

NAMI Boulder County

Circle of Support

National Alliance on Mental Illness, Boulder County, Colorado

Issue No. 191

- For all those touched by mental illness -

June 2007

2006/2007 NAMI Boulder County Accomplishments

At the NAMI Boulder County annual meeting on May 15, we reviewed our accomplishments for the 2006/2007 year. We thought it would be good to share those accomplishments with you, our members, so you can see how your donations and the local portion of your membership dues are used.

We provided extensive mental illness education for approximately 50 family members through our Family-to-Family classes. We are grateful to Cathy Howe and Ann Taylor for teaching these classes.

We helped train more than 75 law enforcement officers through active participation in the county's Crisis Intervention Team (CIT). A big thank you to Sharon Bowyer and Laura Hadaway for the time and energy they invested.

We raised awareness of mental illness and NAMI through booths at the Farmers' Market in Boulder and by holiday gift-wrapping at Borders book store. We provided information at the 9 Health Fair at four locations in Boulder County. Thank you to Nancy Coleman and Barbara Connors for leading these efforts and to all who volunteered at the events.

We raised more money in the NAMI Colorado Walk than any

other affiliate -- which also helped raise awareness and reduce stigma. Many thanks to Anne Weiher who played a big role in that success.

We worked to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness by voicing our concerns over two haunted houses that used stigmatizing names. We got front-page coverage for one of these campaigns in the Boulder newspaper.

We advocated for people with mental illness by calling and writing state legislators about the parity bill (which has been signed into law) and other legislation.

We provided support to family members through support groups in Boulder and Longmont (part of the year). Thank you Sharon Bowyer and Steve and Kathleen Roon for leading these groups for many years.

We also worked with the Mental Health Center Serving Boulder and Broomfield Counties (MHCBBC) to establish the "Let's Talk" series. So far, the series has included three presentations on bipolar disorder in Boulder, Lafayette, and Longmont, with more to come. Sharon Bowyer was instrumental in making this happen. She also helped us stay connected to the MHCBBC and the community

through the Consumer and Family Advisory Board and the Recovery Advisory Forum. See her article on recovery on page 4.

We also provided support to family members through our Help Line. Thank you to Joan Wolfer, Christine Vigorita, and Ann Goldstein for responding to Help Line calls throughout the year.

We kept members and others in the community informed through our newsletter and Web site. Thank you to JoAnn Maxner, Joanne Kelly and Michael and Christine Vigorita and everyone who contributed articles, photos and poems.

We hired Barbara Connors as our first volunteer coordinator. She works part time as an independent contractor. Anne Weiher and JoAnn Maxner were the prime movers in the hiring process.

To improve our efficiency, we updated our membership database, instituted a new procedure for expired memberships and started a database of volunteers.

Thank you to all of you who work to make the world a better place for people with mental illnesses. We appreciate your actions and your support. Together, we can make a difference!

NAMI BOULDER COUNTY

1333 Iris Avenue, Boulder
303-443-4591
www.namibouldercounty.org

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Board of Directors

President, Alan Kelly
Vice-President, Nancy Coleman
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Patty Jansen, Elizabeth Kauffman,
Joanne Kelly, Bev Melius,
Reg Saner, Cathy Stiers
Christine Vigorita, Anne Weiher

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Friends of NAMI

We are most thankful for your past and continuing friendship, but our list has grown too large for this small space. Please know how much you mean to NAMI Boulder County.

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Office Manager, Sharon Bowyer
Volunteer Coordinator, Barbara Connors
NARSAD Cards, Cathy Stiers
Newsletter, Joanne Kelly
Contributing writers for June:
Barbara Connors, Reg Saner,
Sharon Bowyer

President's Corner

I am reading a fascinating book called "The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference" by Malcolm Gladwell. The book jacket blurb describes the tipping point as "that magic moment when an idea, trend or social behavior crosses a threshold, tips and spreads like wildfire." In his book, Gladwell explains how something as seemingly insignificant as cleaning graffiti from subway cars can reduce the rate of violent crime in New York City.

As I read, I constantly think about NAMI, and wonder what it will take for critical messages about mental illness to reach that tipping point. How can we spread the word that brain disorders are biological, physical illnesses, just like other illnesses? And convince people that all kinds of mental illnesses can be treated? How can we convince the general public that there is no need to fear people with mental illness? That stigmatizing language and discriminatory acts just make the problem worse?

I think we are already doing many things that will help us reach the tipping point. Every time we hand out literature at the Farmers' Market or answer questions at a 9 Health Fair booth, we are making a step forward. Every time we offer a Family-to-Family class, we educate 20 or so people who then help spread the word. Every time we write letters to our legislators to advocate for fairer policies, we are making progress. Just as importantly, every time we speak up instead of remaining silent when someone makes stigmatizing comments, we move closer to the tipping point. Perhaps by the time I finish reading the book, I'll have ideas for other things we should be doing. In the meantime, I urge you to read it and to let us know if it sparks any ideas for you.

As you can see in the list of officers at left, I am stepping down as president of NAMI Boulder County, and my husband, Alan, is picking up where I left off. I will continue as a board member, however, and will continue producing the newsletter. I just wanted to make sure I have enough time and energy to devote to serving on the NAMI Colorado board (in May, I was elected to fill a vacancy) and to organizing the "Faith Community Outreach" conference in October (see story on page 6). I am excited about the conference and the potential for reaching an important audience -- clergy and lay leaders from all faiths -- who can influence many others in how they view and treat people with mental illnesses. I hope it will be a giant step toward the tipping point.

Upcoming events**June 19 NAMI Boulder County Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.**

Christ the Servant Lutheran Church, Louisville. We'll be working on plans for the coming year. Feel free to join us or send us your ideas via email at info@namibouldercounty.org.

Save the date:

2007 NAMI Walk
Saturday, September 22
at Clement Park in Denver

Volunteer Corner



*Barbara Connor,
NAMI Boulder
County Volunteer
Coordinator*

NAMI Boulder County staffed information tables for the 9 Health Fair at four locations in April. Nancy Coleman, secretary of the board, organized this effort with the help of other board members Bill Kauffman, Joanne and Alan Kelly, Anne Weiher, and Christine Vigorita. We are also grateful for the help of volunteers Christine Armstrong, Karen Campbell, Ava Erger, Reg Saner, and Joan and Allen Wolfer. Many people stopped by to get more information about NAMI.

Currently I am working on updating and creating both a membership and a volunteer database. Members can be helpful in this effort if they will email me their

email addresses at blconnors@comcast.net. These will only be used to let you know of upcoming NAMI events and volunteer opportunities.

This summer NAMI Boulder County will once again have information tables at the Boulder Farmers' Market. Our presence there has always attracted attention, especially during Mental Illness Awareness Week when board member Alan Kelly portrays Abraham Lincoln, who is said to have suffered from depression. We would also like to extend our presence into Longmont and other areas. That means we need volunteers who are willing to commit to two-hour shifts on either a Saturday or a Wednesday evening. I will be calling interested volunteers soon to enlist your assistance.

The 2nd Annual NAMI Colorado Walk will be on September 22, and we hope to match or increase our participation as a chapter this year,

so start thinking about potential sponsors. Last year NAMI Boulder County raised more than \$6000 from this event. As always, we need volunteers to fight stigma by responding to stigma alerts, to train as Family-to-Family instructors and to advertise upcoming Family-to-Family classes in church bulletins and community bulletin boards, and to find places and groups where speakers could share information about mental health issues.

If you are interested in supporting NAMI through any of these activities, please let me know. You can reach me at 303-710-0701 or blconnors@comcast.net. I look forward to hearing from you. I also want to add that it has been almost a year since I became NAMI Boulder County's first employee. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to serve this wonderful group of people and the very important cause that unites us. Have a great summer!

Five simple things you can do to make the world a better place for people with mental illnesses

The following list was adapted from material provided by the Mental Health Association of Colorado (www.mhacolorado.org) -- obviously, we added the NAMI twist. Next time a friend or relative says "Let me know if there is anything I can do to help," hand them this list:

1. **Be an inspiration** – Share your story. Has mental illness impacted you or your family in some way? Your story will empower others to seek treatment or have hope.
 2. **Be a "StigmaBuster"** – Challenge negative attitudes toward mental illness among your friends and acquaintances and in the media.
 3. **Be a friend** – Help someone seek treatment or take a mental health screening - be a partner in wellness.
 4. **Be a donor** – Attend a fundraiser for NAMI or another mental health organization or suicide prevention program. Make a gift to the group now and name them as a beneficiary in your will.
 5. **Join NAMI** – There is strength in numbers. Every NAMI member makes a difference when we go to the legislature to advocate for nondiscriminatory and equitable state, federal and private-sector policies. You can use the form on the back of this newsletter to join.
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Recovery: How do we get started?

“Recovery is a deeply personal, unique process of changing one’s attitudes, values, feelings, goals, skills, and/or roles. It’s a way of living a satisfying, hopeful, and contributing life even within the limitations caused by the illness. Recovery involves the development of new meaning and purpose in one’s life as one grows beyond the catastrophic effects of mental illness.” William Anthony, Director, Center of Psychiatric Rehabilitation, Boston University.

The Recovery Model is here to stay. It is an international mental health movement. We all need to embrace it, and to embrace it we must know what it is all about.

You can learn much about recovery on the Internet and in books. You

will find the word “recovery” is used in regards to improving the lives of persons with a mental illness (clients). But I find that it also applies to families. Family members are also in recovery. So whatever you read, or whatever you hear about recovery in a presentation, think not only of clients but also their family members.

Here are three of my recommendations on where to begin with your recovery journey:

- www.nami.org: When you get to this Web site just put “recovery” in the search field and you will find many, many articles.
- “Pathways to Recovery, A Strengths Recovery Self-Help Workbook”: This is a 400-page workbook for clients, but I think this book should be read

by family members and professionals to help them start incorporating the recovery philosophies into the clients’ lives. To order this book, call the University of Kansas, 1-785-856-2880 ext. 108 or email Joanna McCloud at pathways@ku.edu.

- NAMI’s Family-to-Family program: This free set of 12 classes is for family members, and we cover a lot of important issues that are part of recovery. Our next classes begin this fall. You can call our office at 303 443-4591 and get on the waiting list. The class is limited to 22 people so call now!

Sharon Bowyer
NAMI BC Board Member

Meet NAMI Boulder County’s new board members

On May 15, we elected eight new board members:

Greg Coleman, commercial real estate professional, serves on board of Sutherland Foundation. Husband of Nancy, has one son, one daughter and three grandkids.

Valine Demos, Master of Social Work, BA (mental health), Many years of mental health experience; Served years ago on NAMI BC board as chair of the Legislative Committee. Mother of 1 daughter.

Robert (Bob) Hadaway, Supervisor of Building Inspection, City of Westminster. Husband of Laura, father of two adult children.

Cathy Howe, wife of Jim, mother to four; Associate Pastor at Boulder Valley Christian Church. Previously worked in probation and parole (juvenile and adult); foster parent to 25 children.

Elizabeth Kauffman, retired English teacher. Has been involved in NAMI for 34 years. Has two adult children. (Has served previously on NAMI BC board.)

Patty Jansen, office and building manager and assistant bookkeeper for Watershed School. Has assisted with Family-to-Family classes as consumer speaker. (Joan Wolfer's daughter)

Reg Saner, retired from CU's English faculty, writes poetry and nonfiction. Husband of Anne, father of two sons. (Has served previously on NAMI BC board.)

Cathy Stiers has lived in Nederland for 28 years. She is the NAMI Boulder County representative for NARSAD note cards. She is the mother of two daughters.

Please see the complete list of board members and officers on page 2.

NAMI Boulder County people in action



NAMI volunteers Reg Saner and Karen Campbell staff a table at the 9 Health Fair on April 14 at St. Mary Magdalene Church in Gunbarrel. The health fairs are an excellent opportunity for NAMI volunteers to talk to participants about their mental health questions and to let them know about the resources NAMI offers.

A group of NAMI Boulder County board members and soon-to-be board members attended a NAMI Colorado fund-raising event at Strings restaurant in Denver on May 4. From left, Alan Kelly, Joanne Kelly, Greg Coleman, Nancy Coleman, Laura Hadaway and Bob Hadaway. Joanne is holding a "Chocolate Decadence" gift basket our affiliate donated to the silent auction. Board member Christine Vigorita created the basket.



Father and Son and an Ancient Greek

by Reg Saner, Board Member

“The way down is the way up,” claimed Heracleitus, a Greek sage whose terse maxims were even in his own time famously ambiguous. My friend Reuben’s anguish over his son, Sidney – twice jailed, then diagnosed as schizophrenic – illustrates a possible meaning.

“One night last January,” Reuben told me, “we get this call from the locked ward at Mapleton Hospital. Sid had asked permission to step outside for a smoke, but instead of a cigarette he just took off. It’s seventeen degrees, more snow coming down, whereas he’s in a light jacket, wool cap, and no gloves. Yet he walks the three snowy miles to our house in just street shoes.”

“I don’t get it. Surely he knew you’d take him back to the hospital?”

“Oh, he knew all right. But he had a plan. He was going to grab his backpack, some gear, then

head for the rocks on Green Mountain just west of our place – to spend the night. He had it in his head nobody could get at him there.”

Sidney’s delusional state meant he was in no condition for a bivouac in snow and freezing weather. His mother pled with him about frostbite, amputations, and worse. He ignored her.

By now, both parents were desperate. Young Sid was far stronger than his sixty-year-old father, so while their son stuffed a sleeping bag into his pack, Reuben gave Sid’s mom a meaningful nod. She slipped from the room and called the police.

“As Sid leaves the house,” Reuben said, “it’s snowing harder. I go with him, pleading, trying to reason, slow him down. All the while I’m scanning for signs of a patrol car. If he makes it past the trailhead, he’s gone. I grab at Sid’s pack, he yanks it away. I

grab it again, and there we are, scuffling, tussling in the snow when – hallelujah! – a patrol car pulls up. My god! I have never in my life been so glad to see two cops.

“What I remember is flakes falling through headlights,” Reuben said, “and feeling absolutely sick inside as they handcuff my only son – who must have been thinking I’m worse than any Judas. All next day I kept wondering, is there such a thing as maximum grief? I mean, is there some limit, beyond which you simply can’t hurt more?”

Yet Sidney’s return to Mapleton and treatment marked the beginning of real improvement in his condition. Ironically, therefore, that worst of nights for a father began his son’s way upward. Which may have been what Heracleitus had in mind.

One-Day “Faith Outreach” Conference Planned for October

Clergy and lay leaders from all faiths in Boulder and Broomfield counties will be invited to participate in a one-day conference on October 18 to learn about mental illness. Participants will be given tools and resources that will help them deal effectively with consumers and family members with confidence.

The conference, entitled “Mental Health and Faith Communities: Sharing the Promise of Hope and Healing,” is sponsored by NAMI Boulder County, the Mental Health Center Serving Boulder and Broomfield Counties, and the Boulder County Aging Services Division.

If you would be willing to help us get information about the conference to the leaders of your church or synagogue, please call Joanne Kelly at 303-494-4882. Also, please let us know if you would like to help with the conference or if there is someone in particular at your place of worship who should be invited.

Education and Support Groups

NAMI CLASSES IN BOULDER COUNTY

On-going free education and support classes offering information on brain disorders, how to cope, and how to advocate. We keep an ongoing list for these classes. For information or to reserve a place, call us at 303-443-4591.

- ▶ **Family-to-Family Class** – A free 12-week program for family members, friends or caregivers who have a loved one with a brain disorder.
- ▶ **Colorado Visions** (formerly Visions for Tomorrow) – A free multi-week program consisting of workshops for caregivers of children and adolescents with brain disorders. Leave a message for Christine at 303-443-4591.

FAMILY SUPPORT

- ▶ **NAMI Family Education and Support Group**
The previous Boulder Support Group has been replaced by the Let's Talk Series. Details on future presentations in the series will be announced in the fall. If you need support, please call 303-443-4591.

CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

- ▶ **Parents Experiencing Challenging Kids Support Group (PECK)** - Meeting times vary. Contact Harriet Austin at 303-499-4132 or austinhb@hotmail.com for dates and locations.

DEPRESSION AND BIPOLAR DISORDER

The first two groups meet at Longmont Hospital, Gaugin Room, 1950 Mountain View.

- ▶ **Depression and Bipolar Support Group**
Mondays, 7:00-9:00 p.m. Contact Laurie at 303-772-3559.
- ▶ **Depression and Bipolar Support Group**
Wednesdays, 7:00-9:00 p.m. Contact Barbara at 303-443-0985 or Vanessa at 970-532-4973.
- ▶ **The Robert D. Sutherland Center for the Evaluation and Treatment of Bipolar Disorder**
Contact Dr. Alisha Brosse, Associate Director, at 303-492-5680 for information about a 6-week psycho-education group and an on-going skills training group (www.rdsfoundation.org)

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER

Support group for people with OCD, their families and friends. First and third Wednesdays, 7:00-9:00 p.m. Mental Health Center, Norton Room, 1333 Iris Avenue, Boulder. Contact Brent, 303-422-9704, Arlene, 303-670-9691, or Ilene, 303-938-1360.

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE ANONYMOUS

(www.ocdcolorado.com) and **SOCIAL PHOBICS ANONYMOUS** (www.healsocialanxiety.com). For further information on both groups, call John at 303-325-3143

CHINOOK CLUBHOUSE, BOULDER

Chinook Clubhouse is a program dedicated to enhancing the recovery of men and women with mental illnesses. It provides opportunities for members to live, work, learn, and socialize while contributing their talents in a community of mutual support. The Chinook Clubhouse works with the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to offer transitional employment opportunities. Call 303-440-4842 for information (www.chinookclubhouse.org).

"SOFT VOICES" DROP-IN CENTER, LONGMONT

Resource and friendship center for adults with mental illness. Tuesdays, 10:00-noon; Thursdays and Fridays, 1:00-3:00. 5th & Kimbark, downstairs. Art sessions led by Mimi Farrelly meets on Fridays, 1:00-3:00 p.m. For more information, contact Gil at 303-776-0410.

Everyone is welcome to participate!

INTERNET RESOURCES

Visit the NAMI (national) Web site at www.nami.org
Visit the NAMI Boulder County Web site at www.namibouldercounty.org

If you need computer assistance, contact the following sources. Service is confidential and available at no cost.

Consumer Health Resource Library

Located at Longmont Hospital, 1950 West Mountain View Avenue, Main Entrance. Call 303-651-5112 for hours.

Grillo Health Care Information Center

Located at Boulder Public Library, 11th and Arapahoe, Main Branch, 2nd floor. Call 303-441-4174 for hours.

NAMI BOULDER COUNTY BOARD

Board members meet the third Tuesday of the month, September through June at 6:30 p.m. at Christ the Servant Lutheran Church, 506 Via Appia, Louisville. Meetings are open to all who would like to attend.