

Special Delivery
June/July 2007

Dear NAMI Virginia Member:

First things first: Please submit nominations for the NAMI Virginia (NAMI VA) Board as soon as possible. Candidates should have a broad prospective of NAMI VA objectives. E-mail your candidates by July 20 to Tom Weaver, Chair of the Nominating Committee sierrakmw@earthlink.net

Second: As a result of the tragic events at Virginia Tech, this year is critical for NAMI VA and its members to be heard on improvements in community based services in Virginia. Several members have been participating on Task Forces for the Commission on Mental Health Law Reform. Other members have been attending meetings at which legislators and other are trying to understand the tragedy and to develop recommendations for improving Virginia's Mental Health response capability.

Third: Please note the following important dates....

- *July 9* – Mira Signer started as the new full time Executive Director of NAMI VA. She received her BA from James Madison University and her MSW from Virginia Commonwealth University. Mira has worked most recently for Planned Parenthood Affiliates in Virginia as Director of Advocacy.
- *September 8* – The State Convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Central in Richmond. The primary speaker will be Professor Richard J. Bonnie, Professor of Psychiatric Medicine and Director of the Virginia Institute of Law, Psychiatry and Public Policy. In addition, he serves as chair of the Virginia Commission on Mental Health Law. Professor Bonnie will update us on the progress of the Commission and the emerging issues in mental health law.
- *October 13* – Our second annual NAMIWALK will be held at Innsbrook in Glen Allen (Richmond). Registration is at 9:30 AM and the WALK is at 10:30. The WALK is an awareness-raising program for those with mental illness. Last year we raised over \$117,000; this year we have established a goal of \$135,000. Carol Evans has provided additional Information (page 2) on the NAMI WALK program. See you there.

Fourth: Members, Barry and Kathy Harkey, have established the *JOSHUA S. COLLINS AWARD OF EXCELLENCE* in honor of their son. Joshua lost his battle with mental illness in 2006 and will be remembered through this award. Two checks in the amount of \$500 will be awarded to local NAMI VA affiliates, individuals or established non-profit organizations that best provide services in a given year for the mentally ill. For more information on award eligibility and a nomination form, see page 5. The information is available as well on the NAMI VA web site www.namivirginia.org

We have much to accomplish. Please be generous with your contributions.

Sincerely,
Bill Farrington
President, NAMI Virginia