Mark Your Calendars
NAMI SW WA Spring Fundraiser!
Warehouse 23, 100 Columbia St, #102, Vancouver, WA 98660
Friday, April 28th 11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Mark your calendar and join us for the NAMI SW WA Spring Fundraising Luncheon. Funds from this event will help us continue to help families and individuals in mental health crises. Vanessa Gaston, Director of Community Services in Clark County will be guest of honor and speaker discussing where we, the early adopters, are on integration of mental health, medical, and substance use treatments in SW WA one year later. We have different levels of sponsorship available for businesses, agencies, individuals and families that wish to become a sponsor. We will also hold a silent auction, auctioning off art work created by individuals and family members who come to our various art therapy groups. Sponsorship levels include:

- Carrie Fisher Luncheon Sponsorships: $5,000
- Patty Duke Unique Services Sponsorships: $2,500
- Robin Williams Table Sponsorships: $1,000
- Lady Gaga Audio Visual Sponsorships: $500
- Brian Wilson Marketing Sponsorships: $250
- Individual Registration: $75

Go to https://namiswwa.org/spring_luncheon-fundraiser/ to register.
Questions? Call or email Suzanne Arnits 360-695-2823 x 111 or susanne.a@namiswwa.org

NAMI SW WA Behavioral Health Services

Ready to address your mental health issues, but you are being told you will need to be put on a waiting list? If you have Apple Health (Medicaid) coverage through Molina Healthcare of Washington or Community Health Plan of Washington, NAMI SW WA currently has no waiting list, but spots are rapidly being filled. Call 360-695-2823 for more information.
Dear Members and Friends,

We had a terrific time in Olympia on President’s Day, February 20th, as we met with Clark, Cowlitz, and Skamania legislators to talk about bills they will be reviewing and, hopefully, approving in the session that will benefit people affected by mental health issues. Eight staff and volunteers represented NAMI SW WA. We all agreed that it was a very successful day full of meetings. We will continue to be in touch with the legislators about specific issues including the diversion, crisis triage/intervention center we hope to be part of creating here in Clark County.

Our SEE ME program gets more requests for presentations every month. We look forward to doing our quarterly trainings for the Northwest Regional Training Center (NWRTC) Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training program through Clark College as well as for the paramedic training program held in Clackamas County, Oregon this month. At each of these programs our speakers are emotionally rewarded when they hear that their presentations make a significant difference toward these trainees feeling more competent to engage in their future positions. These four-hour trainings allow a greater number of our SEE ME presenters to tell their stories about living with one or more mental health diagnoses. If you have not been to a SEE ME program the trainings at NWRTC usually have space for guests. If you would like to witness this wonderful program please call our office and we will let you know if there is space for others to attend.

Our board members and staff are busy preparing for our first major fundraising event that will take place on Friday, April 28th. The luncheon event will be held at Warehouse 23 and will feature Vanessa Gaston, the Director of Clark County Community Services who will speak about Integrating Mental Health, Physical Health, and Substance Abuse Treatment... a goal we have had in this community since last April 1st when the Regional Support Network disbanded and Clark and Skamania Counties chose to become the early adopters of integration for the State of Washington. Funding from this event will help NAMI SW WA continue to provide the many services we now provide at no charge to the public. Please make your reservations online at namiswwa.org/spring_luncheon, call 360-695-2823, or email suzanne.a@namiswwa.org. We look forward to seeing you all there.

Last, but by no means least, NAMI SW WA is very pleased to announce the awarding of funding from the M.J. Murdock Memorial Trust that will help us grow our Behavioral Health Services significantly. We are very grateful for this three-year funding.

Best regards,
Peggy
Development of Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is a disease of the brain. It appears to be the result of factors such as genetics, environmental and psychological assaults, and possible hormonal changes that alter the brain’s chemistry.

It most often appears in young men between the age of 18 and 24. Although more prevalent in men than women, onset for young women is often nearer to age 24 to 30. It has been known to surface again in people around 40 and, in women, as late as 60.

The rarest form is early onset or childhood schizophrenia which occurs before the age of 12. Statistics differ, but it seems to happen about 1 in 40,000 births. As diagnostic techniques improve, incidences of children diagnosed appears to be on the rise. It is not known whether factors in the environment, exposure to chemicals or societal pressures play a part.

Regardless of the age of onset, the prognosis is best when treatment is given with the first psychotic episode. Some medical evidence points to even earlier intervention in the prodromal stage, before a psychotic break.

There are many factors that influence whether an individual is affected. Professionals agree that drug use such as marijuana, methamphetamines and other street drugs can certainly be a factor in the development of the disease. Even individuals who are not genetically wired for schizophrenia can develop hallucinations and delusions that lead to the disease.

Young people who are seriously involved in drugs at an early age are often trying to medicate themselves to deal with the effects of mental illness. These are not adolescents who are weekend participants giving in to peer pressure and hoping for an entertaining buzz. Those who use drug or alcohol on a daily basis, or as often as they possibly can, are trying to escape the negative effects of poor mental health.

It is a sad irony that the young people who will be the most harmed by the use of drugs and alcohol will be the ones the ones most devastated by it. For these individuals, using is not a harmless activity, but an attempt to regulate faulty brain function. Education of children and teens is of the upmost importance.
I was lost
by Greg Betts 02-17-2017

I was lost in a fog of confusion and delusion where reality disappears and has no meaning or conclusion.

I was lost in a place so dark without light without a spark
Oh! It was so dark.

I was lost in the fog, then in the distance a dim light began to shine and somehow I knew it was mine.

I was lost until that day when the light came in sight so I no more had to live in fright.

I was lost no more for with the light the pain was gone and turned to gain no more sorrow no more pain for I no more am lost.

NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBERS:
PLEASE HELP US SAVE MONEY and TREES

NAMI SW WA wants to save money as well as paper. We currently print several thousand newsletters each month, for mailing and for distribution at community events. We know the newsletter is valuable, because we hear from readers about how much they enjoy it. The one way we can save both money, from postage, and trees from the reams of paper we use each month to print, is to cut back on our newsletter mailing. If you receive your newsletter by mail and you have an email address please call or write us with your email address so we can send your next newsletter electronically.

Thanks, NAMI SW WA
Thank you Knights of Columbus Council #15730

Every year, the Knights of Columbus can be seen in local stores as they conduct their Tootsie Roll fundraiser. Customers are offered a special Tootsie Roll treat and asked to put loose change into the donation bucket.

This year the group chose NAMI SW WA and The ARC as the non-profit agencies who would be recipients of their 2016 efforts and their generosity.

NAMI SW WA is deeply grateful to these community oriented men who work in many ways to better the greater Vancouver community through a variety of good works. In 2017 you may see some of our volunteers helping them! Thanks to the Knights of Columbus and to all Vancouver residents who contributed to this worthwhile

Board Committees

**Development**
Ann Donnelly
Suzanne Arnits
Peggy McCarthy

**Governance**
Michael Altig
Peggy McCarthy
Melinda McLeod
Bryan Miller

**Finance**
Ann Donnelly
Michael Inman
Rosalie Larsen
Craig Pridemore
Peggy McCarthy

**Nominating**
Adam Pithan
Peggy McCarthy

**Fundraising**
Ann Donnelly
Kim Schniederman
Suzanne Arnits
Peggy McCarthy
LET’S TALK MENTAL HEALTH
What now?

Last month we looked at the question many people ask when diagnosed with a mental illness, “Why me?”. This month we’ll look at “What now?” Like most journeys we embark on, we have questions: “Where am I going?” “How long does it take?” “What do I need on the trip?” “Will I go alone, have company, have help?” “When will I know I’ve arrived?” The same is true of your mental health recovery journey.

Information helps answer your questions and helps you figure out what needs to be done to rebuild and maintain well-being. It assists in making sense of your diagnosis and your experiences, some of which may be troubling or confusing. It can help you see that you are not your diagnosis, you are a person who happens to have an illness. You can get information from your health care provider, support group, community organizations or on your own through books or websites.

NAMI SW WA has support groups and education groups for individuals diagnosed with a mental health condition and for their family members and loved ones. Information offered in our education groups is always evidenced based, meaning that it is based in science and has been proven accurate. In addition, learning from others in our support groups who’ve experienced similar problems can be very helpful and encouraging. People who have participated in our groups walk away with practical tips to overcome challenges and gain hope for their recovery and the recovery of their loved ones.

As you move forward on your journey, it is important to look toward treatment, recovery, and beyond.

Recovery from a mental disorder is expected. It is not a life sentence. You can learn how to cope with symptoms so they don’t have a big impact on your day-to-day life. Treatment may include a combination of medication, therapy and healthy living skills. Your exact combination will be unique. There is not a set formula that works for everyone.

The Canadian Mental Health Association offers this perspective of looking at recovery: *Most people talk about recovery in terms of controlling symptoms so they can live well. Everyone's recovery journey looks different. Some parts may take a long time, while others will pass quickly. You may even take a few steps back from time to time. You can learn a lot about living with a mental disorder from others who have experienced similar things. The most important point to remember is that recovery does happen for most people, and there are things that you and others can do to help you move through your journey.*

It may have taken a long time, and you might be a bit confused by all the information you’ve heard, but a diagnosis can be very helpful in finding the right recovery plan for you. The next stop in helping cope with your diagnosis may be your family doctor, a trusted friend or family member, your local mental health clinic, a mental health organization, a private counselor, therapist or psychiatrist, or an online support group. NAMI SW WA is here to assist you in information gathering, offering support and recommending resources for your journey.

Please stop by or give us a call.
Psychoeducation and tools for a successful and sustained recovery from mental illness.

Drop in.

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

Drop in.

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

Call to sign up.

Peer support group for those affected by mental illness.

(Drop in)

5411 E. Mill Plain Blvd Suite 4

(360) 695-2823

MONDAY

NAMI Walks and Talks

12:00

TUESDAY

STRivE First Steps

Veteran Family Care Givers

3:30

WEDNESDAY

Women’s Support Group

Vegetarian Family Care Givers

2:00 - 3:00 pm

THURSDAY

Family Support Group

STRivE First Steps

3:30 - 5:00 pm

FRIDAY

Volunteer Orientation

NAMI Walks and Talks

2:00 - 3:00 pm

NAMI Walks and Talks

12:00 - 1:00 pm

Peel support group for those affected by mental health issues cases. (call to sign up)

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.

Psychosocial education and tools for a successful and sustained recovery from mental illness.

Our entrance is on the West side.

On Mill Plain Blvd between 28th and MacArthur.

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**MONDAY**
Office Hours 10 - 4
Family Support Group
**STRivE First Steps**
10:00 - 11:30am

**TUESDAY**
Office Hours 1 - 4
Family to Family (registrants only)
**STRivE First Steps**
6:00 - 8:30 pm

**WEDNESDAY**
Office Hours 10 - 4
ART Group
**STRivE First Steps**
1:00 - 2:30 pm

**THURSDAY**
Office Hours 10 - 4
Family Support Group
**STRivE First Steps**
1:00 - 2:30 pm

**FRIDAY**
Office Hours 10 - 4
Family to Family (registrants only)
Volunteer Orientation - 4th Thursday
**STRivE First Steps**
6:00 - 8:30 pm

**NEW LOCATION**
1128 Broadway
Longview, WA 98632

Provides support and resources
Call 360-695-2823
Information Line - 9 - 5 Monday - Friday

Peer Support Group for those affected by mental illness. (Drop in)
Volunteer Orientation - 4th Thursday
Support for friends and family of people who have a mental health diagnosis. (Drop in)
Psychoeducation and tools for a successful and sustained recovery from mental illness. (Drop in)
Peer Support Group for those affected by mental illness.

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NAMI Washington Lobby Day

Lobby Day, as usual, was exhausting but fun. Monday, February 20th, we set off early in the morning from our Vancouver and Longview office sites to be in Olympia shortly after 9:00 for meetings with our legislators. The group from Longview included Suzanne Arnits, Jan Kell, and Rosalie Olds (daughter of Bernie and Marcia Altman, part of the founding group for NAMI in Cowlitz County). Our group from Vancouver included Jerri Clark, Peggy McCarthy, John McDonald, Annett Pickett, and KeriLee Stanberry. Our groups met with legislators, committee members, and others at the capitol. We talked about various pieces of legislation that will benefit those with mental health diagnoses, the need to more beds in SW WA as well as the hoped for diversion, crisis intervention/triage center for our area. The stories told by our peers and family members deeply touched the hearts of the legislative community. This is a very positive way for us to reach these important people who serve us in

John McDonald, KeriLee Stanberry, Jerri Clark and Annett Pickett in the Capitol Rotunda

Save the date for NAMIWalks NW — Sunday, May 21, 2017

Held at the Vera Katz East Waterfront Promenade in Portland, OR. Enjoy a scenic 5K 3.2mile route crossing over two traffic free bridges.

Please choose NAMI SW WA as your affiliate! It is not too early to sign-up. Create a team, join a team, and talk to co-workers and friends to participate! This regional event is inclusive, fun, and you can walk, skate, run plus your leashed dog is welcome. Register at https://namiswwa.org/namiwalks_northwest/

Interested in being a Corporate Sponsor? if so, please contact Suzanne Arnits at 360-695-2823 or suzanne.a@namiswwa.org or for other information!
Welcome to the Cowlitz Corner. We look forward to assisting you in your journey of recovery with mental illness.

Please visit us at our new location in Longview at 1128 Broadway. We look forward to serving our clients in this more centralized location.

We would like to introduce you to “Cat”, our amazing “ART Group” facilitator. Whether or not you consider yourself artistic or not, Cat will help bring those traits to the surface and assist you in whatever project you choose. Cultivating creativity in your life provides many benefits, including stress reduction, lowering anxiety, helping one cope with depression and also gives you a much-needed break from those day-to-day tasks. We meet on Thursdays from 10 am to noon. We are hoping to add an additional art group in the future. Cat will share her knowledge and guide you on any project you may choose. You will definitely leave with a smile on your face and maybe a chuckle in your heart after listening to funny stories Cat brings to life in our art group. With the help of donations, we are able to offer these classes at no charge to the participant. These are a few of the projects you can choose from in the days to come; hope boxes, bead people, coloring for relaxation, rock painting, sock animals plus more. Please come in and meet Cat and join us in our fun group!

Mark your calendar! The students at RA Long High School (2903 Nichols Blvd in Longview) are presenting a play titled “The Mental State” on Friday evening March 3rd at 7:30 and again on Saturday March 4th at 2:00 pm and then at 7:30 pm. This is a wonderful play involving a student living with schizophrenia. Representatives from NAMI SW Washington Cowlitz County will have a table of literature and handouts and be able to answer any questions or assist in any way we can. We, cast, crew and NAMI SW WA volunteers are also holding short community discussions after the play. We hope to see you there!

Our Family -to- Family group is going well. The current class will end on March 16th. The next class will be held during the daytime. If you are interested in putting your name on the list, please call us at 360.703.6722. Pre-registration is required. Once we have enough people interested we will confirm the date and time. NAMI Family to Family is taught by NAMI-trained family members who have their own experience of living or dealing with a family member with a mental health disorder, that includes presentations, discussion and interactive exercises. All of our services and groups are at no charge to the participant.

DID YOU KNOW?
383 people attended NAMI SW WA support groups in Cowlitz County in 2016. 94% of people who attended our support groups increased their knowledge about mental health and 90% felt increased hope.
Bulletin Board

- **March 28th from 2-3pm** - **Operation Family Caregiver (OFC)** is a free, confidential and individualized program for caregivers of disabled veterans and service members. It is a new program in the state of Washington from the Rosalyn Carter Institute for Caregiving, sponsored in the state by Easterseals Washington. OFC focuses on supporting and improving the quality of life and problem-solving skills for caregivers of Post 9/11 veterans. It is also appropriate for caregivers of Vietnam veterans dealing with PTSD, however it is not designed to work with caregivers of dementia or other long-term illnesses related to aging. Meredith McMackin, OFC Caregiver Coach and Gold Star Mother, will give a short presentation for anyone interested in participating in the program or to gain information to share with other caregivers they might know. You do not have to be a family member of the veteran to be eligible for this program. Meredith can meet with caregivers in person or online via Skype or FaceTime.

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□ $50 ($35 membership fee plus $15 donation)
□ $100 ($35 membership fee plus $65 donation)
□ $35 Individual membership
□ $3 Open Door annual membership
□ Free—membership scholarship
□ Donation $ ____________

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

Name: ____________________________________
Address: __________________________________
City: _________________ State & Zip: ________
Phone: (_____) ____________________________
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.namiswwa.org and click on Join NAMI