



# NAMI Southwestern IL

\* SUPPORT \* EDUCATION \* ADVOCACY \* RESEARCH \*

National Alliance on Mental Illness

Website: <http://madisoncty.nami.org>

April/May 2010

NAMI Office Phone: 618-798-9788

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mark Rudolph

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### TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Page 1** - May is Mental Health Month
- Page 2** - President's Article
  - National Children's...Day
  - Office Information
  - Join NAMI
- Page 3** - Notice Notice Notice Notice
  - Bipolar Research Studies
  - NAMI Launches...Adults
- Page 4** - Calendar of Events
  - NAMI Leaders and Tasks
  - Newsletter Deadline Date
  - Other Local Meetings
  - NAMI SWI Llama's Wish
- Page 5** - Advertisers
- Page 6** - Consumer Conference
  - Annual Meeting...Membership
  - Thank You, KC Council #1712
  - Allsup Helps Break...Backlog
- Page 7** - Supported Employment
  - Janice's Story
  - Moving?
- Page 8** - Jerseyville Happenings
- Page 9** - Jerseyville Contionued
  - Allsup Helps Continued
  - Mental Health Rally
- Page 10** - Meeting Locations & Times

### May is Mental Health Month: Live Your Life Well

Mental Health America is proud to continue its tradition of celebrating "May is Mental Health Month," which began in 1949. This year, our theme "Live Your Life Well," challenges us to promote health and wellness in homes, communities, schools, and inform on how to attain it. Everyday, Americans are affected by the myriad challenges, stresses and demands on their lives. And every day, they seek help in responding to them. The good news is there are tested and effective tools that are readily available and free that anyone can use to help them cope better and improve their well-being.



This Mental Health Month, Mental Health America is encouraging Americans to use these tools, which form the Live Your Life Well™ campaign. Live Your Life Well™ is a national public education campaign dedicated to helping people better cope with stress and enhancing their well-being. Stress can take a huge toll on a person's health, mood, productivity and relationships, but specific, evidence-based tools can help counterbalance these effects.

Mental Health America created Live Your Life Well™ to increase the number of people who take action to protect their mental health, both in the face of ongoing stress and in times of great personal challenge.

The heart of the program is the Live Your Life Well™ website—[www.liveyourlifewell.org](http://www.liveyourlifewell.org)—that provides 10 research-based, straightforward tools and ways to apply them in everyday life. From relaxation techniques to journaling exercises to simple ways to get better sleep and improve eating habits, the materials offer a wide range of resources to build resiliency and well-being. *(Source: e-Bell Newsletter, Spring 2010)*

*(Editor's Note: The e-Bell Newsletter is published by the Mental Health America, which works with its 300 affiliates nationwide to promote health, prevent mental disorders and achieve victory over illnesses through advocacy, education, research and service. To receive the e-Bell, visit Mental Health America's Web site [www.mentalhealthamerica.net](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net) or call 1-800-969-6642.)*

### CRISIS HOTLINE NUMBERS

#### Northern Madison County

Community Counseling Center  
Crisis Hotline **(618) 465-4388**

#### Southern Madison County

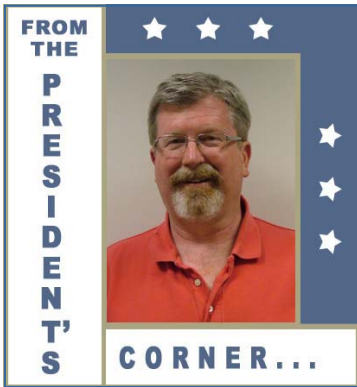
Chestnut Health Systems  
Crisis Hotline **(618) 877-0316**

#### Jersey County Greene County Calhoun County

Tri-County Counseling Center  
Crisis Hotline **(618) 498-6881**

#### St. Clair County

Call For Help  
Crisis Hotline **(618) 397-0963**



*...Rob Roennigke*

The Board of Directors of NAMI Southwestern Illinois [formerly NAMI Madison County] are pleased to announce that the position of Executive Director has been offered to and accepted by Mark Rudolph.

Mark possess a unique combination of professional and people skills that will help NAMI expand its services to consumers and family members throughout the Metro East area. Please join me in welcoming Mark to our NAMI family and to support him as he recovers from his recent hospital stay.

## NATIONAL CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS DAY

MAY 6, 2010

National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day is a day for everyone to promote positive youth development, resilience, recovery, and the transformation of mental health services delivery for children and youth with serious mental health needs and their families. Awareness Day raises awareness of effective programs for children's mental health needs; demonstrates how children's mental health initiatives promote positive youth development, recovery, and resilience; and shows how children with mental health needs thrive in their communities.

On Thursday, May 6, 2010, Awareness Day will mark its 5th anniversary, as well as a first-time focus on the topic of early childhood. Communities across the country will observe the day with events, youth demonstrations, and social networking campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of mental health and increase understanding of the

mental health needs of children and their families.

Awareness Day 2010 will specifically focus on increasing basic awareness of the importance positive mental health has on a child's healthy development, with the key message that "positive mental health is essential to a child's healthy development from birth."

Awareness Day efforts will encourage the following actions:

- Integrate mental health into every environment that impacts child development from birth
- Nurture the social and emotional well-being of children from birth
- Look for and discuss milestones of a child's social and emotional development from birth



### NAMI Southwestern IL Office

Gateway Regional Medical Center  
2100 Madison Avenue, 4th floor  
Granite City, IL 62040

E-mail: [namimadisoncty@sbcglobal.net](mailto:namimadisoncty@sbcglobal.net)

Phone: 618-798-9788  
Fax: 866-332-5338

Website: <http://madisoncty.nami.org>

## NAMI Experience the Revolution

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ JOIN TODAY!

Call the NAMI Office at 618-798-9788 to have a membership form sent to you or download one from our website by clicking here:

[http://madisoncty.nami.org/  
nami\\_membership\\_form12d.pdf](http://madisoncty.nami.org/nami_membership_form12d.pdf)

## NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE

by Alice Adcock



Classes are being held for those who have loved ones who have been diagnosed with a major mental illness, such as:

- Major Depression
- Bipolar Disorder
- Schizophrenia and/or Schizoaffective Disorder
- Panic Disorder and/or Obsessive Compulsive Disorder.

NAMI Southwestern Illinois is again offering the Family-to-Family course for the summer. This is a series of 12 weekly classes structured to help family members understand and support their ill relative while maintaining their own well being. The course is taught by a team of trained volunteer family members who know what it's like to have a loved one with a serious mental illness in the family. There is NO COST to participate in this program.

Classes will be held once a week for 2 ½ hours on Thursday evenings beginning June 3<sup>rd</sup> and ending on Thursday, August 19, 2010. These classes are for family members only. Registration is required. Please call soon to register as class size is limited to 25 persons.

For more information, call the NAMI Southwestern Illinois Office at (618) 798 9788 or Alice Adcock at (618) 307 5132.

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### Bipolar Research Studies

Researchers at the National Human Genome Research Institute of the National Institutes of Health are seeking parents who have been diagnosed with bipolar disorder to participate in an online survey. The survey will take about 45 minutes to complete. In the survey, we ask questions about participants' thoughts about their bipolar disorder and how they deal with bipolar disorder. We also ask about participants' thoughts about the chance that their children might get a mood disorder someday, and how they feel about that chance. The survey is completely anonymous.

To participate, you must:

- Have a diagnosis of bipolar disorder
- Be 18 years or older
- Be a biological parent of a child who is younger than 30 years old
- Be willing to participate in the survey

Your child cannot have been diagnosed with a mood disorder or other serious psychiatric disorder. Your child cannot have been adopted. You must be (or must have been) involved in taking care of your child. Your child must be younger than 30 years of age.

Taking the survey could make you uncomfortable. If you become uncomfortable, you can stop taking the survey. There are no benefits to participating.

If you would like to participate, please go to [http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/parents\\_with\\_bipolar](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/parents_with_bipolar) to take the survey.

If you have questions about the study, please contact the study co-investigator, Holly Peay, at [hpeay@mail.nih.gov](mailto:hpeay@mail.nih.gov) or 301- 496-3979.

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### NAMI Launches Social Networking Site for Young Adults

NAMI has launched [StrengthofUs.org](http://StrengthofUs.org), a new online community where young adults living with mental health concerns can provide mutual support in navigating the unique challenges and opportunities during the critical transition years from ages 18-25. The site also offers support and resources for young adults who have a family member or friend affected by a mental health problem.

Developed by young adults, this newly launched Web site consists of a user-driven social networking community where young adults can connect with their peers and share personal stories, creativity and helpful resources by writing and responding to blog entries, engaging in discussion groups, posting status updates on "the Wire" and sharing videos, photos and other news. The site also offers a variety of resources on issues that young adults have identified as important to them, including relationships, campus life, independent living, family and friends, employment, mental health issues and much more.

For this project NAMI conducted a national survey of young people living with mental conditions on their social networking habits, resource preferences and support needs. 284 responses were received from a wide cross section. This survey became the blue print for the project.

Visit the site to see what it is about, although without a profile, you will only be able to see the resources and not the various social networking components that are popular. We hope you will encourage young adults to join and join in the fun. Check it out today and join the conversation at [StrengthofUs.org](http://StrengthofUs.org).

*(Editor's Note: Don't forget...if you're reading this newsletter online, you can just click on the blue link above and you will be taken directly to the website. If you're not receiving your newsletter electronically, contact the NAMI office at [namimadisoncty@sbcglobal.net](mailto:namimadisoncty@sbcglobal.net) to switch to receiving your newsletters electronically.)*



## 2010 CALENDAR OF EVENTS



Mental Health Rally (See article on page 9).....May 5  
 NAMI Business Meeting .....May 11  
 Madison County 708 Board Mtg, Edwardsville, 4:30PM...May 12  
 Madison County Board Mtg, Edwardsville, 5:00PM.....May 19  
 Continuum of Care Meeting, Woodriver.....May 20  
 Annual Membership Meeting (See article on page 6)..... Jun 8  
 NAMI National Conference, Washington, D.C.....Jun 30-Jul 3  
 Consumer Conference (See article on page 6).....Aug 6  
 A Mile in My Shoe...(More Info Next Newsletter).....Sep 10  
 NAMI Walk for Mental Health.....Oct 2  
 Mental Illness Awareness Week (MIAW).....Oct 4-8  
 NAMI IL Educational Conference, Peoria, IL..... Oct 15-17

**DEADLINE** for the **June 2010** issue of newsletter is **May 15, 2010**. Please email your article to Sandy at [skgiger@hotmail.com](mailto:skgiger@hotmail.com) on or before due date.



## NAMI Southwestern IL Project Leaders

Pam Conley.....Consumer Council Member  
 Mary Gauen..... Webmaster  
 Matt Gauen.....NAMI Southwestern IL Llama Artist  
 Sandy Giger..... Newsletter Editor  
 Tom Johnson.....CIT Coordinator  
 Carol Morrow and Lynn Piggot...Newsletter Mailing  
 Diane Pisko .....Membership Coordinator  
 Diane Pisko.....Newsletter Labels  
 Pat Rudloff.....Support Groups Coordinator

Congratulations  
 to our new  
 Executive  
 Director,  
 Mark Rudolph!!



## OTHER LOCAL MEETINGS



**NAMI CUPFUL:** 4th Saturday of each month, 2:00-4:00PM, 1505 Market Ave., East St. Louis. Call Pamela Perry, Central Comprehensive Mental Health, at 618-274-0881 (work) or 314-868-8031 (home) for more information.

**ST. LOUIS OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER SUPPORT GROUP:** 3rd Saturday of each month, 10:00AM, St. John's Mercy Medical Center, McAuley Room South, 615 S. New Ballas Rd., Von Gontard Conference Center. Speakers start at 10:00AM and support groups meet from 11:00AM till noon. For more information, call 314-842-7228, ext. 3.

**DBSA (Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance) MEETING:** Every Monday 7:00-8:30PM, O.C. Anderson Hospital, Maryville, IL, next to the cafeteria on Lower Level B. Contact: Diane at 618-667-8781 or by e-mail at [dbsamc@yahoo.com](mailto:dbsamc@yahoo.com) for more information.

**"With Hope in Mind" Support Group:** for family members or caregivers; meets the 4th Tuesday of each month from 7:00-8:30PM at Christian Hospital Northeast (CNE), 11133 Dunn Road, St. Louis, MO, Room 2100. For more information contact Larry Daniels at 314-830-4642 or 314-660-9093.

**Karla Smith Foundation Support Group** for family and friends of persons with mental illness: 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month, 7:00-8:30PM, Peace Chapel, 10101 W. Main St., Belleville. For more information call Tom or Fran Smith at 888-KSF-HOPE or [ksf@karlasmithfoundation.org](http://ksf@karlasmithfoundation.org).

**Karla Smith Foundation Suicide Survivor Support Group:** 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m., Peace Chapel, 10101 W. Main St., Belleville. For more information call Tom or Fran Smith at 888-KSF-HOPE or [ksf@karlasmithfoundation.org](mailto:ksf@karlasmithfoundation.org).

**Southwestern Tourette Syndrome Support Group of TSA Illinois:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m., Copper Creek Christian Church, 2184 Vadalabene, Maryville. Child care available. For more information contact Amy Shirley at 618-656-2135 or [amyshirley72@hotmail.com](mailto:amyshirley72@hotmail.com).

**"It's About Us",** Community Counseling Center, 2615 Edwards Street, Alton, Wednesday 3-4PM, for consumers only, must be 18. Call Katie at 618-550-4231 or Dan at 618-550-2671.

**Caring and Sharing for Consumers,** 2nd and 4th Wednesdays, 6:45PM – 8:00PM, Jerseyville Public Library, 105 N. Liberty, Jerseyville, IL, contact the NAMI Office at 618-798-9788.

**Special Night (social gathering) for Consumers and Friends,** 2nd Saturday, 5:00-7:00PM, Church of the Nazarene, 285 Maple Summit Road, Jerseyville, IL. For more information contact Shelly Holmes at 618-498-5476.



**Karla Smith Foundation Suicide Survivor Support Group** for family and friends of people who have died by suicide: 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month, 7:00-8:30PM, Copper Creek Christian Church, 2184 Vadalabene Drive, Maryville. For more information, call Tom or Fran Smith at 888-KSF-HOPE or [ksf@karlasmithfoundation.org](http://ksf@karlasmithfoundation.org).

**First Friday Social:** for consumers on the first Friday of each month from 6:30PM-9:30PM at Sacred Creations, 6610 Center Grove Rd, Edwardsville. For more information, contact Sacred Creations at 618-792-2049.

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Applications are being accepted for HUD rent-assisted apartments at Community Court, Hempel House and Yakubian Apartments in Alton. To qualify, you must be between the ages of 18-62 with a maximum income of \$23,050 and have a chronic mental illness. Please call (618) 465-0120 for more information.



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Behavioral Health Alternatives provides Mental Health Case Management Services, which includes but is not limited to: Individual Therapy; Group Therapy; Medication Monitoring and Training; and Representative Payee Services. Call (618) 251-4073 for more information.

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Thank you

To Chestnut Health Systems in Granite City and Community Counseling Center in Alton who each month alternate printing this newsletter as a service to NAMI.



## Consumer Conference

The Conference Committee is very excited about our 14th Annual Conference this year. We hope everyone has marked their calendars to keep August 6, 2010, available to attend the conference. We have a powerful national speaker, Antonio Lambert, from North Carolina.



We have had to make some changes this year from our normal conference location and date. The consumer conference will be held Friday, August 6, 2010, 9:00AM – 3:00PM at Southwestern Illinois College, 2500 Carlyle Ave, Belleville, IL.

The Conference Committee has chosen it's theme. It is *Today's Challenges- Tomorrow's Triumphs*.

Please mark your calendars now to keep that date open.

## Annual Meeting of the Membership

Our Annual Membership Meeting which is usually held in May has been postponed until June 8, 2010. The membership meeting will be held in the large conference room behind the Cafeteria on the lower level in Gateway Regional Medical Center. The meeting will begin at 7:00PM.

Because of the importance of this meeting, all members are encouraged to come and vote for your officers and board members.

You will have a chance to meet the candidates for election, the existing Board, our new Executive Director and also hear about the accomplishments of 2009-2010 fiscal year and goals of 2010-2011 fiscal year

Be an active member...Come vote at this meeting then socialize with other members. Refreshments will be served.



## Thank You, Knights of Columbus Council #1712



NAMI Southwestern IL was one of the Collinsville Knights of Columbus' recipients of their tootsie roll drive that took place last fall. Proceeds of the drive benefit people with intellectual disabilities.

Knights of Columbus Council #1712 have been a faithful supporter of NAMI for which we are most

grateful. Thank you.

If you know a Collinsville KC member, thank them on behalf of NAMI Southwestern.

## Allsup Helps Break Through the Disability Backlog

*Allsup reissues top 10 tips to help people with disabilities as applications for Social Security disability benefits soar to 2.8 million*

Belleville, Ill. – Feb. 8, 2010 – Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) applications reached an unprecedented 2.8 million claims in 2009, signaling the continuing challenge for applicants. Allsup, the nation's leading Social Security disability representation company, is releasing 10 tips to help Americans with disabilities break through the backlog of more than 700,000 claims now waiting for a hearing before the Social Security Administration.

"Based on Allsup's extensive experience completing and getting awards for thousands of SSDI applicants, we've compiled this list of 10 tips to break through the disability backlog," said Mike Stein, assistant vice president of claims. "These are some of the key steps that individuals can take to speed up their process as much as possible, knowing that it can take two years or more to receive benefits."

The Social Security Administration now expects 340,000 more disability claims in fiscal year 2010 than anticipated one year ago. By the end of this year, the estimated pending SSDI backlog will be 964,000 for initial applications.

SSDI is a federally mandated insurance program overseen by the Social Security Administration (SSA) that operates separately from the retirement and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) programs. SSDI provides monthly benefits to individuals under full retirement age (65 or older) who can no longer work because of a disability (injury, illness or condition) that is expected to last for at least 12 months or is terminal. Individuals must have paid FICA taxes to be eligible. More details are provided in the SSDI Overview on Allsup.com.

### Allsup's Top 10 Tips for Breaking Through the Disability Backlog

1. Determine eligibility. To be eligible for SSDI benefits, claimants must have been disabled before reaching full retirement age (65-67) and meet the Social Security Administration's definition of disabled, which generally means being unable to work due to a medically determinable mental or physical impairment expected to result in death or last for at least 12 months. Individuals also must have worked and paid into the program for five of the last 10 years. (Obtain a free evaluation to determine eligibility by visiting: <https://www.allsup.com/about-ssdi/free-ssdi-evaluation.aspx>)

2. File immediately. If an initial claim is denied, Allsup notes that the national average wait for an appeals hearing is 491 days. There is no time to lose.

(Continued on Page 9, See "Allsup's Helps")

## Supported Employment: A Road to Recovery

Employment is a critical component of recovery for people living with serious mental illnesses. Sadly, 60-80 percent of people who live with mental illness are unemployed and, for people living with the most severe mental illness, unemployment rates are as high as 90 percent.

Supported employment is recognized as the most effective approach for helping people living with mental illness and other disabilities gain competitive employment. The story of Janice,\* below, illustrates the benefits of supported employment and the positive impact it can have on recovery. Janice's story and the supported employment practice principals accompanying it was submitted by Paul Gorman, Ed.D, a faculty member with the Dartmouth Supported Employment Center. Since 1988, the center has developed resources, provided technical assistance and conducted studies on supported employment.

For more information about Supported Employment: Individual Placement and Support, please go to <http://dms.dartmouth.edu/dsec>.

Read Janice's Story below (Janice is not the real name).

### Janice's Story

When Janice first began working, she experienced some anxiety about being in a new situation. In fact, she was worried that the building would fly away. Janice's employment specialist spoke to Janice's boss and co-workers. She said that if Janice expressed this fear, they could help by reassuring her that she was safe. Janice reports that the supports were helpful, "She (employment specialist) showed up at every corner. She told me, if you have any questions, just ask." Almost a year later, the employment specialist continues to make weekly visits to the workplace to provide support.

Janice's employment specialist works closely with her mental health team and reports that they have also provided job supports. "They have been helping with anxiety and intrusive thoughts." The group home staff has also become involved. Initially, they were discouraging Janice from using her "as needed" medications. But the team asked them to offer the medication before work if they notice that Janice is having a bad day.

Finally, the mental health team and employment specialist meet with Janice and her family from time to time. Janice's parents are happy that Janice has somewhere to go during the week and are impressed that she is able to manage her symptoms out in the community. Janice's co-workers appear to like Janice as much as she likes them. When Janice started the job, they asked her to stay and have lunch with them after she finished her shift, but Janice declined the offer saying that she ought to get home. So her co-workers tried moving their lunchtime back to noon, and eventually to 11 a.m. so that lunch would occur in the middle of Janice's work shift. Now

Janice eats with them each day she works. "I love working with them. They hustle around and do their thing. I'm back to working two mornings a week now. So, I guess I'll keep on trucking!"

Janice says that she loves her job at a catering company in a small city in Minnesota. "It's kind of quiet, but I can handle space. I tell my boss that I like working for him. I come in not because I have to, but because I want to."

Before Janice found this job a year ago, she hadn't worked in over 20 years. She had anxiety that sometimes made it hard to concentrate and also had delusional thoughts. But her case manager thought that Janice might enjoy working. "My social worker said, 'Aren't you ever going to get a job? You're never around people because they're working all day.' I said, Okay. I want to get a job so I can feel handy and wanted and needed." Janice's social worker referred her to the supported employment program at her mental health center.

Janice met with an employment specialist who helped her get information about how her benefits would be affected by a return to work. The employment specialist also spoke to Janice about her preferences for a job. Because Janice hadn't worked in a long time, she preferred to begin with a small number of work hours each week. She also wanted a job that was close to her group home.

The employment specialist didn't ask Janice to go through any type of evaluation or job training program. Instead, she began looking around Janice's neighborhood for the types of businesses that she thought might be a good fit for Janice. She spoke to employers about Janice's strengths. For instance, Janice is a conscientious person. Eventually, she found an employer who was interested in hiring someone to work one morning each week. In addition, this employer was located just one block from Janice's home. The specialist arranged a meeting with Janice and the employer.

**Keep receiving your newsletters on time!**

**MOVING???**

**PLEASE** contact NAMI Southwestern IL Office if you will be moving or have already moved.

Either send an e-mail to [namimadisoncty@sbcglobal.net](mailto:namimadisoncty@sbcglobal.net) or call (618) 798-9788 with your new home address, phone number and your e-mail address.





## HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING AT JERSEYVILLE

### **NAMI Special Night** by Shelly Holmes

Recently we had NAMI Special Night we learned about Ireland, it's legends, and it's music. It was an awesome night, we made personal crest with our Strength's, Personality, Hopes, and Dreams. We either wrote down something or created a scene in each section that would represent who we are.

It's important to know who we are and where we are in our recovery process, if we don't know then how can we expect anyone else to know.

As we travel through life we go through many changes some good some bad but that's what makes who we are.

As we listened to the sounds of the Celtic Women we found something we all had in common, the love of the music that soothes the heart and soul that comes from the land of mystic, wonder, and amazement. A sound that can transport you to another time and place long forgotten but not dead and gone because the people, their dreams and their music keeps it alive.

So never give up on your dreams one day they will come true if you believe in them hard and long enough.

---

### **Coping Skills How We Use Them Or How We Don't** by Shelly Holmes

In the past few month's I have had one challenge after another and believe me when I say I wanted to give up, give in, and just disappear. My friends on the other hand had a different way of thinking. They decided I needed their help to get through this mess I call life. My usual coping skills were useless but I soon learned that you can always have new coping skills to add to the ones you already have.

I love to write and to read, to take long walks and to listen to music. The only coping skill I could use was music and that wasn't enough. My friend, Heidi, started to read to me since I couldn't read due to double vision and this helped to take my mind off things for a little while; enough that I could regroup myself and keep going. I got to the point of I didn't care what was happening and I began to sink into depression; I was losing a losing battle--or so I thought.

My friends didn't give up on me and I had to learn new coping skills since the old ones weren't enough. I started doing word search puzzles when my sight would clear for

awhile; I talked with my friends on the phone or they would drop by to visit with me; I started writing a story in my head and when I started getting better I started writing the story on paper. I started exercising, got my strength back and now am walking, not like I use to but I'm walking.

I nearly threw everything away because my old reliable coping skills weren't working so well, but through my support network I was able to get back on track and move forward. You have to use your coping skills everyday if your to make it through life, so don't give up.

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### **Special Nights Time Change** by Shelly Holmes

Due to the times of people who would like to come later in the evening, we are changing our times for NAMI Special Night in Jerseyville. New time will be 5:00PM – 7:00PM. It is still on the second Saturday of each month at the Jerseyville Church of the Nazarene 285 Maple Summit Road Jerseyville. Any questions please call Shelly Holmes at 618-498-5476.

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### **Jerseyville Health Fair** by Tracie C.

The Health Fair started Thursday, March 11, 2010, at the JCH Wellness Center in Jerseyville. It was sure to be a great event with many booths set up for the two day event. I was setting up the NAMI table for the event. I would be spending the two days at the event, along with Sue S. for help on Friday morning.

The event started Thursday at 5:00PM and went till 8:00PM. I spoke with many people about NAMI and handed out different literature that we had to share with the community.

Friday morning came and so did my help, Sue S., one of our NAMI Connection facilitators. She helped to provide the information that I didn't know for she could speak more in depth about the NAMI organization and all the things that NAMI does.

We both had a great experience and we plan on setting up again next year.

**(Continued on Page 9, See “More Jerseyville Happenings”)**



Depression--How Do You Fight It?

by Shelly Holmes

Here lately I have had one bad thing after another happen to me. Two strokes in two years, severe back, problems that have kept me in bed for long periods of time. I miss several of my youth programs as well as my NAMI programs, it's finally getting to me. I cry at the littlest things, I sleep all the time or I go for long periods of time not sleeping and I'm always sick to my stomach for no reason. Here lately I have even been having chest pains which the doctor has told me it is due to stress.

I am a NAMI Connections facilitator and I know that I need help but everywhere that I have turned hasn't been able to help. Others don't even bother to call me back so that I can talk with them, so what do I do?

My coping skills help part of the time then there's times that nothing helps and thoughts run through my mind, "why does the Lord put me through all of this ?" I simply can't handle very much more I keep saying and somehow I keep getting through everything.

It is a very lonely feeling when you can't share with your friends what your thinking or what all this mess is putting you through. So, "How do I fight It?"

Well many times through the day I find myself in conversation with my Heavenly Father, crying "why, Father, do you put me through these test? I can't keep going; I am so tired" But in my heart I know it is not the Father that throws problem after problem but Satan that does. It's our Heavenly Father that helps us to stand up and fight. He gives us the strength to say "I CAN GET THROUGH THIS SITUATION"!!!! So, How do we get past these negative thoughts and emotions? There's only one answer; WE FIND A NEW WAY.

I started looking for new coping skills, new outlets for the negative emotions flowing through me and now I am finally seeing a new light. This light will lead me out of the darkness into a place that is safe and warm, a place where I can learn and grow in my life with the Lord and to be at peace with my mental illness.

I use to live day for day; I still do but sometimes I make plans for events in the future and that gives me reason to fight for life, to fight for freedom of the negative thoughts that drives my mental illness over the edge and I nearly lose control.

Life is worth fighting for no matter who you are, whether you're poor or rich, fat or skinny, young or old--it doesn't matter. All life is important. Never forget that. When you are lost find a new way. When life throws you a lemon, make lemonade.

LIVE FOR THE FIGHT !!!!!!!

3. Obtain doctor's agreement. Claimants need written medical confirmation of their qualifying conditions when they apply. According to Allsup, not having a doctor's support when filing could delay the process a month or more.

4. Get help. Filing for disability benefits is a complicated process akin to preparing a difficult income tax return. Allsup emphasizes that the earlier applicants seek help, the more support they can get to help put them back on the right track.

5. Prepare an accurate medical record. A comprehensive factual record is required to convince the government to provide benefits.

6. As noted above, individuals must have worked for five of the previous 10 years to qualify for benefits. A 15-year work history is needed.

7. Meet deadlines. If benefits are denied at any stage of the process, claimants have only 60 days to file an appeal. If the deadline is missed, the process starts over from the beginning. In addition, there is a risk of reducing the amount of retroactive benefits to which someone is entitled.

8. Reduce spending. The long wait for benefits means that people lose their savings, possessions and sometimes their homes. Eliminate unnecessary spending as quickly as possible and prepare for the long haul. And don't use credit cards. Allsup reminds applicants that high-interest debt will add to long-term problems. There may be other, more affordable options for handling expenses. More resources are available to you on the Personal Finance section of Allsup.com.

9. Maintain health insurance. There will be a temptation to cut spending on insurance, but Allsup notes that even after individuals begin receiving disability benefits there is a two-year waiting period for Medicare eligibility.

10. Don't give up. The Social Security Administration denies more than 60 percent of all initial applications, but two-thirds of the people who appeal eventually will receive their disability benefits. By the time applicants reach the hearing level of appeals, about 90 percent are receiving representation assistance.

To find out if you may be eligible to apply for SSDI benefits, contact the Disability Evaluation Center at (800) 279-4357 and ask for a free evaluation.

Mental Health Rally & Lobby Day

The Illinois Mental Health Rally and Lobby Day will be held on Wednesday, May 5, 2010 in Springfield.



If you are interested in attending please contact the NAMI office at (618)798-9788.

To show our unity, we are asked to wear some shade of blue to the rally.



**NAMI Support Group Locations**

**GRANITE CITY**

- ◆ **First Tuesday of each month, Family Members and Consumer** Support Group in the NAMI Office, 4th floor at Gateway Regional Medical Center, Granite City, IL 62040, 7:00 - 8:30 PM. Contact Pat Rudloff at 618-656-6781.

**ALTON**

- ◆ **First Tuesday of each month, NAMI Family Support** Group at Saint Clare's Hospital, 915 East 5th Street in the Heritage Room, Alton, IL 62002, 7:00 - 8:30PM. Contact Pat Rudloff at 618-656-6781.

**LITCHFIELD**

- ◆ **Third Tuesday of each month, a support meeting for Family Members and Consumers** at The Christian Church of Litchfield, 131 Yaeger Lake Trail, Litchfield, IL 62056, 7:00 - 8:30PM. Contact Pat Rudloff at 618-656-6781.

**EDWARDSVILLE**

- ◆ **Fourth Tuesday of each month, NAMI Family Members** Support Group at First Baptist Church, 534 St. Louis St., Edwardsville, IL 62025, use church parking lot entrance, 7:00 - 8:30PM. Contact Pat Rudloff at 618-656-6781.

**BELLEVILLE**

- ◆ **Third Thursday of each month, a support group for Family Members and Consumers** at the PSOP Bldg, 204 N. Church St, Belleville, IL, 7:00PM - 8:30PM. Contact Ron Szewczuk at 618-476-1771

**NAMI Southwestern IL**  
Gateway Regional Medical Center  
2100 Madison Ave, 4th Floor  
Granite City, IL 62040

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

**TO:**



**NAMI Connection Locations for Consumers**

**MARYVILLE**

- ◆ **Every Thursday, NAMI Connection Group** at First Baptist Church, 7110 State Route 162, 2nd Fl., Room 244, Maryville, IL 62062, 6:30 - 8:00PM. Contact Diane Pisko at 618-667-8781 for more information..

**JERSEYVILLE**

- ◆ **Every Thursday, NAMI Connection Group** at Tri-County Counseling Center, 220 E. County Road, Jerseyville, IL 62052, 7:00-8:30PM. Contact Shelly Holmes at 618-498-5476.



For questions about any of the above meetings or inclement weather, call the contact person for that particular meeting or call the NAMI Office at 618-798-9788.



**NAMI Board Meeting**



- **Second Tuesday of each month in GRANITE CITY** at Gateway Regional Medical Center in the Conference Room through the Cafeteria on the Lower Level, 7:00PM.

**The Board welcomes all members and advocates!!**