



OUT OF THE FOG

The monthly newsletter of NAMI San Francisco

Letter to Members and Friends

Hello Everyone,

As most of you know this is the time of the annual Bay Area NAMI Walk which is just took place at the end of May (5/31/08). This is a mission critical fundraiser for NAMI, and I am writing you now, because I am relatively new as your local Chapter President and if you have not already made a donation to the walk, you need to do so now. Here's why.

I became involved in NAMI because NAMI-SF was huge source of support for me and my wife Debby when we were dealing with my son's bipolar illness which surfaced in 2000. Tim died in 2004 at the age of 26. While I can't do anything to change that fact, I can make sure his life is remembered and other families have access to those same services that were such a source of comfort for me and my family. I want to work for the day when there is no stigma, patients and their families are not afraid to come forward. And when they do, they have the resources they need, the best diagnosis and the best treatment options that are scientifically available.

The vision I described above is not yet close to reality. Even with the promise of Proposition 63, our SF Mayor's budget has decimated the Health Department Budget allocated for mental health treatment. Charitable mental agencies like Larkin Street Youth Services, SF Suicide Prevention, and our Family Services Agency are all scrambling to make due with smaller budgets- all at

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Schizophrenia: Twice as Common as HIV/AIDS, But Survey Shows Americans Misinformed

Reprinted from NAMI, June 9, 2008

Arlington, VA-Twice as many Americans live with schizophrenia than with HIV/AIDS, but a major report by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) reveals most Americans are unfamiliar with the disease. "Americans are not sure what to think about schizophrenia," said NAMI executive director Mike Fitzpatrick. "They know schizophrenia is a medical illness affecting the brain, but it is largely misunderstood. There are gaps in knowledge- and access to treatment. Misinformation, misperceptions, and misunderstanding represent a public health crisis."

The report is available at www.nami.org/schizophreniasurvey. It is based on an on-line survey conducted by Harris Interactive among the general public, caregivers and individuals living with schizophrenia.

Approximately two million Americans live with schizophrenia. Two-thirds do not receive treatment, even though the disease can be managed successfully. The survey found the average age at onset was 21, but a nine-year gap exists between symptoms and treatment.

- 85% of Americans recognize schizophrenia as an illness, 79% believe that with treatment, people with

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3rd Wednesday of each month
6:30 - 8:00 pm
1010 Gough St.
(between Eddy & Ellis)

The Monthly Meeting

June 18

Richard Heasley, Executive Director, Conard House, Inc., will speak on the lessons learned from self-management of chronic medical conditions and their application to serious mental illness."

July 16

TBA

Hello Everyone from page 1

time when our social problems are growing and our safety net is shrinking. Mental health (MH) patients are being shunted to dangerous crack houses in the tenderloin or becoming criminalized in our county jail or state prison system. We now have over-crowded jails with MH patients who then cause a population explosion as they are shunted off to a constantly growing prison population of undiagnosed and untreated mental health patients. We need new resources and new comprehensive treatment programs, not budget cuts.

So what is NAMI doing about it?

We are both an advocacy group that calls on City Hall, Supervisors and Congressman Pelosi's office and makes TV appearances or writes letters for the Op ED pages.

We are also a source of new and completely free programs for patients and their families. Thanks to some of you (last year's generous donors to the 2007 NAMI Walk) we have made the following progress.

We now have an office space at 1010 Gough Street, we have a part-time office manager, a re-modeled web site which I would encourage all of you to visit us at <http://www.namif.org/>.

We have a brand new (for us), very inspirational program called "In Our Own Voice" (IOOV). The IOOV Program trains fully functioning consumers who have diagnoses of schizophrenia, depression, or bi-polar illness. After completing their training, these consumers can tell their story and make informational presentations which are always very compelling. These personal stories help audiences become more compassionate and better understanding of Mental Illness. The audience could be a police department, government policy makers, or staff of a social service agency or just concerned citizens. As an example, NAMI-SF just recently sent a IOOV speaker to the psychiatry residents at CPMC. It's a powerful moment when patients can help train their potential doctors and help them understand better, what it is really like to be psychotic and placed in a locked ward. I would encourage anyone who is otherwise afraid of mental illness (which includes ALL of us), to hear one of these talks. IOOV puts a human face on what is otherwise too scary to think about or to talk about for most of us.

Many of you may have heard of a local TV Anchor man, Jeff Bell author of "Rewind, Replay, Repeat" (Hazelden). This is another example of how someone coming "out of the closet" about his OCD can help the rest of us learn to relate to and empathize with mental health disorders.



The NAMI program that first got me involved, is a 12 week seminar series called "Family-to-Family". NAMI trains instructors who have personal experience with family members with SMIs. These instructors then train those families who are still trying to find their way. I attended the graduation ceremony of one of the biggest yet family-to-family courses of 30+ people last Saturday (5/10) at Kaiser Hospital in SF. They brought me to tears by saying how much they appreciated meeting each other and how much inspiration and hope (for the first time ever) they gleaned from our fabulous teachers (Lavonne and Wanda).

Another NAMI service are our monthly educational meetings, now skillfully organized by Dale Milfay, NAMI's VP. The most recent one was taught by Kiki Chang, MD, a child psychiatrist and the head of the childhood bipolar clinic at Stanford. It was a fabulous program. Some months ago we had Kitty Dukakis talk about her use of shock therapy to treat her own depression as she reviewed her own best seller: "Shock".

So all of this is by way of saying "NAMI is doing its part, now I need you to do your part". Please give generously to the NAMI Bay Area Walk

As you consider this cause, among the many you consider, please keep this fact in mind: One out of five families (20% of the World's Population) will have a family member with a SMI (serious mental illness). With those odds our chapter covering all of SF should have well over a hundred thousand members. We should be a main line charity that people always think about at donation time. We should be up there with concerns like Breast Cancer, AIDS or heart disease. Sadly, we are not even close. Stigma, confusion and fear are still in our way. With the profound irony being that most SMIs are very treatable, now more than ever(!?).

Please donate to this year's walk and come walk with us. Also please register as a member of NAMI. It is with your voice and the voices of others that we are able to bring hope to patients and their families.

Here is how to donate:

- 1) Go to this link: <http://www.namiwalksfbay.org/>
- 2) Click on the "Support a walker" segment
- 3) Eventually you'll see either my name, or my daughter, Ariel's. (BTW, She is ahead of me on meeting her fundraising goal so I would really appreciate your help, here.)

Thank you for your generosity and please tell a friend about NAMI. With your help, we can do a lot to promote better understanding of what is an eminently treatable condition.

Thanks, Giff
Gifford Boyce-Smith, MD
President, Board of Directors
San Francisco NAMI Chapter

Actor Turns Advocate

'Sopranos' star Joe Pantoliano wants people with mental illness to receive the help he got

By Judith Egerton, Reprinted from *The Courier-Journal*, Louisville, Kentucky, 6/9/2008

If you know actor Joe Pantoliano as the violent New Jersey mobster Ralphie Cifaretto, who lost his head in the HBO drama "The Sopranos," you might be surprised to learn that Joey Pants, as he is known to friends and family, is a wine expert, author and outspoken advocate for people with mental illness.

While filming the 2006 movie "Canvas," with co-star Marcia Gay Harden, Pantoliano realized that his chronic depression was a serious problem and that the schizophrenic character played by Harden reminded him of his own mother, whose mental illness and erratic behavior made his childhood unstable and difficult.

With that realization, Pantoliano got help for his clinical depression and resolved to help others. As part of that goal, Pantoliano will be in Louisville tomorrow night as the keynote speaker at a fundraiser for Bridgehaven, a nonprofit organization that is celebrating 50 years of providing mental-health services.

Bridgehaven, 950 S. First St., helps adult clients recover, set goals and resume independent lives in the community. "We wanted a keynote speaker who fit our mission, which is how to integrate people with mental illness back into the community and with their families," said Donna Schuster, Bridgehaven's director of development.

After reading an article about Pantoliano and the drama "Canvas," which chronicles a family's struggle with mental illness, she contacted Pantoliano's agent. The actor readily agreed to speak at the Bridgehaven fundraiser.

During the filming of "Canvas," Pantoliano said, he was grieving for a friend who had committed suicide. He was so devastated and depressed that suicide began to seem like an option, he said in a recent telephone interview.

Instead of acting on that impulse, Pantoliano saw a doctor, who began treating him for depression. "Thus began my journey, the healing process to get my wife back, my kids back and my life back. I have a disease that is part of my genetic makeup," Pantoliano said, but it's a type of illness that carries a stigma and results in isolation, he added.

To combat misunderstanding about mental illness and to get equal treatment for patients with mental

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"Wasted" Author Shifts Focus From Eating Disorder To Bipolar Disorder

By Lynn Carey, Reprinted from the *Contra Costa Times*, 06/09/2008

The last time Walnut Creek native Marya Hornbacher spoke to a crowd here, she killed. But she doesn't remember a thing about it, thanks to prescription drugs mixed with booze. That was back in 2000 at a Times Book Club Gala, with an audience of 800 fans of her book, "Wasted: A Memoir of Anorexia and Bulimia."

Her new book, "Madness: A Bipolar Life" is an equally brutal memoir that begins in 1978 with her 4-year-old self saying "I will not go to sleep. I won't." As with "Wasted," "Madness" immediately sweeps the reader into Hornbacher's manic world.

One would think that this young woman, who has difficulty recalling a moment of peace with herself in her 34 years, would be a wreck. But no. Hornbacher is even more lovely than she was on her visits eight years ago, and just as chatty over lunch at the Grand Cafe in San Francisco, punctuating her conversation with loud cackles of laughter.

It's been a long haul. Even the book tour, where each stop brings in large audiences, is fraught with tension, despite the book's excellent reviews. She's constantly having to be wary of her mood swings and is constantly on the phone with her doctor and psychiatrist, getting her meds altered.

A spring phenomenon

Spring is when she usually flips out, according to her book. But when tentatively asked if she is likely to go bonkers anytime soon, she laughs. "I like it when people are frank about it, instead of saying 'How are you feeling right now?'" she says over a hearty meal. She reassuringly says that she usually crashes in March, then levels out in April and May, then "things are a little escalated in June, July, August. There may be a little blip in April or May."

Continued on page 5

County Mental Health

The County mental health access line
for all consumers is

415-255-3737

The Mobile Crisis Unit is

415-355-8300

From Schizophrenia: Twice As Common on page 1

the diagnosis can lead independent lives, but only 24% are familiar with it. Many cannot recognize symptoms or mistakenly believe they include "split" or multiple personalities (64%).

- 79% want friends to tell them if they have schizophrenia, but only 46% say they would themselves. Even with treatment, 49% are uncomfortable with the prospect of dating a person with schizophrenia.
- Among people living with schizophrenia, 49% said doctors take their medical problems less seriously, even though the report notes that the death rate from causes like heart disease or diabetes is 2-3 times that of the general population.
- A vast majority believe that better medications (96%) and health insurance (82%) would be most helpful to improving their condition,
- Caregivers agree better medications are needed. Approximately 80% have difficulty getting services for loved ones, 63% have difficulty finding time for themselves, and 41% have provided care for more than 10 years.

"We know what to do to increase recovery, but it requires public support, which depends on public attitudes," Fitzpatrick said.

The report offers five recommendations:

- Public education
- Closing the gap between symptoms and treatment
- A welcoming healthcare system
- Education and support for caregivers and individuals living with the illness
- Greater investment in medical research

For more information and for full report, <http://www.nami.org/ssemplate.cfm?section=SchizophreniaSurvey>

Remember to donate to the

Community Thrift Store



This is our *best source* of income
for the NAMI SF Chapter!!

625 Valencia Street at 17th Street
415-861-4910

From Actor Turned Advocate on page 3

diseases, Pantoliano founded a nonprofit organization called No Kidding, Me Too.

On the organization's Web site, he wrote: "I look forward to the day when the brain has the same First Amendment rights as the kidney or the heart. I look forward to the day when a bipolar diagnosis is as accepted as an asthma diagnosis. ... Mental illness does not discriminate. Mental illness is a bipartisan, equal rights issue and concern."

A common denominator of Bridgehaven and "Canvas" is the belief that art and creativity are valuable tools for recovery.

In the movie, Harden's character is a painter. The other characters also have creative outlets that help them cope with their feelings and emotional distress. Bridgehaven incorporates art therapy into its programs, which serve more than 500 people a year, said Ramona Johnson, Bridgehaven president and chief executive.

At the fundraiser tomorrow, art by Bridgehaven clients and five guest artists will be for sale. Half of the proceeds go to Bridgehaven and half to the artist.

"Being diagnosed with mental illness is the greatest thing that ever happened to me," said Pantoliano, 56. "My life is so much better now. ... I understand where the creativity comes from, and I can help other people get the help they truly deserve. ... My only regret is that this kind of knowledge wasn't around when my mother was sick."

Pantoliano lives in New York with his wife, Nancy. They have four children. Not only has he won awards for his stage work and played key roles in such films as "Memento," "The Matrix" and "The Fugitive," Pantoliano is also co-author of "Who's Sorry Now," a memoir that traces his journey from the tough streets of Hoboken, N.J., to Hollywood. Next to Frank Sinatra, Pantoliano may be the most famous Italian from that city.

The actor's advocacy for mental health raises the profile of the issue, and his appearance here for Bridgehaven will give the organization a financial boost during a time when funds for social services are being cut, Johnson said.

For more information about the programs at Bridgehaven, go to www.bridgehaven.org or call (502) 585-9444.

For information about Pantoliano's nonprofit organization -- No Kidding, Me Too -- go to his Web site at www.nkm2.org.

From "Wasted" on page 3

It wasn't until she was 24 that she was diagnosed with rapid cycling type 1 bipolar disorder. Until then, she'd been self-medicating with booze from the age of 10, trading sex for drugs at age 14 and cutting herself in her early 20s, all while suffering from her eating disorder.

She fought the diagnosis of mental illness. "You don't want to believe you have something that won't go away. And you don't want to believe you have something that the entire world mocks."

As described in "Madness," Hornbacher wasn't diligent about taking her medications, especially when she was feeling better. And she was always downing the pills with booze.

In the meantime, she worked on her books, she married and divorced. She moved a lot. She occasionally ended up in the psych ward.


"For a long time, I did a good job of playing that I was just fine and was like everyone else. If I could just convince everyone else of that, maybe it would be true. If I had a husband and I had a book and another book and I had a house and my parents loved me and everything was perfect and I owned my cars outright, then that would all stave off any kind of impending illness, craziness, madness, whatever. And yet at the same time, I always felt like I was balancing a house of cards. Don't touch it, or everything is going to collapse and then the monster's back."

The life-changing event that got her on the right track was somehow ending up in a 12-step meeting after a horrific bender. A perky woman at the podium was saying "Hi, everybody, my name is Connie, and I'm a drunk!" when she realized sobriety was the only alternative if she wanted to live.

"It was the best thing that ever happened to me, in terms of getting me jump-started on having any kind of handle on the mental illness," she says.

Sober, Hornbacher was more aware of her mood swings and better able to handle them. She was able to complete her first novel, 2005's dark "The Center of Winter." She took up ashtanga yoga. She met and married her husband, Jeff, who has no difficulty in recognizing her elevated mood swings, or in sending her to the psych ward. Her last stay was in October, right after she turned in "Madness" to the publisher.

Hornbacher and Jeff live in Minnesota, close to her family. They share their home with young people they mentor, most of whom are in recovery for drugs, alcohol, as well as eating disorders, in some cases.



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Please call Amelia Truman, 415-206-4465

Hornbacher says she loves having them. "It keeps me constantly aware of how much time lies between me and being that vulnerable," she says. "It reminds me it is the last place I ever want to be again."

And, she still writes constantly. Her new book, she says, has "no suicides, and no one goes crazy."

Hornbacher seems happy. She seemed happy back in 2000, too, but "Madness" seems to come from her very core, baring her soul. "I say this in all cheerfulness: Every day is hard. If it seemed easy, well, maybe I'm manic!"

Readers react

Reaction to "Madness" has been even bigger than it was to "Wasted." She is drowning in mail. "The obvious reason is that it's a much more common problem," she says. "More people have bipolar than eating disorders."

"Madness" is dedicated to Hornbacher's parents, who found it more difficult to read than "Wasted," most of which they'd experienced with her. "(Madness) was darker than they knew. They had this adult kid who was saying everything was fine, then drops off the face of the Earth periodically, goes off God knows where for a few months, and then they find you in the psych ward. And that started to happen more and more often."

Hornbacher realizes that the average reader may also have moments of being uncomfortable with "Madness," especially if parts seem familiar. But she is also hoping to educate people about the disease. She's had people imply that bipolar is a character thing, or a "matter of spiritual emptiness."

"I just want to hit them with a pan! I'm like, dude, if I could have pulled this together on my own, wouldn't I have done that 10, 20 years ago? Wouldn't I have just realized that and thought, oh, better knock it off, and improve my character, and just pull myself up by my bootstraps?"

Instead," she says, "I fought it for 30 years. It got me nowhere. Except, I suppose, here."

Support Groups



Family Members' Groups

African American Family Support

1st Thursdays, 5:30-7:30 pm at
1380 Howard St., Rm 537. Call Wanda at 255-3694

San Francisco Family Support Group

Tuesdays, 5:15-6:45 p.m. at SF General Hospital, 1001 Potrero St., Room 7M30. Info: Susanne at 415-558-5900

Sibling & Adult Children Network

Call Mary Gullekson at 474-7010 for information

Berkeley Sibling Support Group

Call Carolyn Defay at (510) 644-8579

Support Group for Family Members, Friends & Care Givers

Tuesdays, 5:30- 7:30 pm at Mission Mental Health,
2712 Mission St. Child care and refreshments provided.
Call Carmen Burgos at 415-401-2733

Bilingual & Monolingual Support Groups

Chinese Families Mental Health Alliance. Ed Koo 352-2047

NEW!

Spanish Language Support Group for family members and caregivers has started. Info: Carmen Burgos 415-401-2733.

Tuesdays 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Mission Mental Health, 2712 Mission Street in San Francisco.

Consumer Self-Help Groups

Depression & Bipolar Support All. (formerly DMDA)

Saturday afternoons at 1:30-3:00 and
1st Mondays at 6:45-8:00 pm in the Saint Francis Hospital,
900 Hyde St., 2nd Floor Conf. Room. Call 519-0171

OASIS (Office of Self Help)

1095 Market Street at 7th, Suite 202 (415) 575-1400

RECOVERY, Inc. for nervous ailments

(415) 333-6454 Community Miracles Center,
2269 Market Street (between Noe and Sanchez

Consumers with Schizophrenia

3rd Wednesday of each month, 5:30 pm
1380 Howard St., 5th floor. Info: Susanne at 558-5900

Hoarding & Cluttering Support

2nd Monday and 4th Wednesday of each month.
Antonio (415) 421-2926 x306

Health and Wellness Action Advocacy

1st Thursday of each month, 1-3pm. Antonio at
(415) 421-2926, x306

Alcoholics Anonymous: San Fran: (415) 621-1326

Marin: (415) 499-0400 San Mateo: (650) 573-6811

Narcotics Anonymous SF Helpline: (415) 621-8600



NAMI-SF Support Groups

- 1) **For Caregivers and Friends Only**
1010 Gough
2nd Wednesday at 6:30
Contact Vickie at 661-5208
- 2) San Francisco General Hospital
7th Floor, Room 7 M 30
Tuesdays, 5:15 – 6:45 p.m.
Call Susanne Killing at 558-5900

Asian Mental Health Resources

The Culture to Culture Foundation's directory of Asian-American mental health services in the Bay Area can be accessed at www.asianmentalhealth.info or call 925-938-9988

DBSA

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance of San Francisco



Regular Support Group:

every Monday at 6:45-8:15pm and
every Saturday at 1:30-3:00pm.

Young Adults Support Group:

1st and 3rd Monday of each month at 6:45-8:15pm for 18 to 25+ year old people.
Contact Harry at 650-430-2909 for information.

Friends And Family Support Group:

1st and 3rd Monday of each month at 6:45-8:15pm. Contact Jane at 415-519-0171 or Harry at 650-430-2909 for information.

Location:

2nd floor of St. Francis Hospital
900 Hyde St.

between Pine and Bush in San Francisco
Conference rooms B, C, and D

Meetings are on a drop in basis and are open to peers, please note we do not allow observers. You do not need to be a member to attend, however memberships are \$20.00 a year and you are encouraged to join and support the organization.

NAMI-San Francisco is a self-help organization of family members, mental health consumers, friends, professionals and other interested citizens, united to provide support, education and advocacy for persons with severe mental illness. NAMI-San Francisco is a private, non-profit organization.

State's Shameful Neglect of Mental Illness

By John Diaz, Editorial Page Editor, Reprinted from The San Francisco Chronicle, 6/1/2008

This is the issue that candidates at all levels prefer to avoid. It divides families, contributes to the crowding in our prisons and jails, explains why so many people are living on the streets, and causes more pain and suffering that can be calculated by any government statistic. Yet it rarely merits mention in any politician's stump speech. The issue is untreated mental illness.

Last week, hundreds of psychiatrists, social workers and relatives of people with severe mental illnesses attended a symposium on mental illness that was held simultaneously, via video hookup, at UC Berkeley and UCLA.

The upshot of the daylong conference was that the status quo is not working. The failure of the current approach can be measured in myriad ways, each a tragedy: The \$200 billion in lost earnings in this nation every year from untreated mental illnesses; the 20,000 California inmates who are receiving psychotropic medications, in all too many cases, too late to avoid an act of violence. According to one study, 48.5 percent of those with severe mental illness in the United States are not getting treatment.

One of the reasons is the enduring stigma that is associated with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or clinical depression.

Another is that the law is ill-equipped to deal with people who are suffering from severe mental illness and may not realize they need treatment. All too often, they self-medicate with alcohol and drugs.

California led the way into what was supposed to be an enlightened era with the 1967 passage of the Lanterman-Petris-Short law, which was designed to move the most severely mentally disabled from institutions to community settings. The laws were tightened, as a matter of civil rights, to make it far more difficult to force someone with a serious mental illness into involuntary treatment.

But the state's approach, which became the national standard within a decade, went from one extreme to the other. The promise of a robust community-based system to replace the institutions was never realized.

Family members who saw their loved ones suffering - oblivious to their conditions - found it virtually impossible to intervene. Benign neglect became the unwritten state policy toward severe mental illness. In effect, the severely mentally ill were shifted from asylums to jails.

... Rod Shaner, medical director of the LA County Department of Mental Health, described the situation as "40 years of wandering." And still we wander....

[To read complete article see <http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/06/01/INMF10U5KC.DTL>]

—John Diaz is The Chronicle's editorial page editor.
E-mail him at jdiaz@sfchronicle.com.

Out of the Fog is published 10 times a year by NAMI-San Francisco, a non-profit organization affiliated with the National Alliance on Mental Illness, which goes by the acronym NAMI, and NAMI-California, the statewide affiliate.

NAMI San Francisco

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Please Join NAMI SF

NAMI-San Francisco is moving to a system where members renew in their anniversary months, but many of you are on the calendar-year system.

Please let us count you. There is power in numbers. We need the support of families, friends, consumers, professionals and others who share our goals. Your dues help us pay for the printing of the newsletter, educational materials and mailings and the Family-to-Family Education Course, an invaluable resource for people who love someone with a mental illness.

Checks may be made out to "NAMI San Francisco"

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1010 Gough St.
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