

BOARD MEMBERS

Richard Elenbaas, President

Melissa Elenbaas, Treasurer

Bonnie Breitman, V.P.

Will Roberts, Secretary

Teresa Hertz

Alicia Clayton

**Pleased to Welcome our
new board member:**

Christine Morrow

Volume 30, Issue 1

Spring 2013

From the President . . .

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NAMI of Whatcom County Recruiting Board Members

NAMI of Whatcom County is looking to recruit additional board members to serve a two year term.

If you are interested in applying for a position on the NAMI Board of Directors please call or e-mail the NAMI office to pick up an application.

Board meetings are generally held once a month in the evenings from 7:00 to 9:00 pm.

Board members can expect:

1. Start and end monthly business meetings on time.
2. Attend board meetings. Attendance will be reflected in minutes – present, excused, not excused
3. Read Board packets and other pertinent information before the meeting. Come prepared to discuss the agenda. Bring your passion, ideas and solutions to the table.

4. Keep on track with agenda discussion; other items/ business will be discussed at the end of the meeting.

A full packet is available at the office and can be e-mailed to interested applicants.

If you have questions, please contact the NAMI Whatcom office at 360.671.4950 or via email at nami@healthsupportcenter.org

Like us on Facebook!!!

[Facebook.com/NAMIWhatcom](https://www.facebook.com/NAMIWhatcom)

Have a question about

an item in the newsletter?

Contact the NAMI

office at:

360.671.4950

Or

[nami@healthsupport](mailto:nami@healthsupportcenter.org)

center.org



The contributions from our generous members allow us to provide services to our membership community.

We would like to thank all of our wonderful members that donate their time, money, and expertise to help us continue in our endeavors to support, educate, and advocate for community members affected by mental illness.

If you would like to donate to NAMI of Whatcom County it's easy...

- Go to www.namiwhatcom.org, click "Donate" this will take you to the paypal donation page.
- Go to www.namiwhatcom.org, click "NAMI Whatcom on Facebook", on the NAMI Whatcom Facebook page in the cause box click

"Donate", (do not need a facebook page to donate this way)

- Mail a donation to NAMI:

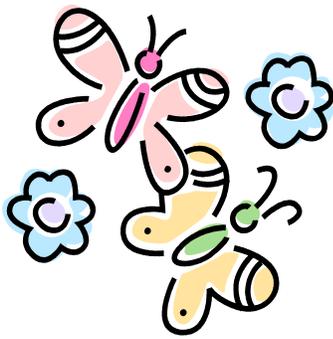
**NAMI of Whatcom County
PO Box 4124
Bellingham, WA 98227**

Exciting News for the Family Support Group!

To start off the new year we have two new co-facilitators, Madalyn and Maren. Maren recently attended the NAMI facilitator training in November. The session comprised three days of learning the NAMI National model of facilitating support groups. This was followed by role playing and practicing scenarios of how to help Family Support Group facilitate productive and practical discussions that assist struggling family members. The training ended with each of the trainees demonstrating their understanding and working knowledge of the NAMI National model. It was a hopeful experience as family members who wanted to do something more met together. It certainly instills hope in us all to know that there are people who truly care and are excited to work dispelling the stigma associated with mental illness. As members of the Family Support Group, we have the opportunity to reject stigma within ourselves and work to help others understand the importance of this.

Madalyn and Maren are excited to meet and facilitate Family Support Group!





By Kathryn Boyd

I am a NAMI Family to Family (F2F) and a Basics Class co-instructor. I'd like to give you a brief background of why I got involved with NAMI.

I don't remember how I learned about NAMI and the educational programs that were being offered in Whatcom County. All I know is NAMI saved my sanity, my family, and our lives. I will always be so very grateful for the awesome life that NAMI has provided for me and my family. I don't say this in any slight way.

As a student I took the NAMI F2F Class in 2008. My life was turned upside down at that time. My significant other of 24 years received his first mental health diagnosis in 2004. I was emotionally wiped out, physically wiped out, and I was trying to hold my family of seven together. PLUS, hold down my 40 hour a week job. I was finding my strength in my kids, my extended family (parents, sisters, friends, and co-workers) and myself. I have a strong faith in God. I know the only way I have survived this journey is by the Grace of God and NAMI.

I went to each F2F Class one night a week for three months. There were some evenings where I didn't think I could attend a 2.5 hour class and even have my mind present, BUT I went. At this time my family was going in and out of crisis. My significant other was getting a new diagnosis approximately

Hope, Healing, Learning, Teaching...

every 1-2 years for a period of 6 years (since 2004). Suicide attempt, breakdown, another suicide attempt, going missing, being found, more mental breakdowns – my life, my kid's lives were on a roller coaster from Hell.

After completing the F2F Class I was able to go to the NAMI F2F Training the following spring. I have been co-teaching the F2F Class ever since. I want to help families who have mental illness in their family. I am living proof that there is HOPE. HOPE for recovery, HOPE for a better life, HOPE for all of us involved to get past the roller coaster from Hell. As we say in NAMI "we don't candy coat".

His journey through these past 8 years since his first diagnosis has been heart-breaking for me and our family to witness. I had no idea that he had a mental illness. I really didn't know that much about mental illness – any mental illness for that matter! I was witnessing the love of my life suffer and I felt extremely helpless. No matter how much I tried I couldn't 'fix' the problems. I tried, I tried.

He was definitely involved with alcohol and drugs. He'd gone to alcohol and drug treatment a few times before 2004, but it did not make a difference. Nothing did-getting mad at him, kicking him out of the house, making ultimatums, crying, yelling. With the first diagnosis we had some answers. We had many questions, but now we knew what the 'problem' was. Our struggle changed from suffering to getting help and support. When I first was told that there is HOPE and the chance of 'recovery' I thought that was nonsense. We had been living in this hell for so long that the idea of a life without the 'roller coaster' was nonsense. I couldn't imagine it.

Our lives are forever changed and I

know I will never have my intimate relationship back with my kid's father – I am 'ok' with that.

The end of our relationship was devastating to me. That took me on my own road down extreme sadness and I went to a grieving counselor. That is how I am 'ok' with it now. It was a long process.

My kid's father is now in recovery! Yes, I said in recovery. He is on the right medication 'cocktail', goes to regular monthly counseling, makes it to all his doctor appointments and attends support group meetings. There are no more suicide attempts and he has not suffered an episode in a very long time. When and if we ever have another crisis we are now equipped with the education and knowledge that NAMI has provided us with. Fear can run your life, or it can motivate you into equipping your family to move forward. We have chosen to move forward and have embraced our future as a family. In no way am I saying that everything is 'perfect', but I am pretty happy today.

Our relationship is now that we are 'co-parents' to four children and we have 2 granddaughters. We are expecting our new granddaughter next month. We share a home with our kids - we share a life now. Our lives have changed, we have realistic expectations, and we are grateful for each new day.

Our oldest Son took the F2F Class, went to training and is now a F2F co-instructor. This in itself is a miracle. He and I have had the pleasure to co-teach F2F these past couple years. I would've never envisioned that.

NAMI saves lives by giving HOPE, giving support, and educating all us who are affected by mental





If you are interested in any of NAMI of Whatcom County's Programs please call 671-4950 for more information.

**NAMI's
Peer to Peer and
Family to Family
Classes**

Starting Late Spring!

**Call the office for
details: 671-4950**

WRAP for Kids

By Christine Morrow

WRAP —'Wellness Recovery Action Plan' for Kids was developed by Dr. Mary Ellen Copeland following her success in implementing a similar program for adults. The WRAP for Kids workshop focuses on educating children about wellness and developing steps that they can take when their moods take a turn for the worse. The goal is to empower kids to take an active role in identifying triggers and signs they are not feeling well, and to take action with the aid of their personalized plan.

I was delighted by the opportunity to co-facilitate the WRAP for Kids workshop centered on childhood self-advocacy and wellness. Inquisitive eyes and energetic little bodies spent an afternoon with Sabrina Collette and myself. As a group we brainstormed and crafted our way through the WRAP workbook intended to help the children identify their own tools to stay happy and healthy. We discussed struggles and concerns that all children could relate to and each was eager to offer solutions as they supported and encouraged each other.

In 2013 NAMI intends to hold several more WRAP for Kids workshops and I am thrilled to play a role in its development and continuation.

If you would like more details about the course or to sign up your child for an upcoming workshop, please contact the NAMI office.



Sign up for Classes Online!

You now have the option to sign up for NAMI Whatcom classes online!

Visit: www.namiwhatcom.org/classes.html

PTSD as a Mental Illness

By Amanda Davidau

According to the National Mental Health Association, eight million people in the United States suffer from PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), which is generally considered a mental illness. Factors that can cause PTSD are childhood abuse, seeing someone get killed or die an unnatural death, sexual assault, being a first responder, being in combat and military trauma

such as Military Sexual Trauma (MST) and training accidents.

I am discussing PTSD in the area of the military, which is now gaining a better understanding of PTSD through combat and MST. These are not the only scenarios in which an individual can develop PTSD in the military; there are also training accidents and medical emergencies. There seems to be less military personal that are

forced out due to failure to adapt, which appears truer for combat personal than for other reasons.

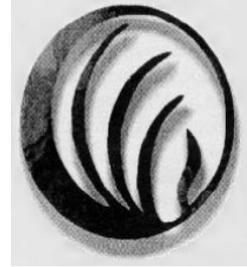
Due to the stigma of mental illness, military personal and other individuals with PTSD may not want their diagnosis labeled as a mental illness and may even be offended by it. This can lead to someone not receiving the necessary treat-



You can find the NAMI Whatcom Calendar online at:

www.namiwhatcom.org

Calendar



- Feb. 21, March 14 & April 11.....NAMI Education Forum
St. Luke's Health Ed Center, 3333 Squalicum Pkwy
- Feb. 7, March 7 & April 4.....NAMI Board Meeting-First Thursday of each month: 7:00 –9:00pm
1212 Indian Street.
- Feb. 11 & 25, March 11 & 25, & April 8 & 22.....Suicide Survivors Support Group –2nd & 4th Mondays of the month,
6:30-8:00pm, 1212 Indian St.
- Feb. 13 & 27, March 13 & 27, & April 10 & 24.....NAMI Family Support Group-2nd & 4th Wednesdays of the month,
6:30-8:00 p.m., 1212 Indian Street
- Feb. 5, 19, & 26, March 5, 19, & 26, & April 2, 16, 23, & 30.....NAMI Connections Group-Tuesdays 6:30-8:00pm (except 2nd
Tuesdays to avoid conflict with DBSA meeting) 1212 Indian Street

OTHER MEETINGS & EVENTS

2nd Tuesday of month Depression Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)
 Contact: Larry Vanderpol at 354-5374 Meetings every 2nd Tuesday of the month
 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 pm, 1212 Indian Street.

North Sound Regional Support Network Meetings: Call 1-800-684-3555 or website <http://nsmha.org>

NAMI Whatcom Calendar: www.namiwhatcom.org/calendar.html



March Education Forum

Thursday March 14, 2013

7:00-9:00 pm

"Mindfulness in the Face of Difficulty"

Join us for an exploration of mindfulness practices that promote awareness and well being with Tim Burnett, Executive Director of Mindfulness Northwest. We will discuss the origins of mindfulness, touch on stress physiology, and explore how mindfulness practices can help us engage in our relationship to experience, reducing stress and enhancing well being. Mindfulness has been shown to be particularly helpful with depression, anxiety, and the resulting fatigue. Simple practices of breathing and mindful movement will support our discussion as we explore mindfulness from the inside out.

Location: St. Luke's Community Health Education Center, 3333 Squalicum Parkway, Bellingham Call for details: 671 -4950

Volunteer Opportunities!

NAMI of Whatcom County would like to thank our current volunteers and would like to extend an invitation to become involved in volunteering with us in the future.

Volunteers are an integral part of bringing additional services and continuing services we provide to our community. If you wish to volunteer for a position that is already filled you can join that committee or volunteer to be trained to volunteer to do so in the future.

Currently, NAMI of Whatcom

County is looking for individuals who are interested in being trained as Family to Family Co-Teachers, Peer to Peer Co-Teachers, NAMI Basics Co-Teachers, Support Group Co-Facilitators, Support Call Takers who accept calls from our support call line.

If you are interested in one of these trainings, or would like to be notified of opportunities to be trained please contact the NAMI Office at 671-4950.

There will be more opportunities to be trained in those and other areas over the year. We are excited and eager to ex-

pand services and look to other areas to offer additional trainings to our volunteers.

If you are interested in volunteering in a way that has not been listed before please fill in the blanks below and return the form to the NAMI Office.

Thank you again to all of our current volunteers, we could not do this without you!



If you are interested in volunteering with NAMI Whatcom please contact the NAMI Whatcom Office at: 671-4950

Volunteers

If you are interested in volunteering please fill out the form and return it to the NAMI Whatcom office.

Our Volunteer Coordinator will contact you about your volunteering interest and training opportunities when they are available.



Volunteer Form

Will You Volunteer?

Sign up for:

- To write an article for our newsletter?
- Train to be a Family Education class Co-Teacher?
- Train to be a Peer to Peer class Co-Teacher?
- Train to be a NAMI Basics class Co-Teacher?
- To train to be a Support Group Co-Facilitator?
- To train to take support calls from our support call line?

Interested in Volunteering Other Ways?

- To help with a fundraiser?
- To help prepare mailings?
-
-
-

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

BUSINESS NAME

Located at: Health Support Center
1212 Indian Street, Bellingham
Mail: PO Box 4124
Bellingham, Wa 98227

Phone: 360-671-4950
Fax: 360-671-4950
E-mail:

nami@healthsupportcenter.org



**NAMI OF WHATCOM
COUNTY**

Located at: Health Support
Center
1212 Indian Street, Bellingham
Mail: PO Box 4124
Bellingham, Wa 98227

Phone: 360-671-4950
Fax: 360-671-4950
E-mail:
nami@healthsupportcenter.org



ARE YOU A NAMI MEMBER??

Please complete and send in!

Name(s) _____ Today's Date _____
Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ FAX _____ E-mail _____

Make Tax Deductible checks payable to: NAMI of Whatcom County **Mail to: P.O. Box 4124, Bellingham, WA 98227** Membership:

New Interested in Volunteering: **Yes** **Not at this time**

Renewal **If yes, what would you like to help do, or what talents can you offer?**

Annual Dues:

Donations:

- | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basic (Individual/Family Membership) \$35.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Limited Income \$4.00 (or more as you can afford) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In Memoriam for _____ | | |