

## **MEDIA ALERT**

### **Halloween Horrors Results—and Thanks**

Thank you to everyone who helped fight back against Halloween “haunted asylum” attractions and costumes.

There is not enough space to call out individual names, but I want to thank especially **NAMI California, NAMI Connecticut, NAMI Florida, NAMI Massachusetts, NAMI Missouri, NAMI New Jersey, and NAMI Ohio and NAMI South Carolina** for their help with the campaign. Nothing could have been achieved without grassroots action.

NAMI’s campaign began after **NAMI Orange County** in California succeeded in shutting down an attraction at Knott’s Berry Farm, which was [reported](#) in *The Los Angeles Times*. We then adopted a national strategy that focused on all stigmatizing Halloween attractions operated by the two largest chains of amusement parks in the country, Cedar Fair and Six Flags. We contacted the companies directly and slowly the parks began to change the names, modify or close attractions.

We launched a media blitz. Links to articles appear below (and in the attachment). We are expecting interviews with CEO Mary Giliberti to air on the **CBS News** and **Fox News** radio networks over the weekend, although we do not know specific days or times.

- [Cruel Tricks on the Mentally Ill](#)

U.S. News & World Report

Article by NAMI CEO Mary Giliberti

(Unfortunately, we didn’t get to choose the headline).

- [Halloween attractions use mental illness to scare us. Here’s why advocates say it must stop.](#)

Washington Post

The Post story, initiated by NAMI, first appeared online and then as the lead story on page 3 of the print edition—and was syndicated nationally. It also appeared as the cover story for the *Washington Post Express* tabloid which is distributed for free at every subway station and bus top in the D.C. metropolitan area.

- [Mental Illness is Not a Horror Show](#)

New York Times

Andrew Solomon, author of *The Noonday Demon*, credited NAMI Orange County for having “sprang into action” when the Knott’s Berry Farm attraction first appeared.

- [Walmart Removes Offensive Suicide Product: Now Let’s Educate Marc Beige Who Is the Supplier](#)

Pete Earley Blog

Journalist and NAMI member Pete Earley is quoted in the *Post* story and [helped publicize](#) the campaign. He also rallied efforts against a “Razor Blade Suicide Scar Wound Latex Costume” make-up kit.

Regardless of how many attractions get closed or products are pulled, this kind of national media attention is invaluable for public education and helping to reduce stigma in popular culture. Headlines were supportive. Other companies paid attention. Many may remember and think twice during discussions in the future about using mental illness as a theme.

There is still a lot of work to be done to eliminate stigma, but for right now, NAMI has made a difference.

Have a Happy Halloween.

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NAMI, National Alliance on Mental Illness