The holiday season is here! We are all excited to stuff our holiday gift bags! Every December, we provide 125 – 150 Holiday Bags to peers who are working to regain stability in Southwest Washington’s critical in-residence mental health and substance use facilities. Often, these bags are the only holiday gift they will receive.

We need donations to make this event a success! We still need donations for our bags like warm woolen gloves and hats (without strings or long tails), and trial size personal care products (like unscented shampoo, body wash, or lotion). Our Expressive Arts Group will be hand decorating the bags for a personal touch.

Thank You and Happy Holidays!
Dear Members and Friends,

As this year comes to a close all of us at NAMI SW WA are busy planning our classes and groups for next year, ensuring we have the teachers and facilitators we need to continue to provide the wide array of programs we offer at both locations. If you have participated in a NAMI SW WA program that has been especially meaningful to you and would like to be able to share that experience with others, please call our office and ask to be placed on our training list so that we can get you signed up for the next possible training class. In 2018 Heidi Bjurstrom, our Coordinator of Program Development and Leader Support/ Volunteer Coordinator, will have a column in each newsletter that will explain more about the many improvements we are making in our programs.

On Monday, December 18th, beginning at 5:30 p.m. we will be hosting our annual bag stuffing party at the Vancouver office. This is the time we gather to prepare over 100 gift bags for our friends who will be working hard to get stabilized in the relatively few in-residence mental health and substance use programs available in SW WA. This year we will be including two pairs of socks provided to us from Bombas Socks. In addition, through gifts from our many supporters, we will be adding hats and gloves, personal items such as toothpaste and toothbrushes, soap and other items, as well as the candy that so many look forward to each year. Please bring donations to our office prior to the evening of the 18th. Candy needs to be individually wrapped such as miniature chocolate bars and candy canes.

Major events for early 2018 include the NAMI SW WA Annual Meeting on January 17th beginning at 5:30 p.m. At this meeting, NAMI SW WA members have the opportunity to vote for board members and officers as well as to review and approve the proposed 2018 budget. The next major event is Lobby Day on February 19th in Olympia when NAMI SW WA staff and volunteers travel to the State capitol to join NAMI members from across Washington State to lobby for proposed bills that will positively affect all those living with mental health issues and their family members. Please mark your calendars and plan to participate in both events.

Have restful and blessed holidays,

Peggy
Support Groups

Connection Support Group
Lee Nelson
Karla Obenhaus
Sharon Smith
Laura Stephens

Corrections H-Pod/Workcenter
John McDonald
Steve Lavoie

Family Support Group
Debbie Archer
Pamela French
Jan Kell
Cindy Falter

LGBTQ+ Group
Collin Stumbaugh
Eric Johnson

Education Classes

Basics
Becky Anderson
Heidi Bjurstrom
Amy Ford
Keri Lee Stanberry
Angela Swanson
Olivia Mattus

Family to Family
Debbie Archer
Heidi Bjurstrom
Jan Kell
Dani Maron-Oliver
Whitney Phillips
Sharon Smith
Scott Buckley
Ted Engelbrecht
Keri Stanberry

Peer to Peer
Debbie Archer
Heidi Bjurstrom
Cindy Falter
Dani Maron-Oliver
John McDonald
Lee Nelson
Karla Obenhaus
Sharon Smith
Ken Stanberry

SEE ME
John McDonald

STRive Psychoeducational Program
Debbie Archer
Jan Kell
Dani Maron-Oliver

Words on Jail and Psychosis by Chiara Caballero

One day I became sane again and learned that five weeks had passed. The time lost pointed to what had happened, what I’d done, and what happened to me. In severe psychosis for several weeks, I remember that time in terms of the delusions and hallucinations I had. A jail stay of almost two weeks and several weeks at Telecare for treatment. When I finally did get out, the depression I felt afterward was staggering. Following is an excerpt from my zine which includes hallucinations and delusions I was under during my time in jail. If you would like to read my entire zine, “Centurion Parade” please go to http://bit.ly/CenturionParade.

Number Five

Five. The number flashed like neon in the ceiling of a worn-out New York apartment. A glimpse of my favorite uncle as if he were communicating from the dead. He insisted on five. I kept seeing five. Blue white neon. Blue white hot. White hot. Then an odor like you would imagine chemo farts to smell like invaded my nostrils. Then I was in a city, a sequence of events tempted catastrophe. A train came through, white hot lightening it was called. There was an old, rich white man who was controlling the train. He wanted to destroy the world. We were trying to stop him. I saw many possible outcomes and also the one where he succeeded. He was on top of the world and treated people the way he wanted without fear of recrimination or consequence. I helped and shared this vision of multiple outcomes; in one timeline, we stopped him and in another we didn’t. When we didn’t, it was horrifying. In the horizon, a huge white flash covered the world and then everything went dark. Nothing was left alive.

Thank You!

By Greg Betts

I was sad and alone and no one heard my anguished pleas until you heard them thank you for hearing my plea oh won’t you please set me free.

Thank you for hearing me as I made my impassioned plea to be set free.

Thank you for hearing my voice I know you had a choice and you heard as I cried to be free.

Thank you NAMI for hearing me and my plea and acknowledging I am here and I am free.

Thank you for hearing me!
"Have a holly, jolly Christmas." It almost sounds like a demand. Or a dare. Burl Ives is threatening us to have a holly, jolly Christmas, or else... But many of us feel anything but jolly (or holly, whatever that is supposed to feel like) during the holidays. Many of us are grieving, anxious, stressed or depressed. And the expectation that we're supposed to be anything but just makes it all worse.

Whatever negative emotions the holidays stir in us, we know that realistically we will be immersed in holiday cheer in the coming weeks. We have parties to attend (or, God help us, throw), presents to buy and wrap, carols to sing with smiles on our faces. We've promised ourselves, our significant others, our kids, and friends that we are not going to win the Bah-Humbug contest this year. So how do we do it?

Set realistic holiday expectations.
Not much of a baker? Then don't promise cookies or a fruitcake to anyone. Store-bought desserts fatten people up just as easily! Hate shopping? Thoughtful, homemade gifts trump any store bought present. Love to sing? Grab some friends and go on a caroling trip to a local nursing home or neighborhood. Choose what makes you the happiest and pursue it, and don't do things you dread. Don't force yourself to do anything you can't do with sincere joy.

Create new traditions.
Many of us experience depression during the holidays because so much of the season is rooted in tradition. But these traditions can trigger overwhelming emotions if we've lost a loved one or battled anxiety, serving as painful reminders of what we're still fighting. Which is why creating new traditions is a healthy way to enjoy holidays in a whole new light. It can be especially fun with children, who are notoriously creative in coming up with new ways to celebrate the season. Trying a new cookie recipe, watching a more recent holiday flick, even eating a holiday meal at a restaurant instead of cooking are all easy ways to break with tradition and take your holidays a different route.

Avoid the drama.
We all have those family members who we barely speak to or can't be in the same room for long. The holidays are not the time to address drama of holidays passed. If you're hosting, let your guests know ahead of time that you expect your gathering to be a happy occasion. If you're invited somewhere you know might result in an uncomfortable situation, give yourself a time limit of how long you'll stay. Let your host know ahead of time (if you know your host well, you can even arrange a safe word or a place you can go if your anxiety creeps up on you and you need a gracious way to make an exit). Set boundaries ahead of time so that you'll be able to thoroughly enjoy your company without a fight breaking out in the middle of your holiday roast.

Many people grieving, depressed, anxious or overwhelmed think they should just be able to "get over it" on their own and isolate themselves from the holiday season. Become mindful of your feelings and needs for the holiday season. Don't have expectations and create a plan ahead. Finally, reach out for comfort and understanding and celebrate in your own way.
Finding the words to tell you about my wonderful friend are hard to come by. She is always happy, bright, full of life, vim and vigor. She always brings cheer and joy to all who come to art group feeling down. They always leave totally renewed and happier for being with her. She had a stroke some years ago and it has not affected her outlook on life in a negative way as it might for some. I see nothing but a free spirit who has overcome her condition. If you want to find her just follow the rays of sunshine and she’ll be there. Her name is Bakira.

My Friend Bakira  
By Teryl Gallagher

Board Committees

**Development/Marketing**  
Ann Donnelly  
Angela Swanson  
Peggy McCarthy

**Finance**  
Ann Donnelly  
Terry Gertsen  
Michael Inman  
Rosalie Larse  
David Loos  
Craig Pridemore  
Kim Schneiderman  
Peggy McCarthy

**Nominating**  
Adam Pithan  
Peggy McCarthy

**Fundraising**  
Ann Donnelly  
Kim Schneiderman  
Angela Swanson  
Peggy McCarthy
Behavioral Health

Our packaging options and dependable delivery are an added benefit for your clients, and our Refill Maintenance program coordinates clients, providers and insurance to offer patients streamlined prescription refills.

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Free Adherence Packaging
- Client's name
- Date and day of week medication should be taken
- List of medications in each bubble
- Color coordination for time of day to be taken
- Easier to open peel back instead of push through
- A larger blister, perforated and portable

Additional Services
- Clozapine monitoring program
- Prior Authorizations
- Pharmacist collaboration
- Health Minder Refill Maintenance
- Web Connect
- Telephone support for client questions

Free Delivery

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**Mental Health Medication Consult**  
By Appointment  
Call 360-695-2823

**Disability/Work Incentives Counseling**  
With Cindy Falter  
By Appointment  
Call 360-695-2823

**Information Line**  
- 9:5 Monday-Friday  
Call 360-695-2823

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**5411 E. Mill Plain**  
Suite 4  
360-695-2823

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**Psychoeducation and tools for a successful and sustained mental wellness.**
- 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 to a peer support group for those affected by mental health issues.  
- Call to sign up for a peer support group for those affected by mental health issues.

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**Provision of resources and tools for a successful and sustained mental wellness.**
- Drop in.

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**Unforeseen circumstances may cause a group or class to be cancelled. Please call ahead to confirm.**

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:30 am</td>
<td>STRivE First Steps</td>
<td>Board of Directors' Annual Meeting</td>
<td>Family Support Group</td>
<td>Connection Recovery Support Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>Women's Support Group</td>
<td>3:30 pm</td>
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<td>LEBT40+ Support Group</td>
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<td>12 noon</td>
<td>STRivE First Steps</td>
<td>5:00 pm</td>
<td>5:00 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 noon</td>
<td>12 noon</td>
<td>NAMI Walks and Talks</td>
<td>6:00 pm</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**On Mill Plain Blvd between Devine and MacArthur.**
- Our entrance is on the West side.
- Our entrance is on the West side.
- Our entrance is on the West side.

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**CLARK / SKAMANIA**

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**December 2017**

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**NAMI Southwest Washington**
Mental Health Medication Consult
BY APPOINTMENT
Call 360-695-2823
Disability/Work Incentives Counseling
Call 360-695-2823
Information Line - 9-5 Monday-Friday

Provides support and resources
Call 360-695-2823
Peer Support Group for those affected by mental health issues, call to schedule.
Support for families of military members, call to sign up.
Support for friends and family of people who have a mental health diagnosis. Drop in.
Peer support group for those affected by mental health challenges. Drop in.

Psychoeducation and tools for a successful and sustained mental wellness.
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 schedule.
Peers in recovery provide support for those affected by mental health challenges. Drop in.

1128 Broadway
Longview, WA 98632
(360) 703-6722

Monday
Office Hours 10 - 4
STRIVE First Steps
10 - 2:30 pm

Tuesday
Office Hours 10 - 4
Family Support Group
4 - 5:30 pm

Wednesday
Office Hours 10 - 4
Expressive Arts
12 - 3 pm

Thursday
Office Hours 10 - 4
STRIVE First Steps
1 to 2:30 pm
Connection Recovery Support Group
3 to 4:30 pm

Friday
Office Closed

It is that time of year again when we start reflecting on the past year, what we accomplished and what we didn’t. We begin to look toward the New Year with refreshed optimism and a list of resolutions. Research tells us that only 8% of individuals making New Year’s resolutions keep them. In fact, most fizzle out before February is in full swing. When that happens, we are apt to get depressed and down on ourselves and begin using those self-defeating words, “I could have,” “I should have”, “If I would have.” Why only 8%? What happened to the rest? In most cases the resolution was not realistic. So, instead of “resolving to do something”, how about winning by setting a realistic goal or goals that can be followed through with and achieved? That sounds smart, doesn’t it? In fact, the acronym SMART is often used to set goals. A SMART goal must conform to the following criteria: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely. Let’s start!

S – Is your goal **specific** – what exactly is it you want to achieve? How, when and where will it happen?
M – Is your goal **measurable** – what will it look like if you achieve your objective? What evidence will show you have been successful?
A – Is your goal **attainable** – can you realistically reach your goal? The whole point of a goal is to be a challenge and something that will push you, but shouldn’t be impossible.
R – Is your goal **relevant** – is it personal and why do you want to reach it?
T – Is your goal **timely** – when will you achieve it? All objectives need a deadline, which will hold accountability to your actions and progress.

In November, our Expressive Arts Group created a goal wall where anyone can start the new year off with a personal goal. When in the Vancouver office, we invite anyone to write a goal on a shape and we will post it on our board. **Want to be in the successful 8%? Choose a goal that matters, don’t let a setback stop you, and make sure your goal is SMART!**
Hello Friends and welcome to our little corner of the world. We embrace all those living with mental health challenges and those that love them. Our staff and volunteers are all peers with lived experience. We either have a family member or loved one living with mental health challenges or are living with a challenge ourselves and in stable recovery. Our office is a safe, inviting space for all and services are confidential and offered at no charge to those accessing them. Please feel free to stop in anytime.

Our outreach team had the opportunity to share our information to the staff at "A First Place" in Kelso along with answering questions and learning about what services they provide to our community. Next we made a presentation to the staff at the "Emergency Support Shelter" in Longview. Four of our "SEE ME" presenters also shared their stories of hope and recovery and answered many questions from those attending. We then were invited to share our materials to the "Veterans Integration Program" (VIP) in Longview. We were excited to talk about the program we have for the Veterans in our community. We answered many questions and were happy with the large turn out. Special thanks to Joe and Kortney for the invite. We want to thank all who attended and volunteered at these events as we continue to help break the STIGMA surrounding mental illness.

Please check the "Cowlitz" calendar on page 6 in this publication for the time and dates of our classes and support groups. We're here to offer "Help" for today and "Hope" for tomorrow.

Jan

Volunteer Appreciation Evening—November 17th

On November 17th, we held our Annual Volunteer Appreciation Evening to recognize all of the dedicated people who promote mental wellness and recovery and family education and support for those with a loved one with a mental diagnosis. A special thank you to Burgerville, our community partner, for providing a delicious dinner! It was a truly wonderful evening. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, we have many opportunities and free training. Go to our website namiswwa.org to sign up!
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 LINE
CLARK COUNTY
(360) 696-9560
(800) 626-8137

SKAMANIA
(509) 427-3850

COWLITZ
(360) 425-6064
(800) 803-8833

WAHKIAKUM
800-273-8255

Vital Support

Office Support
Arlene Meyers

To Register for all NAMI SWWA Coourses call Phyllis
360) 695-2823
to sign-up or email at Phyllis.c@namiswwa.org
Classes fill-up quickly so sign up soon.

Bulletin Board

- **Family and Friends Seminar** is a 4-hour seminar for those with loved ones with a mental health diagnosis. December 2nd, 10am — 2pm. This seminar will be held at both our Vancouver and Longview locations periodically throughout 2018. Register for the next seminar online at namiswwa.org.

- **NEW Chronic Pain Management Group** Register for the next 11-week group beginning Monday, January 8th at 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM. Participants must have Washington Apple Health (Medicaid) through Molina or Community Health Plan of Washington. Call to register (360) 695-2823.

- **Events**
  - **Holiday Bag Stuffing Party**—Come help share a bit of holiday cheer and help fill bags for those in critical mental health care and substance abuse facilities.
    December 18th, 5:30—8:30 pm  at NAMI SW WA
    5411 E. Mill Plain Blvd, Suite 4, Vancouver, WA

- **Ongoing NAMI SW WA Groups**
  - **Gender & Sexuality Support Group** for the LGBTQO+ community. Every Tuesday, from 6:00 to 7:30 pm at the Vancouver location.
  - **Expressive Arts Group** - (no charge, all supplies provided) Longview:
    Wednesdays, from 12:00 to 3:00 pm.  Vancouver: Fridays from 1:00 to 4:00 pm.  Drop-ins welcome.
  - **Creative Writing for Wellness Group** - Anyone interested in writing stories, poetry, journals, etc. please join us. Vancouver: Fridays from 12:00—1:00 pm. Drop-ins welcome.

- **Upcoming 2018 Education Classes and Support Groups**
  - **Family to Family** (starting in January in both Longview and Vancouver)
  - **Familia a Familia Basics**
  - **Homefront**
  - **Peer to Peer**
  - **Parents and Teachers as Allies**
  - **Ending the Silence**

These are NAMI Signature educational classes. Pre-register by calling 360-695-2823 and we will notify you when the class begins.

- **NEW Exercise Class for Wellness and Recovery** - Low impact exercises for beginners. Starting in February 6th on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:15 pm - 2:00 pm

- **Holiday Hours:** Office Closed December 22nd at 1:00 pm, December 25th & 26th, and January 1st.
Help support the one in four Americans who will be affected by mental illness this year.

Thank you for being part of the team!