

With more than 230,000 members, NAMI is America's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to improving the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness.



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Georgia Crisis & Access Line
Single Point of Entry to access mental health, addictive disease and crisis services 24/7
1-800-715-4225

Social Security How Much Do You Know?

**Monday, April 19, 2010
Education Meeting 6:00 PM
CONTACT Training Building – 1520 22nd Street**

Have you or someone you know been considering applying for one of the Social Security disability programs but were confused about the procedure? Have you applied for one of the Social Security disability programs and been denied? If you answered "Yes" to either of these questions, then you should definitely attend our April 19th meeting. We will have two speakers who will explain the application and appeal process for both Social Security disability programs.

The Social Security and Supplemental Security Income disability programs are the largest of several Federal programs that provide assistance to people with disabilities. While these two programs are different in many ways, both are administered by the Social Security Administration and only individuals who have a disability and meet medical criteria may qualify for benefits under either program.

We are very fortunate to have two highly qualified speakers to present this information to us at our April educational meeting. Lois Byrd and Buddy Coiner both have much experience dealing with these programs and have offered to share their knowledge with us.

As most of our NAMI members know, Lois Byrd was the first president of our NAMI Columbus affiliate and served us for 10 dedicated years. However, you may not know that she is also a local paralegal who diligently advocates for her clients to obtain disability benefits they deserve.

Buddy Coiner is a retired Social Security Administration employee, having worked for 25 years in disability programs. He was a district manager for 11 years in the Columbus area, and more recently worked in Baltimore with the commissioner of SSA. In 2001, Buddy began a new business called Medicaid/Medicare Recovery. He and Lois both have impressive track records for obtaining benefits for clients.

Although they have different backgrounds, both Buddy and Lois have the same passion and personal dedication to getting help for people who need and deserve it. They are both excellent, engaging speakers, so be sure not to miss this important and valuable meeting!

~ Mimi Marlowe



Message from Mimi

Everyone's saying spring is here! What does that mean to you? To me, it's about rebirth: the sun comes out stronger (although I don't always like how strong it has been this week) and stays out longer (at least for a few months), beautiful flowers start to peek out of what was frozen ground, and many of us feel spurts of joyous energy. There is a desire to get more active. But active at what?

- Exercising (call Edi Arnst (706-984-8725) if you are interested in joining her exercise group?)
- Planning your summer vacation?
- Cleaning the house (remember to save things for our yard sale on April 24)?
- Sprucing up the yard?

Spring is also a great time to get active with NAMI, at the state and at the local level. How does our community respond to those with a mental illness? How much support does NAMI Columbus receive from the community? Is it enough?

There are many things we can do to (1) help shape what happens to the mental health system in Georgia, and (2) educate and advocate in Columbus. What are some examples you ask? **You did ask, didn't you?**

- When you get an advocacy alert from NAMI Georgia, respond to the request. The alerts let you know what you can say and who to say it to.
- Think about what is most important to you regarding changing the way those living with a mental illness are treated in our community. Do you want more people educated about mental illness? How about more people coming to support groups and our education meetings? There are opportunities for you to make things happen in the activities and events sponsored by NAMI Columbus.

If all of us do a little, we can get a lot done. And we can change the way people view mental illness (it's another medical illness, just like diabetes, heart disease, etc.) and really change the way this medical illness is accepted and treated.

~ *Mimi Marlowe, President*



2010:
Year of the Volunteer

New Horizons Benefit

It's not too late to make plans to attend the ninth annual New Horizons Benefit being held **Wednesday, April 14**, at the Green Island Country Club. Dinner begins at 7:00pm.

Several very important things make this a special event. First of all, proceeds will go to help fund our Mental Health Court which means more people getting treatment instead of incarceration. In addition, two of our most active and effective advocates, Perry Alexander and Dr. Cyndy Pattillo, are receiving the Impact award for the great work they do in mental health.

Hopefully, you can attend and will purchase one or more seats at a NAMI table. The cost is \$100 per person. If you can't attend, you can make the donation for one or more places and one of our NAMI members will attend. Another way to support this wonderful cause is for several members to pool your money to buy a seat at the table.

We want a lot of full tables so please call **706-320-3755** to find out how you can support New Horizons and NAMI.

FaithNet Family-to-Family Class to Begin

A new Family-to-Family Class will begin on **Tuesday, May 11, at 6:30pm. Pre-registration is mandatory** (in order to ensure the correct number of textbooks). Cutoff for registration is **Friday, May 7**. Call **706-320-3755** and leave a message to register.

Family-to-Family is a free 12-week course for family and friends of individuals with serious mental illness. It is taught by trained NAMI family members.

"Family members who take the NAMI Family-to-Family course are better equipped to work with mental health clinicians in a collaborative manner. My bottom-line recommendation? Take this course. It will help you learn to cope successfully with a major challenge in your life, and that, in turn, will help your loved one as he or she works toward recovery."

-- Peter Weiden, M.D., author of *Breakthroughs in Antipsychotic Medications*

THE



TO RECOVERY

NAMI Columbus C.A.R.E.S.

Consumers Achieving Recovery thru Education & Support

Sweet Poison

Probably the most consumed item in American diets and the worst for your waistline is sugar. Here's a sickening thought. Imagine eating 8 teaspoons of sugar out of the bag. That's how much sugar is in one can of Coke. And now with the production of cheap high fructose corn syrup, food producers tempt our taste buds by adding sugar to just about everything Americans eat 156 pounds of sugar per person per year. Comparatively, in the year 1830 Americans consumed only 11 pounds per year.

The American Heart Association's guidelines state that a moderately active woman should consume no more than 6 teaspoons of sugar per day. A moderately active man should consume no more than 9. The reality is the average American consumes 22 teaspoons of sugar per day. Sugar contributes empty carbohydrate calories, which Americans certainly don't need.

The following are potential health risks from consuming too much sugar: (1) Excessive weight gain leading to obesity which in turn is a risk factor for cardiovascular disease since it adversely affects cholesterol and triglyceride levels as well as blood pressure and blood glucose levels; (2) Dental cares or cavities from dental decay; (3) Impact on your immune system by causing white blood cells to be sluggish, thus lowering your resistance to disease

According to a British psychiatric researcher, Malcolm Peet, there is a strong link between high sugar consumption and the risk of depression and schizophrenia.

So how do we reduce our sugar intake? My suggestion is to first start reading your grocery labels. Avoid foods with high fructose corn syrup. Look at how many grams are sugar are in a product. It will definitely surprise you. Here's to healthy eating!

~ Edi Arnst

Peer Support "Warm Line" at 1-888-945-1414 (toll-free)

The Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network operates a state-funded, consumer-directed "warm line" for anyone struggling with mental health issues, 24 hours a day.

The Importance of Friendship!

One of the things that can be difficult to do when you struggle with a mental illness is making and keeping friends. It is often difficult for people who don't have a mental illness to understand just exactly what the experience is like, and it does not help that there is still such a huge stigma that society places on mental illnesses. It is not uncommon to hear statements like "she is just using her mental illness as a crutch" or "he needs to just snap out of it". There are even some segments of society that believe that mental illnesses are simply defects of character and not real diseases.

With all these negative perceptions, making and sustaining friendships can be very difficult for those who struggle with

a mental illness. The irony is that having at least one friend who understands you and can just be there for you is a huge part of the healing process.

This has been one of the benefits of NAMI for me; meeting other people who know exactly what I am going through, and not having to worry about the fear of being unfairly judged or ridiculed. The NAMI support group meetings and monthly educational meetings are excellent places not only to meet other people who are on the healing path, but to learn more about your particular diagnosis and how to cope with it. And who knows, you just might make a friend or two along the way who can be there for you when the going gets tough.

~ Stephen Akinduro

Advocacy News



A Message from the Suicide Prevention Coalition of Georgia

In an effort to see where we stand in our progress to implement the **Georgia Suicide Prevention Plan**, we need updates, information, facts and opinions from stakeholders around the state.

The state plan is broken into three sections, AIM - Awareness, Intervention and Methodology. We will be doing three short surveys over the course of a year to gather updates and opinions on our progress in each of these three sections.

The first section is Awareness. We have developed a short survey (10 - 15 minutes), to help us see where and what awareness activities are happening around the state and where we are lacking. We will use the information gathered to develop the priorities for moving forward. Your information and opinions are critical to our work.

Please make sure to use the comments area under each of the questions to share information and activities that we may not know are happening so that we can develop an accurate list of activities.

Thank you in advance for your time!!

You can find a copy of the Georgia Suicide Prevention Plan on the www.gspin.org website.

You can also access the survey at this site.

ALERT!

Healthcare Georgia Foundation released in March ***Election Guide 2010: Georgia's Gubernatorial Candidates Address Our State's Most Critical Health Challenges.***

The election guide was conceived as a nonpartisan effort to inform Georgia voters about each gubernatorial candidate's vision for better health and healthcare in Georgia. It can be downloaded by going to <http://www.healthcaregeorgia.org/>.

In our participatory democracy, it is important for all citizens to be knowledgeable on the values and stated positions of our potential leaders of state government prior to our vote to elect our next senior executive.

You are encouraged to stay informed and vote for your most qualified candidate.

What is NAMI StigmaBusters?

NAMI StigmaBusters is a **network of dedicated advocates across the country and around the world** who seek to fight inaccurate and hurtful representations of mental illness.

Whether these images are found in TV, film, print, or other media, **StigmaBusters speak out and challenge stereotypes. They seek to educate society about the reality of mental illness** and the courageous struggles faced by consumers and families every day. StigmaBusters' goal is to break down the barriers of ignorance, prejudice, or unfair discrimination by promoting education, understanding, and respect.

Sign up to receive a **NAMI StigmaBusters Alert** at www.nami.org and click on **Fight Stigma** on the left side.

Upcoming NAMI Events

April 2010	May 2010 – <i>Mental Health Awareness Month</i>
12-16 Columbus Police Dept. CIT	2-8 Children's MH Awareness Week
14 Ninth Annual New Horizons Benefit	6 National Children's MH Awareness Day
19 Monthly Education Meeting	10 Mental Health Court Graduation (Govt. Center)
17 SACVET Stand Down (Veterans)	11 FaithNet Family-to-Family Course – Week 1
24 NAMI Cols Semi-annual Yard Sale	15-16 NAMI GA Annual Meeting & Tune-Up (Atlanta)
	17 Monthly Education Meeting
	23-29 Older Americans' Mental Health Week
June 2010	July 2010 <i>Minority MH Awareness Month</i>
1-3 National CIT Conference, San Antonio	TBA NAMI GA Walk Kickoff Luncheon
14-18 Muscogee County Sheriff's Office CIT	1-3 NAMI National Convention, Wash. DC
17 Peer-to-Peer Course – Week 1	12-16 Columbus Police Dept. CIT
21 Monthly Education Meeting	16-18 NAMI GA Facilitator Training (Atlanta)
29 NAMI National Convention, Wash. DC	19 Monthly Education Meeting

Support Groups

Every Monday night, 6-7:30 pm Family/Friend and NAMI Connection Recovery Support Groups
Every Saturday 1-2:30 pm NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group

Meeting Location:

- NAMI Connection Recovery Support Groups meets at The Bradley Center's Multipurpose Room (use 22nd Street Parking Lot)
- Family/Friend Support Group meets at the CONTACT Training Building, 1520 22nd Street

What's coming up that we want to highlight...

Eighth Semi-annual NAMI Columbus Indoor Yard/Bake Sale

CONTACT Chattahoochee Valley office
Saturday, April 24, 8:00am – 1:00pm

It's that time again...time for our yard/bake sale. Our goal this year is to raise \$2,000 to help fund the education, support and advocacy projects that NAMI Columbus is so well known for. And **YOU** are important in helping us achieve our goal.

WHAT: Clothing always sells well (and we always need men's clothing), furniture, and household items (items for the kitchen, lamps, etc.), and electronic goods.

WHERE: Please bring clothing and other items you wish to donate to the CONTACT Chattahoochee Valley office, **1520 22nd St.** (behind the Bradley Center/Pastoral Institute)

WHEN: Thursday (4/22) and Friday (4/23) from 10:00am – 6:00pm.

If you have items to donate but can't bring them by on Thursday or Friday, please call (706-320-3755) or email (NAMICols@knology.net) us so we can help.

NAMI Georgia Annual Meeting

Saturday, May 15
Mercer University, Atlanta

Have you ever attended a NAMI Georgia annual meeting? If you haven't attended in the last couple of years, **YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE MISSING.**

In early 2008, a wonderful decision was made to hire Eric Spencer as Executive Director for NAMI Georgia. Since then, we're made terrific strides as a state organization which greatly benefits all the affiliates. Our president, Mimi Marlowe, is on the NAMI Georgia Board of Directors, has worked closely with Eric and knows first-hand how much he has done. Our annual meetings are a great reflection of his vision, inspiration and perspiration (hard work really). Go to the NAMI Georgia website (www.namiga.org) and look at the agenda.

And if you're a facilitator, mentor or teacher, come to the Tune-Up Day on **Sunday, May 16**. NAMI Georgia will pay for your hotel on Saturday night if you attend both meetings. Call the office (706-320-3755) for more info.



Possibilities

We're working diligently on matching NAMI Columbus needs to the interests of our volunteers. If you're looking for new opportunities, come to this page each month. Think about it! What are you passionate about? What are you interested in? How can you connect to NAMI Columbus? What opportunities does NAMI Columbus have that would fulfill your need to give back to the organization that helped you in your time of crisis? If you see something that interests you, please contact us (706-320-3755 or NAMICols@knology.net).

NAMI Columbus 8th Semi-annual Yard/Bake Sale

You've read about our upcoming yard/bake sale on page 2, but we also want to extend another invitation to those of you who would like to help make this event successful. In addition to bringing items for the sale, there are other opportunities to help out in the following ways.

1. We would love to have all the wonderful bakers in our NAMI community participate in this event. One thing we always see at each yard sale...people buying and eating the few baked goods we've had for sale. Sometimes that's all people buy. So we want to step it up and add to the number of baked goods. Please consider donating one baked item (cakes, cookies, pies, brownies, candy such as fudge, etc.). If only 25% of our NAMI members brought an item, we'd have almost 100 goodies for sale. If you can donate more than one item, even better.
2. We separate and price the donated goods on Thursday and Friday and then sell everything we can on Saturday. If you like yard or bake sales, you can support NAMI by helping out any or all of these days. It doesn't have to be for a whole day...if you have two or more hours available, please let us know. We have great fun and would love to have you there with us.

~ **Kristine Walls & Linda Peters, Co-Chairs**

Do you have organization chart software?

NAMI Columbus is getting organized and we would like to create a visual representation that will show everyone our plan (current and future Board of Directors, Advisory Council and committees). If you have software and know how to use it, would you be willing to help us create this visual?

Mental Health Court (MHC)

Our local MHC (one of the best, if not the best, in the nation) holds two court sessions/month for people who have been arrested and are eligible to go through the court program and receive supervised treatment. NAMI Columbus has supported the MHC since its inception. One way we do this is by having two NAMI representatives attend each court session to talk with people in the program and their family members about our support groups and education programs.

- Each court session lasts approximately two hours (1:00-3:00pm) on the first and third Friday of the month.
- Experience has shown that having two NAMI members attend these sessions to talk to the consumers and their family members involved in the program is invaluable. One NAMI rep goes outside the courtroom after a case is heard and talks to someone while the other rep stays in the courtroom to listen to the next case.
- The major responsibility of a rep is to talk to people about NAMI and encourage them to attend a support group meeting (NAMI Connections for consumers or the family support group). A flyer is available to hand out.
- Someone experienced will go with you at the beginning so you can see what this is all about. All we need is YOU!

Financial Reporting for NAMI Columbus

We've purchased QuickBooks for Nonprofits so that we can get out of the manual mode of financial tracking and reporting. The only trouble is...we need help setting it up with a chart of accounts and others things we probably don't even know about yet. Do you know QB software? Would you be willing to help us set it up? Would you be willing to tutor one of our members on how to create reports? If you could/would do this, then we can take over inputting the data and creating the reports.

THIS AND THAT

Keep On...

Using Goodsearch.com as your search engine.

For me, it searches as well as Google **AND** NAMI Columbus benefits from it. Although we did better in February 2010 (400 searches) than March 2010 (162), we had more searches last month than March 2009 (100). So we're making progress.

Think of it this way...if 100 supporters did an average of 2 searches per day, we could add \$730 to our annual budget and provide even more education and support. Try it! I think you'll like it and NAMI Columbus will thank you.

Have You Heard?



The 2010 Census and why you need to participate in it. The Census allows everyone's voice to be heard by determining congressional seats according to population tallies. It also directly influences how our representatives allocate more than \$400 billion in federal funding for benefits and services such as highways, railroad, schools and hospitals. For example, if there has been an increase in the number of children in our community, funds can be directed to add classrooms or build new schools.

Simply answer the 10 questions and mail it back. It asks nothing more personal than who you are, your race and where you live.



CIT Graduates, March 12, 2010

Thank You!

- Jacquelyn Grandy for holding Mimi's hand while they put together last month's newsletter. Mimi wrote and Jacquelyn created...what a team!
- Paul Morris for an enlightening and well-presented program on bipolar disorder in March. Our thanks also to Matt Avera who shared part of his story and words of wisdom from his experience.
- Kristine Walls and Stephen Akinduro for consistently arranging their schedules to help out with the CIT classes held in Columbus. Sue Marlowe says they do so much to really make the classes successful.

What's News?

- We have a new look. Many thanks to Linda Ames for helping design our "new" newsletter look. We hope you like it.
- **NAMI Launches Social Networking Site for Young Adults.** NAMI has launched www.StrengthofUs.org, a new online community where young adults living with mental health concerns can provide mutual support in navigating the unique challenges and opportunities during the critical transition years from ages 18-25. The site also offers support and resources for young adults who have a family member or friend affected by a mental health problem. A lot is already happening on the online community so check it out today.



Have You Seen...

the NAMI Georgia Website. If you haven't gone to the NAMI Georgia website recently, please do so. At www.namiga.org you can keep up with all the things that are going on at the State level. For instance, the home page is currently announcing the NAMI Georgia Annual Conference and Membership Meeting on May 15, 2010. A link will take you to the agenda and registration information.

There's also information about advocacy events, the NAMI Georgia Walk, and training (new facilitator training (for consumers and family members) is coming up in July. It's a great resource to keep up with what's happening.



Columbus

P.O. Box 8581, Columbus, GA 31908, (706) 320-3755

The Area's Voice on Mental Illness

I want to support NAMI Columbus and NAMI's mission.

✂ Please Cut and Mail ✂

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Numbers (do not enter a number if you do not want to be listed in the Membership Directory (members only).

E-Mail (Please include so we can be green and email you our monthly newsletter.)

Please check type of membership desired:

- Individual Membership \$30 Dues
- Professional Membership \$50 Dues
(Individual and Professional Dues are for one year and are tax deductible.)
- \$3 Open Door Membership (low income)
- I am not joining at this time, but I would like to make a contribution of \$ _____. (Thank you!!!)

NAMI National, NAMI Georgia and NAMI Columbus are dedicated to eradicating stigma and improving the lives of persons with mental illnesses thereby also benefiting their friends, family and community. Catch the wave and be a part of change.

NAMI Columbus is the largest affiliate in Georgia. We are a 501(c)3 non-profit charitable organization. Dues and donations are tax deductible. Membership includes a subscription to our monthly newsletter, membership directory, (501((3) and access to immediate news on advocacy, treatment and support issues from our national, state and local organizations.

Please make checks payable to:

NAMI Columbus
P.O. Box 8581
Columbus, Georgia 31908

You can also join safely online at www.nami.org/join (\$35.00 by credit card).