



Families Together

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Affiliate of NAMI - National Alliance for the Mentally Ill

Winter 2004

Acting Governor Codey Creates Mental Health Task Force



Acting Governor Codey signs executive order creating Task Force

there is anything that my administration will stand for, it is compassion and standing up for those who may not be able to stand up for themselves." Codey, a long-time advocate for the mentally

Office. The executive order establishes an 11-member Mental Health Task Force that will examine issues ranging from housing to jobs to access to care for the mentally ill. Under the order, the task force is required to convene a statewide Mental Health Summit, hold at least three public hear-

NAMI NJ Executive Director Sylvia Axelrod is among the 11 members appointed to Governor's Task Force

Acting Governor Richard J. Codey makes mental health a top priority for New Jersey as he signs an executive order establishing a mental health task force that will recommend ways to better help the mentally ill lead normal lives. "Nowhere is the need for help more prevalent than in the area of mental health," said Codey. "If

ill, dedicated his first day as Acting Governor to mental health issues, starting the morning with breakfast at Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital in Morris Plains.

Prior to signing the executive order, Codey met with mental health advocates from across New Jersey, who joined him for the signing ceremony in the Governor's Outer

ings and form advisory committees that may include non-members of the task force. The task force will submit a final report to the Acting Governor and the Legislature by March 31, 2005.

"This task force is not to be perceived as an excuse to study something to death," said Codey.

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Freedom from Stigma Awards - A Triumphant Celebration



NAMI NJ President Mark Perrin presented award to Mary Jo Codey at Awards Luncheon

In another spirited NAMI NJ "first," over 140 volunteers, friends and supporters gathered together on November 13th to celebrate the success of the NAMI NJ's 2004 "Freedom from Stigma" Campaign.

Following a buffet luncheon at the Somerset Marriott, over 60 awards were presented to individuals and organizations recognizing their tireless actions under-

taken during the year to diminish the stigma often associated with mental illness.

Awards ranged from acknowledging the special courage of Mary Jo Codey, New Jersey's new first lady and the continued support and dedication of Terri Wilson, Deputy Commissioner of the N. J. Department of Human Services, to the triumphant efforts of our media

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Families Together

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**Editors: Sylvia Axelrod
Aruna Rao**

"President's Message"



A New Age for New Jersey

On the eve of Governor Codey's swearing in, his wife Mary Jo was honored at the NAMI NEW JERSEY Awards Luncheon for her courage and conviction in battling stigma. By revealing her own personal experience with depression, she joined the NAMI movement and truly spoke **in her own voice**. She received a replica of the Statue of Liberty with the torch of Freedom held high.

Governor Codey must have borrowed that torch to highlight and bring a new understanding to mental illness. His first official act was to have breakfast at Greystone to express his long standing concern for people with mental illness. Later that same morning he held a news conference in Trenton for the signing of his first administrative order creating a mental health Task Force. Clearly, he has a conscience that understands and is sympathetic to the needs of persons needing psychiatric services. He has charged the Task Force to think outside of the beaurocratic box, to find ways of connecting the disconnections and malfunctions of the whole mental health system. Governor Codey has created a new Age of Enlightenment for New Jersey.

The appointment of our own Executive Director, Sylvia Axelrod, to the Task Force reassures us as to the sincerity, commitment, and capability that has been gathered together to meet this tremendous challenge.

We wish Chairperson Robert Davison and all the members, unparalleled success.

Mark Perrin, M.D.

President





Notes From the Executive Director

Achieving Freedom From Stigma

I want to take this opportunity to thank the many supporters, volunteers and staff who contributed to the great success of the NAMI NJ "Freedom from Stigma" Campaign and the 2004 Walk.

Over 200 people volunteered to help with the organization and on-site jobs involved in the tremendous undertaking of a statewide walk. Many more formed teams and solicited donations and sponsors. The "Freedom from Stigma" Walk brought approximately 4,000 people to Liberty State Park on October 10 and over 15,000 individual contributions ranging from quarters to thousands of dollars. Contributions to the 2004 NAMI NJ Walk totaled \$140,000.

The Walk itself was the embodiment of "Freedom from Stigma." Patients and staff from the psychiatric hospitals, consumers from partial care programs and self-help centers, family members, friends, mental health providers, professionals, corporate administrators, legislators, business owners and community residents from many walks of life and ethnic backgrounds walked side-by-side within view of the Statue of Liberty, a universal symbol of hope and optimism.

The Campaign's media outreach resulted in over 140 articles appearing in newspapers throughout the state, interviews on radio and coverage on TV. A media advisory group and network of over 100 journalists contributed to helping NAMI NJ promote mental illness awareness and focus attention on the real stories of people affected by mental illness.

NAMI NJ's "In Our Own Voice" Program now has over 40 trained consumer presenters prepared to speak about their personal stories and experiences with mental illness. The IOOV Program offers a major tool for breaking down the walls raised by stigma as hundreds of people attend presentations.

The response to the NAMI NJ "Expressive Arts Network Freedom from Stigma Journal" has been great. Over 100 poems, stories and essays celebrating wellness, recovery, advocacy and hope for achieving "Freedom from Stigma" have been submitted for publication.

During 2004 NAMI NJ has acknowledged and presented awards to hundreds of individuals and organizations who have made a major contribution in the fight to achieve "Freedom from Stigma." In 2005 NAMI NJ will be celebrating our 20th Anniversary. We look forward to your continued support in helping us move into a brighter day for those who suffer from mental illness and still endure the barriers of stigma and discrimination.

Enclosed in this newsletter is a donation envelope for those who can contribute financially to help us accomplish our goals. Even more essential is your willingness to speak-out and join in the fight to achieve "Freedom from Stigma."

Sylvia Axelrod,
Executive Director

NAMI NEW JERSEY Affiliates

Atlantic County

* NAMI Atlantic County

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* NAMI Family Org. Bergen

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* NAMI FACE Burlington

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Monmouth County

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Morris County

* Concerned Families of Greystone

* NAMI Morris County

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* NAMI Ocean County, NJ

Passaic County

**NAMI Upper Passaic County
* NAMI Families In Quest-Passaic

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* NAMI Salem County

Somerset County

* NAMI Somerset NJ, Inc.

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* NAMI Sussex, Inc.

Union County

*NAMI Union County

Warren County

* NAMI Warren County

NAMI En Español Groups

*Hudson & Passaic Counties

*For the local Affiliate contact person please contact the NAMI NJ office at 732-940-0991, naminj@optonline.net or visit www.naminj.org. (** Group being reorganized.)*

NAMI NJ 2004 Freedom from Stigma Walk



whom had been on site since 6 am, ensured a smooth and well organized event, coordinated by Walk Coordinator Kathleen Considine and Executive Director Sylvia Axelrod.

Congressman Robert Menendez addressed the crowd, assuring them of his support.

NAMI NEW JERSEY's Freedom from Stigma Walk for mental illness made tremendous strides in raising awareness about mental illness and the impact of stigma on lives of consumers and families.

The atmosphere on a bright, beautiful fall day was upbeat as buses and cars discharged hun-



40 Volunteers register thousands of walkers

As the ribbon was cut by NAMI NJ President Mark Perrin and Executive Director Sylvia Axelrod, walkers picked up their banners and surged forward to walk proudly down a walkway that wound along the sparkling Hudson river in view of the Statue of Liberty holding her torch up towards the brilliant blue sky.

Teams were made up of families and friends, organizations and corporations, support groups and ethnic groups. Children waved from strollers and older children ran alongside their teams, all clad in colorful team T-shirts or NAMI-Walks shirts.

At the end of the 2-mile walk, many walkers stayed to help clean up the site. Tired volunteers smiled as they saw just how successful their hard work had been. As Logistics Coordinator Bob Von Bargaen launched into a stirring rendition of God Bless America, NAMI NJ Staff and volunteers felt their hearts rise at having accomplished a tremendous effort to combat stigma.

The 2004 "Freedom from Stigma" Walk attracted 4000 walkers and

raised \$140,000 to support the fight against stigma. NAMI NJ is proud to have pioneered the Walk in New Jersey and to have raised the public's awareness of mental illness in such a high profile event. Most of all, NAMI NJ is proud to have given families and friends the opportunity to walk with pride in support of their loved ones, and to see consumers stepping forward in achieving "Freedom from Stigma."



Sylvia Axelrod and Kathleen Considine



Walk Family Team Chair Chris Bosco



Walk Logistics Chair Bob Von Bargaen



Terri Wilson, Deputy Commissioner



President Mark Perrin with 2004 Honorary Walk Chair Congressman Menendez

dreds of passengers at the Sundial Field in Liberty State Park to participate in the Walk.

Clowns, including one on stilts, strutted around, and walk teams from every county chatted and laughed as the lines at the Walk registration tables grew.

Dozens of volunteers, some of



President Mark Perrin and Exec. Sylvia Axelrod launch the Walk



Emerson HS Marine Jr. ROTC



NAMI NJ En Español Celebrates!



The team from Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital



The Lost Highway Ramblers



Members of Chris Bosco's Team Hope



Clowns paint faces

A riot of color - Team T-shirts, banners, flags, painted faces, clowns, sun, fall trees.
An excitement of sound - Musicians, team cheers, greetings, speakers, buses, vans, cars, feet, wagons, bicycles, strollers on a 2-mile course.
A gallery of stunning views - The Statue of Liberty, symbol of America's rich heritage Manhattan and Jersey City on the Hudson River.
A get-together of 4,000 walkers - Men, women, children of all ages and backgrounds. All are dedicated to fighting stigma and discrimination against persons affected by mental illness. . .

From Poem by Marcia Coward

Freedom From Stigma Awards *(continued from Page 1)*



Statue of Liberty crowns adorned tables and attendees

consultants Tara Dimilia, Marcia Coward and Brian Van Korn to shed positive light on mental illness. NAMI NJ's In Our Own Voice Program and the Turn A Frown Around Foundation were among those receiving recognition for outstanding contributions to the success of NAMI NJ's

"Freedom from Stigma" Campaign. Life time achievement "Freedom from Stigma" Volunteer Recognition Awards were presented to Marilyn Goldstein, Program Director for Family-to-Family, Mark Perrin, President and Ed Von Lindern, 2nd Vice President.

In a ballroom festooned with American flags, balloons, and chairs creatively "dressed" in T-shirts, Sylvia Axelrod, Mark Perrin and Kathleen Considine showered thanks on the outstanding participa-

tion of Chris Bosco, 2004 Walk Family Team Chair, Bob Von Barga, 2004 Walk Logistics Chair, NAMI NJ Affiliate Walk Chairs, and the remarkable participation of individuals, Affiliates, IFSS staff and Walk sponsors.

The afternoon's celebration culminated with a reading by NAMI NJ's own "poet laureate," Marcia Coward, the smooth sounds of the "Lost Highway Ramblers" accompanying a slide show of the Walk and the heady sense among the NAMI NJ "family" that we have, indeed, accomplished notable strides towards achieving "Freedom from Stigma."

NAMI NJ En Español

NAMI NJ en Español has two *De Familia a Familia en Español* classes running currently in New Brunswick and Passaic, as well as a Latino support group in New Brunswick. In January teachers for *De Familia a Familia en Español* will be given additional training before spring classes begin. There will also be a Spanish language self-help group facilitator training in January to teach volunteers how to run a support group. For more information, please contact Betzaida Aponte at 732 940-0991 or e-mail namiespanol@optonline.net



The first NAMI NJ *De Familia a Familia en Español* celebrated their graduation on June 26 with a picnic.

NAMI C.A.R.E. groups in NJ

NAMI C.A.R.E. is a peer-based, mutual support group program for individuals facing the challenges of recovering from any serious mental illness. Led by consumers, for consumers, NAMI C.A.R.E. employs guidelines and principles of support designed to empower its members. NAMI NJ offers facilitator training to volunteers who would like to facilitate NAMI C.A.R.E. groups in their own areas. Contact Jay Yudof at 866-464-3267, jjudof@hotmail.com for information. The following NAMI NEW JERSEY affiliates currently offer NAMI C.A.R.E. Please call the group's contact for more information.

NAMI Camden County, 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of every month from 6pm at Steining Behavioral Care Services, Cherry Hill. Contact Ben at 856-906-1010 or benlandis@comcast.net

NAMI Mercer New Jersey, 2nd & 4th Tuesdays of every month from 5-6pm at Mercer County Library, Lawrenceville. Contact volunteers at 609-777-9766 or namimercer@aol.com

NAMI Hunterdon County, every Thursday from 7:30-9pm at the Getting Together Self-Help Center, Flemington. Contact Walter at 908-638-8034 or Emily at 908-788-5270. dudzinski@net-lynx.com or eflesher@hotmail.com

NAMI Greater Monmouth, 3rd Tuesday of every month from 7:30-9pm at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Holmdel. contact Jay at 732-531-7624 or jjudof@hotmail.com

CAMHOP Mental Health Mailbox

As part of NAMI NJ's efforts to enhance awareness and knowledge of mental health and illness among Chinese immigrants, CAMHOP-NJ launched in September a bi-weekly "Mental Health Mailbox" column in *Duowei Times*, one of the most popular free Chinese newspapers in New Jersey. On the expert panel of the column are six Chinese mental health professionals who have rich experience in working with Chinese immigrants. So far, six educational pieces have been published in the column, on topics like postpartum depression, anxiety disorder, social phobia, and mental health resources available in the

state. Questions from readers were addressed in a timely manner by the panel professionals. Overall, the column has been well received by the Chinese community and will continue to be one of the critical sources of mental health information in New Jersey.



SAMHAJ Celebration

NAMI NJ's SAMHAJ (South Asian Mental Health in Jersey) program celebrated a year of accomplishments stemming from its outreach targeting New Jersey's South Asian immigrants, and to thank all the families and volunteers who have contributed to the program's success.

The SAMHAJ Holiday Celebration on December 2nd featured dinner at Tanjore. For information about SAMHAJ contact Anu Singh at the NAMI NJ office or e-mail samhaj_naminj@yahoo.com

Acting Governor Codey Creates Mental Health Task Force

(continued from Page 1)

“Its members are independent, fresh thinkers who bring national expertise. They will recommend how we can better help the mentally ill lead normal lives.”

The Acting Governor appointed the following as members of the task force:

Robert N. Davison, Chairman: Executive Director of the Montclair-based Mental Health Association of Essex County.

Martin D. Cohen: President and CEO of MetroWest Community Health Care Foundation, Inc. and a nationally recognized expert on mental health issues.

Christopher Kosseff: President and CEO of The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey School of Behavior Health, which delivers mental health services to New Jersey’s prisons.

John V. Jacobi: Seton Hall Law School Professor and Associate Director of the school’s Institute of Law and Mental Health.

Sylvia Axelrod, MA: Executive Director of NAMI NEW JERSEY, a leading self-help support, education and advocacy organization for individuals and families affected by

serious mental illness.

Linda Goldwater Gochfeld, M.D.: Medical Director of SERV Behavioral Health System, Inc., a behavioral healthcare organization serving adults and children working to recover from and cope with a serious mental illness or developmental disability.

Ange Puig, Ph.D.: Head of Puig Associates, a full-time psychology practice based in Cherry Hill, Camden County.

George H. Brice, Jr. MSW: Team leader for Collaborative Support Programs of New Jersey, which provides consumer driven mental health services that support recovery and promote community living.

Jerome J. Johnson: President and CEO of Family Service Association, which provides services such as outpatient counseling, day care, partial hospitalization, and work programs.

Kevin Michael Martone: President and CEO of Advance Housing Inc., in Hackensack, a non-profit provider of affordable housing and support services to the mentally ill.

James M. Davy: Commissioner of

New Jersey Department of Human Services, an agency that serves more than 1 million of New Jersey’s most vulnerable citizens.

Codey also named Kimberly S. Ricketts, M.Ed., as executive director of the Mental Health Task Force. Ricketts, who served in the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for more than two years, will leave her position as chief of staff to work for the Task Force.

To view the text of the Governor’s Executive Order establishing the Task Force, visit www.naminj.org



Acting Governor Codey and Sylvia Axelrod

NAMI NEW JERSEY Supporting Membership & Contributions

NAMI NJ is a private non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for individuals and families affected by mental illness. When you support NAMI NJ you are helping build a strong statewide family with a powerful voice. State Supporting Members receive national and state newsletters and discounts to conferences and special events. You can also become a member of NAMI NJ and NAMI National through a local affiliate. Donations to NAMI NJ are tax deductible.

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Edward Von Lindern Honored with Advocacy Award



Edward Von Lindern, Jr., 2nd Vice President of the NAMI NJ Board of Trustees and Representative to the NAMI Consumer Council, was honored by the New Jersey Association of Mental Health Agencies for his "Service to the Mental Health Community" and his outstanding commitment towards advocating for people with serious mental illness.

Sylvia Axelrod Receives Ann Klein Advocate Award



Sylvia Axelrod, Executive Director of NAMI NJ, received the Community Mental Health Law Project's Ann Klein Advocate Award for her distinguished career serving the needs of people affected by mental illness and her stewardship of NAMI NJ. The award was presented at the CMHLP Award Dinner on October 21 at the Brookdale Country Club.

NJ Lien Law Scheduled for Hearing

The Assembly Appropriations Committee will hear A779, the lien law, on Thursday, December 2 at 2pm. This law would end the discriminatory practice of placing liens for the full cost of care on patients who are hospitalized at state and county psychiatric hospitals and certain members of their family.

Thanks to the many calls and letters from NAMI NEW JERSEY advocates, Committee Chair, Assemblywoman Bonnie Watson Coleman has prioritized A779 for action in the committee's only scheduled meeting for the remainder of the year.

For further updates go to www.naminj.org

E-group for Adult Children of a Parent with Mental Illness

An e-mail discussion group has been developed for NJ adult children who were raised by a parent who had a mental illness, in order to share their experiences, strengths, collective wisdom, and the understanding that only those "who have been there" can provide. The group especially hopes to share helpful resources, regional events, and explore the possible development of local NJ mutual support network/groups. For more information visit: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NJ-ACMIP>



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