

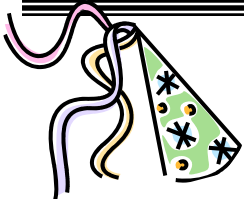
## February 2008

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## NEW YEAR BRINGS NEW BOARD MEMBERS AND PRESIDENT

NAMI Denver Board elections were held at the December board meeting. Heather J. Turner was elected president; Kathryn Chaney was elected Vice President; and Michael Callahan remains the Secretary/Treasurer. Two new faces were elected to the board: Maureen Martin and Lucia Paparelli. The Dispatch will be profiling board members in upcoming issues. We'll start by introducing new president Heather Turner.

### MEMBER PROFILE:

### Heather J. Turner

By Anjali Budhiraja

From the time Heather Turner graduated from law school through her career working as a trial attorney, she tried and prosecuted criminals and worked to uphold the rights of victims.

She never knew that at the height of her career, she herself would face criminal charges and have some of her basic rights taken away.

Turner is the newly-elected president of NAMI Denver, and she has lived with Bipolar Disorder for the past seven years.

Although she was diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder in 2001, it has taken six years of extreme ups and downs – five months in jail, eight hospitalizations and several suicide attempts – for her to finally accept the fact that she lives with a mental illness.

“It was not until I woke up in the ER, with a tube in my throat, (after a suicide attempt), that I accepted that something was really wrong,” she says.

Now that she has accepted it, she has decided to bring her difficult health experiences as well as her skills as an attorney to NAMI and work as an advocate in the mental health field.

Continued on page 4



Heather Turner

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello NAMI Denver members. My name is Heather Turner. First of all, I want to tell you that I am thrilled to now represent NAMI Denver.






This organization and the people in it have literally saved my life (peer support, education night, and the WRAP class) and greatly assisted my family and friends (Family to Family class). It will be the Board's mission to expand both the Board and our membership (encompassing the volunteers). We also feel strongly that members know you all can contact any one of us with your ideas or concerns and we welcome you to attend any board meeting. The next meeting is February 28, 6:30 p.m. at MHCD, 4141 E. Dickenson.

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## Upcoming Meetings and Events

What	Topic	Where	Date & Time
 Monthly Education Meeting	Legislation Relating to Mental Health	4141 E. Dickenson Place	Wednesday, Feb. 20 7 – 8:30 PM
 Peer Support Meeting	Ongoing Monthly Support Group	4141 E. Dickenson Place	Wednesday, Feb. 13
 Family to Family Class	12-week education meeting for family members (see details below)	Fort Logan, Colorado Mental Health Institute	Weekly, March 4 - May 20
 WRAP	Wellness Recovery Action Plan Class (see details below)	4141 E. Dickenson Place	8 weeks, begins Feb. 19
 NAMI Denver Board	All members welcome	4141 E. Dickenson	Thursday, Feb. 28 6:30 p.m.

## Bulletin Board

### WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) Class to begin in February

A free, 8-week Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) class will begin **Feb. 19, 2008** for individuals who experience psychiatric symptoms and family members.

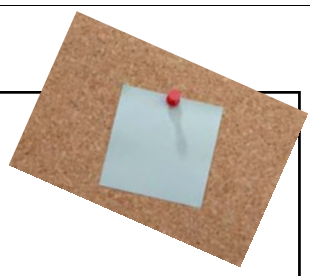
The class will be held at the Mental Health Center of Denver, 4141 E. Dickenson Place, Denver, 7 – 8:30 pm.

The WRAP class will help participants to:

- ◆ Identify their strengths, resources and coping methods (wellness tools);
- ◆ Determine what they need to do each day to feel as well as possible;
- ◆ Identify things that might cause (or trigger) problems and wellness tools that can help them get through any difficulties that might arise;
- ◆ Recognize the first signs that things are not going well and know what to do to feel better;
- ◆ Understand when things are getting worse and use wellness tools to get through difficult times;
- ◆ Develop a crisis plan to ensure, as much as possible, that they will get the support and treatment they need and prefer when they are unable to make decisions or care for themselves; and
- ◆ Create a post-crisis plan that will help them return to wellness after a very difficult time.

For more information and/or to register for the class, contact Deborah Amesbury, 303-744-1817 or [DebBAmesbury@msn.com](mailto:DebBAmesbury@msn.com).

*WRAP is a gift you give yourself!*



### Family to Family Class begins March 4

The Family to Family class covers the major mental illnesses, their treatment, problem solving, communication techniques and empathy. It will run from March 4 through May 20, at Fort Logan, 3520 W Oxford Ave. in Denver. Interested family members should contact Kathryn Chaney at 303-744-0388 or by e-mail at [Cecil296@aol.com](mailto:Cecil296@aol.com)

### Sutherland Seminar Series

The Robert D. Sutherland Center for the Evaluation and Treatment of Bipolar Disorder is offering a series of 12 seminars about bipolar disorder, including the topics of diagnosis, sleep and exercise, and relationships.

**Who:** Designed for adults with bipolar disorder and their family and friends; open to anyone in the community who wishes to better understand bipolar disorders.

**When:** Thursdays, 6-7:30 pm. Each session stands alone; no commitment or pre-registration required.

**Where:** Room E214 Muenzinger Psychology Building, University of Colorado – Boulder.

**Cost:** A \$10 per person donation is appreciated, but no fee is required. For more information, call 303-492-5680 or go to [www.rdsfoundation.org](http://www.rdsfoundation.org).

## Wellness: Ask the Doctor



### Mood Disorders Involve Psychology, Sociology, Physiology and Biochemistry by Dr. Julie Martin

*Editor's Note: In this ongoing feature, we will present the viewpoints of a variety of different health care professionals. This is the opinion of one doctor, and readers are encouraged to consult multiple sources, including your own doctor, in any health care decision.*

As we all know, affective disorders are disturbances in mood. Of course, daily life brings the normal swing of sadness, grief, happiness etc. The challenge is determining when the mood swings are normal vs. pathological.

As the research has evolved, it is no longer assumed that there is only a psychological or sociological cause. In order to create a full clinical picture and a successful treatment program, it is also crucial to address the physiological and biochemical individuality of each person.

Modern psychiatry's approach continues to focus on manipulating neurotransmitter levels in the brain. It can also be very helpful to identify and eliminate the psychological factors that are responsible for producing the chemical imbalances in neurotransmitters that have an affect on mood.

In order to have greater success in addressing a person's imbalances and supporting their well being it is imperative to also consider:

- ◆ Nutrient deficiency or excess
- ◆ Drugs (prescription, illicit, alcohol, caffeine, nicotine)
- ◆ Hypoglycemia
- ◆ Hormonal Imbalances
- ◆ Allergies
- ◆ Environmental Factors
- ◆ Microbial Influences
- ◆ Lifestyle Factors

By using an integrated approach, it will allow for a person to continue to take more responsibility and feel more in control of their own health.

#### References:

- ◆ Textbook of Natural Medicine 3<sup>rd</sup>. edition, Volume 2, Joseph E. Pizzorno, Jr., Michael T. Murray.
- ◆ Clinical Nutrition: A Functional Approach, Jeffrey S. Bland.

*Dr. Julie A. Martin is currently a practicing chiropractor in Coos Bay, Oregon. Acupuncture and nutrition are also an integral part of her work. She practiced in Eagle, Colorado for 12 years until she recently moved to Coos Bay with her family.*

*Dr. Martin graduated from Palmer College of Chiropractic in 1989. Her clinical practice focuses on integrating functional medicine and addressing the four vectors of stress consisting of mental/emotional, nutritional/chemical, electromagnetic and physical/structural.*

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *continued from page 1*

This month I will give a lecture on pending state legislation, the position of NAMI Colorado, how a bill becomes law, and how you can get involved. As a former trial attorney and current professional lobbyist for NAMI Colorado and The Legal Center for Disabilities and Older People, it is my passion to advocate for mental health and stop the stigma!

Finally, I would like to invite you to attend the Peer Support meeting on February 6<sup>th</sup> to meet television producer Orin Levy. He and I are in the process of forming a production company to produce a series of six two-hour segments titled "Mental Health Matters." Our

first topic is "A Systemic Change in the Criminal Justice System." I learned at a Senate hearing last week that mentally ill inmates are incarcerated five times longer than other inmates. If you have a story you would like to share, please contact me or come to the peer support group. We will NOT be filming that night, just listening, and we will not publish anything that we do not have permission for.

Live in wellness and don't forget, there are people who want to help and there are people just like you.

*Mental Health Matters. Stop the Stigma!*

**MEMBER PROFILE: HEATHER TURNER** *continued from page 1*

Heather first experienced her illness in 2001, soon after the devastating events of 9/11. At the time, she was in an abusive marriage. She traveled to New York City with her husband, son, and stepdaughter for a wedding. While there, they enjoyed a memorable dinner at the top of World Trade Center. Just over one week later, they heard the news and saw the images of the place they had just visited crumbling to the ground. Her son, just five at the time, asked her, “What about our waitress?”

This traumatic event, along with the stress of her failing marriage, launched Turner into a deep depression. She recalls going to work, but just sitting in her office and staring at the walls, unable to function, and coworkers having to cover for her. She used family and medical leave and took a leave of absence, but finally she had to leave her job.

During this difficult time, Turner also left her husband. To get away from it all, she took off for Florida. During a spell of mania, Heather blew thousands of dollars, drank, took drugs, and engaged in reckless behavior that landed her in jail. Her friend and mentor, the former Adams County District Attorney, flew to Florida to bail her out and bring her home.

Friends then took her to University Hospital, where she was placed under a 72-hour watch. While she was in the hospital, her husband served her with divorce papers. At the same time, her husband asked a judge to take away the rights for her to see her son.

Heather improved some and started to work again, first with the Office of the Child’s Representative, and then later with the Broomfield County Attorney’s Office. However, she stopped taking her medications again, and made some dramatic new choices. She decided to move to the mountains with her boyfriend who was a paraglider/ski instructor and Turner fulfilled her ski bum dream and became a ski instructor in Vail. But her illness took hold again, and Heather once again faced both dramatic mania and severe depression. This time, due to financial

troubles, Heather ended up in jail again. This time she remained incarcerated for five months.

Heather finally received help at the Mental Health Institute at Pueblo, where she was sent after a judge found her “Incompetent.” She convinced her psychiatrist to let her stay until she was stable on her medications, even though she was deemed competent within 12 hours of admission. After five weeks, she returned to jail, plead guilty to a misdemeanor, and was placed on probation. She began taking her medications again, and moved to Denver to be closer to family. But her depressions continued. Heather first tried to end her life through starvation, and then again with a sleeping pill overdose.

“  
***This is the best path for me, this is a way I can use my skills and talents. It helps both me and other people. I feel that NAMI saved my life.***  
 ”

After her last suicide attempt in 2007, something clicked for Heather. While she was staying at West Pines Hospital, her best friend told her that a friend had been helped by NAMI. So Heather contacted NAMI Denver, and former president Jennifer Hill returned the call and offered support. Heather credits NAMI with helping to save her life.

So now, Heather is taking on a number of new challenges. She is actively seeking to regain custody of her 11-year-old son, who she hasn’t seen in two years.

She recently received two contracts to work as a lobbyist on behalf of NAMI Colorado and the Legal Center for People with Disabilities. She is also busy forming a production company, called “Hot Critter”, that plans to produce a series of six documentaries about mental health and the legal system.

And, she is also the new president of NAMI Denver, and has the goals of increasing the chapter’s membership, increasing members on the Board of Directors, expanding outreach within the hospitals, and increasing peer support.

“This is the best path for me, this is a way I can use my skills and talents. It helps both me and other people. I feel that NAMI saved my life.” ♦♦

**NAMI**– National Alliance for the Mentally Ill - is a grass-roots, family and consumer, self-help, support, education, and advocacy organization dedicated to improving the lives of people with severe mental illness.

**NAMI Denver Board Members:** President: Heather Turner, Vice President; Kathryn Chaney; Secretary/Treasurer: Michael Callahan; members at large: Joyce Borgmeyer, Maureen Martin, Lucia Paparelli.

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