



# The Iris

Support, Education, Advocacy

Vol 25, No 9

October 2010 Issue

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### Iris Editor & Webmaster

Ann Akland  
aakland@nami-wake.org

Submissions Welcome  
aakland@nc.rr.com

### NAMI Wake Contact Information:

**www.nami-wake.org**

**919-848-4490**

Wake County Human Services'  
Access Center  
919-250-3133  
NAMI NC Helpline  
1-800-451-9682; M-F 8:30am-5pm

The famous artist, VanGogh, understood his illness as "an illness like any other." He painted, *Irises, while institutionalized. It has become a symbol of hope and courage for people with mental illnesses.*

## From the President's Desk -- Gerry Akland, President

At the recent NAMI North Carolina convention, NAMI Wake County and Western Highlands were recognized as the 2010 affiliates of the year. We were recognized for our accomplishments which I want to share the highlights with all of you.

First we have focused on reaching out to people living in our community of Wake County. We have grown from an affiliate of a little more than 131 members eight years ago to 319 in 2010. This is an increase of about 150%, or roughly 14%/year, a phenomenal growth during some very difficult years of Mental Health Reform. In addition, our mailing list has grown to approximately 2,000, and our website has had 3,500 visits in the past 6 months, approximately 600/month. We also have a virtual phone system that allows us to post a telephone number and direct callers to extensions for various functions such as the coordinator for the support group.

We have a help line through this phone system through which we help people find services or local support. We have web pages on "meet-up.com" and Facebook. And, of course, we publish an eight-page newsletter monthly that is sent to our mailing list and our email list.

Our affiliate is very actively involved in advocacy. Our Advocacy Committee has meetings just prior to advocacy opportunities such as Board of Commissioners meetings. This allows us to update members about the issues in order to effectively present our case. We participate with NAMI NC and the Coalition on Rally Day. We also meet with our representatives to keep them informed about mental health issues and to advocate. We also are very active in writing and getting letters to the editor published as well as getting information out to the media. We have completed three comprehensive studies since 2008 about the state of the mental health system in NC. The latest report is an in-depth analysis of admission delays for psychiatric patients who need admission to state hospitals.

NAMI Wake developed the Celebration of Courage event in 2005, and we have erected it many times since April 2010. The event raises community awareness about mental illness by symbolizing Van Gogh's painting, "Irises." This event provides an opportunity for us to celebrate our "heroes" by tagging flowers in honor or memory of a person with mental illness, an advocate/family member, or a healthcare professional. The event also provides a forum where we can invite members of the community such as elected officials, LME officials, other organizations, consumers, volunteers, and providers to celebrate with us and learn more about NAMI. For example, this past year, we had a luncheon to honor our sponsors at the Angus Barn which was attended by the Secretary of NC DHHS, two Wake Co. Commissioners, a member of the NC House, the LME Director, consumers from Club Horizon and many other special guests.

Continued on page 2



continued from page 1 -- NAMI Wake wins Affiliate of Year Award

NAMI Wake has a history of helping other affiliates across the state. We developed the Celebration of Courage in 2005 and subsequently took it across the state (Pinehurst, Hendersonville, Wilmington, Goldsboro, New Bern, Fayetteville, Lillington, etc.) and helped the local affiliates erect the flowers and raise money from the event. We have traveled to Hendersonville, Onslow County, Carteret County, Harnett County, Rocky Mount, Durham, Henderson, etc. to help affiliates start CIT programs. We have also travelled to Harnett County and Rocky Mount to assist affiliates wanting our assistance in learning about growing an affiliate.

NAMI Wake started a nonprofit Fountain House model clubhouse in Knightdale in 2004. We did all the work to incorporate, obtain IRS tax exemption, obtain startup funding, write policies and procedures, set up accounting procedures and cost models, locate a site, rehabilitate the facility, obtain furnishings, obtain site approval, write position descriptions, hire staff, and obtain state licensure. We also worked with a nonprofit housing agency (CASA) and the Wake Board of Commissioners and the Wake Housing authority to rehabilitate apartments in Knightdale that came with "project based Section 8 vouchers" to enable clubhouse members to live there. The clubhouse has been in operation for 6 years.

NAMI Wake took the lead in creating a partnership with the UNC Center for Excellence in Community Mental Health to develop a course for workers in group homes. This effort resulted in the Group Home Employee Skills Training (GHEST) that is currently being pilot tested, to be followed by implementation across the state (we hope).

To make this all happen, we had over 100 active volunteers participate in our projects this past year. NAMI Wake County has very active support groups for both consumers and family members. Connections groups are held the first three Monday nights of the month and the family support groups are also held the first three Monday nights of each month. We usually have at least two Family to Family classes each year. We have had two BASICS classes in Wake County. We also plan Peer to Peer classes.

NAMI Wake is a respected member of the mental health "team" in Wake County. We are members of the LME Committee of the WCHS Board and other key committees related to MH/DD/SAS including the CFAC. We routinely are asked to provide input on key initiatives. We are also invited to provide speakers for events. We are very proud of the accomplishments of our Affiliate Board, members and many volunteers

## VOLUNTEER NEWS

After 4 ½ years, October will be my last month as NAMI Wake's Volunteer Coordinator. I will be accepting a position with another organization but will still be an active NAMI member and will hopefully have time to volunteer myself.

Thank you so much to all of you great volunteers that I have gotten to know during my time as Volunteer Coordinator. You are a great bunch of people. Your dedication and devotion to NAMI's cause have inspired me, as have your personal stories of courage in the face of mental illness.

The NAMI Board is looking for someone to take on the Volunteer Coordinator position (see back page) and I hope one of you will take this job and help NAMI move to the next level. I will be available to help with the transition and I know that all the volunteers will be there to support and help the new Volunteer Coordinator as you have done for me.

I hope to be able to do one last Newsletter Crew at the end of the month and will be involved in whatever Volunteer Appreciation event we plan for the fall. I won't say goodbye because this is just a transition and I hope to see all of you soon.

Christine Olson 662-0764 OlsonChr@aol.com

## Join Our Events Team - Volunteer & Make a Difference

NAMI Wake has a small group of individuals providing creative ideas and leadership for Fund Raising Activities. If you have lots of positive energy and are a manager, planner, organizer who wants to make a difference for an organization dedicated to helping people with mental illness and their families, we would love to have your help. Call **919-848-4490** or send an email to Wendy Wenzel, [wwenzel@wellnesssupports.com](mailto:wwenzel@wellnesssupports.com); Robin Allen, [rallen3@nc.rr.com](mailto:rallen3@nc.rr.com); Louise Jordan, [louisejordan@nc.rr.com](mailto:louisejordan@nc.rr.com); Kelly Hill, [kbear34@nc.rr.com](mailto:kbear34@nc.rr.com); Kathy Driver, [kathydriver@nc.rr.com](mailto:kathydriver@nc.rr.com); or Ann Akland, [aakland@nc.rr.com](mailto:aakland@nc.rr.com)

## Accessible Raleigh Transportation

### *Tier I Transportation Services Ending*

Recently I started using Accessible Raleigh Transportation or ART. This program allows persons with disabilities to access taxi cabs to get from place to place. The cabs are to be used in the same area as the Capital Area Transit buses use.

When I was enrolled into the program there were two levels or "Tiers." Tier I and Tier II. Tier I allows persons to call a cab as needed for transportation. Say I am at the grocery store and need a cab ride home. I can call and use specific coupons to save dollars for a ride home. Tier II allows me to arrange taxi transportation 24 hours ahead of time. Say, for example, I have a doctor's appointment. I can get a ride there and a ride home with Tier II.

So the combination of Tier I and Tier II allow me the flexibility to get where I need to go.

Unfortunately Tier I is being done away with just when I bought a book of Tier I coupons. There was very little notice given me and I am left with coupons to use before September 30, 2010. That is the date the Tier I coupon tickets will no longer be accepted by the taxi drivers. What if I go to the grocery store and have more than I carry or don't feel well? How will I get home except by buses? Fortunately I have some friends to help me out from time to time who I give them gas money. How did Tier I just go by the way-side?

Submitted by Marianne Clayter

## NC CANSO

### *Seeking your input related to CABHAS*

ISSUE: Our public mental health system will soon be certifying qualified providers of services to offer specific sets of services. In turn, some services will no longer be offered by other providers not receiving this certification. Those that will be certified to provide the largest array of services will be called Critical Access Behavioral Health Providers ("CABHAs"). Some providers are not seeking CABHA status and wish to continue as a provider in the community.

understand about this change since it may affect your services or those of one of your friends. Your opinions and ideas can help the Department of Health and Human Services and some of its Divisions consider ways to help consumers during the transition. Please note that there are only ten questions.

Additionally, your confidentiality is protected in this survey process

NC Consumer, Networking and Support Organization (CANSO) would like to know what you

Just go to this link to participate:  
<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/5BDJY8Q>

### ***When are the following numbers equal?***

Hint: The numbers represent the number of people receiving daily care by various providers for the same amount of money. Answer where the people are receiving the care for each number.

$$1 = 2 = 5 = 10 = 30 = 500$$

If you know the answer, email [gakland@nc.rr.com](mailto:gakland@nc.rr.com). The first person with the most right answers (correct providers) receives a prized NAMI coffee mug.

## *Mental Illness Awareness Week Is Nothing to Celebrate-- In Fact, It Doesn't Even Exist*

*By DJ Jaffe, Huffington Post*

This first full week in October is being celebrated as Mental Illness Awareness Week (MIAW). The holiday doesn't even exist. More about that later.

But in celebration of this mythical event, well meaning mental health advocates are busy hosting events to reduce the "stigma" of mental illness.

Stop. Stop right now. Hold it. Here's another reality check: There is no 'stigma' to having a mental illness. There is 'discrimination', but that's another story.

Serious mental illnesses are real biologically based disorders that are no ones fault. Serious mental illness is not, "a mark of shame or discredit", or "a mark or token of infamy or disgrace". There's no stigma to being mentally ill the same way there is no stigma to being "black", "gay", "short", "tall", "lefty", "righty", inny, or outy. There is discrimination. As J. Rock Johnson, a former board member of a major mental health organization once said, "the most stigmatizing thing we do is talk about stigma"

The efforts to reduce this nonexistent stigma are harmful because they are designed to work by diverting attention away from those who need our help the most: the most seriously mentally ill.

The anti-stigma campaigns are premised on the belief that the key to reducing 'stigma' is to convince the public that "the mentally ill are just like you and me" and "with proper supports can become productive members of society".

Those two facts are true, if you're talking about the high functioning "worried-well"--the 25% of Americans who have a "diagnosable mental disorder". But, hey, who doesn't?

But what about the others? The effect of Mental Illness Awareness Week is to divert attention away from the 3%-5% of Americans who are the most seriously mentally ill--like those suffering from schizophrenia or treatment-resistant bipolar disorder, the very mentally ill people who are not "like you and me" and need our help the most.

MIAW intentionally diverts attention from those who as a result of their untreated illness are homeless psychotic, eating out of garbage cans, sleeping in cardboard homes, and living with festering wounds under layer after layer of filthy clothes. Done that lately?

The anti 'stigma' campaigns intentionally divert our attention from the mentally ill who are in jail or due to lack of treatment are likely to become violent. The advocates attack the media for reporting on violence, and go through mathematical contortions to "prove" "the mentally ill are just like you and me".

Trying to gain sympathy for mental illness, by only displaying the highest functioning individuals, is like trying to end hunger by showing the well-fed.

This effort to divert attention away from the seriously ill and towards the worried-well may be well intentioned, but it is definitely harmful. It leads to the term "mental illness" losing all its meaning. And with no meaning, federal and state agencies can dilute their efforts and spend money on any project they want.

Rather than provide services that would make people with mental illness more welcome in the community, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Agency (SAMHSA) funds 'anti-

## *Mental Illness Awareness Week--Continued from Page 4*

stigma' efforts to change the people in the community. Say what?

Everything is fair game for funding if it can be even tangentially connected to mental anything. Funding goes to the "worried-well" leaving the seriously ill to fend for themselves. The government can even divert their money to funding, say, PSAs that say, "the mentally ill are just like you and me".

Diverting attention from the severely mentally ill also diverts the public from addressing the policy initiatives that can help the seriously ill: like ending health care discrimination and government discrimination against the seriously mentally ill, saving state hospitals, and finding a cure. It leads to reports by the Surgeon General and President's Commission on mental "health" that virtually ignore the mentally "ill".

Dr. E. Fuller Torrey of the Treatment Advocacy Center, and the nations leading mental illness researcher and advocate has a solution. He suggests that any government mental health program that doesn't use at least 50% of the money for the seriously mentally ill should lose it's funding. My own solution is a federal definition of "serious mental illness" that would force federal programs purporting to serve the seriously mentally ill population to serve that population instead of serving people "just like you and me". How bad is it? Mental Illness Awareness Week does not even officially exist anymore. Congress first de-

clared it in 1989 at the strong urging of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, which still celebrates it. (Who needs Congress anyway?) It was re-enacted in 1990, 1991, 1992 and 1993. But since then, no one in Congress has had enough interest in the seriously mentally ill to keep it going.

However even though Mental Illness Awareness Week bit the official dust, stigma groupies will be happy to know Mental Health Awareness Month (May) is coming on strong.

So here's an idea. This week, while everyone else is celebrating the non-existent MIAW by working to divert your attention to the "worried-well", let's think what we can do for those so seriously ill, so imprisoned, impoverished and punished by their psychosis, they are not at all "like you and me"--the 150,000 mentally who are homeless, the 231,000 who are incarcerated due to acting out when untreated, the 5,000 who took their lives this past year, the 70,000 in state psychiatric hospitals, and the 28% who get food from garbage cans.

They don't deserve to be ignored. Least of all by those who say they want to help.

**Editor's Note: The first week in October is observed by NAMI as Mental Illness Awareness Week. While you may or may not agree with DJ Jaffe on this subject, his article gives us something to think about. I encourage you to give some thought to his idea about where our attention might be focused in the last two paragraphs of the article.**

## **Nominations for NAMI Wake Board of Directors**

NAMI Wake County has vacancies for several individuals to serve on our Board of Directors. Since NAMI Wake is an all volunteer organization, Board Members are expected to not only provide oversight for organization functions but also to volunteer and assist in carrying out the mission of the organization along with other volunteers. Some particular areas of focus are expanding education and support groups, reaching out to the faith community, outreach to the African Americans and Latinos, and fund raising. If you are interested in serving, please contact Gerry Akland, [gakland@nc.rr.com](mailto:gakland@nc.rr.com) or 919-266-0766.

## Monthly Education Meeting Highland United Methodist Church

October 25, 7-8:30pm

### “Getting to Know You”

### Pizza Party

**We want to meet you!**

**If you are new to NAMI Wake, we want to get to know you.**

**If you are a long time member, we want to see you again!**

**Rm. 202, 1901 Ridge Rd, Raleigh, NC**

## Les Girls Social

### NEXT MEETING

October 23 at 12:15pm

**NO MEETING IN NOVEMBER**

Holiday Luncheon, Dec.11, 11:45 am,

Note: Luncheon Site changes back to the Golden Corral, 6129 Glenwood Avenue.

*This is a social opportunity for consumers and family members. Everyone is invited. Lunch is Dutch-treat. If you would like to attend Les Girls for our monthly social Dutch treat lunch but need assistance paying, contact Katherine.*

## Support for Families of Children & Adolescents

NAMI Wake members, Heidi Cranford and Chary Sundstrom, parents trained to lead the NAMI BASICS course, convene a support meeting for parents and caregivers of children under the age of 18 who have a behavioral health diagnosis. These meetings are for sharing and supporting one another especially in reference to the education system.

The group meets the second Sunday of the month at Whole Foods, 3540 Wade Avenue, Raleigh from 4-6pm. There is no charge to attend.

Contacts: Heidi Cranford heidi3623@nc.rr.com  
Chary Sundstrom chary@nc.rr.com

## FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS

(Family & friends of people with mental illnesses)  
Rooms 202 & 204

## NAMI Connections Groups

(People with mental illnesses), Room 206

Highland United Methodist Church  
1901 Ridge Rd, Raleigh, NC

*All Support groups meet from 7-8:30 p.m. on the first three Mondays of each month. For more information about support groups, contact:*

- Gordon Gogola (gogolags@hotmail.com), phone 601-3996
- Jeanne Harris, phone 850-0406

## Upcoming Learning Opportunities

NAMI NC 2011 CIT Conference, February 11, 2011

4/8 - 4/10 2011 Connections & Support Group, Basics, Raleigh, Contact Brenda Piper: 919-788-0801, 800-451-9682 or bpiper@naminc.org

## All F2F Teachers!!

We need your input, Family-to-Family teachers and prospective teachers! We are looking for your suggestions for continued growth and success. Plan to meet on October 12(Tuesday), 7-8 pm at Whole Food Lifestyle Center, 3540 Wade Avenue. The meeting room is beyond the eating area near greeting cards and vitamins.

Have you found some library materials you forgot to return? **Notify shadley@nami-wake.org or 787-5999.**

## Volunteers Needed for Newsletter Editorial Board

Do you enjoy reading the “Iris?” Do you have ideas for making it even better. Are you willing to help recruit people to write interesting articles. Can you spend a little time meeting and chatting with other members of the Editorial Board each month? If so, email Ann Akland, aakland@nc.rr.com.

# Time to Join NAMI for 2011!

## 2011 Family Membership Form -- NAMI Wake County

If your name and address are correct on the mailing label (on reverse), check here \_\_\_\_\_

OR you can complete the form below.

Number in household represented by membership \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Membership \$35.00

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Donation \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

NAMI Wake County is a qualified 501(c)(3) organization. The TOTAL you send us is fully tax deductible to the extent of the law.

Please check this box if we may share your E-mail with NAMI NC: \_\_\_\_\_

We are all volunteers. Check here if you would like to volunteer \_\_\_\_\_.

Relationship to Consumer	Ethnicity (Please check one)
<input type="checkbox"/> Adult child of person with MI diagnosis	<input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska Native
<input type="checkbox"/> Person with a MI diagnosis	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian American
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent of adult with MI diagnosis	<input type="checkbox"/> Black or African American
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent of child under 18 with MI diagnosis	<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino
<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Professional	<input type="checkbox"/> Multiracial
<input type="checkbox"/> Sibling of person with MI diagnosis	<input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
<input type="checkbox"/> Spouse of person with MI diagnosis	<input type="checkbox"/> White
<input type="checkbox"/> Friend/Other <input type="checkbox"/> Person with MI diagnosis is a Veteran	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

## Join NAMI Today!

Kicking off our 2011 membership drive the beginning of September, we have almost 30 families who will have joined by the time you read this.

We had over 300 members for 2010, more than any other affiliate in North Carolina. Since your NAMI Wake County board set a goal of 350 members for 2011, we have a long way to go. Please help by joining today and become a member until the end of 2011. You can join by filling out the form on page 7 of the Iris and mailing your check to our return address or by going electronically to our web site, [www.nami-wake.org](http://www.nami-wake.org).

NAMI is a three-level organization. When you join NAMI Wake County you automatically join NAMI national and NAMI North Carolina. When you pay us, we pay your dues to the other organizations. Dues for your whole family are only \$35 for the year for all three levels. We want everyone to be NAMI members, so we offer an "Open Door" membership beginning at \$3 or whatever more you can afford.

NAMI Wake County is a qualified 501(c)(3) organization, so your dues and donation are fully tax deductible to the extent of the law.

NAMI is the country's largest, grass roots organization working to improve the lives of those with mental illness, their families and friends. Please join us to help our programs of support, education and advocacy.

NAMI Wake County  
P.O. Box 12562  
Raleigh, NC 27605-2562

Nonprofit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
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Raleigh, NC  
Permit No. 1533



October 2010

*Paid Part-time Contract Position*

## **Volunteer Coordinator**

If you are well organized, self-motivated, love people, talking on the phone, and responding to email, you may be the right person for this job. To learn more, call Gerry Akland, 919-266-0766 or send resume and letter of interest to [gakland@nc.rr.com](mailto:gakland@nc.rr.com).