Peer Run Respite is on its way in Wisconsin!

By: Karen Iverson Riggers, CPS, Peer Run Respite Director

Progress continues toward NAMI Fox Valley’s Peer Run Respite Center. I had the privilege of attending the Alternatives Conference in Orlando (funded by the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration). Alternatives is the largest peer/consumer/survivor mental health conference organized by and for peers. The theme was “Creating the Future: Change, Challenge, Opportunity” with speakers and workshops focusing on the opportunities and challenges of creating change in our mental health systems.

I had the opportunity to connect with the national network of Peer Run Respites currently operating or in the planning phase. The National Empowerment Center has a section of its website dedicated to crisis alternatives and Peer Run Respite and Warmlines: http://www.power2u.org/crisis-alternatives.html. The learning and connections will be incredibly helpful in implementing this peer-run crisis alternative in our state.

With the additions of Val Neff (House Manager), Kara Patterson (Program Coordinator) and John Rose (Guest Services Coordinator) to our Peer Run Respite staff, we are excited to move forward in making this dream a reality!

We attended a week-long Intentional Peer Support (IPS) training along with Paula Verrett and Evelyn Koehnke from our NAMI Fox Valley staff, and Peer Run Respite staff from GEP (Grassroots Empowerment Project) and SOAR Case Management, which are the other two agencies implementing respites in our state. IPS was founded by Shery Mead and focuses on thinking about and inviting powerfully transformative relationships among people. IPS emphasizes mutual conversations and creating new ways of “knowing” through dialogue. IPS is about building stronger, healthier, interconnected communities and will be instrumental in helping us move toward Peer Run Respite as a healing, trauma-informed alternative to support peers in moving toward what they want versus what they want to stop or avoid doing.

Continued on Page 2

Background: Last summer, NAMI Fox Valley was awarded a $441,000 state grant to launch a Peer Run Respite center in the Fox Valley.

The center, which will be staffed by Certified Peer Specialists, will offer respite care and support for people struggling with mental illness.

Get Involved! Volunteer or join one of our Peer Run Respite work groups. We are also holding a contest to name our Peer Run Respite center and develop its logo. Submit your name and/or logo idea to prrname@gmail.com by Dec. 19.

Questions? Contact Karen at karen@namifoxvalley.org or (920) 954-1550.
We are close to securing a property in Appleton for the respite center. The lease is under review by the property owner and we are excited about what the potential space can offer. Additional staff positions for the respite will be posted in mid-December. Because the respite will be staffed 24/7/365, we will be offering Peer Companion staff opportunities for individuals with lived experience. Watch our website for updates and more information.

The Peer Run Respite Advisory Board will be responsible for planning, implementation and evaluation of our respite. The advisory board meets monthly and includes workgroups on policy, property and programs. We are thankful for their dedication as well as the variety of community stakeholders at the table to help support the respite. The advisory board is peer-led, meaning that more than half are individuals with lived experience.

NAMI Fox Valley fills three positions for Peer Run Respite Center

We are excited to announce that we’ve hired three new employees to fill important roles for our agency’s new Peer Run Respite center. Please join us in welcoming Val Neff, Kara Patterson and John Rose.

Val, a Lawrence University graduate who spent much of her career serving children and adults with special needs, has been hired as House Manager. Kara Patterson, a former journalist and longtime NAMI Fox Valley volunteer and board member, will serve as the Program Coordinator. John Rose, already a NAMI FV staff member and Certified Peer Specialist, has been named Guest Services Coordinator.

**Val Neff, House Manager**

Val, who is a recent graduate of the agency’s NEW Hope Peer Specialist Program, began volunteering for NAMI FV last year as an Ending the Silence speaker, sharing her mental illness recovery story with high school students throughout the Fox Valley.

“I’m very excited to be serving as the new House Manager and working more closely with NAMI Fox Valley,” said Val, who holds a bachelor of arts degree in psychology and a bachelor of music degree in music performance from Lawrence.

Val, who grew up in Prospect Heights, Ill., is passionate about serving others and worked six years for the Northwest Special Recreation Association (NWSRA) in Chicago, serving children and adults with disabilities. She also worked as a direct support professional for Clarity Care, a Fox Valley nonprofit agency dedicated to providing care to people with disabilities, where she gained a good understanding of what goes into maintaining a successful community based residential facility.

“I’ve also been fortunate enough to get to volunteer with some of the Fox Valley’s many wonderful mental-health and crisis-based resources, including NEW Mental Health Connection, the Sexual Assault Crisis Center, and the Victim Crisis Response Team,” she added. Val will spend the next couple months completing a 100-hour internship at Lutheran Social Services’ Eastwood Crisis program as part of her requirements to become a state certified peer specialist.

In her new role as House Manager, she will work with staff and volunteers to ensure that guests receive the support and resources they need to ensure a positive and healing experience. Val will also manage the center’s stock of supplies, food and resources, and follow all policies and procedures including guest registration, checkout, referral process, house rules, etc.

Val, who is a talented musician, is professionally trained in clarinet and Balinese gamelan, a type of Indonesian percussion ensemble.

**Kara Patterson, Program Coordinator**

Kara Patterson, who has a long history serving NAMI Fox Valley as a volunteer and board member, considers working with the affiliate to be a passion and a mission for her.

“What first drew me to NAMI was a desire to connect with others who also are doing their best to live well with mental illness,” said Kara, who lives with bipolar disorder type 2 and is the parent of a young daughter living with mental illness. “Ultimately, I want people to know help is available at NAMI in the form of tangible resources that are accessible to them, that we at NAMI are holding onto hope for them, that together we can face and fight stigma, and that recovery is real.”

During almost eight years of volunteering with NAMI, Kara has taken on a variety of roles, including NAMI FV board secretary, resource fair/educational display volunteer and young adult support group co-facilitator. She served on the planning team for the NAMI Wisconsin conference that took place in Appleton last spring. She is a past board member and volunteer with Friendship Place in Neenah,
where she ran discussion and community service groups. Kara has a journalism background and spent a significant part of her career covering nonprofits and philanthropy. She worked for 14 years as a staff writer at The Post-Crescent in Appleton.

Along with her Peer Run Respite duties, Kara will be assisting with NAMI Fox Valley writing projects and also continuing her work as NAMI Fox Valley’s resource librarian, as a Parent Advocate through NAMI in the Lobby including at Catalpa Health, and as a co-facilitator of NAMI Fox Valley’s Saturday Coffee Clutch support group at Atlas Coffee Mill. She currently is taking NAMI Fox Valley’s NEW Hope Peer Specialist training course.

As Peer Run Respite Program Coordinator, Kara will plan, implement and evaluate programs, services and activities for guests in collaboration with staff and advisory board members. She will support guests in their self-directed recovery and help them access and connect with community resources.

Kara lives in Appleton with her husband and their daughter. Outside of work, she enjoys volunteering with the Appleton-Fox Cities Kiwanis Club, at her daughter’s school, through her church, and with the nonprofit Roots Ethiopia. She also loves to read, write, travel, sing, watch films, listen to music and spend time with loved ones.

John Rose, Guest Coordinator

John, who has worked part time as a Peer Advocate for our agency, will expand his role by also serving guests at the respite center.

Prior to joining NAMI’s staff in 2012, John had been an active volunteer and member of NAMI Fox Valley over the years. He has served as a Peer-to-Peer Mentor, Support Group Facilitator, and is a Certified Peer Specialist.

As Guest Coordinator, John will be working with the House Manager to ensure all guests feel safe, welcomed and supported. He will also be leading the policy work group which will advise on the creation of policies and guidelines.

“I am incredibly excited about what the new Peer Run Respite will offer to those in need of peer support and the boundless possibilities it will offer our guests on their recovery journeys,” said John.

John, of Appleton, grew up in Wisconsin and graduated from Fox Valley Lutheran High School. He enjoys reading and spending time with his family and dog Charlie, a petite goldendoodle.

Creating Hope

The Power of Faith Communities in Mental Health Recovery

‘Creating Hope’ workshop trains faith leaders in mental health

Nearly 70 faith leaders turned out for “Creating Hope” on Oct. 30, a first-of-its-kind mental health training workshop put on by Samaritan Counseling Center and NAMI Fox Valley.

The training, held at The Grand Meridian in Appleton, was designed to give church clergy and lay leaders a solid understanding of the major mental illnesses, mental health resources in our community, and how to reach and help those struggling with mental illness or mental health problems.

“The day was a huge success, and the Mental Health Ministry Task Force will meet to discuss what steps will be next for planning future education and training opportunities for faith communities,” said Ann Jadin, NAMI Fox Valley’s Community Engagement Director.

Both NAMI and Samaritan are part of The Mental Health Ministry Task Force, a community committee charged with providing mental health education and resources to area faith communities.

During the daylong workshop, the 67 participants heard testimonials from a mental health consumer, a family member and former pastor, followed by a variety of educational topics outlining mental health conditions, crisis de-escalation, addressing stigma, and how to develop partnerships to foster mental health recovery.

Over lunch, interested attendees participated in a simulation of hearing auditory hallucinations by wearing headphones while eating and visiting with others. Participants also received a Mental Health Ministry Tool Kit, filled with resources for participants to take back and share with their congregations.

Ann said she was pleased with the positive feedback from participants who were surveyed at the end of the training. The survey results are also being used to select topics for future trainings.

“This day has empowered me to better minister to the congregation I serve,” wrote one participant. “I would like to keep pushing people to stand up against stigma.”
2014 Bowl-a-Thon exceeds $75,000 fundraising goal

By: Wendy Magas, Communications Director

We did it! We are excited to announce that we exceeded our $75,000 Bowl-a-Thon fundraising goal. Thank you to our sponsors, team captains, bowlers and volunteers and the many generous donors who helped make our second-annual Strike Out Stigma Bowl-a-Thon another great success.

Matching funds are still trickling in, but our total has now topped $79,000. All told, 36 bowling teams, about 300 bowlers, two dozen sponsors and some 40 volunteers helped us raise funds, raise awareness and put on this fun, family-friendly event that was held Saturday, Oct. 4 at the Super Bowl in Appleton. Just like last year, it poured rain the day of the bowl-a-thon and we were grateful to be indoors bowling instead of outside walking.

We'd like to extend a special thank you to Walgreens, for being an event sponsor, supporter, and partner with NAMI Fox Valley again this year. Walgreens donated flu shots at the bowl-a-thon, along with team photos for all the bowlers. We'd also like to express our gratitude to 91.1 The Avenue. NAMI Fox Valley was the proud recipient of a Community Impact Grant from 91.1 The Ave., which included a public service announcement that was aired during the weeks leading up to the Bowl-a-Thon! Thank you, 91.1 The Ave., for helping us promote the event and expand our reach in the community.

More than three dozen volunteers helped us put on the bowl-a-thon! Thanks, everyone, for all your hard work. From setup, registration, preparing snacks, sharing information about NAMI, taking event photos, cleanup and so much more, we couldn't have put on the event without our volunteers.

Thank you to all our Bowl-a-Thon sponsors for helping us meet our fundraising goal. Thank you for supporting us, believing in our mission, and joining us to improve the lives and empower those affected by mental illness.

Thank you to our Strike Out Stigma Bowl-a-Thon sponsors:

Media Sponsor
91.1 The Avenue

In Kind Sponsors
Branding Apparel
The Grand Meridian
Super Bowl Family Entertainment Center

Strike Sponsors ($2,500 - $5,000)
Hartwig Family Foundation
ThedaCare Behavioral Health
Tom & Andrea Tatlock

Spare Sponsors ($1,000 - $2,499)
Appleton Breakfast Rotary
Green Bay Packers
Rogers Memorial Hospital

Lane Sponsors ($500 - $999)
Richard P. & Patricia Galloway Fund II

Pin Sponsors ($250 - $499)
Appleton Fox Cities Kiwanis
Bergstrom Automotive
Tim & Nancy Collentine
Gunderson, Inc.
Helene & Jerry Iverson
Katapult

Volunteers Dave Zanon and Nolan Jones work the snack table.

Team 2MUtsCH, led by Pete and Cathy Mutschler, middle, was the top fundraising team again this year. They raised more than $9,000! Way to go!
Thank you to our Baskets of Hope raffle donors:

Acoca Coffee
Ann Francart WLMT, LLC
Auto Aces
Big Apple Bagels
Buffalo Wild Wings
Carmella’s
Charles the Florist
Chef Fresh Pizza
Cherry Berry
Cozzy Corner
Dairy Queen
Dunkin’ Donuts
Family Video
Festival Foods
Fox River Mall
Free Market
Half Price Books
Hampton Inn Appleton
Helene & Jerry Iverson
JD’s Drive-In Restaurant
Jacob’s Meat Market
Jansport
Karen & Eric Riggers
Knights Jewelry
Krieger Jewelers
Making Memories By Elizabeth
Man Cave Head Quarters
Michiels Bar & Grill
Mikes Mobile Maintenance
Muncheez Pizzeria
Noodles & Company
Radisson Paper Valley Hotel
Shine On Salon
Simple Simon Bakery
Skyline Comedy Café
Starbucks
Stevi B’s Pizza
Stone Cellar Brewpub
The Body Shop
Walgreens
Wild Tree Supplier
Wilmar Chocolates

Sue Kennedy and Sherry Williams, both Family-to-Family instructors, helped out by selling raffle tickets for the “Baskets of Hope” raffle.

Volunteers Tim and Nancy Collentine helped out at the volunteer registration table.

Walgreens manager and NAMI FV board member Ron Hoffmeyer, left, served as the bowl-a-thon emcee. Walgreens Pharmacist Eric Miller administered free flu shots at the event.

The Turkey Farmers, led by NAMI FV Office Manager Helen Timm, were the second highest fundraising team, raising over $6,000.
Peer Specialist students begin internships

By: Paula Verrett, Recovery Specialist

Congratulations to the eleven students who have successfully completed 15 weeks of classroom coursework in NAMI Fox Valley’s inaugural NEW Hope Peer Specialist Training class. These amazing people have covered a wide variety of topics including trauma-informed care, QPR (Question, Persuade and Refer) suicide prevention training, AODA and dual diagnosis, boundaries and ethics and many other topics.

The professional growth and confidence gained from this class were best summed up by a few comments offered in a course evaluation: “I loved this class! I would recommend it highly to others in the helping field. Life-changing experience. Thank you!”

It has been an inspiration to watch the students learn and grow and connect with one another. Everyone at NAMI Fox Valley is proud of all they have accomplished. This cohort of students is now off and running in their internships. As part of the requirements to become a state-certified Peer Specialist, the students are each completing a 100-hour internship.

We are grateful for the mentorship and expertise offered by the supervisors at each of the internship sites. The interns also attend two-hour seminars every other week at NAMI throughout the internship period to provide opportunities for sharing, collaboration, and ongoing support.

The following are the placement settings with the number of interns listed:

- Kewaunee County Health Services – 1
- Outagamie County Health Services – 1
- COTS – 1
- Homeless Connections (Emergency Shelter of Fox Cities) – 2
- Warming Shelter – 1
- Villa Phoenix – 1
- Harbor House – 1
- Options for Independent Living – 1
- Lutheran Social Services Eastwood Crisis Intervention – 1

We will hold a graduation ceremony for this first class of NEW Hope Peer Specialists from 6 – 8 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 8. Our second NEW Hope Peer Specialist class is underway with 15 participants from around the Fox Valley. This new cohort includes two participants from Oshkosh, one from Green Bay and one from Shawano. We are looking forward to getting to know them!

Q: What is a Certified Peer Specialist?
A: A Certified Peer Specialist is someone who is living well with mental illness and has received extensive training and state certification, through a state-approved Peer Specialist training program, to serve as a support person for others living with mental illness by offering encouragement, guidance and resources to support recovery.

NAMI Fox Valley’s NEW Hope Peer Specialist Training Program received state approval in June 2014, and we began teaching our first class using the new model in July. For more information about the NEW Hope Peer Specialist Training program or how to apply for a future course offered by NAMI Fox Valley, contact Paula Verrett at paula@namifoxvalley.org or (920) 954-1550.
Welcome to winter! We find ourselves once again, covered in snow, bundled in hats and mittens, preparing for another holiday season, and the turn of the calendar year to 2015. For us at NAMI Fox Valley, it has meant another year of having the honor of offering life-changing programs and serving as the community’s voice on mental illness.

Thank you for your commitment to our mission, your trust in our stewardship and your support of the day-to-day work of our participants, volunteers, staff and Board of Directors. We are deeply grateful for your dedication to NAMI Fox Valley as 2014 comes to a close.

As a woman living with mental illness, and a working mom of a 12-year-old daughter living with OCD and autism, this time of year can bring more angst than smiles. While the holidays are typically thought of as a time of joy and happiness, they also bring challenges because of the stress of meeting our mental health needs in the midst of increased stress and the utter destruction of our meticulously-followed wellness routine! Perhaps you experience something similar?

I am often taken by surprise by hidden triggers that can hijack my mood before I know what hit me! Things like feeling too much pressure to get a “perfect gift” or having unrealistic expectations of a get-together, feeling lonely even when I’m in a crowd, or feeling drained by the over-commercialization of something that used to feel magical or special.

Last November, my daughter Hannah and I created a plan together to successfully get through the holidays, and we are looking forward to implementing it. We hope it will help you, too.

- Get adequate sleep – when our energy lags, our mood suffers and our resilience disappears
- Stay connected – to those people with whom you can be honest – you might need to tug on their sleeve and say you need to go home
- Your medication routine is critical – even if the rest of your routine suffers, don’t let go of this piece
- Remember that all of the holiday events on your schedule are supposed to be fun, and are therefore OPTIONAL! It’s OK to opt out if you need quiet time, a rest, a walk, a slower pace, some help, or anything else.

Whether you use this list or your own, please make your wellness a priority this holiday season – you are so important to us. Wishing you well as we greet 2015.

Warmly,
Beth

Library Corner

Warm up in the NAMI Fox Valley library this winter season while browsing the shelves to see what’s new. Here is a sampling of the most recent arrivals.

- Helping Teens Who Cut: Understanding and Ending Self-Injury
- Crazy: A Father’s Search Through America’s Mental Health Madness
- Children With Tourette Syndrome: A Parents’ Guide
- Ten Things Every Child With Autism Wishes You Knew (Updated & Expanded Edition)

The following new resources are reference materials for use in the NFV library.

- Aging & Disability Resource Center- Outagamie County Branch Resource Directory
- Outagamie County Department of Health & Human Services Glossary - Sept. 2013
- The Guide to the Outagamie County Department of Health & Human Services

Reference materials are marked with a single red dot sticker on their spines. They are not available for checkout.

Anyone who has filled out a registration form can use the NFV library, which is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays and during special NFV program hours.

To suggest additional items for the library, complete the purchase suggestion form in the NFV library.

For assistance in the library, contact NFV librarian Kara Patterson. Call her at (920) 954-1550, email her at kara@namifoxvalley.org or stop by the NFV library at the NFV office at 211 E. Franklin Street in downtown Appleton.
Atlas Café dinner captures joyful spirit of Thanksgiving

Dear Sue and Bogey,

On behalf of everyone at our agency, and the 70 of us who attended your special Thanksgiving dinner, I want to thank you for your kindness and generosity for creating such a wonderful holiday meal for NAMI Fox Valley and friends. And on a personal note, I want to say thank you for making the holiday special for me again. For the first time in several years, I felt joy instead of anxiety, fear and sadness. The past several Thanksgivings have been difficult for our family. Mental illness can wreak havoc on holidays. Or rather, holidays — with all their anticipation, expectations, hustle and bustle — can wreak havoc on mental illness if you’re not careful.

I used to love entertaining and had always looked forward to taking over the tradition of hosting Thanksgiving at our home. When the kids got older and graduated from diapers and tantrums, I imagined, I would finally be able to host the holiday I remembered from my childhood — a sparkling house filled with family, a dining room table set with china, and a perfectly prepared meal. Yeah, right. And turkeys can whistle zippity doo dah.

You see, my youngest child never outgrew his tantrums. In fact, holidays, with all their excitement and routine-busting discombobulation, only made his mood swings worse. Each year, the ride on the mood roller coaster only got rougher and the rest of us would find ourselves walking on egg shells, trying not to set off a powder keg.

We didn’t quite know how to explain this to extended family. Back then I didn’t have the knowledge and diagnoses to fully explain that what appeared on the surface to be bratty behavior on steroids was actually a child suffering from mental illness, with all his triggers being tripped by the perfect storm known as the holidays.

We began turning down invitations to relatives’ homes, and stopped inviting them to ours.

Instead, we started our own family tradition of zero expectations and zero preparations. We would skip town, head for Wisconsin Dells, and eat at the buffet or get take out. Swimming is one of our son’s favorite activities and wearing him out at the resort swimming pool was one of the best tools we had at the time to regulate his ever-shifting moods. And if he had a meltdown, at least it wouldn’t be in front of relatives and we could whisk him back to the safety and confines of our detached condo (where hopefully no one would hear him screaming and call 911).

And then IT happened three years ago. In the days leading up to Thanksgiving break, his mood turned manic and then he had a mental breakdown. I will skip the details, other than to say his subsequent hospitalization was the hardest thing my husband and I have ever experienced. We were unprepared, alone and blindsided with grief. My husband, our other son and I spent that Thanksgiving at a cheap buffet, eating pressed turkey loaf, instant mashed potatoes and cranberry sauce that still held the shape of a can. My eyes were red and swollen as I tried to hold it together through that joyless meal, among strangers, knowing that my “baby” was scared, alone, and devastated that we had “abandoned him.”

Fast forward three years, and the picture is quite different. Our sweet, smart and funny son (who was subsequently diagnosed with bipolar disorder and pervasive development disorder) now has more good days than bad, thanks to medication, therapy and the wonderful people we’ve met along the way who continue to guide us and support us as we navigate his recovery journey.

And on this very special Thanksgiving that just passed, my family (including extended family) had the pleasure of a delicious, homemade meal in the company of some of the finest people I’ve come to know — my friends from NAMI Fox Valley. Gone was the anxiety of not being able to pull off a clean house and a six-course meal. Gone was the guilt from avoiding extended family by hiding out in the Dells. And gone was the fear that my son might have a panic attack/tantrum at a highway rest stop during holiday travels.

Instead, I felt calm. I felt present. I felt the comfort of being surrounded by a community of people who understand. I savored every bite and every moment. And I will cherish the memory. Thank you, again, Sue and Bogey, for such a special day.

Sincerely,

Wendy Magas
NAMI Fox Valley Communications Director
Holiday Party scheduled for Dec. 8

Fun, food and fellowship are at the heart of the annual Holiday Party, which is just around the corner.

Mark your calendars for the party, which will be held at 4:30 p.m., Monday, Dec. 8 at First Congregational United Church of Christ, 724 E. South River Street, Appleton.

The event features a dinner meal, including appetizers, desserts and refreshments. It is free for consumers, family members and friends. There is no need to register in advance.

NAMI Fox Valley, the Community Outreach Center and Friendship Place sponsor the event, which also includes holiday carols and the distribution of gift cards to event participants.

Those who attend are invited to bring a dessert to share.

For more information, call 920-954-1550 or go online at www.namifoxvalley.org.

NAMI Teen Support Group updates

Our Teen Support groups continue to be well attended and are reaching teenagers from many communities in the Fox Valley. With the closing of Harmony Café in downtown Appleton at the end of the year, we will be relocating our Wednesday and Thursday Teen Support Groups.

We are in the process of finding a new gathering spot in the Appleton downtown area with the hope of finding a place as welcoming and cozy as Harmony Café.

We are excited to announce we will be starting a new Teen Support Group for Neenah/Menasha teens. The group will meet 4:30 – 6 p.m. each Tuesday at Perkins Restaurant, 1121 Westowne Drive, Neenah.

The Teen Support Groups are designed for teens, ages 13 to 18 (must still be in high school), who have a mental illness and are looking for a supportive environment where they will learn about symptoms, treatment and resources, as well as spend time socializing with peers. New participants are always welcome.

Annual meeting and awards celebration set for Feb. 5

We hope you reserve the evening of Feb. 5 to spend with NAMI Fox Valley and friends. This special evening will be dedicated to honoring some very special community members for their service and commitment to NAMI Fox Valley’s mission. We will also present our annual report, which will summarize the many programs and services we delivered, and the impact we made, in 2014, with a look ahead to what we have planned for the coming year. Attendees are also invited to stay and attend our January Board of Directors meeting.

NAMI Fox Valley and WisconSibs collaborate on new program

NAMI Fox Valley and WisconSibs, formerly known as the Fox Valley Sibling Support Network, are collaborating to offer “SibShops” for siblings who have a brother or sister living with mental illness.

WisconSibs, which is also located in the 211 E. Franklin building, provides programs and services for siblings of individuals with special needs.

Tracy Aliota, NAMI Fox Valley’s Community Outreach Coordinator, received Sibshop facilitator training in October. Tracy will collaborate with a WisconSibs facilitator to offer two mental health SibShops in 2015. Stay tuned for dates and times!

The get-togethers are designed to be fun and offer kids the chance to connect with others who understand the joys and challenges of having a sibling with special needs, and learn coping skills.
Ending the Silence now reaching middle school students

NAMI Fox Valley’s Ending the Silence program, which educates teens about mental illness, has been adapted for middle school audiences. Called Ending the Silence 101, the new pilot program is tailored for middle school students and offers an overview of mental illness, puts a human face on the issue and confronts myths that reinforce stigma.

The new program has been presented in several area public and private schools. Additionally, Ending the Silence, for the high school audience, has been presented to seven area high schools so far this past fall.

“The testimonial speakers are phenomenal and we have trained a core group of seven teens and young adults to share their stories of recovery and living successfully with mental illness,” says Tracy Aliota, Community Outreach Coordinator, who oversees the program.

We’d like to extend a “thank you” to Appleton Rotary West, which recently donated $1,000 toward our Ending the Silence program. Several Rotary members recently visited Appleton North High School to attend an ETS program and hear the testimonial speakers share their stories.

Peer-to-Peer program begins Jan. 13

NAMI Fox Valley is pleased to offer its Peer-to-Peer recovery education program beginning Jan. 13. This 10-week education course focuses on mental health recovery and is designed for adults living with a mental illness. The course will be held Tuesdays, Jan. 13 – March 17 from 1:30 to 4 p.m. at NAMI Fox Valley.

Taught by peer mentors who themselves are living well with mental illness, participants learn about the major mental illnesses, brain biology, relapse prevention planning, impact of trauma, recovery strategies, stigma and advocacy. This course provides hope, help, tools and support needed to engage in wellness and recovery.

REAP class begins end of January

The Recovery, Education and Advocacy Program (REAP), also known as Peer-to-Peer Part 2, will be held Thursdays, 1 – 3 p.m., from Jan. 29 to Feb. 29. The class will be held at Friendship Place, 220 N. Commercial St. in Neenah.

Participants use the information gained in Peer-to-Peer to create an individualized recovery plan of physical and mental wellness. This trauma-informed program focuses on the individual needs of the participants.

For more information or to register for any of our courses, call (920) 954-1550.
Your NAMI Fox Valley membership expires Dec. 31st. Renew below!

Please make checks payable to: **NAMI Fox Valley**

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**Become a member today! Receive a ‘Keep Calm, Fight Stigma’ mug!**

It’s time to renew your membership! And if you aren't a member of NAMI Fox Valley yet, now is a great time to join!

With your membership, you will receive an awesome “Keep Calm and Fight Stigma” mug (while supplies last). It also includes our NAMI Fox Valley logo on the opposite side.

A standard membership is just $35. We also offer a low-income membership for $3. Benefits of membership include subscriptions to The Advocate (NAMI National’s newsletter); The Iris (NAMI Wisconsin’s newsletter); and The Alliance (NAMI Fox Valley’s newsletter).

As a member, you will receive discounts at state and national conventions and will have access to NAMI’s online member community. Being a member also includes opportunities to join in advocacy on public policy issues affecting our community, state and nation.

You can sign up for a membership at our website: www.namifoxvalley.org. Just click on “support us.” Or, fill out the above membership form and mail it in or drop it off at NAMI Fox Valley, 211 E. Franklin St., Appleton, WI 54911. Please help us save on shipping costs and we invite you to stop by, say ‘hello,’ and pick up your mug with your paid membership.
Our Mission
NAMI Fox Valley works to support and empower everyone touched by mental illness. We commit to eliminate stigma and nurture recovery through education, support, advocacy and outreach.

Our Vision
We envision a community, free of stigma, that supports and promotes mental health and recovery.

How to reach us:

NAMI Fox Valley
Please note our NEW address:
211 E. Franklin Street
Appleton, WI 54911
(920) 954-1550 phone
(920) 954-0490 fax
www.namifoxvalley.org
info@namifoxvalley.org

NAMI Wisconsin
www.namiwisconsin.org
(608) 268-6000 or
(800) 236-2988

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