



NAMI

National Alliance on Mental Illness

NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA

Nov. 2006 • Vol. 4, No. 11 Serving Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Levy & Union Counties

"Presidents Corner"

...Joan & Bruce Stevens

As an extension of Mental Illness Awareness Week, NAMI NCF partnered with Vista to offer mental health screenings at two different locations on two different days in October. We were at Shands at UF in the Atrium and at Shands at AGH in the lobby with a table display and array of brochures and other handouts from both NAMI and Vista. The event was advertised on the radio, and TV and in the Gainesville Sun.

Marcus Dietrich from Vista provided some data that tell at least part of the success story: 51 people took the screening, several coming specifically because they'd seen the event advertised. Everyone taking the screening had the opportunity to discuss the results with a licensed mental health counselor from Vista. 61% of those taking the screening were referred for follow-up. An additional 58 people picked up printed information. In the two weeks following the in-person screenings, 149 people took the screening on line, a service provided by Vista all year long. An uncounted number read the signs and saw a public display on a topic that is often dismissed or hidden: mental illness.

We had an opportunity to informally discuss questions people had about topics related to mental illnesses and fortunately had a variety of reading material to offer. This sort of public venue brings the topic of mental illness into the community awareness and invites informed discussion. Many thanks to everyone who helped make this outreach event such a success!

Our affiliate is offering another opportunity to further our mission of "support, information and advocacy"! NAMI will have a table at the Downtown Arts Festival on November 4 and 5 from 9:30 to 5:30 both days, in the area by the Hippodrome specifically for nonprofit organizations. Please stop by to say "hi" if you are at the festival.

As of this writing, we are still looking for a couple of volunteers to take a 2 hour shift at the table, sheltered from the elements by a tent (thanks to the keen shopper's eye of Michelle and Bill Donnelly!). Call 378-0886 or email us at the website if you'd like to volunteer for any 2-hour shift.

NOVEMBER MEETING



Our Monday, November 13th meeting will be begin at 7:00 p.m. We will begin with our annual meeting and conclude with a screening of an award winning documentary, *Out of the Shadow* by Director Susan Smiley. This very personal documentary chronicles the filmmaker's mother, Millie, and her family through the mother's battle with schizophrenia, and her subsequent trials within the public health system. See page 2 of this newsletter for additional information about this documentary.

We will meet at Trinity United Methodist Church, 4000 NW 53rd Avenue. Enter through the Educational Building door, under the drive-up portico, and take the elevator or stairs on your right to Room 224 on the second floor. Go down the hall straight ahead and the room is on the right.



NAMI - C.A.R.E.

NAMI C.A.R.E. (*Consumers Advocating Recovery through Empowerment*) is a Support Group just for persons/consumers with a mental illness. CARE meets the first and third Mondays of each month at Vista from 7:30-9:00 P.M. Anyone with a mental illness is welcome, regardless of diagnosis or severity.

RADIO TALK SHOW - NOVEMBER PROGRAMS

Karen Schmauss, Director of Development at Meridian, has recently begun hosting a local radio talk show with Sunshine Broadcasting discussing issues directly related to services provided by Meridian. Tune in on Sunday mornings (stations and times listed in October Newsletter) to hear future shows on topics of interest to many of us.

Nov 2 THERAPEUTIC FOSTER HOMES AND THE ONGOING NEED – Donna Maynard & Deak Peyton

Nov 9 CRISIS STABILIZATION & FAMILY CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM – Chad Crosier & Betty Strayer

"OUT OF THE SHADOW"

Movie Showing at our November 13 Meeting

For our Nov 13 NAMI meeting, we will view the award winning DVD movie, "Out of the Shadow" (67 min). This movie is currently being aired on PBS nationwide, but somehow not on any Cox Cable channels. We purchased the high res DVD for our NAMI lending library, and purchased a license for unlimited showings of the film to our entire NAMI group.

This very personal documentary chronicles the filmmaker's mother, Millie, and her family through Millie's battle with schizophrenia, and her subsequent trials within the public health system. Millie was just 25 with two small children when she was first plagued by the symptoms of schizophrenia. As mental chaos overwhelmed their mother, filmmaker Susan and sister Tina struggled to cope. For years, the family's ignorance and shame kept Millie's behaviour shrouded in a veil of secrecy. When her children left home, Millie's life unravelled completely. Smiley weaves recent interviews with her mother, sister, and other relatives with old family home movies, which occasionally show the young Millie, blond and gorgeous, playing happily with her babies, but more often find her staring blankly at the camera.

Out of the Shadow succeeds in portraying the frustration of loving someone who's mentally ill, capturing the times Millie is rational, warm, and funny as well as her chilling episodes of hostility and delusion. A story of madness and dignity, shame and love, this intimate film helps dispel the stigmas and misconceptions surrounding this harrowing illness.

When documentary filmmaker Susan Smiley decided she was finally ready to turn the camera on her own family, the result became *Out of the Shadow*, the

story of her family's secret struggle to deal with her mother's schizophrenia within the confines of the public health system.

This film is a story illuminating a national plight through one family's journey. *Out of the Shadow* premiered at SILVER DOGS: AFI/Discovery Channel

Documentary Festival in June, 2004. Since then it has toured festivals across the United States, and after its international premiere at the Vancouver International Film Festival, it is now being screened around the world.

It is proving to be an effective tool to dispel stigmas and misconceptions surrounding this harrowing and often confusing illness. *Out of the Shadow* is a provocative and courageous film which is also having a tremendous impact on mental health communities nationwide, providing much-needed insights to psychiatrists, case managers, social workers, educators, consumers and their families.

NAMI national has hailed the film as a critical tool for raising public awareness and has sponsored hundreds of screenings nationwide. The film won

NAMI's prestigious 2006 Media Award. Our November 13 NAMI meeting in Gainesville is the first screening in the North Central Florida area.

The film is also educating policy makers about the realities, issues and needs of America's severely mentally ill population. Screenings for policymakers have been held throughout the United States.



The young Millie was bright, beautiful and charismatic, but over the years the progression of her illness eclipsed the woman she once was.

Annual Downtown Festival & Art Show

Our NAMI Gainesville chapter will have a table this year at the Annual Downtown Festival & Art Show. It will be located with other non-profit displays near the Hippodrome. This is Gainesville's premier fall festival of the arts, with city officials expecting over 100,000 visitors. Our NAMI booth will be offering for sale the "Nothing to Hide" fine photography photoessay book of interviews and photos of everyday families whose lives are affected mental illnesses. This is



the book that accompanied the touring photo essay exhibit which we brought to Gainesville last fall. Our NAMI booth will also display information on mental illnesses, anti-stigma, and family support. We are still looking for NAMI members to help fill time slots at the booth. To volunteer at the booth for any amount of time, email artfest@namigainesville.org. The festival is free and open to the public Saturday Nov 4 and Sunday Nov 5 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m in the heart of historic downtown Gainesville.

NARSAD Artworks

Looking for a gift are greeting cards for the holidays?

Why not fill you needs while supporting mental health research.

The NARSAD Artworks products showcase museum-quality art by talented artists whose lives share or have shared the common bond of mental illness. NARSAD Artworks is a volunteer 501 (c) 3 nonprofit corporation. All proceeds flow to causes supporting people with a mental illness, especially scientific research. For a wide selection of gifts and artwork go to <https://narsadartworks.org>.



People with a Mental Illness Enrich our Lives...

This is one of a series of informational bits about people throughout history who have had or whose family members have had a serious mental illness.

Greg Louganis, the most successful diver in history, has recently gone public with the news that his mental health took its own plunge years ago. Louganis, the winner of five Olympic medals, first experienced depression at age 12 when a doctor told him that because of knee damage, he would have to give up gymnastics and his dream of competing in the Olympics.

Louganis attempted suicide by downing aspirin and Ex-Lax, trying again twice before the age of 18. While counseling sessions accomplished little, Louganis found that diving--a sport less grueling for the knees--was a satisfying way to express his physical talents.

By 1971 he had qualified for the Junior Olympics. Five years later, at the age of 16, Louganis won a silver medal at the Montreal Olympics in the 10-meter platform diving competition. He went on to win gold medals in the 1984 and 1988 Olympic Games.

But Louganis felt acute insecurities and inner conflicts about being gay. In a crushing blow, he found out in 1987 that he was HIV-positive.

For years, Louganis did not share the news of his illness for fear that it would cost him his diving career. He relied on the income from endorsements and appearances to pay his enormous medical expenses rather than submit the bills to his insurance company. Louganis has since gone public with his illness, touring the country to give speeches about his life experiences and act as a positive role model.



Greg Louganis

NAMI North Central Florida
 an affiliate of
 NAMI and NAMI Florida
 P.O. Box 90114
 Gainesville, FL 32607
 352-374-5600 or 800- 330-5615
 Extension 8322



<http://www.naminorthcentralflorida.org>

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

Co-PresidentsJoan & Bruce Stevens
 Vice PresidentSusan Cary
 SecretaryPaula Ambroso
 TreasurerPat Warnock

NAMI NCF Committee Chairs

Stigma Busters -Mental Illness
 Awareness CommitteeBill Donnelly
 Consumer Support CommitteeChristine McEvoy
 PROP Leaders CommitteeJoan Stevens
 Telephone CommitteeDorothy Davenport
 Public Policy CommitteeSusan Cary
 Newsletter & MembershipDianne Walsh
 LibrarianMichelle Donnelly

Community Liaisons

Shands at VistaMarianne Debolt
 FACT TeamBernice Best
 Meridian Behavioral HealthcareChuck Debolt
 NFESHLillian Cason
 Survivors of SuicideJudy Bousquet

Family-to-Family Trainers

Paula Ambroso
 Susan Boulet
 Beth Foley
 Dianne Skye

CIT Trainers

Susan Boulet
 Bruce Stevens

CARE Leaders

Steff Osborne & Conrad Burkholder

Meridian
Tree of Hope

You can help support people with mental illness, substance abuse and neglected & abused children in our community by supporting the Tree of Hope

Money raised by the Tree of Hope will directly support Meridian's programs and services

Purchase your **Brass, Silver or Bronze** leaf and show your community that you support *Hope* for the lives of the people that are touched by mental illness, substance abuse or children who suffer from abuse and neglect

The Meridian Tree of Hope has a Cast Bronze Trunk that will reside in the main lobby at Meridian Behavioral Healthcare, Gainesville. The names of donors will be engraved on the leaves pledged. Large bronze rocks are reserved for pledges of \$1,000 or more and will be placed around the trunk of the tree. The size of the rock, depends upon the pledge.

Meridian Behavioral Healthcare, Inc. is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization whose mission is to provide quality affordable behavioral healthcare and related services in partnership with our communities.

Make your tax-deductible pledge to purchase a leaf for the Tree of Hope

Bronze Leaf \$200 Silver Leaf \$150 Brass Leaf \$100 Rocks \$1,000+

In the name of: _____

check enclosed # _____ Amount \$ _____

credit card # _____ Amount \$ _____

expiration _____ Verification ID # _____ signature _____

Contact information Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

 Development Office 4300 S.W. 13th St. Gainesville, FL 32609 (352) 374-5600 Ext. 8187
 Meridian Behavioral Healthcare, Inc. ...Choose, Hope, Recovery