NAMI SW WA NAMED ONE OF TEN BEST NON-PROFITS

In early February, NAMI SW WA was honored by the Vancouver Business Journal when they named us one of the ten most outstanding non-profit agencies in Vancouver. As part of this award we have received a beautiful plaque which can be seen in our entryway. This is a great honor for all of us, staff, board, and especially our many volunteers, who have worked so very hard for the last several years. During this time we began offering services not just in Vancouver but throughout Clark County as well as Cowlitz and Skamania counties. We have increased the number of volunteers from about ten, including our board members, to over 65. We now provide over 18,000 non-duplicated services annually, up ten-fold between year-end 2013 to year-end 2015. Our annual budget has also increased ten-fold. We now have eight people working as paid staff, up from one. We have moved offices twice, more than doubling our space each time in Vancouver, and we have an office in Cowlitz County that is conducting great programs to meet the needs of Cowlitz County residents.

NAMI SW WA: A WA STATE LICENSED HEALTH PROVIDER

We were recently approved by WA State to become a licensed mental health agency and our official license arrived Friday, February 26th (just before press time). All this work has taken true dedication by our members. We are deeply indebted to all of you who have supported us with your physical efforts but also with your donations which we could not do without. Thank you so very much. We sincerely thank the Vancouver Business Journal publicly for recognizing our group effort to make all this happen. To see the license, see top of page 9.
Dear Members and Friends,

It is with great sorrow that Janie Gislason, our very dedicated Cowlitz County Coordinator has left us. We hope this will be a temporary leave of absence while she takes care of a number of personal issues. Until a final decision is made on this, her team in Cowlitz is doing a great job of carrying on with all the many activities there. Jodi Swofford is the lead; she is focusing largely on the outreach we are doing there with many county organizations, agencies, and groups. As a trained peer, Jodi is also working with individuals, facilitating support groups and following through with other activities there. Windy Nein, who was one of our earliest volunteers in Cowlitz is taking care of the office, the records we keep and other more administrative aspects of NAMI SW WA activities there as well as facilitating groups. Blaine Hess, who has volunteered with us for almost a year is working with both Jodi and Windy in multiple capacities. Blaine has started a popular book group that is currently discussing Emotional Intelligence, a subject we all need to know more about. We are very grateful to the people of Cowlitz County for their growing interest in NAMI SW WA.

We have one more month before April 1st when Clark and Skamania counties become the first counties in WA State to integrate medical, substance abuse and mental health services for all those individuals who are disabled by these issues. We very much look forward to being part of this major change and sincerely want to be a part of making it a successful transition.

Best wishes to all for a lovely spring.

Peggy
Recently the magazine *Esperanza, hope to cope with anxiety and depression* published a short article titled *10 Reasons to Read*. Sandy Frischman, one of our Peers, brought this to our attention and suggested we include this topic in a newsletter. The story lists ten reasons, all of which can help anyone have a better life and yet the median number of books read per year by adults Americans is only five. We hope this list might convince you that you could really benefit from activating that library card that you let lapse or getting a new one. Reading can:

**Provide instant escape**: if the day’s issues are overwhelming pick up a good novel and get involved with those characters; it can help take your mind off your own issues for a period of time. Book characters experience the same issues we all do; often we can learn something from the author.

**Provide a pause that refreshes**: most adults read on our own rather than reading to or with someone else. This can be a time to sit in a hot bath or lie on the floor with your legs up the wall, both of which can help to regenerate your body while the book you are reading can help regenerate your spirit, especially in this case if you happened to pick up one of the many great self-help books.

**Become brain food**: reading uses more and different parts of the brain than we use when we are using our computers or watching TV. In fact, avid readers have more white matter, that part of the brain that stores our language skills. We recommend holding a book and manually turning the pages rather than reading from a tablet or other device.

**Become a welcome distraction**: it can provide something to do when you travel, when you are feeling lonely, or things just don’t seem to be going right for you. Book characters’ lives go up and down just as ours do. Reading, contrary to watching TV or a movie, allows you to use your own creativity to imagine just what a character looks like rather than having someone else make that decision for you.

**Be a calming influence**: brain studies show that, when reading, we often put ourselves in the place of the main character, almost always the hero. It can also reduce anxiety and our need to think and rethink situations over and over. It helps the brain move on from a negative focus, even if only for a period of time. We often need to do this in order to get a new perspective on a problem.

(Continued on page 4)
HABITS and HOBBIES THAT BENEFIT OUR WELLBEING (cont. from page 3)

Become a social teacher: because we become empathetic with the characters and get into their mindset as we read, our brains are practicing the same social skills those characters are using. Reading is not just mindless activity. It can produce some overall special benefits for us socially.

May be a change agent: When we get lost in a good story we go through a process called experience taking. Studies done with university students showed that reading a short story about a student doing something positive encouraged other students to follow suit. Reading can change our behavior.

Is a therapeutic tool: the National Health Service in Britain has had a program since 2013 called Books of Prescription for people with moderate mental health challenges in partnership with local libraries. The books in the program are self-help books. Many people read and reread these books over and over, knowing that each time the book is read new meaning will come from it.

Be a social lubricant: reading books on your own may encourage you to join a book club where you and others read the same book and meet to discuss it. Watch this newsletter because we have talked about starting a book group for those who are interested.

Provides rejuvenation: Try reading a light or funny novel before going to sleep at night. When bored or lonely, read a novel and see if it can help stimulate your creativity to do something else with your time than you usually do...maybe visit a friend because the main character did that and had a good outcome, or eat a new food because the food was mentioned in the book, or go fishing because the book characters seemed to have a great time fishing.

Watch this newsletter for the usual monthly book review that will be in next month’s issue.
WRITING FOR FUN, PLEASURE, and PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

For some time, volunteers have asked to have a writing group at NAMI SW WA because they know I work with a group of writers as part of my life outside NAMI. I think we are nearing the time where this could happen. Let us know if you might be interested.

Writing has all the same benefits that reading does, for me and for many others. Most of my writing now is for fun when I am not writing for work-related issues such as this newsletter. For me, however, the type of writing I do helps me to better understand myself and the world around me. I do this type of writing almost every day, usually early in the morning because of a dream I had or an incident from the previous day. Often a childhood memory will come to mind and I capture that on paper. I only write for 10 to 15 minutes, usually, just a few hundred words. I never reread these short stories unless I share them with the others who like to do this type of writing. I file the stories away on my computer to read in the future. It is the process of writing that helps me gain the increased understanding.

Others like to keep journals or diaries. I preferred this type of writing as a child, teen and young adult. This type of writing focuses on the day’s activities and the person’s current thoughts, ideas, and situations. Many people prefer to do this writing by hand rather than use a computer. Some play with techniques such as writing with the non-dominant hand to help get a different perspective on a problem or situation.

The type of writing group I foresee happening at NAMI at either of our offices will not require a teacher. All those things your English teachers insisted on would not be important here. What we would like to see is thoughts and stories on paper. We would not plan on anyone writing a book but would want everyone to have fun with what they write.

Call the NAMI office if you are interested in either a book group or a writing group at either office site.
Peace of Mind by Greg Betts

Peace of mind is what we seek for we are mild, meek and weak, but still it we seek.

Peace of mind comes from above as a gift of love on the wings of a snow white dove.

Peace of mind is given freely to you and me that we might of our burdens be set free.

Peace of mind is by design a gift that is so fine and yet sometimes hard to find even thought it’s yours and mine.

Yes we thank you for your gift of peace of mind even if sometimes it’s hard to find.

01-30-2016

Two Dreams by Brigitte Macdonald

Into my dream you flew,
Like a bat from the netherworld.
I stood and greeted you
With my red flag of hate unfurled.

I wanted to cut you apart,
And I did so in my dream.
For you had broken my heart,
With actions so vile and mean

I carried the hurt and shame
And the dark legacy of fear
You had branded in my brain.
When you died, I rejoiced, my dear.

But for decades, I'd carried you,
The hate in me burned so strong.
Mental illness misguided you,
And I realized I was wrong.

Your mind had been very sick,
And I'd had no choices then.
I was the dog you could kick,
A helpless victim, back then.

But last night, you were back in my dream,
And I looked with love, at your face.
You were beautiful, loving, and kind.
But then, I had given you grace.

Love, forgiveness, and grace
Is what I give myself, too.
Free from the pain and disgrace,
I choose to see from a different view.

Oh yes, deep scars are still there.
There’s both weakness and strength in me.
But now, I’m becoming aware
Of the truth that’s setting me free.
**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.**

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

**Peer support group for those affected by mental illness.**

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**5411 E. Mill Plain**

**Suite 4, Mill Plain**

**360-695-2823**

**Provided by Janet and Jean**

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<td>Open Emotional Wellness Support Group</td>
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<td>Parent and Family Support Group</td>
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<td>Mindfulness, Music &amp; Movement</td>
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<td>Peer Support Group for those at risk</td>
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FRIDAY

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**MENTAL HEALTH THERAPY**

Provided by Janet

- Wednesday Afternoon
- Underinsured, Limited Term
- Mental Health Therapy for the uninsured and underinsured individual
- 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 affected by mental illness

**HELPLINE**

Call 360-695-2823

Mon-Fri 9-5

**MENTAL HEALTH MEDICATION CONSULT**

Provided by Janet

- By Appointment

**PROVIDED BY JANET**

- MENTAL HEALTH THERAPY
- MENTAL HEALTH MEDICATION CONSULT
- FAMILY TO FAMILY
- EVERY MONDAY & FRIDAY
- STARTING FEBRUARY 29 AND ENDING APRIL 8

(360) 703-6722
109 Allen Street
KELSO, WA 98626
COWLITZ CORNER

One of the places we will miss Janie Gislason the most is with this monthly update of what is going on at the NAMI SW WA office in Kelso. Her update letters have always been so very full of feeling and deep emotion for the activities that are being carried out by the team of peers and volunteers there. It is hard for any one else to step in and even hope to fill her shoes with a similar amount of caring, compassion, and heart. For this and many other reasons, we hope that Janie will be back with us in the near future. This past few weeks we have all worked hard to make sure that gaps will be filled with our services there until Janie is able to return. Jodie, Windy, Blaine, Sharon, Jan and others have all stepped up to fill this space, and we know that we will have a stronger office in the long run. With every negative there is a positive and often the end results are better than what they might have been without the negative.

This past month our Cowlitz office has continued its many support groups, has had a number of productive outreach activities including meetings with PeaceHealth, Aging and Disabilities where we met with a number of other agencies to begin to identify the greatest needs in Cowlitz County, and a fun morning with students in an ESD 112 alternative high school program where the students asked great questions and shared many personal experiences. We very much look forward to returning to meet with these students in future programs for them. Suzanne Arnits, our Development/Marketing person who also serves as Volunteer Coordinator, is spending a day a week at that office to help out since Cowlitz County is home for her.

We all wish Janie good health and sincerely hope to see her back at NAMI SW WA in the very near future.
Spring Cleaning for Your Mental Health

Soon we will smell newly bloomed tulips, cut the grass, clean out our closets of old winter clothes, and begin our other pre-summer routines. Springtime is full of fresh starts and new beginnings, a time of renewal. So what better time than spring to give a little attention to renewing our mental health?

Taking a little time to focus on our needs and discover the things that make us happy helps us gain a clear and refreshed mind. Here are a few tips to follow when spring-cleaning your mental health:

1. **Create a to-do list:** Instead of your common project list, create a list of things you want to achieve emotionally over the next few months. Include dreams—things you’ve always wanted to do—as well as long-term and short-term goals that are easily achievable. Perhaps you have been wanting to reconnect with that old high school friend or maybe you wish you knew how to play the guitar. Put them on your list!

2. **Enhance your physical health:** Physical wellness is an important part of sustaining mental well-being. Exercising and eating healthy are a big part of physical wellness but often are hard to incorporate in your routine. Try something simple like replacing soda and coffee with herbal teas, or eating a small portion of dark chocolate instead of a donut or other sugary snack.

3. **Renew your spirit:** Yoga, Pilates, and meditation often lend themselves to mental cleansing. Taking just a few minutes each day to relax by yourself can make a huge difference and reduce negative energy and thoughts that may be consuming your day.

New beginnings and healthy steps toward better living can help us rid ourselves of negative emotions and built up stress that may be bringing us down. Remember that each day is a fresh start—just like spring.

http://www.mymentalhealthday.org/2013/04/spring-cleaning-for-your-mental-health/
**Bulletin Board**

- There will be an **Educational Seminar on Genetic Testing**, Tuesday, March 22nd from 7-8:30 pm. The presentation will describe how a person metabolizes medication and how our individual DNA plays a role in this process. The presenter will also explain pharmacogenomic screening, how it works, give examples of potential test results and then walk through the steps required to get tested.

- The next **Genetic Testing day will be Wednesday, March 23rd**. This testing requires paperwork to be filled out. Please stop by the office, or call 360-695-2823, to get paperwork and instructions. People attending the Educational Seminar on March 22nd will not be eligible for testing the next day unless they have brought their completed paperwork to the NAMI office and set up a time for their genetic check swab.

- **Paper Tigers** - Wednesday, March 16th at 5:30pm. This movie will be showing at the Liberty Theatre 315 NE Fourth Avenue, Camas, WA 98607. Sponsored by the Washougal School District, this movie is **free to the public—first come, first served**.

  *Paper Tigers* chronicles a year in the life of Lincoln High School in the community of Walla Walla, Washington. The kids who come to Lincoln have a history of truancy, behavioral problems and substance abuse. After Lincoln's principal is exposed to research about the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), he decides to radically change the school's approach to discipline. With the aid of diary camera footage, the film follows six students. From getting into fights, grappling with traumatic events in their lives, and on the cusp of dropping out, they find healing, support and academic promise at Lincoln High.

  NAMI SW WA plans to show this film and its successor **Resilience** beginning late March or April in both offices.

- **Eating Smart, Being Active**  A nine (9) week series being held at the NAMI SW WA office beginning Tuesday, March 2nd from 3:00–4:30. This class ends on Tuesday, May 11th. To register call Brenda Harrison at 360-397-6060 x 5708 or email her at brenda.harrison@wsu.edu.

- **Volunteer Orientation Dates**
  - Vancouver office: Friday, March 25th at 3 p.m.
  - Kelso office: Wednesday, March 30th at 3 p.m.

  Please drop by either office to pick-up an application or email suzanne.a@namiswwa.org for an electronic copy.

- **Training through the Hearing Voices Research and Development Project** will be held in Vancouver, WA Monday, April 25th through Wednesday, April 27 from 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM. Training will take place at 40 and 8 Chateau (Bingo) at 7607 NE 26th Avenue. Training is free and is open to people who identify as voice hearers, allies, friends and family, clinicians, and peers. To participate you must already have some basic facilitation skills and/or training and some affiliation with the Veteran community. If interested, please check out [www.hearingvoicesusa.org](http://www.hearingvoicesusa.org) to become familiar with the basics and are truly interested in applying. Their goal is to have people who want to set up Hearing Voices groups. If you are interested, please complete the application on the website or come by the NAMI SW WA office for a copy. **Deadline for applications is Monday March 28th.**

- We are in dire need of **50 identical stacking chairs**. Please contact the office if you have some you wish to donate.

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**Resources:**

**NAMI SWWA Help Line**
M-F 9am-5pm  
(360) 695-2823  
(800) 273-TALK Suicide line  
(800) 950-NAMI Info line

**Mental Health Ombuds:**
(360) 397-8470  
(866) 666-5070

**Teen Talk:** (after 4pm)  
(360) 397-2428

**CRISIS LINES**

**CLARK COUNTY**  
(360) 696-9560  
(800) 626-8137

**SKAMANIA**  
(509) 427-3850

**COWLITZ**  
(360) 425-6064  
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**ATTENTION!! New fund raising App for smart phones.**
Enjoy dinner at one of several different restaurants on a Tuesday and 15-40% of what you purchase will be donated to NAMI SW WA.

Go to [http://quipley.com/](http://quipley.com/) or call the office for more information.
- 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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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.namiswwa.org and click on Join NAMI

Thank you for being part of the team! Help support the one in four Americans who will be affected by mental illness this year.

Thank you for being part of the team!