition, placement and treatment.

As an employee of MHC and the Group Facilitator for our CSU units and as the 1st Vice President of NAMI Hillsborough and a consumer and Advocate who has had my share of stays in other units like this in years past I truly can say that this new remodeled and enhanced structure which has led to the subtle and maybe not so subtle improvement of the morale of all concerned is going a long way to making the consumers served and the staff serving them more empathetic and understanding of one another.

Those responsible for the vision and the persistence to see this project through to a successful conclusion are in my opinion to be praised for a job well done.

NAMI Hillsborough's first annual Bowling Fundraiser

Please join us for NAMI Hillsborough's first annual bowling fundraiser.

When: Saturday May 15, 2010, 1:30-3:30 pm
Where: Pin Chasers Midtown, 4847 N. Armenia Avenue, Tampa

A \$20 donation to NAMI Hillsborough covers bowling shoes and 2 hours of bowling. Call 273-8104 for information about NAMI Hillsborough.



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