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### **A Note from Our President...**

As usual, 2007 so far has been a very busy time for NAMI-FL. We started out with our first Annual Meeting as an incorporated group in January. We elected Board Members, including officers, and proceeded to plan the year. Our Affiliate sponsored our SIXTH Family to Family Course and graduated many new friends and members. We held our first Board Meeting in March and then another in May – made a decision to remain at Jean’s through November, 2007 and then assess our financial situation again. We decided to sponsor a Community Rally for Mental Illness and Support for Mental Health in May at Cass Park. Many of our members and friends came around to plan and help that day – Ann Carter and I thank them so much for all their efforts. This event was extremely successful and brought together many different voices in the Mental Health field – a first for our Ithaca community. We also got a nice article about this Rally written in the Ithaca Journal – supporting our continuing efforts to raise awareness about mental illnesses and their IMPACT on individuals, family, and community.

I had been in touch with Cornell Minds Matter for quite some time in terms of co-sponsoring the Kay Redfield Jamison free lecture, which now will take place on Tuesday, September 18, 2007 at 7:30PM,

Bailey Hall. Ms. Jamison is a well-known professional who has struggled with Bipolar 1 for many years. She is a Clinical Psychologist at Johns Hopkins University Medical School who, a number of years ago, “came out” about her own mental illness – this lecture should prove to be excellent on many levels, personal and professional. NAMI-FL will sponsor a bus leaving the Library to take individuals from downtown up to Bailey Hall – we will invite individuals from Skylight Club, SPACE, and Mental Health Association to sign up.

I want to encourage all members and friends of NAMI to attend the upcoming Educational Conference in Albany on November 2-4, 2007. These Conferences are so interesting and informative and it is wonderful to be with “like-minded” people for a few days. If people are interested, we could rent a van and a group from here could go together. As Secretary to the NAMI-NYS Board, I need to be there on Friday and stay through a short Board Meeting at 1PM on Sunday -- but some of you might like to go for 1 or 2 days – this is possible. Peter Earley, author of *Crazy*, will be the lunchtime speaker on Saturday and there will be many great workshops on Saturday and a dinner and speaker on Saturday night. Look for information coming in the mail.

I am so proud of what our relatively small affiliate has been able to accomplish in the Ithaca Community. We are really the most important provider of services for family support and education in town. We are available on an “as needed” basis and we provide excellent educational programs for family members and others. Year by year our name becomes known to more and more people and our reputation is substantial. Our work is so important toward making sure that individuals in this Community who struggle with Mental Illness receive the most respectful, comprehensive treatment and services. We are doing a great job!! And I thank all of you for your support and encouragement.

*Carol Booth, President, NAMI-FL*

## **CALL FOR 2007 DUES**

For those members who have not paid their 2007 dues please do so as soon as possible!!!

Single membership dues \$25  
Family membership dues \$35

Mail to NAMI-FL, 104 East Lewis Street,  
Ithaca, NY.

Thank you,  
*Joanne Denison, NAMI/FL Treasurer*

## **NAMI-FL Fall Calendar...**

Support Group: 7-9 PM, First Tuesday of each month at Jean Walter’s house, 104 East Lewis Street, (607) 273-2462.

### August

28<sup>th</sup>, Picnic at Small Pavilion, Stewart Park, 6PM, Dish-to-Pass

September


18<sup>th</sup>, Free Lecture at CU by Kay Redfield Jamison, 7:30PM. Co-sponsored by NAMI-FL

Cornell Minds Matter, Family & Children's Service of Ithaca, Cornell University College of Human Ecology, Gannett Health Services, and NAMI present the

**2007 Robert E. Hamlich, MD Memorial Lecture**  
featuring...

**Kay Redfield Jamison, PhD**  
"Personal & Professional Reflections on Mental Illness"  
Author of *New York Times* bestseller *An Unquiet Mind*

Cornell University, Bailey Hall  
FREE and Open to the Public



Tuesday, September 18, 2007

**2007 Robert E. Hamlich, MD Memorial Lecture**  
featuring

**Kay Redfield Jamison, PhD**  
*Author, Mental Health Advocate, and Professor of Psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine*

KAY REDFIELD JAMISON has unique insight into the world of mental illness. She has been there herself. A Professor of Psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University, Dr. Jamison shocked her colleagues by going public with her own struggle with manic-depression in a 1995 *Washington Post* article and subsequent book, *An Unquiet Mind*, a *New York Times* bestseller. Dr. Jamison has since become a trusted spokesperson for millions of people who live with mental illness. Audiences describe her lectures as profound educational experiences. She addresses the clinical and personal realities of depression and bipolar disorder in a manner that encourages dialogue, empathy, and hope.

<http://www.hamlich07-jamison.org>

Sponsored by Family & Children's Service of Ithaca, Cornell University College of Human Ecology, Cornell Minds Matter, Gannett Health Services, and National Alliance on Mental Illness - Finger Lakes.

**Tuesday, September 18**  
7:45 p.m.

Cornell University  
Bailey Hall  
Free and Open to the Public

**BOOK SIGNING  
IMMEDIATELY  
FOLLOWING**

20th, NAMI-FL Board Meeting, 6PM at Jean's

October

Information Table at Tompkins County Public Library, 2 weeks

November

2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>, NAMI-NYS Educational Conference, Albany, NY

15<sup>th</sup>, NAMI-FL Board Meeting

December

11<sup>th</sup>, Holiday Party, 6PM ( more info to come)

January

22<sup>nd</sup>, NAMI-FL ANNUAL MEETING

**SUMMER, 2007**

**LENDING LIBRARY**

NAMI-FL maintains a lending library, adding to it as new books come in. I have just read our newest book, *Innocent Man: Murder and Injustice in a Small Town*, by John Grisham, published in December, 2006. It is a true story about a man with bipolar disorder, who was falsely accused of a murder. Five days before he was to be executed, after years being on death row, DNA proved him innocent. I highly recommend it. If you would like to browse or borrow, call Jean Walters at (607) 273-2462 or Carol Booth at (607) 272-6593 and we will arrange a time.

*Jean Walters, Manager, NAMI-FL*

**BOOK AND MOVIE REVIEWS:  
Reviewer Anna Moratz**

**CRAZY (A Story within a Story)**

During our NAMI Family to Family Class, my husband and I were not the only ones wondering if there was hope for recovery of our bipolar loved one. All those attending needed help with the feelings of helplessness this and similar illnesses bring with them. Therefore we borrowed the book "Crazy" by Pete Earley from the NAMI Finger Lakes Library.

Earley, a distinguished journalist for over 30 years, describes how he tried to help his son Mike, earlier diagnosed with bipolar disorder. Earley repeatedly begged the police to protect his son from himself for his own safety, but they could only get involved after Mike, in a psychotic state, had broken into an expensive, unoccupied home and caused some fairly harmless property damage. And here a path began which only those familiar with the complexities of mental health laws can

imagine. The homeowners insisted on felony charges. Such a conviction could have shattered Mike's professional future. Those charges were rescinded by a miraculous coincidence. Mike entered a treatment program, but still faced misdemeanor charges from the break-in, to which he pleaded guilty, resulting in two years' probation. This not only severely impeded Mike's chances to return to any kind of work...he also had to learn not to disclose his bipolar disorder. His college degree did not help. Earley was told: "Just because your son is mentally ill does not mean he can't be charged with breaking the law." After some reluctance on his Dad's part, Mike insisted: "Readers should know what it's like to get sick and be arrested."

One may ask if mental illness would not save an individual from jail and a ruined future. But instead of helping mentally ill people get the treatment and counseling they need, the laws, which vary by state, make it more difficult and in many cases, impossible. According to Jim Randall, Vice President, NAMI, San Fernando Valley, the Bureau of Justice Statistics says there are currently 2.2 million people in prison. Given that it's estimated that 15 percent of this population suffers from a severe mental illness, that means the US has roughly 330,000 people incarcerated who suffer from brain disorders. Pete Earley's search for answers is reflected in the pages interspersed with Mike's story. Between 20%-45% of homeless individuals have a psychiatric disorder, and the borderline between wandering the streets and getting in trouble with the law is thin. Earley becomes deeply involved in the goings-on in the frequently overcrowded Miami-Dade County, Florida jail. His observations are hair-raising. The jail's psychiatrist, Dr.

Poitier, tells him: "Most mentally ill people do stupid things, not bad things. They should not be put in jail. A patient who needs help for his mental illness won't get it in here." For lack of time and professional staff, Dr. Poitier's preoccupation must be to make sure no one kills himself and to try to get inmates to take medications, so that they can be put on trial. Based on contacts made in the jail and in Miami's mental health groups, Earley follows several mentally ill people's lives. For example, Ted Jackson\*, was arrested for writing religious graffiti. In jail, he knew he needed medications, but the warden did not have any when asked. Later Jackson was moved to the mental health center. When they released him, he was still not thinking clearly. Another is Alice Ann Collyer\*, jailed nine times in 15 years for various crimes related to mental illness. She had been traveling between the jail and the Chattahoochee State Mental Hospital for three years, but still had not been put on trial or found guilty of any crime. Sadly, Ms. Collyer would soon be on the bus again, going back and forth between Chattahoochee and the jail, the same routine she had followed for 1,151 days, with no sign of continued professional psychiatric treatment on the horizon.

Earley describes one solution, of which more are needed: Passageway, a small refuge founded in an industrial area of Miami by Tom Mullen around the time the State of Florida was vacating many mental hospitals. Passageway is a halfway house specifically for mentally ill ex-offenders. As long as they take their medications, they can live there safely, receive individual psychiatric treatment, participate in classes, programs and day-to-day chores, and are carefully monitored

until they are found ready to gradually move to a more open environment.

Pete Earley ends Mike's story: "I have my son back." Many are not as fortunate as his son. Mental illness is biological and treatable. "Crazy," a wake-up call about the dangers of criminalization of the mentally ill, is an immeasurably important book.

\*Names are fictitious

### "My Sister's Keeper"

Kathy Bates portrays Chrissie in this movie, which shows the development of schizoaffective illness from the teen years on. Chrissie confronts the ignorance and helplessness of her widowed mother (Lynn Redgrave) and sister (Elizabeth Perkins). Both react with denial and shame. The superior acting and dialogue help us understand how living on the edge feels for Chrissie. "There's a shadow over me. Something awful--I can't stop it." The mother, who wants her other daughter to have a career away from home, loses her boundaries in her love for Chrissie. The sister slowly learns to better understand Chrissie's plight after the mother dies. But the viewer must guard against false conclusions. Chrissie appears slow and simple-minded, even during her good phases. Actually many such patients are highly intelligent. Because the family is shown as well-to-do, "My Sister's Keeper" ignores bigger problems, which arise for people at the lower edge of the social structure, who cannot afford the best possible treatment for their loved ones or are unable find help within the social system. The superficial ending does little to detract from the film's power. It is definitely worth seeing.

## **Fundraiser—Garage Sale**

Although no date has yet been set, we will be planning a fall garage sale in downtown Ithaca to benefit NAMI. We would like our NAMI friends and members to help. For now, we ask that you save any sellable items you may have. Please contact Susan Larkin (607 539 7299); e-mail SCL8@cornell.edu, or the NAMI-FingerLakes office: (607-273-2462); email namifl@lightlink.com if you'd like to be on the volunteer list and/or with any questions. Thank you. Details to follow!

*Anna Moratz*

## **EDUCATION**

### **Family-to-Family Course**

Last spring NAMI-Finger Lakes sponsored its sixth annual Family to Family class. Jean Walters and Susan Larkin taught the class with excellent assistance from Janet Lynch. Twenty people signed up for the class and all twenty finished. Interest and involvement were strong and we all learned, both from the curriculum and from each other. As previously, the class met once a week for twelve weeks. We were fortunate to have extra support from Bruce McKee who answered questions not covered in class via a link to our NAMI-Finger Lakes web page: <http://www.namifingerlakes.org>.

We were very fortunate to have guest speakers from Cayuga Addiction and Recovery, Tompkins County Mental Health Clinic, Ithaca Police, Ithaca College Police, and Tompkins Workforce NY. In addition we had excellent consumer speakers, Rob and Eileen Ameigh from Elmira who spoke with the class members

about their experiences with mental illness and recovery.

Many class members continue to meet for dinner once a month for information and support. As an advocacy project the class plans to sponsor a garage sale this fall to raise money to benefit NAMI-Finger Lakes.

NAMI-Finger Lakes will sponsor another Family to Family Class in spring, 2008. If you know anyone interested in taking the class, please have them call the NAMI-Finger Lakes office at 273-2462 or write to namifl@lightlink.com.

*Susan Larkin, Jean Walters, Janet Lynch,*  
Instructors

### **Psychiatric Disabilities in the Workplace**

On October 12, 2007, Employment & Disability Institute of the Cornell School of Industrial and Labor Relations, the Employee Assistance Program, and NAMI-Finger Lakes will hold a workshop at the Cornell Cooperative Extension System Conference (sorry, not open to the public). *Psychiatric Disabilities in the Workplace* will cover mental illness as a brain disorder and information on NAMI (Bruce McKee as speaker); the legal and human resources considerations, including the Americans With Disabilities Act; and the human experience (Carole Stone will speak about her personal experience).

The workshop is revised from a February 2, 2007, workshop held for Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) Administration on the Cornell campus.

CCE has approximately 1,700 employees in 56 county offices across the state and campus. Generally, the conference draws

300 to 400 people. The workshop may expect to draw 15 to 40 CCE employees.

*Deb Grantham*

### **Public Service Announcements**

The following PSAs are written by Susan Weitz, a NAMI-FL member, and have been sent to area radio stations.

Diabetes.  
Heart Disease.  
Mental Illness.  
Kidney Disease.

Which of these four conditions doesn't belong on the list?

If you guessed Heart Disease, you were right. Diabetes, Mental Illness, and Kidney Disease are all caused by a metabolic disorder—a chemical imbalance in an area of the body.

Mental Illness is biological, like Diabetes or Kidney Disease. One out of five people suffer from this condition. It's likely that you know someone with mental illness—a friend, a family member, someone you work with.

For more information on Mental Illness, its symptoms, and its treatment, call the National Alliance on Mental Illness of the Finger Lakes at 607-273-2462.

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Have you ever brought soup to a friend suffering from pneumonia? Or sent a sympathy card to a colleague with cancer? Run errands for a relative with multiple sclerosis?

When we see another human being in pain, we naturally want to help. But what happens when the person in distress has a



mental illness? There are no sympathy cards that read, “Sorry to hear you’re depressed,” or “Hope your manic episode ends soon.”

It’s a sad fact that people with mental illness suffer alone. They are criticized and stigmatized for their condition. They are told to get over it, to behave differently. Can you imagine saying to a diabetic, “Your problem is all in your head; just get back to work and ignore it. And don’t talk to me about it!” We know that diabetes is caused by chemical imbalances in the body and that it’s beyond the control of the diabetic. But most mental illness is also caused by chemical imbalances in the brain, and it is also beyond the control of the mentally ill person.

It’s time to think differently about mental illness. We need to talk freely about it and bring it out into the open. Join us. Start a conversation. Be sympathetic. And feel free to call us, the National Alliance on Mental Illness of the Finger Lakes at 607-273-2462.

**MENTAL HEALTH MONTH:  
Rally to Raise Awareness about Mental  
Illness and Supporting Mental Health**

We tried something new this year – a Rally for Mental Illness Awareness – and it was a great success. Ann Carter and I worked with a great group of volunteers, beginning in March – planning and carrying out the entire event – which took place down at Cass Park on Saturday, May 19, 1-3PM. We had 2 hours of inspirational speakers, lots of information about mental illness, donated snacks, and wonderful music, provided by Trish Engelhard and Friends. The speakers included Bob DeLuca,

Tompkins County Mental Health Commissioner; Dr. Robert Dean, head psychiatrist from Cayuga Medical Center; Eric Weaver from Rochester, NY (retired Sgt. from the Rochester Police Department and a consumer himself); David Bulkley from our Mental Health Association; Gary Tracy from SPACE; Carole Stone from Compos Mentis; Casey Carr from Cornell University’s Minds Matter student group; Barbara Lifton, our local state Assembly Woman; Paul Fairbanks from Elmira Psychiatric Center and Tompkins County Mental Health Services; Mark Lenzenweger, a noted researcher; Deb Grantham, a NAMI-FL member and her sister Liz; Carol and Ann, as MC. The Rally ended with a cheer by all NAMI-FL members in attendance and people were already talking about next year’s Rally! Many people signed petitions supporting a mandate for teaching about Mental Illnesses in all schools and also petitions for a housing waiting list. I sent these on to the Governor and to Michael Hogan, our new Commissioner – Mr. Hogan responded soon after with encouragement for our “grass roots” efforts.



Eric Weaver, former Rochester, NY police officer noted for initiation of training on mental illness for police officers.

Thanks to all of you who made this possible....we are certainly BREAKING THE SILENCE!!!!!!

*Carol Booth*, President, NAMI-FL

## COMPOS MENTIS

A growing band of community supporters and dedicated volunteers recently opened a seasonal, organic farming program for adults who are dealing with depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and other mental illnesses.

Pictures and information about the farm on Garrett Road, off Taughannock Blvd., 5 miles north of Ithaca, can be found at the website:

<http://www.composmentisithaca.org/>

Anyone interested in seeing the farm is invited to a picnic at 5:30P.M. on Wednesday, August 22 at the farm. Please bring a place setting.

Our big fundraiser for the fall will be a Raucous Auction, at the farm from 1:00 to 4:00P.M. on Sunday, September 9. Our auctioneer will be Peggy Haine.

We hope to see you at one or both of these upcoming events. If you have any questions, please call 539-7299 or write: SCL8@Cornell.edu

*Susan Larkin*, NAMI-FL and Compos Mentis