



NAMI Huntsville

September 2007

# GRASSROOTS

NAMI is the National Alliance on Mental Illness  
Newsletter of NAMI Huntsville, a grassroots affiliate of NAMI Alabama and NAMI

## NAMIH Announces Full Schedule for Last Quarter of 2007

### President's Corner

By Annie Saylor

Fall is approaching, and hopefully soon, we'll get some relief from the summer heat. With this also comes some of our busier times within NAMIH - Mental Illness Awareness Week (MIAW) in October, our Rummage Sale in November, and then, later, our Christmas get-together.

NAMIH volunteers have been busy preparing for MIAW; see the flyer in this newsletter for some of the details. We are planning a Candlelight Vigil, workshop on Bipolar Disorder, and library displays. Look for our Huntsville Times large page ad on Wednesday, September 26; it will also highlight our fall activities.

I challenge each of you to do at least one activity this fall to bring more awareness about mental illness to our community. Go by the office and pick up a handful of brochures; take them to your church or doctor's office or other location and leave them for a family to find. We continually hear from people that they didn't know NAMIH existed when they needed help. If you can make time for more activity, volunteer to help with the library displays, with the Vigil, or with publicity. Contribute your own ideas on activities, but be prepared to help with them.

Another November activity is the election of board members. We are fortunate to have an outstanding board, but we need more people who are willing to serve on the board. The time requirements are once a month meetings for an hour, staying in contact via email, and volunteering to assist in at least one area. The volunteer work can usually be done on your own schedule.

Autumn is my favorite time of year. Here's looking to a fun, productive time!

- *Annie*

([saylorav@yahoo.com](mailto:saylorav@yahoo.com))

### Events Calendar

All NAMI Huntsville Meetings are held in  
The United Way Building  
701 Andrew Jackson Way, Huntsville,  
Unless otherwise announced.

**Tuesday, September 4**

7:00pm – Support Group  
Facilitator: Ruth Karr

**Tuesday, September 18**

6:00pm – Board Meeting  
7:00pm – Education Program

**Tuesday, September 25**

11:00am – 2:00pm  
CFC Agency Fair

**Tuesday, October 2**

7:00pm - Support Group  
Facilitator: Wood DeLeuil

**Thursday, October 4**

NARAH Family Workshop  
More inside

**Friday, October 5**

Bipolar Symposium  
9:00am to Noon  
Huntsville Main Library  
See "Fall Events" page

**Tuesday October 16**

6:00pm – Board Meeting  
7:00pm Education Program

See pg. 4 for MIAW Events

# **NAMI Alabama State Conference**

## **“A New Day in Psychiatry: Research, Services and Recovery” Held August 23 – 25, 2007**

Nine NAMI Huntsville Members attended the annual conference in Montgomery. Some of the attendees brought back information to share with our readers. The following two articles are a review of selected topics from the education programs.

### **Convention Overview**

By-Ruth Karr

Since this is the 20th Anniversary of NAMI AL, I spoke briefly during the business portion of the convention on Saturday about how the organization started, and recognized 1987 charter members who attended.

There were six local AMI affiliates in Alabama; (then only national was referred to as "NAMI"). The oldest were in Huntsville and Mobile, then Shoals, Birmingham, Wiregrass and Coffee County. Wood DeLeuil and Leon Capuano drafted Articles of Incorporation and By Laws. We met at Leon's Montgomery law offices, signed the Articles, and were ready to go!

It had taken over two years since the need for state AMIs had been pointed out in a NAMI Newsletter by Dr. E. Fuller Torrey. Ronald Reagan was president, shrinking federal government, giving state governments more power was his aim. Torrey urged each affiliates to form state AMIs since more power would be at that level. Two local groups were sponsored by Mental Health Associations. Two of them felt that to be NAMI state affiliated instead of MHA was disloyal. But finally, we stubbornly said "No Way"! After two years, in 1987, we were on the way as AMI of Alabama.

Rogene Parris of Birmingham was the first President, I was secretary, and she requested that I start a newsletter. I chose an alliterative name, *Alabama Advocate*, since advocacy would be a major focus. Later, NAMI liked that name and changed the national newsletter to the *NAMI Advocate*.

Rogene and her husband, Dick--humorously introducing himself as "Mr. Rogene", soon traveled all across Alabama getting new local "AMI groups" started. Soon there was over twenty. Not all flourished, but those that thrived have supplied our state NAMI with many devoted "work horse" leaders. Other newer affiliates are growing and helping with one target--local NAMIs in convenient distance to all Alabamians who need what we did when we each found NAMI.

Attending charter AAMI members were asked stand and be introduced on Saturday. Less than a dozen was able to attend. However, Peggi DeLeuil reminded me, as attendees came into the reception area, it is good to see so many newer members stepping into our earlier leadership roles. These new people share our passionate determination for support and change.

Benjamin Staples, NAMI Regional Leadership Consultant, gave an inspiring presentation on growing NAMI in Alabama, and later asked for a copy of our "pioneering days" for NAMI archives.

### **Psychiatrist Shortage in Alabama** By Wood and Peggi DeLeuil

Dr. Richard Powers, a long-time friend of NAMI and a highly regarded psychiatrist who has held a number of important positions in the Alabama Department of Mental Health Mental Retardation gave a convincing presentation on the current and future shortage of psychiatrists, as well as nurses and other mental health providers. In Alabama, we currently have a profound shortage of psychiatrists that will only get worse if the problem is not addressed immediately. Dr. Powers backed up his assertion with some interesting statistics - all well documented: In 2001 there were 7.1 clinically trained psychiatrists per 100,000 residents in Alabama versus a national average of 13.7. (Second lowest in the nation.)

There are several factors impacting on this problem. First, managed care organizations restrict annual patient time to 2.8 hours, compared to the average standard practice of 14.1 hours. Hence, some stakeholders will argue there is no shortage. We family members know otherwise first-hand. Have (Cont'd. next pg., see "Psychiatrist")

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you tried to get an appointment with a psychiatrist other than a routine med-check? Even worse, have you tried to find a child and adolescent psychiatrist in our area? Second, the workforce is aging. In 2002, 78 % of the male psychiatric workforce was 50 or older; 47 % of the female. Third, Alabama’s licensing law for psychiatry presents a major stumbling block when recruiting out of state. There is no reciprocity with other states and we have a ten-year recertification requirement. This is underscored by the scarcity of practitioners who fled the Gulf States from Hurricane Katrina that relocated to Alabama. Most went to Tennessee, Georgia and Texas.

So how do you fix the problem? Train your own, lure from out of state, or recruit foreign medical graduates. In recognition of the forthcoming crisis, UAB will increase its residencies in psychiatry in the future. Hopefully, USA will follow suit. This is the preferred course of action, since experience shows that psychiatrists tend to remain close to where they did their residency. NAMI AL has joined the advocacy thrust to get the law changed and to get more funds for residencies in 2008 and beyond. Recruitment of foreign medical graduates, while feasible, draws psychiatrist away from countries that have desperate shortages themselves. The solution will no doubt come from a combination of all these sources.

The final point Dr. Powers made was that returning veterans will only exacerbate the shortage. As we heard at our last education meeting, there will be a flood of veterans swamping the VA as well as the private sector with psychiatric problems. For those interested in more detail, Dr. Powers’ viewgraphs are on the NAMI AL website at [www.namialabama.org](http://www.namialabama.org).

## Library News

### Library Adds New Books

--Eileen Sessions, NAMIH Librarian

NAMIH recently updated its library with three new books. The first one, *The Complete Family Guide to Schizophrenia: Helping Your Loved One Get the Most Out of Life* was written by Kim T. Mueser and Susan Gingerich. This

comprehensive guide covers topics on understanding schizophrenia, special issues for family members, preventing relapses, creating a supportive environment, coping with specific problems and improving quality of life.

*No Momma's Boy: How I Let Go of My Past and Embraced the Future* is a memoir by Dominic Carter. Although he grew up in poverty as the son of a mother struggling with paranoid schizophrenia, Dominic Carter eventually became a successful news anchor in New York City.

*Surviving Schizophrenia: A Manual for Families, Patients, and Providers*, 5th ed., by E. Fuller Torrey, 2006, is the third addition to our collection. *Surviving Schizophrenia*, first published in 1983, has been considered by many to be the definitive book on schizophrenia. This 5<sup>th</sup> edition has been fully revised and updated to include the latest information on research and treatment.

All three of these books, and many others, may be checked out from our library in the NAMIH office, M-F from 9-3.



### Still Serving Veterans (SSV) NAMIH Topic for August Education Program

Presenter: Laura Ayers

Laura is a member of the SSV Executive Board. Her mission is to create and implement a Medical Accommodation Process (MAP).

Its purpose is to help veterans returning from war accept medical help and to easily identify and access resources to Mental Health (MH) recovery.

MAP Seeks creative ideas to implement existing medical services and resources. And they are searching for acceptable non-labeling terms to describe mental trauma; terms which will not

(Cont'd see last pg., “SSV”)

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label vets, and discourage them from accepting the treatment they need.

SSV is working with existing non-profits, law enforcement, Government agencies and governments at city, county state and national level to bring together a successful, easy to access, process for tapping into medical help.

([www.StillServingVeterans.org](http://www.StillServingVeterans.org))

HSV Office: 2939 Johnson Road S. W.

Huntsville, AL 35805

Phone: 256.658.0585

**Every Thursday**

6:00pm - Bipolar DBSA\*

Support Group

In the United Way Bldg.

Contact: Tony Martin, 313-0633

\*Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance affiliate

**About NAMIH Membership • • •**

**All our services are free. Membership is not required, but appreciated.**



**Join NAMI Huntsville**

Become a partner. Help NAMIH realize our goals to support, educate and advocate on behalf of individuals with mental illness and their families.

**MEMBERSHIP FORM**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

\$20 individual

\$25 family

New

Renewal

Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail check to: NAMIH, 701 Andrew Jackson Way  
Huntsville, AL 35801



*G R A S S R O O T S*

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