



National Alliance on Mental Illness

**NAMI**

**Central Iowa**

### FREE SERVICES PROVIDED BY NAMI-CI

**DAILY** support and information available at the NAMI office

**WEEKLY** NAMI Connection support groups for persons with mental illness:

Monday 6-7:30 p.m. Collegiate United Methodist Church (CUMC), 2622 W. Lincoln Way, Pine Room;  
Thursday 2-3:30 p.m. CUMC, Room 44

### MONTHLY

--educational meetings featuring local specialists speaking on topics relating to mental health:

3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month at 7:00 PM

--support group for family members

4th Thursday of the month at 7:00 PM

Trinity Church, 3626 Ontario St. Ames

**YEARLY** series of educational classes offered for persons with mental illness and for family members:

***Family to Family*** for family members of adults with mental illness

***Visions for Tomorrow*** for caregivers of children with mental illness

***Wishing Wellness*** for children ages 6-12 who have a relative with mental illness

***Peer to Peer*** for adults with mental illness

For more information contact our Director Deb Niehof at 515-292-9400 or [namiofci@gmail.com](mailto:namiofci@gmail.com).

**Office hours** are 9-12 a.m.

Monday-Wednesday;

1-4 p.m. on Thursday and

Friday.

**Office address:** 130 S. Sheldon  
#306, Ames, IA 50014



### FROM THE DIRECTOR

I recently read this sobering statistic about children and mental illness: 50% of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by the age of 14. Even more sobering is the fact that fewer than half of these children receive any services. Sadly, untreated mental illness in children can lead to school failure, substance abuse, involvement with the juvenile justice system, and tragically, youth suicide.

Fortunately, the earlier mental illness is recognized and diagnosed, the better the chances are that a child can live a happy and productive life. In the next few months, NAMI Central Iowa will be offering education and support to parents, teachers, and other caregivers of children with severe emotional and mental disorders. Our educational program on February 15 will feature a speaker who deals with mental illness in children. At that meeting, we will make available a free 150 page handbook on mental health services, resources, and support for families of children and teens in Iowa.

More in-depth education and support will also be given through the *Visions for Tomorrow* course that will be offered during March and April. This free course offers educational material and provides the basics for day-to-day caregiving skills. It also offers caregivers an opportunity to share mutual experiences and learn valuable lessons from one another.

If you or someone you love is struggling to cope with a child who needs extra support and understanding, you are not alone! Give me a call to find out more about what NAMI has to offer.

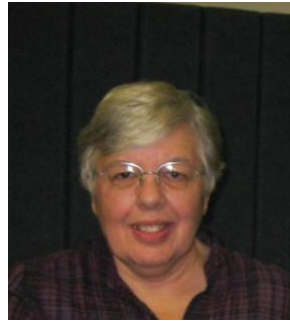
- Deb Niehof

**P.S.** You can see, at left, how Tom and I spent our winter vacation climbing and hiking with family in New Mexico.

## PEIR CORNER

PEIR = PErson (or people) In Recovery

### Recovery and Mental Health



Most individuals who receive a psychiatric diagnosis also suffer significant losses associated with that diagnosis. These losses may include relationships, jobs, financial standing, self worth, and personal strengths previously taken for granted. Grieving the losses is natural and expected. As acceptance of one's new reality appears, moving forward and recovery becomes possible.

***Recovery is the process of gaining control over one's life and the direction one wants their life to go, after a psychiatric diagnosis.*** Recovery is a personal journey, different for each individual. Friends, family, and providers may be involved, but the person with the diagnosis must decide the direction, stops on the journey, and which roads to take.

For newly diagnosed individuals, regaining control of their lives may come easily. For individuals who have been in "the system" for a number of years and are convinced that they cannot be trusted to make their own decisions, taking charge will be a more gradual process. Deciding on one's treatment goals is a good place to start.

Although it is a life-altering event, a psychiatric diagnosis should not limit one's life goals to simply marking "time with stability," as defined by providers. Life will be different, but it can still be exciting, challenging, and fulfilling if recovery is pursued.

-- Linda Sawyer

## TEACHING OPPORTUNITY

**Family to Family Teacher Training** will be offered in Des Moines in March. If you are interested in teaching local Family to Family classes, contact Deb for an application for the weekend teacher training.

## NAMI SPRING CALENDAR

**February 15** Speaker on children and mental illness at 7:00 P.M. at Collegiate Presbyterian Church

**March 7** Peer to Peer class begins

**March 7** Visions for Tomorrow class begins

**March 15** John Hostetler will speak on our community mental health center at 7:00 P.M. at Collegiate Presbyterian Church

**April 19** Our second annual *Recovery through the Arts* will be presented at 7:00 P.M. at the Farwell T. Brown Auditorium at the Ames Public Library.

## WELCOME OUR NEW ASSOCIATE EDITOR



I am ecstatic about working with our new Associate Editor **Anastasia Tuckness**. She has been an active member of NAMI-CI for over ten years. She works in the children's section at the Ames Public Library and enjoys cooking, gardening, and reading. A few other

facts about her rich life:

- BA in secondary education—she taught high school English for one year.
- MA in Library and Information Science
- Little known fact—she attends a weekly Extreme Step Aerobics class.

With skill sets I can only dream of having, she is bringing renewed talents, insights, and creativity to this newsletter. Please give her your ideas at [atuckness@gmail.com](mailto:atuckness@gmail.com).

- Fred Borgen, Editor  
[fhborgen@aol.com](mailto:fhborgen@aol.com)

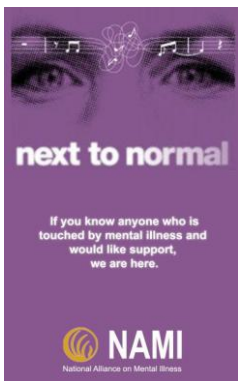
## NAMI SPRING CLASSES

**Peer to Peer** is a free 9-week course for individuals diagnosed with mental illness who are interested in establishing and maintaining their wellness and recovery. Class topics include relapse prevention planning, addictions, mindfulness exercises, coping strategies, and survival skills for working with providers and the general public. The class will meet on Monday afternoons beginning March 7.

**Visions for Tomorrow** is a free 8-session course for parents and caregivers of children who have serious emotional or mental disorders. The curriculum includes types of mental illnesses and emotional disorders, as well as instruction on coping skills; dealing with schools; communication; medication; rehabilitation, recovery and transition; and advocacy. The class will meet on Monday evenings beginning March 7.

Both classes are free, but registration is required. For more information, or to register, contact Deb at 515-292-9400 or [namiofci@gmail.com](mailto:namiofci@gmail.com).

## POWERFUL BROADWAY PLAY IN DES MOINES



The insightful and compelling musical, **NEXT TO NORMAL**, has touched hearts and minds on Broadway. Following critical acclaim, the play launched a national tour in November.

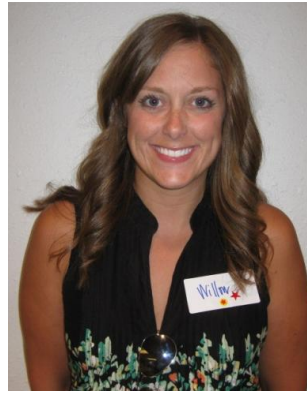
See it at the **Civic Center in Des Moines March 15-20**. Tickets and information are available at

[desmoinescenter.com](http://desmoinescenter.com).

For more information, check out the January newsletter from NAMI Greater Des Moines, at [nami.org/sites/NAMIGreaterDesMoines](http://nami.org/sites/NAMIGreaterDesMoines) (Internet search keywords "Greater Des Moines NAMI"). Click on the Newsletters tab on the left menu to access their January newsletter; on page 13, one of the writers of the musical shares reflections on the process of writing this play, and responses he's heard from those who have seen it so far.

NAMI National ([nami.org](http://nami.org)) is a sponsor of the national tour of this groundbreaking musical. You won't want to miss it!

## MEET SOME OF OUR BOARD MEMBERS



For her day job, **Willow McLaughlin Hill** is a case manager, and she keeps busy when she's not working, too! Spending time with family and her dog, and pursuing health and fitness, are priorities she shares with her

husband. Photography is another hobby, and she is on the board of directors for the Autism Society of Iowa.

She also serves NAMI-CI with her many passions. She has led the monthly Art Therapy group for the past year, recently began fundraising duties for the NAMI-CI board, and is spearheading the effort to get NAMI-CI on Facebook, as a way for NAMI-CI to particularly connect with younger people.



**Carol Lippard** may look familiar to you because she regularly works at the downtown Post Office counter. You might also see her attending an exercise class, hiking at the

Ledges, or even going ice skating, as these are all activities she enjoys. She also likes reading and especially loves playing with her 3-year-old granddaughter!

Like many, Carol connected with NAMI at a time of need and found support and close connections that continue to this day. For the past two years, she has also enjoyed being the Loan Administrator on the NAMI-CI board.

## Learn More about the Board Members



Above, Carol enjoys the company of her granddaughter. More about Carol:

- Married 34 years
- A true Ames native—born here!
- Has grown kids: 2 sons, 1 daughter
- Appreciates NAMI’s programs for everyone in the community, no matter what their need
- Enjoys fellow board members’ “kindness, energy, dedication and professionalism”



Above, Willow and her husband Seth enjoy the great outdoors—in Hawaii! More about Willow:

- Co-owns two Kosama Fitness locations with husband
- Cooks dinner with her husband weekly—especially likes healthy cooking
- Enjoys board meetings because she enjoys the board members
- Believes that art expresses your true heart and feelings; pursuing art is a great way to work on personal goals

## TELL US WHAT YOU SEE!



©Jane Mjolsness  
[www.janemjolsness.com](http://www.janemjolsness.com)

**Jane Mjolsness** is an illustrator who uses her artistic gifts to capture many things, including “**complex emotional issues.**” She has given us permission to use the illustration you see here. Please interpret what it means to you, and share your thoughts with us through an e-mail to Associate Editor

Anastasia Tuckness at [atuckness@gmail.com](mailto:atuckness@gmail.com).

In a later issue, we may share your thoughts and ideas (without identifying you).

### Writers for Life: Leading Our NAMI Writing Workshops

**Jason Arbogast and Laura Sweeney** provide us with Writers for Life workshops. See their work facilitating mental, emotional, and physical well-being through writing at <http://blog.writersforlife.net>.

### \*\*\*words, words, words\*\*\*

thought disorder

cognitive slippage

delusion

dementia

hallucination

*Do you know what these words mean? Which one of these words does not belong in this list? Check the next page to learn their technical definitions and increase your knowledge!*

*Or, take a look at the next set of words and send your definitions and experiences of these words to Anastasia Tuckness ([atuckness@gmail.com](mailto:atuckness@gmail.com)).*

recovery

life goals

stability

fulfillment

freedom

## \*\*\*words, words, words\*\*\*

Some core features of **textbook schizophrenia** are **thought disorder, hallucinations, and delusions**.

**The National Institute of Mental Health has an official one-page summary: "What are the symptoms of schizophrenia?" online at:**

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/schizophrenia/what-are-the-symptoms-of-schizophrenia.shtml>

We quote a small portion of that here in *italics*. See the full page for the full picture. Here's just a sampling.

*"Hallucinations are things a person sees, hears, smells, or feels that no one else can see, hear, smell, or feel. "Voices" are the most common type of hallucination in schizophrenia."*

*"Delusions are false beliefs that are not part of the person's culture and do not change. The person believes delusions even after other people prove that the beliefs are not true or logical."*

*"Thought disorders are unusual or dysfunctional ways of thinking."* They are evident in speech content that does not make sense, such as, "I am growing my father's hair."

Psychologist Paul Meehl wrote influential papers on schizophrenia. His style was colorful, and he referred to thought disorder as **cognitive slippage**.

**Medications** usually moderate these symptoms, which are thought to be due in part to excess activity of the neurotransmitter **dopamine**. Treatment is vital.

**Dementia** is the word that does not fit in this list. It is not a distinctive feature of schizophrenia. It is literally loss of mentation, meaning that someone has normal thinking skills and then loses memory and cognitive skills due to brain trauma or progressive disorders such as Alzheimer's. A very sad linguistic outcome is when the misinformed stigmatize people with mental illness as "demented."

### Reality with NAMI Families

**Real people are not textbook cases.** Textbooks generalize, so they often miss the mark with individual people.

Each NAMI family's story is somewhat different, while also sharing common bonds. Schizophrenia typically emerges between ages 15 to 25. Emergence can be slow, with symptoms possibly due to other causes such as abuse of drugs like amphetamines or hallucinogens. The turbulence of late adolescence can be a wrenching and confusing challenge for families as they watch a painful downward spiral in their loved one. NAMI offers support groups and educational classes for both the persons living with the illness and their family members.

## Prodromal Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia often emerges slowly, with a **prodromal** phase having subtle signs of mildly unusual behaviors that do not easily point to an imminent break with reality.

### One Iowan's Experience with Prodromal Schizophrenia

"With regard to schizophrenia, what I think is important is the gradual way that the symptoms are manifested. In the case with my brother, it started with his accounts of the troubles he was having with co-workers and supervisors. I was sympathetic at first. Then, as his reports of intrigue and conspiracy became increasingly egregious, I started to wonder if he was being reasonable. Because he was highly intelligent and creative, I tended to perceive some of his strange remarks as challenging metaphors rather than mental illness. Then the time came when he spoke of the "dark people" who lived behind the walls of his bedroom, and had frequent episodes of angry and accusative ranting in a loud, coarse, and malevolent voice that was not his own. On the day he was pinching his mother hard enough to bruise her, and slamming a door repeatedly until it broke, the sheriff had to be called."

### One Iowan's Experience Today

**"That was thirty years ago. Thanks to medications and regular therapy my brother lives peacefully now, and gets along well with others. He is not cured. The medications have noticeable side effects. Occasionally, when he is in another room and thinks no one can hear, he will talk to himself in the "other voice." However, he is accepted and well liked in his community. He is able to experience happiness and contentment. He makes jokes, enjoys games, and laughs with his family and friends. He frequently expresses his gratitude to the professionals and family members who help him."**

### Share Your Experience

We welcome your personal insights and experiences. Please continue the dialogue by e-mailing Anastasia Tuckness at [atuckness@gmail.com](mailto:atuckness@gmail.com). Without identifying you, we may share your comments in later issues.

### Arizona Shooting Tragedy

The national NAMI Web site ([nami.org](http://nami.org)) is a crucial source for timely information about how we might learn from the Arizona tragedy. As Executive Director Michael Fitzpatrick says, **"If any good can come from a situation such as the Arizona tragedy, it is to raise awareness for the need for a mental health system that is accountable to meeting the needs of families and individuals affected by mental illness."** See [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org) for actions to take in your state.



NAMI Central Iowa  
130 S. Sheldon, Room 306  
Ames, IA 50014

## February 2011 Newsletter

NAMI-CI newsletter is published six times a year by the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Central Iowa (NAMI-CI).

NAMI-CI is a support group comprised of people who seek to make a better life for those affected by mental illnesses. Our members include people with mental illnesses, their friends, families, and other central Iowa residents. We serve as advocates and as a source of understanding and encouragement for all who are faced with mental illness or the mental illness of a loved one.

NAMI-CI is a United Way partner agency and is an affiliate of NAMI Iowa ([www.namiowa.com](http://www.namiowa.com)) and of NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness ([www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)).

### NAMI-CI Office Address:

130 S. Sheldon Ave., Rm. 306  
Ames, IA 50014  
Office phone: 515-292-9400  
[namiofci@gmail.com](mailto:namiofci@gmail.com) / [www.namiofci.org](http://www.namiofci.org)



**Becoming a member of NAMI-CI is easy.** Just complete this form and mail with appropriate dues to:

NAMI-CI  
130 S. Sheldon #306  
Ames, IA 50014

### Membership Dues

\_\_\_ Family/Individual                    \$ 35.00\*  
\_\_\_ Limited Income                        \$ 2.00  
\_\_\_ Extra donation                        \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*Includes \$15 Local/\$10 State/\$10 National

### Member Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Check here to receive newsletter by email

### If you no longer wish to receive the NAMI-CI newsletter:

Email or phone Fred Borgen at [FHBORGEN@aol.com](mailto:FHBORGEN@aol.com) or 515-232-5014. **To receive your newsletter by email**, send a message to [FHBORGEN@aol.com](mailto:FHBORGEN@aol.com); include your name and address in the message.