

With more than 1,200 affiliates, NAMI is America's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to improving the lives of all individuals affected by mental illness.

**Inside This Issue**

Upcoming Events Calendar	2
Registration open for classes	2
Finding peace in the midst of chaos	3
Information Updates	3
S.O.S. Groups	4
Attachments:	
WCGRH Gift List	
Winter Celebration Invitation	

**NAMI Columbus**

P.O. Box 8581

Columbus, GA 31908

(706) 320-3755

Email: [info@NAMICols.org](mailto:info@NAMICols.org)

[www.nami.org/sites/NAMIColumbusGA](http://www.nami.org/sites/NAMIColumbusGA)

**Board of Directors**

Vacant, President

Vacant, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

Joshua Bell, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

Vacant, Secretary

Ursula King, Treasurer

Charles Clark

Frank Dunford

Sue Marlowe

Linda Peters

Kristine Walls

Perry Alexander, Advisor

Buddy Coiner, Advisor

Doris Keene, Advisor

Steve Scott, Advisor

David Wallace, Advisor

**Georgia Crisis & Access Line**

Single Point of Entry to access mental health, addictive disease and crisis services

24/7/365

1-800-715-4225

**Peer Support "Warm Line"**

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

**Faith & Mental Illness**

**Monday, November 21, 2011**

**Education Meeting 6:00 PM**

**CONTACT Training Building – 1520 22<sup>nd</sup> Street**

In April, 2008, Reverend Matt Avera was the guest speaker at our affiliate's monthly educational meeting. Attendees talked about his presentation for months afterward. We are very pleased to announce that Matt will once again be our guest presenter at our November meeting.

Our first introduction to Rev. Avera was when he was invited to deliver the invocation and benediction at our quarterly graduation celebration for the Muscogee County Mental Health Court. His first words got everyone's attention. He told the graduates that he had bipolar disorder and he gave them some quick tips to stay on the road to recovery. One tip was to surround themselves with people they trusted because "sometimes thoughts will lie to you".

Since his appearances at the graduation and monthly educational meeting in 2008, Matt and his wife Stacy have spoken to numerous CIT (Crisis Intervention Team) classes where they share their journey as a consumer and family member dealing with mental illness. Their presentations to the officers are the beginning for law enforcement to see that people actually can reach recovery and learn to manage their mental illness.

At present, Matt is an Associate Pastor at St. Mark United Methodist Church in Columbus and was diagnosed with Bipolar II in 1999. He will be talking with us about his life before and after the diagnosis. He will also share with us about how he has been able to deal with his illness and live a very productive life. The major part of his talk will emphasize how faith in God helps guide us on the road to recovery.

We have asked Matt to also address the issue that many NAMI members feel...that their church virtually abandoned them when mental illness struck. At a time when they need their church members and faith the most, they felt shunned. For this reason, NAMI oftentimes will call mental illness the "no casserole illness." Church members bring food by to comfort families when any other diagnosis occurs, but many find they are left alone when a mental health diagnosis is made.

Rev. Avera and his wife Stacy are engaging people with an inspiring message. Their marriage and ministry are a partnership that we all can learn from. Please plan on joining us on November 21st at 6:00 p.m. at CONTACT, 1520, 22nd Street in Columbus. Light refreshments will be served.

It was with regret that Sue Knight resigned from the NAMI Columbus Board. Election of new Board Members will take place at our November monthly education meeting. If you are a NAMI Columbus member and you are interested in joining our Board, contact NAMI Columbus by phone or e-mail and request an application for the Board. There are, at present, two vacancies on the Board. (Elected Board Members will then elect a slate of Executive Officers.)

## Upcoming Events

November 2011	December 2011
07 Mental Health Court Graduation 08 Disability Fair, CSU Campus 08-10 Georgia CIT Awards Banquet 13-19 Mental Health Wellness Week 14-18 Muscogee County Sheriff's Office CIT 19 National Survivors of Suicide Day 21 Monthly Ed Program & Board Election 29 Mayor's Motorcade—WCGRH Decorate Our Cars & in line by 12:45pm	<b>No Monthly Education Program</b> 01 Christmas Tree Lighting, WCGRH, 6:30 pm 04 NAMI Cols Winter Celebration Party 05-09 Corporate CIT Class 10 Dickens Caroling, 1 pm WCGRH Chapel 24 Delivering Gifts to consumers, WCGRH, 9:30 am
January 2012	February 2012
06-08 Family-to-Family Teacher Training in Atlanta 16 Monthly Education Program 16-20 Columbus Police Department CIT 19 Family-to-Family Class Begins (12 weeks) 26 Homeless Employment Expo (ODCH) 26 Peer-to-Peer Class Begins (10 weeks) TBD NAMI Basics Begins (6 Weeks)	06 Mental Health Court Graduation 20 Monthly Education Program

### 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 Locations:

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



## REGISTRATION (Waiting List)

### for Family-to-Family, Peer-to-Peer and Basics classes

**F**amily-to-Family is a free 12-week course for caregivers of individuals with severe mental illnesses that discusses the clinical treatment of these illnesses and teaches the knowledge and skills that caregivers need to cope more effectively. The Family-to-Family class will begin **January 19, 2012**.

**P**eer-to-Peer Education Course is a free ten week – 2-1/2 hours per week – experiential education course on the topic of recovery for any person with serious mental illness who is interested in establishing and maintaining wellness. The course uses a combination of lecture, interactive exercises and structured group processes. The diversity of experience among course participants affords for a lively dynamic that moves the course along. The Peer-to-Peer class will begin **January 26, 2012**.

**N**AMI Basics is a free six-week course for family caregivers of children and adolescents who have either been diagnosed with a serious mental illness / serious disturbance or who are experiencing symptoms but have not yet been diagnosed. This free course is taught by trained NAMI members. The NAMI Basics class will begin in **January, 2012**.

To register, or to obtain more information, please call the NAMI Columbus office at (706) 320-3755 or e-mail us at [info@namicols.org](mailto:info@namicols.org). To ensure we will have enough textbooks, the class location for each class will be given at time of registration. Room is limited so call or e-mail quickly.



# Finding Peace In The Midst of Chaos

Long work days, coming home to chores, homework, mealtime, bath time, etc.; worries of what new role our new management would have us play wreaked havoc in the back of my mind as I tried to concentrate on the present moment. What would we have for dinner? Had homework been finished? And, when was the last time my eight year old brushed her teeth? This was my chaos. As a single mom, I relied heavily on the support of my parents to help me care for my eight and ten year old daughters. I worked full time and couldn't be all places at once. My support network fell to pieces when I learned my dad was diagnosed with latter stage Non-

Hodgkin's Lymphoma. My struggle with Major Depression took hold and caused total exhaustion and isolation. When it all became too much, I withdrew. I isolated, and as a result of this, I am no longer employed.

Peace in the midst of chaos... I knew the depression was more than I could bear alone and I knew a lack of medication would make things worse. I immediately went to my number one informant, the internet. I found the local NAMI Columbus chapter, but wasn't sure if it applied to me since I live in Phenix City, Alabama. It most certainly does! Who would have ever dreamt that sitting in a room with strangers in a group called

NAMI Connection, sharing our innermost struggles and thoughts would lead me to peace? I looked around me. Shouldn't I have felt chaos? After all, society tells me I'm with a bunch of crazy people. What could be more chaotic? Instead, I found unconditional acceptance. I found understanding. I found people who have been or are still struggling right where I am. No one wishes for problems, but with NAMI Columbus, I found something more substantial than an immediate answer to my problems. I found peace. I am not alone. You are not alone, my friend.

Sincerely,  
LeAnn Shirah Siegert

## Some Updates:

The **yard sale** yielded \$1,004 after expenses. All the volunteers agreed this was a good total considering we didn't have the number of donations that we normally receive. So as a note, please begin putting items aside that you no longer need for our next yard sale (the end of April, 2012). Speaking of volunteers we want to thank Charles Clark, Gisela Poesing, Leilani Welch, Ursula and Eileen King, Euclid Johnson, Audwin Williams, Joshua Brown, and especially our Yard Sale Leaders, Kristine Walls and Linda Peters. The team especially wanted to mention that Linda Peters "wins the award" for her hard work and committed attitude all three days. A successful yard sale only comes about because NAMI Columbus members and friends are so willing to donate their time and energy and gently used items to make it happen. THANK YOU volunteers.

Our **Halloween party** was fun for humans and animals. Pictures of the party revealed a fun time for all. We will want to do events like this again in 2012 so that we can sometimes gather as an affiliate for NON-mental health reasons. Having fun can sometimes be as helpful as medicine and support. You can go to our website and see some more fun photos from the party.



This just in from NAMI Georgia: NAMI Columbus raised \$3,397.50 for the **NAMI Walks** this year. Our affiliate will be able to keep 40 percent of that amount (or \$1,359.00). For your information, NAMI Georgia keeps 50 percent of the amounts raised because they are the ones that pay for all our trainings and materials used in our educational classes. The remaining 10 percent goes to NAMI National. Not a bad deal we say.

It's time to decorate our cars again for the **Mayor's Motorcade at WCGRH** (West Central Georgia Regional Hospital). Each year NAMI Columbus joins with employees of WCGRH for various events. One of the fun things we do is decorate our cars with holiday decorations and our NAMI Columbus banner and join in the parade around the hospital campus. Bring your car (decorated or not) and join us. The full WCGRH Holiday Calendar of Events is listed on page 2 alongside our other NAMI Columbus events. So whether you want to go to the parade, go caroling or help hand out gifts to patients, a number of events are available for you to choose from.



# Columbus

P.O. Box 8581  
Columbus, GA 31908  
(706) 320-3755  
**Our Area's Voice on Mental Illness**



## Support Our Support (Groups)

Many people find their way to our classes by first attending a support group. If you are a NAMI Columbus "long timer" (we don't want to call you old), please attend either of the two weekly NAMI Connection support groups or the weekly Family support group. Newcomers can use your wisdom and hard-earned experience. Sharing a message of recovery gives many the hope they are searching for. Many people tell us that the NAMI motto "You

**Are Not Alone**" is the initial feeling they realize at their first meeting. There will be a training in the spring for facilitators. If you are willing to train for either support group, let us know!



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

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 \$35 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!!!)

*✂ Please Cut and Mail ✂*

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, 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](http://www.nami.org/join) (\$35.00 by credit card).