



National Alliance on Mental Illness

NAMI Southeast Minnesota

NAMI NEWS

February 2017

The Official Newsletter of NAMI Southeast Minnesota

So, You Want to be an Advocate?

Advocate: a person who publicly recommends or supports a particular cause or policy

NAMI's advocacy efforts are ongoing to ensure that policy makers maintain a focus and continue to address the needs of the mental health community.

Within the first week of January, the Minnesota Legislature started meeting and the NAMI national office announced legislative priorities for 2017. For more details, visit <http://www.nami.org/Press-Media/Press-Releases/2017/NAMI-Announces-Legislative-Priorities-for-2017>

Those priorities are:

- Invest in Mental Health and Innovation
- Promote Early Intervention
- Improve Integration of Care
- Support Caregivers, Military Service Members and Veterans
- End The Criminalization of Mental Illness

NAMI relies on a strong network of advocates across the region, state and country. As someone who cares about mental health, we need you to be part of that network.

In this new political climate, continuing our momentum will be more important than ever. Policymakers need to hear from you, their constituents, to fully understand the impact of proposed legislation.

Here are three quick action steps to get ready for the 2017 legislative session:

1. Sign up to receive The Spark Plug, NAMI Southeast Minnesota's new advocacy communication, via email by sending a note to nami-semn@namisemn.org
2. Know your elected officials! Enter your address here: <http://www.gis.leg.mn/iMaps/districts/>
3. Visit <https://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/committees> to get committee rosters to see where your legislators have the most influence. Since most discussion occurs and decisions are made in committees, it's important to know who's who. You can also visit your legislator's web page to see their committee assignments.

Always remember, while making a phone call or sending an email may seem small, it only takes a few contacts on a particular issue to demonstrate it matters to a legislator's constituents. Legislators listen to the people who elect them (and will re-elect them—or not). Therefore, even if you are called to action on an issue that isn't your passion, if you are the constituent of someone in a key role (for example, a committee chair or member), it's still important to reach out. If every advocate does this, you can rest assured someone will be contacting a legislator who is influential on your issue.

Lastly, save the date for Mental Health Day on the Hill on March 16, 2017. Check namisemn.org for more details!

NAMI offers free DBT skills classes

The Lighthouse is now offering DBT Skills Training! DBT stands for "Dialectical Behavior Therapy." The primary DBT dialectic is "I accept the way my life is now, AND I resolve to change for the better." The goal of those changes is to "Create a Life Worth Living." DBT provides a number of tools to skillfully accomplish four goals for a better life:

1. Mindfulness – Live in the present moment with wisdom
2. Emotional Regulation – Regulate emotions to serve rather than control
3. Interpersonal Effectiveness – Create and retain healthy, positive relationships with others
4. Distress Tolerance – Tolerate tough patches and periods of pain

Join us Monday evenings at The Lighthouse from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. for an Intro to DBT Skills Class. This class is perfect for anyone who is interested in learning more about DBT, a DBT graduate looking to practice or refresh their skills, or anyone who isn't able to commit to a weekly group. Light refreshments will be provided.

On Tuesday evenings from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. we will have a DBT Skills Closed Class. This class is a more intimate group and registration is required. New members may join at the beginning of a new module. This class is recommended for people who have more experience with DBT, or who are able to commit to weekly participation. Please register by contacting Bill Berg at BBerg@namisemn.org or 507-316-0986.

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An introduction from our new Board President, Robin DeVries

I joined the NAMI board a year ago. I got to know (Executive Director) Courtney Lawson through some NAMI programs at the public library, and was excited about the opportunity to join in on such an important movement and organization. I accepted the position of president of the board because of the NAMI board. They are one of the most dedicated and energetic boards I've ever been involved with. One of my goals for 2017 is to simply keep that going. We also have a strong executive committee, and will be working on clarifying board responsibilities and duties.



I currently work at the Rochester Public Library as a reference librarian, and most of my hobbies are predictable; I love to read in the winter and garden in the summer. I have an adult daughter who lives in Brooklyn, so trips to New York to spend time with her are high on my list of things I like to do.

Most people don't know that I worked as a family law attorney for Southern Minnesota Legal Services for 10 years. Although it was rewarding to help people in difficult situations, it was also very stressful. Working as a librarian is rewarding without the stress. We help people find the answers to just about anything!



NAMI recognizes award recipients

During our annual meeting on Dec. 5, NAMI recognized those who won 2016 awards.

They were:

Professional of the Year, Jim Behrends
Provider of the Year, Roger Eichman, L.P.
Criminal Justice Award, Dr. Steven Norton
CIT Officer of the Year, Officer Doug Remling
Volunteer of the Year (also honored by NAMI Minnesota), Rog Nolte

Congrats to our 2016 award winners! And we also want to extend a sincere thank you to our outgoing Board members for the year -- Paul Harkess, Donny Rowles and Mike Stensland. We appreciate all you've done for us!

Volunteer Spotlight: Rog Nolte

Q: What got you connected with NAMI SE MN?

A: Our daughter was diagnosed with mental illness in the mid 1990s. At that time, there wasn't a lot of information about mental illness. We found out about NAMI and took the family to a family (support) class. In the late 90s my wife Maggie was on the NAMI board of directors, and told me they needed someone to 'write a few checks a month.' This turned into -- including doing payroll -- tax payments, budgeting and, eventually, technology, as the number of staff members increased.

Q: How long have you been volunteering with NAMI?

A: Almost 20 years.

Q: What do you like most about your volunteerism?

A: I can use a lot of the skills I had before I retired to help the NAMI staff help others.

Q: How many hours do you give per month?

A: Typically 20 to 30 hours.

Q: You won a significant award this last year through NAMI MN for volunteerism. How do you feel about being recognized in that way?

A: It was very surprising. But nice in that it recognized people who do some of the 'back office' things that are not always visible, but needed to run the office and a NAMI affiliate.

Q: You're our go-to technology guy. What's the toughest question you've been asked?

A: Why is my computer slow? For which there are a thousand and one possible reasons, but it's often difficult to figure out which one it is.

Q: Outside of volunteering at NAMI, what do you do for enjoyment?

A: Volunteer for some other organizations, and travel.

Q: Tell us about your family.

A: Maggie and I have been married over 47 years. We have two children -- our son and his wife live in the Twin Cities area, and our daughter Kerry died from cancer in 2012.

Q: What's something about you that would surprise others to know?

A: I lived in England for a couple of years in the early 90s.



Holidays come to those in the hospital

Thank you to everyone who donated gifts to give to people receiving in-patient mental health care in the hospital over the holidays. Both fun gifts -- puzzle books, magazines, journals, and lotions -- and cozy gifts -- hats, gloves, socks -- were given to more than 90 people at Community Behavioral Health Hospital, Mayo Clinic and Zumbro Valley Health Center.

Welcoming new staff

As mental health needs in our community grow, so too do NAMI offerings. NAMI added two new staff this winter, both Peer Support Specialists. NAMI SE MN now has three Peer Support Specialists on staff!

Peer Support Specialists help people navigate the road to mental illness recovery. Please call us at 287-1692 if you'd like additional information about being matched with a Peer Support Specialist. And help us welcome Renee Berg and Steve Cray to the Peer Support team at NAMI! They join Bill Berg (no relation to Renee) and round out an awesome team.

RENEE BERG Peer Support and Communications Specialist

I never imagined being here, but here is where I find myself, and I'm thrilled. By here I mean everything, I mean the works -- I've been in Rochester for 15 years, when I envisioned being here for two; I've been diagnosed with bipolar disorder after years of mental health struggles; and now I'm here at NAMI, where I intend to engage in mental health advocacy through both of my roles as Peer Support and Communications Specialist.

It's my belief that getting help with mental illness shouldn't be as difficult as the journey I took to find my way to diagnosis and treatment. For me, it was years of challenge, years of struggle. Now I'm well, and I want to help others find their way to wellness, too. That, to me, is very important.

Outside of work, you'll likely find me at a coffee shop, sipping on a mocha. Or watching a movie, or reading a book. And of course I adore my two awesome kids, who inspired me to overcome my worst days and find my way to better days.



STEVE CRAY Peer Support Specialist

I have a lived experience with mental health challenges and enjoy walking with others on their journey toward hope and health. I know the heartache of individuals and families when their "normal" is ambushed.

I am a certified facilitator for the Family Connections class with the National Education Alliance for Borderline Personality Disorder. It is always encouraging to see people find help and hope in the midst of confusion and despair.

It has been my privilege to serve as a pastor for 26 years in Ohio, Illinois and California. I love to see churches seize the incredible ministry opportunity to serve individuals and families who are facing a mental health challenge.

Though I have only one biological sibling, our home had up to 12 other children or youth living with us at a time. My parents were house-parents in a faith-based children's home, whose staff served more than 100 children and youth.

I enjoy sports, traveling, home projects, golden retrievers, camping, whitewater rafting and downhill skiing on California mountain slopes—where the snow is deep, the temperature high and your biggest concern is not frostbite but sunburn!

I have been blessed to be married for 30 years and have two grown daughters.



2017 NAMI SE MN Board of Directors

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Kim Keilholtz
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NAMI STAFF

Courtney Lawson, Executive Director
Diana Evans, Community Talent Coordinator
Carrie L. Clark, Warmline Coordinator
Allison Stanfield, Peer Support Program Manager
Anita Otterness, Community & Family Program Manager
Bill Berg, Peer Support Specialist
Steve Cray, Peer Support Specialist
Renee Berg, Peer Support and Communications Specialist

CONTACT US

1700 Broadway Avenue N, Suite 104 • Rochester, Minn. 55906
507-287-1692 or www.namisemn.org

We won a Mayo Clinic award!

NAMI SE MN and partners received the inaugural Shared Value Award from Mayo Clinic for Mental Health First Aid in December. The Mayo Clinic staff had the opportunity to vote on the award recipient, and it's an honor to be selected.

The award will allow us to provide 12 Mental Health First Aid training sessions during 2017, as well as support training for an additional five instructors. Just as CPR helps assist individuals having a heart attack, participants in the Mental Health First Aid course learn a five-step action plan to assist a person who is in or entering into a mental health crisis.

Partners in achieving this recognition are NAMI SE MN, Family Service Rochester, the Rochester Area Council PTSA and Rochester Public Schools Community Education. For more information about taking a Mental Health First Aid class, or becoming trained as an instructor, call NAMI at 287-1692.

Become a Member of NAMI Southeast Minnesota!

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

**Email will be used to send program information and announcements.
Your contact information will not be shared.**

Annual Membership (\$35 regular, \$3 Open Door)	
Additional donation	
Total enclosed	

Please send this form and your payment to NAMI SE MN, 1700 Broadway Ave N, Suite 104, Rochester, MN 55906 or join online at www.namisemn.org

Thank You!

WHY JOIN NAMI?

Your Membership Supports

- Local, state and federal advocacy
- Effective programs that positively change lives

Member benefits:

- Quarterly news from NAMI SE MN, NAMI MN and NAMI national
- Discounted registration fees for the NAMI MN state conference
- Be part of the movement to assure that people with mental illness have access to needed treatment and resources

NAMI improves the lives of people affected by mental illness.

Change Service Requested

1700 Broadway Ave N,
Suite 104, Rochester, MN 55906

National Alliance on Mental Illness

**Southeast
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