



**Carol A. Kivler**

Carol Kivler's amazing journey from a person paralyzed by clinical depression to a compelling spokesperson for recovery has been an inspiration to so many of us. First diagnosed with mental illness in 1990, Carol has suffered periodic acute bouts of medication-resistant depression, which in her case was only responsive to electro-convulsive therapy (ECT). At the time of her diagnosis, Carol was a 40-year-old mother of three healthy children and working as a part-time college professor. She has had four acute episodes each time requiring hospitalization and additional ECT treatment.

During her recovery over the past 15 years, Carol has dedicated herself to fighting stigma, raising awareness, and spreading hope. She has made dozens of *In Our Own Voice* presentations and delivered keynote addresses at our Night Out with NAMI gala and our Harvest of Hope wellness conference. She served on the NAMI Mercer Executive Board for more than ten years.

Carol also is an enthusiastic fundraiser. Over the past seven years, she has been the captain of large and productive walk teams. She works to bring in sponsorships and three years ago, led our most successful membership drive. Carol never hesitates to do whatever needs doing, be it answering Helpline calls, making punch for the annual meeting, or transporting balloons to the kickoff luncheon. And, she does everything with a smile.

As the owner of Kivler Communications, a successful executive-coaching company, Carol often shares her own story of recovery from mental illness. Several years ago, Carol founded Courageous Recovery, a non-profit organization, to dispel the myths and stigma surrounding mental illness. Through Courageous Recovery, Kivler strives to change the way society and the medical profession view people living with mental illness—as courageous survivors who want to be accepted, not rejected; respected, not pitied; and admired, not feared.

She often addresses professionals, some of whom have never met a person in recovery. A frequent panelist on radio and TV, Carol is an effective ambassador for NAMI Mercer and our mission.

As an accomplished author, Carol also improves the lives of people affected by mental illness. Her books include *The ABCs of Recovery from Mental Illness*, *Will I Ever Be the Same Again—Transforming the Face of ECT (Shock Therapy)*, *Blessings: My Journal of Gratitude*, and *Mental Health Recovery Boosters*. Carol generously contributes 15 percent of the revenue from her sales to NAMI Mercer.