



National Alliance on Mental Illness

NAMI Madison County

* SUPPORT * EDUCATION * ADVOCACY * RESEARCH *

Website: <http://madisoncty.nami.org>

NAMI Office Phone: 618-798-9788

April 2008

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The Bids Are In!

On March 11, 2008, the Madison County Buildings Committee voted to refer the two lowest bidders for the rebuilding of the Madison County Sheltered Care Home to the Madison County Board where a decision will be made at their regular meeting on April 16th regarding the awarding of a contract to one of these bidders. Impact Strategies, Fairview Heights, Illinois, was the apparent low bidder at \$4,351,000, just below the official construction estimate of \$4,368,000. Impact estimates completion within seven months.

NAMI Madison County is advocating with United Congregations of Metro East (UCM) and others in the community for the rebuilding of the Madison County Sheltered Care Home which is located at 333 South Main St., Edwardsville, in a residential neighborhood just two blocks from downtown. The current facility has 42 beds and is licensed to provide long-term care for people with mental illnesses, the elderly and the developmentally disabled. The plans for the new building include transitional beds which will enable the Home to be more oriented to assisting individuals with their recovery.

NAMI Madison County strongly supports the rebuilding efforts of the County Board and especially their insight in including transitional beds in the design of the new facility. Zoning regulations and the high cost of land often stand in the way of erecting new housing for individuals with mental illnesses. The new home on land already zoned for that purpose, owned by the County, and in close proximity to public transportation and other services will offer another choice in residential care plus provide Madison County with an opportunity to create a model for others in Illinois to follow.

Please contact your Madison County Board member to tell him/her about the importance of this project. The names and phone numbers of all Board Members as well as the Chairmen of the Board are listed on page 7 of this newsletter. If you're unsure who your board member is, you may contact the NAMI Office at 618-798-9788 and one of the staff will find whose district you live in.

Become an advocate. Tell your Madison County Board Member that you support NAMI's position.

**CRISIS
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NUMBERS**

Southern Madison County Area
Chestnut Health Systems
(618) 877-0316

Northern Madison County Area
Community Counseling Center
(618) 465-4388



by *Diane Piska*

Peer to Peer Classes will be taught starting April 4th from 6:30 to 8:30pm– Call the NAMI office now to register at

(618) 798-9788. It's for anyone with a mental illness such as: depression, bipolar, schizophrenia, OCD, just to name a few. We still have some openings for this upcoming class. Please call as soon as possible because the class is filling up quickly.

The Illinois Mental Health Rally and Lobby Day will be held on Wednesday May 14th in Springfield, Illinois. I hope all of you can attend. We will have a bus at the same location as previous years (Arby's/Pilot gas station parking lot next to Jack-in-the-Box) off Highway 162 in Troy, IL. Be there no later than 9:30AM as the bus will leave promptly at 10:00AM. Anyone is welcome to attend; you do not have to be a NAMI member, but you must register using your home address. The purpose of using your home address is so that packets can be made up for each individual attending with the legislators in your district. Upon arrival in Springfield, participants will receive a box lunch and a briefing on how to talk with their legislators in the Capitol, before proceeding to meet with their legislators. The buses will leave after the rally. It is suggested that everyone wear a blue shirt. For more information call the NAMI office at (618) 798-9788 or e-mail namimadisoncty@sbcglobal.net with any questions or concerns. Call the NAMI Office for registration forms and in the event that registration forms cannot be returned or mailed to NAMI Madison County, registration forms can be faxed to the office at (866) 332-5338. You MUST

register by April 11th so we have an accurate count for the bus.

Have you ever heard of Dysthymia? Everyday Health says mental health professionals use the term dysthymia (dis-THIGH-me-ah) to refer to a low-level drone of depression that lasts for at least two years in adults or one year in children and teens. While not as crippling as major depression, its persistent hold can keep you from feeling good and can intrude upon your work, school, and social life. If you were to equate depression with the color black, dysthymia might be likened to a dim gray. Unlike major depression, in which relatively short episodes may be separated by considerable spans of time, dysthymia lasts for an average of at least five years.

If you suffer from dysthymia, more often than not you feel depressed during most of the day. You may carry out daily responsibilities, but much of the zest is gone from your life. Your depressed mood doesn't lift for more than two months at a time, and you also have at least two of the following symptoms:

- overeating or loss of appetite
- insomnia or sleeping too much
- tiredness or lack of energy
- low self-esteem
- trouble concentrating or making decisions
- hopelessness

It's difficult to escape the grasp of untreated dysthymia. Only about 10% of people spontaneously emerge from it in a given year. Some appear to get beyond it for as long as two months, only to spiral downward again. However, proper treatment eases dysthymia and other depressive disorders in about four out of five people.

Do you have extra time on your hands? You can become a member and/or a volunteer of NAMI Madison County. Just call our office at (618) 798-9788 and speak to AJ French, our office coordinator. The office is open Monday through Thursday from 12:00PM to 4:30PM. If you have any time available during those hours, we would appreciate you being a volunteer member of our NAMI Madison County office staff.



NAMI Madison County Office

Gateway Regional Medical Center
2100 Madison Avenue, 4th floor
Granite City, IL 62040

AJ French, Office Coordinator

E-mail: namimadisoncty@sbcglobal.net

Office Hours: Phone: 618-798-9788
Noon to 4:30PM Fax: 866-332-5338
Monday thru Thursday

Website: <http://madisoncty.nami.org>



Applications are being accepted for HUD rent-assisted apartments at Community Court, Hempel House and Yakubian Apartments in Alton. To qualify, you must be between the ages of 18-62 with a maximum income of \$23,050 and have a chronic mental illness. Please call (618) 465-0120 to arrange pick up of an application or for more information.



Springfield Rally & Lobby Day

May 14, 2008

Mental Health America of Illinois (MHAI) as part of the Mental Health Summit is once again sponsoring the Illinois Mental Health Rally and Lobby Day in Springfield on Wednesday, May 14, 2008. This event calls attention to the plight of the Illinois mental health system and ensures that the unified voice of consumers and advocates in the mental health community is heard.

MHAI has secured funding to bus a limited number of consumers, family members, and community mental health staff to Springfield. Upon arrival in Springfield, participants will receive a box lunch and a briefing on how to talk with their legislators in the Capitol, before proceeding to meet with their legislators. The buses will leave following the rally.

Because MHAI total funding for this event is not yet determined, registration will be conducted on a first-come first-serve basis. **Please register as soon as possible.** There will be registration forms at the April sharing and caring meetings or you can stop by the NAMI Madison County Office and pick one up or call the office to have one mailed to you. Each participant must send a completed registration form with his/her home address, including zip code to the NAMI office by May 11th. The home address is necessary to identify the participants' legislators and prepare their educational materials prior to the event. The total number of participants is also needed for planning lunches.

The bus for our area will leave from Arby's/Pilot Gas Station next to Jack-in-the-Box on Hwy 162 in Troy, IL. This is the same location as previous years. Please be at the bus stop by 9:30AM as the bus will leave by 10:00AM sharp. **Let's fill our bus with advocates.**

Last year the Summit was successful in congregating over 1,600 consumers in Springfield. Considering the state's budget crisis, MHAI believes that a goal of 2000 is reasonable **and** necessary for 2008. This important day marks an effort to educate persons with mental illnesses about current mental health issues that directly affect them, and to collectively ask the Illinois government to invest in mental health. I hope we can count on your participation and completed registration as soon as possible.

In an effort to unify Rally participants, the MHAI ask that individuals wear blue t-shirts. Any shade of blue is wonderful, as we are trying to promote a unified front for mental health in Springfield. If you participated in NAMI Madison County's Walk for Mental Health in 2007, you received a "blue" t-shirt that you could wear!

Please do not hesitate to contact AJ French, Office Coordinator of NAMI Madison County, (618) 798-9788 or namimadisoncty@sbcglobal.net with any questions or concerns. You can drop the completed registration form off or mail it to the office or fax your registration forms using our fax number (866) 332-5338.

Hope to see you there!!!

"Celebrating Abilities"

Free Wheelchair Basketball Game - April 16

Roll, Run & Walk Race - April 20

On April 16, 2008 at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, Disability Support Services (DSS), in conjunction with New Horizons, a student organization for and about persons with disabilities, will host the 7th Annual Celebrating Abilities Wheelchair Basketball Game starting at 6:00 p.m. The Confluence Center Coast Wheelchair Basketball

Team, coached by Jim Dugan of the Gateway Confluence in Bethalto, IL, will challenge the SIUE Men's and Women's Basketball Teams at the Vadalabene Center at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. It is **FREE** for all to watch with free parking, free refreshments and attendance prizes. Please come join the SIUE teams and the Confluence players who show you how to "Celebrate Abilities". Visit the website at www.siu.edu/dss or call Jim Boyle at DSS at 618-650-2568 for further information.

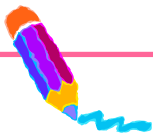
On April 20, 2008, New Horizons and Disability Support Services will be hosting the 7th Annual "Celebrating Abilities" 5K Roll, Run and Walk Race. This event will be held at the Madison County Transit Station across from the Madison County Court House. Persons interested must be registered by 7:30 a.m. For further information or a registration form, go to www.siu.edu/dss or contact Shirley Lodes at DSS at 618-650-3726.



AADD 18th Annual Conference

The Association Aging with Developmental Disabilities (AADD) develops, links, and supports opportunities and services for older adults with developmental disabilities. The AADD will be holding their two-day 18th Annual Conference on May 19 and 20, 2008.

You can visit their website at www.agingwithdd.org for more information or by calling (314)647-8100.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- Family Member Support Mtg, Clubhouse.....Apr 1, 2008
- NAMI Connection Group, Clubhouse.....Apr 1, 2008
- Business Meeting, Gateway, Granite City.....Apr 8, 2008
- Support Meeting, Jerseyville.....Apr 12, 2008
- NAMI Connection Group, Gateway, Granite City.....Apr 15, 2008
- Support Meeting, Litchfield.....Apr 15, 2008
- County Board Meeting, 5:00PM, Admin Bldg.....Apr 16, 2008
- Continuum of Care **Annual Meeting**.....Apr 17, 2008
- Support Meeting, Jerseyville.....Apr 26, 2008
- Facing Us* Event, Belleville.....Apr 26, 2008
- Last Day to Register for Rally & Lobby Day.....May 11, 2008
- Rally & Lobby Day, Springfield.....May 14, 2008
- NAMI National Convention, Orlando, FL.....Jun 13-16, 2008
- 5th Annual Walk for Mental Health.....Sep 27, 2008
- Consumer Conference, Gateway Convention Center..Oct 10, 2008
- NAMI IL Conference, Lisle, IL.....Oct 17-19, 2008
- NAMI/PsiChi Event, SIUE.....Oct 23, 2008

NAMI Madison County Project Leaders

- Dianne Crawford..... Housing
- AJ French.....Office Coordinator
- Mary Gauen..... Webmaster
- Matt Gauen.....NAMI Llama Artist
- Barb Giesecking & Diane Pisko..... Newsletter
- Sandy Giger..... Editor & Walk Coordinator
- Tom Johnson.....CIT Coordinator
- Kevin Niebur.....Multi-Cultural Coordinator
- Jane Roennigke..... Education & PIAT Coordinator

Interested in helping these members?
Contact the NAMI Office at 618-798-9788.

OTHER LOCAL MEETINGS

NAMI GREATER BELLEVILLE: 3rd Thursday of each month, 7:00PM at the Hilltop Emporium (rear entrance), 207 East Main St., Belleville. For more information contact Ron Szewczuk at 618-476-1771.

NAMI CUPFUL: 4th Saturday of each month, 2:00-4:00PM, 1505 Market Ave., East St. Louis. Call Pamela Perry, Central Comprehensive Mental Health, at 618-274-0881 (work) or 314-868-8031 (home) for more information.

ST. LOUIS OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER SUPPORT GROUP: 3rd Saturday of each month, 10:00AM, St. John's Mercy Medical Center, McAuley Room South, 615 S. New Ballas Rd., Von Gontard Conference Center. Speakers start at 10:00AM and support groups meet from 11:00AM till noon. For more information, call 314-842-7228, ext. 3.

DBSA (Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance) MEETING: Every Monday 7:00-8:30PM, O.C. Anderson Hospital, Maryville, IL, next to the cafeteria on Lower Level B.
DBSA Contact: Diane at 618-667-8781 or by e-mail at dbsamc@yahoo.com for more information.

ATTN: Potentials Advertisers!

Place your business-card size ad here for \$50.00 per year. The ad will run monthly in the newsletter which is received by 250 people. The e-newsletter is sent to approximately an additional 100 more recipients. The newsletter is posted to our website and therefore can also be seen **worldwide**.

For more information on advertising with us, call the NAMI Madison County Office at 618-798-9788.

DEADLINE for the May 2008 issue

of newsletter is **April 15th**.

Please e-mail your article to **Sandy at skgiger@hotmail.com on or before due date.**

This newsletter is published monthly and printed alternately each month as a service to NAMI Madison County by **Chestnut Health Systems** and **Community Counseling Center**.
Thank You!



Hey NAMI Supporters,
Don't forget to sign up for the rally and call your Madison County Board Member. Be an advocate. See pages one and three for more information.

Your friend,
NAMI Llama

Stimulus Payments Will Not Be Taxed Or Reduce Benefits



In an effort to clear up questions and rumors that have arisen since the Economic Stimulus Act of 2008 passed, the IRS plans to mail special information packages to more than 20 million recipients of Social Security and Veterans Affairs benefits.

Many constituents have wondered if the stimulus payment will be taxable next year or if it will affect the amount of benefits received. The answer to both questions is no. More answers will be included in the 10-page tax package, which contains everything recipients will need to file a 2007 tax form immediately. Each package contains an informational notice, tips for completing Form 1040A, a sample Form 1040A and an actual Form 1040A for the filer to complete.

This informational package is specially designed for people who may qualify for an economic stimulus payment but who normally are not required to file a tax return. Under the Economic Stimulus Act, people may be eligible for the minimum payment of \$300 (\$600 for married couples) even if they do not normally file a tax return. There also is an additional payment of \$300 for people with eligible children younger than 17. However, people must file an income tax return in order to receive the payment, even if they are not usually required to do so.

To qualify for the minimum economic stimulus payment, individuals must have at least \$3,000 in any combination of qualifying incomes:

- Disability or survivors' benefits from the Social Security Administration
- Disability compensation, disability pension or survivors' benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs
- Tier 1 benefits from Railroad Retirement
- Certain combat pay and earned income from wages, salaries, tips or net earnings from self-employment that are includible in taxable income.

More information is available by clicking: <http://www.irs.gov/> or by calling the IRS, toll-free, at 1-800-829-1040.

(Source: Congressman John Shimkus' Newsletter, March 14, 2008)

NAMI Madison County to Participate in Survey

The NAMI Madison County Board of Directors has agreed to work with Tosha Cantrell-Bruce, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Public Administration, University of Illinois at Springfield, who is doing a dissertation on how effective a select group of NAMI Illinois

affiliates are in meeting the needs of their members. Her work involves having NAMI IL mail surveys to every current NAMI member (family, consumers, professionals, students) of the participating affiliates. These surveys are to be completed anonymously and returned in a timely fashion. Survey results will be shared with the participating affiliates. NAMI Madison County believes that this will be very helpful for us in determining how well we are serving our members and where changes may need to be made.

We expect the surveys to be mailed to NAMI members sometime between now and June. We urge our members to complete the surveys when they receive them. Ms Cantrell-Bruce will not have access to our membership list and has assured us that all mailings including the initial survey and postcard reminders will be done by NAMI. Anyone having questions about this survey should call the NAMI Madison County office at 618-798-9788.

Mental Screening of Vets in Illinois Praised!

A recent article in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch highlighted the interest being generated among legislators and others around the country in Illinois' program to help returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans deal with mental health issues. Illinois is the first state in the nation to use state money to set up mandatory screening of all returning National Guard and Reserve troops for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury. A 24 hour hot line for veterans having trouble readjusting has also been established.

Symptoms of both PTSD and mild traumatic brain injury include irritability, sleep troubles and concentration and memory problems.

The hotline, (866) 554-4927, is run by Magellan Health Services under a state contract. Details about the screenings and other services are at www.illinoiswarrior.com.

Deepest Sympathy...

NAMI Madison County would like to pay our condolences to NAMI member, Shirlee Byrd, on the recent passing of her Mother. Shirlee, please know our thoughts and prayers are with you.



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2100 Madison Avenue
Granite City, IL 62040

Free Education Course

NAMI Madison County is once again compiling a "wait list" for a 12 week course entitled "Family-To-Family" to be offered later this year. This course is for family members and other caregivers of individuals with severe and persistent mental illnesses. Taught by trained NAMI family members, Family-To-Family offers information about illnesses of the brain and their treatment, medications, current research, coping skills, problem solving, communication techniques, and guidance on locating appropriate supports and services. The course is free.

Call the NAMI office, 618-798-9788, to register your intent to take the next Family-To-Family course.

Training for Office Staff

by AJ French, Office Coordinator

On Tuesday, April 15th, 2008 from 2:00-3:30PM, there will be a training session for persons who would like to volunteer to become a part of the NAMI Madison County Office Staff. This training is for those of you who have worked in the office in the past as well as first-timers. After speaking with several individuals, I have found out that some people have been hesitant to volunteer in the office because of a fear of what it might require. If this might be you, please give me a buzz to talk about what **you** would like to do. Each volunteer is responsible for something that they enjoy doing and not something that will be uncomfortable for them.

Please RSVP for this informal training to the NAMI Madison County Office at (618)798-9788.

DBSA 2007 Facing Us Video Winner Announced

In August of 2007, the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) launched the *Facing Us* campaign to highlight the 'face' of bipolar disorder and depression and to supply tools to those 'facing' the challenges of living with these illnesses. The campaign is aimed at bringing mood disorders out of the shadows; humanizing individuals with the illnesses; and helping those diagnosed to create a reality where they face a better future.

Phase One of this campaign included a nation-wide contest calling for personal video stories, original artwork and video public service announcements.

DBSA Women to Women from Belleville, IL won the *Facing Us* video contest. They are sponsoring a *Facing Us* event with co-sponsors of DBSA of Madison County, DBSA of Belleville and St. Elizabeth's Hospital. The event is FREE and open to all and will be held in the Millennium Room in the Southern Illinois Heart Institute building located on the West side of St. Elizabeth Hospital with first floor parking off Lincoln St. in Belleville, IL. The event will be held on Saturday, April 26th with booth registration from 8:00AM to 9:00AM and 9:00AM to 11:00AM for the *Facing Us* event.

The *Facing Us* Clubhouse is a program brought to you by The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance. For questions, call 618-235-9988.

LINC Workshops During April 2008

LINC is a consumer-driven, community based, not-for-profit agency which provides services to persons of all ages and with all types of disabilities in order to maximize their independence in all areas of community life. LINC is sponsoring the following upcoming workshops:

- Wednesday, April 9, 1-3pm - Qualifications for Social Security Benefits
- Thursday, April 17, 7-9pm - Mental Health Post Crisis & Supports

Advanced registration for their workshops is necessary. Space is limited. Please call (618) 235-9988 to register today. If you have any questions, you can e-mail info@lincinc.org or call the office at the number above.



BURT SHELTERED CARE HOME

Mary Jo Swengrosh
Owner

1414 Milton Road • Alton, IL 62002
(618) 465-1351 • (618) 465-1367 • Fax (618) 465-3751

Madison County Continuum of Care Annual Meeting

The Madison County Continuum of Care is a county-wide collaboration consisting of Madison County Community Development and an array of providers who focus on services to people who are homeless. The group includes shelters, agencies that provide mental health and other disability services, agencies that provide all sorts of supportive services, and interested individuals. The focus on homelessness is broader than just people who have a mental illness or other disability although people with disabilities do constitute a sizable portion of those who are homeless. In Madison County, unfortunately, a growing number of homeless individuals are children or families with children.

The monthly Madison County Continuum of Care meeting is held on the third Thursday of each month. The **annual** meeting will be held on Thursday, April 17th. The annual meeting is an opportunity for providers and interested persons, including elected officials, to learn about programs which address problems surrounding homelessness, and the problems which remain as challenges.

For registration, time and meeting locations please contact Amy Lyerla at Madison County Community Development, phone 618-692-8940.

NAMI: What We're About

by Shelly Holmes

National Alliance for Mental Illness is what we are, but support and devotion to the mentally ill is what we are about. No matter what illness you may have, no matter the illness your loved one may have, you are a living, breathing human with a heart and you need our help. Each support meeting will lift each burden and soothe the aching heart. Being a family is what we are, but support and devotion [are] what we are about.

(Source: Article taken from the 1st edition of the Jerseyville NAMI Newsletter)

(Editor's Note: NAMI Madison County is helping to facilitate the support group. For times and location of Jerseyville sharing & caring meetings, see page 10, Meeting Dates & Locations.)

Madison County Mental Health Court

Over the past year the Madison County Mental Health Court has offered a number of consumers charged with misdemeanors (whose behaviors were deemed to be a consequence of their mental illnesses) the opportunity to participate in a treatment plan rather than do jail time. The same opportunity will be offered to individuals with men-

tal illnesses charged with non-violent felonies (fraud, bad-check writing, prostitution, etc.).

The Madison County Mental Health (708) Board funds two case workers who work with the Mental Health Court.

Madison County Board Members and Phone Numbers

Below are the names and phone numbers of all the Madison County Board Members and the Chairman as per the article on page 1 regarding the Madison County Shelter Home. Please call them before the meeting date of April 16th and tell them that you support NAMI's position. (The names and numbers were taken directly from the Madison County Government Website.)

Alan J. Dunstan, Madison County Board Chairman -
(618) 296-4341

29 Board Members:

Judy Kuhn - (618) 654-8281
Christopher Wangard - (618) 667-5991
William S. Meyer - (618) 633-2252
Kelly Tracy - (618) 520-8919
Michelle Ruppert - (618) 465-3586
Stephen Adler - (618) 550-9539
Michael J. Walters - (618) 466-0707
Michael "Doc" Holliday, Sr - (618) 465-6974
Peggy Voumard - (618) 465-7430
Tom Hoechst - (618) 465-3692
Jean Myers - (618) 667-6577
Mark Burris - (618) 254-2292
Sue Brown - (618) 258-1506
Nathan Hartman - (618) 377-0340
Barbara Overton - (618) 254-8187
Helen Hawkins - (618) 797-6009
Hal R. Patton - (618) 692-9733
Jack Minner - (618) 656-8084
Frank Laub - (618) 876-1463
Kristen Novacich - (618) 451-2523
Arthur Asadorian - (618) 451-1353
Nick Petrillo - (618) 876-5556
Gussie Glasper - (618) 451-9549
Kent Scheibel - (618) 656-9536
Eric A. Schuler - (618) 931-4163
Brenda Roosevelt - (618) 288-2953
M. Joe Semanisin - (618) 288-7422
Joyce Fitzgerald - (618) 344-2743
Larry Trucano - (618) 344-6687

NAMI Experience
the Revolution
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Support Group to Meet in Jerseyville

NAMI Madison County has agreed to work with concerned family members and consumers in Jerseyville and assist them in offering family member/consumer support group meetings. The meetings are scheduled for the following Saturdays, April 12 and 26. All meetings are from 4:00 to 6:00PM at The Church of the Nazarene, 285 Maple Summit Rd., Jerseyville, IL. It is anticipated that meetings will continue past April.

Watch for announcements of future meetings in the NAMI newsletter or call the NAMI office, 618-798-9788 for more information or to volunteer to help bring NAMI to the Jerseyville area.

Letter to the Editor

In light of the latest tragedies at an Illinois University and at Kirkwood Missouri, our Education Coordinator Jane Roennigke wrote the following letter to the editor for local papers in our area. Her letter follows:

February 21, 2008

Letter to the Editor:

The recent shootings at Northern Illinois University and the Kirkwood (MO) City Hall have brought newspaper headlines closer to home. The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of Madison County wishes to extend their sympathies to the families and individual victims of these tragedies. Mental illness has been mentioned in both of these events and we would be remiss in not responding.

None of us can fully understand the whys and the wherefores of what caused these two men to take the lives of innocent people. Mental illness is like that. One in four adults – approximately 57.7 million Americans – experience a mental health disorder in any given year. Nearly 50% of all people with a serious mental illness do not get treatment they need due to inadequate health insurance coverage, stigma and financial disincentives to treatment and lack of qualified mental health professionals.

When reading accounts of these shootings, it appears that people who have mental illness are violent. That is far from the truth. According to the Surgeon General, "The overall contribution of mental disorders to the level of violence in society is exceptionally small."

The brain is the most awesome, intricate organ in our body, however it can get sick. Brain disorders are biologically-based, but because of the stigma of mental illness not enough research has been done.

The MetroEast has hundreds of families with relatives suffering from mental illness but are afraid to "come out" due to stigma. They pretend that everything is fine when the reality is these families need help. "Physical" illness is given sympathy and understanding. "Mental" illness is given criticism and rebuke.

Even our own insurance companies handle mental illness differently from other "illnesses."

We can make a difference in the lives of those living with mental illness by accepting that this is an illness like any other. We need to educate ourselves and others about what mental illness is and is not. Combining medication and therapy with family support can turn someone living with mental illness' life around. To learn more, call the NAMI Madison County office at (618) 798-9788 or e-mail namimadisoncty@sbcglobal.net.


Jane Roennigke
Education Coordinator
NAMI Madison County



Swallow the Ocean by Laura M. Flynn

As a child growing up in San Francisco in the 1970s, the author idolized her mother and her strong will and free spirit. But by the time Laura Flynn was eight, her mother's hold on reality began to slip, and the author and her sisters retreated into their own world of elaborate fantasy, dolls and books, as a way to escape from the reality of their mother's schizophrenia. As children, they had no knowledge of what mental illness was: "Most of all," one reviewer of the book has observed, "this memoir is a tribute to the ingenuity of children in the face of catastrophic events." Flynn is a NAMI Minnesota member.

(Source: NAMI Advocate, Book Reviews, February 2008)



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Glen Carbon and Granite City

House Passes Mental Health Legislation by Congressman Jerry Costello



As a member of the Mental Health Caucus in the U.S. House of Representatives, I was very pleased to support H.R. 1424, the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act of 2007, when it passed the House in March. The effort to pass this landmark legislation has been twelve years in the making and I have been a consistent co-sponsor of this bill since its introduction.

As you know, H.R. 1424 would improve the overall health of all Americans by granting greater access to mental health and addiction treatment and prohibiting health insurers from placing discriminatory restrictions on treatment. The Senate has passed its own version of the bill, and although we have a lot of work ahead of us to negotiate the differences between the two, I believe we have taken a great step forward to break down the negative stigma associated with mental health diseases and to ensure Americans receive the treatment and services they need. NAMI's support of this effort has been critical in reaching this point, and I will continue to work with you and my colleagues to ensure that we pass a final version of mental health parity legislation during the 110th Congress.



Applications for Prescription Coverage for Seniors/Persons with Disabilities by Congressman John Shimkus

Enroll for Illinois Cares Rx, the prescription drug plan for Illinois seniors and persons with disabilities by calling 1-800-326-3221. You can make an appointment to file over the phone or in person, or just to obtain an application. You may also enroll over the internet **for faster processing** at www.illinoiscaresrx.com or www.illinoisbenefits.org.

To qualify for **Illinois Cares Rx BASIC** you must be a senior age 65 or older, or a person with a disability. A single person's annual income must be less than \$21,218 or if married less than \$28,480.

To qualify for with disabilities who received disability benefits in 2007 from the Social Security Administration (SSI or SSD) and who paid property tax in Illinois on a home they own or who paid rent to live in a building that pays property tax **PLUS** you must be a senior age 65 or older; only citizens or qualified non-citizens are eligible. A single person's annual income must be no more than \$19,600 or if married less than \$26,400.

Illinois Cares Rx BASIC covers prescription drugs for treatment of Alzheimer's disease, arthritis, cancer, diabetes, glaucoma, heart and blood pressure problems, HIV/AIDS (if eligible for Medicare), lung disease and smoking-related

illnesses, multiple sclerosis, osteoporosis, and Parkinson's disease. Illinois Cares Rx PLUS covers all classes of medically necessary prescription drugs.

To get Illinois Cares Rx drug coverage; you must apply on a Form IL-1363 each year. If eligible for Medicare, you must also apply for "extra help" from Social Security.

(Editor's Note: Filing a Form IL 1363 will not only determine if you qualify for the Illinois Cares Rx but can also benefit persons with disabilities receiving either SSI or SSD and who paid property tax in Illinois on a home they own or who paid rent to live in a building that pays property tax. Filing the Form IL-1363 also allows qualified persons to receive a license plate discount. Visit www.cbrx.il.gov and read about the IL Circuit Breaker Form 1363. If you do not have access to a computer, call toll-free 1-800-624-2459 for more information and to get form IL Form 1363.)

Track Your Senators' and Representative's Votes by E-mail

Did you know that NAMI National has a way to keep you up-to-date on your members of Congress? It's known as "MegaVote". To sign up for MegaVote on NAMI National website, click: <http://capwiz.com/nami/megavote/> All you have to do then is enter your zip code or select your state from the dropdown and provide your email address to sign up--it's as easy as that.

Each week that Congress is in session you will receive:

- Key votes by your two Senators and U.S. Representative.
- Links to send e-mail to your members of Congress using pre-addressed forms.
- Upcoming votes for your review and a chance to offer e-mail input before they vote.

Use this weekly vote monitor to track the decisions made by your elected officials on key issues.

Your personal information will not be used for any purpose other than to create and send to you your custom MegaVote.



2615 Edwards St.
Alton, IL 62002
(618) 462-2331
24 hr. Crisis Line:
(618) 465-4388
www.cccnmc.org

Outpatient group counseling for adults and children; case management; residential and housing options; 24-hour crisis services for adults and children; Methadone maintenance treatment; psychosocial rehabilitation services; psychiatric and medical services; senior/caregiver services.

**NAMI Madison County
Meeting Dates & Locations**



Family Member/Caregivers

Sharing and Caring Meeting: 1st Tuesday of each month, 7:00-9:00PM, **Chestnut Clubhouse**, 2054 Edison Street in Granite City.

NAMI Connection--Consumer Sharing & Caring Meetings: 1st Tuesday of each month at **Chestnut Clubhouse**, 2054 Edison Street in Granite City; **3rd & 4th Tuesday** of each month, **NAMI Madison County Office** in Gateway Regional Medical Center in Granite City, 4th Floor, North Wing; all meetings 7:00-9:00PM.

Family Member/Caregivers and Consumer Sharing and Caring Meeting: 3rd Tuesday of each month, 7:00-9:00PM, St. Timothy United Methodist Church, 219 East Union, **Litchfield**, park/enter rear of church.

Family Member/Caregivers and Consumer Sharing and Caring Meeting: 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month, 4:00-6:00 PM, The Church of the Nazarene, 285 Maple Summit Rd, **Jerseyville**.

Business Meeting for All Members and Advocates: 2nd Tuesday of each month, 7:00-8:30PM, Gateway Regional Medical Center in Granite City, **Lower Level Conference Room** next to Cafeteria.

See "Mark Your Calendar!" on page 4 for dates.

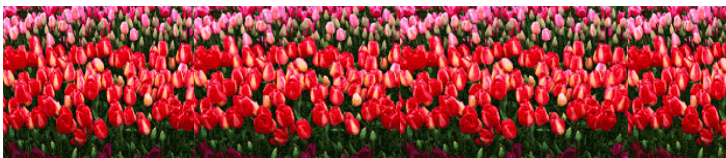


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BHA
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
Alternatives, Inc.

337 E. Ferguson Ave.
Wood River, IL 62095
Phone (618) 251-4073
Fax (618) 251-6246
TDD (618) 254-5524

Behavioral Health Alternatives provides Mental Health Case Management Services, which includes but is not limited to: Individual Therapy; Group Therapy; Medication Monitoring and Training; and Representative Payee Services.
For more information, please call (618) 251-4073.



**NAMI Madison County
Gateway Regional Medical Center
2100 Madison Ave, 4th Floor
Granite City, IL 62040**

TO:

**RETURN
SERVICE
REQUESTED**