

The Alliance

NAMI Fox Valley

Vol. XXIII, No. 4

December 2009

Welcome Angel!

We are excited to welcome Angel Gruber as our new receptionist. You'll be greeted by her "angelic" tones when you call the office, and by her warm smile when you visit during business hours of Monday through Thursday, 9 am - 4 pm. Angel has been a volunteer of ours for many years, serving as a volunteer receptionist, support group facilitator, and "In Our Own Voice" presenter. Please welcome her when you get a chance!



Farewell, not goodbye, to Jen

Jennifer Parsons joined our teen support group staff as an intern from UW Oshkosh almost five years ago. She has been a vital personality for this group, bringing an understanding heart and a willingness to take on just about any task that would benefit the group. Jen continued to assist with the group after her graduation. Sadly for us, she has taken new employment that conflicts with her availability, so we have had to say "farewell for now" to one of our favorite people. Jen has offered to stay involved with the Teen Walk team, and we'll definitely take her up on it...she helps design the best t-shirts! We wish Jen all the best of luck in her new endeavor.

Membership renewal

It's time to renew your membership in NAMI Fox Valley! Membership runs from January 1 through December 31, and rates remain the same as last year. Your payment includes membership in the local, state, and national levels of NAMI. Please use the envelope included with this newsletter to renew (or become) a member now!

In Memory

The Board of Directors, Staff, and Volunteers of NAMI Fox Valley extend our sincere sympathy to the family of Sue Schouten on her passing October 27, 2009. Sue, along with her trusty companion Meg Schroeder, served as the mailing chairpersons of our newsletter crew for many years. Sue's warm smile and cheerful demeanor will be greatly missed.

IOOV Coordinator busy with outreach

We welcome Greg Pekarske-Siers as the Coordinator of our "In Our Own Voice" outreach and advocacy program. In this capacity, Greg contacts schools, businesses, churches, and civic organizations to schedule presentations of this stigma-busting program. So far in 2009, IOOV has reached audiences of more than 750 individuals, sharing its message of recovery and hope. This position is supported by a generous grant from NAMI. If you are interested in having an IOOV presentation for a group you are involved with, you can reach Greg at 954.1550, or info@namifoxvalley.org.



Iris Garden	p. 3, 9, 10
Consumer Corner	p. 4
Vet's Corner	p. 5
NAMIWalk Walk 2009	p. 6-7
Family Support Group in Waupaca	p. 8
Karen Writes	p. 11

Consumers as Providers (CAP)

NAMI Fox Valley, with support from NAMI Wisconsin, has been offering the Consumers as Providers (CAP) course, a 15-week class that prepares mental health consumers to work as Peer Specialists within mental health care systems. As part of the coursework, students submitted papers on various topics. Following is an outstanding paper that speak directly to the mission of NAMI Fox Valley:

Mental health seems to be missing

Submitted by Karen Schiller, CAP Student

An article in the Huffington Post caught my eye. It was titled “Where is Mental Health in Health Care Reform.” The authors describe how prevalent mental illness is: “one in four Americans suffer from a mental or substance use disorder each year; 50% during the course of their lifetimes” (Sederer and Friedman, 2009). I have heard this startling statistic before and recognize that not only does mental illness affect more people than other common illnesses like heart disease and diabetes, but I also agree with the statistic about so many people with mental illness not seeking treatment. The article goes on to discuss how, in the front page dialogue about health care that is going on today, mental health care receives little to no attention. The article connects comorbidity conditions among those with mental illness, conditions such as diabetes, heart and lung disease, asthma and cancer. These illnesses complicate the treatment of mental illness and increase the cost of health care. The article also shares these startling statistics: “75% of seniors who killed themselves were in a primary care doctor's office in the 30 days anteceding their death -- 40% in the week before” (Sederer and Friedman, 2009). The authors wonder if people realize the impact of untreated mental illness on the educational system, workplaces and premature death.

This article is connected to recovery because it directly relates to how to make changes to the mental health care system, especially early detection. It also points out the lack of dialogue in the media, among politicians and in the public's dialogue. This prevents the opportunity for system change that could happen with the upcoming changes made to the health care system.

After reading this article my first reaction was anger about the startling statistics of how prevalent mental illness is, how little recognition there is of the danger of

untreated mental illness (reference the statistic about suicides among the elderly population) and how the health care dialogue rarely focuses on mental illness – one of the most, if not the most, prevalent illnesses in the United States. I was also interested in the recommendations laid out by the authors on how to improve the mental health care system. The first option they offer is to provide screening in primary care settings. Identifying symptoms early, before they progress to a critical status, and then providing treatment could greatly aid in an individual's recovery and could prevent costly crisis care. The screening tests are a great idea, and I believe this would be a great tool for primary care doctors. However, I also believe other “primary care providers” like teachers, nurses, and home care providers should be trained to recognize mental illness signs and symptoms and how to refer for help. The second recommendation was to provide care paths after illnesses are diagnosed. The recognition that there needs to be care paths after a mental illness is identified is important because a primary care provider cannot be an expert like a psychiatrist, psychologist, consumer provider or therapist can. The article suggests creating “mental health homes.” I'm not sure about creating the homes as it sounds like another way to institutionalize individuals, so I would want more information before making a comment on this recommendation. The third recommendation was to provide screening for high-risk populations like the elderly, veterans and post-partum women. Again, I agree with the idea of early diagnosis and treatment being essential to recovery. The authors suggest the slogan, “There is no health without mental health” (Sederer and Friedman, 2009).

Finally, the authors recommend finding champions for providing change to the mental health care system. Champions for a cause are always important and some champions, like Senator Patrick Kennedy, Patty Duke and the Wellstone family/organization, already exist. One of the recommendations missing from this article is a system change toward recovery in mental health care. The article seemed to focus more on early detection and treatment, but did not emphasize how important a change to a consumer-focused system is. The article could have promoted implementing strengths-based approaches to recovery; however, recovery was never mentioned in the article. The authors had the opportunity to emphasize system change to one that promotes recovery, but they missed it. Early detection and care paths are important, but without systems

continued on page 5

IRIS GARDEN

Submitted By Helen Timm, Administrative Coordinator

In which NAMI-FV celebrates our generous friends and contributors!

Heartfelt thanks to the following for their donations:

Gerry Henseler for his donation of four cases of copy paper.

Helen Timm for her donation of a desk jet printer for the NAMI office.

Mike and Mary Arneson for their continued donation of bottled water for support group and class use.

Mindy Arneson for a supply of label maker tape.

Print Source Plus for their generous donation of printing 4,000 tickets for the moped raffle.

Kimberly-Clark Foundation/ The Matching Gift Center for their \$500 donation to match a donation from their employee, Mary Ellyn Vicksta.

Pat Seegers and Fox Cities Chapter of Credit Unions who chose NAMI Fox Valley as the recipient of \$260 from their monthly raffle to benefit local charities.

Paul & Gwen Court for a \$50 donation for services provided by Joseph Troy to officiate their wedding.

Deb Whitman and St. Thomas More Congregation for a \$100 donation after hearing a presentation that Karen Aspenson gave to their members.

Jack & Margaret Berkers for a \$250 donation in recognition of the parents & family members who helped to develop NAMI Fox Valley.

Alvin & Beverly Vandenberg for their donation of \$30 to buy gifts for the holiday party.

Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region Inc. for the \$16,000 Bridge Grant from unrestricted funds within the Community Foundation.

Charles & Martha Sauter Family Fund within the Community Foundation for a \$700 grant.

Bemis Company Foundation for a \$5,000 grant for education and support services.

Prudential Foundation Matching Gifts for a \$200 donation to match funds that were received from Herb Clark.

Walmart on Mutual Way, **Pizza King**, **Jimmie Johns** on College, **Super Bowl**, **The 10th Frame**, **Old Country Buffet**, **Sam's Club**, **Angels Restaurant**, **Quizno's Subs** on Integrity Way, **Pizza Hut**, **Applebee's**, **Mary's Family**

Restaurant, **Dairy Queen** Neenah, **Blueberry Hill Pancake House**, **Woodman's Food Market**, **Simon's Specialty Cheese**, **Atlas Coffee Mill & Café**, **Harmony Café**, **Super Cuts** on Van Roy, **Great Clips** on Casaloma, **Cost Cutters Family Hair Care** on Northland, **The Barbershop**, **CVS Pharmacy** on College, **PDQ Car Wash**, **Little Caesar's Pizza**, **Half Price Books**, **The Book Store**, **Funset Boulevard**, **Building for Kids**, **Goodwill**, **St. Vincent de Paul Appleton**, **Breadsmith**, **Honeybaked Ham Company & Café**, **Wilmar's Chocolates**, **Manderfield's Home Bakery**, **Jersey Bagel & Deli**, **Copp's**, **Aspen Tea & Coffee**, **Domino's Pizza**, **Jeff & Karen Aspenson**, **Carol Schaidler** and **Marsha Brewer** for donation of gifts for the holiday party.

Memorial Gifts

Karen & Jeff Aspenson \$25 in memory of Jim Nash

Judith Spielmacher \$20 in memory of Jim Nash

Karen & Jeff Aspenson \$25 in memory of Sue Schouten

Jerry & Helene Iverson \$25 in memory of Sue Schouten

Herb Clark \$25 in memory of Mrs. Francis Grygleski

Jerry & Helene Iverson \$30 in memory of Jim Laga

Dennis & Marlene Braun \$100 in memory of Dan Evans

Gift under \$100

Mr. & Mrs. Lois Faust \$50

Margaret Otis \$25

Raymond Zagorski \$20

Gifts of \$100

Steven Meiers

Donald & Barbara VanDynhoven

Allan & Marvel Williamson

Gifts of \$200

Carol Ligare

Alvin & Beverly Vandenberg

Gifts of \$500

Mary Ellyn Vicksta

Carolyn Wilmot

Gifts of \$1000

Oshkosh Corporation

Robert & Lynne Keller – (Please forgive us for the misspelling of their names in the last issue of our newsletter)

continued on page 9

Consumers' Corner

By Tammy Bradley, Consumer Coordinator

Thanksgiving Party

The Thanksgiving party was a successful event, featuring lots of good food and good friends. The attendees make paper snowflakes, which are now sparkling from the ceiling in the meeting room. As always, we are reminded of the importance of celebrating the things we are thankful for, like friends, family, and recovery.



Games and Pizza night

Please join us on Saturday, January 16, at 5:00 pm at the NAMI House for a fun-filled evening of games, featuring Apples to Apples and Zobmondo. Please sign up at any New Hope Connections group.



Bowling

Back by popular demand—bowling! We'll meet on Sunday, February 21st at the 10th Frame bowling alley, 618 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Appleton, at 2:00 pm. The event includes payment for shoe rental and unlimited number of games, but attendees should bring money for snacks. Please sign up at any New Hope Connections group.



"We Care Program"

Please remember that NAMI Fox Valley is listed as a "We Care" organization with Pick 'n Save grocery stores. All you do to have us listed as your donation choice is complete an Advantage Card form and designate our agency number, 21900, in the "We Care" portion of the form. When you shop at any Pick 'n Save in the State of Wisconsin, please let the cashier know that you participate in the program. If you don't have your card or our agency number with you, just let the cashier know and they can look it up!

New community group for teens

The Center for Grieving Children will begin hosting a weekly teen bereavement group at Harmony Café. The group is open to any teen age 14 - 18 who has experienced a loss through death. While each person's grief is unique, meeting with others can reduce the sense of isolation and foster hope. For more information or to register, call the Center at 731.0555, ext. 244.

1 IN 4
OF YOUR CO-WORKERS
IS SILENTLY SUFFERING



GET EDUCATED!

Did you know that one in four adults (that's approximately 57.7 million Americans) experience a mental health disorder in a given year?

Did you know that fewer than one-third of adults and half of children with a diagnosable biological brain disorder receive any mental health services in a given year?

Why do you think such a common problem is never talked about?

Sponsor a Lunch 'N Learn today to make your workplace a more supportive environment for those who are silently suffering.

Knowledge is power!

NAMI Fox Valley

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www.namifoxvalley.org

Vet's Corner

Submitted by Sandy Pharis,
Project Coordinator

The Veteran's Group has been increasing in membership over the past three months, possibly due to the revised flyer that is posted all over the Fox Valley community. The group now welcomes veterans who are living with diagnoses of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Military Sexual Trauma (MST). Of course, all diagnoses are welcome. If you would like copies of the flyer to post at your location, please call Sandy at 954.1550 and we'll get some out to you.

Sandy Pharis and Janet Malcolm, co-facilitators of the group, coordinated the breakout session on women's issues at the Warrior Summit held in Milwaukee in September. The attendance was excellent, and they were happy to see some men in the audience. This event was co-sponsored by DryHootch (dryhootch.org), NAMI Greater Milwaukee, and other organizations. The connection with DryHootch is an exciting one as they are a non-profit organization that assists veterans in their quest to stay sober. We will be working with them on other ventures in the future.

On October 7th Scott Adler (our veteran's advocate) set up a NAMI Veteran's Project station at the "Supermarket of Veteran's Benefits" held at the Wisconsin National Guard Armory in Marshfield. Even though attendance was lower than usual, several veterans asked Scott questions about how an individual can determine if he or she is living with a mental illness. Veterans took fliers, brochures, business cards and other resources available at the station.

For more information about our services to Veterans, please call Sandy at 954.1550.

continued from page 2, Mental health seems to be missing

change, more people will be put into the mental health system, perpetuating the pathology treatment of mental illness versus a strengths-based approach. I was glad to see an article in a major media outlet that brought mental health care into the health care dialogue and pointed out how essential mental health care is to health care and to the success of our communities.

Article referenced: Sederer, L. and Friedman, M. (2009) *Where is Mental Health in Health Care Reform?*

Outreach impacts various audiences

By Karen Aspenson, Executive Director

I was offered two very unique outreach opportunities in October, both of which afforded unique access to audiences who typically may not hear about our programs and services. On October 6th, I was invited to provide the pre-show discussion before the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center performance of "Of Mice and Men," based on the classic novel by John Steinbeck. I was encouraged to speak about the experience of one of the main characters, Lenny, and compare and contrast his experience of living with a developmental disability with the experience of living with mental illness. I touched on various elements of his experience, such as processing delays, violence, knowing right from wrong, and the importance of human relationships. I would like to thank Erin Husader, the PAC's Education and Community Program Coordinator, for the opportunity.

On October 8th, I was asked to put together a panel discussion about living with mental illness as part of "Celebrating Abilities Week." I served as moderator for Kara Patterson, Kat Sachs, and Faith Boersma, all of whom did a fantastic job of discussing their life experiences with mental illness to two sections of 8th grade students at Highlands Elementary School in Appleton. The students asked thoughtful questions of each of the panelists, and all seemed to come away with increased awareness of mental illness. A note of thanks, one student wrote, "Dear Faith, I really love your story. You are my idol." Thanks to Cindy Romnek and Kara Patterson for providing us with this unique opportunity to reach our young community members.



NAMI Walks 2009

The 4th Annual NAMI Walks for the Mind of America event went off beautifully! More than 500 walkers gathered on the hill at Appleton's Memorial Park for the event. Honorary Walk Chair Bill Jartz revved up the crowd with his high-energy patter, setting the tone for an important event. As always, the funds raised are vital to keep the programs and services of NAMI Fox Valley running; the outreach opportunity is priceless! Each year since we began hosting the Walk, we've seen an increase in the demand for our education classes, such as Family-to-Family and Peer-to-Peer, as well as an increase in the number of support group attendees.



Summary of Funds Collected
Walker donations
 (day of Walk) - \$30,804.13
On-line donations - \$23,912.00
Sponsorships - \$53,750.00
In-kind Donations - \$8,217.77
Total Walk Revenue - \$116,683.90



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

Presenting

JJ Keller Foundation - \$10,000

US Oil - \$10,000

Ace Hardware
Affinity Health Systems
Alta Resources
Appleton Breakfast Rotary
Appleton Dental
Appleton Fox Cities Kiwanis Club
Badger Plug
Bank First National
Boldt Company
Children's Hospital of Wisconsin – Fox Valley
Charles & Kathryn Collins
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Gary & Judy Gunderson
Goodwill Industries of Northcentral Wisconsin
Great Northern Corporation
Green Bay Packers
Habish, Habish & Rottier
Harry Wendlandt Co.
Hartwig Family Foundation
Gerry & Peg Henseler
George & Joan Helbing
Hoffman LLC
Hyp Solutions
Kenneth Rahmlow Builder
M&I Bank
McCarty Law Fund
McClone Insurance Group
Mike & Mary Mollon
Network Medicare Platinum Products
Oshkosh Area Community Foundation (Anonymous)
PDI Financial
Roger's Memorial Hospital
SCA Tissue
School Specialty
SECURA
Sherwood Dental
Tom & Andrea Tatlock
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Gary Van Abel
Vesaas Consulting
Vincent Group
Mike & Sherry Williams
Wolf River Bank

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Special thanks to the staff of NAMI Fox Valley who helped in so many ways: Scott Adler, Richard Bauer, Tammy Bradley, Michele Hefter, Kim Lillo, Shannan Mancheski, and Sandy Pharis



THANK YOU TO ALL OF THE VOLUNTEERS WHO MADE THE DAY HAPPEN!



Library Corner

Please stop by and check out these new additions to our library:

“*The Soloist*,” DVD

“*Mr. Ayers & Mr. Lopez*,” DVD, 60 Minutes program from March 22, 2009

“*Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*” by Judith Herman

“*I Can’t Get Over It: A Handbook for Trauma Survivors*” by Aphrodite Matsakis

“*Coping with Trauma: Hope Through Understanding*” by Jon G. Allen

“*Healing from Trauma: A Survivor’s Guide to Understanding Your Symptoms and Reclaiming Your life*” by Jasmin Lee Cori

“*New Hope for People with Borderline Personality Disorder: Your Friendly, Authoritative Guide to the Latest in Traditional and Complementary Solutions*” by Neil R. Bocklan

“*Claim Denied!: How to Appeal a VA Denial of Benefits*” by John D. Roche

We are always looking for people to read our books or watch our movies and submit a review! Contact Karen at 954.1550 if you are interested in doing this.

Did you know?

NAMI Fox Valley has an Endowment Fund

- It was established in the year 2000 and has grown to a value of \$227,220.94
- To date the fund has earned and given \$50,101.26 to the operating budget
- All income is used to support the operating budget
- The fund can only grow by gifts and donations directed to it.
- There are now two memorial funds within the Endowment Fund. They are: the Dan Evans Memorial Fund and the Claudia Jayne Calabrese Memorial Fund.
- Gifts can be given in the form of cash, checks, or securities.



- If you would like to donate to the Endowment and/or establish a Memorial Fund within the Endowment, you may contact the NAMI-FV office or the Chair of the Endowment Fund at 734-0983.
- A gift to the Endowment Fund is a gift that keeps on giving!

Wish List

Carpeting (ours no longer comes clean!)
Certificates (for education class graduates)

Coffee (regular and decaf)

Colored copy paper

Dry Erase markers

Flip chart paper

File folders (3-tab)

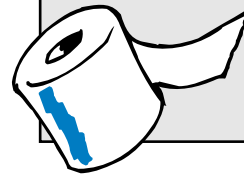
Highlight markers

Paper towels

Postage stamps

Toilet paper

White copy paper



Family support group in Waupaca

A meeting of our Family Sharing Session, open to family and friends of people living with mental illness, is now available in Waupaca. The group meets on the third Tuesday of the month from 6:30 – 7:30 pm, at the Waupaca Library, 107 S. Main Street, Waupaca. For information about the group, contact Karen Engel at 715.258.6400. NAMI Fox Valley continues to offer the Appleton Family Sharing Session as well, which meets on the second Wednesday of the month from 6:30-8:30 pm, at 516 W. Sixth Street, Appleton. Both groups are offered free of charge and there is no need to register.

The NAMI Fox Valley Endowment Fund has recently received the following donation:

Burga Foltz \$30 in honor of Louis & Louise Weiske's 60th anniversary

The Dr. Bruce Heyl Memorial Fund within the NAMI Fox Valley Endowment Fund has received the following donations in memory of Dr. Bruce Heyl:

Appleton Psychiatric Counseling Center Inc.	\$500
Dr. Tom & Andrea Tatlock	\$500
Lyle & Marlene Long and Kay & Wallace Vetter	\$25
Jay Drzewiecki/Watermark Financial Services	\$30
Jack & Margaret Berkers	\$50
Jeremiah Olson	\$25
Dianna Werch	\$20
Marjory Oldenburg	\$125
Richard Long	\$50
Trygve Lonnedotn	\$500
Dr. Charles & Lesley McKee	\$100
Attorney Michael Rudolph	\$50
James & Emily Funk	\$25
Alice Fara	\$25
Nancy Gorchals	\$10
Kathleen Rippl	\$25
James & Susanne Bruce	\$100
Linda Munes	\$10
Eugene & Bernice Lerza	\$10
John & Jane Haynes	\$100
R.D. Bauman	\$25
Glenn & Inez Tellock	\$20
Richard & Linda Bjella	\$25
Oscar & Patricia Boldt	\$50
Bill & Ruth Pfund	\$20
Rosemary Williamsen	\$20
Mary Bartosic	\$20
Frank Rippl & Carol Jegen	\$150
Della Tesch	\$50
Gerry & Mimi Eisele	\$40
Don & Mary Brown	\$20
Steve & Susan Grade	\$20
Phyllis Jelich	\$20
Tom & Deb Locy	\$10
Jim & Jean Marshall	\$100
Dick & Pat Galloway	\$25
Jeanne Zempel	\$20
Joette Wheeler	\$10

Tom & Nancy Hennessy	\$20
Beth Fritsch	\$20
Vicky Gossens	\$20
Dan Gosz	\$15
Jerome VanDeraa	\$10
Jan Butterbrodt	\$10
Dale & Sue Miller	\$15
Dick & Sara Nooe	\$50
Marie Gartman	\$20
Timothy & Ramona Bishton	\$25
Warren & Ruth Whitlinger	\$50
John & Peggy Galloway	\$25
Coreen Breese	\$25

Heartfelt thanks to the following for their donations of time and talent:

We had a great group of gals that volunteered their time with our September newsletter mailing. New postal rules challenged their patience, but they persevered and finished the task and we thank **Angie Cord, Yodi Jensen, Ann Pearson, Julie Edwards, Angel Gruber, Cathy Grambsch, Barb Buckner, Joan Borgman and Dinny Grueneberg** for a job well done.

So many people helped in so many ways to pull our NAMI Walk together. We thank everyone that volunteered to help with the walk no matter if it was something small that you did or something huge. All jobs are important and necessary to be successful... and the NAMI Walk was a success again this year! We are extremely grateful to all that collected donations, made donations and came out to walk too. That is another piece of the puzzle to reach success and kudos to all involved with the NAMI Walk.

We thank **Mike Miller** for welding and repairing a stack of our meeting room chairs.

Huge thanks to **Richard Bauer** who maintains his status of NAMI Ambassador by helping out with every task we ask of him from cleaning to answering phones to sitting down with people in distress and more! **Cathy Grambsch** deserves many thanks for her continued clerical help. Cathy puts together many of the folders for all the groups and presentations that are done here. **Alice Baumbach** continues to compile all of our data and manages to put it into report form so the rest of us can understand it. That is quite a task! Alice has been receiving assistance from volunteers **Cici Shoaf and Rosemary Frazier** who also deserve a big thank you. **Jim Baumbach** continues to keep our website

up-to-date and looking great. Jim has added the PayPal feature that makes it possible to use a credit card to pay for membership dues on-line. Check it out by clicking on "Membership" at www.namifoxvalley.org. Thanks so much Jim for a job well done! **Scott Adler** continues the intense work with veteran suicide issues and also is one of our veteran advocates along with **Sandy Pharis**. We thank them both very much for all their work with veteran affairs. Thank you to **Marilyn Mosher** for her help writing letters and handling distressed phone callers. **Roger Mosher** manages the NFV Endowment Fund and we thank him hugely for all his efforts.

Many thanks to all the **CIT trained police officers** that are making the daily effort to have situations end in a safer and better way for all when encountering consumers of mental illness. Thank them for taking the training when you see them.

So many thanks to the NAMI FV Board of Directors for the wonderful job they are doing at managing this organization. Current board members are **President Joan Helbing, Vice-President Mike Williams, Secretary Chris Craggs, Treasurer Vicki Running, Jim Baer, Richard Bauer, Rachel Fitzgerald, Amy Jordan, Jim Marshall, Jackie Peters, Mike Mollon, April Schmidt, Brandt Swardenski, Tom Tatlock and Joe Troy**. Thanks to all!

There were some new faces around the mailing table in November when it came time to get our 2010 Program Guides ready to send. We welcome the newcomers and are grateful for all that helped. Helping our Circulation Chief **Dinny Grueneberg**, were **Yvonne Ebben, Cathy Grambsch, Doris Lang, Betty and Steve Lemmers, Dorothy Loll, Kathy Radermacher and John Rose**.

We once again thank our dedicated team of support group facilitators. Those who facilitated since September are **Mindy Arneson, Richard Bauer, Sandy Pharis, Janet Malcolm, Tammy Bradley, Karen Schiller, Chris Craggs, Tom Morrissey, Julie Edwards, Danielle Ostorero, Patrick Haskett, Miles Sutter, Angel Gruber, Norma Czarnik, Bob Brooks, Jennifer Parsons, Amy Fifield and Kara Patterson**.

We thank our receptionists that were here during the past three months. They were **Mary Mollon, Richard Bauer, Ras Rozite, Tammy Bradley, Angel Gruber, Dinny Grueneberg and Ann Pearson**. We also thank our gals that answer our help-line phone. They are **Sherry Williams, Virginia Johnson, Karen Aspenson and Helene Iverson**.

Kudos and thanks go out to IOOV presenters **Greg Pekarske-Siers, Scott Adler, Richard Bauer, Janet Malcolm and Angel Gruber** who have been doing presentations for the past three months. Many thanks to Greg for the great job he is doing as IOOV Coordinator.

Thank you to **Mike & Eric Mollon** and **Ed & Yvonne Ebben** for once again taking care of the yard, flower beds and parking lot. We are ready for winter! Thanks to **George Herberg** for replacing the security lights in the parking lot.

Please forgive us if we have overlooked thanking anyone that may have helped out in any way or made a donation. We appreciate all volunteers and donors and are grateful for everything they do to help our organization!



Some of our Board members are:

*Front Row: Vicki Running, Joan Helbing, Rachel Fitzgerald
Back Row: Tom Tatlock, Chris Craggs, Richard Bauer, Mike Williams, Jim Marshall, Jim Baer*

The Alliance is the newsletter of NAMI Fox Valley, published quarterly in March, June, September, and December.

Send news items related to chronic mental illness, opinions, or complaints (no poetry please) to: Karen Aspenson NAMI-FV, 516 W. 6th St., Appleton, WI 54911 or karen@namifoxvalley.org

Contributors:

Karen Aspenson, Karen Schiller, Helen Timm, Tammy Bradley, Sandy Pharis, Scott Adler

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Tammy Bradley

Project Coordinator

Sandy Pharis

Karen Writes

There can be little question that a primary concern for those of us who work with people living with mental illness is the recent teen suicides in Kaukauna. Rather than share my personal insights in this issue, I prefer to use this space to share some information that I hope will be helpful to those left behind.

Coping with Suicide Loss

(American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, www.afsp.org)

"One learns to live with the loss, the tragedy, the waste, and the gaping hole in the fabric of one's life. There is no closure, nor would I want one. I want to remember him all my life, vividly: his laughter, the smell of his sneakers under his bed, his moments of joy, his humility, and his integrity."

-A survivor

- Some survivors struggle with what to tell other people. Although you should make whatever decision feels right to you, most survivors have found it best to simply acknowledge that their loved one died by suicide.
- You may find that it helps to reach out to family and friends. Because some people may not know what to say, you may need to take the initiative to talk about the suicide, share your feelings, and ask for their help.
- Even though it may seem difficult, maintaining contact with other people is especially important during the stress-filled months after a loved one's suicide.
- Keep in mind that each person grieves in his or her own way. Some people visit the cemetery weekly; others find it too painful to go at all.
- Each person also grieves at his or her own pace; there is no set rhythm or timeline for healing.
- Anniversaries, birthdays, and holidays may be especially difficult, so you might want to think about whether to continue old traditions

or create some new ones. You may also experience unexpected waves of sadness; these are a normal part of the grieving process.



- Children experience many of the feelings of adult grief, and are particularly vulnerable to feeling abandoned and guilty. Reassure them that the death was not their fault. Listen to their questions, and try to offer honest, straightforward, age-appropriate answers.
- Some survivors find comfort in community, religious, or spiritual activities, including talking to a trusted member of the clergy.
- Be kind to yourself. When you feel ready, begin to go on with your life. Eventually starting to enjoy life again is not a betrayal of your loved one, but rather a sign that you've begun to heal.

There are many excellent resources in the Fox Cities that can be of assistance to those left behind, including Survivors of Suicide (SOS), 920.235.8966, and the Center for Grieving Children, 920.731.0555 ext. 244. I also recommend the following online resources: "Kidshealth," About Teen Suicide, www.kidshealth.org "www.kidshealth.org, and HOPES (Helping Others Prevent and Education About Suicide), www.hopes-wi.org" www.hopes-wi.org. And, of course, the national suicide hotline is 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Each county has a crisis line as well: Outagamie County's is 920.832.5656; Winnebago County is 920.722.7707. More than ever, we need to TALK about the stressors in our lives and in the lives of our loved ones. No one need feel alone when there are so many ways to get help. There is no shame in reaching out; in fact, it takes a very brave person to do so Be well, Karen

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Our Mission

NAMI Fox Valley exists to improve the quality of life for those with brain disorders (mental illness) and their families and friends through education, support, advocacy and research. It is affiliated with NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) and NAMI Wisconsin.

Our Vision

Through our individual and collective efforts, we will live in a community where mental illnesses are recognized as physical illnesses and treated as such.

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