



National Alliance on Mental Illness
NAMI-Sussex County Affiliate
P.O. Box 652, Sparta, NJ 07871
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President's Message

Kathleen Fitzsimmons

Dear members and friends of NAMI-Sussex,

We have so much great news to share with you! NAMI-Sussex members have experienced joy and satisfaction from their efforts during the fall of 2009. I will let the articles in our newsletter tell their stories. We hope you will be inspired. Join us for a very exciting and productive 2010!

NAMI-Sussex will soon have its own website! It is being developed right now by my son, Jason. You will have links to NAMI-NJ, NAMI National, many other mental health organizations, plus we will post both our newsletters and meeting minutes on the site!

NAMI- NJ's top priority for 2010 is to save state mental health services from massive state budget cuts. With decreasing state funds during this period of economic crisis, your voices are needed to speak for thousands of individuals living with mental illness. Without state and local mental health services, too many people with a mental illness end up in emergency rooms, hospitalized, in shelters, on the streets or in jails. Please write to our Governor Chris Christie, P.O. Box 004, Trenton, NJ 08625.

A healthy, happy and prosperous New Year 2010 to all!



Affiliate Wins Award! *Outstanding Revitalization Efforts*

NAMI-Sussex County, one of 26 county affiliates of the National Alliance on Mental Illness of New Jersey, was awarded NAMI-NJ's 2009 "Outstanding Affiliate Revitalization Efforts Award" at NAMI-NJ's Annual Holiday Awards Luncheon, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Monroe, NJ on Dec. 8, 2009.



Accepts Award - Kathleen Fitzsimmons, right, president of NAMI-Sussex County, receives the "Outstanding Affiliate Revitalization Efforts Award" from Sylvia Axelrod, executive director of NAMI New Jersey.

NAMI-Sussex members' revitalization efforts that helped win this award included providing

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We're on our Way!

NAMI-NJ being considered for 2-year Special State Project

How exciting for us to discover in November that NAMI-NJ was being seriously considered for the Two-Year Special State Project of the New Jersey State Federation of Women's Clubs of GFWC (NJSFWC)! Word came that our organization was chosen to be one of six presenters at their Federation Headquarters this month! It was a thrill that energized our entire base.

NAMI-NJ Executive Director Sylvia Axelrod, Associate Director Aruna Rao, and our own Affiliate Secretary and Federated Clubwoman Marjorie Strohsahl (who nominated NAMI-NJ for this project), were the presenters. They gave an overview of NAMI and their programs and a host of ideas to show ways in which clubwomen may become involved.

Two major initiatives were stressed: Stigma Busting and Soldiers. There is much work to be done to aid soldiers/veterans returning from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars who are suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress

educational NAMI programs such as Hearts and Minds, the 12-week free Family-to-Family Education Program, building membership from one to 30 members, holding monthly Support Group and Business/Advocacy meetings and publishing a quarterly newsletter.



Celebrating Award - Carrie Parmelee, center, Family Specialist of Intensive Family Support Services of St. Clare's Hospital, Sussex, joins Kathleen Fitzsimmons, left, and Jeri Doherty at the NAMI NJ Annual Holiday Awards Luncheon.



BRAVO! – From left, Aruna Rao, NAMI NJ Director of Educational Programs; Sylvia Axelrod, Executive Director of NAMI-NJ and Marjorie Strohsahl, Secretary of NAMI-Sussex, and a Federated Clubwoman, made an impressive presentation on NAMI-NJ's behalf to the New Jersey State Federation of Women's Clubs.

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NAMI-Sussex also reached out to and participated in the events of local county mental health provider agencies and the Board of Mental Health. The affiliate brought awareness and fought stigma in the public sector during "May Is National Mental Health Month" and "Mental Illness Awareness Week," with presentations at local social and service organizations, displays in county libraries, and the distribution of hundreds of information packets.

In addition, our affiliate has joined the Sussex County Chamber of Commerce and maintains on-going participation in the NJ Governor's Campaign to fight stigma and Bridgeway's Community Outreach.

NAMI-Sussex members are currently working hard to bring the upcoming NAMI-NJ's Law Enforcement Education Program (LEEP) to Sussex County. We can be very proud to have been recognized for all our hard work by NAMI New Jersey.

Disorder (PTSD). A design for a Special State Project pin was suggested. Among the host of ideas put on the table that were big hits were prototypes of NAMI-NJ/NJSFWC Bookmarks and a specially created candy bar wrapper sleeve for use in a fundraiser for Veterans.

Much to the delight of all concerned, NAMI-NJ was chosen as one of the *top three* charities in the state. Now, NAMI-NJ will be put on the Federation voting ballot so all 11,000 New Jersey clubwomen in over 255 clubs can select the winner, NJSFWC Special State Project 2010-2012! If NAMI-NJ is chosen, this will be the first time in its history that another organization, other than a health-related alliance, will be partnering with them! Even if this does not come to pass, the positive aspect is that all women in the Federation will learn about NAMI-NJ through the Fact Sheets submitted to clubs...so right there we have a victory! ***We Are Getting The Word Out!***

Bridgeway Takes Over NMH Rehabilitation Services

Bridgeway Rehabilitation Services, a psychiatric rehabilitation agency providing care to patients throughout New Jersey for 40 years, will take over Newton Memorial Hospital's rehabilitation services as of Jan. 1, 2010: Sussex House's Psychiatric Rehabilitation and Recovery day program, Supported Employment, Integrated Case Management Services, PATH Homeless Case Management Services and OPAL Supported Housing Services. These programs involve treatment for approximately 470 patients.



Anticipating Changes - Bridgeway Executive Director Cory Storch, Bridgeway Director Diane Piagesi-Zett, NAMI-Sussex President Kathleen Fitzsimmons, Penni Webber and Dr. Joseph Zvirblis, Psychologist.

Cory Storch M.S., C.P.R.P, Bridgeway's executive director explained that Bridgeway will provide the same services but organize the services differently by fully integrating the programs. Storch estimates 50 per cent of the staff at Sussex House have been retained. Bridgeway will have two locations with the main location being in Newton and the second location being north of Newton.

Until relocating to a permanent location in Newton, Sussex House will remain at the same address at the hospital. Care Point and Supported Employment will be onsite with them. Director Diane Piagesi-Zett's new e-mail as of January 1, 2010 will be Diane.Piagesi-Zett@Bridgewayinc.com

Newton Memorial Hospital will continue the following services: Inpatient Psychiatric Hospitalization, Screening Ctr. / Psychiatric Emergency Services, Acute Partial Hospitalization Services (short-term day program), Outpatient Mental Health Services (individual and group treatment), MICA, Psychiatry (medication monitoring and psychiatric evaluation), Youth Case Management Services (DCBHS) and Residential Services (Group Homes, Semi-supervised apartments). NAMI-Sussex County President Kathleen Fitzsimmons is serving on Bridgeway's Advisory Group Committee.

LEEP Moves Forward in the County

Plans to implement NAMI-NJ's Law Enforcement Education Program (LEEP) in Sussex County are moving forward. The program's goal is to ensure that law enforcement officers receive up-to-date, comprehensive mental illness education and to promote cooperation between county criminal justice and mental health systems throughout the state.

Our public forum, held Oct. 1 at Sussex County Community College in Newton, introduced LEEP to the county. The event was well-attended by the public and by representatives of county police departments and the Keogh Dwyer correctional facility, as well as numerous students from SCCC's Criminal Justice Department. The program included the showing of the NAMI-NJ video, "The Community I Serve," followed by a panel discussion. Panel members included Sussex County Prosecutor David Weaver; Collingswood Police Chief Tom Garrity; Hopatcong Police Chief John Swanson; SCCC's Criminal Justice Department Chairperson Bill McGovern; Ernest Hemschot, Chair, Board of Mental Health; and Amy Steinberg of Newton Memorial Hospital's Psychiatric Emergency Services. All were enthusiastic about the program.

Later in the month, NAMI-Sussex's LEEP coordinator Jeri Doherty, along with Amy Steinberg, Carrie Parmelee of Intensive Family Support Services and Cindy Armstrong of Sussex County Mental Health Services made a presentation at a meeting of the county Police Chiefs' Association. The chiefs indicated their desire to obtain a copy of the LEEP video for their departments. Recently, the Education Committee of the Sussex County Mental Health Board approved a request from NAMI-Sussex to purchase a copy of the DVD for their police departments.

On Nov. 24, Jeri Doherty, Kathleen Fitzsimmons, Cindy Armstrong and NAMI-NJ LEEP Director Phil Lubitz, sat down with County Prosecutor David Weaver to begin plans to bring LEEP to the county. At this point, we anticipate offering training in late spring or early summer. Details will be announced in the next newsletter.

Undersheriff David DiMarco, director of the Keogh Dwyer correctional facility, has also expressed his intention to invite NAMI-Sussex to provide training at the facility for his officers. Nearby Picatinny Arsenal is interested in hosting training for its law enforcement officers as well.

Meanwhile, due to the generosity of the Mental Health Board's Education Committee, police chiefs throughout the county will soon be able to start showing the video to all the police officers in their departments. The video demonstrates how law enforcement officers can handle mentally ill persons with respect and understanding while protecting the safety of the community.



Discussing LEEP - David Weaver, right, Sussex County Chief Prosecutor and Collingswood Police Chief John Garrity discuss LEEP. *(Printed with permission from the NJ Herald. Photographer, Daniel Freel)*



Full Panel – The Oct. 1 LEEP forum panelists, from left to right are: Bill McGovern, Sussex County Community College Criminal Justice Department Chair; Ernest Hemschot, Sussex County Board of Mental Health Chair; John Swanson, Hopatcong Chief of Police; David Weaver, Sussex County Chief Prosecutor; Tom Garrity, Collingswood Chief of Police; and Amy Steinberg, Psychiatric Screener Newton Memorial Hospital Psychiatric Emergency Services. *(Photograph printed with permission of the NJ Herald. Photographer, Daniel Freel.)*

NAMI-Sussex Honors Family-to-Family Graduates

On Dec. 2, NAMI-Sussex honored 20 graduates of a 12-week Family-to-Family class. Family-to-Family is an intensive 30-hour course for family members of persons with mental illness. While the stories of attendees included many worries, sorrows, and difficulties, the group celebrated in a mood of shared happiness and accomplishment. The distribution of certificates was accompanied by the playing of “Pomp and Circumstance” on the piano by one of the class members. For many, the class had provided their first opportunity to speak openly to other family members dealing with similar issues.

The curriculum explains the biological brain chemistry involved in serious mental illness. As family members gained increased insight and empathy, they learned to calibrate their expectations for their loved one in line with the predictable stages of the illness process.

The Fall 2009 Sussex County Family-to-Family course was taught at Blessed Kateri Church in Sparta by NAMI-Sussex members Paige Coyne and Jeri Doherty, who are primary caregivers to a loved one with mental illness. NAMI-Sussex will offer the course again in September 2010.



Celebration - NAMI-Sussex’s Family-to-Family class graduates, teachers and guests celebrated the completion of the 12-week course on Dec. 2. with a covered dish dinner.



Guest Special Speaker – During a Family-To-Family class on advocacy, NAMI New Jersey Director Marilyn Goldstein, second from right, gave a presentation. Also pictured, from left, are instructors Paige Coyne and Jeri Doherty. NAMI-Sussex President Kathleen Fitzsimmons, at right, was also present.

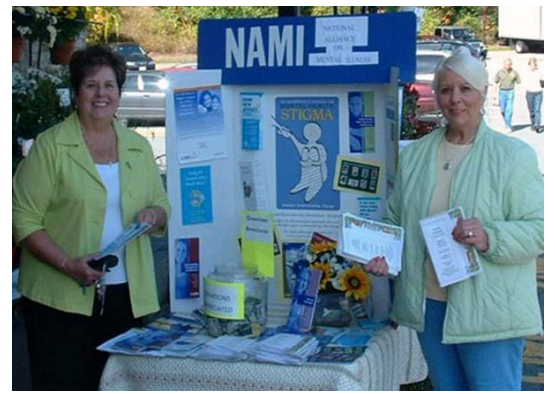
Education Partnership Workshop Successful

A subcommittee of the Sussex County Youth Services Commission in collaboration with the Sussex County School Counselors Association held a workshop on October 12, 2009 at the Sussex County Technical School.

The focus was on creating a partnership between Behavioral Health Services, Child Protective Services, and the Educational System. There were 140 professionals in attendance.

NAMI-Sussex was represented by member Claire Cooney at the information table where the guidance counselors, school nurses, and child study team members were made aware of the upcoming NAMI Basics Course for the parent or caregiver of a child or adolescent living with mental health challenges.

The response of the professionals was very welcoming. Other NAMI information was distributed as well.



Reaching Out - NAMI – Sussex officers Marjorie Strohsahl and Kathleen Fitzsimmons provided information at the Stop and Shop Supermarket in Sparta, NJ. The Supermarket reach-out was a huge success! NAMI-Sussex members will reach out again in front of Wal-Mart and two county supermarkets during “May is National Mental Health Month” in 2010. Join us!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

LOCATION OF MEETINGS CONTINUE AT
SUSSEX HOUSE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

JANUARY 2010 – No MEETINGS

NAMI-SUSSEX SUPPORT GROUP
FIRST MONDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 7:00 P.M.
NAMI-SUSSEX BUSINESS/ADVOCACY MEETING
FIRST THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 7:00 P.M.
NAMI BASICS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM
MARCH: LOCATION AND TIME, TO BE ANNOUNCED

PUBLIC NOTICE

In conformance with the Open Public Meeting Act of 1975, (N.J.P.L. 1975, c.231), the Sussex County Mental Health Board will hold meetings on the following dates at 5:00 p.m. in the Freeholders Meeting Room, 1st Floor of the Sussex County Administrative Center, One Spring Street, Newton.

The Mental Health Board meeting dates for calendar year 2010 are as follows:

January 25, 2010
March 29, 2010
April 26, 2010
June 28, 2010
July 26, 2010
September 27, 2010
October 25, 2010
November 22, 2010

NAMI Basics

NAMI-Sussex NJ Affiliate will offer a new family education program called “NAMI Basics.” NAMI Basics is a six-week educational program for parents and other primary caregivers of children age 2-18 (or up to age 22 if still attending high school) living with emotional, behavioral, or mental health challenges.

The course is taught by trained teachers who are themselves parents/caregivers of individuals who developed the symptoms of mental illness prior to 13 years old. All instruction and course materials are free to class participants.

The goals of the NAMI Basics program include:

1. to give the parent/caregiver the fundamental information necessary to be an effective caregiver.
2. To help the parent/caregiver cope with the traumatic impact that mental health challenges have on the child living with the illness and the entire family.
3. To provide tools for the parent/caregiver to use even after completing the program that will assist in making the best decisions possible for the care of the child.

The course will offer specific workshops to learn problem solving, listening and communication skills, and other strategies. Parents/caregivers will also be given information on locating appropriate supports and services within the community and school system, as well as information on how to access advocates.

Outreach Volunteers Needed

As NAMI-Sussex becomes more well-known for the good work we are doing, we are beginning to receive requests to speak to service organizations throughout the county. In August, President Kathleen Fitzsimmons made a presentation to the Sparta Women’s Club. In October, Jeri Doherty made a presentation to the Branchville Rotary Club. There are likely to be more such requests in the future.

NAMI provides an outreach packet with guidelines on what to say in a 20-minute talk about the programs and services NAMI offers. If any of our members would like to participate the next time we get a request to make a presentation, please let Kathleen know (862-268-5846). It would be especially effective to have recent Family-to-Family class graduates testify as to how the course has helped them cope. It would be a great help to our officers if you are willing to volunteer!