



nami Mercer

Families Meeting the Challenge of Mental Illness

September 2011

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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 Page 8

PUBLIC EDUCATION MEETINGS

AT THE NAMI CENTER

Sept. 20 (Tuesday)
7:30 to 9 p.m.

Mental Health Needs of the Spanish-Speaking Population: A Panel Discussion with Area Leaders

Oct. 18 (Tuesday)
7:30 to 9 p.m.

Unveiling Trauma: Ask the Expert (TBA)

Nov. 15 (Tuesday)
7:30 to 9 p.m.

Get Ready for the Holidays: Managing Stress for Happy Celebrations

*IFSS Staff Lori Trani,
Denise Dennis and Josephine Reyes*



NAMI board members Karen Marquis and John Marsland donate two \$1,000 volunteer grant checks from their former employers to NAMI Mercer. Sally Osmer is at right.

NAMI Mercer Receives Volunteer Program Grants from Albemarle and Pfizer

The Albemarle and Pfizer Foundations each have awarded \$1,000 grants to NAMI Mercer in recognition of the volunteer hours donated by their former employees John Marsland and Karen Marquis respectively.

Albemarle and Pfizer are two of a growing number of businesses that support community involvement. To qualify for the Albemarle Foundation Volunteer Program, an employee or retiree must contribute at least 35 hours of service per year for a \$500 award and more than 70 hours of service for a \$1,000 award.

To qualify for a \$1,000 Pfizer Foundation Volunteer Program grant, employees/retirees must have volunteered for at least 6 months and have served an average of six hours per month for a

total of 72 hours for the nonprofit organization per calendar year.

The maximum amount an eligible organization may receive from the Pfizer Foundation Volunteer Program in any year is \$5,000.

Both Karen and John are members of the NAMI Mercer Board. Karen provides leadership for the Helpline and has co-chaired the annual Night Out with NAMI benefit.

John heads up the Development Committee.

NAMI Mercer is very appreciative of the support shown by the Albemarle and Pfizer Foundations in recognition of volunteers John Marsland and Karen Marquis. We will continue to seek out other employers that encourage and reward volunteerism among staff and retirees.

SAVE THE DATES FOR 2012

Night Out With NAMI

Sat., Jan. 21, 3:00 pm.

Attend the world premiere of the play "The Convert" at the McCarter Theatre. Join us for an after-party.

NAMI Mercer NAMIWalk

Sat. May 5, 9:00 a.m.

Educational Testing Service
660 Rosedale Road
Princeton, NJ 08541

Executive Director's Message

New Jersey's Budget and People with Mental Illness

Dear NAMI Mercer Friends,

The fight over the establishment of the state budget for New Jersey these past few months will go down as one of the most contentious episodes in our state's political history and one of the most disheartening for people affected by mental illness.

Democrats controlling the Legislature introduced their own budget and funding programs that Republican Governor Christie had eliminated in his own budget proposal. When the Governor received the Democrats' budget, he utilized his power of the line-item veto to cut back numerous additions made by the Democrats, and surprisingly eliminated programs he had included in his own budget proposal.

In a rarely used procedure, the Democrats attempted to override the line item vetoes made by the Governor, but failed in all their attempts, as legislators voted along party lines and a supermajority of votes is necessary for a veto override.

At the end of the contentious process, New Jersey has a budget that makes a number of reductions to programs impacting people with mental illness and their families. These include:

- The closure of Garrett W. Hagedorn Psychiatric Hospital in Hunterdon County, producing a savings of \$9 million for the State. The Democrats attempted an override of the closure by including the \$9 million in the

budget and adding footnote language that would have prevented the administration from proceeding with the closure;

- Elimination of \$50,000 for the Governor's Council on Mental Health Stigma;
- Elimination of \$450,000 for the Postpartum Education Campaign in the Department of Health and Senior Services. Championed by former Governor Richard Codey, this program was designed to raise awareness about postpartum depression;
- Reduction of \$4.5 million in spending to fund Treatment Homes and Emergency Behavioral Health Services in the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS); and,
- A Medicaid comprehensive waiver proposal that will reduce income eligibility for Medicaid from \$29,726 a year for a family of four to just \$5,588 a year in income for a family of four. Thus, only the extremely poor will be eligible for this health coverage.

The Democrats tried unsuccessfully to restore all of these items to the budget through veto overrides.



Sally Osmer

Advocates for people with disabilities and mental illness were effective in opposing other reductions. Proposed reductions in the pay rate for providers of partial care for mental health consumers and reductions in staff ratios to consumers were not included in the budget.

People with disabilities and mental illness are already struggling to receive the quality services they deserve. NAMI's position through the budget process and now has been that these people should not be expected to bear the brunt of reductions in services in the state hospital system or in the community mental health system.

The cuts in funding and programming this year serve as a reminder that all NAMI members and friends have an important advocacy role. Our loved ones deserve and need quality treatment services in order to have positive recoveries in the community!

Please continue to tell your personal stories to your state legislators, congressional representatives, the governor and the president. We will continue to keep you informed about current advocacy issues and opportunities.

Sincerely,

Sally Osmer

Executive Director

"I think it's unconscionable and an all-out assault on people with mental illness to let these cuts stand. Studies have shown that one in five families suffers from mental illness at some point. This is a disease that knows no barriers — whether regional, geographic or demographic.

"Black, white, Asian, Hispanic, North Jersey, South Jersey — everyone is affected by mental illness, and programs, like the ones that the Governor cut through the use of the line-item veto, make a difference in everyone's lives."

Former NJ Governor Richard Codey, July 11, 2011.

During his tenure, Codey was a strong advocate for persons with mental illness.

A Holistic Approach to Healing

To optimize the body's ability to repair itself, treatment of brain-based biological disorders should involve a holistic approach. It is imperative that individuals affected by these illnesses practice good nutrition, regular exercise, and effective stress management techniques.

There is a danger in treating brain-based biological disorders exclusively with medication interventions. This is

Volunteer Team Begins Monitoring TPH

A team of family volunteers, including five NAMI Mercer members, has assembled to revive the Family Monitoring program at Trenton Psychiatric Hospital (TPH), part of a state-wide program under the aegis of the New Jersey Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS).

Working in pairs, Caryl Chambers, Patricia Korsak, Erika Geertz, John Orloff, Tom Pyle, and Barbara Rogers will periodically make unannounced visits to TPH units to observe conditions and programs and interview patients and staff. They will report their observations and provide independent assessments of the quality of care to TPH's CEO, Teresa McQuaide. TPH's Executive Assistant, Michelle Senni, will be the team's contact point.

In explaining her reasons for becoming a monitor, Korsak cited Matthew 25: "As you have done to the least of these, you have done to me."

"For me, this verse means looking out for those who are unable to care for themselves. My hope is that my small contribution will aid them on their way to recovery. I would want people to do the same for me."

The objective of Orloff, one of the team's coordinators, is to overcome frustration and despair. "As family monitors, we hope we can provide meaningful observations and support for our institutions like TPH that lead to

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especially true during the current economic downturn and its associated decrease in state and federal funding for mental health. Psychotherapy has been demonstrated on multiple occasions to be an effective treatment for multiple psychiatric illnesses, often without medication.

In addition, studies in the past two decades have demonstrated the significant efficacy of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). Unfortunately, the practice of traditional face-to-face CBT has been limited by cost and the small number of CBT providers. When many individuals and families seek a CBT therapist, they often find that the provider does not participate with their insurance company.

Fortunately, there is emerging evidence that online computerized cognitive behavioral therapy programs can be a useful adjunct to treatment. These lessons are self-paced and can be learned in the comfort of one's own home. Please note that online programs should not be considered a substitute for professional medical diagnosis, advice or services.

MoodGYM at www.moodgym.anu.edu.au is an Australian-based, free Internet site designed to help with depression. It consists of five modules, an interactive game, anxiety and depression assessments, a downloadable relaxation audio, a workbook, and feedback assessment.

Using flashed diagrams and online exercises, MoodGYM teaches the principles of CBT and demonstrates the relationship between thoughts and emotion. It provides strategies for dealing with stress and relationship break-ups, as well as teaching relaxation and meditation techniques.

Another Australian-based, free computerized CBT resource is www.ecouch.anu.edu.au.



Bill Hayes Jr.

The original version of e-couch was co-funded by Australia's national depression initiative (Beyondblue) and the Centre for Mental Health Research at the Australian National University.

e-couch provides evidence-based information about multiple emotional problems (including depression and anxiety disorders) and teaches strategies that may help you to prevent problems and understand yourself better. The first several lessons provide numerous coping strategies from its "Toolbox." This allows you to try them out over several weeks and determine which ones work best for you and your personal circumstances.

The online e-couch course, which takes six weeks, can be accessed from anywhere in the world. Participants can connect to audio and video materials as well as participate in a weekly live chat with one of the instructors and other participants.

I also recommend Good Days Ahead, an interactive, multimedia program with scientifically tested therapy methods for fighting depression and anxiety.

Written by leading experts, including Jesse H. Wright, M.D. (author of *Getting Your Life Back: The Complete Guide to Depression*) and Aaron T. Beck, M.D. (winner of the Heinz Award and author of many acclaimed books including *Cognitive Therapy of Depression*), this self-help program is full of engaging videos and empowering self-help exercises to help tap into one's inner strengths to overcome problems. Aaron Beck is considered to be the father of CBT, which he called cognitive therapy.

For more information about Good Days Ahead, visit www.mindstreet.com. You can purchase the DVD for \$99.

Sincerely,

Bill Hayes

President

Annual Meeting, June 27



Top left: Jeremy Mann with past NAMI President Pat Demers.

Top right: Maddy Monheit with Danita Saunders-Davis.

Left: Sally Osmer with outgoing volunteer coordinator Tom Tompkins.

Above: Liz Leach with Caryl Chambers and Jenn Antinoro.

Below from left: Jeremy Mann, Kurt Baker, Kevin Nalty, Pam Cebulski and Mike De Ieso.



NAMI Mercer Expands Staff

During the past year, the NAMI Mercer Board of Directors developed a staffing plan to achieve the strategic objectives of our five goals areas: Inclusive Community, Education and Support, Advocacy, Outreach, and Sustainability.

Sally Osmer will continue as the full-time executive director. In recognition of her valuable contribution to the organization, Danita Saunders-Davis will assume additional administrative responsibilities as director of operations, a new full-time position.

NAMI Mercer also has hired two additional staff members for newly created positions.

We welcome Ann Renee Hansard as our full-time program director. Her responsibilities include the coordination of the volunteer leaders for our support, education, and outreach programs.

Ann Renee has a rich background of work experience in education, mental health, and religious organizations. A recent Masters of Divinity graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary, she has been a speaker and trainer with the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance. Ann Renee has a special interest in multicultural and congregational outreach.

Regarding her new position at NAMI Mercer, Ann Renee commented: "I am truly excited to have come on board as the program director! This is an exciting time. I embrace NAMI Mercer's long-term vision and feel honored to be



NAMI staff, from left: Program Director Ann Renee Hansard, Executive Director Sally Osmer, Director of Operations Danita Saunders-Davis (foreground) and part-time Development Director Jenn Antinoro.

part of the organization's period of transition and growth."

She added: "This is a dedicated group of volunteers and staff, and I am appreciative of the level of knowledge, enthusiasm, and professionalism I see on a daily basis. There are a lot of great things going on here! As we work side by side, we can look forward to a day when people affected by mental illness no longer feel alone."

Jenn Antinoro, our new development

director, will be working 20 hours per week to coordinate our fundraising plan and our events. Jenn brings a depth of experience in nonprofit leadership and fund development. She is a licensed social worker and fundraising professional. Before coming to NAMI Mercer, she served as executive director of Communities in Schools of Lehigh Valley for seven years.

In Jenn's own words, "As I begin my employment with NAMI Mercer, I am thrilled to work with an organization where the mission and commitment to community align strongly with my personal and professional background. My previous organization focused primarily on dropout prevention services for youth. Many, many of the young people we touched were either diagnosed or undiagnosed with mental illness."

Jenn continues, "It gives me great pleasure to work with NAMI Mercer, its Board, and families to increase the visibility and viability of the organization so that our programs, services and awareness can meet the growing needs of families who face the day-to-day challenge of living with mental illness."

2011 NAMIWalk Summary

Number of walkers	1,200
Teams	85
NAMI affiliates represented	10
Congregations who sent teams	5
<i>Walker dollars online:</i>	\$62,307
<i>Checks/cash:</i>	\$39,502
<i>Sponsor dollars</i>	\$39,000
Total income	\$140,809

Winning Teams and Fundraisers:
Largest Walk Team: Attitudes in Reverse (AIR)
Top Corporate Fundraising Team: Janssen Pharmaceuticals Inc.

Top Congregation Team:
 Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville

Top Organization Team:
 Just Friends of NAMI Mercer

Top Affiliate Team: NAMI Hunterdon

Top Individual Fundraiser:
 Pat Demers of NAMI Mercer

Gifts are still coming in from individuals who work for companies that match donations to nonprofits.

Kay Lasley, Friend and Mentor

Kay Lasley died on February 25 at the age of 85. She was a tall, rangy, athletic woman of immense energy and goodwill who took scuba divers all over the world, diving off reefs and in caves. In South Africa, she was known as the “shark lady” for her work with the Shark Research Institute. She was an avid swimmer and joined the Princeton Rowing Club in her 60s. She was also a founder, with Chomy Garces, of NAMI Mercer.

In the early 1980s, four families began to meet regularly in Lois Teegarten’s livingroom, with Millie Foria, Joanne Freedman, Virginia Anderson and the Teegartens.

Things really began cracking when Chomy and Tom Garces, Gloria Blumenthal and Kay joined the group. They took turns serving as President and VP. Kay led the organization (1994 - 1998) through the years it took to buy and set up NAMI residential houses for mental health consumers.

At the time MAMI (Mercer Alliance for the Mentally Ill, our former name) took the initiative, housing was the most critical need facing people affected by mental illness and their families. The families knew independent living was crucial to the full functioning of their family members. These families were the pioneers in the state and county on this issue.

Kay and John bought a house for their son, David, to share with some others. They inspired the organization to seek funding for similar houses.

Kay was largely responsible for landing two mortgages with HUD. It was her patience and good humor that kept the others going. The whole process took about five years. Kay’s foresight, energy and time made it happen.

Following are tributes to Kay from four past presidents of NAMI Mercer:

Chomy Garces (1992 - 1994)

When I joined NAMI, I had already met Kay and David at Christopher House. We learned a lot from Kay, John and David. Those meetings were our introduction to a long and bumpy road called Mental Illness.

Kay was already involved with a small group that met in the Lawrenceville Library, and she gave me a phone number and suggested that I try this group. How could I have imagined that this telephone number would save our lives?

Kay was at my side at my first NAMI Mercer meeting. She was always there for me when I started on this long road, and she taught me that there was not much we could do to help our children, but we did have control of how we reacted to the illness.

She encouraged and guided us. Her positive experience running a house for David led us to try this for Becky. Our daughter lived there many years, and it was a good experience for our family.

Kay’s home was open every summer for her picnics. It was not easy those first days when our children came but did not know how to socialize with each

other. Others would have given up; Kay persisted. I never will forget this very special woman who gave so generously of herself.

Bill Wilmot (1998 - 2002)

We see only one view of Kay through the lens of NAMI, but this perspective reveals an extraordinary person without airs or pretense, open, warm, kind, generous, delightful, resolute, venturesome, fearless, upbeat and unflappable. The many who benefit from what NAMI offers are forever indebted to Kay for her contributions.

For us, her roles start with co-founder of NAMI Mercer and extend to friend, caregiver, leader, volunteer, supporter, and innovator in the area of housing. After her stroke, by focusing in a characteristically upbeat manner on what remains rather than obsessing over what is lost, she became an inspiration to all in search of meaning, purpose, and fulfillment.

We are not the only ones to benefit from her influence. It extends to all who follow and is an immortal and glorious legacy.



Kay Lasley

Continued on Page 8

TPH, *continued from Page 3*
improvements in mental health care...”

Pyle and Rogers were the first of the new team to visit TPH. They toured the Raycroft unit, one of TPH’s three inpatient facilities, with stops at a group area, nurse’s station, specialty rooms, and living areas. They talked casually with staff members and patients, observing many details including cleanliness, hospital routines, messaging, general living quality, staff and patient attitudes.

Regarding his initial impressions, Pyle, the team’s other co-leader, found

the staff generally welcoming and chaty. The consumers also were accessible. Some said hello, shook his hand, and were interested to see the monitoring program back in action.

One of Pyle’s chief concerns was the lack of stimulation for the residents: the drab environment; the lack of newspapers and magazines; and the poor condition of the few available board games.

“Clearly TPH has challenges. But for the most part, I think everyone’s heart is in the right place,” commented Pyle. “The transition from the traditional custodial model to an individual-centered recovery model is not an easy thing for such a state hospital to do.”

Nevertheless, Pyle believes that

much more can be done for the patients with a little imagination and without much effort.

In terms of next steps, the monitoring team plans to:

- Develop rapport with the hospital administration and staff
- Provide input to the TPH management and DMHAS on the reporting form under development
- Meet as a group to discuss their observations
- Identify improvements that are actionable and will have impact
- Develop with TPH’s management a means by which concerns identified by the monitors will be addressed.

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NAMI Mercer

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Harvest of Hope Conference - October 1

NAMI Mercer will host its third annual Harvest of Hope conference on Saturday, Oct. 1 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville.

Sponsored in part with grants from the Bunbury and Princeton Area Community Foundations, this education event is open to consumers, their families, and the general public. Our theme this year is "Pathways to Wellness."

Carol Kivler, CSP, MS, will deliver the keynote address: "Unwrapping the Gifts of Recovery." Carol is the president of Kivler Communications, a corporate training and executive coaching firm. Its Courageous Recovery Division reaches out to mental healthcare professionals, consumers, and family members with a message of hope.

Carol has been a member of the NAMI Board for eight years, an IOOV presenter, and 2009 recipient of NJ Monthly Magazine's Seeds of Hope Award. Carol's book, "Will I Ever Be the Same Again? Transforming the Face of ECT," has been honored with two book awards this past year. She presently is working on her next book, "Unwrapping the Gifts from Depression."

The conference then will offer attendees a choice of concurrent wellness workshops, with one session in the morning and another during the afternoon. The \$10 registration fee includes lunch. Although membership in NAMI Mercer is not required, we are offering an incentive price of \$35 to join now AND attend the conference.

Workshops will provide a variety of interactive and hands-on wellness experiences. Topics include nutrition and weight management, journaling, art therapy, physical fitness and tai chi, a home spa experience, reiki, mindfulness, animal-assisted therapy, a medication update, and spirituality.

The closing activity will be an energizing group drumming experience led by Mauri Tyler, CTRS, CMP. This activity is an evidence-based wellness method of improving the immune system and reducing stress. No musical experience is required. Drums will be provided or you can bring your own.

Mauri is a recreation therapist with more than 20 years of experience. She is currently the program director for Princeton Senior Resource Center, a private non-profit that provides services to support healthy aging.

Endorsed by the Remo drum company as a HealthRhythms facilitator, Mauri leads group drumming for the Princeton Adult School and other locations in the area.

NAMI Mercer members will receive a conference brochure in the mail. You can register by completing the paper form or by going to www.namimercer.org to register online. For more information, call 609-799-8994.



Carol Kivler

TPH, *continued from Page 6*

Among initial goals of the team are:

- Building the team to a sufficient number of members to ensure frequent visits
- Recruiting team members from the other counties served by TPH (notably Middlesex County, which has the largest percentage of TPH residents)
- Learning as much as we can about the wellness and recovery principles TPH seeks to implement, as well as

the problems, constraints, and difficulties that TPH faces

- Developing good methods and process to become constructive partners for the hospital and even more effective advocates for its consumers and their family members.

The monitoring team is aware of the long and difficult journey ahead. But it is excited about the opportunity to contribute to care improvement at TPH.

"We'll take little steps and raise awareness to the critical issues we find. That's how you start," said Orloff.

Lasley, *continued from Page 6*

Ellen Heath (2002 - 2005)

In her later years, Kay managed her physical difficulties with the same positive spirit she brought to her NAMI activities. She still looked forward to the next adventure. She relished the annual picnic, when she was surround-

ed by so many people she had supported over the years. We are all grateful to Kay for demonstrating how life-giving a non-judgmental attitude can be, and how joy can persist even through the greatest of life's blows.

Pat Demers (2005 - 2008)

Before our office moved from Lakeview Drive, Kay would breeze in with immense energy and spirit and give encouragement and help. Later, after her initial heart surgery, she would come into the office even though she wasn't well. After her stroke, we honored her, and she came in her wheel-

chair. The room was packed but full of happiness. In my last days on the Help Line, John would bring Kay in her wheelchair. Even though she could only use one hand, she would stuff and stamp envelopes and do that alone.

She would make calls to former members and encourage them to return to NAMI. I attended the picnics at her house many times and through those years, she always welcomed the company, especially all the Just Friends. She and John came to Night Out With NAMI up to the end.

She will be missed.

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 Support Group: Recovery support group program for people living with mental illness. 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Mondays, 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. No registration required. NAMI Center.

WRAP: A wellness/recovery action plan workshop for individuals maintaining mental health. 2nd and 4th Wednesdays through November. Fall classes begin Wed. Sept. 14. Contact our office to register. NAMI Center.

IFSS/NAMI: Support for families of adults with mental illness. Mondays, 5:15 – 6:45 p.m., Lawrence Rd. Presbyterian Church. Every other Tuesday, 5:15 – 6:45 p.m., and Thursdays, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Kingsbury Towers, 1 Kingsbury Sq., Trenton.

Support Group in Spanish: Every other Thursday, 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m., Kingsbury Towers, 1 Kingsbury Sq., Trenton.

(Call 609-799-8994 for Tue/Thurs. dates.)

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