



## Chicago's Voice on Mental Illness

THE ALLIANCE FOR THE MENTALLY ILL OF GREATER CHICAGO

NAMI OF GREATER CHICAGO • 1536 WEST CHICAGO AVENUE, 1<sup>ST</sup> FLOOR • CHICAGO, IL 60622

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Phone: 312.563.0445

Fax: 312.563.0467

Email: [namigc@aol.com](mailto:namigc@aol.com)

Website: [www.NAMIGC.ORG](http://www.NAMIGC.ORG)

### Highlights of 2005

*The mission of NAMI of Greater Chicago is to provide hope and improve the quality of life for those in the greater Chicago area whose lives are affected by serious mental illness.*

NAMI of Greater Chicago board members include family members, persons with a serious mental illness, friends, a police officer, a nurse, licensed social workers, CPA's, and other professionals. The board meets every other month to discuss relevant issues, decide actions and set policy. With over 600 dues paying members, NAMI of Greater Chicago is currently one of the largest NAMI affiliates in the nation, making it *Chicago's Voice on Mental Illness*.

With a budget of \$175,000, one full-time and four part-time staff, the following are the highlights of our activities during 2005.

#### Strategic Planning:

Due to the generous donation of the time and talent of NAMI of Greater Chicago member, Leslie Jacobs, the organization underwent a Strategic Planning process that started in January 2005. An environmental scan, which included interviewing 57 outside stakeholders, was conducted. The NAMI-GC Board of Directors and executive staff held a day-long retreat, where they reaffirmed the organization's values and agreed upon a future direction. Executive staff refined NAMI-GC's mission statement, developed a set of goals and a work plan to achieve them.

#### Education:

##### Courses:

- **Family to Family:** Three series of this 12 week course were taught during 2005, two at the NAMI of Greater Chicago office and one on the south side at St. Xavier University.
- **Spanish Family to Family:** After successfully recruiting two Spanish speaking family members to be trained as teachers, NAMI of Greater Chicago will offer the first Spanish Family to Family class in Illinois in early 2006.
- **Pathways in Living Consumer Education Course:** Developed by NAMI of Greater Chicago staff and six consumer members, two sets of this 8 week program were delivered in 2005. Susan Pickett-Schenk, Ph.D. researcher at the University of Illinois at Chicago was awarded a three-year grant from NIDRR (National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research) to collaborate with NAMI of Greater Chicago in a study to evaluate the effectiveness of this course in improving consumers' community integration. Classes will be offered at three Chicago agencies with a total of 336 consumers participating in the study.

##### Law Enforcement:

- **Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) Teams:** Developed in collaboration with the Chicago Police Department (CPD), NAMI of Greater Chicago, the Illinois Office of Mental Health, and a host of Chicago area mental health providers, Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training for experienced Chicago police officers was launched in October of 2004. CIT educates officers about mental illness, how to de-escalate behaviors, and to ensure that, whenever possible, the outcome would be to direct persons to treatment rather than incarceration. This initiation of CIT training for Chicago police officers is an historic event making Chicago the largest urban area in the nation to have CIT training for its officers. The pilot program trained 80 officers from the 7<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> districts in three sets of the 40-hour training. In October of 2005, the CPD, Cook County Mental Health Court project, and Illinois's TASC were awarded a grant from the Bureau of Justice which will provide funding for the training of additional CIT officers, the expansion the Mental Health Court project, and TASC's additional case-management services.
- **Mental Health Court Project:** Suzanne has participated on the committee working with Judge Biebel on this project. This important initiative launched in the summer of 2004 is dedicated to treatment rather than punishment for behaviors that are a product of untreated mental illness. In addition, Suzanne sat on the committee to organize and attended the first National Mental Health Courts Summit in Racine, WI.
- **Chicago Police Academy:** Twelve 3-hour training programs were delivered at the Chicago Police Academy during 2005 providing training on mental illness for approximately 1,000 new police recruits. This 3-hour curriculum was developed by the Illinois Office of Mental Health, the Chicago Police Department, and NAMI of Greater Chicago and is delivered to all recruits going through the Chicago Police Academy by a team including: an advocate, a mental health professional, a person with a serious mental illness, a family member, and an experienced police officer. An evaluation of the pre- and post tests shows that recruits have learned a great deal about serious mental illnesses and appropriate approaches for persons potentially suffering from a mental illness.
- **Cook County Jail Guards:** NAMI of Greater Chicago was invited to present the information from the 3-hour course used at the police academy as part of a credit course being given to officers from Cook County Jail. Together, Suzanne and Lt. Jeffry Murphy of the Chicago Police Department provided this educational presentation twice during 2005.

#### Public:

- **Resource Cards:** The seventh printing, funded by Pfizer, has brought to 80,000 the number of these cards distributed to agencies and individuals around Chicago. These tri-fold Resource Cards list important addresses and phone numbers of services and resources for persons with mental illness.
- **Baby Blues:** Developed in 2001, NAMI of Greater Chicago has now distributed 55,000 sets of "Depression After Childbirth: Is it the "Baby Blues" or Something More?" These brochures discuss the differences between the baby blues, postpartum depression, and postpartum psychosis. Funding to print the "Baby Blues" brochures has come from Janssen, Lilly and Pfizer. Both English and Spanish versions are available on our website at namigc.org.
- **Libraries:** All Chicago libraries (more than 100) were provided literature on mental illnesses for Mental Health Awareness month in May and again for Mental Illness Awareness Week in October.
- **Health Fair:** NAMI of Greater Chicago's staff members manned several Health Fairs during this past year and the office additionally provided materials for volunteers who staffed 10 more Health Fairs.
- **Website:** Volunteer, Tony Buttitta, has revamped the NAMI of Greater Chicago's website. This easier to navigate website has consistently resulted in over 700 visitors per month.
- **NAMI Chicago on Campus:** In early 2005 Assistant Director, Tammy Pesenti, gathered young adult members and volunteers together to form the Young Professionals Group. Preliminary meetings gravitated to concern for college students dealing with mental illness. Over the summer, NAMI of Greater Chicago staff, our Young Professionals Group, with the full-time efforts of summer intern, Judy Herbstman, a Harvard student with experience in mental health issues on the Harvard campus, finalized the planning for this initiative. **NAMI Chicago on Campus** aims to improve the quality of life for Chicago area college students living with mental illness, either their own, or that of a friend or family member. By developing working partnerships between campus personnel and NAMI of Greater Chicago, the project aims to assist Chicago area colleges to increase awareness about mental illness and increase available campus-based support and resources for students.

#### Symposia:

- **"Choices in Recovery":** This consumer program focusing on recovery was inspirational to all who attended.
- **"Out of the Shadow":** This powerful documentary filmed in Illinois of a daughter's struggle with her mother's paranoid schizophrenia kicked off the events for Mental Illness Awareness Week. The unique panel of a politician, researcher, provider and clinician generated lively discussion following the viewing.
- **Family/Friends Support Day:** Done in collaboration with Thresholds, this full day seminar was well attended and received overwhelmingly positive reviews.

#### Educational General Meetings:

- **Protected Tomorrows:** This was a program on Special Needs Trusts for loved ones with a mental illness.
- **Medication Restrictions for Antipsychotic and Antiseizure Medications for Medicaid recipients:** Jim Parker, Deputy Director of Medicaid, Illinois Department of Health Care and Family Services responded to questions from consumers, family members and providers on the restrictions placed on these medications.
- **Medicare Part D:** Three in a series of five presentations were held on this new federal program. The other two presentations are scheduled for early 2006.

#### Presentations by our Staff/Speaker's Bureau:

- **TASC-** Suzanne and Board Member, Lt. Jeff Murphy presented to staff on "de-escalation" techniques.
- **Junior League-** Suzanne presented on two occasions 1) Children's Mental Health and 2) Postpartum Illnesses
- **Howard Area Community Center-** Suzanne presented on "Postpartum Depression".
- **First National CIT Conference, Columbus, Ohio-** Suzanne and Board Member, Lt. Jeff Murphy presented "The Development and Implementation of CIT in a Large Urban Area".
- **Youth Civic Group-** Assistant Director, Tammy Pesenti, presented to a group of 30 "gifted and talented" young adults from across the country about mental illnesses and NAMI.
- **Humboldt Park Care Center-** Volunteer and Board Member, Peter Chapman, LCSW, spoke to residents about mental illnesses and substance abuse.
- **Community Counseling Center of Chicago-** Assistant Director, Tammy Pesenti, presented on Cultural Competence- "Mental Illnesses- Culture Counts" to over 30 staff members.
- **TASC National Conference, Cleveland, Ohio-** Suzanne and Board Member, Lt. Jeff Murphy did two presentations at this National Conference: 1) Collaboration in the Development and Implementation of CIT in Chicago", and 2) CIT and The Cook County Mental Health Courts".
- **Loyola University,** Volunteer and Young Professional Group member, Kristen Jerisha, spoke to an Abnormal Psychology class about mental illnesses, her personal experience living with a mental illness, stigma, and recovery.
- **Pfizer Conference-** Suzanne presented on Medicare Part D at this conference.

#### Faith Based Initiatives:

- A candlelight walk at United Church of Christ Trinity was held on May 7<sup>th</sup> with a turnout of more than 200 persons.
- Suzanne presented to a Highland Park Synagogue on Mental Illnesses.
- NAMI of Greater Chicago participated in the Beth Emet Synagogue Conference focusing on Depression in Elders.

## Advocacy:

- **Individual:** The NAMI of Greater Chicago's Information and Referral services have expanded over the past 4 years thanks to a grant from the Chicago Community Trust. This has resulted in over 5,000 callers to our office annually. Staff and volunteers help callers navigate the complex mental health service systems in order to assist persons in accessing treatment for themselves or a loved one. Staff member, Sammye Williamson, our Resource Specialist, regularly updates our database with the Greater Chicago area resources/services.
- **Public:**
  - NAMI of Greater Chicago's Executive Director regularly attends, among others, the meetings of the Mental Health Summit (a coalition of providers, professional organization heads, and advocates developed to promote unified responses to mental health concerns and legislation), Union League Club Criminal Justice Committee, and the Metro Joint Advisory Council established by the Office of Mental Health.
  - A Rally was held on May 3<sup>rd</sup> on the steps of the State Capitol in Springfield with more than 1,500 in attendance.
  - A Rally was held on October 17<sup>th</sup> at the State of Illinois Building to bring attention to the need to restore proposed cuts to the budget of the Division of Mental Health and had 600 in attendance.
  - Efforts to halt the closure of Tinley Park State Hospital were done on many levels throughout the year.
- **Consultations and Collaborations:**
  - Collaborated with AstraZeneca and Health Systems Research Associates on the creation and implementation plan for a Stakeholders Scan to develop recommendations to improve treatment and support of persons with serious mental illness in Cook County.
  - NAMI of Greater Chicago has offered and provided more than a half a dozen NAMI affiliates across the country with the Access database it developed. Ongoing assistance in managing this database has been provided as requested.
  - Attended and offered input at the Systems of Continuity of Care (SCOC) meetings.

## Support Groups:

- **Family Support Group Meetings:** at the NAMI of Greater Chicago office on the second Wednesday of each month from 7-9 PM. Additional Family Support Groups meet at a variety of locations in the Greater Chicago area.
- **Consumer Support Group Meetings** continue to be held at the NAMI of Greater Chicago office every other Monday afternoon from 2:30 to 4:00 PM, being led by Betty Frazier, staff member.

## Multicultural Outreach:

- **Baby Blues:** This informative brochure has been translated into Spanish and back translated into English for fidelity. This is currently available on our website at namigc.org.
- **Spanish Family to Family:** NAMI of Greater Chicago successfully recruited two teachers who were trained and will be able to offer this course for the first time ever in Illinois in early 2006.
- Board member **Denise White** continues her active outreach efforts on Chicago's southside and again for the third year put together a WALK during May, Mental Health month which was attended by more than 200 persons.

**Fundraising:** Because NAMI of Greater Chicago does not accept monies from State funding sources, it is consistently necessary to find ways to sustain our budget, which has grown steadily over the years as our activities and the demand have increased. While the vast majority of our funds come from outright donations from members and supporters, fundraising events and foundation sources for this past year are listed below:

- **Annual Benefit:** this is our largest fundraiser and a main source of operating capital. This event has been held annually since 1996 and has steadily become better known and better attended.
- **Chicago Board of Trade:** for Police Training.
- **Chicago Community Trust Grant** for CIT training for experienced Chicago police officers.
- **Blowitz-Ridgeway:** for expanding our activities for consumers of mental health services.
- **Walk-A-Thon:** held on the Saturday of Mental Illness Awareness Week in collaboration with our affiliate, Advocates for Chicago Read, this year's Walk-A-Thon was the 12<sup>th</sup> annual walk. Funds raised support the activities of the Advocates for Chicago Read, who provide: a clothing room, sports equipment, personal hygiene products, and a drop-in recreational room for the patients at Chicago Read Mental Health Center.
- **Pharmaceuticals:** Suzanne worked with several pharmaceutical companies to secure monies to assist in printing of our educational materials and programs that the NAMI of Greater Chicago office offers.
- **Private Donors:** allowed for the purchase of a laptop computer and LCD projector, the "Consumer Club" to host monthly events, and supported the Pathways classes.

## Consumer Activities:

- Since 1997, our **computer donation program** has accepted donations of computers. A volunteer checks out the systems, and they are given free of charge to consumers for their home use. In the past, countless consumers have benefited from this inventive and creative re-cycling program. This year, in addition to the systems donated by individuals, more than 50 were donated by a local HMO company and all were provided to consumers. NAMI of Greater Chicago continues to maintain a list of consumers in need of these computer systems.
- For the past eight years, greeting cards with \$1 and a hand-written note have been provided to residents in **Intermediate Care Facilities** (housing for persons with mental illness) in the Greater Chicago area. The cards

are donated by greeting card manufacturers and the crisp, new \$1 bills are donated by several NAMI of Greater Chicago volunteers, who also help to individually sign and address each card.

- **Voter Empowerment with the Mental Health Association** – NAMI of Greater Chicago continues to partner with the Mental Health Association of Illinois to encourage voter registration and voter education and advocacy for mental illness related issues.
- NAMI of Greater Chicago's "**Consumer Club**" hosted monthly events this year including: a "Game Day", a "Pizza Party", a "Bowling Party", a "Second City Improv" training, a "Weenie Roast" for July 4<sup>th</sup>, an "Ice Cream Social", a "Coffee House" and a "Holiday Party".
- The "**Art for Life**" **Gallery** located in the NAMI of Greater Chicago office provides a venue for art created by consumers. The much admired artwork decorates the office. When sold, the consumer artists receive 50% of the proceeds.

**Technology:** As technology continues to change rapidly, NAMI of Greater Chicago has worked hard to keep up in order to stay as efficient as possible. This year several projects were completed:

- With assistance from Bob Jurman, volunteer Database Developer, new features were added to enhance data entry and retrieval, specifically enhanced was the separation of individual and institutional membership renewals.
- One of eleven not-for-profit organizations that received a Year of Assistance from Teaming for Technology (T4T), a collaborative project of the United Way of Metropolitan Chicago, IBM, and the Corporation for National and Community Service, several areas of technology were addressed including: network assistance, and computer hardware evaluations. Most notable was the thorough revamping of our website: [www.namigc.org](http://www.namigc.org) conducted by volunteer, Tony Buttitta. Tony has worked diligently to make our website more user-friendly, easier to navigate and continues to work on setting up automated forms to keep the information on the site current. Staff member, Tammy Pesenti, has worked closely on this project. Volunteer, Kurt Flechsig has been self training on the new software, Dreamweaver, in order to assist with the website updates in the future.

**Media/Anti-Stigma:** NAMI of Greater Chicago regularly receives calls from a variety of media sources requesting information on mental illnesses and assistance in identifying other experts who might comment on particular issues. Attending to requests from media personnel is a priority for NAMI of Greater Chicago's Executive Director because the media is our most potent ally in educating the public and eradicating the stigma of mental illnesses.

- Suzanne presented at a press conference at the County Building in regards to the closure of Tinley Park State Hospital.
- Suzanne was quoted in an article by the *Chicago Sun Times* entitled "Yates All Over Again?"
- Suzanne attended the Press Conference at the Chicago Athletic Club regarding Access to Medication.

**Staff:** NAMI of Greater Chicago currently employs one full time Executive Director and 4 part-time staff.

- Suzanne Andriukaitis, M.A., LCSW, has been the Executive Director since 1994.
- Tammy Pesenti, BSW, Assistant Director since 2003, has developed and oversees the Young Professionals Group and the **NAMI Chicago on Campus** initiative, arranges educational classes and programs, coordinates volunteers-including the **Job Readiness Program**, manages the membership database, recruits and arranges speakers for the Speaker's Bureau, oversees the Benefit Committee, assists in maintaining the website, develops fact sheets on persistent and severe mental illnesses and subjects related to these illnesses, and assists in creating and editing the newsletter.
- Sammye Williamson, hired in the fall of 2001, is our "Resource Specialist". She keeps the information in our resource database organized and up-to-date. Sammye is frequently the person you will speak with when you call the office in the afternoons.
- Shirley Woyt has been on staff since 1986. As the "Office Manager", she coordinates projects in the office and assists with the **Job Readiness Program**. In 2005 there were over 7,000 hours volunteered to assist with work in the office and an additional 6,000 volunteer hours for running groups, educational programs, committees, and assisting with fundraising.
- Betty Frazier, Administrative Assistant, answers the phones, assists callers, xeroxes, collates, types, prints mailing labels, updates information in the databases, and maintains our materials sent out to callers. Betty additionally runs our Consumer Support Group meetings, coordinates Consumer Club activities, and is a teacher in our Pathways in Living Consumer Education Program.

#### **Volunteers:**

As a grassroots organization, we rely on our committed volunteers. During 2005, more than 13,000 volunteer hours were donated providing assistance in the office with phones, mailings, computer word processing and data entry, selection of articles and editing of the newsletters, preparing gifts for delivery to Intermediate Care Facilities, managing our website, fundraising, etc. Additional volunteer activities included those hours donated by our volunteer Board of Directors, our volunteer Information Technology person, Peter Andriukaitis, our volunteer Database Developer, Bob Jurman, and the many volunteers who manned Health Fairs and delivered NAMI literature to a variety of locations. During 2005, a formal two-hour volunteer training session was held for the Speaker's Bureau. As a thank you to all of our dedicated volunteers a buffet luncheon was held in their honor on October 6<sup>th</sup>.