



*Mental illnesses are
medical brain disorders*

NAMI North Central Florida Affiliate
Annual Report
November 2004 – October 2005

NAMI North Central Florida Affiliate membership is represented largely by Gainesville residents, but our wide catchment includes the counties of Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Levy, and Union. The core philosophy of our group was established 25 years ago by founding members, some currently active, and developed by the late Don Walsh, our most recent past-president. The current co-presidents are Joan and Bruce Stevens. Our mission is support, education, and advocacy. A memorial fund in Don's name has been established to further related goals.

NAMI is run exclusively by family members. All our families continually move to and fro along the crisis continuum, and therefore execution of these activities reflects efforts sacrificed by many family members for the larger membership.

Activities and Programs

- Established Don Walsh Memorial Fund; spending requires NAMI Board approval
- Family Members Support Meetings (P.R.O.P.—People Reaching Out to Other People)
- Family-to-Family Educational training of instructors courses for the public
- Development of Steps to Follow in Handling a Crisis
- Monthly newsletter mailed and posted on website
- Informational meeting topics
 - Wills and Trusts Seminar for Family Members
 - The F.A.C.T. program (Florida Assertive Community Treatment Program, run by Psychotherapeutic Services, Inc.), presented by Trish Sokol, ED.S., LMHC.
 - Magistrate Judge presents Baker Act 101
 - Overview of the Crisis Intervention Training program in Alachua County
 - Judge Martha Lott speaks on mental illnesses and court related issues
- Tour of Mental Illness Pod at County Jail; for all NAMI Family Members
- C.A.R.E. (Consumers Advocating Recovery through Empowerment) consumer led support group established that should include the UF student population
- Website (www.naminorthcentralflorida.org) developed and maintained. This serves as a portal on local resources for family members and consumers, as well as informing our members of our NAMI meetings and community events. Our home page has a conspicuous “panic button” that visitors can click to access constructive steps to follow during a mental illness crisis

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- Phone support for community citizens
- Forum on Northeast Florida State Hospital (NEFSH) presented to County and City public officials
- Mental Illness Awareness Month; Depression Screening collaboration with Shands at Vista
- NAMI development and participation with Sheriff in local (Crisis Intervention Team) CIT Training Course
- Anti-Stigma Campaign/Elimination of Barriers (EBI) talk presented to Kiwanis; with DCF District 3.
- NAMI seminar at Northeast Florida Regional Treatment Center
- Testimony at "Governor's Working Group on the Americans with Disabilities Act Real Choice Partnership Project Consumer Task Force."
- Attendance at DCF meeting: "The Employment Path to Recovery"
- University of Florida Research Projects relating to mental illnesses ("Visual Studies in Family Members of Persons with Schizophrenia"; "Early Detection of Schizophrenia through Movement Disorders")
- Lobbying for Medicaid access to mental illness meds on state's Preferred Drug List
- Public testimony at state government's Pharmaceuticals and Therapeutics Subcommittee in Tallahassee regarding consumers' access to mental illness meds
- "Nothing to Hide: Mental Illness in the Family" photo essay show about mental illness; public display at main Library and Shands Hospital Atrium; exhibit and reception sponsored by Vista at Shands Atrium
- "Faces and Places of Psychiatry in Gainesville" photo essay on local psychiatric care resources, by UF medical student Denise Caicedo, M.D.
- Newspaper announcements of meetings
- Gainesville Sun "Speaking Out" feature editorials on mental illnesses
- Communicating with office of Florida Senator Rod Smith, an advocate of the mission of NAMI
- Participating in Psychiatry Grand Rounds, medical student functions, and psychiatry residents' luncheons
- Continual interactions with the area's mental health services
 - NAMI Interface with local Meridian Behavioral Healthcare, Inc. (provides postage for mailings)
 - NAMI Interface with local F.A.C.T. program (Psychotherapeutic Services)
 - NAMI Interface with local Shands at Vista Psychiatric Hospital (provides meeting rooms and funding)
 - NAMI Interface with Northeast Florida State Hospital (NEFSH, civil)
 - NAMI Interface with Northeast Florida Regions Treatment Center (NEFTC, forensic)
 - NAMI Interface with Department of Children and Families (DCF) Florida District 3

Respectively submitted,
Joan and Bruce Stevens