

National Alliance on Mental Illness, Denver Affiliate

**November-December 2008**

E-mail: [namidenver@nami.org](mailto:namidenver@nami.org)

Phone: 303-504-6545

Mental Health Center of Denver, 4141 E. Dickenson Place

Website: [www.namidenver.org](http://www.namidenver.org)

## Message from the President — A Call to Action in 2009

By Kathryn Chaney

As we look ahead to 2009, just as the country seems to be feeling a sense of change, so too is NAMI Denver. In January we will have our annual member meeting on the 21st, when we will elect new officers and recognize those of you have volunteered in the past year. All members are invited to attend. The meeting will take place at **6:30 p.m. at the Mental Health Center of Denver, 4141 E. Dickenson Place, before the monthly Education Meeting.** It's a great opportunity to mingle with other members and learn about volunteer opportunities. (more on pages 2 and 7)

We have had some wonderful additions to our Board of Directors this year, all of whom you have been reading about in the Dispatch. And we anticipate having more new faces in the year to come.

So this year, I believe we have the potential for NAMI Denver to do more. We have a membership approaching 100, but we don't know all of the faces that make up our organization — and we want to.

continued on page 7



Exciting news! Metro area NAMI affiliates are joining together in 2009 to hold a NAMI Walk in Denver, scheduled for mid-May. We are looking for sponsors, volunteers, and participants to help with this very exciting event.

### HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- ◆ Are you, or anyone you know, involved in a corporation or small business that would like to sponsor the NAMI Denver team?
- ◆ Start thinking about building a team of walkers. Friends, co-workers, family, who can raise money and awareness by walking together.
- ◆ Volunteer to work on other parts of the walk, such as publicity, logistics, etc.

If you think you can help in any of these areas, or for more information, please e-mail [namidenver@nami.org](mailto:namidenver@nami.org).

### Inside this Issue

<b>Calendar and Bulletin Board</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>NAMI Denver Presents CIT Awards</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Meet Board Member Maureen Martin</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Family to Family and NAMI Connections</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Beyond Bipolar, Dr. Jane Mountain</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Volunteer Opportunities</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Handling the Holidays</b>	<b>8</b>




**You're invited!!**  
**Come celebrate with NAMI Denver**

**Thank you**



Page 2

## Upcoming Meetings and Events

	What	Topic	Where	Date & Time
	<b>Peer and Family Support Meeting</b> <i>(Second Wednesday of every month)</i>	Two Support Groups, one for family members and for peers	4141 E. Dickenson Place	<b>Wednesday, Nov. 12</b> <b>Wednesday, Dec. 10</b> <b>7 - 8:30 PM</b>
	<b>Monthly Education Meeting</b> <i>(Third Wednesday of every month)</i>	<b>Dr. Jane Mountain</b> <i>Wellness and the Wasp:</i> A talk presentation about Healing and Sharing our Stories	4141 E. Dickenson Place	<b>Wed., Jan. 21, 2009</b> <b>7 p.m.</b> <b>(No meetings in Nov. and Dec. due to the holidays)</b>
	<b>NAMI Denver Board Meeting</b>	All members welcome	4141 E. Dickenson Place	<b>Thursday, Nov. 20</b> <b>6:30 PM</b> <b>December: No meeting</b>

### THANK YOU NAMI DENVER MEMBERS!

**You are invited — Come celebrate!**

- Who:** NAMI Denver members and prospective members
- What:** NAMI Denver Annual Meeting, Elections, Volunteer Recognition ... and pizza!
- When:** **Wednesday, January 21, 2009**  
**6:30—7 p.m.** (before the monthly Education Meeting)
- Where:** Mental Health Center of Denver, 4141 E. Dickenson Place, Denver

**Thank you!**



### Donations Needed

The Mental Health Center of Denver (MHCD) continues to support NAMI Denver in many ways. One way for NAMI members to show their appreciation is to donate furniture, appliances, clothes, books and/or food to be used by individuals receiving services from MHCD. Donations can be dropped off at **MHCD Wishing Well Enterprises, 1075 Galapago Street, Denver, 80204 OR call 303-892-5594** between 10 am and 2 pm, Monday – Friday to schedule a **FREE PICKUP**. All items directly benefit MHCD consumers.

## NAMI Denver Hosts Annual Luncheon Honoring Denver Police Crisis Intervention Team



Lt. Ron Saunier, Chief Gerald Whitman, Leigh Sinclair, and Sgt. Betty Hale

NAMI Denver hosted a luncheon October 28 to recognize 25 Denver Police Department officers who responded to situations involving a person with a mental illness or developmental disability and managed the crisis in a positive, respectful way.

NAMI Denver also honored Leigh Sinclair, former CIT Program Mental Health Coordinator, who expanded Denver's Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training program to make it one of the best in the nation.



NAMI Denver Board President Kathryn Chaney presents an award to Officer Nadia Gatchell.

CIT training prepares officers to interact effectively and respectfully with individuals in crisis. Appropriate interventions result in fewer people being transported to emergency rooms or jail and minimize trauma to officers and responders. The ability of officers to de-escalate individuals with mental illnesses has been greatly appreciated by all involved, including family members and/or others who are at the scene of a crisis.

The CIT program has fostered strong ties between the Denver Police Department and community agencies concerned with mental health and law enforcement.



NAMI Event organizers Jennifer Hill and Deborah Amesbury congratulate Leigh Sinclair.

Approximately 120 people attended the luncheon, which was sponsored by NAMI Denver, Colorado Access, the Denver Police Foundation, Denver Options, the Mental Health Center of Denver (MHCD), and Leigh Sinclair. The meal was catered by Qdoba Mexican Grill.

Thanks to NAMI volunteers Deborah Amesbury and Jennifer Hill who planned the event. Thanks also to volunteers who helped on the day of the event.

**ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF C. STARK PHOTOGRAPHY**

*Dispatch* readers: Be sure to forward the Dispatch via mail, email, or by hand to friends and colleagues to let them know what's happening with NAMI Denver.

## Board Member Profile: Meet Maureen Martin

Maureen Martin has been a member of NAMI Denver for 5 years and became a board member one year ago. Maureen has been teaching NAMI's Family to Family class for four years and is a Colorado State Trainer for NAMI Family Support Facilitators.

Like many parents of children with a mental illness, Maureen and her family struggled for years, not knowing where to turn or who could help her cope with her daughter's challenges.

Maureen's eldest daughter, who is now 29, was diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder 10 years ago. Her daughter began showing behavioral symptoms at 17 and went into the hospital at age 19 after experiencing a psychotic break.

"Basically, I was shut down, I didn't know where to go," Maureen recalls. Maureen and her husband were busy trying to raise four daughters.

"I was totally unprepared for the stigma – people just did not want to hear about it. Our own family wasn't even talking too much about it. We were operating in survival mode and were just trying to manage her symptoms."

But Maureen says that one day five years ago, a friend she had been sharing her situation with discreetly handed her a small article in the newspaper about NAMI's Family to Family class.

"From the first moment I went to the class I got the feeling that these were people who understood what I was going through."

When Maureen found Family to Family, she said it provided her with the support and information she needed. She benefited from the program so much that she now has become a Family to Family teacher. "I absolutely love teaching Family to Family because I've been where they are. It's very rewarding."

Maureen said that as she gathered more information as a student in the Family to Family



**"This experience has defined where life has taken me and directed me into a whole new world," Maureen says about her daughter's mental illness.**

class, she was able to share her new knowledge and skills with her husband and three other daughters at home. Instead of just working with symptoms, she said her family was able to start thinking further ahead about how they were going to grow together through the illness.

"We learned that we weren't to blame and that we could still have a life."

Initially, her daughter would not take her medications consistently, and would come and go from their home, sometimes getting into situations with police and other people they did not know. However, after a few years, she returned home and was ready to heal.

Her daughter currently lives at home, but works and has her own colleagues and friends. "Her younger sisters are so supportive and proud of her."

Like many people whose lives are touched by mental illness, Maureen's life has been forever changed.

"This experience has defined where life has taken me and directed me into a whole new world," she says.

Maureen has been married to her husband for 31 years, and her daughters are now 29, 27, 24 and 15. They have lived in Denver for 14 years, but are originally from Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Maureen runs her own business, in which she serves as a business coach to small businesses and entrepreneurs and also offers various seminars and self-growth courses. She also is a big fan of the Colorado Rockies.

## Family to Family Class to Begin on February 3, 2009

Family to Family is a free, 12-week course for family members of a person living with mental illness. The course is taught by trained family members who have experienced first hand the rewards and challenges of caring for a loved one with mental illness.

During the class you will learn about symptoms and clinical treatment of schizophrenia, bipolar disorder (manic depression), clinical depression, panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), borderline personality disorder, and co-occurring brain disorders and addictive disorders.

This will help you to gain empathy by understanding the subjective, lived experience of a person with mental illness.

Learn problem solving, listening, and communication techniques and acquire strategies

for handling crises and relapse.

You will learn techniques for coping with worry, stress, and emotional overload and improve communication with your relative.

The National Institute of Mental Health research indicates that people with mental illnesses do 20 – 50% better after their families participate in educational classes and support groups.

The class will run on Tuesdays from February 3 through April 21, 2009.

The class will be held in Southwest Denver and each class is 2.5 hours.

You must register in advance to attend class so please call Kathryn @ 303-744-0288 or email [cecil296@aol.com](mailto:cecil296@aol.com)

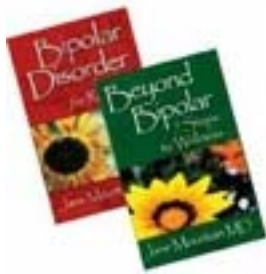
### Attend a NAMI Connection Support Group



Mondays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Thursdays	Saturdays
<b>11:30 am – 1 pm</b>	<b>7 – 8:30 pm</b>	<b>7 – 8:30 pm</b>	<b>7 – 8:30 pm</b>	<b>2:30 - 4 pm</b>
Aurora Mental Health Center 11059 E. Bethany Drive Broadway Room Aurora. CO 80014 Facilitators: Stacey 720-327-7894 <a href="mailto:missgalka@gmail.com">missgalka@gmail.com</a>	CHARG Drop-in Center Our Savior's Lutheran Church 920 Emerson Street Denver 80218 Facilitator: Kathy 303-321-3104 <a href="mailto:kredman@nami.org">kredman@nami.org</a>	S.T.A.R. Reach Clubhouse 2531 W. Church Avenue Littleton 80120 Facilitators: June 303-788-0776 <a href="mailto:jdmcw@interfold.com">jdmcw@interfold.com</a> Carol 303-760-1055 <a href="mailto:kyvilla@aol.com">kyvilla@aol.com</a> <b>Wednesdays</b> 5:30-7 pm Sante Fe House 6509 S. Sante Fe Dr. Littleton, CO 80120 Facilitators: Carolyn 720-366-0883 <a href="mailto:cvtv2003@yahoo.com">cvtv2003@yahoo.com</a> Faith 303-321-3104 <a href="mailto:faithmomof3@hotmail.com">faithmomof3@hotmail.com</a>	Colorado Mental Health Institute at Ft. Logan 3520 W. Oxford Avenue Denver 80236 Administration building, room #108 Facilitators: Joe 303-949-3862 Norma 303-980-5821 <a href="mailto:njschneider@comcast.net">njschneider@comcast.net</a>	CHARG Drop-in Center Our Savior's Lutheran Church 920 Emerson Street Denver 80218 Facilitators: Paula 303-322-6296 Cathy

**NAMI Connection** is a recovery support group program for adults living with mental illness that is expanding in communities throughout the country. Each group meets weekly for 90 minutes, is offered free of charge, follows a flexible structure without an educational format, does not recommend or endorse any medications or other medical therapies, and is confidential.

## Wellness : Beyond Bipolar, by Jane Mountain M.D.



This is the fourth in a series of articles contributed by local author Dr. Jane Mountain. Dr. Mountain is a speaker, author and publisher who shares her personal experience of bipolar disorder with others. She brings her expertise as a physician and as a wellness expert. She has written two books, *Bipolar Disorder: Insights for Recovery* and *Beyond Bipolar: 7 Steps to Wellness*, which can be purchased on her website, [www.BeyondBipolar.com](http://www.BeyondBipolar.com), or at any bookstore, including Amazon. Sign up for her free e-Newsletter, BeyondBipolar on her website.

### Step Four: Search! © Jane Mountain, MD

#### Discovering mood clues is essential in playing the game of bipolar disorder.

In playing the game of bipolar disorder, we are nearly always taught to focus on episodes of depression or mania rather than look for subtle mood clues. Mood clues tell us where we may be headed at a particular time. Episodes tell us where our moods have arrived.

When we focus on episodes, we can react too late in the game and are behind in the fourth quarter. Looking for mood clues helps us to anticipate the moves we can make to put us ahead in the game from the very start.

If we are planning to suicide, that is a symptom of depression that we readily recognize. A buying spree that runs us into bankruptcy is a symptom of mania. Both of these are more than mood clues. They are well-defined symptoms. They're often part of full-blown episodes of depression or mania.

However, those of us who experience bipolar disorder can learn to recognize a few mood clues that may not last long enough or be severe enough to qualify as symptoms making up an episode. It makes sense that if the brain has difficulty finding a set point for mood, it may stray from normal mood in small as well as in the large ways that make up an episode.

These small changes are what I call mood clues. When we learn to recognize mood clues early on in the game, we can take action to modulate our mood

before it takes us to extremes. Mood clues vary from person to person, and they are different for depression and mania. Here are a few examples. As you read them think about additional mood clues that you may experience.

#### ***Mood Clues for Depression:***

- Sleeping at least one hour more than usual for three days in a row.
- Dreading an activity or feeling bored with something you normally enjoy.
- Looking only at the ground when walking
- Losing your sex drive for several days.
- Feeling that life is not worth living.
- Thinking your friends don't like you any more.

#### ***Mood Clues for Mania***

- Starting many projects at once but not finishing any.
- Thinking that others are not keeping up with you.
- Feeling like you can't sit still.
- Being annoyed by sounds in your environment.

*Continued on page 9*

## Message from the President

continued from Page 1

We are all involved in NAMI because we feel strongly about our cause and mission — and we all know that helping families and people living with mental illness, fighting stigma, and searching for better solutions for these illnesses is imperative.

**For this reason, the NAMI Denver Board of Directors would like to reach out to our members and ask you to become more involved in the organization.** We have a wide range of opportunities for everyone, big and small. Folks don't need to have special skills to help. We know that our members include individuals with mental illnesses, their family members, health care professionals, and others. Each of us has a role in raising awareness and solving important issues relating to mental illness. The NAMI Walk coming up in May is one great opportunity we'll have to get to know each other and work together. But there are needs in the organization year-round. On this page, you can see a list of some of the activities for which we could use help. And there are many more things we could be doing.

**Another thing we'd like to do is seek out new members.** Perhaps some of us have friends in classes or support groups, we may have met others in the hospital, or we all may just know people in our daily lives who grapple with mental illnesses and may be interested in joining NAMI. If you know of anyone who might like to get involved, send them our way. Feel free to forward the Dispatch to your friends and colleagues to share what we're up to.

We thank you for reaching out and becoming a member of NAMI Denver. We wish you and your families a happy holiday season. We would love to meet you and work with you in the coming year in this very rewarding work.

Sincerely,

*Kathryn*



**Mission statement: To improve the lives of people affected by mental illnesses.**

### Volunteer Opportunities

#### NAMI Walk

- ◆ Find business sponsors
- ◆ Marketing
- ◆ Walking with friends

#### Contact/Support Line

- ◆ Provide phone and e-mail support

#### Office Support

- ◆ Inventory educational materials
- ◆ Check mail
- ◆ Process memberships and donations

#### Fundraising

#### Support Group Facilitators

- ◆ Peer Group
- ◆ Family Group

#### Education Program

- ◆ Select topics of interest
- ◆ Find and schedule speakers

#### Community Outreach

- ◆ Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Recognition Luncheon
- ◆ 9 Health Fairs
- ◆ Presentations to hospitals and local organizations
- ◆ Advocacy Committee

#### Newsletter Publication

- ◆ Research or contribute articles
- ◆ Desktop publishing
- ◆ E-mail and mail distribution

## Handling the Holidays

***Holidays tend to be especially stressful for families experiencing a mental illness.***



- ◆ There are often implied, if not explicit, expectations of certain types of behavior (e.g., exchanging gifts, socializing), feelings (happiness), etc. that are hard to live up to.
- ◆ Large groups can be over-stimulating and confusing for individuals diagnosed with a mental illness.
- ◆ Holidays can be painful reminders of times past when things were better, thus highlighting present difficulties related to coping with a mental illness.
- ◆ Family get-togethers can raise the issue of what to tell people about the illness, the life of the individual diagnosed with a mental illness, etc.
- ◆ Holidays lend themselves to ill individuals comparing themselves unfavorably to other, non-disabled or more accomplished relatives. Other family members can experience survivor's guilt.

### ***Families can reduce holiday stress by:***

- ◆ Discussing plans in advance;
- ◆ Acknowledging feelings related to holidays and being with family members, including any mixed feelings people may have;
- ◆ Not making assumptions about how individuals feel or which/what kind of activities family members want to be part of;
- ◆ Keeping expectations realistic, especially regarding whether the family member diagnosed with a mental illness can tolerate a family/social gathering, for how long and what participation the person is capable of;
- ◆ Respecting and supporting each family member's choices and decisions regarding participation in family activities/get-togethers;
- ◆ Accepting each family member's limits, needs and preferences;
- ◆ Being flexible and allowing for some changes in plans and participations, when possible; and
- ◆ Strategizing how to handle some of the stress, e.g., how to answer personal questions, what tasks each person will focus on, how long to stay at get-togethers, where get-togethers will be held, taking breaks, etc.

Article courtesy of Deborah Amesbury, LCSW. Adapted from: ***When Someone You Love Has a Mental Illness: A Handbook for Family, Friends and Caregivers*** by Rebecca Woolis.

***A reminder that there will be no Education Meetings in November and December due to the holidays. But be sure to attend the meeting on January 21, 2009. Dr. Jane Mountain will be presenting.***

## Wellness : Beyond Bipolar continued from page 6

- Answering others with a sharp voice even though you are not angry.
- ♦ Feeling highly driven to accomplish more than average in a short time.

We have all been told, "Don't sweat the small stuff." With bipolar disorder, the big stuff of mood episodes can be so overwhelming that, if we concentrate on them, it is hard to know where to begin. We can still see the big picture of episodes, hospitalizations, work issues, relationships and the ability to manage stress, but we focus on manageable mood clues.

On a day-to-day basis (and especially when we are very ill), it can be even more helpful to "sweat the small stuff." Mood clues can help us respond in small ways that will eventually teach us to regulate mood closer to the target of resiliency. As this happens, we develop management and recovery skills that allow us to take over our moods and learn to live with bipolar disorder.

There are many ways to handle mood clues, but the first step is to recognize them. If we don't notice these mood clues, it will seem as though our mood changes without warning and that we are constantly being surprised by the impact of bipolar illness in our lives.

Identifying our individual mood clues is a first step in learning wellness skills that can help us become managers, not just reactors, to our mood. *Discovering mood clues is essential in playing the game of bipolar disorder.*

Dr. Mountain will be the featured speaker at our January education meeting. Her talk is titled *Wellness and the Wasp*. Part of healing is sharing our illness stories with others. With psychiatric diagnoses, telling our stories can be difficult due to the way others understand these illnesses. Telling our illness story requires skills that bring wellness into our stories while validating our struggles.

Her presentation will be at 7 p.m. Jan. 21, 2009. Join us at 6:30 p.m. for our Annual Meeting and pizza.

## New NAMI Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Brochure Released

For Veterans Day, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) has released a new 14-page brochure on posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), its treatment and recovery.

"Over a lifetime, approximately 5 percent of men and 10 percent of women are diagnosed with PTSD," said NAMI medical director Ken

Duckworth, M.D. "Risk factors include the type of trauma, degree of exposure and any prior history of trauma. In most cases, there is a direct physical impact. Proximity in witnessing violent, life-threatening events also makes a difference."

Visit [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org) to download a copy, or for more information.



**NAMI**– National Alliance on Mental Illness - 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: Kathryn Chaney; Secretary/Treasurer: Michael Callahan; Members-at-Large: Maureen Martin, Anjali Budhiraja

**NAMI Denver Dispatch** Editor: Anjali Budhiraja; Distribution: Deborah Amesbury

Published bi-monthly by NAMI Denver, 4141 E Dickenson Place, Denver, CO 80222. Contact us at [namidenver@nami.org](mailto:namidenver@nami.org) or 303-504-6545. Visit the website: [www.namidenver.org](http://www.namidenver.org)