NAMIWALKS 2009 OFF TO A ROARING START!!!

Thanks to our Presenting Sponsors--the Tohono O’odham Nation and CPSA, the 2009 Walk started off this fundraising season with a bang. NAMI Southern Arizona is making an impact in our community by educating, supporting and advocating for people with mental illness and their families. Contributions to our biggest yearly event have helped us to serve and educate thousands more people in the last year!

This year’s impressive line-up of Honorary Chairs includes:
Dr. Francisco Moreno, U of A Associate Professor; State Senator Linda Lopez; County Attorney Barbara LaWall; Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords; State Representative Pat Fleming; and Sierra Vista Councilman Tom Reardon

Please visit the website at www.nami.org/walks and register today to participate!

Date: Saturday, March 28, 2009
Location: Sam Lena Park
2805 E. Ajo Way
Tucson, Arizona
Registration begins at 7:30 AM
Walk begins at 9:00 AM
Come join us for fun, food, and entertainment all for a good cause!

Fundraising Goal:
Current Total: $123,640.00
Progress: 71%
Days left until event: 14

NAMI of Southern Arizona Thanks Our Sponsors!

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Sponsors Continued
NAMIWalks Volunteer Information Meeting

The NAMIWalks Volunteer Information Meeting was held on November 5th at the Tucson Botanical Gardens. It was a fun event featuring light snacks and refreshments. The newest video was presented, spotlighting the progress of the first two successful NAMIWalks in Tucson and encouraging participation in the upcoming 3rd annual NAMIWalks Southern Arizona on March 28, 2009.

HELP NEEDED for the Upcoming WALK

We would like to have Volunteers in the following areas:

- Walk Day Set-up and Tear Down
- Parking Lot Attendants
- We need gift certificates from local businesses to give to ‘Thank’ people

NAMIWalks Kick-Offs in English and Spanish

Our NAMIWalks Kick-Off event held at The Manning House on January 29th was a great success! We had a lot of motivated walk team captains, volunteers and representatives from the various organizations ready to help fundraise for the walk. Dr. Francisco Moreno, Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Arizona, gave a presentation on Validating the Brain Basis of the Brain. Dr. Moreno also provided this presentation in Spanish at our 1st annual NAMIWalks Kick-Off event in Spanish held at the El Pueblo Neighborhood Center on February 18th. Despite being the first year to have a kick-off meeting in Spanish - it certainly was an accomplishment within our Hispanic community.

More Sponsors to Thank!!

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Grading the States Report

NEW REPORT CARD: NATION’S MENTAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Washington, D.C. - The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) has released a new report, Grading the States, assessing the nation's public mental health care system for adults and finding that the national average grade is a D.

Fourteen states improved their grades since NAMI's last report card three years ago. Twelve states fell backwards. Oklahoma showed the greatest improvement in the nation, rising from a D to a B. South Carolina fell the farthest, from a B to a D. However, the report comes at a time when state budget cuts are threatening mental health care overall.

"Mental health care in America is in crisis," said NAMI executive director Michael J. Fitzpatrick. "Even states that have worked hard to build life-saving, recovery-oriented systems of care stand to see their progress wiped out."

"Ironically, state budget cuts occur during a time of economic crisis when mental health services are needed even more urgently than before. It is a vicious cycle that can lead to ruin. States need to move forward, not retreat."

This is the second report NAMI has published to measure progress in transforming what a presidential commission on mental health called "a system in shambles."

NAMI's grades for 2009 include six Bs, 18 Cs, 21 Ds and six Fs, based on 65 specific criteria such as access to medicine, housing, family education, and support for National Guard members.

"Too many people living with mental illness end up hospitalized, on the street, in jail or dead," Fitzpatrick said. "We need governors and legislators willing to make investments in change."

In 2006, the national average was D. Three years later, it has not budged.

Arizona went from a ‘D’ to a ‘C’

To download the full copy of the report for free, please visit: www.nami.org/grades09.
Crisis Intervention Training
Training Law Enforcement

After a brief hiatus, Crisis Intervention Training of local law enforcement is back in full swing starting this summer! This training has proven to reduce violence, incarceration and unexpected tragedies in crisis situations involving police officers. NAMI National Board Member and local resident, Joe Mucenski, spearheaded the training in Tucson in 2000 and is now in several communities statewide.

If you or your loved one is in a mental health crisis and need to call 911:
- State that you or your loved one is in a mental health crisis.
- Request a CIT trained officer.

2nd Annual Daniel Moreno Recovery Award

The 2008 Daniel Moreno Recovery Award was held October 10 at Skyline Country Club. It was a beautiful evening celebrating recovery as well as NAMI Southern Arizona’s 25th year anniversary! Over 100 people attended and enjoyed live music played by member/volunteer Ron Lehner while bidding on several awesome auction items. A scrumptious dinner was served and the presentation began by honoring some of the Founding Members: Si and Eleanor Schorr, Marty Scheinkman, Nancy Masland, Curt and Elly Anderson.

This year’s recovery award went to Scott Whitley, with special acknowledgements to Eric Stark, Sam Nagy, Jackie Schimmel and Hope Gonzales. It was difficult to honor just one person when all had achieved amazing recoveries, so going forward the Recovery Award will honor people in the community instead of a single person. The intention of the award is to educate the public about recovery and to assist in lifting stigma by exposing the multiple experiences of each person’s journey.

Book review - But I Just Want A Life by Barbara Bursuk, Librarian

Lily Berman, the central character in this novel, is the perfect teenager in every way, dazzling people with her sharp mind and charisma. However, she is fighting a diagnosis of severe bipolar disorder and winds up checking into a long-term hospital. There, Lily must decide on a direction to take -- will she cooperate with the brilliant psychiatrist who has been assigned to her case or will she rebel forever against an illness that will never go away?

Author Elizabeth Drucker has written an interesting and compelling story about Lily Berman and her struggle with severe bipolar disorder. Ms. Drucker captures Lily's teenage voice very well and makes her a likeable character for whom the reader wants to root. The author's attention to the details of this illness (symptoms, behavior, medication) is excellent, and her descriptions of life in the hospital are vivid and accurate.

The end of the story was upbeat and hopeful, with what I would consider an interesting twist in Lily's treatment.

Elizabeth Drucker is a Sociology major at the University of Arizona and a strong advocate of mental health issues. She hopes that through educating people about life with a serious mental illness, improvements can be made for individuals and in policy.

Her novel, But I Just Want A Life, is available at amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com. It can also be ordered at the local Borders bookstores and at the University of Arizona bookstore in Tucson.

Thanks to the David C. and Lura M. Lovell Foundation

$15,000 Education Grant

We’re appreciate our Benefactors!
New Year, New Board Members!

2008 saw many changes in NAMI Southern Arizona’s Board of Directors. Some long-standing, hard-working members “retired” and some new energetic people joined.

Lollie Butler, who had been on the Board for a few decades, has decided to work more on the sidelines. She’ll still be involved in the program, Heart-to-Heart, which she spearheaded, as well as facilitating support groups and helping out in other ways she can.

Derry Dean, affectionately known as the Energizer Bunny because of her tireless efforts on NAMI Southern Arizona’s behalf, has retired from the Board, but so far there has been no perceptible decrease in her involvement. Derry continues to work hard for the upcoming NAMI Walks as well as anything else she can do.

Susan Hyder, Norma Carlson and Bobbie Schorr also retired in the last year as they have all become very busy with their families. Of course we still consider them part of our family and always look forward to seeing them at our events.

Many of you may already know Scott Whitley as he has been a member and very involved with NAMI for many years. Fortunately, he has agreed to re-join our Board and in addition to the countless hours he volunteers for us, he’ll now be a valuable member (again) of the Board of Directors.

Billie Larsen joined our Board a few months ago. She is the owner of a “Curves” workout studio. Joan Cole, member and volunteer, and Dr. Francisco Moreno, Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the University, are the latest very impressive recruits. We welcome them all!

Please join us in thanking Cindy Coco, previous Board Vice-President and Secretary, for stepping up to be our new incoming President. She has lived in Arizona most of her life with the last 22 years in Tucson. Her eldest son lives in Mesa with his family and her youngest is residing with her. Cindy has enjoyed a successful 25 year career in the mortgage lending industry, even with its up and downs.

Outgoing President, Susan Moreno, recruited Cindy a few years ago and she has been an invaluable addition with a deep commitment to NAMI and the services we provide to our community. As Cindy says, “it is an exciting time now as NAMI Southern Arizona is reaching a pivotal change in growth and its ability to provide even more support, education and advocacy to a greater number in need.”

Are you a NAMI of Southern Arizona Member?

If so, please help us in spreading the word about becoming a member of our organization!

Membership:
$35 Regular
$3 Open Door

Receive the following:
- The Advocate (NAMI National’s publication)
- Announcements/Event Info
- NAMI Southern Arizona’s Newsletter
- Discounts at the NAMI Store, Events and Conferences

Don’t forget to renew your annual membership!

Volunteer Spotlight

Our Singing Receptionist

FACTS ABOUT BOBBY:

Favorite Hobbies:
- Watching movies & traveling

Favorite Food:
- Spaghetti

Favorite Book:
- To Kill a Mockingbird

Bobby Dover is our receptionist extraordinaire! Bobby usually comes into the office for his Friday shift, but whenever we need a fill-in or even a fix-up, we call our guy. What one can usually expect from Bobby is occasional singing to different tunes, jokes, and his typical saying - Lord! His energy and willingness to always help has really made him shine. Bobby—Thank you for all of your hard work and for being YOU!
Jean Balcezak, NAMI of Southern Arizona Family Advocate
Selected to receive the 2009
Diane Lynne Andersons Memorial Award

Prior to her death in 1990, Diane Anderson was a major force in implementing programs for people with disabilities in Pima County. Diane was among the first counselors outside the government system to work specifically with individuals with disabilities beginning in the 1970’s, when no such programs were available. This year we are celebrating the 30th anniversary of Diane’s groundbreaking work.

The Diane Lynn Anderson Memorial Award was established in the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona to recognize those who, through their work with individuals with disabilities, have shown the kinds of qualities Diane exhibited: including patience, compassion, devotion and caring for individual needs which surpass the usual bounds of a client-counselor relationship. Diane showed great respect for individuals and was able to engender hope even in the most difficult of circumstances.

Jean Balcezak has, over her years with NAMI of Southern Arizona both as a volunteer and as a staff member, shown the same qualities as the namesake of this Award. Jean will receive her Award at an 11:30 luncheon at the Manning House on March 27, 2009. Reservations to attend the luncheon can be made at the NASW website www.naswaz.com.

HELP WANTED!!!

NAMI is having difficulty in locating FREE (or close to free) meeting room space in which to have classes, support groups, trainings, etc. Does your church or synagogue have space available or do you have suggestions about other options? If so, please call the NAMI office @ 622-5582. Thank you.

The Pima County Human Rights Committee is seeking members. To learn more about the Committee please contact Ken Karrels at kkarrels@aol.com or 886-6588.

We need volunteers and bilingual (English/Spanish) volunteers as Receptionists and Resource Specialists (four hours per week). We will train you and you will be helping people who really are in need.

Join our Heart-to-Heart program! Volunteers are needed to be paired with individuals with mental illness. This is our buddy system program!

Congratulations Jean!!
You’re a STAR
In our book!

Newsletter Distribution: NAMI Southern Arizona News has begun electronic delivery of our newsletter. Anyone who would like to receive it electronically should send us their email address. With the next newsletter we will only send the electronic version to members or organizations who have given us their email address unless specifically requested to send the hard copy as well.

Don’t forget the 2009 NAMI National Convention in San Francisco, July 6-9. Register now at www.nami.org
NAMI Southern Arizona Education Corner

We have expanded our education programs and the support staff for our programs!

Our Education Team
Judy Kowalick, Education Coordinator
Haydeé Meza, Bilingual Education Coordinator Assistant and Peer-to-Peer/Persona a Persona Coordinator
Judi Maikoff, Parents and Teachers as Allies Coordinator and NAMI Basics Coordinator
George Leon, In Our Own Voice Coordinator
Scott Whitley, NAMI Connections Coordinator

Classes & Trainings Updates

The second De Familia a Familia Class graduated on October 18, 2008. This has been a very successful class. St. Cyril’s Church was able to provide us with a classroom. A third class began in February. Contact Haydeé Meza for more information.

In Our Own Voice continues presentations under the guidance of the Coordinator George Leon. The year-to-date total given for presentations in 2008 was 66. This education program is a one-to-two hour presentation by two trained consumers. The interactive presentation is an opportunity for groups to hear about the consumers’ journeys with mental illness. Promoting recovery is a key focus of this program. Fifteen new presenters were trained in January.

A Family-to-Family daytime class began January 13, 2009. An evening class will be scheduled in the spring for the Oro Valley area.

Haydeé Meza has taken over responsibility of the Peer-to-Peer Education Program: Learning to Live with Mental Illness. Fourteen students graduated on November 19. The next class beginning in March is already filled. For more information please contact Haydeé Meza.

Persona a Persona began January 20th. This is the third time Peer-to-Peer is in Spanish.

Family Support Groups continue with the Westside group meeting the 3rd Monday each month, and the Eastside group meeting on the 4th Tuesday each month. New facilitators will be trained in early June. If you are interested in becoming a Family Support Group facilitator, please call Judy Kowalick at 622-5582.

Classes & Trainings Updates Continued

NAMI Connection Support Group meets weekly every Thursday evening. NAMI Connection is a recovery support group for people living with mental illness that is expanding in communities throughout the country. These groups provide a place that offers respect, understanding, encouragement and hope. Contact Scott Whitley for more information.

Judi Maikoff, Parents and Teachers as Allies (PTasA) Coordinator, has continued to train new presenters. Ten presentations were given in 2008, with more scheduled for this year. This program reaches out to people in the education field to help them recognize and understand children with serious emotional disturbances.

Haydeé Meza and Marianna Caballero were trained in St. Louis to be trainers of Mentors for Persona-a-Persona and Peer-to-Peer in 2008. Haydeé was also sent to California in December to be trained as a Familia a Familia teacher.

Judi Maikoff is the Coordinator for the NAMI Basics Program and training is planned for this fall. This program replaces the Visions for Tomorrow Program that we offered for several years to parents and caregivers of children and adolescents. If you are interested in learning more about this program, contact Judi at 622-5582.

Eastside Family & Friends
Meets: 4th Tuesday of every month @ 7:00 pm
Where: NAMI of Southern Arizona
6122 E. 22nd St.
(Between Craycroft & Wilmot)

Westside Family & Friends
Meets: 3rd Monday of every month @ 7:00 pm
Where: Ward 1 Office
940 W. Alameda St.
(Grande Ave. & Alameda St.)

NAMI Connection
(Recovery group for those with mental illness)
Meets: Every Thursday @ 6 pm
Where: La Frontera (Temporary Location)
3620 N. Mountain
(NE corner of Prince & Mountain)

For more information or to confirm locations/times, please call our office at 622-5582.
From the Executive Director

Our 26th year is well underway and the 3rd Annual NAMIWalks is right around the corner. We have had our Volunteer Information Meeting and the NAMIWalks Kick-Off (both in English and Spanish), so now all our efforts (and I hope yours, too) are pointed at achieving the target of 3,000 walkers and $175,000 raised. At our second NAMIWalks we had 2,500 walkers and raised over $120,000 from sponsors and Walk Teams. Besides the NAMIWalks efforts, our programs are progressing on all fronts. We have already given fifteen In Our Own Voice presentations (with over 200 participants). We have a Family-to-Family course, a Familia-a-Familia course, and a Persona-a-Persona course underway. A Peer-to-Peer course is scheduled for March and five Parents and Teachers as Allies presentations have already been given in 2009. WOW! All free of charge, of course.

The point of all this walking and teaching and fundraising is helping people affected by mental illness. Helping individuals, their loved ones and the community understand that these are illnesses like any other. They are difficult, but they are treatable.

The stigma surrounding these illnesses can be overcome through education of the people directly affected and by educating the public at large. NAMI of Southern Arizona has been at this task for twenty-five years and little by little we are making inroads. Educating our elected officials is particularly important in these extremely difficult economic times. How can we get them to listen to us? Membership!! I have said this before and I am saying it again. It is certain that if NAMI of Southern Arizona had 5,000 members we would be listened to carefully. So your membership is vital to our organization in getting decision-makers to actually listen.

Let’s celebrate the beginning of our next 25 years by renewing our memberships and getting someone to participate with you in the 2009 NAMIWalks on March 28!!!!!!

- Clarke Romans