

BOARD MEMBERS

Richard Elenbaas, President

Melissa Elenbaas, Treasurer

Bonnie Breitman, V.P.

Will Roberts, Secretary

Teresa Hertz

Pleased to Welcome our new board member:

Alisha Clayton

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Winter 2012

From the President . . .

What defines you? If you were in the dictionary, what would be said? For that matter, who would have written the definition?

I met someone last week. He defined himself. "I'm crazy and I'm an alcoholic". He talked a long time. As he talked, I sensed he hadn't defined himself. Rather confusing. Life had. Society had. His past. His family. Eventually he perhaps gave up. Gave in. Accepted what everyone else said. After all, what choice did he have?

Do you have a choice in your own definition? What do you think?

Some of you know me. Our family had tragedy. I eventually allowed the events to define me. It pretty much became who I was. Like Gollum. He forgot his name. The ring defined him.

Something has been building lately. My new friend unknow-

ingly helped me. I'm tired of being defined by my past, specifically, the tragic events in my past. After all, there's a whole lot more.

Me, I'm not blaming others. I'm not angry. Just feeling feisty. Empowered. I'm 59. There, I said it.

I've only known about NAMI for a few of those years. Some of the best things I've learned in life I've learned from NAMI people. The first event I ever attended, a lady spoke. She said a lot. "Sure, I've got a mental illness. It's not who I am though. It doesn't define me". She then listed probably two dozen other things that did define her. Mental illness was just one of the things. Maybe not the coolest thing on her list, but o well. It was like a birth mark. So I've got a birth mark. I still play the piano. I sing at weddings. I love to backpack. Love making my wife her morning coffee. My birthmark? O yeah. So?

What else would you like to know about me.

What about you? Given in? Given up? Allowing others to tell you who you are?

We can be so confusing.

I so want to be an encouragement to you. To someone who perhaps has about given up. DON'T. Don't give in Frodo. Why would I say that just now? Because Arwen stepped in and helped.

If you have an illness, it's healthy to accept the fact. Just don't let it take you over. Don't let it define you. You're a whole lot more.

NAMI is not just about mental illness. Actually It's more about recovery. Helping others. Taking a stand against prejudice. Standing in the gap for others. Helping others as they figure out their own definition.

Richard J Elenbaas

Dates to remember!!!

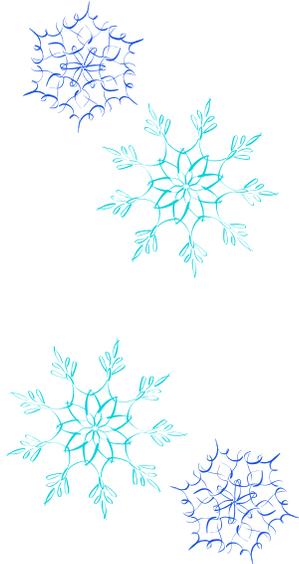
November 14th — NAMI's WRAP for Work begins (details on page 5)

December 1st — NAMI Basics Class begins (details on page 4)

December 11th — NAMI's Holiday Party (details on page 3)

December 15th — NAMI's WRAP for Kids (details on page 6)

January 10th — NAMI Whatcom Annual Membership Meeting (details on page 2)



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

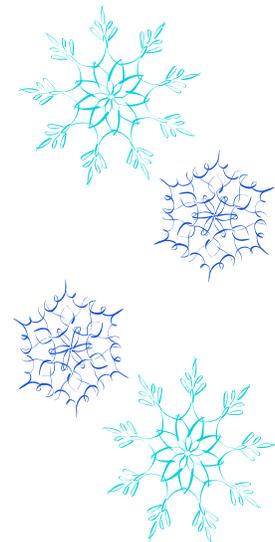
Like us on Facebook!!!

[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@healthsupportcenter.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**

Annual Membership Meeting

Join us at the annual membership meeting where we will vote on the upcoming budget new board members, and discuss the upcoming year at

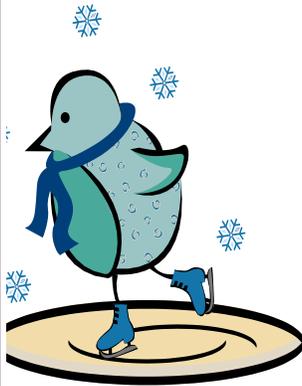
NAMI Whatcom

Thursday, January 10th 2013

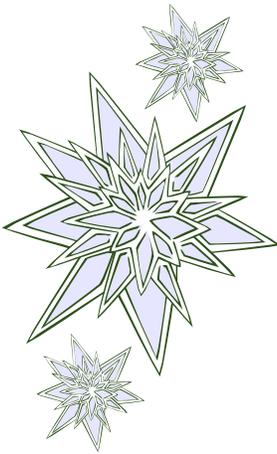
Location: St. Luke's Community Health Education Center

3333 Squalicum Parkway, Bellingham

Call for details: 671-4950



Stay Connected!
If you would like to be on
the NAMI e-mail list
contact us at: [nami@
healthsupportcenter.org](mailto:nami@healthsupportcenter.org)



Strength & Hope in Healing

By Janell Britt

So often I've been plagued with hopelessness, feeling as if I don't have the strength to continue pursuing recovery.

This leads me down a very dark and scary path. Yet over the last year I have developed much greater strength. The majority of this has been attained through the hard work of my treatment team. They have taught me to focus on the glimmers of hope within me and to continuously progress in this new skill. I have learned to lean on my therapist to help me in times of crisis and have gained trust in my prescriber

because of the decisions I am allowed to make. Connecting with others through NAMI has given me more hope than I could have imagined. I have become empowered in my treatment, humble enough to ask for help, and skillful enough to focus on positivity. I have no greater hope for all of my peers than the ability to find this same strength and hope in their walk to recovery and healing.

One of my biggest challenges is to ask others for help. To some people this is an easy task, but when you feel unsure of yourself or your decisions it

can be difficult to ask others to support you. I had to start with baby steps and just become aware of what my needs were in times of emotional struggles. Slowly I progressed to a feeling of confidence so I wasn't as embarrassed to actually ask for help. I've always hated the common question asked after I say I'm struggling ~ "Is there anything I can do?" But now I'm starting to embrace that question and dig inside myself to discover what it is I need help with. Are you strong enough to ask for help? What steps can you begin taking in order to improve your skills?

NAMI's Holiday Party!!

Tuesday, December 11th 2012

6:00—8:30pm

You are cordially invited to celebrate NAMI's annual
Potluck Style Holiday Party!

Dinner will be served at 6:30pm

NAMI is providing the main dish, and we encourage you to bring a side dish to share.
(Please bring food ready to serve, there will be no oven available)

Family Members are very welcome, including children!

The Leopold

1224 Cornwall Ave
Bellingham, WA 98225



NAMI BASICS



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

Upcoming Class

Schedule:

Wrap for work-

November 14, 2012

NAMI BASICS-

December 1, 8 and 15
2012

WRAP for Kids-

December 15, 2012

Call the office for details: 671-4950

What you will gain by taking BASICS...

LEARN WHY:

- Current information about Attention Deficit Disorder, Major Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Conduct Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Anxiety Disorders, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Childhood Schizophrenia and Substance Abuse Disorders
- Current research related to the biology of mental illness and the evidence-based, most effective treatment strategies available, including medications used to treat mental illness in children and adolescents

LEARN HOW:

- Specific workshops to learn problem solving, listening and communication skills
- Examples of strategies that have been found helpful in handling challenging behaviors in children and adolescents
- Information on planning for crisis management and relapse

LEARN HOW TO GET HELP:

- Information about the systems that are major players in the lives of children and adolescents with mental illness – the school system and the mental health system
- Information on locating appropriate supports and services within the community to build a community of support for the parent/caregiver

The class meets for three consecutive Saturdays. From 10:00am — 3:00pm

Next class begins December 1st!

For more information or to register: call the NAMI Office: 671-4950

Sign up for Classes Online!

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

Visit: www.namiwhatcom.org/classes.html

Meditation Practice

By Amanda Daviau

Meditation is a great way to relieve stress, and can be very beneficial in the recovery process of many mental illnesses. There are several ways that mediation can be practice. I have found the following to be the easiest way:

1. Set a timer for the amount of time you want to practice meditation with an alarm that is soothing and not intense.
2. Find a comfortable posi-

tion to sit or lie down.

3. After you have found a comfortable place begin to listen to your breathe going in and out. If you are breathing from your chest try to breathe from your Diaphragm. Diaphragm breathing increases oxygen flow and can relieve anxiety.
4. If you find your mind racing go back to your breathe.

5. Get up very slowly.

Mediation doesn't have to be perfect and your mind will wonder. The important thing is to keep practicing as often as you can. I have found practicing meditation only ten minutes a day reduces stress and anxiety that I have related to PTSD.



You can find the NAMI Whatcom Calendar online at:

www.namiwhatcom.org/calendar.html



Calendar



November 14 - December 19WRAP for Work - Wednesdays, 6:00 - 8:30pm
 St. Luke's Health Ed Center, 3333 Squalicum Pkwy
 December 1, 8, & 15.....NAMI Basics - Saturdays, 10:00am - 3:00pm
 1212 Indian Street
 December 11th.....NAMI's Holiday Party
 The Leopold, 1224 Cornwall Ave
 December 15thWRAP for KIDS - Saturday, 10:00am - 2:00pm
 1210 Indian Street
 January 10.....NAMI Whatcom Annual Membership Meeting
 St. Luke's Health Ed Center, 3333 Squalicum Pkwy

ONGOING

January 3.....NAMI Board Meeting-First Thursday of each month: 7:00 –9:00pm
 1212 Indian Street.
 Nov. 12 & 26, Dec. 10, Jan. 14 & 28.....Suicide Survivors Support Group –2nd & 4th Mondays of the month,
 6:30-8:00pm, 1212 Indian St.
 Nov. 14 & 28, Dec. 12, Jan. 9 & 23.....NAMI Family Support Group-2nd & 4th Wednesdays of the month,
 6:30-8:00 p.m., 1212 Indian Street
 Nov. 20 & 27, Dec. 4 & 18, Jan. 15, 22, & 29.....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.

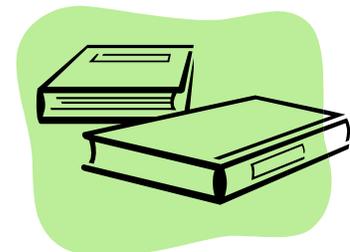
North Sound Regional Support Network Meetings: Call 1-800-684-3555 or website <http://nsmha.org>
 NAMI Whatcom Calendar: www.namiwhatcom.org/calendar.html

Dealing With a Chronic Illness? There's Hope and Help!

Wellness Recovery Action Plan for Work

The WRAP Program, developed by Mary Ellen Copeland PhD, has taught specific tools to thousands of people across the United States to:

- Decrease and prevent intrusive or troubling feelings and behaviors
- Increase personal empowerment
- Improve quality of life
- Assist you in achieving **YOUR** life goals and dreams.



Where: St. Luke's Health Education Center; 3333 Squalicum Parkway

Who: Jo Ann Elkins, Certified WRAP Trainer

Class size is limited so enroll today! Call the NAMI Whatcom Office at 360-671-4950 for more information. For more information on the WRAP Program, please visit: www.mentalhealthrecovery.com

A, B, C...?

By Dylan Serdenia

Bipolar, Major Depression, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Schizoaffective. Mood stabilizers, anti-psychotics, sedatives, anti-depressants.

Often times, a diagnosis of one mental illness may accompany another, or other, diagnoses. How the separate diagnoses relate to one another may vary in terms of the separate relationships between each one, and from that entire relationship to the person.

So, how do medications fit into all of this? As many are aware, medicine is often utilized as a tool to help manage mental illness. Typically, a medication is prescribed for the treatment of a fitting diagnosis. But, what happens if the symptoms of one diagnosis overlap with another? Do the effects compound if—say, fatigue—is a side effect of *both* medications used to treat two *separate* diagnoses? Does this increase the *likelihood* of the side effect of fatigue, or does this increase the *effect* of the fatigue itself? Or is it both?

I am no expert on the subject itself. I am just a person labeled with an alphabet of diagnoses. I am, honestly, just curious. I pose these questions in hopes of giving someone else the space to think about these things—if you haven't already. Questions like these can best be answered by a psychiatrist/prescriber. However, to get a better understanding of first-hand experience, these questions may probably be answered best by peers, through involvement in NAMI. Stopping by the office on Indian Street, attending groups like Connections, and participating in the Peer-to-Peer class have given me the space to find answers to so many of my questions regarding mental illness. NAMI has encouraged me ask questions, and given me the ability to answer questions for other people. Like accurately prescribed medications overlapping one another—we're working *together* to help *you*.

Wellness Recovery Action Plan for KIDS

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 listing 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

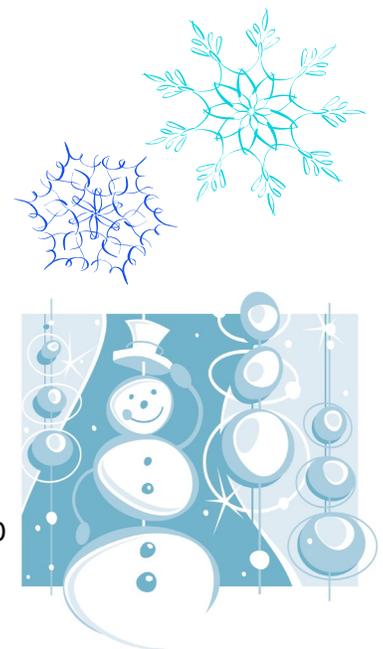
Where: 1210 Indian Street Bellingham, WA 98226

Class Taught by: Christine Morrow

Lunch will be provided

Class size is limited so enroll today! Call the NAMI Whatcom Office at 360-671-4950 for more information. For more information on the WRAP for kids program,

please visit: www.mentalhealthrecovery.com



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 _____ | | |