



NAMI Mercer

Families Meeting the Challenge of Mental Illness

December 2008

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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 back cover (Page 8)

PUBLIC EDUCATION MEETINGS AT THE NAMI CENTER

Jan. 15 (Thursday)

Start the New Year with a Laughter Workshop

Abbie Katz and Amy Layng

Abbie is a licensed Laughter Leader.

Amy is an M.Ed. at IFSS
7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Laughter improves immune functions; vibrates muscles for an internal massage; improves cardiovascular functioning; relieves stress and discharges physical and emotional tension. People who laugh together work better together.

Feb. 17 (Tuesday)

Video Night

“Documenting Our Presence — Multicultural Experiences of Mental Illness”

7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Come to view and discuss NAMI NJ’s new video.

Mar. 17 (Tuesday)

Current Research on Schizophrenia and Bipolar Disorders

Karen Marquis, Ph.D.

Director of Schizophrenia and Bipolar Disorders in Discovery Neuroscience at Wyeth Research
7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Hughes Will Chair Night Out

As we enter our 25th year of serving the community, NAMI Mercer looks forward to a special anniversary celebration at our upcoming Night Out With NAMI, 3 p.m., Sunday, January 11, 2009 at The College of New Jersey.

Mercer County Executive Brian Hughes will serve as honorary chair of this milestone event.

Mr. Hughes will discuss his 20 years in recovery from substance abuse. His personal story speaks to NAMI’s mission of hope for those affected by mental illness. Like NAMI’s In Our Own Voice presentations, Night Out provides an opportunity for us to combat stigma.

Dr. Richard Kogan, distinguished pianist and psychiatrist, will return for the seventh consecutive year to explore the life and genius of an eminent composer. This January, Dr. Kogan will present “Music and the Mind: George Gershwin,” a study of the psychological influences on the creative output of one of our best-loved composers.

According to Kogan, “Porgy and Bess,” considered the quintessential American opera and Gershwin’s masterpiece, contains some of the most anguished songs of the 20th century.

The concert will be followed by a festive dinner and silent auction. For information about sponsoring the event or contributing an item or service to the silent auction, please call the NAMI Mercer office at (609) 799-8994. For up-to-date ticket information, call us or visit our website at www.namimercer.org.



Above, back row, l-r: Development Committee Chair John Marsland, President Bill Hayes, County Executive Brian Hughes. Front row l-r: Executive Director Sally Osmer and NOWN Chair Elizabeth Pilliod.

George Gershwin: a fascinating life

“Gershwin led a life that is fascinating, and especially fascinating from a psychiatric perspective,” Kogan told “Psychiatric News” in a recent interview. Born in Brooklyn in 1898 to a close-knit immigrant family, Gershwin was a boy always in trouble. Today, his diagnosis would most likely be a conduct disorder and possibly ADHD.

Throughout his life, Gershwin was intrigued by fast-clipped sounds (considered noise by others), which he incorporated into his music. “I think he heard them that way in part because of his hyperactive nature,” said Kogan. When he was 36 and at the peak of his career, Gershwin became severely depressed. It

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Ticket Information	Encore \$10,000
Concert only: \$70	Intermezzo \$5,000
Full event: concert, reception and dinner \$185	Overture \$2,500
Concert and table for eight (8) for reception and dinner, \$1,400	Musical Notes \$1,000
Sponsor Information	Minuet \$500
Grand Finale \$20,000	Program Advertisements
	Full Page \$500
	Half Page \$250
	Quarter Page \$125

The Holiday Gift That Keeps On Giving

As you receive this newsletter, you are likely making preparations for the holiday season. With the current economic climate, you may be thinking about ways to manage gift-giving amid rising costs and declining financial prospects. You also may have people on your list who don't need another pillar candle or fruit basket.

NAMI Mercer has a suggestion for you. Simplify your holiday gift-giving by making a donation to NAMI Mercer in honor of your friends and family members. We will recognize your generosity by sending cards to your honorees. Your gift will help support NAMI Mercer programs and spread awareness about mental illness and the possibility of recovery.

Your financial support will help us offer hope to more than 3,000 people in 2009.

Here are some examples of persons who will benefit:

- Parents who will learn the communication skills to guide their adult children with mental illness toward a better future
- The mother of a 10-year old who sees her son playing with new friends using the social skills he has learned in Just Kids
- The support group member who steps up to the leadership challenge of starting a new NAMI group for his peers
- The college freshman who attends a NAMI Mercer presentation and is able to recognize the symptoms of depression in his roommate and guide him to professional help
- The service club member who hears an In Our Own Voice presentation and experiences her first glimmer of hope for recovery for

her mother who lives with bipolar disorder.

In these days of uncertain economic outlook, all of us are considering ways to simplify the holiday season and to focus on meaningful giving. What better way to honor your friends and family than by donating to NAMI Mercer in their name.



Sally Osmer

Sincerely,

Sally Osmer
Executive Director

Night Out

Continued from Page 1

was at this time that he wrote his most famous work, the folk opera "Porgy and Bess."

Many of Gershwin's songs have become American standards including: Swanee, Somebody Loves Me, Stairway to Paradise, Lady Be Good, Fascinating Rhythm, The Man I Love, It Ain't Necessarily So, Summertime, They Can't Take That Away from Me, and Let's Call the Whole Thing Off.

Throughout his career, George collaborated with his brother Ira on musicals for the stage and film. Best known are Lady Be Good, Funny Face, Strike Up the Band, Let 'Em Eat Cake, and Of Thee I Sing, an innovative work dealing with social issues that won the Pulitzer Prize.

While continuing to compose popular music for the stage, Gershwin began to lead a double life, trying to make his mark as a serious composer. When he was 25 years old, his jazz-influenced "Rhapsody in Blue" premiered in New

York's Aeolian Hall. He went on to compose "Piano Concerto in F," "Second Rhapsody for Piano and Orchestra," and "An American In Paris". He planned a string quartet, a ballet and another opera, but these pieces were never written. At the age of 38, he died of a brain tumor.

Kogan: a distinguished career

Richard Kogan has had a distinguished career both as a concert pianist and as a psychiatrist. The Boston Globe wrote: "Kogan has somehow managed to excel at the world's two most demanding professions."

A graduate of the Juilliard School of Music, Harvard College, and Harvard Medical School, Kogan completed his psychiatry residency and an academic psychiatry fellowship at New York University. He currently has a private practice in psychiatry in New York City and is affiliated with Weill-Cornell Medical School as co-director of its Human Sexuality Program.

As a musician and scholar, Kogan has gained renown for his presentations that explore the influence of psychological forces on the creative output

of composers such as Mozart, Beethoven, Schumann, Tchaikovsky, Bernstein, and Gershwin. Winner of the Concert Artists Guild Award and the Chopin Competition of the Kosciuszko Foundation, Kogan also received the 2005 Artsgenesis Creative Achievement Award. He frequently performs with world-famous cellist Yo Yo Ma, who was his roommate at Harvard.

New WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) Class Starting in January 2009

WRAP is a method to help persons with chronic mental or physical illness stay on the path to wellness by focusing on positive supports and recognizing triggers and symptoms that could cause them to become ill.

WRAP meets the first Monday of each month, starting January 5, 2009. WRAP is free, but registration is required. Contact the NAMI Mercer office for more information.

Much Has Changed Since NAMI Mercer Began

NAMI Mercer will be celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2009. This is a momentous occasion for Mercer County families who have loved ones affected by brain-based biological disorders known as mental illnesses.

Our 25th anniversary coincides with a tremendous victory for our cause with the passage of the federal Paul Wellstone-Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008. Unfortunately, our anniversary also comes at a time of a great crisis in our nation's economy. As you may know, the \$700 billion bailout package for Wall Street was attached as a rider to the mental health parity bill.

Deinstitutionalization and inadequate community services

Much has changed since the Alliance for the Mentally Ill was founded in 1984 by four women seeking to improve the lives of their family members affected by mental illness. At that time, Mercer County families were dealing with the deinstitutionalization movement, i.e., the relocation of individuals with chronic, severe psychiatric illnesses from state psychiatric facilities back to their local communities.

Helping individuals with chronic mental illnesses become productive members of society in a supervised setting is the goal of mental health advocates. However, government promises of funding for supportive housing and therapy in the community did not materialize. Our NAMI founders faced the deinstitutionalization of their loved ones into a community with insufficient resources.

NAMI Mercer responded by purchasing homes and running a housing program, which ultimately became too difficult for volunteers to manage. Regrettably, the tremendous shortage of supervised apartment and group home placements persists today so we continue to advocate for supportive housing.

John Monahan, founder and president of Greater Trenton Community Mental Health and a member of our

Board, has agreed to chair the Advocacy Committee. He will help us partner with other organizations to achieve specific legislative, policy, and system changes to ensure that people with mental illness and their families have access to effective, evidence-based services. If you are interested in joining the Advocacy Committee, please contact Executive Director Sally Osmer.

The biopsychosocial approach to treatment

In addition to deinstitutionalization, the past 25 years has seen other significant changes in the approach to mental illness. In 1984, I was just beginning my two-year fellowship in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at Georgetown University, where I learned to conduct evaluations of children and adolescents with a strong biological-psychological-social (biopsychosocial) focus. To achieve a complete understanding of an individual and his/her social network requires multiple interviews of the child, parents, and entire family. Only after this comprehensive diagnostic assessment would the psychiatrist and professional team develop a treatment plan.

Upon completing training at Georgetown, I helped to develop the inpatient adolescent program at the Carrier Clinic. In 1986, we created a comprehensive six-week program to evaluate adolescents, initiate treatment, and work with their families to develop aftercare treatment plans. This extensive evaluation allowed for a biopsychosocial understanding of the child, the family, and the illness.

Introduction of Managed Care

With the emergence of managed care, it was expected that an evaluation of a child be completed in one hour. As you may imagine, it is impossible to understand a child in a biopsychosocial context in 60 minutes.

I left Carrier Clinic in 1993 because managed care decided that psychotherapy be provided/reimbursed at the non-physician level. I enthusiastically set up Homebase Integrated Mental

Health Systems in Lawrenceville to continue practicing the biopsychosocial approach to mental illness. At that time, there was a strong movement to move the treatment of children and adolescents in crisis from inpatient psychiatric settings to alternative intensive outpatient settings. This policy was another victory for advocates who wished to avoid the adverse effects of inpatient treatment on children and adolescents.



Bill Hayes

Research had demonstrated that patients who were treated in partial hospitalization day programs had fewer rates of future psychiatric hospitalization. Insurance companies promised that money saved by reducing intensive inpatient treatment would be diverted to intensive outpatient treatment programs. Nevertheless, as with the earlier deinstitutionalization movement, managed care did not honor its promises. In fact, as the average length of stay for adolescents and children decreased from six weeks to six days, support for hospital diversion programs waned.

During the five years that I operated Homebase, managed care continued to decrease reimbursements and increase the bureaucracy required to obtain preauthorization and payment for services. In 1998, along with many other psychiatrists, I concluded that managed care compromised the treatment of children and adolescents. I closed Homebase and joined the Department of Psychiatry at Hunterdon Medical Center where I served as chairman.

I left Hunterdon when I realized that the severe discounts imposed by managed care adversely affected the quality of services. I was impressed by the commitment of staff to 30-minute medica-

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Kids Celebrate Fall at Terhune Orchards

By Joanna Harrison-Smith

October brings pumpkins, apples, mums, and a wonderful array of autumn color to Mercer County. Just Kids celebrated the fall season with a trip to Terhune Orchards, the Mount family farm in Princeton. While we engaged in fun-filled activities including a hay ride and pumpkin painting and enjoyed home-made cider and cupcakes, I was able to talk with the children and their families about the Just Kids program. What do they think? Do they find it helpful?

Brian has attended since December 2007. He was reserved and shy in social situations and was having trouble making friends at school. His mother Cate reports that today, not only is he more out-going, but he approaches new kids in class and befriends them. Brian has become more sensitive to other children with special needs. Recently, our formerly shy Brian presented a class about cartooning to his mom's women's group, sharing his own artwork and giving a brief lesson on how to draw characters.

Davin came to his first Just Kids session in January of 2008. He immediately asked to leave. During his second session, he spent most of the time underneath a table, where I joined him to get to know him better.

Since then, Davin has made good friends within the group (they actually HUG when they see each other!) and sees some of these friends outside of the program. His mother Barbara reports



that he has improved his communication skills with other children. Recently, he was invited to his first birthday party.

Kyle sat on his father's lap during his first encounter with Just Kids in December of 2007. He shied away from questions, refusing to respond or giving one-word answers. In the past year, Kyle has become a regular member of Just Kids and a valuable contributor to our community service programs. He cannot attend every meeting due to his sports activities; when he is absent, the other children ask where he is. His mother Lori reports that he has become sensitive to the needs of other children, both at school and in other social situations.

Socialization is so important to children with mental health issues. Isolation can lead to irreparable social impairment that continues into adult years. We are committed to providing meaningful and enjoyable social encounters for these children so that despite the special challenges they face, they know they are just kids. NAMI Mercer is pleased to share these personal stories of hope.

If you or someone you know would be interested in volunteering or joining Just Kids, contact me at (609) 799-0639 or dr.jenny@comcast.net.

Joanna Harrison-Smith is Just Kids Program Coordinator

Much Changed

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tion visits despite insufficient reimbursement. After leaving Hunterdon, I entered private practice at Alexander Road Associates in Princeton. We do not participate with managed care as we do not agree with its approach to mental health care treatment.

Other Changes

In the past 25 years, we have seen much scientific advancement in the

treatment of mental illness. I hope to write about these advancements in future issues. There also has been a tremendous increase in education regarding brain-based biological disorders. Although this education has helped to decrease stigma, there continues to be an urgent need for anti-stigma organizations like NAMI Mercer.

Over the past quarter decade, we also have seen an explosion of advocacy and support groups. These positive developments are due to the dedicated families working to ensure that their family members receive the medical treatment they deserve and the support they need

to become happy and contributing members of society.

During my presidency, I will use my column to highlight the areas of success in our advocacy efforts and to continue the fight for adequate funding of effective, evidence-based services that promote real recovery and improve the quality of life for individuals with brain-based biological disorders.

Sincerely,

William P. Hayes

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

President

NAMI Mercer Selected to Pilot AAFI

NAMI Mercer is proud to have been selected as one of three affiliates to pilot the new NAMI African American Faith Initiative (AAFI). Our presentation on Nov. 8 at Galilee Baptist Church in Trenton was the first in the nation.

Throughout the U.S., congregations of all denominations bring African American families together and provide emotional support to their members. Researchers have found that many African Americans seek help from the clergy more frequently than from other professionals. When coping with mental illness, African American families are most likely to seek guidance, support, and understanding from their faith community.

For this reason, NAMI is seeking to partner with African American congregations to share vital mental health education and support. NAMI's Multicultural Action Center has created the AAFI to educate African American congregations about mental illness, decrease stigma, increase awareness about recovery, foster dialogue in African American congregations, and introduce NAMI programs.



Multicultural Outreach Committee from left: Sally Osmer, Rev. John Harris, Angela and Jules DeGraff, Galen Valley, and NAMI Mercer Office Manager Danita Saunders.

NAMI Mercer's AAFI presentation on Nov. 8 was hosted and led by Pastor John Harris of Galilee Baptist Church. The twenty-two attendees heard NAMI presentations by consumer Galen Valley and family members Jules and Angela DeGraff.

Kimme Carlos, NAMI Mercer's Multicultural Outreach Coordinator, who organized the gathering, stated, "We are very pleased that Galilee Church has taken the lead in its mental health ministry in offering this pro-

gram and in hosting Family to Family for NAMI Mercer."

Participants said they appreciated the compassion and empathy that each presenter communicated and the open sharing that the session encouraged.

NAMI Mercer will schedule future AAFI sessions at other African American congregations in the coming months.

Please contact our office at (609) 799-8994 if your congregation is interested in hosting our presentation.

SAVE THE DATE: WALK 2009



It's official. The 2009 NAMI Mercer 5K Walk will be held on Saturday, May 30 at 9:00 a.m. on the beautiful campus of the Educational Testing Service (ETS) in Lawrenceville.

The Carrier Clinic team is shown at left, stepping out during the 2007 Walk.

Our Walk web page is up on the NAMI National site at www.nami.org (select "NAMI Walks" and then NJ). We're ready for you to sign up, form teams, become a sponsor, or make a donation. More information will be coming soon.

Our inaugural NAMI Mercer Walk in Oct. 2007 greatly exceeded our expectations. Hundreds of people participated, and we raised more than \$100,000 to improve the lives of families affected by mental illness. Help us to make the 2009 Walk even more successful.

Celebrating Pat Demers: A Life of Service to NAMI

Fifty NAMI Mercer members honored Pat Demers at a cocktail reception on Oct. 6. The party was hosted by Nancy and Joe Irenas at the Nassau Club in Princeton.

Pat stepped down in July after three years as president of the NAMI Mercer Board. “Since she joined our organization in 1999, Pat has nurtured and prodded us forward,” commented past-president Ellen Heath.

“Through her compelling capacity for caring and her contagious optimism, Pat has been able to attract enthusiastic volunteers, generous donors, and outstanding board members.”

As part of the honors ceremony, Volunteer Coordinator Tom Tompkins unveiled a plaque inscribed with the names of all those who have served as NAMI Mercer Board president. Chomy Garces, Bill Wilmot, Ellen Heath, and current President Bill Hayes were in attendance to share this distinction with Pat.

Guests also presented Pat with useful travel items for the vacation she and her husband Bob were about to enjoy. The Demers spent most of October touring in Italy, Greece, Croatia, Egypt, and Israel.

In her closing remarks at the reception, Pat said that she was truly happy that her friends at NAMI “believed she had made a difference.”



Above: Tom Tompkins presents NAMI Mercer’s presidential plaque to Bill Wilmot and Pat Demers. Presidents listed are: Gloria Blumenthal, 1984-1986; Peggy Whitehead, 1986-1987; Harold W. MacDonald, 1987-1990; Cathy Pruden, 1990-1992; Chomy Garces, 1992-1994; Katherine Lasley, 1994-1998; Bill Wilmot, 1998-2001; Ellen Heath, 2002-2005; Pat Demers, 2005-2008.



Left: Pat and Ellen exchange a hug.



Above: Pat gives her farewell address and opens a box of gifts.



At right, l-r: past NAMI Mercer presidents Bill Wilmot, Pat Demers, Chomy Garces and Ellen Heath with President Bill Hayes.

NAMI Mercer

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Our New Website

NAMI Mercer plans to unveil its redesigned website early next month. The site will be easy on the eye and easy to navigate.

"For today's non-profits, effective websites are no longer a luxury. They are an essential form of communication," remarked Madeline Monheit, who leads NAMI Mercer's Communications Committee.

Our goals include: create a welcoming and positive atmosphere of families helping families; help visitors to find what they need in a logical, efficient manner; encourage and enable visitors to join, sign up for programs, volunteer and donate; increase the likelihood of persons finding our site when using a search engine.

Jim Alexander, of JimQuest Communications, Lawrenceville, is assisting us.

NAMI Gets Grant from Church & Dwight



Angela Olsen, (at right with Sally Osmer) is on the Employee Giving Fund Committee for Church & Dwight. Employees of the company donate money to the fund, develop guidelines for their grants and select recipient organizations. Church & Dwight is the leading U.S. producer of baking soda products, including the Arm & Hammer brand. This photo was taken at the Stomp Out Stigma Run, Nov. 13 at Rider U.

NAMI Mercer is pleased to announce that it has received a \$5,000 grant from Church and Dwight (C&D) for outreach on college campuses. Angela Olsen of the C&D Employee Giving Program presented the award on Nov. 13 at "Stomp Out Stigma," Rider University's 4th annual run/walk to raise awareness about mental illness.

"It is important to note that most major mental illnesses have an onset at ages 18-24, or squarely in the college years," commented NAMI Mercer Executive Director Sally Osmer.

This year, NAMI Mercer partnered with Rider University Counseling Services to sponsor the anti-stigma walk. Although rain forced the event indoors, 83 people attended, with another 50 registered.

With funding from the Lawrence Township Community Foundation, NAMI Mercer provided mental health materials for the students.

Two days prior to the walk, Rider showed the NAMI New Jersey film "Documenting Our Presence: Multi-cultural Experiences of Mental Illness," which tells the personal stories of eight individuals of different ethnicities. After the screening, Grace Yang, one of the consumers featured in the film, was

available to answer questions from the audience. The NAMI NJ video is available in the NAMI Mercer resource library.

Thanks to the generous grant from C&D, NAMI Mercer will be able to provide training materials and educational opportunities for faculty, staff, and students at academic institutions throughout Mercer County, including Rider, The College of New Jersey, Princeton University, Mercer County Community College, and Princeton Theological Seminary.

A critical part of the project will be Healthy Minds "tool kits," small tote bags with mental health materials for students. NAMI Mercer also plans to provide presentations to more than 2,000 college students, administrators and faculty during the 2008-2009 academic year.

"The heartbreaking incidents at Northern Illinois University, Virginia Tech and elsewhere underscore the need for more attention to mental health and mental illness on our university campuses," stated Osmer.

"Our programs of education, advocacy, and mutual support ALL help to bring about change and avert tragedies in the future."

HOW TO REACH US

THE NAMI CENTER

of Mercer County

Lawrence Commons
3371 Brunswick Pike
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(609) 799-8994

fax (609) 799-8996

home@namimercer.org

www.namimercer.org

Directions: From southbound Rte. 1, make a right at Denny's Restaurant in the Mercer Mall. Lawrence Commons is a white building, the second on your left. The NAMI Center is in Suite 124, on the ground floor.

NAMI Mercer Support Groups

- NAMI CARE** For adult consumers, run by consumers
2nd and 3rd Monday, 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.
Registration required. NAMI Center
- NEW WRAP** A wellness/recovery action program for consumers
1st Monday, 6:00 – 7:30 p.m., starting Jan. 5, 2009.
Registration required. NAMI Center
- Parents Support** For parents of kids (under 18) with brain disorders
Contact NAMI Mercer office for dates and times.
Registration required. NAMI Center
- Weight Management** For adults on medication
4th Wednesday, 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.
NAMI Center
- IFSS/NAMI** For families of mentally ill adults
Mondays, 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.
Lawrence Road Presbyterian Church *and*
Tuesdays, 5:30 – 7:00 p.m., NAMI Center



**The NAMI Center of
Mercer County**

Lawrence Commons
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