PLEASE REGISTER NOW
NAMI SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON’S
Annual Fundraising Luncheon
FEBRUARY 15 AT WAREHOUSE 23
FROM 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM
WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU FOR A GREAT
TIME OF FUN, FOOD, AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE
PLEASE REGISTER AND
PAY ONLINE
AT NAMISWWA.ORG
$50 PER PERSON
SEE YOU THERE!

Clark/Skamania
Hours: Monday–Friday 9-5 pm
5411 E. Mill Plain, Suite 4
Vancouver, WA 98661
Tel: (360) 695-2823
Fax: (360) 823-1088

Cowlitz/Wahkiakum
Hours: Mon, Wed & Thurs
10 am-4 pm
Tues 1 pm-4 pm
Closed on Fridays
1128 Broadway
Longview, WA 98632
Tel: (360) 703-6722
Fax: (360) 823-1088
Dear Members and Friends,

This is my last letter to you all as Executive Director. I am leaving my position as well as leaving NAMI SW WA on the last day in January. This is a bittersweet time for me. I hate leaving all the wonderful people I have met and grown to care deeply about as we offer hope and help to you and your loved ones. I find myself shedding tears daily in conversations, in person, and on the phone. Every single person I have met through what has become NAMI SW WA holds a spot in my heart and mind. Leaving you all is hard. On the other hand, I am leaving because I am planning a journey of my lifetime. Over 40 years ago I decided I wanted to walk the Pilgrim’s Trail in Europe. I turn 80 at the end of this year and I want to take what I assume will be my last trip in which I do something this energetic, and I need to do it before I no longer can.

When I made the decision to do this walk I had just had the opportunity to spend two weeks walking trails in France, some of it on connecting trails to the official Santiago de Compostela trail that ends in Spain. Over the next years, I walked trails in Italy and Turkey as well. Each these trails had connections to Santiago. Each trail was first formed by animals, then expanded by the very early Neanderthals and then the early humans, the Cro-Magnons. As I walked these ancient paths it felt to me as if I was able to relive some of their experiences. I witnessed ancient ruins that brought me to my knees; I saw history and conflict unfold as I saw cave dwellings with amazing art on the walls; of animals and hunts, of religious art and objects that were first painted by early humans then painted over or marked through by others who came after. Many of these early paintings depicted early spiritual practices that were followed by the more organized religions, each trying to overshadow the previous inhabitants or travelers through the area.

My walk will take me from southern Portugal, up the coast into Spain to the city of Santiago, one of the most popular places where pilgrimages from all over Europe traditionally end. I plan to walk an additional 150 or so miles after that to go to Finisterra, or the end of the earth, or so it was believed when people in Europe believed the earth was flat. I hope to average 15 to 20 miles per day...which is why I need some time now to get my walking up to that amount.

I will leave for my walk in September and be returning in late fall, probably sometime in November. I am not sure what I will have decided to do when I come back to Vancouver. Right now I am talking with a number of people about projects that need to be done in behavioral health, an area that
I have become devoted to these past six years.

I will write a blog while I am walking and will let friends at NAMI SW WA know the name and URL of the blog for those interested in following my journey.

I wish the very best for NAMI SW WA. We have worked hard to bring it to where it is today and sincerely hope that those who are taking over the agency will see fit to carry on our good work. Our staff at NAMI SW WA is terrific, kind, caring, talented, devoted, compassionate, and full of commitment to our goal of providing hope and help to all affected by mental health challenges. Together, we have created space at our two offices in Vancouver and Longview where individuals and family members can come to feel safe as they talk with us and others about their challenges. It is important that this space is kept available. This is where the public comes in. Please become a recurring donor for us by signing up on our website. Give up a fancy coffee once a week or once a month or a lunch out with friends. Even $5, $10, $25 or more a month can be a big help to us.

I will keep you all in my mind and sincerely hope that you will think of me at times and send me wishes for strength and fortitude for my journey.

With love to you all, Peggy
STIGMA: Getting Appropriate Attention for a Medical Issue When Living With Mental Health Challenges  by Peggy McCarthy

On Wednesday evening, January 22, the Friends of Vancouver Community Library hosted a Forum: The Stigma of Mental Illness: What it Means to Individuals, Families, and Community. Speakers included two of our NAMI SW WA peers: Amy Ford and Tom Myklebust. Other presenters were peers and professionals from CVAB and Columbia River Mental Health.

At one point, the immense issue of getting appropriate attention for a medical issue when one has a chart history full of information about a mental health issue. At that mention, I immediately thought of two of the first people I met when I started my job as Executive Director of NAMI Clark County, now NAMI SW WA. Both are friends I care deeply about and they are only a few of all those individuals who face repeated struggles trying to get good medical care when all their signs and symptoms are chalked up to mental illness.

When I arrived at my office the day after the Forum my phone was ringing...it was one of these people. She had just met with her relatively new primary care physician (PCP) who had told her, first, that everything checked out fine in her physical...this after serious brain surgery several years ago for removal of meningioma, a type of non-malignant tumor. My friend had been seeking help for a number of years for disabling headaches that had been ignored because she might be “drug-seeking” or “wanting attention” because, after all, she is mentally ill. At about this same time she began coughing up blood and having frequent pulmonary problems. Again, these symptoms were ignored when the practitioner saw her long history of mental health issues and read or heard any of her story about leaving home at the age of 12 to find safety because she lived with a mother also dealing with mental health challenges. Her difficult teenage years were also chronicled in her medical records.

Today she meets with her current PCP who first told her that all her tests and other parts of her physical were fine. Then the PCP said that my friend needed to talk to the radiologist who had done the most recent CT scan of her lungs. My friend asked why and was eventually told that there were nodules in her lungs. The PCP was embarrassed...she mentioned that the system had “failed my friend so often.” She was also possibly horrified that this possible diagnosis had happened on her watch, and insisted that a conversation with the radiologist was necessary.
and that she, the PCP, would set that up. When my friend got to her car her phone rang; it was the radiologist. He announced that she had nodules located in three different lobes of her lungs. My friend knew what questions to ask because we had been talking about lung cancer for some years now, and her former husband had dealt with cancer even before she finally had her brain tumor removed.

We don’t know the official diagnosis at this time however this provider can be certain that these signs and symptoms are not because this woman is “just one of those crazies” they have to put up with. She is not a drug seeker. She does not make up signs and symptoms to get attention. She, in fact, has a serious medical condition going on and it is my belief that this provider will do all they can to help her get the care and consideration she deserves. She is relatively young and deserves to live out her average life expectancy of 81.1 years—almost 40 more years!
Ubuntu: “I am because we are”: How Social Supports Impacts Our Mental Wellness

By Angie I. Cruz, MAE, LMHC, MHP, CMHS, R-DMT

It is generally agreed upon that social ties improve one’s overall sense of wellbeing. Humans are pack mammals that need one another in order to survive. Living in America we are taught to be individualistic, to rely on no one other than ourselves. However, this mindset can lead us down the rabbit hole of isolation, loneliness, and depression, believing that no one cares. In fact, according to US News and World Reports in an online newspaper (09/15/16) “The US is one of the most depressed countries in the world according to World Health Organization (WHO) and according to NAMI 1 in 5 adults experience a mental health diagnosis. Whereas in other community-based cultures they report less depression, a higher resiliency rate and higher scores of general happiness.

In Africa, the Zulu people have a philosophy called “Ubuntu” which is derived from a Nguni word meaning “the quality of being human” which they translate as “a person is a person through other people”. According to an article: Ubuntu: Applying African Philosophy in Building Community by William E. Flippin, Jr he says, “This African proverb reveals a world view that we owe our self to others, that we are first and foremost social beings, that if you no man/woman is an island, or as the African would have it, ‘One finger cannot pick up a grain.’ This “It Takes a Village” mentality or community-based society is the key to increasing resiliency, lowering depression and improving one’s general outlook on life. So how can we apply this philosophy to us, Westerners? By creating a supportive and encouraging network of support! As I was researching articles on this topic, I found several studies that showed empirical evidence that relationships are the key to general happiness. Yes, that’s right. Just like the Beatles said, “All you need is love.”

So, then we ask, “what do we do if we don’t have any friends or a supportive family?” CREATE YOUR TRIBE! I cannot stress enough how important having a healthy network of support is to one’s general wellbeing. Most humans have experienced loss in one form or another, whether it be thru losing friendships/family members due to moving, death or
ruptured relationships. Many of us have experienced trauma in one form or another. However, humans are incredibly resilient; Attachment Theory and neuroplasticity teach us that we can repair ruptured relationships and poor attachment by creating new healthy ones. If you don’t have supportive family members/partners/friends, then it’s important to surround yourself around positive and healthy people who encourage and empower us. If a person is suffering from anxiety or depression that affects their ability to interact with others, I would encourage that person to seek help in the form of counseling, either formal or informal such as utilizing NAMI SW WA signature psychoeducational classes, using Peer Support Counselors and/or trained clinical mental health counselors. This way they can address their fears/worries surrounding creating healthy relationships (especially if one suffers from trust issues), in order to learn ways to clear old negative thought patterns and adopt healthier ones.

I have had clients in the past ask me, “so how do I learn how to identify healthy relationships if I have never had them?” Great question! No relationship is perfect. All relationships take work. Most relationships have periods of ups and downs, but if there are more “downs then ups” it may be time to reevaluate if the relationship is still serving you in healthy ways. Relationships are a two-way street, where ideally each person takes turns giving and receiving support, love, and compassion. If a person finds themselves “always being there for the other but never receiving support back” then it’s time to reassess if the relationship is a healthy one, and whether or not it should be pruned away. For people who grew up in dysfunctional families or who suffered from issues of codependency, learning what constitutes healthy relationship patterns can be difficult. I encourage people to learn about healthy relationships in whatever form speaks to them, such as by taking a class, participating in counseling, or engaging in meaningful activities within the community. If one feels energized, uplifted and empowered by being with their network of support (friends/family/significant other) more times than not I would assess that they are in a healthy dynamic~ keep doing that! Remember, we all learn and grow thru our experiences, and in order to live a happier, healthier life let us fill our lives with a healthy network of support. And to quote my all-time favorite band once again.... “And in the end, the love you take is equal to the love you make.” Let us all be the Light we wish to see in the world.
Family-to-Family Class Starts This Month

12 SESSION CLASS

For family members and caregivers who have a loved one 18 years or older with any mental health challenges. Join us for support, critical education, and strategies related to caring for your loved one.

- Managing crisis and problem solving
- Taking care of yourself and managing stress
- Developing the confidence to provide support with compassion
- Finding and using local resources
- Information on mental health conditions and how they affect the brain
- Current treatments, including evidence-based therapies, medications, and side effects
- The impact of mental illness on the entire family

Classes in Longview & Vancouver

Please go to namiswwa.org register online today for our next Family to Family Class or call Longview at (360) 703-6722 or Vancouver at (360) 695-2023

Serving Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, and Wahkiakum counties

NO-CHARGE - CONFIDENTIAL - SPACES LIMITED

Class starts February 13-March 24, pre-registration required. This is a free class.
Call 360-695-2823 to register.
MONDAY  NAMI Walks & Talks     11:30-12:30
TUESDAY  STRivE First Steps      3:30-5:00pm   WEDNESDAY Women's Support Group     10:00-11:30am
     Board of Directors' Meeting     6:00-7:30pm (Third Wednesday every month)
     (Third Wednesday every month)
THURSDAY NAMI Walks & Talks     11:30-12:30   Family Support Group     3:00-4:30pm   Connection Recovery      3:00-4:30pm   Support Group     FRIDAY  Creative Writing for Wellness    12:00-1:00pm   Expressive Arts     2:00-3:00pm
     Unforeseen circumstances may cause a group or class to be
     canceled. Please call ahead to confirm.

5411 E. MILL PLAIN
SUITE 4
CLARK/SKAMANIA
NORTHWEST

Mailing Address:
5411 E. Mill Plain
Suite 4
MILWAUKIE, OR 97222

Suite 4

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5411 E. Mill Plain
Suite 4
MILWAUKIE, OR 97222

Unforeseen circumstances may cause a group or class to be

5411 E. MILL PLAIN
Suite 4
MILWAUKIE, OR 97222
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<td>Wednesday</td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
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360-703-6722
Longview, WA 98632
1128 Broadway

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.
Peer support group for those affected by mental health.

Office Closed

1128 BROADWAY
Longview, WA 98632
360-703-6722

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.
Peer support group for those affected by mental health.

Office Closed
BASICS Class Starts This Month

6-WEEK CLASS

Have you had a difficult time advocating for your child or teen in school? Basics is for parents and caregivers of children under the age of 18 living with mental health challenges and looking for support and education.

- Managing crises and solving problems
- How to take care of yourself and handle stress
- Support your child with compassion
- Advocating for your child's rights
- Learning about current treatments
- Gaining an overview of the public mental health care, school, and juvenile justice systems and supporting resources to help you navigate these systems
- Understanding the challenges and impact of mental health conditions on your entire family

Upcoming Classes in Longview & Vancouver – Pre-Register Today!

Please go to namiswwa.org to register online today for our next Basics Class
or call Longview at (360) 703-6722 or Vancouver at (360) 695-2023

Serving Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, and Wahkiakum counties

NO-CHARGE - CONFIDENTIAL - SPACES LIMITED

Class starts February 21-March 28, pre-registration required. This is a free class.
Call 360-695-2823 to register.
Support NAMI SW WA through AMAZON Smile when you shop!

Go to: https://smile.amazon.com

Log-in with the same username and password you use for your Amazon account.

• Type in NAMI Southwest Washington as the charity you want to support and select!
• Shop and save the link for the next time you shop your Amazon account.
• .05% of all of your purchases will be credited as a donation.
• Please sign-up today
This year’s Annual Fundraising Luncheon on Friday, February 15 from 11:30-1:00pm. This year our goal is to reach $50,000. Please come and support NAMI SW WA in our work to offer education, support, and advocacy to individuals and families affected by mental illness.

Your attendance at the Luncheon and generous support in our paddle raise and art sale will help us continue our important work in the community.

Tickets are $50 each.
See you there!

PLEASE REGISTER NOW

REGISTER AND PAY AT NAMISWWA.ORG OR CALL 360-695-2823
Welcome to the Cowlitz Corner!

Please drop in and learn about the services we offer to individuals and family members and loved ones to those living with mental health conditions. Our staff and facilitators are all peers with lived experience, and our office is a safe, inviting, confidential environment for all.

I want to introduce "Silas" to all of you. He is an "emotional support otter" for one of our fantastic volunteers and he has volunteered to write the "Cowlitz Corner" for this month.

We are off to a very successful new year in the Cowlitz County office. We've had a record-breaking few days with the largest number of visitors attending our classes, in the middle of January no less!

Our Table Top Games group on Tuesday afternoons, from 2 to 4 pm is very popular. We've had many games donated so we'll have enough to keep everyone busy for some time. Some of our most popular games have been Apples to Apples and Yahtzee. We have also seen people pair off for lively games of Checkers and Chess.

Tuesday evenings, we have our Family Support Group from 6 to 7:30 pm. Our support group is facilitated by family members who have a loved one living with mental illness and the group works as a whole in sharing lived experiences.

On Wednesdays we have our Expressive Arts group from 12 to 3 pm. This group is so popular, we have outgrown our classroom. Our volunteer leaders have taken on the challenge of leading the group from two different rooms simultaneously. Our most recent projects have been goal vision boards, drawing with yarn, and an open draw or paint day.

On Thursdays, we offer both STRivE and Connection Recovery Support Group. First up on Tuesdays is STRivE from 1 to 2:30 pm. Our topics in February will be: Effective Communication, Social Support, Controlling Anger, and Managing Stress. STRivE remains one of our most popular programs with many members that have repeated the 10-week cycle several times. Each time through, they say, they learn something new.

Our Connection Recovery Support group, on Thursdays from 3 to 4:30 pm is after STRivE. Connection continues with many new participants weekly. The group embraces new participants helping them feel welcome and accepted. There is so much mutual support and group wisdom in these sessions that the facilitators have had little to do. Some of our recent topics have been grief and loss, medications, advocating for ourselves and loved ones, how everyday life can make anxiety worse, financial hardships, and housing. One of the benefits of this group format is that a suggestion for one person's situation may prove to be useful for someone else's unrelated situation.

We are excited about the new neighbors we will be sharing our building with. NAMI SW WA occupies half of the building while the other half has been empty for some time. Our new neighbors, Community Integrated Health Service, a program of Great Rivers Behavioral Health Agency, will be occupying that space and will be offering their services to the community. Our organizations will compliment each other beautifully.

Please refer to the calendar for Cowlitz/Wahkiakum Counties near the middle of our newsletter for additional information.

Silas, the emotional support otter!
Bulletin Board

Annual Fundraising Luncheon: 40th Anniversary
On Friday, February 15, NAMI SW WA is hosting our Annual Fundraising Luncheon to make sure we can continue our support and advocacy for the community. The Luncheon is at Warehouse 23 paid registration is required. $50 per person.

In Longview
Table Top Games Tuesdays 2-4pm, great time and place to relax and just have fun with friends! We supply the board games and you bring the FUN! Bring your favorite game. In Longview.

Signature Classes
Classes starting soon in Vancouver and Longview (dates and times to be determined).

Family to Family is a twelve-week education course for families with adult family members with a mental health diagnosis. February 13-April 24 in Vancouver, sign up by calling NAMI SW WA 360-695-2823.

Basics is a six-week education course for parents and caregivers of children and adolescents living with mental health challenges. February 21-March 28 in Vancouver, sign up by calling NAMI SW WA 360-695-2823.

Family and Friends is a 90-minute presentation that provides information, and help for family and friends of a loved one with a mental health diagnosis.

Sign up online at namiswwa.org or call 360-695-2823 (Vancouver) or 360-703-6722 (Longview) to register. There is no charge to attend these classes.

PLEASE REGISTER NOW
2019 Annual Fundraising Luncheon
REGISTER AND PAY AT NAMISWWA.ORG OR CALL 360-695-2823

Resources

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<th>NAMI SWWA Help Line</th>
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<tr>
<td>M-F 9am-5pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>(360) 695-2823</td>
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<td>(800) 273-TALK</td>
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<td>(360) 397-8470</td>
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<td>(360) 606-1040</td>
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Vital Support

To sign-up or email at Phyllis.c@namiswwa.org
Classes fill-up quickly so sign up soon.

Independently operated and funded 501(c)3 affiliate of NAMI Washington and NAMI National providing direct support, education and advocacy services in the Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, and Wahkiakum.
Help support the one in four Americans who will be affected by mental illness this year.

Thank you for being part of the team!