



Partnering with the Community to Share a Message

By Joyce Campbell

NAMI Mercer celebrated National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month on July 17 by partnering with the Trenton Housing Authority and Catholic Charities (Diocese of Trenton) to hold a Mental Health Awareness Fair at the Donnelly Homes Community Center in Trenton. The message, “Seek treatment because recovery is possible,” was echoed throughout the three-hour awareness fair.

More than a dozen organizations were present to provide participants with information on health and mental health services available in the Trenton/Mercer County area. Kimme Carlos, a dedicated NAMI volunteer, emceed the brief program and provided insight from her personal experience.

There followed a ten-minute video produced by NAMI NJ, “Documenting Our Presence: Multicultural Experiences of Mental Illness.” A vibrant panel of consumers responded to questions about their personal experience with stigma, the barriers in finding treatment, and how treatment helped them to recover. The audience was engaged, asking questions and applauding panel members for their courage in sharing their stories.

Amini Sabubu from The Serenity Garden also shared her experience in creating “a garden for and by the community that has experienced pain caused by violence.” The garden is located at the intersection of Bellevue Ave. and Prospect St. in Trenton. Ms. Sabudu urged the community to visit and become involved in the garden, a place of beauty, peace, and healing.

More than 100 residents of Donnelly Homes, adults and children, attended the event and learned about the serious nature of mental illness and how to get help. While this was the main message, the atmosphere was full of fun as children and adults had their faces painted, won raffle prizes, and enjoyed great snacks and a barbecued hot dog dinner.

In 2008, the US House of Representatives established Minority Mental Health Awareness Month “to enhance public awareness of mental illness and mental illness among minorities.” This act was in honor of Bebe Moore Campbell, author, advocate, and cofounder of NAMI Urban Los Angeles.

NAMI Mercer, the Trenton Housing Authority, and Catholic Charities wish to thank the organizations that participated in the July 17 event and those who shared their journeys towards recovery.

*Joyce Campbell is a NAMI Mercer
Board member and Associate Executive
Director for External Affairs, Catholic
Charities (Diocese of Trenton).*