



August 2012

MEET GERRY BLESSING, OUR NEW NAMI FREDERICK PRESIDENT

Friends of NAMI Frederick,
Greetings!

I am Gerry Blessing. Let me first take a minute to introduce myself. At our recent Annual Meeting in July, I was elected to serve as President of NAMI Frederick. My involvement with this special community began some years ago when attending a Family Member Support Group and taking Family-to-Family education classes.

A few years later NAMI Frederick came under the leadership of Remo Molino who has served as President these past four years. Even now he continues strong in supporting the organization in the NAMI office and facilitating one of our Family Member Support Groups. We thank him!

The Annual Meeting especially invites the participation of our broader membership for an overview of our activities - our motivation for existing. It was suggested that the activities outlined there be reviewed in this newsletter.

We are all about support, education, and advocacy for persons experiencing mental illness, and their families and friends. I would note that each of us has particular motivations for our involvement - each knows best where we might fit in and contribute, where our volunteering would make a difference. Please reflect on those feelings in the overview presented here- I hope you might be motivated to 'fit in'.

SUPPORT

- Family Member Support Groups meet twice a month in the evening, led by trained facilitators.
- Connections is a recovery support group for adults living with mental illness.
- Hospital visits offer support and information to families in crisis.

EDUCATION

- Family to Family Education Classes are offered twice a year by trained volunteers, for both family and friends of those suffering a mental illness.

- NAMI Public Education Forums are presented by specialists on topics of general interest, providing the latest topical research.
- Brochures from NAMI National offer professional descriptions on various mental illnesses and how to seek help.
- NAMIWalks is an annual program to inform the public of our mission, and acts as a major fundraising effort.
- This newsletter! We invite you to contribute.

ADVOCACY

- NAMI Frederick works with NAMI Maryland and NAMI National to spread the message about key legislative issues concerning mental illness and eliminating the stigma associated with these illnesses.

You might observe how advocacy for NAMI's mission is intertwined with many NAMI Frederick activities like our public education forums, our informational brochures, in the public display afforded by NAMIWalks, and this newsletter.

We also participate with area organizations in seasonal affairs such as Mental Illness Awareness Week in early October and the Christmas celebration for Way Station clients in December.

In summary, may we all become informed, work together, and support each other in our NAMI community.

Sincerely,

Gerry Blessing

NAMI Frederick
President

*You can learn about NAMI
Frederick by:*

*1- Picking up a bright orange NAMI
Frederick brochure detailing many
of the above activities.*

*2- Visiting our website
www.namifcmd.org for additional
information.*

*3- Leaving a personal message or
request on the NAMI Frederick
office phone: 240-379-6186.*

Changes to Our NAMI Frederick Board

The NAMI Frederick 2012 Annual Meeting was held on Tuesday, July 3rd. During the meeting, the NAMI objectives of Support, Education, and Advocacy were discussed. Highlighted in the presentation were NAMI Frederick's accomplishments in each area. Additionally, several board members completed their term limits, ending their time serving on the NAMI Frederick board of directors.



Former President, Remo Molino was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation by newly appointed NAMI Frederick President, Gerry Blessing. We are thankful to Remo for his dedication, supportiveness, and excellent leadership skills. Remo continues to volunteer with NAMI Frederick as a Support Group Facilitator.



Nancy Gieser and Christy Evans were presented with Certificates of Appreciation for their service to the NAMI Frederick Board of Directors. Nancy Gieser has served for many years as the Community Education Coordinator. She is responsible for bringing expert speakers to Frederick County to present on a variety of topics relating to mental illness. We are pleased that Nancy will continue to volunteer in this role through the fall and has lined up two excellent speakers. Look for information about the Fall Education Meetings in this newsletter. Christy Evans served as the Brochure Coordinator, designing and updating the orange NAMI Frederick brochure and overseeing the distribution of brochures throughout the community. She will continue to volunteer for Frederick NAMI in her new role as Newsletter Coordinator.

At the annual meeting, we welcomed two new NAMI Frederick Volunteers, Nancy Hall and Lori Dempsey. Nancy Hall came to the meeting on behalf of her husband Jim Hall. The Halls became interested in Frederick NAMI after taking the Family-to-Family Class and Jim will be serving as the new Brochure Coordinator. Lori Dempsey will serve as the NAMI Walks Coordinator along with her daughter, Sarah Dempsey. Lori and Sarah will also help to spread the word about NAMI Frederick and offer educational brochures at Frederick's *In the Streets Celebration*. Look for the NAMI booth and stop by to say hello!

Do you have a few hours a month to volunteer? Please consider serving on the NAMI Frederick Board of Directors. Find out more by contacting Kathy Van Arnum at kathy.vanarnum@namifcmd.org.



HELP WANTED

Are you willing to work an hour or two per month to help our affiliate? We are looking for a volunteer who will serve on the NAMI of Frederick County Board of Directors and take on the duties of the *Community Outreach Coordinator* position. The duties of this position include:

Regularly place notices in newspapers for support groups

(Hey, you can use the same ad over and over! How easy is that?!!!)

Twice a year advertise the Family to Family class via newspaper/flyers/website/etc.

(Once again, you can use the same ad over and over—just change the dates! Easy-peasy!!!)

Advertise guest speakers as needed (approx. 2-3 times per year) and the annual NAMI Walk

(held each spring) via newspaper/flyers/radio/ website/email blasts

Attend NAMI of Frederick County Board of Directors meetings six (6) times per year

and be a NAMI member “in good standing.” (In other words, you’ve paid your annual NAMI dues.)

Don't worry...our webmaster will send the email blasts & advertise on our website! (You just have to let him know *when* to do it.) Also, the other board members will help you—hey, we're ALL volunteers too! So, if you have a willing spirit, are fairly organized and want to help others, we could use your help. Come on, someone reached out to you when you first came to NAMI, right? Now it's your turn to pay it forward. If you are interested in this position, contact Kathy VanArnum at: kathy.vanarnum@namifcmd.org



PTSD

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

...not all wounds are visible.

PTSD – How Can We Help?

by Jane Kohlheyer

We've all heard about the huge numbers of soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with PTSD. There are approximately 17,500 veterans living in Frederick County, and about 13% of them served from 2001-2012. Thankfully, not all of them have post-traumatic stress disorder, but a fairly large number are struggling with PTSD, depression and other disorders. Nationwide, NAMI estimates there are about 40 million Americans with anxiety disorders, which includes PTSD.

Is there anything the average citizen can do to help? One study done at the University of Denver found that soldiers serving in combat who received handwritten letters from family, friends and even unknown supportive citizens had fewer symptoms of PTSD upon return to the U.S. than those who received no mail-- and even than those who communicated via email or instant messages with loved ones. According to U. of Denver professor Howard Markham, Ph.D., writing and sending a letter is a sign of commitment and support. Letters can help soldiers serving in a combat zone feel connected and less lonely. A handwritten letter can be read and reread when a soldier is in need of support. If you'd like to write a letter of support to an active duty soldier serving in a combat zone, consider contacting anysoldier.com, the USO, or other similar organizations.

NAMI Connection Support Group Meets

2nd and 4th Tuesday
of each month

7:30-9:00 PM

4 East Church Street,
Community Room B

Right here in Frederick County there are a couple of things you can do for our veterans and active duty service members. If you see an active-duty member of the armed forces in uniform, take a moment to speak to them. Simply saying, "Thank you for your service," means a great deal to those who are serving our nation. If you have a child in school, perhaps you could suggest to his/her teacher that the class write letters of support to soldiers. And, if you know of a veteran who is struggling with PTSD or depression, please encourage them to seek medical attention and also encourage them to attend the Connections support group. For dates and times of support group meetings, check our website.

Every 80 minutes a U.S. Veteran dies by suicide. Male veterans are twice as likely to die by suicide as compared to their civilian peers. We must all do what we can to help.

Sources: U.S. Department of
Veteran's Affairs, University of
Denver, U.S. Census Bureau,
NAMI National



"One study done at the University of Denver found that soldiers serving in combat who received handwritten letters from family, friends and even unknown supportive citizens had fewer symptoms of PTSD upon return to the U.S. than those who received no mail."

How can I help a friend or relative who has PTSD?

If you know someone who has PTSD, it affects you too. The first and most important thing you can do to help a friend or relative is to help him or her get the right diagnosis and treatment. You may need to make an appointment for your friend or relative and go with him or her to see the doctor. Encourage him or her to stay in treatment, or to seek different treatment if his or her symptoms don't get better after 6 to 8 weeks.

- Offer emotional support, understanding, patience, and encouragement.
- Learn about PTSD so you can understand what your friend or relative is experiencing.
- Talk to your friend or relative, and listen carefully.
- Listen to feelings your friend or relative expresses and be understanding of situations that may trigger PTSD symptoms.
- Invite your friend or relative out for positive distractions such as walks, outings, and other activities.
- Remind your friend or relative that, with time and treatment, he or she can get better.

Never ignore comments about your friend or relative harming him or herself, and report such comments to your friend's or relative's therapist or doctor.

Source: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd>

Community Education Opportunities

Presentations free and open to the public.

NAMI's September Education Meeting

September 11, 2012

7:00-9:00PM

Hood College

NAMI's October Education Meeting

October 2, 2012

7:00-9:00PM

Hood College



Treatment Considerations and Novel Treatment Approaches in Schizophrenia

Understanding Severe Irritability and Bipolar Disorder in Children & Youth

NAMI of Frederick County will present Dr. Deanna Kelley, Director of the Treatment Research Program at the Maryland Psychiatric Research Center (MPRC), University of Maryland School of Medicine on **Tuesday, September 11, from 7 – 9 pm., at Hood College, Whitaker Commons Common Room, 401 Rosemont Avenue, Frederick.** Dr. Kelly will talk about sex specific differences in schizophrenia onset and treatment, insights on treatment from the latest research, and information about on-going clinical trial research including:

- Sex specific differences in clinical onset, medication side effects and treatment outcomes between men and women with schizophrenia, and treatment considerations in women with schizophrenia,
- The antibiotic minocycline, which has been recently shown to improve symptoms in schizophrenia, but is not yet approved by the Food and Drug Administration, or been tested in combination with clozapine.
- Emerging clinical evidence of using oxytocin in schizophrenia and its effect on negative symptoms.

Dr. Kelly, Pharm.D., BCPP is Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the Maryland Psychiatric Research Center, University of Maryland School of Medicine. Dr. Kelly received her Bachelor of Science and Doctorate in Pharmacy at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA. Dr. Kelly has been involved in several clinical trials in schizophrenia and substance use and has been active in psychopharmacology research for the past 14 years. She has received research funding from the National Institutes of Mental Health to study long-term outcomes and mortality associated with antipsychotics medication, cardiovascular risk and substance abuse.

By Nancy Gieser, Education Coordinator, NAMI Frederick

NAMI of Frederick County in partnership with Frederick County Public Schools and Frederick County Developmental Center will present Dr. Kenneth Towbin, M.D., Chief of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychiatry in the Emotion and Development Branch of the Intramural Research Program at National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), **Tuesday, October 2, from 7 – 9 p.m. at Hood College, Whitaker Commons Common Room, 401 Rosemont Avenue, Frederick.** Dr. Towbin will address common signs and symptoms of bipolar disorder and severe irritability in youth, what parents can do to help a child who is struggling with irritability (severe temper tantrums and rages), and "hyper" behavior (distractible, hyperactive, trouble sleeping). Dr. Tobin will also explain treatment options and the current research in pediatric psychiatry conducted at the NIMH.

Dr. Towbin is a Diplomate of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology in both General and in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and a Clinical Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science at the George Washington University School of Medicine. Dr. Towbin has authored on Tourette's Syndrome, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Autism Spectrum disorders and pediatric Bipolar Disorder. His current research seeks to inform phenomenology and treatment of pediatric Bipolar Disorder, Severe Mood Dysregulation in children and adolescence, and Childhood Anxiety Disorders.

Registration is required if sign language or foreign language interpretation is needed; registration is recommended for all other attendees. To register, contact: Julie DeRoner, Frederick County Developmental Center 301-600-1617 or jderoner@frederickcountymd.gov. If sign language or foreign language interpretation is needed, please contact Susan Donoghue-Rick 5 days before the program at 240-236-8744 or susan.donoghue-rick@fcps.org

Fall Class

Beginning on **September 10, 2012**, NAMI Frederick will again be offering its flagship-education course—Family to Family—to the local community. The Family to Family course is a free, 12-week course intended for caregivers and loved ones of persons living with mental illness. The course is led by former participants, who have received significant additional training for course leadership, but still share similar circumstances and issues with the participants. The course delves into causes and treatments for virtually all major mental illnesses, such as depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and more. It explores the physiological causes of these illnesses and the capabilities and limitations of available existing treatments. Practical exercises instill and reinforce communication and crisis management techniques. To date, over 300,000 family members have benefitted from this national program.

This fall's Family to Family class will be held every **Monday** evening, from **September 12th through November 26th from 6:30 to 9:00 PM** at All Saints Episcopal Church (room is TBD). Interested persons can contact Mike Neely at 301-802-4496, or at mike@neely.net.

"There are only four kinds of people in the world – those who have been caregivers, those who are currently caregivers, those who will be caregivers and those who will need caregivers."

-Rosalyn Carter

Register Now!

Family Support Groups

Groups Meet:

1st Thursday of each month

7:00-8:30 PM

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church,
1415 W. 7th Street

3rd Wednesday of each month

6:30-8:00 PM

All Saints Episcopal Church
106 W. Church Street

Frederick NAMI offers two ongoing family member support groups which meet monthly. For more info on family support groups email curt.kohlheyser@namifcmd.org

Stronger Together:

Partners for the Future

2012 NAMI Maryland Education Conference

October 26-27, 2012

The 2012 Annual NAMI Maryland Education Conference will take place at Sheppard Pratt in Towson, Maryland. Workshops will be practical, skill-building sessions tailored for specific audiences including local NAMI affiliate leaders, consumers and family members, mental health service providers, and individuals working in the criminal justice arena. Friday evening there will be an awards dinner.

For more information or to register, visit www.namimd.org.



Read Any Good Books Lately?

Share your review of a book relating to mental illness in the NAMI Frederick newsletter. You can submit your review by emailing christy.evans@namifcmd.org.

Recently Published...

Better Than Normal: How What Makes You Different Can Make You Exceptional

by Dr. Dale Archer

Twelve Patients: Life and Death at Bellevue Hospital by Dr. Eric Manheimer



Congressional Forum on Mental Health and Addiction Parity

On June 27th, Maryland Congressman Chris Van Hollen, in cooperation with mental health and addiction treatment advocates, hosted a Congressional Forum that focused on the implementation and enforcement of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008. Congressman Van Hollen was joined by Congressman Jim Moran (D-VA), Congressman Paul Tonko (D-NY), former Congressman Patrick Kennedy (D-RI), and former Congressman Jim Ramstad (R-MN). Local citizens, government officials, and experts in mental health and addiction discussed how the law is affecting individuals' access to non-discriminatory mental health and addiction treatment benefits.

"Both common sense and simple fairness dictate that mental health diseases be treated on an equal footing with other health conditions," said Congressman Van Hollen. "As early supporters of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act, we felt it was important to hear from stakeholders about how the law is impacting them. We've made a lot of progress, but there is much more to be done to ensure that the law is meeting the goals Congress intended when it was enacted."

"There is a great need for complete and absolute parity for mental health treatments – more than 11 million adult Americans suffered from severe mental illness in the past year. We have come far in both understanding and treating mental disorders, but as discussion at Tuesday's forum reflected, we have a long way to go to bring down barriers to mental health treat-

ment," said Congressman Moran. "Mental health insurance coverage should be no different than physical health insurance coverage. After all, one in five adults nationwide suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder. As the sponsor of New York's mental health parity law, Timothy's Law, and a co-chair of the bipartisan Addiction, Treatment and Recovery Caucus, last night's forum was a chance to bring a voice to the voiceless and hope to the doorsteps of so many. I am proud to continue to work with any of my colleagues in the House who will stand up with me and fight for fair and full implementation of the Wellstone-Domenici Act on behalf of mental health and addiction patients," said Congressman Tonko.

For more information about this issue, visit Mental Health Association of Maryland's website at www.mhamd.org.



**THANK YOU
WALKERS!**



NAMI Frederick would like to thank all the individual walkers and teams that helped to make NAMIWalks a huge success.

We thank you for taking the time to participate in this event and for the donations solicited on behalf of NAMI Frederick!

Thank you for doing your part to support individuals affected by mental illness. We hope to see you again at next year's NAMIWalks!

Thank You!

NAMI Frederick greatly appreciates the support of three area churches for generously donating the meeting and office space that allow us to carry out the mission of NAMI in the Frederick community.

- All Saints Episcopal Church
- Evangelical Reformed United Church of Christ
- Good Shepherd Lutheran Church



Mental Illness Awareness Week

Mental Illness Awareness Week was established in 1990 in recognition of the efforts of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) to raise awareness of mental illness. Each year in the beginning of October, NAMI of Frederick County and other providers of mental health services in the Frederick area work together to sponsor special events which will bring about greater understanding of mental illness.

All events are open to the public free of charge.

- **Tuesday, October 2nd, 7:00-9:00 p.m.** – Dr. Kenneth Towbin of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) will speak on “**Understanding Severe Irritability and Bipolar disorder in Children & Youth**”. This NAMI Education Meeting was planned in partnership with Frederick County Public Schools and the Frederick County Developmental Center. It will be held at Hood College, Whitaker Commons Common Room, 401 Rosemont Avenue, Frederick.



- **Sunday, October 7th, 7:00-8:30 p.m.** – **Candlelight Vigil.** One in four persons suffers from a mental illness, including someone you know and love. Come light a candle to honor their struggles, and send a message of hope, recovery and fullness of life to those who continue the journey and to the friends, family and caregivers who accompany them. This will be held at Way Station, 230 West Patrick Street, Frederick. Refreshments will be served.

- **Thursday, October 11th** – **Free Depression Screening** will be held at the Wellness Center, Francis Scott Key Mall. (Time will be announced)

- **Saturday, October 13th, 7:30-9:00 p.m.** – **The Maryland Playback Ensemble** will present “**Mental Health: Stories of Stigma and Support**” at All Saints Episcopal Church (Parish Hall), 106 West Church Street, Frederick. Playback Theater is a unique form of community engagement that builds connections through shared experiences. Audience members offer stories, anecdotes, feelings and impressions, which are “played back” by a company of actors and musicians trained to respond respectfully, authentically and creatively, using only body, voice, music and cloth. By sharing stories and listening to those of others, the audience sometimes discovers unexpected similarities with people they thought were different.



**Study Participant
Opportunities**

NIMH Clinical Trial Research Studies: Bipolar Disorder & Severe Irritability Symptoms

Enrolling Nationwide, Eligible Participants Ages 6-17

How do the brain and the symptoms change as children grow up?

Participants must have a bipolar diagnosis, or have symptoms of severe irritability. Irritability symptoms include: difficulty handling frustration (severe temper tantrums and rages) and “hyper” behavior (distractible, hyperactive, trouble sleeping). Call for more information and eligibility criteria. 301-496-8381 or

email bipolarkids@mail.nih.gov

Schizophrenia Research Studies:

The schizophrenia research protocols vary as do the related risks and benefits to the participants.

If you are interested in learning about the current studies and whether they may or may not be suitable for you or your family member, please call the schizophrenia referral line at 1-888-674-6464 or

email schizophrenia@mail.nih.gov.

"I always wondered why somebody didn't do something about that. Then I realized I was somebody."

--Lily Tomlin

**We invite you to get involved with
Frederick NAMI!**

Contact our Volunteer Coordinator at kathy.vanarnum@namifcmd.org or call 240-379-6186 to find out about volunteer opportunities.

**There are Two Ways to Join NAMI or
Renew Your Membership**

1. Join online at www.namifcmd.org and pay with a credit card.
2. Mail a check to NAMI of Frederick County, **4 East Church Street, Frederick, MD 21701**. Please include this form.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

_____ Individual/Business Membership \$35.00

_____ Limited Income Membership \$3.00

www.namifcmd.org

Check your address label for your membership expiration date.

Your Membership Today!

JOIN or RENEW

NAMI Frederick
4 East Church Street
Frederick, Maryland 21701