The NAMI Westside Gala Is Back This Winter!

The event of the year is back! Glamour, glitz and some good old-fashioned mental health advocacy, moving the country, our city and our affiliate forward. You do not want to miss this year’s Gala. Just like last year’s it will leave you with memories of laughter, joy and heartfelt moments.

When: December 6th, 11:00 AM
Where: Luxe Summit Hotel Brentwood

Set at the luxurious Luxe Summit Hotel, there will be compelling speakers and divine cuisine. There will be a raffle, a silent auction, shopping venues and more exciting surprises to come. You don’t want to miss out on this amazing event!

“No one would ever say that someone with a broken arm or a broken leg is less than a whole person, but people say that or imply that all the time about people with mental illness.” – Elyn Saks
Gear Up For NAMIWalks 2015!

Be a superhero this fall! Led by our awesome Walk Manager Shelley Hoffman, we are aiming to raise over $440,000 for LA County this year! Think it's impossible? We raised $68,457 just for our affiliate alone last year! We can do even better this year by donating more. Each year participants sign up to be Team Captains to wrangle a team of friends, co-workers and family to join together and donate to NAMI and raise awareness about mental health by walking in beautiful Grand Park in Downtown, Los Angeles. It was a lot of fun last year and we cannot wait to see what’s in store this year. So, come and join our team at the Westside LA walk Page at…


NAMIWalks are the largest fundraisers that NAMI puts on and they create more opportunities for families around the city to get the help they desperately need and to also aid the family members or friends who have mental illness learn about their illness, make friends, volunteer and ultimately recover. Please join us at this illustrious event. (If you cannot, please consider making a donation). We promise it will be a memory you will cherish for years to come. We’ll see you there…

Come visit us on our Social Media Sites!

You may not think social media matters, but to an organization like ours it can mean making connections with people not only around our city, but around the country and world. With more people signed up to follow us, we reach out to more people and spread awareness about mental health. Every week, we publish amazing articles on mental health that will give you insight into what is going on in the world and how you can be an even better advocate. On Facebook, please search for us “NAMI Westside Los Angeles”, and on Twitter search “@NAMIwla”. It can't hurt and it helps our affiliate grow.
Lessons Author of ‘Crazy’ Pete Early Has Learned

First, mental illnesses are serious business. You can’t take an aspirin and wake up in the morning healed. It took more than five years for my son to become stable. Parents and others need to realize that there are no quick fixes. Hang in there and realize there will be many highs and lows on your journey.

Second, accept a new normal. Saying you want your child to go back to the way that he was is counter productive. You need to understand that the person who you love has a mental illness. Most people can and do recover. But the journey that you go through with them to recovery changes both of you. There is no going back to the past.

Third, learn to trust your own judgment. No one knows the person you love better than you and while there are amazing, devoted and really smart mental health professionals, they do not have to live with the person who is sick.

I’ve had people tell me that I needed to get tough with Kevin when he was psychotic and not lift a finger to help him until he hit rock bottom. I remember wondering: What does that mean exactly? After all, he was arrested and shot with a Taser? Short of allowing him to go homeless — what’s left? Suicide?

Other times, I know my anxiety about pushing him too hard has led to me being an enabler. It helps that Patti is Kevin’s step-mom. While she certainly loves him, she sometimes can take a step back and see how Kevin and I are engaging in destructive behaviors that are not good for either of us.

I’ve turned to professionals for help numerous times and fortunately have gotten good advice. But I’ve also known some therapists who have no business advising anyone. One actually put Kevin in harm’s way because of a rushed diagnosis.

Fourth, educate yourself. Think of mental illness as a formidable enemy and realize you need to be knowledgeable to prevent it from destroying your loved one’s life. Join a national mental health group, such as the National Alliance on Mental Illness or Mental Health America. Learn about Crisis Intervention Team training and if law enforcement in your community has CIT officers who you can call. Become knowledgeable about medications and alternatives. Obtain the tools that you need to help someone you love.

Two sources that have helped me are Dr. Xavier Amador’s book, I’m Not Sick, I Don’t Need Help, and the National Alliance on Mental Illness’s Family-to-Family course. One advantage of joining a mental health group is that you meet others on the same road. Learn from them.

Fifth, realize that mental illnesses impact your entire family. Siblings often are jealous of all the attention that is being shown someone with a disorder. They accuse their troubled brother or sister of acting out to get attention or of manipulating their parents. Encouraging them to learn about mental illness and including them in helping someone recover can ease those feelings.

Sixth, understand your own limitations. This is perhaps the most difficult lesson to learn. Sometimes, no matter what you do and how hard you try, you will not be successful. If your child had cancer and you couldn’t save them, would you blame yourself? A parent can’t always fix things. This doesn’t mean that you give up, although some do and for good reason.

I remember talking to Bebe Moore Campbell, the late novelist who specialized in writing about mental illnesses, and listening to her explain how she never was critical of anyone who walked away from a family member — including parents. Sometimes, she told me, it was the only way for that person to save themselves. “I’ve seen how these illnesses can destroy relationships,” she said. “No one can judge anyone else until they walk in their shoes.”

Seventh, understand that while you love a person who is ill and because of that you hurt, that person is the one with the mental illness and what he/she is going through can be more horrific than what most of us will ever imagine. Learn to listen, treat them with respect, try to build trust and when possible, become a partner — make sure they are part of the solution and not seen as a problem that needs to be fixed.
Mental Health News

Veteran Treks Across Country to Promote Suicide Prevention
Marine veteran Toby Flaget trekked across the country in a 3,100-mile walk, his shirt displaying the quote “22 is 22 too many”. It is a shame that 22 of our veterans die every day. Toby is a hero as a veteran and as a mental health advocate. All the money he raises while on the walk will go to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

Presidential Candidate Mike Huckabee Offends Mental Health Community
It is very popular in the media to use mental disorders to label someone generically as moody, insane or a neat freak. Mike Huckabee said that Chief Justice John Roberts “apparently needs medication for schizophrenia” for his allegedly inconsistent opinions in two prominent cases. Thankfully our NAMI National Executive Director Mary Gilberti responded with this statement: “As a political tactic, Gov. Huckabee has exploited the stigma that traditionally has surrounded mental illness in order to attack the competence and credibility of someone with whom he disagrees. Such a remark would never be tolerated about needing chemotherapy for cancer or insulin for diabetes. It represents political ‘stigma-slinging at its worst.’” Hopefully our next president will be more sensitive to the needs of the mental health community.

Mental Health Fashion Statement
A new fashion brand is trying to spark a conversation about mental health with their bold new line of t-shirts. They own mental illness rather than running from it. What do you think?

Semicolon Tattoos Raise Awareness About Mental Illness
The latest trend is to get tattoos of semicolons to aid in the mental health cause. How? Why? “A semicolon is a pause in a sentence; not the end of one”, USA TODAY’s Lori Grisham wrote. The tattoo symbolizes the individual's desire to keep moving, to pause, not stop. We may have pauses in our lives, but they are not the end. It is a promise to keep going no matter what gets in your way.

However, do not feel that those who have lost their lives to suicide gave up. They simply were so overwhelmed that they could not stand it anymore. It is no more their fault than it is someone who died after a long bout with cancer.

Every person facing depression and suicide is a hero. Society does not recognize the great strength and courage it takes to face up against such odds. Your mind turns on you and creates a darker vision of the world than it really is. Let’s all work to make that semicolon a reality for all our friends and family. We can do it together!
Hello friends and advocates!

It sure has been a busy summer! In June, NAMI Westside LA partnered with both NAMI Los Angeles County Council and the Department of Mental Health to hold our 9th Annual Pathways to Wellness Conference. Once again, we had diverse and exciting breakout sessions that explored and celebrated many different pathways to wellness. DMH’s District Chief Debbie-Innes Gomberg and Director Lynda Boyd provided important information about what changes are to come within the DMH system of care. I was so proud of our NAMI family of staff and volunteers and of course the invaluable Elyn Saks as our keynote speaker.

In July, the NAMI National Convention was held in San Francisco with the theme, Embracing the Future. There were amazing workshops which spoke to NAMI National’s five goals for the year: Drive Advocacy, Focus on Youth, Build a Movement, Leverage Technology, and Strengthen the Organization. Our very own Director of Education, Rosina Ehrlich, participated on a panel about how to do outreach, launch, and grow NAMI Latino programming and LA County District Attorney Jackie Lacey was presented with the Sam Cochran Criminal Justice Award. But what struck me the most was being a part of something so big. It is easy to forget, while we are here in the trenches providing local programs and navigating resources, that we are, in fact, a part of a huge national presence. We are a mighty voice! And seeing so many people gather in one place fiercely dedicated to the same cause was truly inspiring. I left San Francisco renewed and recommitted to the difference I want our affiliate to make in our community.

In August, the NAMI California Conference was held in Orange County. This year, there were five different tracks at the conference: Advocacy, Criminal Justice, Engaging Diverse Communities, Transitional Aged Youth, Consumer and Family Engagement, and Affiliate Leadership. Again I was struck by how determined the NAMI family is and reminded of one of my favorite Margaret Meade quotes, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.” Happily, Jim Randall from NAMI San Fernando Valley was voted onto NAMI California’s Board of Directors, which will be a tremendous benefit for all of LA County. Thank you to all who voted!

So now, as I return to my ongoing responsibilities leading NAMI Westside LA, I remember what my very wise mentor told me several years ago: “Sylvia, if the vision you have for the world is something you can achieve on your own, then you're not thinking big enough!” Well, I can’t do it alone so I hope to see you at the Walk in October and our Holiday Gala in December…then we can achieve that vision together!

Yours in partnership,

Sylvia Thompson
NAMI Westside LA, President
Art by Artists with Mental Illness

“Feeling in the Park #2” by Nick Gifford from Fountain Gallery NYC

“Color Me Wood” by Lorrie Berman from Fountain Gallery NYC
“Pain – T” by Gail Shamchenko from Fountain Gallery NYC
(above) “Yorkshire Terrier” by Mercedes Kelly from Fountain Gallery NYC

(left) “Sharpei” by Mercedes Kelly

(right) “Tough Guy” by Keith Pavia from Fountain Gallery NYC
MENTAL HEALTH AND CRISIS SERVICES
LOS ANGELES COUNTY Sept 2015

IMMEDIATE CRISIS RESPONSE TO YOUR HOME

EMERGENCY
CRISIS TEAM HOT LINE - open always  911
PET TEAM - (Mon-Fri) Clinicians come to home to evaluate for hospitalization  800-854-7771
SMART TEAM - Police team with mental health worker- backs field officers  310-482-3260
PMRT - DMH clinicians come to evaluate for hospitalization within 60 mins.  213-996-1300
MET - Clinicians & Sheriff for crisis intervention / referrals / follow-up  800-854-7771
West LA/ Santa Monica Police  310-444-0702
TYY - Hearing Impaired  562-651-2549

HELP WITH SUICIDE PREVENTION
Suicide Prevention Hotline  310-391-1253
Suicide Prevention Lifeline  800-273-TALK

HELP WITH CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM
Mental Health Court Program - Ask for DMH Employee  626-403-4370
Locating a person in Jail  213-473-6100
Locating a person in Superior Court (Mental Health)  323-226-2917
LA County Public Defenders Offices  213-974-2811
LA Bar Association - Mental Health Advocacy Services  213-389-2077

HELP WITH PATIENTS' RIGHTS
Public Guardian Office (Conservatorship Information)  213-974-0515
LA County Patients' Rights  213-738-4888

HELP WITH MEDICARE/SSI/MEDICAL/HOUSING
Social Security  800-772-1213
Bet Tzdek - Help with SSI/SSDI  818-769-0136
Finkelberg & Finkelberg - Help suing SSI/SSDI  213-628-8037
Allsup Disability Claims  800-854-1418 #5049
The Saban Free Health Clinic  323-653-1990

HELP WITH LOW-FEE COUNSELING
Step Up On Second - Santa Monica (ages 18-59)  310-394-6889
Daniel's Place - Santa Monica (ages 18-28)  310-392-5855
Alcott Center on Robertson (ages 18 and up)  310-785-2121
Westside Center for Independent Living (WCIL) - LA (ages 18 and up)  888-851-WCIL

HELP WITH CLIENT DAY PROGRAMS
Southern California Counseling Center - indiv/couple/fam/child/group  323-937-1344
Venice Family Clinic - (also psychiatry and case management) - indiv/group  310-664-7500
Gay and Lesbian Center - indiv/group  323-993-7669

HELP WITH SENIORS
Elderlink  800-836-7080
Senior Multipurpose Centers  800-510-2020

L.A. COUNTY DEPT. OF MENTAL HEALTH (patients rights)
West L.A. Mental Health Center - Ed Edelman  310-966-6500

LOCAL HOSPITAL NUMBERS
UCLA Neuropsychiatric  800-825-9989
Brotman Mental Health - Culver City  310-836-7000
Del Amo Psychiatric Services and Hospital  310-530-1151
Santa Monica UCLA Hospital  310-319-4000

NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS
NAMI Westside LA - Family & Peer Education, speakers and support groups  310-889-7200
NAMI LA County - for referrals for the county  213-632-0782
NAMI California State Office - NamiCalifornia.org  916-567-0163
Poem From The Editor

In the storm of life,
We find ourselves in the rain,
Cold, starved, beaten,
And in tremendous pain.

But in that darkness lies,
The impassioned cries,
Of the brave and bold,
Who live through such enterprise.

We who
know the struggle,
Of the cranial kind,
Can be proud of the strength,
That it takes to secure the mind.

Wander in the wilderness,
Bake in the sun,
You are cosmic stardust,
You have already won.

Support Groups

FAMILY-TO-FAMILY
• Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center
  Mondays 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM
  4760 Sepulveda Blvd., Culver City, 90232

• Topanga Public Library
  4th Tuesday of every month: 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM
  122 N. Topanga Blvd., Topanga 90290

FAMILIA-A-FAMILIA
En Español: Lunes 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM
Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center

PEER-TO-PEER
Wednesdays: 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM
Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center

PERSONA-A-PERSONA
postponed till fall En Español: Lunes 6:30 – 8:00 PM
Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center

Parent/Family Support Group
2nd & 4th Tuesday of every month 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM
Daniel’s Place – 1619 Santa Monica Blvd. • SM, 90404

Become a NAMI Member!

If you are reading this newsletter online from our regular e-blast why not sign up to be a member or renew your membership and receive it in print?

You will also receive the monthly post card which details the times, dates and description of the speaker series as well as our regular support groups as seen here on the left.

There are also discounts on tickets to our illustrious Gala coming this fall, which you don’t want to miss.

But above all, when you become a member, you can rest assured that you have done your part in supporting NAMI. You fund our life-changing programs, events and fundraisers that affect lives all over Los Angeles, California and the United States at large. Won’t you join us? Membership is $35 regular and $3 if you cannot afford $35.