In the wake of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, our country has moved from shock and grief to demanding answers and action. Unfortunately, this wasn’t the only tragic event experienced by our nation in the past year. The NAMI community extends our sympathy to the families who have lost loved ones to suicide and to violent acts. America’s hearts are broken.

The tragedy has galvanized our country to provide real solutions to our mental health crisis, as well as with gun control. We are encouraged by President Obama’s sweeping agenda to improve mental health care. The test is whether Congress, state legislatures and the country as a whole are serious enough to face up to the challenge. It’s not a new challenge. For more than 30 years, NAMI has been fighting for improvements to our broken mental health system and better access to care.

NAMI also works tirelessly to educate the public about mental illness. When mental illness is highlighted as a cause or factor in these terrible tragedies, NAMI works to infuse the resulting conversations with accurate information about the nature of mental illness. We must not allow misinformation to further stigmatize those who live with, know, love, or support someone with mental illness. Stigma, defined as the shame or disgrace attached to something regarded as socially unacceptable, makes it harder for people and families to reach out for help, support and treatment. That, too, is tragic.

When violent tragedies occur, and an individual living with a mental illness has been implicated, arrested or charged, NAMI seeks to provide context and balance. Only a tiny fraction of people with mental illness ever become violent. In fact, the U.S. Surgeon General determined more than a decade ago that “the overall contribution of mental disorders to the total level of violence in society is exceptionally small.” Statistically, people with mental illness are much more likely to be victims of crime than perpetrators.

Mental illnesses are brain disorders - medical illnesses, like any other. One in four adults - close to 60 million Americans - experiences a mental health disorder in a given year, and about one in 10 children live with a serious mental or emotional disorder. Tragically, less than one-third of adults and one-half of children will receive the necessary mental health intervention to treat their disorders. With access to appropriate medical care, treatment works. With hope and the right tools and supports, mental health recovery is possible. Hope. Help. Recovery. Those are NAMI’s promises.

Continued on Page 4

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Rose joins staff</td>
<td>p. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAMI Fox Valley Welcome Tamra Retlick</td>
<td>p. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upcoming classes &amp; events</td>
<td>p. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling all Support Group Facilitators</td>
<td>p. 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 Holiday Party festive and fun</td>
<td>p. 6-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.E.W. Mental Health Connection</td>
<td>p. 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAMHSA’s Working</td>
<td>p. 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Recovery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAMI Fox Valley newsletter going green</td>
<td>p. 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you Sandy</td>
<td>p. 11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
John Rose joins staff as Peer Advocate, IOOV Program Coordinator

NAMI Fox Valley is pleased to welcome John Rose to its staff. John will serve as a peer advocate, providing information, resources, support and encouragement to those living with mental illness. He will also coordinate the agency’s In Our Own Voice program.

John has 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. John recently completed his 100-hour Consumers as Providers internship at the agency.

John says he’s really excited about his new role with NAMI. “This gives me a chance to give back to an organization that helped me when I really needed it and use my life experiences to help others when they need it,” he said.

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.

NAMI Fox Valley Welcomes Tamra Retlick to its Board of Directors

NAMI Fox Valley’s Board of Directors is pleased to welcome Tamra Retlick as a new member. Tamra, of Appleton, has been a longtime NAMI volunteer and supporter and has served as an In Our Own Voice presenter for the past two years. She recently served on NAMI Fox Valley’s Quality Assurance Task Force, which was charged with revamping the agency’s Support Group programs.

Tamra, who is living well with bipolar disorder, is passionate about raising awareness and educating the public about mental illness and breaking down stigma. By sharing her story, Tamra works to create increased public acceptance of mental illness, as well as self-acceptance among consumers.

Tamra, a licensed cosmetologist, enjoys card making and scrapbooking with her mom and sisters and feels blessed to have such a supportive and loving family.

“My husband, Dan, is a major source of support for me on my recovery journey and encourages me to reach out and help others,” Tamra says. She also credits friends and her beloved Yoshi, a Yorkie, as being part of her support team.
UPCOMING CLASSES & EVENTS
To register for any of the following programs, please email Angel Gruber at angel@namifoxvalley.org or call NAMI Fox Valley at 920-954-1550.

Mental Health First Aid Offered in March
You probably know what to do if someone is choking. But what if they are thinking of suicide? NAMI's Mental Health First Aid class can help. Similar to traditional First Aid and CPR, Mental Health First Aid teaches participants how to provide help to someone with a mental health problem or who is experiencing a crisis until professional treatment is obtained or the crisis resolves.

NAMI Fox Valley is proud to provide this important training, which has been in national headlines recently. President Obama's new gun control initiative calls for Mental Health First Aid training for teachers and school staff so they are better equipped to recognize the signs of mental health disorders in young people and connect them to appropriate care.

The 12-hour course will be held March 5, 7, 12 and 14 from 5:30-8:30 p.m. at Fox Valley Technical College (FVTC), 1825 N. Bluemound Drive, Appleton. There is a $50 advance registration fee charged for supplies. Upon completion, class participants receive a three-year certification.

Be Well begins late February
NAMI Fox Valley is excited to offer its Be Well education program beginning Feb. 25. This free, six-week course is for adults who live with mental illness, and focuses on both physical and mental wellbeing.

Each week, experts present on various topics, including fitness, nutrition, stress management, smoking cessation, side effects of psychotropic medications, and other subjects. There is an optional “walking club” incorporated into the program to encourage physical activity, as well as many free incentives for participants throughout the course.

The course will be held Noon - 1 p.m. each Monday from Feb. 25th through Apr. 1st at FVTC. Registration is required.

Family-to-Family class planned for Spring
NAMI Fox Valley is pleased to offer its Family-to-Family class beginning March 11. This free, 12-week class is designed for family members of adults living with mental illness.

Taught by trained instructors who have family members living with mental illness, this nationally-acclaimed course teaches participants coping and supportive skills; current information about the major mental illnesses; brain biology and function; up-to-date information about medications, side effects, and strategies for medication adherence; how to deal with crisis situations; effective communication, problem-solving skills, therapeutic resources and advocacy.

The class will be held Monday evenings, March 11 through June 3 (except Memorial Day, May 27) from 6-8:30 p.m. at FVTC. Registration is required.

Art from the Heart
Come and experience how tapping into your creative side can bring balance, peace and meaningfulness. Try a new artistic experience to use the creative arts as part of your mental health recovery tool box. Choose from one of three activities at this recovery-focused workshop: photography, oil painting and bracelet making. This free workshop will run from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 23 at FVTC. Registration is required.
Continued from Page 1

These tragic losses have left our community searching for answers and people wondering what they can do to help. For many of us, our grief is a call to action. Join us in moving from anger and sadness to action and advocacy and help meet the needs of our neighbors, co-workers and family members who live with mental illness. Let NAMI Fox Valley help you find a way:

1. **Educate yourself about mental illness.** Visit our website to learn about our education programs. Our Family-to-Family program, described as “life changing” by many participants, is a course that will give you the tools to work effectively with your family member living with mental illness. Similarly, for parents, teachers, or caregivers of school-age children with mental illness, our education course, MICA (Mental Illness in Children and Adolescents) provides real tools around advocacy, treatment, and school supports. We also train law enforcement, first responders and other professionals how to work safely and compassionately with people experiencing a mental health crisis through our Crisis Intervention Team and Crisis Intervention Partner training programs. For the general public, we offer Mental Health 101, NAMI 101, and Mental Health First Aid, to give any concerned citizen the tools they need to get someone in crisis to the right services. In addition, NAMI’s *In Our Own Voice* program is a powerful anti-stigma tool that changes hearts, minds, and attitudes about mental illness.

2. **Join community efforts to improve access to services, build awareness of mental illness, and break down stigma.** In 2011, the Northeast Wisconsin Mental Health Connection was established to connect community stakeholders and resources to improve the mental health of our community. Visit their website, www.newmentalhealthconnection.org, to join as a member and/or join one of their task forces that are working to create and connect a mental health system of care for the Fox Valley.

3. **Be a stigma buster.** Help us fight inaccurate and hurtful representations of mental illness. Speak out against offensive language, stereotypes, images, advertising or commercial products (e.g. T-shirts) found in local stores. Visit NAMI’s StigmaBuster page at NAMI National’s website, www.nami.org, for more information on how to take action.

4. **Advocate for better treatment and access to services for people with mental illness.** Contact your lawmakers and let them know that federal, state and local support is needed. Visit NAMI’s Advocacy Action Center for legislative alerts and updates and information on how you can make your voice heard.

Do you need more information about NAMI Fox Valley programming or mental health services in our area? Do you know how to access crisis services for yourself or someone you care about? Visit NAMI Fox Valley’s website, www.namifoxvalley.org, for more information; call 211 (our community’s 24 hour information and referral resource); or call NAMI Fox Valley, 954-1550, to speak with a staff member, or a Peer/Family Advocate. You are not alone.

Karen Schiller, NAMI Fox Valley’s Development Director, was interviewed by Fox 11 News on Jan. 29 following U.S. Rep. Reid Ribble’s roundtable meeting in Appleton to discuss school safety, preventing gun violence and mental health issues. Karen spoke about the importance of breaking down stigma, early intervention, and improved access to mental health services.
Calling all Support Group facilitators! Mark your calendars

We are excited to launch our newly revamped Support Group Program this year. But before we can get our groups up and running, we need to train as many of our current and former Support Group facilitators as possible. We are also recruiting new facilitators. Leading a group can be an enriching and rewarding experience!

The training reflects NAMI Fox Valley’s new support group model, which incorporates the best practices from several respected support group programs.

Support Group facilitators are required to take a four-day training, which will be held over four consecutive Saturdays. The training is 4 ½ hours long on each day, for a total of 18 hours. The training includes knowledge building, developing skills, and role-play activities.

The requirements for becoming a facilitator are as follows:

- Participate in a NAMI Fox Valley support group for at least six months prior to facilitating your first group
- Have completed Peer-to-Peer;
- Have completed REAP (Recovery Education and Advocacy Program);
- And have completed one of the following trainings
  - Mental Health First Aid
  - QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer)
  - Emotional CPR

Two upcoming facilitator training sessions are planned for the following dates and times, and will be held at the Atlas Café, 25 West Water St., Appleton:

- 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., May 4, 11, 18, and 25.
- 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., Aug. 10, 17, 24, and 31.

All training is provided free of charge. New facilitators will be mentored by an experienced facilitator for the first six months of facilitating. Our goal is to provide our group facilitators with the knowledge, skills and support they need to be the best facilitators they can be and help them move forward in their recovery.

To register for the training or prerequisite classes, please call Angel at NAMI Fox Valley (920) 954-1550. If you have questions or need additional information, contact Paula Verrett, Recovery Specialist at NAMI Fox Valley. She can be reached at paula@namifoxvalley.org.

Development news: Grants support expansion of teen programs

NAMI Fox Valley is grateful to the Infant Welfare Circle Kings Daughters and the Schmidt G4 funds for their recent grants to support an expansion of our teen programs.

The money will be used to expand NAMI Fox Valley’s Teen Support Group and present *Ending the Silence* to more area high schools. Support for these programs allows the agency to broaden its reach to one of the most underserved populations regarding mental health – youth. Half of all mental illness begins by age 14; yet all too often, many children and teens don’t receive the mental health care they need during their critical years of development.

*Ending the Silence*

Last year, NAMI Fox Valley piloted *Ending the Silence* at Menasha High School. The program, developed by NAMI DuPage, Illinois, and designed for high school students, provides information on the signs and symptoms of mental illness, helps teens learn mental health coping skills, and reduces stigma through personal stories.

Meanwhile, NAMI Fox Valley plans to offer its Teen Support Group program at two new locations: Catalpa in Appleton and CHAPS Academy in Kaukauna. Currently, the Teen Support Group meets weekly at Harmony Café in Appleton.

By educating young people about mental illness with *Ending the Silence*, NAMI can help teens and families reach out sooner for help and support. The Teen Support Groups provide a safe and supportive environment where teens learn about coping skills, treatment options and resources, while spending time with peers who understand each other’s journey.
Nearly 200 consumers and family members turned out for the annual Holiday Party, held Dec. 10 at First Congregational United Church of Christ in Appleton. Many thanks to all of the great volunteers and staff members from NAMI Fox Valley, Friendship Place, and the Outreach Center who helped make the evening so special.

Partygoers enjoyed before-dinner snacks and a delicious meal with all the trimmings, along with beautiful music provided by the Fox Valley Flute Ensemble. After dinner, everyone enjoyed the fun Christmas carol sing-along and donated holiday gift cards that were given out to attendees through a raffle drawing.

The many volunteers ensured the event ran smoothly and helped with tasks such as planning, setting up, food preparation, picking up donations, food and beverage serving, entertainment and clean up. In addition, many attendees made and brought delicious desserts to share. Thanks also to First Congregational United Church of Christ for the use of Friendship Hall and its kitchen facilities again, as well as to the NAMI Fox Valley volunteers who were in charge of decorating.

Cedar Creek Meats, Haen Meats, Neimuth’s Southside Market, Dairy Queen and Jimmy John’s Gourmet Sandwiches donated food for the event. We’d like to sincerely thank them and encourage everyone to patronize these generous businesses.

The Holiday Party wouldn’t be possible without the help of many, many people. To our donors, volunteers, staff members and attendees, thank you all so very much. We hope everyone had a happy holiday season, and are off to a great start in 2013.
N.E.W. Mental Health Connection initiatives underway

The N.E.W. (Northeast Wisconsin) Mental Health Connection is building momentum around several initiatives aimed at improving mental health care in the Fox Cities.

The nonprofit organization, created in 2011 as a result of the Fox Cities Mental Health Summit, was established to connect community stakeholders and resources to improve the mental health of our community. This membership organization, to which NAMI Fox Valley belongs, includes individuals and organizations that support its vision to make the Fox Cities the “mentally healthiest” community in the nation.

N.E.W. Mental Health Connection is focused on the needs of mental health consumers in our community, specifically around the issues of navigating and accessing the region’s mental health system. Initiatives include:

- Creating a system of care to address suicide and suicide prevention from a public health perspective
- Training and supporting primary care providers to diagnose and treat mental illness
- Strengthening the community’s 24/7 Crisis Response
- Creating a “No Wrong Door” philosophy to get people to the right place for the right service at the right time. This initiative also includes creating an electronic community referral infrastructure.
- Supporting school-based mental health programs like TeenScreen and PATH. TeenScreen is a mental health program that screens high school students for suicide and other behavioral risks. The United Way’s PATH (Providing Access to Healing) for Students is a school-based program designed to improve access to mental health services for children and youth who are unable to obtain care elsewhere in the community.
- Breaking down stigma and building mental health awareness – a committee of members is working to plan coordinated community activities for Mental Health Awareness Month in May.

For more information, to get involved or become a member, contact Karen Schiller, NAMI Fox Valley’s Program & Development Director, who is also a N.E.W. MH Connection board member, at karen@namifoxvalley.org. Or, contact Amanda Matthews, executive director of N.E.W. MH Connection, at amatthews@newmentalhealthconnection.org. Visit the organization’s website at www.newmentalhealthconnection.org.
SAMHSA’s Working Definition of Recovery

Summarized by Paula Verrett

NAMI Fox Valley is a proud supporter of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s working definition of “recovery.”

SAMHSA recently adopted a new working definition of recovery and NAMI FV is using these principles to guide its work in 2013 and into the future.

The new definition is as follows: “A process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential.”

According to SAMHSA, the four dimensions that support a life in recovery are:

- Health: Overcoming or managing one’s disease(s) as well as living in a physically and emotionally healthy way.
- Home: A stable and safe place to live.
- Purpose: Meaningful daily activities, such as a job, school, volunteerism, family caretaking, or creative endeavors, and the independence, income and resources to participate in society.
- Community: Relationships and social networks that provide support, friendship, love and hope.

Additionally, here are five of the 10 guiding principles of recovery, according to SAMHSA:

1. Recovery emerges from hope: The belief that recovery is real provides the essential and motivating message of a better future—that people can and do overcome the internal and external challenges, barriers, and obstacles that confront them.

2. Recovery is person driven: Self-determination and self-direction are the foundations for recovery as individuals define their own life goals and design their unique path(s).

3. Recovery occurs via many pathways: Individuals are unique with distinct needs, strengths, preferences, goals, culture, and backgrounds including trauma experiences that affect and determine their pathway(s) to recovery. Abstinence is the safest approach for those with substance use disorders.

4. Recovery is holistic: Recovery encompasses an individual's whole life, including mind, body, spirit, and community. The array of services and supports available should be integrated and coordinated.

5. Recovery is supported by peers and allies: Mutual support and mutual aid groups, including the sharing of experiential knowledge and skills, as well as social learning, play an invaluable role in recovery.

We will explore the five remaining principles of recovery in our next newsletter, including respect, strengths/responsibility, addresses trauma, culture, and relational.
NAMI Fox Valley newsletter is going green

We encourage you to sign up for our e-newsletter at our website. Help us save paper (and money!) by switching to our new, digital version of The Alliance. Just visit our homepage, www.namifoxvalley.org, and enter your email address in the bottom of the left column. Once you enter your email, you will be prompted to also enter your first and last name.

Once you've signed up, we will take you off our paper newsletter mailing list. Thank you for helping NAMI Fox Valley be a more conscientious steward of our environment and budget. If you'd like to continue receiving our newsletter in the mail, please contact Helen at 954-1550 or helen@namifoxvalley.org to confirm your mailing address.

NAMI Fox Valley preparing for move

The NAMI House, at 516 W. 6th St., is for sale. But rest assured that NAMI Fox Valley is here to stay! We are excited to be moving into our new home at 211 E. Franklin Street in downtown Appleton. We have co-purchased this beautiful, spacious building with the Arc Fox Cities, which will give each agency plenty of room to grow and provide space for other nonprofits in the Fox Valley. We plan to move in later this year. Watch for updates on our website.
The Alliance is the newsletter of NAMI Fox Valley, published quarterly in February, May, August and November.

Send news items related to chronic mental illness, opinions, or complaints no later than 1/21/13; 4/29/13; 7/29/13; 10/28/13 to:
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Thank you for your years of service, Sandy

NAMI Fox Valley wishes to thank Sandy Pharis for her nearly 10 years of dedicated involvement, including five years as a passionate staff member where she served in the role of Project Coordinator. Sandy ended her employment with NAMI Fox Valley in December 2012.

Sandy started the first peer support group offered by NAMI Fox Valley at The Friendship Place in Neenah, quickly developing a dedicated core of consumers in attendance. Later, working from her Veteran’s status as a Marine, she took on the development of NAMI Fox Valley’s Veterans program offerings. This later became a paid staff position. She helped varied audiences understand and empathize with the experiences of consumers through numerous presentations at meetings, classes and conferences.

Along with Sandy’s local affiliate involvement, she has also been active at the state level, as a NAMI Wisconsin Board member, a state Connections trainer, a state Peer-to-Peer mentor trainer, and as a state-level coordinator around programs and services for Veterans. Sandy was the recipient of many awards during her years of NAMI involvement, including Outstanding Facilitator Award, Outstanding Trainer Award, Outstanding Outreach Award, Consumer Council Peer of the Year Award, and NAMI Fox Valley Volunteer of the Year Award. We know Sandy will continue to make a positive difference in her future endeavors.

Save the date: May 1, 2013

Mark your calendars for Wednesday, May 1 when NAMI Fox Valley, N.E.W. Mental Health Connection, and other community partners come together to celebrate the start of Mental Health Awareness Month. The hour-long morning event will be held at Riverview Gardens Community Center, 1101 S. Oneida St., Appleton. Join us as community leaders and stakeholders come together to address mental health, break down stigma surrounding mental illness, and announce several awareness-raising events and activities planned for the month. Watch our website for more details.
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 outreach. It is affiliated with NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) and NAMI Wisconsin.

Our Vision
Live well with mental illness.

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