



National Alliance on Mental Illness

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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAMI New Jersey Recognizes High School Volunteer for Holiday Gift Giving to Psychiatric Hospitals

*North Brunswick, NJ—December 31, 2013—*On Saturday, December 14, 2013 the National Alliance on Mental Illness of New Jersey (NAMI NJ) presented a Special Recognition Award at its annual conference to Nancy Woo, a student at J.P. Stevens High School of Edison, for her outstanding contribution to improving the lives of individuals affected by mental illness through a project that raised funds and donated 600 holiday artisan socks to patients at the four NJ state psychiatric hospitals this holiday season.

Nancy Woo, currently a junior at J.P. Stevens in Edison, has been a member and volunteer for NAMI NJ's Chinese American Mental Health Outreach Program (CAMHOP) since 2010. Nancy was the recipient of the NJ State Governor's Jefferson Youth Award for organizing a successful "Stomp Out Stigma Walk" in Edison during Mental Illness Awareness Week in 2012. Nancy's passion of volunteerism is informed by her personal experience. When she was ten years old, her father passed away of a heart attack and her sister was diagnosed with schizophrenia. These events have left Nancy determined to fight stigma against those with mental illness and support those in need.



Nancy with staff and volunteers at the Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital's Thrift Shop

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Nancy said: "For the past two years, my Christmas holiday has never been normal. While others were celebrating at home with their entire families, my mother and I would drive to the hospital to visit my sister who suffers from schizophrenia. After the visits, my mother and I would cry on the car ride home thinking about how my sister wasn't able to be with her family. I know that this situation also applies to other people in hospitals or group homes who aren't able to spend the holidays with their families, so I wanted to give a small gift to cheer them up. I began to raise funds in July to pay for holiday artisan socks. I met people during dinner parties, called family friends, and spread the word in my church. Families and friends supported my cause and donated various amounts of money that ranged from \$5 to \$50. By the end of September, I raised a total of about \$2,090 for the project which allowed me to purchase 600 pairs of artisan socks. I am excited that, with NAMI NJ's help, these socks have been distributed to consumers in the four state psychiatric hospitals during this holiday season. It is my special way of saying to them that 'you are not alone' and that our love and care is for you."



Nancy with Mr. Morrison, Deputy CEO of Trenton Psychiatric Hospital, who received the socks on behalf of the hospital.

ABOUT NAMI NJ

NAMI NJ, founded in 1985, is a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of individuals and families who are affected by mental illness through programs of support, education and advocacy.