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Volume 30, Issue 2

Summer 2013

From the President . . .

It played out like Shakespeare. The 19 year old had been abandoned by his parents, along with his two younger brothers. He had taken on the role of parent. Provider, role model, protector. From his view of life, it was the three of them against the world. It was up to him.

History is full of stories with seemingly endless twists and turns. Some have happy endings, some not so much. His became a question of identity.

My wife made an amazing statement the other day. "NAMI is an organization that is in the identity changing business". Those of us with a diagnosed mental illness, just who are we identified as? Yes we use the different words: labeled, branded, put in a box... IDENTITY is, perhaps, something we do to ourselves. Who do we identify with? Or better yet, where do we find our identity?

The 19 year old joined a gang. Had 5" letters tattooed on his arm. Above everything else, his gang was what he identified with. It was who he was. It was where he belonged.

You better be sure what you belong to. What you identify with. In his mind, belonging to a gang was his best bet. It was safe. They watched out for their own. He hadn't thought it through though. As with everything in life, your actions affect those around you. That day, his only intention was to scare the other kid, the 13 year old who belonged to some other gang. The 19 year old's younger brother tagged along... and was killed.

I enjoy hanging around people that have a mental illness. Often I can be more myself, feel more acceptance from them than from my own family. I was taught early on in my NAMI career that mental illness is a disease.

An illness. The point is to recover. The point is to have no shame. It's healthy to accept reality.

I have a mental illness. Tell you what though. It's not where I derive my identity. NAMI is about helping people rediscover their true identity. Their humanity. We are people with a mental illness, not the other way round. We are not mentally ill people who are still human beings.

You think I'm just playing with words. Think again. I would argue that we need to act, think and feel like the awesome, healthy, responsible human beings we are. Yes, we have to wrestle with an illness. But we don't have to allow an illness to define who we are or become our identity.

Richard J Elenbaas

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NAMI Looking for Fundraising Committee Members



Finding funding is a challenge for any non-profit. And while volunteers power much of what our affiliate does, NAMI needs help with fundraising, and fundraising activities.

NAMI Whatcom would like to add volunteers looking to help NAMI on fundraising activities without impacting our service to the community. This means more volunteers are needed! The committee will appoint a chair who will report to the NAMI Board of Directors. The chair will be responsible for

organizing and directing the committee and overseeing fundraising activities for the organization.

With the organization being so volunteer organized, why do we need funding?

The organization would like to broaden our financial base so that we are not dependant in one area for our organizations expenses related to classes, educational forums, support groups, newsletters, and our affiliates great member activities.

We also have part time staff who work directly with the community helping to connect them with support, information, and educational opportunities.

Without adequate funding, NAMI would not be able to sustain our great variety of services.

Help us work to continue to support our community and contact the office for a volunteer application if you are interested.

Have a question about an item in the newsletter?

Contact the NAMI office at: 360.671.4950

Or

nami@healthsupportcenter.org



Like us on Facebook!!!

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

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 tin 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**

May Education Forum

Thursday May 9, 2013

7:00-9:00 pm

Location: St. Luke's Community Health Education Center, 3333 Squalicum Pkwy

NO KIDDING! ME TOO!!

Join us in watching Joe Pantoliano's (The Matrix, The Sopranos, Memento) documentary directorial debut NO KIDDING! ME TOO!! As part of his fight against the stigma of mental/brain disease. This empowering film sheds light on the suffering of millions of Americans through candid, often humorous discussions with Pantoliano and his family on their struggle with his own clinical depression, as well as the compelling stories of six other people from all walks of life, all affected differently by mental illness. Each frankly discusses the struggle before they were diagnosed, as well as the hope and encouragement they discover when managing their own recovery and realizing they are not alone. Followed by a discussion on how NAMI seeks to combat the stigma of mental illness through education.

On Volunteering...

By Sabrina Collette



Volunteers can be the glue that holds a non-profit organization together. There's no doubt that without volunteers holding the loose pieces of NAMI together, it wouldn't be there to offer an amazing support system for our community. NAMI can offer the last ray of hope for someone struggling.

Whether you're a board member, office staff, a teacher keeping our classes and support groups going, or just handing out flyers; you could mean so much to an organization like NAMI. I'll admit reaching out to be a volunteer can be an easy step, into a sometimes hard job. What gets talked about the least at NAMI is how this job can be one of the most rewarding things in your life.

Just like everyone else, my life hits rough waters, leaving me confused about which course I should be on and feeling stranded with no options. NAMI was the lighthouse in one of the darkest times of my life. I was hesitant to start volunteering at a place I knew so little about, now I know it was one of the best decisions I've ever made. There's never a day at NAMI I don't feel hope that I'm not alone, and appreciation for what I've done, tasks big or small.

Volunteering is rewarding for all the obvious reasons. Reaching out, changing lives, fulfillment in your own life, job skills, and new connections. Volunteering can also be rewarding for reasons you might never hear. A new support system you never thought you'd gain. Someone reaching out to let us know, even when we seem so far from where we want to be, our path was there, just a little hidden. It's been said that volunteers can keep an organization together, but this organization is what keeps me together.



Join the NAMI Walk Whatcom Team!



NAMI of Whatcom County is recruiting a team for the NAMI Washington Walk in May!

The annual NAMI Washington Walk will be staged along the picturesque banks of Lake Washington starting at Marina Park in downtown Kirkland, Washington on Saturday, May 18, 2013. Check in is at 8:00 a.m. Walk at 9:30 a.m.

We hope to find more interested individuals in the community to help join together as a team to support each other for this great event. NAMI Whatcom team members will represent our affiliate in the NAMI Washington Walk having fun together while raising awareness that serious mental illness is not uncommon and that people can recover.

Help us and our team by volunteering to walk as part of the team, joining us at the finish line, or contact the office about how to sponsor the team.

For detailed Walk information, Visit: <http://namiwalks.org>

Or contact the NAMI Whatcom Office at (360) 671-4950 or via email nami@healthsupportcenter.org



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**



My Father

By Mary Kahle (First runner up for Miss Whatcom County 2013)

April 23, 2011 is date that I will never forget. It is the day that I lost a provider, care-giver, teacher, and my biggest hero. On that day two years ago, my father lost his life-long battle with bipolar disorder, taking his own life.

My father had suffered from bipolar disorder for his entire life, yet it never stopped him from being an amazing father figure. He was brilliantly creative and sharply intelligent, and he pushed my siblings and me to become the best possible versions of ourselves. He welcomed our faults and pushed us in our talents, nourished our love of learning, and instilled in all of his children a love of performing and the arts. We shared a love of music, cooking, and travel. I relish the memories of times spent with him. For much of my life I had no understanding of the suffering that he endured, all I knew was that my father loved me, and I him.

However, he was not able to overcome his illness. On that day two years ago, my father lost his life-long battle, opening my eyes to the realities of mental illness. I felt pain, anger, and immeasurable sadness after his passing, yet I knew that my father would not have wanted me to grieve. In my sadness, I remembered his last words to me, a memory remarkably vivid for how ordinary it was at the time. Sitting in his car, he told me to "remember who you are and what you can do, and never forget to look for the beauty in this life. Make me proud."

I live every single day with these words in mind. As a high school senior, it was necessary for me to choose a culminating project, a final hands-on project of my own choice to show panelists that I am ready for graduation. I knew going into it that I wanted to choose a project that would allow me to honor my father. For my project, I chose competing in the Miss Whatcom County Scholarship Pageant for two specific reasons. First, it would allow me to earn scholarships money, therefore fulfilling my father's dream for me to further my education at the university level. Second, the pageants under the umbrella of the Miss America Organization allow contestants to choose a "platform", a social issue that the contestant will work with in-depth, devoting time and resources towards the chosen cause.

I chose mental health awareness as my platform, in order to break down the stigmas on mental illness and raise awareness for those suffering in the same way that my father did. In order to do so, my mother suggested that I partner with NAMI, working specifically within this organization. I loved the idea from the beginning, and am incredibly honored to have been welcomed into this outstanding community that has provided me with the tools necessary to achieve the goals outlined in my platform.

The pageant itself proved to be a wonderful experience. On March 9, I won the title of First Runner-Up in the Miss Whatcom County Scholarship Pageant, and was awarded over a thousand dollars in scholarship money that I will be using this upcoming fall at Western Washington University. I deeply value the experiences and skills I have gained from being in the pageant, and plan to return to compete again next year. I will also be returning to the pageant with the same platform, knowing that it is a cause that I care deeply about.

I am looking forward to the years to come, years that will be filled with college life, personal growth, and continued volunteering within the NAMI Whatcom organization. Two years ago, I lost my father, and now at the age of 17, I am trying to help others who suffer in the way my father and family has. I live my life with the hope of making my father proud, and I truly think that he would be.



Calendar

- April 24, May 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, June 5, 12, 19, 26, July 3, 10.....Family to Family 6-8:30pm
St. Luke's Health and Education Center, 3333 Squalicum Pkwy
- April 22, 29, May 6,13, 20, June 3,10, 17, 24, July 1.....Peer to Peer 7-9pm
St. Luke's Health and Education Center, 3333 Squalicum Pkwy
- May 9, June 13, July 11.....NAMI Education Forum
St. Luke's Health and Education Center, 3333 Squalicum Pkwy
- May 2, June 6,NAMI Board Meeting-First Thursday of each month: 7:00 –9:00pm
1212 Indian Street.
- May 13 & 27, June 10 & 24, July 8 & 22.....Suicide Survivors Support Group –2nd & 4th Mondays of the month,
6:30-8:00pm, 1212 Indian St.
- May 8 & 22, June 12 & 26, July 10 & 24.....NAMI Family Support Group-2nd & 4th Wednesdays of the month,
6:30-8:00 p.m., 1212 Indian Street
- May 7 & 22 & 29 , June 4 & 18 & 25 , July 2 & 16 & 23 & 30.....NAMI Connections Group-Tuesdays 6:30-8:00pm (except 2nd
Tuesdays to avoid conflict with DBSA meeting) 1212 Indian Street
- June 29.....WRAP for Kids (Location to be announced—please call for details)

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

*Post Script:

The 19 year old is now happily married, the father of 3 awesome kids (our grandkids) and volunteers as a leader and mentor of high schoolers.



If you are interested in joining our team, or coordinating events for the team please call 671-4950 for more information.

Volunteering at NAMI Whatcom Events are a great way to stay connected. If you would like to volunteer contact the office at 671-4950

NAMI'S Wellness Recovery Action Plan for KIDS

For more information or to register:

Call the NAMI Whatcom Office: (360) 671-4950

To find out more about WRAP visit: www.mentalhealthrecovery.com/aboutwrap.php

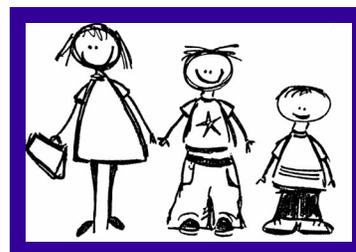
SATURDAY, JUNE 29, 2013

The **WRAP** for kids program was developed by: Mary Ellen Copeland PhD.

This free class is intended to help children discover all the things they can do to feel good, stay well, and even feel better when the going is hard.

This class will guide them through developing Wellness Tools:

- Things they can do every day to stay healthy and well
- Things that might upset them and what they can do if these things do happen
- Signs that they are not feeling well and steps to take to feel better



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

Visit: www.namiwhatcom.org/classes.html

NAMI of Whatcom County Recruiting Board Members



You can find the NAMI Whatcom Calendar online at:

www.namiwhatcom.org

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

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 _____ | | |