



NAMI Contra Costa

Contra Costa's Voice on Mental Illness *April, 2008*

The NAMI Contra Costa Newsletter is available on the website: www.namicontracosta.org

NAMI-CC BOARD ADDRESSES HOSPITAL INCIDENT

As reported in this newsletter in the March issue, a 26 year old male patient attacked a 110 pound female patient and nearly strangled her to death. It happened February 1, 2008, on Ward C, the 23 bed psychiatric ward on the fourth floor of the Contra Costa Regional Medical Center.

The 26 year old male had been sent here *because* he had attempted to strangle a fellow patient at another psychiatric facility.

The father had called the night before and informed the staff that his son was having command hallucinations that were telling him to kill someone or the voices would kill him and send him to hell.

The incident reopens the question: Is Ward C safe? The hospital got a report from the inspecting agency, U. S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services that said the hospital has successfully implemented correction plans. Dr. Jeff Smith, the hospital's Director was quoted as saying that the efforts to correct the procedures and policies cited in the earlier reports were a "great success."

(Continued on page 5,)

NEW LEADERSHIP FOR MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION

Co-chairs Kathy McLaughlin and Karen Soma have stepped down from leadership of the Mental Health Commission. Two long term members, Scott Singley and Judy McCahon will be the new interim co-chairs. The Commission had failed to get a sufficient number of votes to elect

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NAMI WALK 2008

The 2008 Walk is set for Saturday, May 31, 2008. Ride the NAMI vans and enjoy the FREE picnic and prizes afterwards.

General Meeting

APRIL

Thursday, April 17

Speaker

Kim Engelmann

Doctor of Ministry
Pastor of Congregational Care
Presbyterian Church, Menlo Park

Topic

Health and Hope
For the Mentally Ill and Their
Families Through Faith Based
Community Support.

Co-sponsored by:
Interfaith Council
of Contra Costa County and
NAMI-Contra Costa
(More on page 4)

John Muir Medical Center
Concord Campus
(Note: Formerly Mt. Diablo
Medical Center)

www.namicontracosta.org
E mail : xnamicc@aol.com

FREE CLASSES

Family to Family classes begin
again May 7 in Pleasant Hill.
Contact: Marie Overby

xnamicc@aol.com
925- 284 5240

NAMI-CC Care and Support Groups

Central Contra Costa County

1st Tuesday of each month, 7:30-9:00 pm Hillcrest Congregational Church, 404 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. Contact Peggy Luna, Dave Kahler 925- 676-5771 or e mail: xnamicc@aol.com

3rd Monday of each month, 7:15-9:15 pm, John Muir Hospital, 1601 Ygnacio Valley Road, Walnut Creek Campus, downstairs in the Stern Conference Room. The group is facilitated by Dr. Mary Olwin and Gloria Hill. The Consumer Group will not be meeting.

Call: Gloria Hill 925- 957-5146.

NAMI Tri-Valley

2nd Monday of each Month: 7:15—9:00 pm Livermore Public Library, 1188 S. Livermore Ave., Livermore.

Contact support facilitator Marsha McInnis, marsha@nami-trivalley.org or 925- 980 5331

4th Monday of each month, 7:00—8:30 pm St. Claire's Episcopal Church, 3350 Hopyard Road, Pleasanton

Contact Russell or Donna White. russdonnawhite@comcast.net 925- 455 6901

NAPA STATE HOSPITAL FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP (NSHFSG)

Meets the 2nd Saturday of each month

Where: Hospital's Volunteer Conference Room

For Information: Bill Schrader 707-433 9250

BIPOLAR CHILL (CLIENT RUN)

Manic Depression Support Group

Wednesday 7:00—8:30 pm

710 Broadway #3G Walnut Creek

Contact Lisa or Scott 925-743 1160

TRI-VALLEY BIPOLAR (Consumer Run)

Bipolar and Depression Support Group

Wednesdays, 7:15 pm to 8:45 pm

St. Claire's Episcopal Church, Pleasanton

Contact: Bob Hogan: 925-462 5481

NEW HOPE BIPOLAR SUPPORT GROUP

For parents of children and adolescents diagnosed with a mood disorder.

Lafayette:

2nd Monday of each month

7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church Room #4

Contact: Annette 510-733 0577 or

Joani 925-962 9952

www.newhopesupportgroup.com

SELF-INJURY SUPPORT GROUP (Consumer Run)

For self-injury sufferers to talk about ways to change these behaviors and resolve feelings brought on by trauma.

Call: Veronica 925-945 7871

Information About Meds

Get reliable information from Pharmacist Steven Protzel, a NAMI-CC friend and supporter of the mental health community. Send your questions to:

steven.protzel@safeway.com.

Remember always to check with your doctor about any medication changes.

Richmond Support Group

Richmond Health Center 100 38th St. Room 2400

2:00 pm to 3:30 pm

Matthew Luu, LCSW 510- 374 7500

FAMILY ADVOCATE HOURS

Gloria Hill, Contra Costa County

Mental Health Advocate

Monday - Friday 9:30 am - 6:00 pm

925-957 5146

NAMI-Contra Costa
National Alliance on Mental Illness

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Website: namicontracosta.com
Phone: 925- 465 3864

**PRESIDENT'S
COLUMN**

By Al Farmer

During our general meeting on March 20th, NAMI Contra Costa held a celebration to honor Chet and Doris Watson for their many years of dedicated service to NAMI and to mental health.

The meeting room was full of their friends. Herb Putnam praised Chet's many accomplishments as President of NAMI Contra Costa in 2000 and President of NAMI California in 2003.

Chet spearheaded the concept of a NAMI Walk Fundraiser for NAMI Contra Costa and through his enthusiasm and determination, expanded the NAMI walk to cover the entire Bay Area.

Chet also brought the "In Our Own Voice" program to NAMI Contra Costa. (This year consumers plan to make sixty In Our Own Voice presentations describing their own personal life experiences to promote understanding and to reduce stigma).

Laurie Williams, NAMI Bay Area Walk Director and Veronica Vale, In Our Own Voice Coordinator, attested to Chet's continuing determination and guidance in these much needed endeavors.

Brent Adams, Chaplain for John Muir Behavioral Health Center, praised Chet's many contributions as the first chaplain for the behavioral health center.

The NAMI Contra Costa Board of Directors then presented Chet and Doris with a commemorative engraved clock thanking them for their outstanding service. Along with the clock, the board presented a gift certificate for dinner at the Toscano's Restaurant.

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Upcoming Lectures
for NAMI-CC Meetings

Thursday, April 17, 2008, **Health & Hope For the Mentally Ill & Their Families Through Faith-Based Community Support**, Kim Englemann, Doctor of Ministry, Pastor of Caring Ministries, co-sponsored by Interfaith Council & NAMI-CC

Thursday, May 15, 2008, **Early Diagnosis and Preventive Treatment of Psychotic Illness**, Dr. Michael Minzenberg, Psychiatrist and Neuroscientist, UC Davis. Early Diagnosis and Preventive Treatment Clinic; specialty areas of schizophrenia and borderline personality disorder

Thursday, June 19, 2008, **Disability Benefits**, Cassandra Kolto, Patient Financial Supervisor, Benefits Specialist, Contra Costa County Mental Health Administration, practical, how-to information.

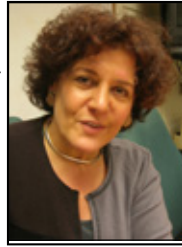
Thursday, August 21, 2008, **Contra Costa County Behavioral Health Court: Successes & Updates**, Martha Wilson, Ph.D., Forensics Community Liaison; Lt. Mitch LeMay, Contra Costa County Sheriff's Dept.

Information: (925) 933-4012
Send questions for presenters to:
kayderrico@comcast.net

NAMI Contra Costa
E mail: xnamicc@aol.com
www.namicontracosta.org

MEDICAL DIRECTOR SELECTED

As of March 3, 2008, Johanna Ferman, M.D. has taken the senior management role of Medical Director for Adult Mental Health Services. She will have overall responsibility for clinical/medical policy within Adult Services. She will be working closely Victor Montoya,



Johanna Ferman

Adult Services Program Chief, and Suzanne Tavano, Deputy Director of Mental Health, to assure that we achieve high-quality care, including the earliest possible intervention, as integral to recovery .

She will have direct supervisory authority for all adult services physicians and will report directly to Donna Wigand, Director for the Mental Health Division.

Dr. Ferman comes to the Division with a wealth of experience as a clinical psychiatrist, as a psychiatric administrator and policy expert, and as an innovator in program development for people with serious mental illness and addiction.

As the Deputy Commissioner for Clinical Programs for the New York State Office of Mental Health, she built the Division of Clinical Programs to assist in the clinical transformation of the public sector, with responsibility for the medical directors of the 33 state hospitals, mental health as well as health policy, new program development and training for the state's workforce.

General Meeting APRIL SPEAKER

Pastor Kim Engelmann will be sharing her experiences to help our faith communities establish programs to help the mentally ill and their families. She brings understanding and practical experience. Additionally, her church has eight years of a weekly program that supports the mentally ill and their families. This May, the church is sponsoring its third conference on mental illness.

Subsequently, as CEO and Medical Director of the Center for Mental Health in Washington, D.C., she designed and built a system of comprehensive, integrated mental health, addiction and rehabilitative services to address the needs of the most seriously mentally ill and dually diagnosed adults and children from the City's neediest communities.

She has had a long-standing commitment to consumers, families and high-quality care as integral to recovery.

A graduate of Wayne State Medical School, she completed her residency training at the Westchester Division of Cornell Medical Center-New York Hospital.

While working in outpatient mental health and establishing a private practice in New York City, she went on to do fellowship work in Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry at Montefiore Hospital-Einstein Medical School, where she also taught medical students. She subsequently left to provide care to adult as well as adolescent inmates at Rikers Island Jail System – an early set of experiences that seeded her later

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

By Lisa Hillier

The California Senate Health Committee meets April 9th for a hearing on SB 1606. Laura's Law, AB 1421, has been impotent due to the nature of how it was written. SB 1606 will enable County Mental Health to implement Laura's Law.

Senator Leland Yee, introduced this bill. SB 1606 cuts through the red tape and simplifies the process of involuntary assisted outpatient treatment for the most severely mentally ill persons at high risk. This bill could prevent repeated incarcerations, hospitalizations, and acts of violence.

For more information:

www.lauraslaw.net

click on "a guide to laura's law"

Call or write a letter showing your support today! Personal information is more effective.

Senator Tom Torlakson
State Capitol
Room 5050
Sacramento, CA 94248-0001
(916) 651-4007
Fax: (916) 445-2527

Senator Leland Yee
State Capital Building, Room 4048
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: (916) 651-4008
Fax (916) 327-2186



Clubhouse Report

NAMI-CC BOARD ADDRESSES HOSPITAL INCIDENT

(Continued from page 1)

NOTE: This report by Mae Bragan can be read in its entirety on the website:
www.namicontracosta.org

The NAMI Contra Costa Clubhouse officially opened February 18, 2008. Four years ago our founding father, Herb Putnam began the effort. He established a committee of Caroline Jackson, myself, Julia Bonacich, Molly Hamaker, Betty McCabe and many others. They never gave up.

Now the Clubhouse has taken possession of 2400 square feet at 3024 Willow Pass Road in Concord.

Excitement was in the air with the establishment of a social rehabilitation model for the mentally ill that is work oriented.

In May of 2006, several of the working group went to Utah for the New Clubhouse Development Training. It gave a solid foundation to begin the NAMI-CC Clubhouse.

Cindy Mataraso, Director of Crestwood who came on board and offered that facility to hold meetings was enormously helpful.

In 2007, Herb and Bev Putnam offered a \$50,000 challenge grant. We all worked hard to do the fund raising each in our way and the grant was matched.

In the fall of 2007, we hired the very capable, Yvonne Nair-Gill as Executive Director.

Later Tamara Hunter-Carson joined the staff and the Willow Pass location has come alive.

The Clubhouse has evolved and will some day be a full fledged Partner in all aspects of the mental health community of Contra Costa County.

The NAMI Contra Costa Board of Directors sent a letter to each of the Board of Supervisors supporting the action taken by the Commission to request information and receive independent reports of the incident. The NAMI Board questioned the failure of the Plan of Correction, that was supposed to prevent these types of incidents.

This failure resulted in the near death of a patient and the eventual arrest of the young man displaying behavior consistent with his diagnosis.

The incident was discussed at the March meeting of the Mental Health Commission. During a report given by Dr. William Walker, Director of the Health Services Department, he made the point that the letter from the NAMI-CC Board to the Board of Supervisors, was not based on actual facts, but rather on innuendo.

Commissioner Teresa Pasquini disagreed and pointed out that the pertinent information came directly from the 26 year old male's father who had spoken to and warned the staff the preceding night. Commissioner Pasquini was emphatic that the information in the letter is based on sound facts.

Also, NAMI interviewed the girl's roommate who was the one that interrupted the attack and saved the girl's life. Others, close to the scene were also interviewed. Each of the interviews were recorded for future reference.

As a result of the incident, the 26 year old male is now in the Martinez Detention Facility charged with attempted murder. He is but one of the inmates at the jail that went from psychiatric Ward C to the county jail.

The choking incident occurred on February 1. It then took four days to arrest the 26 year old and take him to detention. After the incident he was put in restraints and seclusion. He was guarded by two members of the staff. This is called 2 on 1. Had this procedure been followed, it would be unlikely that there would have been an incident. Although a member of the hospital staff pointed out there has to be "just cause" to put a patient on the increased supervision. There are a great many questions related to the incident.

For example:

- What is the policy on when a 2 on 1 supervision can be put into effect?
- Does the treating psychiatrist have to write an order for this level of supervision?
- Who should have made the decision when he was admitted to the unit to put the 26 year old on a high level of supervision, such as a 1 on 1, since he was sent to the unit because the locked facility he had been at, could not handle him? He had attempted to choke another patient.
- Why didn't that history put the unit on notice that the highest level of supervision was called for?
- Why is D Ward still not available to separate the various levels of acuity?
- How much do the traveling nurses cost instead of using the original psych nurses that were laid off when Ward D was closed?

A SISTER TELLS HER STORY

45 YEAR OLD BROTHER BEYOND HELP

By K.S. of Pleasant Hill

Last Halloween, my brother left me a voice message thanking me for my love and support. It was a sweet message filled with gratitude. He left a similar message for other members in our family.

I am the oldest of five children, and he is the youngest. He is in his mid-forties, single, and unable to work because of his diagnosed schizoaffective disorder. We have always been a close family and have been present to help one another through life's many challenges. For the past twenty-five years, we have been on a roller coaster ride with the ups and downs of my brother's mental illness.

He has been hospitalized several times and has also gone through two rounds of electric shock treatments when his depression emotionally paralyzed him, leaving him unable to function. With the love and support of family, mental health professionals and friends, my brother has more than once fought his way back from haunting despair, deep depressions, horrific paranoia, severe anxiety, and the reckless behavior that comes from the unbelievable, delusional highs of the mania side of his illness.

His schizoaffective disorder is cyclical. There seems to be a pattern, and after calmer times, we brace ourselves for what will

happen next. Up until now, with our brother's determination, and our coming together as a family, we have been able to find our way in helping him to stay in treatment and live a purposeful and meaningful life despite his disorder.

Although we have weathered rough times in the past, nothing prepared us for the present journey we are now on. On October 29th, 2007, two days after he touched base with all of us, leaving those messages of gratitude, something snapped inside of him.

After becoming verbally abusive for the first time to our mother, he left without a word. He disappeared for over two weeks and nothing has been the same since. After filing missing person reports, and communicating with the police on several occasions; days have turned into weeks, weeks into months, and now as we enter our fifth month of this nightmare, we are left with a brother that will have nothing to do with any of us.

Our only connection with him presently is in reading his My Space blogs. He will not answer any of our phone calls, knocks on the door, emails and letters. Sadly, he has also become something we have never known. He has never been verbally and physically abusive.

He has been off his medication and away from treatment for at least 4 months now, and there is no way to force him to take it. Our mental health laws state that just because someone *desperately needs help*, that doesn't mean you can force them to get it. If my brother had any other kind of illness, we could intervene and help him to seek the treatment that he greatly needs.

Through this difficult time, we were fortunate enough to find out about NAMI and the guidance that the NAMI volunteer has given us has been our only guiding

light. Learning how to work with NAMI's Survival Guide at:

(www.namicontracosta.org.) has at least given us an anchor to help keep us breathing through our own anxieties.

When the mentally ill person becomes isolated and detached, how do we as a family find a way to reconnect? How can we help to change the laws so that people who desperately need help, can be led to treatment before they end up in jail? These are questions we have never been faced with before. In all of these many years of traveling this journey with our brother and his mental illness, we have never been faced with his violent behavior before. This is new, and it has created a tremendous barrier between us and him.

The NAMI volunteer often expresses that the only thing we can count on is that mental illness is unpredictability. Never in a million years, would I have ever believed that we would be where we are now with my brother's illness. We all love him and yet we are scared for him, and scared of him.

We pray as we continue through each day that we can somehow find a way to build a bridge to reconnect with him before something really terrible happens. A special thanks to NAMI for helping us to keep breathing during this very challenging time!

Editor's Note: *The man described above is so fortunate to have an intact family that is committed to him. Unfortunately, it is unusual.*

The writer of this essay has used the NAMI Survival Guide to great effect. It is available on the website:

**PRESIDENT'S
COLUMN**
By Al Farmer

(Continued from page 3)

I can't personally speak to many years of past association with Chet and Doris, but I can say that their kind efforts have had a significant impact on our family.

Our son had a serious episode and my wife and I didn't really know how best to deal with it. Doris was kind enough to let us attend the Family to Family Class which has been the single most meaningful and helpful class that either of us has ever attended.

Later, Chet personally persuaded me to become a member of the NAMI Contra Costa Board of Directors. It is truly an honor for me, as president, to be so involved in such an important and meaningful organization. Thank you Chet and Doris!

The Nami families in Contra Costa County, the Bay Area and statewide whose lives you have touched in the past and will continue to be touched in the future, all thank you for your invaluable contributions to NAMI and to mental health.

NEW LEADERSHIP

(Continued from page 1)

Co-chairs for 2008. Singley and McCahon were voted in as interim co-chairs until the Commission is able to have an election in which 7 votes can be found to elect a new chairperson for the organization.

7
APRIL DONATIONS

In Memory Of:

Chris Bruce

From: Carolyn Daniels
William Murphy
Bill Kelly
M. M. Wahl and A. H. Wahl

In Memory Of:

Craig Fletcher

From: Jasmine Gutierrez
Katherine Fletcher
David Kahler

Donations for the "Peer to Peer" Program

Al and Sue Farmer
Antoinette F. Laiolo

Donations

Mary and Jay Hoppe
Sam Yoshioka

DONATION FORM

Make check payable to NAMI-CC
Mail to: Treasurer, NAMI-CC
P.O. Box 21247, Concord, CA. 94521
NAMI-CC Tax ID # 68-0209474

Use Donation For:

- Peer to Peer Program
- NAMI-CC General Fund
- Family to Family
- K.I.D.S. Program
- Housing
- IOOV (In Our Own Voice)

Name

Street Address

City State Zip

Phone: _____

E mail address:

NAMI Contra Costa
 P.O Box 21247
 Concord, CA
 94521

First Tuesday
 Support Group
 One on One support
 An introduction to the Family to Family Program

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Stamp

NAMI Walk 2008
Saturday, May 31, 2008, 9:00 am
 San Francisco's Golden Gate Park
 FREE picnic
 xnamicc@aol.com 925- 676 5771

NAMI Contra Costa

The annual membership dues are \$40. This makes you a member of NAMI National, NAMI California and NAMI Contra Costa. You are automatically a member of all three organizations.

If you are solicited for membership or special donations from the State or National organizations, give generously if you can, but all such donations are voluntary and would be over and above your membership in NAMI Contra Costa.

Dues paid in October, November and December provide membership for the following year.

Send your membership application to:

NAMI Contra Costa
 P.O. Box 21247
 Concord, California
 94521
 E mail: xnamicc@aol.com

This Monthly Newsletter is Published by: NAMI Contra Costa
 E mail address: xnamicc@aol.com

Affiliated with NAMI National and NAMI California

APPLICATION FOR NAMI-CC MEMBERSHIP
 Make check payable to NAMI Contra Costa
 Complete this information cut-out and return it to:
 Treasurer, NAMI-CC
 P.O. Box 21247, Concord, CA., 94521
 E Mail Address: xnamicc@aol.com

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Membership is: New A Renewal

<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Client	\$ 20.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Dual Affiliate	20.00
<input type="checkbox"/> General Membership	40.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Professional Membership	50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Century Club	100.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime	500.00