

Our Mission

NAMI Mercer is a nonprofit organization of individuals and families working to improve the lives of those affected by mental illness through education, advocacy and mutual support.

NAMI Mercer Calendar

For regular support meetings, see Page 8

PUBLIC EDUCATION MEETINGS

AT THE NAMI CENTER

April 20 (Tuesday), 7:30 to 9 p.m.
Recovery Through Employment
IFSS and NAMI Mercer present a panel discussion.

May 12 (Wednesday), 7:30 to 9 p.m.
Spirituality and Mental Health
A panel discussion with clergy and pastoral leaders of many faiths.

May 25 and June 1 (Tuesdays),
7:30 to 9 p.m.
LEAP Classes
Amandalyn Salzman and IFSS Staff will explain Xavier Amador's Listen, Empathize, Agree and Partner (LEAP) communication method.

SAVE THE DATE

for our Annual General Meeting
on Monday, June 21.

We will honor volunteers and present the Annual Report for 2009 and our updated strategic plan.

Join Our Third NAMIWalk, May 22

NAMI Mercer invites you to participate in our third NAMIWalk to combat stigma and raise money to sustain our free education and support programs for families affected by mental illness. This year's theme is "Changing minds . . . one step at a time."

Join thousands of concerned citizens in more than 80 communities around the nation who will walk this year to raise awareness and to improve lives.

Thanks to you, NAMI Mercer surpassed its fundraising goals in 2007 and 2009, bringing in a total of \$185,000. Since then, the Walk has been our largest source of income, subsidizing the costs of one third of our programs.

Help us achieve this year's goal of \$100,000 so that we can do even more.

NAMI Mercer will host the walk in beautiful and historic Washington Crossing State Park. We welcome the participation of other affiliates around the state to join us for the walk and for the picnic to follow.

Now is the time to sign up, form teams, become a sponsor, or make a donation. You can register online at www.namimercer.org, or mail in the registration form on Page 7.

We need many volunteers for a variety of roles before, during, and following the walk.

If you are interested in helping, please contact Walk Manager **Tom Tompkins** at (609) 799-8994 or ttompkins@namimercer.org.



NAMI Mercer Walk 2010

Saturday, May 22

Washington Crossing State Park

Titusville, New Jersey

Check in at 9:00 a.m., walk begins at 10:00 a.m.

Picnic to follow.

Prevent Cuts in Mental Health Services!

As I write this letter, our governor and state legislature are searching for solutions to the state's fiscal problems. New Jersey's budget is short by billions of dollars, requiring cuts in all areas. Governor Christie delivers his budget address on Mar. 16, and the legislature has until the end of June to pass a balanced budget.

Funding programs that provide life-saving health care for people living with mental illness must remain a high priority. While many of us are concerned about the tax structure and high cost of living in New Jersey, we cannot ignore the high human and economic costs of untreated mental illness.

One in four NJ residents and their families live with mental illness at some point in their lives. Nearly all New Jerseyans know someone who is affected by mental illness. More than 250,000 adults and 93,000 children in our state have serious mental illness and rely on the community system of mental health care. Let's not jeopardize the significant progress that NJ has made in providing services. Our loved ones' lives are at stake.

Consider some realities:

The community mental health system has saved the state billions of dollars as fewer people are hospitalized in state institutions. Taxpayers have benefited for 30 years with reduced costs, estimated at a savings of \$1 billion per year.

Cuts in mental health services will mean that fewer people are served, waiting lists will be longer, and people without treatment will become sicker and need a higher level of treatment.

Costs of untreated mental illness get shifted elsewhere — to emergency departments, schools, police, courts, and overcrowded prisons. Consider also the cost of human suffering.

While families shoulder much of the responsibility of facilitating their loved one's living in the community, intensive community programs such as case management, counseling, day treatment, supportive housing, vocational rehabilitation, and psychiatric care are necessary to foster recovery.

NAMI Mercer friends, we have an opportunity and a responsibility. Legislators must hear our voices as

they make difficult decisions in the next few months.

We urge you to express your concern about budget cuts to Gov. Christie, your state senator, and assembly members.

Use the tools on our website at <http://www.namimercer.org> (Take Action button) to communicate with your representatives.

Also, watch for upcoming advocacy meetings this spring at NAMI Mercer where we will train our members to tell their stories to decision-makers.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world." (Margaret Mead)

Sincerely,

Sally Osmer

Executive Director



Sally Osmer

Volunteers Needed

NAMI Mercer Walk—Please offer your time and talents for the NAMIWalk on May 22. Help us recruit walkers, teams, and sponsors. We also need assistance in planning the event and in staffing a variety of positions on the day of the walk.

Advocacy Committee—Please join the Advocacy Committee to play a role in influencing state policy, training law enforcement officers, and in mobilizing NAMI Mercer's members to promote our mission.

Multicultural Outreach Committee—Please join this important committee to help NAMI Mercer reach people in the underserved African American and Latino communities in Mercer County.

Scrapbook, Archivist—Please help us organize our news clippings on NAMI Mercer to preserve our history. The position will require a few hours each month after the system is set up.

Please call Tom Tompkins at NAMI Mercer or email tompkins@namimercer.org

WRAP Class is forming

On April 14, we will begin our Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) course for 2010.

Classes will meet on the second Wednesday of each month from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. at the NAMI Center of Mercer County. **Elise Wilmot** and **Patrice Johansen** will facilitate.

WRAP is a structured system for managing and modifying one's symptoms and planning for one's wellness. Each participant develops an individualized wellness plan that serves as a blueprint for future life circumstances.

NAMI Mercer has offered this nine-month program for the past six years, and we are recruiting participants NOW.

If you are interested in WRAP, please contact NAMI Mercer at 609-799-8994 or home@namimercer.org.

NAMIWalk 2010: following a noble tradition

By Bill Hayes

NAMI Mercer's 2010 NAMIWalk to "change minds about mental illness . . . one step at a time" will depart from the same site where General George Washington and the Continental Army crossed the Delaware into New Jersey more than 233 years ago. Washington and his men had endured near starvation and severe winter conditions before winning the battles at Trenton and Princeton that turned the tide of the American Revolution.

Washington Crossing State Park commemorates that winter trek in 1776 by tired and freezing revolutionary soldiers, who took one step at a time in the deep snow to defeat the Hessians at Trenton. Their victory reinvigorated the failing morale of the Revolution and gave Washington and his officers the confidence to continue their campaign.

In the same spirit, I'd like to encourage all NAMI Mercer members to participate in this year's NAMIWALK on Saturday, May 22 at Washington Crossing State Park. Revolutionary War re-enactors, including George Washington, will join us as we conduct our campaign to improve the lives of people affected by mental illness.

For more than 30 years, NAMI has been waging a battle to decrease stigma and to provide education, support, and advocacy for improved treatment and

services for our loved ones. Like our revolutionary war hero John Paul Jones, "we have only just begun to fight."

The crusade to ensure compassionate care and treatment for those affected by mental illness can be traced back to two of the signers of the Declaration of Independence: Benjamin Franklin and Dr. Benjamin Rush. Franklin worked with his friend Dr. Thomas Bond to found Pennsylvania Hospital at a time when mental illness was poorly understood, and the mentally ill were frequently imprisoned or homeless.

With Franklin's talent for popularizing an idea, he persuaded the Pennsylvania Legislature in 1751 to match funds donated by private citizens to the hospital. We continue to use the matching funds strategy today to raise money for NAMI.

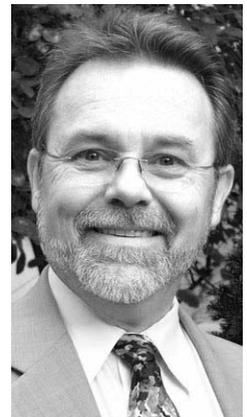
Another of Franklin's fundraising ideas was the sale of a promotional booklet, "Some Account of the Pennsylvania Hospital (1756)." It served as an early "development report" and included a list of contributors. Franklin served as the first secretary of the original hospital board of managers and as its second president. His humanitarian influence is evident in the hospital seal bearing the words "Take care of him and I will repay thee" and in the image of the Good Samaritan.

Dr. Benjamin Rush, a fellow signer of

the Declaration of Independence, is known as the "Father of American Psychiatry." In 1777, he was physician general of the Military Hospital of the Middle Department and a member of the Continental Congress. Dr. Rush joined the medical staff of Pennsylvania Hospital in 1783, serving there until his death.

Please join us on May 22 at Washington Crossing State Park to help make this year's NAMIWalk the turning point of our mission to end the stigma associated with mental illness.

Help us continue the efforts of our forefathers Benjamin Franklin, Dr. Thomas Bond, and Dr. Benjamin Rush to ensure compassionate quality care to those afflicted by brain-based psychiatric disorders. NAMI will continue to fight for this noble cause.



Bill Hayes

William P. Hayes

M.D., F.A.A.C.A.P

President

Our Interns: a series of snapshots

Jessica Hammond (22) is a senior at Rider University, majoring in Psychology. She joined NAMI Mercer in January as an unpaid intern, together with her best friend, Kim Dougherty. She interviewed with Executive Director Sally Osmer and was happy that Sally offered her the internship.

Jessica would like to become a counselor, working with troubled children, adolescents and their families. "The family is a key element in recovery from mental illness," she says.

In the NAMI office, Jessica takes calls from people who need help. "We give them contact information for mental health professionals, lawyers, agencies and other sources of help," she said. In addition to answering the phone, she talks to walk-ins and works on mailings to NAMI Mercer's members and sponsors. At the moment, the NAMI staff is getting the word out on the May 22 Walk-athon, a major annual community-builder and fundraiser.

"I love it in the office," says Jessica. "Everybody's awesome! If I had a prob-



From left, NAMI Mercer interns Jessica Hammond and Ashlee Davidson.

lem, I feel I could sit down with anyone here and talk about it. NAMI is kind of

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Night Out With NAMI: an enjoyable and successful event

More than 200 guests attended our 8th annual Night Out with NAMI benefit concert on Jan. 10 at The College of New Jersey in Ewing. Mental health advocates Senator Richard Codey and Mary Jo Codey served as the event's honorary chairpersons.

Internationally known psychiatrist

and classical pianist Dr. Richard Kogan performed compositions by Frédéric Chopin and discussed the healing power of music in the composer's life. The concert was followed by a gala dinner and silent auction in Eickhoff Hall.

This year's Night Out raised more than \$52,000 for our education, advocacy, and mutual support programs for

families affected by mental illness. Special thanks to Laurie Russell (event chair), Karen Marquis (silent auction chair), Danita Saunders (office manager), and to the rest of the event committee. We also appreciate the generous contributions of all of our sponsors, advertisers, guests, donors, and volunteers.



Top left: former Governor Dick Codey and his wife, Mary Jo. Top right: Mary Hayes with Gloria Hayes and William P. Hayes Sr.

Above left: Dr. Kogan and his son, David. Above right: Erica Silver with event chair Laurie Russell and Maddy Monheit.

Above left: Stan DeRiel with Sharon Logue and her daughter Sierra Logue at the registration table.

Above: Danita Saunders and Leon Davis.

Left: Katrine Stumbaugh with John and Carol Marsland.

Kimme Carlos Named Garden State Woman of the Year

By Madeline Monheit

NAMI Mercer is very proud to announce that volunteer Kimme Carlos has been named a 2009 Garden State Woman of the Year (non-profit category) by the Garden State Woman Education Foundation.

Kimme received her award at the Foundation's 5th annual awards luncheon on Mar. 12 at the Park Avenue Club in Florham Park, NJ.

As inspirational role models who have demonstrated a sincere interest in community service, honorees have made a positive difference in the lives of other women. On the basis of these criteria, Kimme certainly is deserving of recognition.

She has devoted countless hours to increasing understanding about mental illness and fighting stigma, especially among her fellow African Americans.

It is very difficult to imagine that this elegant, intelligent woman, a Masters student who is employed as a professional conference planner by Rutgers University, is a recovering addict who began drinking as a young teenager. "In an attempt to suppress the pain in my brain and in my heart, alcohol was my drug of choice," recalls Kimme.

Her mother had committed suicide at the age of 32 when Kimme was twelve years old.

For the next 22 years, Kimme drank heavily and experimented with other drugs. When she finally entered rehabilitation at Princeton House in 2000, she was suffering from severe depression, anxiety, and alcoholism. She had not been sober for one day during the previous 18 months. The worst part for

Kimme was watching her children "begin the same descent into hell and not having the strength or the where-withal to somehow reach out and catch them."

Kimme's remarkable road to recovery took tremendous courage, faith in her religion, and the willingness to accept the help of others. "There is a parent out there somewhere, says Kimme, "that I owe a big, giant hug. It was this mother who, in the midst of group therapy, gave me the name of NAMI Mercer." According to Kimme, she found her home with our organization.

"NAMI Mercer offers grace in the midst of what for many is a world of darkness."

Kimme is not the first in her family to show true heroism. On the morning of

Committee, Smith and Carlos were suspended from the U.S. team and banned from the Olympic Village. Kimme says that her family was then "harassed mercilessly, mercilessly."

Carlos and Smith were vindicated in 2008, when they won the Arthur Ashe Courage Award for transcending sports by using their moment of victory to make a courageous statement that would change the world.

Their historic salute has come to symbolize the American struggle for racial equality as well as the universal struggle for basic human rights.

Like her father, Kimme is waging a campaign against injustice. She fights stigma and changes minds about mental illness through her work as the director of Mental Health Ministry at Galilee Baptist Church and her volunteer work for NAMI Mercer, where she teaches Family-to-Family and serves on the Multicultural Outreach Committee.

Kimme's mother used to tell her, "Ladybug, you sure can talk a lot. Be quiet for a little while."

If she had the chance today, Kimme would say, "Mom, I'm still talking. You have not died in vain because through NAMI Mercer, I have a voice with which to tell your story."

We sincerely thank Kimme for bringing healing and hope to families affected by mental illness.



Kimme Carlos



October 16, 1968, with heads bowed, her father John Carlos and fellow athlete Tommie Smith performed the Black Power salute as they received their Olympic medals for the 200-meter race, at the summer games in Mexico City.

At the insistence of Avery Brundage, president of the International Olympic

NAMI Mercer board members, from left: John Monahan, Tom Pyle, Jules DeGraff, Sally Osmer, William Hayes, John Marsland, Richard Kogan, Harris Adams, Liz Leach, Madeline Monheit, Laurie Russell, Karen Marquis, Carol Kivler.



The Messenger — Outstanding Affiliate Newsletter

At the NAMI New Jersey holiday party on Dec. 9, Elisabeth (Liz) Hagen and Madeline Monheit accepted the 2009 NAMI NJ Outstanding Affiliate Newsletter Award on behalf of NAMI Mercer. Elisabeth and Madeline are co-editors of the NAMI Mercer Messenger, which is in its 28th year of publication.

Madeline is the lead writer, while Liz does the photography and layout for each issue. The Messenger is mailed to 2,000 friends of NAMI every quarter. It also is available online at www.nami-mercer.org.

Both volunteer editors have extensive experience in writing and journalism. Liz retired in 2000 as Communications Director for the New Jersey Press Association. Prior to her retirement in 2006,



Above, from left: Liz Hagen and Maddy Monheit.
Left: Amandalynn Salzman and Amy Layng.

Madeline was employed as a senior writer/editor for the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, MD.

We salute Liz and Madeline for helping NAMI Mercer communicate its news and message of hope to the community.

Also honored at the NAMI NJ event were IFSS professionals Amandalynn Salzman and Amy Layng.

Snapshots,

Continued from Page 3

a new family for me.” She is the oldest in her own family, with two sisters and two brothers.

The NAMI internship is Jessica’s first. She also has a passion for photography and owns three cameras, one of them a high-end Sony Cybershot. “Photography is a hard field to get into,” she says. “It’s something I do for myself. I keep a portfolio of my best shots.”

Jessica plans to stay on at NAMI as a volunteer when her internship ends. “If they ever need anything, I’m there to help,” she said.

Ashlee Davidson (21) is a senior at Rider University, majoring in Psychology. Her hometown is Mount Holly and she lives on campus at Rider.

Ashlee’s internship at NAMI Mercer started in January and is her first. She works ten hours a week at the NAMI

Center and will gain four credits towards her bachelor’s degree.

“One of my professors, Dr. Alison Thomas-Cottingham, recommended an internship at NAMI Mercer.

“She is very familiar with NAMI, and she said I would have a good experience,” said Ashlee.

NAMI Mercer is well known on the Rider campus through the anti-stigma walk and NAMI’s participation in several wellness fairs. “A lot of people know about NAMI,” Ashlee said.

She is still mostly doing office work, but she has taken a Helpline call. “It’s really neat to actually be able to help someone,” she said. Her first response was monitored by a helpline volunteer as part of Ashlee’s own training.

“Training comes with practice,” she said. She would like to make her career in counseling.

Ashlee was raised by three strong women, her great-grandmother, grand-

mother and mother. She has a nine-year-old half-sister, a 20-year-old step brother and an 18-year-old step sister. She has a strong background in dance and taught classes during her high school years. She also plays softball.

“If I ever had a problem with mental illness in my family, I would call NAMI,” she said.

*The next issue of the Messenger will have snapshots of interns **Kim Dougherty** and **Bill Hayes**.*

Monthly Support Group for Mothers with Depression or Anxiety

If you experience low energy, irritability, poor affect, and difficulty relating to your children, no matter what their age, this support group, led by Abbie Katz, can help you manage your emotions for a more satisfactory parenting experience.

Meetings are on the 4th Wednesday of the month at 7:30 pm. Register by calling 609-799-8994.

NAMI Mercer

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What's Been On YOUR Mind Lately?

NAMI Mercer has formed a group where participants will explore and communicate their personal experiences, opinions and responses to life through the written word. We will write about and share our perspectives and feelings about major events as well as everyday experiences, but most importantly, you'll determine what is meaningful to you.

The goal of our writers' group is simply to express, reveal and release our thoughts and feelings. The idea, inspired by Dr. Sharon O'Brien, who led the memoir-writing workshop at our Harvest of Hope Conference on Oct. 10, is that writing is an effective self-help tool for stress management, personal understanding, and fulfillment.

We are meeting on the second Thursday of the month. If you are interested in joining, please contact our office at 609-799-8994.

NAMIWalk Registration Form

Walker Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

County: _____

Phone: _____

1. I WISH TO FORM A TEAM

Team Name: _____

2. I WISH TO JOIN A TEAM

Team Name: _____

Captain Name: _____

3. I WISH TO WALK AS AN INDIVIDUAL

4. I CANNOT WALK, BUT HERE IS MY DONATION

TO NAMI MERCER

Mail check to: NAMI Mercer, 3371 Brunswick Pike, Suite 124,
Lawrenceville, New Jersey 08648

COMPLETE, DETACH, AND MAIL

OR . . . REGISTER ONLINE AT www.namimercer.org

Waiver: I hereby waive all claims against NAMI, NAMI Mercer NJ, sponsors, or any personnel for any injury that I might suffer in this event. I attest that I am physically fit and prepared for this event.

I grant full permission for organizers to use photographs of me and quotations from me in legitimate accounts and promotions of this event.

Signature of Participant/Parent/Guardian:

Date: _____

HOW TO REACH US

THE NAMI CENTER

of Mercer County

Lawrence Commons
3371 Brunswick Pike
Suite 124
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648

(609) 799-8994

fax (609) 799-8996

home@namimercer.org

www.namimercer.org

Directions: From southbound Rte. 1, pass Province Line Road and make a right at the Office Depot sign. Lawrence Commons is a white building, second on your left. Drive to the rear of the building. The NAMI Center is in Suite 124 on the ground floor.

NAMI Mercer Support Groups

- NAMI Connection** For adult consumers, run by consumers
1st through 4th Mondays, 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.
Registration required.
NAMI Center of Mercer County.
- WRAP** A wellness/recovery action program for consumers
2nd Wednesdays, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m., starting April 14.
Registration required. NAMI Center.
- Weight Management** For adult consumers and families
4th Wednesdays, 6:00 p.m.
Visitors welcome.
NAMI Center.
- IFSS/NAMI** For families of adults with mental illness
Mondays, 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.
Lawrence Road Presbyterian Church *and*
Biweekly Tuesdays, 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.
NAMI Center.
(Contact NAMI at 609-799-8994 for Tuesday dates.)
- WRITING GROUP** For adults to improve wellness through self-expression,
2nd Thursdays at 5:00 p.m. Open to all.
NAMI Center.
- BOOK GROUP** 3rd Thursdays at 12:00 noon (bring lunch).
Call 799-8994 for book selection. NAMI Center.

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