May you enjoy peaceful holidays and may your new year be filled with beauty, inspiration and memorable moments.

May it be a year of achievement, discovery, joy and gratitude.

NAMI Southwest Washington Staff, Peers, Volunteers and Board
Dear Members and Friends,

The year-end is approaching quickly. We have just four months remaining as part of the Southwest Behavioral Health Regional Support Network (SWBH RSN) where over half our funding comes from. As we move into the April 1st 2016 launch of the Early Adopter program in Clark and Skamania counties we will be working with many new faces and organizations including important groups in our community: Molina Healthcare and Community Health Plan of Washington (CHPW). These managed care organizations were recently contracted by WA State to oversee all medical, mental health, and substance abuse treatment for all area clients who are disabled by mental health disorders or other conditions. We have been meeting and talking with these groups and look forward to building these new relationships in order to provide care, in cooperation with all contracted providers, that will better enable clients to meet the triple aims of care: to get service more easily, have medical, mental health and substance abuse services that will be more effective, and will do a better job of keeping people stable, in recovery, and away from the Emergency Departments. Cowlitz County is also going through many changes as it begins to partner with other rural counties from the coast to central WA. Current plans are that they will not merge their medical, mental health and substance abuse services until 2020 along with the rest of the counties in WA State.

To support some of these changes, NAMI SW WA has applied to become a WA State licensed mental health provider. We hope to have our application approved by the end of this year or shortly thereafter. This will provide us with a small income from a few of the services we provide however those who come to us for help and hope will not feel any difference; our services will still be at no charge to the public.

We hope you will put our Annual Meeting on your calendars: January 12th at 7:15 PM at our Vancouver office. All NAMI SW WA members and friends are welcome. At this meeting members are asked to approve Board members, officers and our new budget. Much of the meeting is taken up with awards and recognitions. Please join us!!

And please join us on December 16th at 6:00 PM when we meet at the Vancouver office to gift wrap and stuff gift bags that will be taken to every person who is in a mental health bed anywhere in our counties. We are still in need of donations of warm socks, hats and gloves as well as candy and other wrapped goodies to put in the bags. Refreshments will be served. Please join the party!

All of us staff and volunteers wish you all a very wonderful final month of this year. We all look forward, I know, to that time when the days start getting longer. Happy holidays to those who celebrate religious holidays. For them and for those who don’t celebrate we wish you the very best ending to 2015 and may 2016 bring many wonderful experiences your way.

Best regards,

Peggy
DEALING WITH HOLIDAY STRESS

If you are stressed because of the holidays, here are some positive things you can do.

Make connections. Good relationships with family and friends are important. View the holidays as a time to reconnect. Accept help and support from people who care about you to help alleviate stress.

Set realistic goals. Take small, concrete steps to deal with holiday tasks. Try not to overwhelm yourself by setting goals that are too extensive for a busy time of the year.

Keep things in perspective. Try to consider stressful situations in a broader context. Keep things in a long-term perspective. Avoid blowing things out of proportion.

Take actions. Don’t let holiday stress get you down. Make a decision to address the underlying cause of a stressful situation.

Take care of you. Pay attention to your own needs and feelings during the holiday season. Engage in activities that you enjoy and find relaxing. Taking care of yourself helps keep you real to deal with stressful situations.

“We live in a world where if you break your arm, everyone runs over to sign your cast. But if you tell people you’re depressed, everyone runs the other way... We are so, so, so accepting of any body part breaking down other than our brains. And that’s ignorance. That’s pure ignorance. And that ignorance has created a world that doesn’t understand depression, that doesn’t understand mental health.”
Why is it Important to Set Goals for Mental Health Recovery

One of the biggest challenges for people in recovery from mental illness and substance abuse is setting goals. Without goals, there is no sense of progress or forward direction. A sense of hopefulness is required in order to have the ability to envision goals in the first place. How can those with mental illness and substance abuse get help – or help themselves – to understand both the importance of setting goals and become better able to set them on their own?

Develop a Therapeutic Relationship
Recovery doesn’t happen in isolation. The individual in recovery from mental illness and substance abuse needs professionals in his or her corner to help deal with stressful situations, overcome the lack of employment or adequate living conditions, and build life. The length of time counseling will be needed will vary depending on the individual’s needs and progress. There’s no one-size-fits-all plan for individuals, just as there is no defined blueprint for any person in recovery from addiction.

Restore or Build Hope
The ability to set realistic goals – even to picture a future that includes such goals – depends, in large part, on the individual having hope. But how do you find hope when your life has been a series of crushing disappointments, continuous failures or losses, stigma and discrimination because of mental illness and addiction, or a combination of all of these? Some individuals in recovery can’t see anything other than a bleak future when they’ve tried in the past to pick up the pieces over and over again only to see them fall apart.

When a person has no hope, it’s important that others carry hope for that individual until such a time as the person begins to believe that his or her life can get better. Engaging the person in social activities that are pleasurable, helping him or her to develop friendships or meaningful relationships, and activating spirituality or faith are some ways to help the individual build or restore hope.

In addition, others who have come through similar circumstances and have been able to find hope can serve as tangible proof that recovery is possible. These peers provide inspiration to those who desperately need it.

Identify Interests, Desires, or Aspirations
Talking about setting goals may seem scary to some in recovery from mental illness and substance abuse. Instead of diving right in and asking the person what they want to do with their future, a better approach for mental health providers and family members is to help the individual identify what interests them, what they’ve always wanted to do, or even think they’d like to do.

Identifying interests may turn into a lasting pursuit that brings self-satisfaction, pleasure, a sense of accomplishment, and even open up opportunities for future growth. It’s also possible that, during the time the person is putting together the materials or getting ready or doing the activity, he or she will become more communicative, open up more, and the care professional or family member can learn more about the interests, desires, or aspirations.

You Have to Have Choices
Make the individual aware they have choices. – Again, this gets back to the issue of hope or the lack of it. If there’s no hope, there can be no thought of setting goals. Why bother? But when individuals are given the opportunity to see that they do have choices that they can make, this gives them some measure of autonomy. They choose what they will do, which direction to take – given responsible and appropriate choices. It is important to note that the individual needs to become aware that they have choices, and then be able to recognize the choices. What those choices are is (Continued from Page 5)
Can Drinking Diet Coke Cause Depression? 
by Sara Ipatenco  (http://www.livestrong.com/article/459166-can-drinking-diet-coke-cause-depression/)

Diet soda doesn't contain calories, but that doesn't mean it's healthy. When it comes to drinking soda, diet is better in terms of sugar and calorie content when compared to regular soda. Diet soda, however, comes with its own set of risks, and it's partly the artificial sweeteners that make the beverage a poor dietary choice. There is a link between drinking diet soda and depression, for example. That doesn't mean you're destined for depression if you enjoy diet soda, but the connection is worth considering as you make beverage choices in the future.

The Stats
A study conducted by the American Academy of Neurology that involved 263,925 adults between the ages of 50 and 71 discovered a link between drinking diet soda and depression. The participants recorded their intake of drinks such as soda, coffee, tea and fruit punch between 1995 and 1996. Ten years later, the participants told researchers whether they had been diagnosed with depression since the year 2000, and 11,311 people stated that they had been so diagnosed. Participants who drank more than four cans of soda per day were 30 percent more likely to be diagnosed with depression compared to people who didn't drink any soda, and the risk was greater for participants who drank diet soda.
In My Own Voice by Lynette

I never would have thought that my life would be turned upside down when I joined the Army. I was seventeen, and I thought that I was invincible. However, during Basic Training I was diagnosed with tuberculosis; the Army prescribed the standard medication for treating this disease: isoniazid (INH). Within a week I was in psychosis, became mentally ill. I was discharged from Basic Training for lack of motivation, never knowing what was happening to me. My life was never the same.

I tried to tell the doctors in the beginning that I was hearing voices and that now everything was scary. I became more and more fearful, and started to hide the illness that now controlled my life. I didn’t understand what was happening to me.

After 5 years, I was diagnosed with schizophrenia. I fell further and further down the rabbit hole. I went so far down that I thought that the only way out was to commit suicide. I took an overdose of an over the counter medication with a liter of vodka. I should have died that night, but instead there was a chemical in my system that counteracted the stuff I took. The doctors at the hospital were never able to identify the chemical but they assured me that whatever it was, it saved my life. I was very lucky in the sense that I lived. That was my first encounter with a mental health ward. I was so scared that I thought if I lied that I would be released the next day. Little did I know that I was not going to leave for at least a week.

I lost my job, car, and home. Accept. That is what I told myself. My mom thought that I tried to kill myself to hurt her, and she thought that putting a lot of restrictions on me if I lived at home was a good idea. So I left home and went to stay with a Russian family who let me live with them by doing housework in exchange for room and board. But they had one condition. I was not allowed to take medication. This worked for me, because I had felt that medication was nothing but a poison. I went for two more years without medication. I was totally wrong.

I entered college to study, my mental illness took a turn for the worse, and I ended up in the hospital again. This time I had no choice but to take my meds. I became very ill for many years and was in the hospital over forty times because of suicidal ideation and attempts. I couldn’t seem to stabilize on medication. I think that this was the case, because I had spent so long not treating the real enemy in my life called schizophrenia. I was in denial for so many years that maybe in the beginning if someone would have really listened to my fears and thoughts that maybe I would not have been so severely ill. Only recently have I gotten into recovery.

Schizophrenia is definitely a killer disease that can be masked. You wouldn’t want to wish it on anyone. You wouldn’t typically see it in a person, unless you know what to look for. And early treatment can be very beneficial. It has become my one thing in life that I am trying to overcome. When you have a severe mental illness, it is a minute by minute struggle, but you can beat it.
Psychoeducation and tools for a successful and sustained recovery from mental illness.

Peer support group for those affected by mental illness.

Supported groups for those struggling with mental health issues.

Support for families of military personnel who are struggling with mental health issues.

Support for friends and family of people who have a mental health diagnosis.

Peer support group for those affected by mental illness.

MENTAL HEALTH THERAPY for the uninsured and underinsured. Limited term. Provided by Janet and Jean.

MENTAL HEALTH MEDICATION CONSULT

BENEFITS CONSULT w/Cindy Falter

Provided by Janet and Jean.

MENTAL HEALTH THERAPY for the uninsured and underinsured. Limited term.

Psychoeducation and tools for a successful and sustained recovery from mental illness.

Provided by Janet and Jean.

2823 5411 E. Mill Plain

Suite 4

MILL Plain ClACK/SKAMANIA WASHINGon WASHINGTON

December 2015
CONNECTIONS OPEN SUPPORT GROUP
MONDAY 12:00 - 1:30 pm

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY 6:00 - 7:30 pm
Every 1st and 3rd
Wednesday of the month

PARENT AND FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP
WEDNESDAY 6:00 - 7:30 pm

Psychoeducation and tools for a successful and sustained recovery from mental illness.
Support for friends and family of people who have a mental health diagnosis.
Peer support group for those at-risk.

MENTAL HEALTH THERAPY
Provided by JANET
Wednesday afternoon
Limited to the uninsured and underinsured. Limited term.

MENTAL HEALTH MEDICATION CONSULT
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MENTAL HEALTH THERAPY for the uninsured and underinsured.

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(360) 703-6722
98626
Kelsø, WA

109 Allen Street
Dear Cowlitz Friends & Supporters,

The season of year-end holidays is upon us with many of us joining together to celebrate, give thanks and affirm our relationship with our Creator. We re-establish or celebrate existing ties with our families, both birth and chosen, and reaffirm our many individual cultural traditions. During this season of giving, hopefully we can all try to find a way to give of ourselves rather than just running up the charge cards. Giving of yourself might include volunteering at a local non-profit; donating new socks, blankets and toiletries to the homeless; visiting your local nursing home or reaching out to help a neighbor in need. Service to others is such an important part of our paths toward optimal mental, emotional and spiritual wellness. We here at NAMI SW WA Kelso office are honored to be able to help our friends at Salvation Army serve their Thanksgiving Day meal this year. We’ll also will be volunteer serving on Christmas Eve at the annual Christmas holiday meal. We are so grateful for their free hot meal program as well as their many other services and look forward to supporting them in their mission whenever the opportunity presents.

We are sooo happy to finally have Jodi Grant Swofford, our other Kelso Office Peer Support Specialist back from her extended trip to Alaska. She has been so missed by both clients and staff. Her high energy, enthusiasm and ability to comfortably network among many different groups has helped spread the NAMI message of hope and mental health wellness out in the community.

I hope you join us for our first NAMI SW WA Season of Giving Holiday Bazaar on Friday Dec 4th & Saturday Dec 5th. Admission is free but we’re asking all that can to bring one can of non-perishable food that we’ll pass on to our local food bank. We are still accepting applications for vendor spaces for the suggested donation of $20.00 which covers both days. For further information, call our office at 360-703-6722 and ask for Jodi.

My thanks to those that have welcomed our NAMI SW WA SEE ME program into their workplace. It is an informative and enlightening training for all people working with the public. Government statistics now tell us that 1 out of every 4 people experience diagnosable mental health symptoms. We are ALL touched by this. We need to learn about it, understand it and work to provide those struggling with it their basic needs of housing, adequate nutrition, consistent healthcare, medication and all effective modalities of treatment.

**UNTREATED mental illness** robs that individual of a chance at life. It creates toxic or broken family relationships that pass on the impact for generations, and it costs the public an incredible price tag. For the money crunchers, the huge cost of extended psychiatric hospitalizations, locally or at Western State, increased costs of law enforcement and emergency response personnel, incarcerations, life-long welfare recipients with higher healthcare expenses for all their other disease processes that we know will develop as a result of their inability to practice self care, healthy living choices, or their need to self-medicate. This is all the result of **untreated or inadequately treated mental illness**.

NAMI SW WA’s goal is to educate the individual, their families and supporters, and hopefully raise the consciousness of all in the community to see that not only is it the best fiscal policy to provide the best treatment and support services to enable this large segment of our population to lead the most stable, productive and healthy lives possible but it is the only policy choice for a society that values life, education and personal development for all and the belief that we each have an important purpose in this life and we need to reach our highest level of independence and health to achieve that purpose.

We are currently developing our own local SEE ME speaker panel comprised of people who live or work within our Cowlitz County community. These folks are all experiencing the difficulties of living with the challenges of mental illness and are actively committed to staying in recovery. Hearing their stories is powerful. We’ve seen this program reduce fear, stigma and shame and allow people to see the whole person and not just their label. Each speaker bravely shares a bit about their background, when they experienced the onset of their symptoms, their dark days when struggling with their illness, self medicating with alcohol, pharmaceuticals or street drugs, run-ins with law enforcement, etc. And then they tell of their steps toward recovery, what worked, what they do to maintain that recovery and what their goals are going forward. Continued on page 10
In My Own Voice by Paul

BOARDING RULED UNCONSTITUTIONAL

When President Reagan closed down most state mental health in-patient institutions first as governor of California and later as US President, the national rate of people with mental health diagnoses who became incarcerated in local jails, state or regional prisons soared. Now jails have replaced mental health facilities. Mental illness has been criminalized, and it is estimated that there are up to 2.5 million people with mental health diagnoses. Almost half of the individuals involved in the corrections system are there because of their mental health and substance abuse disorders; conditions that often go hand in hand. Most of these individuals are often jailed for minor offenses such as trespassing, disorderly conduct, disturbing the peace. Once convicted, these charges will follow the person through life and they can become part of the revolving door of the system, going in and out of jail. Some jails in our state offer few or no mental health services. Others, like Clark County jail have a prescriber, limited mental health staff, and some support for those with mental health disorders who are jailed. It's difficult for most people to understand that mental illness is not fundamentally different than a medical illness in any other organ of the body. You wouldn't lock someone up with heart disease and then withhold or offer only minimal treatment. People with mental illness who are without treatment often go downhill fast.

The Washington State Supreme Court ruled unanimously in August of 2014 that the practice known as boarding or subjecting pre-trial detainees with mental illness without treatment of any kind was unconstitutional. On December 22, 2014 the US District Court in Seattle ordered the State of Washington to cease violating the due process of its citizens as guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution. Now that the Supreme Court has weighed in, roughly half of the remaining states admit to boarding. What happens in our state could have a ripple effect across the country. This cause is personal to me. My own constitutional rights were violated, and I fear under certain circumstances they could be violated again.
Bulletin Board

◊ **Holiday gift wrapping:** On Wednesday, December 16th at 6:30 we will be holding our annual holiday gift collection and wrapping event at our office. We need warm hats, socks, gloves, personal toiletries (toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, deodorant, lip balm) wrapped candy and other nice treats. Please feel free to join us for some holiday cheer.

◊ **Annual Meeting:** NAMI SW WA will host its Annual Meeting on January 12th at our Vancouver office location, 5411 E Mill Plain, Suite 4 from 7:15 to 8:45 PM. All NAMI members and guests are welcome. This is the meeting where we elect board members and officers and approve our annual budget. We also give awards and highlight events from the past year and hear about the challenges we expect in 2016. We welcome everyone. Refreshments will be served.

◊ **Family to Family:** We will set start dates for classes in each of our counties. Classes will begin in late January or early February, depending on the demand. Family to Family, a 12-week educational program, is the most popular of NAMI classes, offering significant help and hope to family (by birth or by choice) members who have an adult (18 or older) loved one with a mental health diagnosis. Participants learn communication, boundary setting, and develop strong friendships with others facing similar problems. At least one class will be scheduled for weekends during which we will conduct 3-4 class sessions per day so that participants can complete the class over two or three weekends. Another class will be held during weekday work hours and one will be held in the evening to give family members options. Please call our office at 360-695-2823 to get on the list and give your preference for class time. Once dates are selected, you will be called and officially registered for a class. Like all other NAMI SW WA services, this class has no charge for participation.

◊ **BASICS:** A BASICS class for Skamania County is scheduled for January 31st and February 6th, both Saturdays. The usual six-session class will be broken into two, three-session days to prevent attendees from having to drive six times into Stevenson. Times and locations have not been set yet. BASICS classes for Cowlitz and Clark counties will begin around the same time, but dates have not yet been established. If you have a child or you know someone who has a child under the age of 18 who has been diagnosed with any mental health issue, this class could be very helpful to build understanding of the issues and enable you to get the services that will help your child be more successful in school, in social settings and at home. If you are interested please call 360-695-2823 to sign up.

◊ **Genetic Testing for Medication Metabolism:** We have currently scheduled our third test date, January 6th, when individuals can come to our Vancouver office to get a cheek swab for genetic testing to see if the individual is able to metabolize a wide panel of mental health medications. We may be changing this date so watch for word in our January newsletter. We are changing the enrollment forms and currently don’t have the new forms in our office yet. We will keep you posted.

When you invest your time, you make a goal and a decision of something that you want to accomplish. Whether it’s make good grades in school, be a good athlete, be a good person, go down and do some community service and help somebody who’s in need, whatever it is you choose to do, you’re investing your time in that.

Nick Saban
☐ ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP - $35.00
☐ OPEN DOOR ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP - $3.00
☐ MEMBERSHIP SCHOLARSHIP - FREE
☐ DONATION $ ____________

★ We are a registered non-profit organization 501(C) (3) and donations are tax deductible.

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E-Mail: ________________________________

NAMI Membership Includes:
★ NAMI National Advocate Magazine, quarterly
★ Washington Friday Facts, weekly e-mail by request
★ NAMI SW WA Newsletter, monthly

Member Discounts on NAMI Events & Materials,
Please return your payment and completed form to:

NAMI Southwest Washington
5411 E Mill Plain Blvd, Suite 4
Vancouver, WA 98661
To use a credit card and join online, go to
www.nami.org

Thank you for being part of the team!

Help support one in four Americans who will be affected by mental illness this year.

NAMI Southwest Washington
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED