



nami Mercer

Families Meeting the Challenge of Mental Illness

September 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

Sept. 16 (Tuesday)

"What is Recovery?"

Michelle Zechner

7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

An interactive workshop on supporting hope in ourselves and our loved ones.

Oct. 14 (Tuesday)

Wellness Recovery Action Plan

Erika Reading and Elise Wilmot

7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

A successful approach to wellness and recovery.

Oct. 21 (Tuesday)

Afternoon at the Movies

Amy Layng

2:30 – 5:00 p.m.

A movie, popcorn and good conversation.

Nov. 3 (Monday)

Exercise Your Self-Esteem While Caring for Your Loved Ones

Jeanne Rohach

5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

How to develop healthy self-esteem.

Nov. 18 (Tuesday)

Collaborative Problem-Solving

Alicia Stevenson

7:30 p.m.

Ways to help easily frustrated children and adults.

New NAMI Board Elected



New NAMI Mercer officers, from left: Laurie Russell (VP), Bill Hayes (president), Caroline Tompkins (secretary) and Damon Vigiano (treasurer). Four new board members were also elected (see Page 3).

NAMI Mercer has elected four new board members: Harris Adams, C. Elizabeth Leach, Karen L. Marquis, and John Monahan.

"Each of these four individuals brings a profound interest in investing in a stronger mental health community," said Dr. William P. Hayes, recently elected president by the new board. The other officers for 2008/2009 are Laurie A. Russell, vice president; Caroline P. Tompkins, secretary; and Damon Magnes Vigiano, treasurer.

Adams, a resident of Hamilton,

joined the board to "contribute just a small part of what NAMI has meant to me. NAMI Mercer was there when no one else was."

Retired after 32 years with New Jersey state government, Harris served in various management positions. He has an extensive background in local property tax administration.

Leach, of Lawrenceville, is the director of network development at Princeton House Behavioral Health. She is committed to working toward

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Save the Date – Sunday, Jan. 11, 2009



Celebrate NAMI Mercer's 25th Anniversary at

NIGHT OUT WITH NAMI

Richard Kogan, M.D., psychiatrist and concert pianist, will present "Music and the Mind: George Gershwin." Dr. Kogan will explore George Gershwin's fascinating life and musical career from a psychiatric perspective. Concert at 3 p.m.

The Music Building, The College of New Jersey, Ewing. Silent auction and gala reception to follow at Eickhoff Hall. Proceeds will benefit NAMI Mercer's advocacy, education and support programs.

Executive Director's Message

Bringing Mental Healthcare to the Ballot Questions for Candidates

We all will have the opportunity to vote in the presidential, congressional, and local elections on November 4. Prior to entering the voting booth, every one of us should seriously consider the views of each candidate. But, our responsibility doesn't stop here. We also need to let the candidates know what WE care about. We want people with mental illness to receive the treatment and support that enable them to live full and satisfying lives.

How can we bring mental healthcare to the ballot? Simply, we need to TELL and to ASK. Tell the candidates that you care about the quality of mental healthcare. As a potential supporter and future constituent, tell them that this issue makes a big difference to you. Now is the time to let them know. And ask questions of candidates as you consider giving them your vote. Write letters, make phone calls, or send emails expressing your views and asking where they stand.

Here are some excellent questions suggested by NAMI National:



1) Mental illness affects one in four Americans. It is common and highly treatable, yet

millions struggle because they cannot get treatment. What steps will you take to ensure that all Americans have the coverage for mental healthcare that they need to take care of themselves and their families?

2) Public awareness of mental illness and its impact on health is growing, but research budgets for the National Institute of Mental Health are not. What will you do to accelerate investment in mental health research?

3) A key challenge for our future is building a healthcare system that addresses the needs of underserved populations, such as racial and ethnic communities, older Americans, and rural areas. What will you do to eliminate disparities in mental healthcare?

4) Research shows that treating mental illness early reduces long-term disability. What will you do to make sure that healthcare for families includes early identification and treatment of mental illness?

5) Lack of appropriate and affordable housing is one of the most significant barriers to living in the community for people with serious mental illness. What will you do to ensure adequate housing and supports for people with mental illness?

6) Only one in three adults with serious mental illness is employed, even though seven out of ten want to work and contribute to their independence. What will you do to help people with

mental illness return to work?

7) Over five times as many people with mental illness are in jails and prisons than in hospitals. What will you do to prevent people with mental illness from ending up in our criminal justice system?



Sally Osmer

Finally, as you make your choice for each race, let your friends, co-workers and families know that we want the best mental healthcare for ourselves and our loved ones. Wear this issue proudly. NAMI Mercer will have buttons for you to wear from September to November stating "Mental Healthcare gets my VOTE!"

Contact the NAMI Mercer office, and we will send you a button, or pick one up when you attend a support group or educational program. NAMI is a grassroots movement, and we need all to participate.

Sincerely,

Sally Osmer
Executive Director

VOLUNTEER VIEW

HELP WANTED

(Contact the NAMI office if you are interested: 609-799-8994)

Data Entry

Assistance on a regular basis entering data into our membership database.

Handyman Tasks

Assistance with repairing damage within a consumer's home. If you are able to donate your services, please call.

Working with Kids

Assistance with Just Kids on the third Saturday of each month.

Outreach Activities

Ambassadors at public events to represent NAMI Mercer and effectively publicize our education, support and advocacy programs.

Thanks to our four interns: Melody Wysocki, Joanna Harrison-Smith, Sara Butler and Christa Brewer.

Act Now!

Tell your senators and representatives to support final passage of the compromise version of the mental illness insurance parity bill (S 558-HR 1424).

Equitable coverage is long overdue. "Don't adjourn for the year without passing this bill!"

Volunteers are at the heart of NAMI Mercer

It is an honor and privilege for me to write for the Messenger as the new board president of NAMI Mercer. When our organization was begun as the Alliance for the Mentally Ill by local families in 1984, I was just beginning my two-year fellowship in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at Georgetown University.

NAMI Mercer has had a continuing legacy of dedicated presidents with the torch being passed from first President Gloria Blumenthal to Peggy Whitehead, Harold MacDonald, Cathy Pruden, Chomy Garces, Bill Wilmot, Ellen Heath, and Pat Demers. I will do my best to carry on our mission, so capably nourished by our past presidents, and most recently by the tireless work of Pat Demers. I remain in awe of her contributions and those of board members and volunteers in building NAMI Mercer over the past

quarter century.

I became involved with NAMI Mercer by participating in speaker programs and in NAMI New Jersey's Educate the Educator Program. I remember vividly the meeting I had with Pat Demers and Bill Wilmot when they invited me to join the board of NAMI Mercer. Their personal warmth and excitement about NAMI and its mission to improve the lives of Mercer County families affected by mental illness convinced me to become a member of the board.

As president, I look forward to working with the NAMI Board and our Executive Director Sally Osmer to support our volunteers as they continue the work NAMI Mercer began 25 years ago. Volunteers are the heart of our organization. In the words of one of our board members, NAMI Mercer volunteers power the "Love Machine"

that supports us as we cope with mental illness. Research has shown that volunteer work enhances well-being by improving life satisfaction, self-esteem, a sense of control over life, physical and mental health.

NAMI Mercer is the Love Machine that offers families support, education, encouragement and hope.

Sincerely,

William P. Hayes

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

President



Bill Hayes

New board members

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anti-stigma, advocacy and clergy outreach initiatives for the populations that NAMI Mercer serves.

Marquis, of Yardley, PA, is the director of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder research at Wyeth in Princeton. "I've been very impressed with the programs provided by NAMI Mercer . . . and would like to help guide this organization toward achieving its vision of improving the mental health of our community," said Marquis, who also is a member of

the Society for Neuroscience and the New York Academy of Sciences.

Monahan, a Ewing resident and licensed clinical social worker, is the founding president and CEO of Greater Trenton Behavioral Health Care.

He is a past president of the NJ Association of Mental Health Agencies, where he has served on the board since 1984. He also was a member of the NAMI New Jersey Board for nine years.

Continuing on the NAMI Mercer Board are Jules DeGraff, Hon.



From left, new Board members Harris Adams, Karen Marquis and Elizabeth Leach. John Monahan is below, right.



John Monahan

Joseph Irenas, Carol A. Kivler, Lynn LiMato, John E. Marsland, Jr., Jeremy Mann, Madeline Monheit, and Dr. Elizabeth Pilliod.

Kivler wins Seeds of Hope award

Carol Kivler, NAMI Mercer board member and In Our Own Voice speaker, is one of four humanitarians selected to receive New Jersey Monthly magazine's "Seeds of Hope Award" at a luncheon for honorees on Sep. 18 at the Crystal Plaza in Livingston. Tickets to the "Seeds of Hope Award" luncheon are \$55. For more information, contact the NAMI Mercer office. All proceeds will be divided among the honorees' organizations.

Sailing on Barnegat Bay



The weather on Sunday, August 3 was absolutely delightful, sunny with mild breezes, and a few billowing clouds in the sky. Guests of Carol and John Marsland enjoyed sailing, swimming and lunch at Tices Shoals near Island Beach State Park, a favorite rendezvous for sailors and boaters on Barnegat Bay. Everyone had a good time. The afternoon of sailing was donated by the Marslands to the 2008 Night Out With NAMI silent auction.

Left to right: Carol Marsland, Cathy Pike, Rita and Lew Pepperman, and Cathy's husband, Neil Shainwald.

Kids Enjoy Grounds for Sculpture

By Joanna Harrison-Smith

Just Kids is happy to announce that we have grown by five families and nine children this quarter. May, June and July were active, fun-filled months for our participants. In May, Lauren's daughter Stephanie hosted a "Fun with Cooking" activity. Each participating family prepared their favorite dish to share at a potluck luncheon. The children spoke about their family's recipe in the context of their cultural background. After lunch, the children played together in the backyard.

June's activity was held at the Grounds for Sculpture. We began with a picnic followed by an informal tour of the water sculpture display and a walk to the lake. The children were particu-

larly interested in the waterfalls and the animals of the park. We were surrounded by peacocks, frogs, ducks and other wildlife. A mother peacock and her newly hatched chicks delighted everyone. Later, the families toured the park at their leisure.

In July, we met at the Wacky Gym, a facility dedicated to making exercise fun. The children were treated to one hour of supervised activity with hula hoops, zip cords, parachutes, and a climbing wall. What



fun! After exercising, the children shared a snack in a private room.

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



The Lasley picnic, an annual pleasure for NAMI Mercer members



From left: Libby Bartholomew, Elise Wilmot and Sally Osmer at John and Kay Lasley's annual NAMI Mercer picnic.



Above: Brian and Cate Massarelli in the pool.
At left: Kay Lasley and Ann Rebbeck.



Below: Pat Demers and Joe Irenas with Karen and Ron Schotland.

Taking Care of Yourself

When Someone You Love Has a Mental Illness

by Amy Layng, M.Ed.

*Intensive Family Support
Services/Greater Trenton
Behavioral HealthCare*

Every day, I see first-hand the devastation that a diagnosis of mental illness can cause for families and loved ones. Family members struggle with a range of difficult emotions including fear, guilt, helplessness, anger, frustration and isolation.

I also witness the incredible strength that families can muster in the face of uncertainty and heartache. Through the darkness, they discover tiny flickers of light that lead them safely to a brighter place. These rays of hope are the supports they discover along the way, chance meetings with others who share their experiences of both pain and healing. In dealing with mental illness in the family, members often learn more about themselves and grow in many ways.

According to NAMI, the families who deal most successfully with mental illness are those who accept the diagnosis and its difficulties, have real-

istic expectations for the affected person and for themselves, and maintain a sense of humor. Keeping a positive outlook is much easier when you can turn to others for support. It is our goal at IFSS to provide this support by teaching caregivers coping strategies and skills to nurture themselves.

Some practical ways to cope:

- Seek help immediately; early intervention makes a difference.
- Become educated about the illness and treatment options to make more informed decisions and be better equipped to manage symptoms.
- Set realistic expectations for your loved one.
- Enable your loved ones to boost their confidence and sense of control by allowing them to take on responsibilities.
- Reduce tension in the home while maintaining a safe environment.

Here are some fun ways to nurture yourself and reduce your stress. They lighten the way when life gets a bit too cloudy. And, like our services at IFSS,

most of them are free.

- Smile often and REALLY mean it
- Play with a baby
- Sleep under the stars
- Go to a support group
- Take a dance class
- Dine outdoors
- Think beautiful thoughts every time you stop for a red light
- Drink lots of water, eat healthy foods, exercise and meditate
- Get a massage
- Buy someone breakfast
- Count your blessings
- Cultivate healthy, positive people
- Play with your pets
- Collect small, goofy things
- Help a neighbor
- Pray
- Learn something new every day
- Go to a park and feed the birds
- Sing
- Listen to beautiful music by fragrant candlelight
- Get a good night's sleep
- Go on a television and news "fast"
- Make yourself a smoothie.

NAMI Mercer Receives Two Major Grants

This summer, NAMI Mercer received generous grants from the Fred C. Rummel and the Merancas Foundations. "We are very pleased to have these new partners," commented NAMI Mercer Executive Director Sally Osmer.

The Fred C. Rummel Foundation provides grants to organizations for

human services activities that assist youth, the elderly, and children with disabilities. The \$5,000 award to NAMI Mercer will be used for our education, mutual support, and advocacy programs.

NAMI Mercer also received a \$10,000 general-programming grant from the Merancas Foundation.

Since its inception in 1989, this foundation has been financially supporting nonprofit organizations in North Carolina that prepare children to become productive adults and that help adults become more self-sufficient. More recently, the foundation has expanded its giving to Georgia and New Jersey.

Give a book to our library

Love books? Honor a loved one, create a lasting memorial, or surprise a friend or family member by dedicating a library book in his/her name.

The book will become a part of the NAMI Center library collection.

Donations may be made directly to NAMI Mercer in the form of a book or money. All donations are tax deductible.

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When Someone You Love Has a Mental Illness, by Rebecca Woolis (2003) \$10.17

The Natural Medicine Guide to Bipolar Disorder, by Stephanie Marohn (2003) \$11.53

The Natural Medicine Guide to Schizophrenia, by Stephanie Marohn (2003) \$10.17

The Omega-3 Connection: The

Groundbreaking Anti-Depression Diet & Brain Program, by Andrew L. Stoll & Andrew Stoll (2004) \$10.20

Full Catastrophe Living: Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain and Illness, by Jon Kabat-Zinn (1990) \$13.60

Eat, Drink and Be Healthy: The Harvard Medical School Guide to Healthy Eating by M.D. Walter C. Willett

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NAMI Mercer

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

William P. Hayes M.D.

President

Laurie A. Russell

Vice President

Caroline P. Tompkins, M.Ed.

Secretary

Damon Magnes Vigiano

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Harris Adams

Jules DeGraff

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C. Elizabeth Leach, M.S.W.

Lynn LiMato

Karen L. Marquis, Ph.D.

John E. Marsland, Jr.

Jeremy Mann

John Monahan, M.S.W.

Madeline Monheit, M.S.

Elizabeth Pilliod, M.B.A., Ph.D.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Sally T. Osmer, L.C.S.W.

OFFICE MANAGER

Danita L. Saunders

EDITORS

Madeline Monheit

Elisabeth Hagen

A Tribute to Pat Demers

by Ellen Heath

As Pat Demers steps down after three years as board president, I would like to honor her many years of dedicated service to our organization. Credit for NAMI Mercer's extraordinary growth, over the past ten years, into a major community resource goes largely to Pat Demers.

Since she was recruited in 1999 to lend a hand in the Campaign for the Future, Pat has nurtured and prodded the organization forward.

She was instrumental in designing the fundraising effort that raised more than \$300,000 to enable the hiring of NAMI Mercer's first executive director and to support the organization through an intensive growth period. She helped to set the stage for the professional staff by writing job descriptions and developing a transition plan.

As a next step, Pat launched a search for an expert facilitator who would guide the board in writing a strategic plan that captured the heart and intent of NAMI Mercer and charted its course for many years.

During my time as president, Pat stood behind me as my consultant, confidence builder, and friend. With a small band of sturdy volunteers, we launched two major events, set up the financial structure and accounting system, administered the payroll, and managed NAMI houses. Pat gave willingly of her time and business acumen to ensure good outcomes while holding a demanding job.

After she retired, Pat became president and dedicated her new-found time to all the growing functions of the organization such as multi-cultural outreach, advocacy at both state and local levels, the children's social program, and the Helpline.

She continued to chair the Development Committee, attracting and diversifying funding sources, instituting an



Pat Demers prepares to cut the cake on July 28 as she presides over her last meeting as president of the NAMI Mercer Board.

annual appeal, soliciting grants with the executive director, overseeing every event, and finally, ensuring the success of our inaugural walk-a-thon. In addition, she remained a crucial member of the Finance and Trustees Committees.

Over the past nine years, Pat led searches for three executive directors; each time, we hired someone who succeeded in extending the reach and influence of NAMI Mercer. Her indomitable spirit and dedication was evident during the drafting of the children's guide. When we lost our major author, Pat oversaw the guide's completion, doing much of the work herself.

All along the way, Pat has encouraged and inspired people to step beyond their comfort zone to carry out NAMI Mercer's ambitious vision. Through her compelling capacity for caring and her contagious optimism, Pat has been able to attract enthusiastic volunteers, generous donors, and outstanding board members. She has taken the time to be a friend to all who have come through NAMI Mercer's doors.

Thank you, Pat, for never giving up, even when the going got rough.

Suggested donations

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(2005) \$10.20

Integrative Nutrition

by Joshua Rosenthal (2007) \$16.47

Recovery & Wellness: Models of Hope and Empowerment for People with Mental Illness, by Mary V. Donohue and Catana Brown (2002) \$48.45

The Motion Picture Prescription: Watch This Movie and Call Me in the Morning, by Gary Solomon (1995) \$10.36

Rent Two Films and Let's Talk in the Morning: Using Popular Movies in Psychotherapy. Edited by John W. Hesley and Jan G. Hesley (2001, 2nd edition) \$44.96

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, 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.



**The NAMI Center of
Mercer County**

Lawrence Commons
3371 Brunswick Pike
Suite 124
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648

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

WRAP

A wellness/recovery action program for consumers
1st Monday, 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.
Registration required. NAMI Center

Parents Support

For parents of kids (under 18) with brain disorders
1st Saturday, 10:30 a.m. – noon.
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

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