

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.

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NAMI Columbus

P.O. Box 8581
Columbus, GA 31908
(706) 320-3755
Email: info@NAMICols.org
www.nami.org/sites/NAMIColumbusGA

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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

AmericanWork, Inc.
Columbus ACT Team
706-641-9663

Living at The Ralston

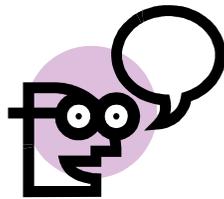
Monday, January 21, 2013

Education Meeting 6:00 PM

CONTACT Training Building – 1520 22nd Street

Have you ever been curious about "Life at The Ralston"? Who qualifies to live there? What kind of services are delivered to the residents? Claudette Boelter and Mandy Entwistle will talk about The Ralston and what population they serve in Columbus. Eligibility requirements, leasing, documents needed to process the application, approximately how long it can take, and general information about the property will be presented at our monthly educational meeting.

As always, light refreshments will be served. If you can bring a dish for our tables, please do so.



Frankly Speaking

Hello all,

I hope the new year has brought good fortune to you all. NAMI Columbus has started the year with a flurry of activity. We have met with officials at Ft Benning in order to hopefully bring our services to the soldiers in need. Much thanks goes to Randy McGrew who is one of our members. Randy arranged the meeting with all of the proper personnel to ensure that we were given the best chance for success. We are also meeting with personnel from The Ralston later on in the month with the hopes to begin a NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group there.

As you may know, this year marks NAMI Columbus's 30th anniversary. Surprised? For 30 years we have provided unparalleled, continuous, life saving services to many people and always without regard to pay or compensation. We are going to have a large celebration tentatively on May 11th. Anyone who would like to be on the committee to plan the event, please email me at fdunford@namicols.org. We definitely need your help.

Speaking of help, Sue Marlowe is still looking for someone to take over the support group coordinator job. It's not a big job, but it's one too many for someone who has a large number of CIT classes to prepare for.

I want to personally thank everyone for making 2012 a very good year for NAMI Columbus, and for me. It was a challenging but very rewarding time. I have made some very good friends and have met so many really great members.

Happy New Year!

Frank Dunford

Frank Dunford, President
NAMI Columbus

Upcoming Events

January 2013	February 2013
21 Monthly Education Program— The Ralston	04 Mental Health Court Graduation (<i>You are cordially invited to attend at 5 pm at the Columbus Government Center, Plaza Level</i>)
21-25 Columbus Police Department CIT	07 Peer-to-Peer Class Begins (10 wks)
24 Homeless Employment Expo (ODCH)	08 Mental Health Day at the Capitol
26-27 In Our Own Voice Training in Atlanta	18 Monthly Education Program— All About NAMI
31 Family-to-Family Class Begins (12 wks)	19 Mental Health Day at the Capitol (Atlanta)

REGISTRATION for the 2013 NAMI Education Classes

Family-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 next Family-to-Family class will begin **Thursday evening, January 31st**. Call our NAMI Columbus Office and leave a message that you'd like to register for this class.

Lisa Dixon, M.D. at the University of Maryland School of Medicine conducted an evaluation of the Family-to-Family course. Her results showed that "course participants gained a greater understanding of mental illness, coped much better, worried less, and felt newly empowered to advocate for better treatment and services for their relative. Many family members described the impact of taking this course as life changing".

Peer-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 a 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 next Peer-to-Peer class will begin **Thursday evening, February 7th**. Call our NAMI Columbus Office and leave a message that you'd like to register for this class.

NAMI 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 start date for the first class for 2013 has not yet been set, but you CAN pre-register and place yourself on our waiting list for our next class.

To register, or to obtain more information, please call the NAMI Columbus office at (706) 320-3755 or e-mail us at info@namicolos.org. To ensure we will have enough textbooks, the class location for each class will be given at time of registration. Seats are always limited to encourage class bonding, so reserve your seat now.



2 Way\$ to Help NAMI Columbu\$ (Without Breaking a \$weat)!

1 Use "**Goodsearch**" as your search engine and online shopping portal instead of Google. Google doesn't pay us anything when we use them. Goodsearch does. We want everyone who supports NAMI Columbus to sign up at www.goodsearch.com and enter that they want to help NAMI, then find NAMI Columbus in the drop down list. Please make it one of your home pages. We will receive a penny for every search that everyone does. If you click on "Goodshop" at the top of the Goodsearch page, and then go to whatever online store you're heading for, we will receive a percentage of the total that you've ordered. It doesn't add to your price in any way. We've received a yearly check from Goodsearch for quite a few years. We need to make 2013 our best ever year. So – **HAVE YOU GOODSEARCHED FOR US TODAY?**

2 **NewsLeader 9** has announced they need your help honoring nonprofit organizations right here in our area. WTVM's "Give9", in partnership with sponsor Headquarter Nissan, wants to recognize the outstanding local not-for-profit organizations with over \$20,000 in cash awards for 2013.

NAMI Columbus always offers our services for free, but this means we need \$\$\$! Nominate NAMI Columbus today and every day so we can win \$5,000. Go to: <http://www.wtvm.com/category/253848/give-9> and fill out the form on this page to nominate us. (You will be asked for your e-mail address, name, address, and phone number and what nonprofit you want to nominate) Nominations for the first quarter ends 3/31/13.

Wouldn't this be a wonderful way to also get some free publicity for NAMI Columbus?

My Experience at the Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU)

I recently had to go for inpatient treatment at the Crisis Stabilization Unit of The Bradley Center after slipping into depression so deep that I felt trapped and overwhelmed with sadness and hopelessness. A combination of problems all of a sudden converged at once: dealing with traumatic experiences from my past in therapy, issues that I thought I had resolved; financial struggles; intense loneliness, and feelings of shame and failure as a man because I grew up believing the myth that "real men do not struggle with mental illness": mental illness was what lazy or weak minded people used to justify bad behavior.

For days, all I could do was cry and sleep, wake up and cry and sleep again. No interest in anything but sleeping and hoping I would never wake up ever again. By Friday of that week I was not only suicidal, I had a concrete plan I finalized after going online to find some information. Before I carried it out however, I started crying again, this time crying for almost 40 minutes. By the time I was through balling, I was mentally exhausted and had no energy to carry it out. It was then I texted a friend and Frank Dunford, our affiliate President, and told them what was going on and that I needed help.

Frank came and got me, having given me just enough time to stop crying, put on my "mask" (my pleasant demeanor that hides all the symptoms of my internal pain) and pack some clothes in case I was admitted into the hospital.

I was admitted (into the Crisis Stabilization Unit of The Bradley Center), and I was very nervous. I didn't know what to expect or if I would get anything positive from the experience. The staff members I interacted with during my stay were very compassionate and never made me feel ashamed or guilty for being in a mental hospital. The groups were very productive and my sessions with Doctors Hudson and Dixit were very helpful as they adjusted my medicine. They both were very compassionate and took time to get my history and understand what brought me there. One of the patient's favorite groups is the NAMI group facilitated by Sherri and Bonnie. I

got lots of feedback from patients about that group and used those opportunities to make a plug for NAMI.

The biggest lesson I learned while I was there is that suffering from a mental disorder and/or addiction is nothing to be ashamed of. These are biologically based disorders that require treatment. I also learned that I need to stop wearing the "mask" all the time, especially with my providers when I am struggling. Another lesson was that mental illness affects people from all walks of life and doesn't discriminate based on age, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion or socioeconomic status. This is why what NAMI is doing to tear down and eliminate stigma is so important.

I wish I could remember all the names of the staff I interacted with during my stay there. I want to say a big thank you to them for what they do in helping people recover from mental disorders and/or addiction. I especially want to thank the admissions director who interviewed me for the intake process; my intake nurse Amanda; Rhonda, also a nurse, nighttime tech David; Paulette who worked at nights also; daytime tech DeWayne who gave me some very encouraging compliments that uplifted my spirits; the nurse who ordered my flu shot; doctors Hudson and Dixit who were great; group leaders Misty and Sue Ellen; my fabulous case worker Kendra; Sherri, the NAMI group facilitator; those who checked on me while I was in the hospital; Sue Marlowe, NAMI Columbus VP and one of our most active volunteers. She was the one who told me about the CSU because I was so terrified I wouldn't be able to get help since I have no insurance. Last but not least, I have to thank Frank Dunford for taking me there and waiting till I was actually admitted.

The Crisis Stabilization Unit is great inpatient resource in the community for people with mental disorders during a time of crisis. Even if you don't have insurance you will be accepted if a bed is available. Please take advantage of it if you or a loved one is struggling and in a mental health crisis.

Wishing you all an abundance of blessings.

~~Stephen Akinduro

Have you visited NAMI.ORG recently?

The NAMI National website has always been a very useful website where it explained mental illness diagnoses and issues in a very easy to understand manner. Nowadays it is a beautiful and meaningful website as well.



The home page changes frequently and is very attractive. More and more it's highlighting stories that are written by NAMI members across the country and frequently describes the mental illnesses that famous people have had and the impact they have had on the world. So very often people feel their lives are over when they receive a diagnosis of having a mental illness.

NAMI National is emphasizing with their website that **WE ARE NOT ALONE**. Go to www.nami.org and see what's new. As a side note, NAMI Columbus' newest board member, Joanne Snider, is in the process of building a website that WE can be proud of as well. Frank Dunford and Joanne are working together to build an outstanding website for us. Stay tuned!!!





Columbus

P.O. Box 8581
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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 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. If you are willing to train to be a support group facilitator, let us know!

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 \$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!!!)

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 one of the largest affiliates 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 (\$35.00 by credit card).