



# The Iris

*A Publication of  
NAMI Wisconsin  
— the State's Voice  
on Mental Illness*

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## MIAW Features

### Affiliates MIAW activities

See pages six and seven in this issue

#### Healing Arts Show

Opening October 2, 2009,  
runs through MIAW

NAMI Wisconsin

4233 West Beltline Hwy. Madison

A NAMI Wisconsin Consumer

Council Event

featuring the works  
of consumer artists

Opening day reception

4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Refreshments will be served.

#### NAMIWalks 2009

NAMI Brown County NAMIWalk

September 26, 2009

Green Isle Park, Green Bay

10:00 a.m. Start Time

NAMI Fox Valley NAMIWalk

October 3, 2009

Appleton Memorial Park, Appleton

9:30 a.m. Start Time

NAMI Dane County NAMIWalk

October 4, 2009

Olin Turville Park, Madison

1:00 p.m. Start Time

#### NAMI Wisconsin Facts About Mental Illness

Fact sheet on page eleven  
to copy and share

Bring MIAW to your community  
by sharing this resource.

## Recovery: One Family's Journey

When Allan was a young child, he knew he was different from other kids his age. He saw things they could not see. They did not understand the world in the same way he did.

Until he was in his teens, Allan's parents, Ed and Patricia, were unaware that Allan viewed the world differently than other kids. In 1984 Allan was a student at the University of Wisconsin. He was struggling in school and came home for a visit. This visit opened the door for Ed and Patricia to better understand their son and support him through difficult times.

"One morning, Patricia and I noticed Allan's car was in the driveway but he was nowhere to be found. I'm not sure what concerned us at that point, but we began to search the house for him. We found him curled up and sleeping in the corner of a basement closet. He didn't want to come out and he told us the FBI, CIA and Native American tribes were after him. We had no idea what was going on. Our family was ignorant about mental illness and we did not realize what Allan was dealing with," shared Ed.

Allan's fears lead to difficulties with the police.

"We were concerned for his safety but we had a hard time communicating with him. Allan told us he did not want to be involved with the law so we agreed that if he would go for help in the local hospital, Patricia and I would post bail," Ed explained.

"It was a triple whammy," said Allan. "I was stressed and my condition worsens when I am under pressure. I was having medical issues with my eyes and an eating disorder.

Plus, the law had gotten involved. The one good thing that came from all of this is I met my psychiatrist, Dr. H. He became my best friend."

In 1986, Allan received a diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia. Ed and Patricia were happy to see that Allan responded well to treatment. He went to work at a local casino and became an outstanding blackjack dealer. For a time he lived alone in his own apartment. Ed and Patricia were unsure if Allan was staying on track with his medication and counseling. There was some evidence that he might be self-medicating with drugs and alcohol.

In 2000, Allan was offered the opportunity to regain sight in an eye that had been damaged by an accident in his teens. He took himself off all medication because he was concerned there might be drug interactions. During a visit with friends he once again had difficulties with the law.

"It was a tough time for all of us. We worked with Allan's attorney on a conditional release program," said Ed. "She is the one who told us about NAMI. At that time Patricia and I started going to a NAMI family support group. Later, we attended twelve weeks of Family-to-Family education. Our involvement with NAMI showed us that we were not alone and provided new ways for us to support Allan when he needed us."

"People don't usually understand," said Allan. "They perceive things in the wrong way. They may have a pre-conceived notion about what mental illness is and that notion is generally pretty negative. People placate

*(continued on page 10)*

# Executive Director's Corner

by Lannia Syren, NAMI Wisconsin Executive Director



Lannia Syren

One in four people will experience a diagnosable mental illness in their lifetime. When applied to the 2008 U.S. Census population estimate for ages 18 and older, this figure translates to 56.3 million people. That is roughly ten times the number of people living in Wisconsin. Approximately one in seventeen people, or 13.2 million Americans, live with a serious mental illness.

In other words, if you have a mental illness, you are not alone. Not by a long shot.

During Mental Illness Awareness Week, NAMI strives to increase public awareness and reduce the stigma associated with severe and persistent mental illnesses. We want to encourage every person who might benefit from counseling or a personal treatment plan to seek professional support. We work to reduce the fear and stigma associated with mental illness and build a hopeful future for men and women who live every day with a mental illness.

If you share one copy of the *Iris* with a friend this year, I hope it is this copy.

In fact, I would like to encourage you to donate your copies of the *Iris* to a local library, doctor's office or Laundromat once you have had an opportunity to read what

we have to say. Pass your copy onto a friend or display it in the entryway of your work place. Before these words are recycled I would love to have a dozen or more pairs of eyes see what NAMI members and mental health advocates have to say.

In these exciting times when the government is examining new ways to approach health care, it is critical for us to continue to grow and speak out in support of mental health coverage. In a recent town hall meeting, President Obama was asked about his stand on mental health and he replied, "Mental health has always been undervalued in the health insurance market and what we now know is that somebody who has severe depression has a more debilitating and dangerous illness than somebody who's got a broken leg. But a broken leg, nobody argues that's covered. Severe depression, unfortunately, oftentimes isn't even under existing insurance policies. So I think — I've been a strong believer in mental health parity, recognizing that those are serious illnesses. And I would like to see a mental health component as part of a package that people are covered under, under our plan."

His words are encouraging but we cannot relent. There are 13.2 million Americans living with a serious mental illness who must not be forgotten when health care reform happens. As NAMI grows, so will our voice. Inspire an interest in membership, share your *Iris* or bring a friend to the next NAMI conference. Together we will be heard. 🌸

## NAMI Wisconsin County Affiliates

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Barron .....              | (715) 736-0089  |
| Brown .....               | (920) 430-7460  |
| Chequamegon Bay.....      | (715) 274-8403<br>(Ashland, Bayfield)                                 |
| Dane .....                | (608) 249-7188  |
| Dodge .....               | (920) 887-7211  |
| Door .....                | (920) 493-2912  |
| Douglas .....             | (715) 378-2772  |
| Fond du Lac .....         | (920) 922-0566  |
| Fox Valley .....          | (920) 954-1550<br>(Outagamie, Calumet, Waupaca, Winnebago)            |
| Green .....               | (608) 328-9376  |
| Iron .....                | (715) 476-2172  |
| Jefferson .....           | (920) 262-7887  |
| Kenosha .....             | (262) 605-9038  |
| La Crosse .....           | (608) 784-7532  |
| Manitowoc .....           | (920) 683-3363  |
| Marinette (WI) .....      | (906) 864-1933<br>and Menominee (MI)                                  |
| Mid Central .....         | (608) 408-0177<br>(Adams, Green Lake, Juneau,<br>Marquette, Waushara) |
| Milwaukee .....           | (414) 344-0447  |
| Northwoods .....          | (715) 298-2553<br>(Marathon, Lincoln, Langlade)                       |
| Oshkosh .....             | (920) 651-1148<br>(Winnebago)   |
| Ozaukee .....             | (262) 241-3929  |
| Portage/Wood .....        | (715) 592-4522  |
| Racine .....              | (262) 637-0582  |
| Richland .....            | (608) 604-4535  |
| Rock .....                | (608) 758-8144  |
| Sheboygan .....           | (920) 803-6193  |
| South Central .....       | (608) 254-7092<br>(Sauk, Columbia)                                    |
| Southwest Wisconsin ..... | (608) 348-6136<br>(Grant, Iowa, Crawford)                             |
| St. Croix Valley .....    | (715) 307-1921<br>(St. Croix, Pierce)                                 |
| UW Madison .....          | (608) 268-6000  |
| Walworth .....            | (262) 495-2439  |
| Washington .....          | (262) 338-2393  |
| Waukesha .....            | (262) 524-8886  |
| Wishigan .....            | (715) 336-2744<br>(Florence, WI, Dickinson, MI)                       |

**The mission of NAMI Wisconsin is to improve the quality of life of people affected by mental illnesses and to promote recovery.**

**NAMI of Wisconsin will accomplish its mission through the following:**

- Establishing local Affiliates in keeping with NAMI National's principles and guidelines.
- Supporting Affiliates by providing follow-up advice and counsel; educational and training programs and materials; access to financial resources as appropriate; and by offering conferences, seminars, and presentations.
- Advocating at all levels of government and throughout the public sector.
- Promoting public education and understanding of mental illnesses.

# Picking Up the Torch

By Pat Rutkowski and Geoff Greiveldinger

In recent weeks friends of the disability community and the nation mourned the loss of Eunice Kennedy Shriver. At the time of her death, a quote by Harrison Rainie, the author of *Growing Up Kennedy*, was often cited and attributed to her brother Ted, who made similar observations:

“When the full judgment on the Kennedy legacy is made — including JFK’s Peace Corps and Alliance for Progress, Robert Kennedy’s passion for civil rights and Ted Kennedy’s efforts on health care, work place reform and refugees — the changes wrought by Eunice Shriver may well be seen as the most consequential.”

Eunice used her gifts and her celebrity to change the lives of people with intellectual disabilities. We need not recount the reduction of stigma and changes in perception of people with intellectual disabilities that can be attributed to Eunice’s work. Her legacy has been eloquently communicated and will be continued.

But, what we are left with is the unfinished work that still remains in changing the perception of mental illness. October 4-10 is Mental Illness Awareness Week. This is our week to carry on the work before us, to reduce the stigma that still exists for us, our friends, and our loved ones—and continue the fight for awareness, understanding and quality services. The participation of each and every one of us is needed this week and thereafter because we, NAMI, are our Eunice.

We also need to thank her brother Ted Kennedy for his championship of our causes in the Congress, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, SCHIP, and the final passage of mental health parity legislation. We will greatly miss his fight for our concerns.

The passing of these two individuals only magnifies the efforts yet required. This is our torch to pick up and our inspiration to do the “more” than is necessary. 🌱

## New staff members join NAMI Wisconsin



Gail Auerbach

Gail Auerbach is the Family-to-Family Program Director, and a former President and Board Member of NAMI Dane County. Gail started teaching Family-to-Family in the fall of 1993 for

NAMI Dane County. Gail continued to teach for the next three years. In 1994 she took the trainer training nationally from Joyce Burland along with Trudy Cisek. Gail and Trudy began training teachers for NAMI Wisconsin in the fall of 1994 and continued for three more years. Gail went on to train teachers for several years with the late Claire Ryan, while assuming the role of Director of the Family-to-Family Program. She has been director for the last ten years and is now directing the program from the NAMI Wisconsin office.



Don Pirozzoli

Don Pirozzoli is the Consumer Program Coordinator. In that role he will be coordinating the In Our Own Voice and Peer-to-Peer programs. Don’s background includes working in the cross

disability field for the past six years in a wide variety of roles: working directly with individuals; advocacy; developing a satellite office for the largest independent living center in Florida for the Center For Independent Living and working for the Independent Living Council of Wisconsin (ILCW). Don also brings six years of leadership experience in the Wisconsin Technical College System and training and education experience in non-profit, call center, and manufacturing environments. 🌱

**NAMI Wisconsin, Inc**  
4233 West Beltline Highway  
Madison, WI 53711

### Office Staff and Volunteers

|                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| Lannia Syren     | Gail Auerbach  |
| Bob Fox          | Vaunceil Kruse |
| Jennie Lowenberg | Kurt Monson    |
| Don Pirozzoli    | Dennis Wilder  |

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### NAMI Wisconsin Board of Directors 2009-2010

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Co-Presidents                          | Pat Rutkowski<br>Geoff Greiveldinger   |
| Vice-President                         | Sandy Hall   |
| Secretary                              | Terence W. Schnapp   |
| Treasurer                              | Robert Wrenn   |
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WORKING FOR A HEALTHY WISCONSIN

# How a suicide has changed my life

by Eric D. Garland

On Feb. 15, 2006, my life was forever changed. My son Brandon died by suicide. He was 19 years old and a senior in high school. Brandon was a young man who had more friends than could be counted. He was a gifted student and a talented athlete. His favorite things in life were fishing, his friends and sports. It is very hard for me to comprehend anything more painful or tragic than losing a child to suicide. The only thing I can imagine that is more painful is the pain that my son endured before he lost his battle with depression.

After my son's death I wanted to crawl into a hole and never face anyone again. With the passage of time, I began to realize that I had to do anything and everything possible to help prevent people from experiencing the torture and the nightmare that my son and my family endured.

Through my work in suicide prevention, I have learned to be a more compassionate, tolerant and better educated person. I have learned that mental illness can be treated and cured just like any other illness. I have also learned that we are fighting against a

stigma. I firmly believe that through improved awareness and education, we can end the stigma that is often associated with mental illness.

A short time after my son's death, a business associate said to me, "It may not make sense today, but some day you will find something positive that came from all of this." This phrase has always stuck with me and for a long time it did not make any sense. I can tell you today that I have been able to find some positives and purpose in all of this. I am a different and better person. I have made many new friends through my involvement with organizations like NAMI. Helping to improve the lives of people affected by mental illness and saving lives through suicide prevention has given my loss meaning, and enriched my life.

I spend a great deal of time working on suicide prevention. I help train others to recognize the warning signs of someone in a suicidal crisis, what to do if they see the warning signs, and how to get them to the help that is needed. I will probably never know for sure if my efforts have made a difference

in anyone's life but my own. The way I chose to deal with the grief of losing a child isn't necessarily the right way for everyone but it has been the right way for me.



Eric Garland

*Eric Garland has recently been elected to the NAMI Wisconsin Board of Directors, is a member of NAMI Dane County, serves on the Board of Directors for H.O.P.E.S. (Helping*

*Others Prevent and Educate about Suicide) and is acting Chairperson of Safe Communities Dane County Task Force on Suicide Prevention. He is involved with SPAN USA (Suicide Prevention Action Network) and AFSP (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention). Eric was the recipient of the NAMI Wisconsin 2007 Wisconsin Community Education Award. He and his wife, Trudy, have been married for 25 years, and have a 20 year old daughter, Brittney. The Garlands live in McFarland.* 🌸

## Suicide Prevention Resources

### **HOPES: Suicide education and prevention**

HOPES is a non-profit organization based in Madison. HOPES is composed of suicide survivors whose losses have motivated them to action. [www.hopes-wi.org](http://www.hopes-wi.org)

### **Suicide Prevention Toolkit**

The Garrett Lee Smith Suicide Prevention Toolkit is a resource provided by Mental Health of America of Wisconsin that provides resources and tools to assist community members, agencies, and individuals in preventing suicide.

[www.mhawisconsin.org/content/introductiontoolkit.asp](http://www.mhawisconsin.org/content/introductiontoolkit.asp)

### **Suicide Prevention Resource Center**

The Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) provides prevention support, training, and resources to assist organizations and individuals to develop suicide prevention programs, interventions and policies, and to advance the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention. The SPRC website hosts an online suicide prevention resource library with full text versions of many publications available electronically. [www.sprc.org](http://www.sprc.org)

### **Suicide Prevention Action Network USA**

SPAN USA serves as the public policy and advocacy division of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP). AFSP is the leading national non-profit organization exclusively dedicated to understanding and preventing suicide through research, education, advocacy, and to reaching out to people with mental illnesses and to those impacted by suicide. [www.spanusa.org](http://www.spanusa.org)

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline  
1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

# Mental Illness and Wisconsin Prisons

by Representative Joe Parisi

*Representative Joe Parisi called for an audit of state prisons that would examine how those with mental illness find their way into the prison system and the quality of care for Wisconsin prisoners with mental illnesses. As of September 4th he had not learned if the audit will be approved.*

Although it is important for services to be reviewed by the audit bureau, I have a good sense of what an audit would find. More resources for mental health services are needed at the front end. Until we address the root cause, individuals with mental illness will continue to funnel into the criminal justice system.

Improved mental health services in Wisconsin could reduce prison populations and costs. Look at the PACT model or similar programs. Many of these programs intervene in the life of an individual who might otherwise end up behind bars. Throughout the state these programs do not receive adequate resources. They have huge waiting lists and inadequate support.

Training for correctional officers should include crisis intervention. Without special

training, incidents involving correctional employees and people with mental illness are more likely to escalate. We need to be aware of best practices in working with a population with mental illness and that may include practices different from those used in the general prison population. We want to avoid situations that promote self harm, segregation and victimization. Training should help minimize these issues.

On September 23rd a joint hearing will occur where Senator Taylor and I will learn what the Department of Corrections has to report prior to their formal report to the Joint Finance Committee. NAMI members and the general public are welcome to attend and observe.

I believe the general public is unaware of this issue and how important it is for us to address. Wisconsin citizens must understand that when deinstitutionalization occurred we did not follow through with providing the services needed in the community. Individuals who would be productive citizens with treatment are not getting the support

they need and are ending up in the justice system. It is our moral obligation to assist them and support a comprehensive strategic plan to address this issue. We need to think about what we can do upfront in the community to ensure those who need treatment are treated.



Joe Parisi

*Representative Parisi is the Wisconsin State Legislature Representative for the 48th Assembly District. Rep. Parisi was born in Madison on October 24, 1960. He is a recipient of the League of Conservation Voters Conservation Champion Award 2007-08 and the Wisconsin Counties Assn. Outstanding Legislator Award 2007-08. He was elected to Assembly in 2004 and has been reelected since 2006. Parisi is married with two children.* 🍀

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## Chief Justice initiative addresses growing numbers of people with mental illness in Wisconsin's jails

by Jennifer Lowenberg

Nationally, jails and prisons have become substitute psychiatric facilities for individuals with mental illness. According to a United States Justice Department study, more than half of all prison and jail inmates were found to have mental health problems. These individuals come in and out of the criminal justice system through what experts call a revolving door. This problem stems in part from the lack of adequate psychiatric care in community settings as well as lapses in services upon release from incarceration.

Wisconsin is no exception to this national trend, with the number of persons with

mental illness in jails and prisons increasing steadily as access to community services declines. This problem has been recognized by families, consumers, jail administrators, local law enforcement, judges, probation and parole, and by Chief Justice Shirley Abrahamson.

The Chief Justice applied for and received a grant from the Council on State Governments to aid Wisconsin in developing a strategic plan to improve responses to people with mental illnesses involved in the criminal justice system. A steering committee has met several times over the last year to identify key

stakeholders and a primary focus area for Task Force attention.

The steering committee identified diversion as the focus of the Task Force, as diversion strategies are critical for redirecting people from unnecessary incarceration and linking them with needed treatment services and support. Opportunities for diversion exist at the time of arrest, during the pre-booking phase and during post-booking. The Task Force will be charged with identifying the most effective diversion strategies and supporting their implementation.

*(continued on page 10)*



# NAMI Wisconsin Affiliates bring MIAW to their communities

### **NAMI Barron County**

NAMI Barron County is hosting their fourth annual Mental Illness Awareness Conference on October 17th from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the WITC in Rice Lake. The conference will feature a panel of speakers and will conclude with a question and answer session. Call Laura Oser at 715-237-3343 to register.

### **NAMI Brown County**

NAMI Brown County will hold their annual NAMIWalk on Saturday, September 26th at Green Isle Park in Green Bay. Registration begins at 9:00 a.m. with a start time of 10:00 a.m. NAMI Brown County will be showing the film, *The Soloist* or hosting a presentation on Dual Diagnosis on October 6th or 8th. Wednesday, October 7th is the Mental Health America Banquet.

### **NAMI Dane County**

NAMI Dane County will sponsor their annual NAMIWalk on Sunday October 4th at Olin Turville Park. Registration begins at 11:00 a.m. with a start time of 1 p.m. NAMI Dane County will officially roll out their new NAMI Connection recovery support group on Sunday, October 4th from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the United Way Building, 2059 Atwood Ave. The Connection support group will meet every Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday at that same time.

### **NAMI Door County**

NAMI Door County will be giving a power point presentation on NAMI Door County and Jak's Place activities to the Rotary Club on October 8th. On Sunday, October 11th, NAMI Door County members are presenting forums at several Door County churches, as well as including prayers for those with mental illness and their loved ones during a candle lighting ceremony. They will feature a showing of the film, *The Soloist*, at their October NAMI meeting. They will continue their practice of purchasing a book on mental illness for each of the eight Door County library

branches. The selection for 2009 is *The Soloist*.

### **NAMI Fond du Lac County**

NAMI Fond du Lac will offer a three hour program, *The Voice Hearing Experience*, which offers participants the experience of hearing voices much like those experienced by people with schizophrenia. Ideal class size is 25-30 so it will be necessary to sign up for the program. To register call Friendship Corner at 920-922-0566. On October 8th NAMI Fond du Lac is hosting a Resource Fair, Raffle Drawing and program, *Minds On the Edge: Facing Mental Illness*. The Resource Fair will be held at UW Fond du Lac in the Commons Area and will begin at 4:00 p.m. At 6:00 there will be a raffle drawing for a beautiful Iris Quilt. Following the drawing will be the showing of the documentary film, *Minds On the Edge*.

### **NAMI Fox Valley**

NAMI Fox Valley is holding their annual NAMIWalk on Saturday, October 3rd at Appleton Memorial Park in Appleton. Registration begins at 7:45 a.m. with a start time of 9:30 a.m.

### **NAMI Green County**

NAMI Green County will be holding a community educational presentation featuring Dr. Knoedler. The presentation will be held Tuesday, October 13th at 7:00 p.m. at the Amcore Bank in Monroe. Green County will place a bulletin insert in many county churches offering information and resources. NAMI Green County also plans to do media outreach throughout the county.

### **NAMI Kenosha County**

NAMI Kenosha will be holding a fund raiser on October 2nd, 3rd and 4th, soliciting funds outside retail outlets around Kenosha County. On October 8th they will have a public education event immediately following their support meeting featuring an In Our Own Voice presentation. The presentation will begin at

7:30 p.m. at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, the corner of 39th Ave. and 88th St. in Kenosha. NAMI Kenosha will also have a broadcast on the local PBS station updating NAMI Kenosha's activities for MIAW and beyond.

### **NAMI La Crosse County**

NAMI La Crosse will have their annual Iris sale at stores in the community to support the NAMI La Crosse Family-to-Family Program. They will also have an informational exhibit at the Main Library. The October Informational Meeting will feature Family-to-Family graduates reporting how the course impacted their lives and the lives of their family members with mental illness. NAMI La Crosse also assisted the local Suicide Intervention and Prevention group with their remembrance Walk in the Park and with their all day Suicide Prevention Summit on September 16th.

### **NAMI Marinette & Menominee**

NAMI M&M will have an exhibit of the art of Steve Bowles displayed for the duration of MIAW at the Dewhills Coffee Shop, 1609 Main Street, Marinette, Wisconsin. Bowles is a consumer who was homeless at one time and who has also designed sets for films.

### **NAMI Greater Milwaukee**

NAMI Greater Milwaukee will hold their Annual Awards Banquet, also honoring NAMI National's 30th Anniversary, on October 14th. The banquet will be held at the Italian Conference Center, 631 East Chicago St., Milwaukee. The evening begins with a Silent Auction at 5:30 p.m. followed by dinner at 7:00 p.m. and the awards ceremony at 8:00p.m. NAMI Greater Milwaukee is also holding their *Creativity Heals* art show on Sunday, November 8th, an event featured in NAMI National's *MIAW Idea Book*.

### **NAMI Ozaukee County**

NAMI Ozaukee County will place informational literature in all six county public libraries, including the Bookmobile.

## **NAMI Racine County**

NAMI Racine County will roll out their NAMI Connection recovery support group on Thursday, October 8th from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The group will meet each Thursday at that time at St. Luke's Hospital in Racine. NAMI Racine will have placemats at a number of family restaurants and coffee shops in Racine and Burlington during MIAW. They will hold their annual Candlelight Vigil at 4:00 p.m. followed by a Courthouse Proclamation at 4:30 p.m. on the lawn of the Racine County Courthouse. The event will be followed by a dinner for participants. Call the NAMI Racine office at 262-637-0582 for more information.

## **NAMI Richland County**

NAMI Richland County is sponsoring a community wide discussion featuring local speakers and centered around Rebecca Woolis' book, *When Someone You Love has a Mental Illness*. The discussion will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, October 5th at Pippin Hall at UW Richland in Richland Center. Mayor Larry D. Fowler of Richland Center will provide a proclamation announcing MIAW.

## **NAMI Rock County**

NAMI Rock County will be drafting letters to the editors of local newspapers at their next meeting, and will send them to all local newspapers to raise awareness in their communities. They will feature informational displays throughout MIAW at the Helberg Library in Janesville, the Beloit Public Library and the Clinton Public Library. NAMI Rock County will hold a Candlelight Vigil on October 5th at 7:00 p.m. at the River of Life Methodist Church.

## **NAMI South Central WI**

NAMI South Central is featuring an informational display at the Reedsburg Public Library. The display will run for three weeks encompassing MIAW.

## **NAMI St. Croix Valley**

NAMI St. Croix Valley is pleased that during this year's MIAW their Family-to-Family education course will be up and running. They will have three *In Our Own Voice* presentations in October. NAMI St. Croix will also have a presentation featuring their Family-to-Family teachers on October 8th on Channel

16, the local cable access channel. Additionally, in November, an art exhibit will be held at the River Falls Public Library entitled *Coping With Mental Illness*. The exhibit will feature the works of individuals coping with mental illness, consumers, family members or caregivers. A portion of the exhibit, a public education event, will be interactive and focus on erasing stigma. The week of October 8th, the affiliate will host creative workshops to assist individuals in preparing their art work for the November exhibit.

## **NAMI Walworth County**

NAMI Walworth County will have six fund raising teams at various stores and shopping centers around the county between the dates of October 4th and 10th. NAMI Walworth kicked-off their fundraising activities with two Saturday Brat Stands, one in August and one in September at Frank's Market in Elkhorn. NAMI Walworth will hold their Fifth Annual Awards Banquet October 7th. Awards are given for outstanding leadership and membership participation. They expect approximately 50 friends of NAMI Walworth to turn out for the occasion which will feature their guest speaker, NAMI Wisconsin Executive Director, Lannia Syren.

## **NAMI Washington County**

NAMI Washington County will feature an informational display to raise awareness of mental illness at the West Bend Memorial Library during MIAW. They will also host an Open House to raise awareness at Riverside City Park on Wednesday, October 7th from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

## **NAMI Waukesha County**

NAMI Waukesha has a number of activities scheduled for MIAW. Moe's Southwest Grill, 1350 Capitol in Pewaukee, is donating 10% of all sales from 3 to 9 p.m. on Friday, October 2nd to NAMI Waukesha. NAMI Waukesha members will be selling Irises outside the Pick N Save, 220 E. Sunset, Waukesha from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, October 3rd. Monday, October 5th the film, *The Soloist*, will be shown in cooperation with Prohealth Care Behavioral Medicine Center, 725 American Ave., Waukesha. The film will begin at 6 p.m. There is no charge but an RSVP is requested. Call 262-524-8886 to reserve a spot. An *In Our Own Voice* presentation will be given to the staff at Waukesha Mental

Health Hospital on Tuesday, October 6th. NAMI Waukesha will participate in the Health Fair at Brookfield High School, 3305 N. Lilly Road, Brookfield on Wednesday October 7th. The fair will run from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. Several public libraries around Waukesha County will have informational displays provided by NAMI Waukesha. The full week of activities will wrap up with the Annual Awards Dinner at Thunder Bay Grille, N14 W24150 Tower Place, Pewaukee. Cocktails and a Silent Auction will open the event at 5:00 p.m. with dinner served at 6:00 p.m. The awards ceremony will begin at 7:00 p.m. with a raffle drawing following.

## **NAMI Wishigan**

NAMI Wishigan will feature an informational display at the Dickenson County Library for the duration of MIAW. They will also supply placemats to restaurants in their area with information about mental illness and about NAMI programs such as NAMI Connection and In Our Own Voice.

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As MIAW activities and updates continue to come in to the NAMI Wisconsin office we will place updated details on the NAMI Wisconsin Web site [www.namiwisconsin.org](http://www.namiwisconsin.org). Click the "Affiliates" button on the home page to access Affiliates' contact information, programs, and special activities. 🌸

## **New Wisconsin Parity Bill in the works**

The state budget has been signed, legislators are back in Madison after time in the district, and the fall series of debates is beginning. The New Day Coalition (formerly Coalition for Fairness) is pleased and excited to announce that a new Wisconsin Parity Bill is currently being drafted—and there could very well be a need for organized advocacy within the next couple of weeks. Please check the NAMI Wisconsin Web site [www.namiwisconsin.org](http://www.namiwisconsin.org) for updates.

# Parents and Teachers as Allies gains momentum in western Wisconsin

*Parents and Teachers as Allies (P&TA)* is a two hour in-service program that focuses on helping school professionals and families within the school community better understand the early warning signs of mental illnesses. The education program features early warning signs of mental illnesses in children and adolescents and guidance on how best to intervene so that youth with mental health treatment needs are linked with services. The program also covers the lived experience of mental illnesses and how schools can best communicate with families about mental health related concerns. The NAMI National program includes a supporting publication available on line.

*Parents and Teachers as Allies* makes clear that families and school professionals are natural allies in working to ensure that youth with early-onset mental illnesses receive timely and appropriate treatment.

The in-service education program for school professionals opens with a welcome from an education professional, a family member, who introduces the topics to be covered, often with a personal story. Following introductions, a facilitator walks the school professionals through the early warning signs of mental illnesses, closely following the *P&TA* publication. To give perspective on the family's experience, a parent or caregiver of a child with mental illness covers the

predictable stages of emotional reactions among family members dealing with the challenges of mental illness and the lived experience of raising a child with a mental illness.

An essential component of the in-service includes a mental health consumer that experienced the early onset of mental illness and shares a view from the inside. The consumer leads a discussion about the positive and negative impact that the school experience had on his or her life.

The in-service concludes with a group discussion, closing remarks and evaluation.

With financial support from the La Crosse Community Foundation, NAMI of La Crosse County, Inc. has spread the word about *Parents and Teachers as Allies* to educational professionals and students in the area. In March, Patti Jo Severson and Dani Schrage presented the program at Diversity Day for the students of the Viroqua Alternative School. As a result of the positive response to that presentation, and with the support of a local donor, 200 additional *P&TA* booklets were purchased for Viroqua area educators. Severson presented the concept of *P&TA* to Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) 4 in May, sparking the interest of many professionals around the table. In August, Severson, Schrage, and Jennifer Schwedler, *P&TA* team, presented to nearly

one hundred Christian School educators at St. Paul's Lutheran School in Onalaska, WI.

"We are definitely gaining momentum," said Severson. "Since launching the *Parents and Teachers as Allies* program we have seen a great response. Dani Schrage created a Power Point presentation to jazz up the training and make it more interactive. We have provided outreach to parent education groups and created a flier for school administrators. We are looking forward to our fall launch. As the school year gets rolling we plan to provide more *P&TA* trainings throughout the region."

Are you an education professional? If your school system is interested in learning more about the *Parents and Teachers as Allies* two-hour educator in-service or related publication, please visit [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org), or contact Patti Jo Severson at [pjseverson@charter.net](mailto:pjseverson@charter.net).



Patti Jo Severson

*NAMI Wisconsin Board Member, and La Crosse affiliate member, Patti Jo Severson, MS, RD, has facilitated the launch of the Parents and Teachers as Allies program in the La Crosse area.* 🌸

## Children and Adolescent Mental Health Resources

### NAMI Child & Adolescent Action Center

Provides a thorough list of Federal agencies and Children's Health and Advocacy Organizations. [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

### SAMHSA's Family Guide

SAMHSA's Family Guide Web site features articles and resources about sending children back to school, mentally healthy and drug free.

[www.family.samhsa.gov/set/septemberbacktoschool.aspx](http://www.family.samhsa.gov/set/septemberbacktoschool.aspx)

### Wisconsin Family Ties

Wisconsin Family Ties works to create greater understanding, respectful acceptance, and support in the community with families that include children and adolescents with emotional, behavioral, and mental disorders. [www.wifamilyties.org](http://www.wifamilyties.org)

### Child and Adolescent Bipolar Foundation (CABF)

The Child and Adolescent Bipolar Foundation (CABF) educates families,

professionals, and the public about early-onset bipolar disorders. [www.bpkids.org](http://www.bpkids.org)

### Child Mental Health

Medline Plus/Child mental Health site sponsored by the National Institutes of Health offers information and resources for children.

[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/childmentalhealth.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/childmentalhealth.html) 🌸

# MIAW an opportunity to expand membership

by Vaunceil Kruse

Mental Illness Awareness Week (MIAW) offers NAMI Wisconsin and her affiliates the opportunity to not only bring awareness of mental illness into our communities and reduce stigma, but to bring new members into the fold. Each supermarket patron who buys an *Iris*, each recipient of a brochure at a library display, each respectful onlooker at a Candlelight Vigil is a potential member. And we all know of the strength in numbers.

People join organizations both for what they receive, i.e., information and education, representation, a sense of community, empowerment, other direct services, and what they can give, i.e., expertise, volunteer time, outreach and validation, credibility, and financial stability. We as an organization must always keep these motivations in mind as we reach out to potential members.

NAMI Wisconsin is a collaborative organization. To fulfill our mission we must have a working relationship among families, consumers, professionals, legislators, and the communities in which we live. The more members of that collaborative group we bring onto our membership rolls the more stability, credibility and political influence we can bring to our mission.

One of the most effective paths to new memberships is through NAMI Wisconsin's signature education and support programs. The Family-to-Family education course curriculum includes several opportunities to encourage membership. A significant opportunity comes in the first class when the *Stages of Emotional Response* are introduced, and class members are shown how NAMI membership helps, in part, to meet each of those emotional needs.

The powerful, anti-stigma *In Our Own Voice* presentation always includes a statement of the NAMI mission. Presenters also make information on their local affiliate's activities and NAMI Wisconsin's membership opportunities available for their audience members. A component of the audience evaluation document includes contact information for anyone interested in membership.

Sadly, there are still many professionals who do not know to whom they can refer consumers and families for support. Supplying provider sites with brochures, posters, and education and support group information will go a long way in providing vital information about NAMI's programs and activities. Professional referrals will build membership—not forgetting the important role professional memberships play in the NAMI mission.

The strong community presence evident in the many activities scheduled by NAMI Affiliates for MIAW (see pages 6 and 7) need to carry over into the other fifty one weeks. Traditional media outreach like radio PSAs and letters to the editors of local newspapers, can now be joined by outreach through Web sites, as well as social networking sites on the internet. Media outreach is vital in the successful fulfillment of the advocacy component of our mission. Direct contact with legislators is also essential if we are to achieve the political influence necessary for real change.

One to one communication is still probably the best avenue to membership. In a recent conversation with NAMI Wishigan Affiliate Leader, Fumiko McLain, (see Sidebar) she remarked, "When I mention to people some of the opportunities available through NAMI Wishigan and NAMI Wisconsin, the Annual Conference, for example, and get their interest up, I also add that they need to become members to participate. Membership fees should not be a barrier. An Open Door membership is only three dollars. To participate they need to be a part of the organization."

Once a member has become part of the organization we must remember to consistently reinforce his or her initial motivation for joining. We must supply information, education, and a sense of community. We must give each member a voice and listen to what he or she has to say. Through an energized and empowered membership we can bring education, advocacy, and support with the hope of recovery to every corner of Wisconsin. 🌸

## Fumiko McLain retires from leadership role



Fumiko McLain

Long-time NAMI Wishigan Affiliate Leader and former NAMI Wisconsin Board of Directors

member, Fumiko McLain has surrendered her leadership role to Bill DeDie. Fumiko has been a part of NAMI Wisconsin for 30 years.

Fumiko came to NAMI after her son's diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia sent her on a quest for information and support. At the time, she could find very little of either. Fortunately, she connected with NAMI Wisconsin co-founder Bev Young, who not only offered Fumiko the information and support she was looking for, but traveled to Florence County to help Fumiko start a support group for parents.

Fumiko's leadership role has never wavered in that long commitment to the NAMI mission. In addition to her service as the leader of NAMI Wishigan, serving Florence County in Wisconsin and Dickinson County, Michigan, Fumiko served on the NAMI Wisconsin Board of Directors from 2000 until 2006.

Fumiko's leadership was given international status in 2000 when she was invited to represent the United States on a forum of speakers at the Zenkaren (the National Federation of Families of the Mentally Ill in Japan) National Congress in Shizuoka, Japan.

NAMI Wisconsin's Board of Directors, staff, and membership thank Fumiko for her tireless commitment and wish her well. 🌸


# Media project explores mental illness in America

*MINDS ON THE EDGE: Facing Mental Illness* is a media project that explores severe mental illness in America. The centerpiece of the project is a television program that will air on PBS stations in October 2009. Unfortunately, Wisconsin's PBS stations are not airing the program at this time, but the program may be viewed on the NAMI National Web site at [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org). This video component is part of a national initiative that includes an extensive Web site, also available on the NAMI National site, and an ambitious strategy

to engage citizens, professionals in many fields, and policy makers at all levels of government. The goal is to advance consensus about how to improve the kinds of support and treatment available for people with mental illness.

*MINDS ON THE EDGE: Facing Mental Illness* effectively illuminates challenging ethical issues as well as systemic flaws in program and policy design, service coordination, and resource allocation that are contributing to a mental health system that is widely

acknowledged to be broken. The program also provides a glimpse of innovations, many shaped by the guidance and expertise of people with mental illness, that offer promising solutions and hopeful direction to transform the mental health system.

The *MINDS ON THE EDGE* project is working with a broad variety of national organizations, among them NAMI, the American Psychiatric Association, NARSAD and the National Association of Mental Health Program Directors. 

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## Chief Justice initiative


*continued from page 5*

Wisconsin is clearly facing a significant challenge. There are several effective mechanisms, however, being implemented around the state that have had positive impact on the problem. CIT training has occurred in many areas of the state giving law enforcement officers information and tools to better handle situations that involve individuals with mental

illnesses. In some areas positive communication between jail personnel and community providers has yielded improved outcomes for consumers. Eau Claire has developed a mental health court and others are considering expanding specialty courts in their areas.

A Task Force Summit in Mental Health and the Law is being planned for the spring of 2010. The goal of the summit is to bring together a broad-based group of stakeholders to evaluate the problem and to develop a

best practices model of evidence-based, cost effective intervention strategies that can be implemented in an effort to appropriately divert individuals with serious mental illness from the criminal justice system and into the treatment system.

For more information about the Chief Justice initiative on Mental Health and the Criminal Justice System contact Jennie Lowenberg at NAMI Wisconsin. 

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## Recovery

*continued from page 1*

you, humor you, or patronize you. NAMI helped my parents understand a little better what was going on.”

Through their work with NAMI, Ed and Patricia became passionate about Crisis Intervention Training and worked with NAMI to provide the family perspective to police officers during training sessions about mental illness.

“Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) is needed by officers throughout the state. When de-institutionalization started in the 1950's no one provided the community services that were required to back up the good intentions,” explains Ed. “CIT trains officers to safely diffuse a crisis situation where someone with a mental illness is involved. Best of all, the training seems to work. Patricia and I are both passionate about CIT and believe it's needed.”

Ed shared that he reads a lot of recovery stories. “I believe Allan is in recovery. He lives alone and visits us nearly every day. He is working part time as an employment coach for a boy with a physical disability. At one point he was given the *Most Improved Employee* award. He has been working hard to make good choices for seven years and we are incredibly proud of him.”


“Recovery is a process, not a goal,” Allan said. “It is an individual growth process, a series of tiny daily goals. I have a diagnosis of a special bi-polar disorder that causes me to have blue and anxious periods. I know there is no cure or fix. I just constantly work towards accepting things the way they are. When I think of my future, I always try to look on the bright side. I have a hundred different plans: additional relationships, lineage of my own and I hope to pass something special on in this world.”

When Ed and Patricia were asked if they had insights to share, they responded, “Stay positive during the difficult times and remember

that God doesn't give you anything you can't handle. Become informed about mental illness. Family-to-Family class can really help you there. Stay involved and don't lose hope.”

Allan shared that he recently lost his best friend and counselor of over twenty years. The loss has been tough on him but he continues to look ahead. He concluded by saying, “My recovery goal is to make a greater contribution to society—if only a smile on a kid's face. I don't have any grandiose plans. I will just continue to make progress and be positive and do my best in the future.”

Because stigma remains an issue in our communities, Allan asked that his family's names remain private.

“It is our hope,” said Ed, “that this story may offer hope to others living with major mental illness and their caregivers and promote NAMI as a source of information and inspiration.” 

### What is mental illness?

- Mental illnesses and severe emotional disturbances are biologically based disorders, just as are diabetes, cancer and heart disease. Mental and emotional disorders disrupt a person's ability to think, feel, and relate to others.
- Mental illness is the nation's second leading cause of disability after heart disease.

### Who does mental illness affect?

- Twenty percent (20%) of adults, or about 40 million (40,000,000) Americans, experiences some type of mental disorder every year.
- Five percent (5%) of adults, or about 10 million (10,000,000) Americans, have a serious mental illness, such as schizophrenia, major depression or bipolar disorder.
- Ten percent (10%) of children and adolescents suffer from mental illness severe enough to cause some level of impairment.
- Young people between 15 and 24 years old are the age group most likely to experience a major depressive episode.
- Depression in elders accounts for a majority of suicidal ideation, inpatient admissions, medical outpatient visits, emergency room use and medical co-morbidity.
- Fifty to sixty percent (50-60%) of individuals with severe mental disorders are also affected by substance abuse. This compares with ten percent (10%) in the general population.
- People with mental illness have a higher incidence of medical disorders, including obesity, heart disease and diabetes.

### Common Myths about Mental Illness

**Myth: If I have a mental illness, it is a sign of weakness—it's my fault. Reality:** Mental illness is not anyone's fault any more than heart disease or diabetes is a person's fault. According to the Surgeon General's report: "Mental disorders are health conditions that are characterized by alterations in thinking, mood, or behavior (or some combination thereof), associated with distress and/or impaired functioning." Mental illnesses are not a condition that people choose to have or not have. No one should have to feel ashamed of this condition any more than any other medical condition.

**Myth: All people with mental illness go for treatment. Reality:** Only one third of individuals with mental illness seek treatment.

**Myth: If a person has a mental illness, he or she can forget about college and a career. Reality:** People who have mental illnesses can recover and go on to college and get jobs that fit their talents and interests.

**Myth: Stress causes mental illness. Reality:** This is only partially true. Stress may occasionally trigger an episode or cause symptoms such as anxiety or depression, but persistent symptoms appear to be biological in nature. There are probably many things that can contribute to mental illness—the cause is not yet fully understood.

**Myth: People who have mental illnesses are dangerous. Reality:** People who have mental illness are far more likely to be the victims of violence—not the perpetrators. In fact, the rate of violence among people with mental illness is exactly the same as the general population.

**Myth: People with mental illnesses need to be in psychiatric hospitals or institutions until all the symptoms go away. Reality:** People with mental illnesses may need to go to a hospital occasionally to help them get things under control, but most people learn to manage their illnesses and everyday life in the community.

**For more information contact: NAMI Wisconsin at 608-268-6000 or 800-236-2988**

**Web site: [www.namiwisconsin.org](http://www.namiwisconsin.org)**



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I'd like more information about the following:     a local NAMI affiliate in my area     becoming a NAMI member

### Your gift to NAMI Wisconsin will change minds, raise voices, and help many individuals and families affected by mental illness.

*"In Our Own Voice presentations give hope to consumers and family members that mental illness may be a different way of life, but not a lesser life."*

*"Recovery is contagious. If you "stick to the winners" like NAMI you don't have to do it alone. You see success stories at NAMI functions and these represent hope. We have to show up for each other to participate in the recovery process."*

**Consider making a generous gift today.**