



Brain Pages



The Newsletter of NAMI Greater Bloomington Indiana Area

Family and Friends Together Providing Support and a Voice on Mental Illness

Issue No. 4

December 2006



Calendar of Events

January 8: TLC Support Group Meeting

January 15: NAMI-GBA Support Group Meeting

February 5: TLC Support Group Meeting

February 8: Family to Family Classes begin

February 19: NAMI-GBA Support Group Meeting

March 5: TLC Support Group Meeting

March 19: NAMI-GBA Support Group Meeting

April 2: TLC Support Group Meeting

Family to Family Class Now Accepting Participants

by Lee Strickholm

The next NAMI Family to Family Education Program, a 12-week course for families of individuals with severe mental illnesses, is scheduled to begin February 8, 2007. The class will be team taught by trained volunteers, Al and Lee Strickholm, on each consecutive Wednesday evening from 6:30 to 9:00pm at the First United Church, 2420 East Third Street in Bloomington.

The program has a dual focus: education and personal insight to help individuals coping with their family members who have been diagnosed with a variety of major brain disorders. In a confidential setting, the class will discuss mutual concerns and learn skills that help in coping more effectively with their loved ones.

The curriculum focuses on schizophrenia, bipolar disorder (manic depression), clinical depression, panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), and co-occurring brain and addictive disorders. The program balances education and skill training with self-care, emotional support, and empowerment.

We will learn about what our loved ones are actually experiencing, explore the biology and physiology of the brain, take a look at some of the current research on brain disorders, identify the positive and negative effects of common psychotropic medications, and explore how to become advocates against stigma and for the needs of our loved ones.

Class size is limited to 20 family members and requires pre-enrollment. To reserve a place, contact Al or Lee at 812-339-5440 or by email at leestrick@aol.com. There is no charge to participate. The program is underwritten by funds from the national and state NAMI affiliates and the Indiana Department of Mental Health.

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NAMI Joins Voices with the Brain Stigma Busters

by Jill Bolte Taylor

In late Spring 2006, Joan Hart placed a call-out for any groups interested in the brain to gather our voices together for a fall event with the candidates. The newly formed Bloomington Brain Stigma Busters sent questionnaires and invitations to all of the local candidates for a conversation of issues related to our populations of individuals with various forms of brain disorders. Representing their organizations were Joan Hart for CHADD, Penny Githens for the South Central Indiana Autism Society, Jan Nelson for the Tourette's Syndrome Organization, Laura Karcher for the Aphasia and Epilepsy Support Group at Indiana University, and Dr. Jill Taylor for NAMI-GBA.

On the evening of October 12, 2006, our Stigma Buster leaders and members gathered together to meet our political candidates with the hope of educating them about issues pertaining to our various populations afflicted with various brain problems. Dr. Jill Taylor presented information on the neuroanatomy of the brain in an attempt to help the candidates better understand the structure of the brain and its ability to become ill.

The evening was a terrific opportunity for our local candidates to better understand the brain in both wellness and in illness. Each of the candidates were given two minutes to speak. The rest of the evening was reserved for socializing, creating an opportunity for us to get to know the candidates and a chance for the candidates to get to know the local leaders in our community interested in issues about the brain and cognition.

The candidates and elected officials participating included all four candidates for judge, Jeff Chalfant, Teresa Harper, Valerie Haughton, and Francie Hill; Chris Gaal and Carl Salzmann, our candidates for prosecutor; Matt Pierce for the Indiana House of Representatives; a representative for Pat Stoffers and Jeff Ellington for County Commissioner; Jim Kennedy for Sheriff; and Sue West and Mark Stoops for County Council. Candidates for the Monroe County School Board included Valerie Merriam, Geoff McKim, and Beth Hamlin.

The Brain Stigma Busters will continue in 2007. We will keep you abreast of any activities through e-mail and announcements on our website.

Brain Pages is the official newsletter of the NAMI local affiliate in the Greater Bloomington Area.

For information or questions, please contact Kat Domingo, this issue's newsletter editor.

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NAMI-GBA wishes to thank the Center for Behavioral Health for helping to underwrite this issue of the newsletter.

Community Awards Three NAMI Members

by Lee Strickholm

The Bloomington Council for Community Accessibility recently recognized a number of individuals and businesses who have worked to enhance the lives of people with disabilities. We are proud to report that among those receiving awards are three NAMI-GBA members.

The Public Service Award was given to Vid Beldavs of Citizens for Effective Justice and Hal Taylor of New Leaf-New

Life, for their efforts in improving the criminal justice system. Vid currently serves on the Board of Directors of NAMI-GBA, and Hal was the founding member of our local affiliate many years ago.

Joan Hart received the Kristin Willison Volunteer Service Award for her dedicated and persistent advocacy on behalf of people with disabilities in the schools and throughout the community. Joan has just start-

ed her term as a member of the Board of Directors of NAMI-GBA and was responsible for the formation of the Brain Stigma Busters, a coalition of local organizations dedicated to fighting the stigma of cognitive disorders.

Congratulations to Vid, Hal, and Joan for their hard work, passion, and dedication to improving the lives of people throughout our community and beyond.

Exhibit of Consumer Art at the Buskirk-Chumley

by Cathy Korinek

“Be A Part of the Art of Mental Health” was the title of the Weekend programs presented December 1 and 2, in downtown Bloomington, co-sponsored by The Center for Behavioral Health and Mental Health America - Monroe County. Included in the event was a visual art exhibit at the Buskirk-Chumley Theater lobby on Saturday evening December 2. There were 37 wonderful works of art by mental health consumers from Monroe and Lawrence counties.

Various mediums, including graphite, acrylic, marker, and collage were used to cre-

ate the diverse pictures. Some were serious while others were whimsical, and many were very sophisticated, showing a good deal of talent. All were labeled with the artist name and some had a short statement from the artist about the work. It was great to see the pictures displayed where so many people could view them.

Also available that night were note cards with works by mental health consumers in Monroe and Lawrence counties. The 16 different pictures chosen for the cards were picked by a vote by the public in the case of the 8 from Lawrence

County, and by the staff and clients of CBH for the 8 from Monroe County. All of these cards can still be ordered for \$5.00 per box by contacting Cathi Norton at the Center for Behavioral Health in Bloomington by phoning 812 219-4882.

In January, an exhibit of the consumers' artwork is planned for Boxcar Books. There will also be cards available at that time. So if you missed this wonderful show in December, make a note to see it in January!

Cathy Korinek is a local visual artist who also serves on the NAMI-GBA Board of Directors.



Journal Review: *Schizophrenia Digest*

by Al Strickholm

the stigma associated with it. Some name changes suggested for schizophrenia have been "Neuro-Cognitive Dysphoria," "Neuro-Biochemical Disorder," or simply "Brain Disease." Whether this idea can contribute to reducing stigma associated with this brain disease remains to be seen, but the article suggests that it should be explored.

Other articles focused on caregivers and included sugges-

Some of the new research findings were especially interesting. One was the discovery that an immune gene may be linked to an increased risk of schizophrenia. Other findings also indicate that other genes have links to schizophrenia risk with the conclusion that there is no single gene responsible for this disease. Another research review shows that newly diagnosed schizophrenics had higher than normal blood glucose levels in the brain and spinal cord. This suggests that glucose metabolism of the brain may be impaired, giving rise to lower uptake of glucose by brain tissue, thus impairing neuron function. This finding may provide hope for a diagnostic clue identifiable prior to the onset of the disease. Another research article showed that the longer a psychosis goes untreated, the poorer the long-term outcome. These studies reinforce the need for early intervention.

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*Schizophrenia Digest* is published four times a year by Magpie Media, Inc. The founder and publisher is William MacPhee, who lives with schizophrenia. Subscription cost is \$19.95 per year, obtainable by toll free phone: 1-888-834-5537. The website is [www.szdigest.com](http://www.szdigest.com).

The Fall 2006 issue of *Schizophrenia Digest*, a magazine published four times a year, consists of some fifty pages and covers many aspects of mental illness, from treatment to coping and on to recovery. Some of the latest findings in research are also discussed.

This reviewer found several articles of particular interest. One concerned the stigma associated with schizophrenia and whether it could be reduced by changing the diagnostic name. Often the public confuses the term "schizophrenia" with the non-medical definition of "split personality." Manic depression is now called "bipolar disorder," which perhaps has reduced

tions for coping, handling crisis, and avoiding caregiver burnout. Overall, the information is of fundamental use. It discusses topics such as hospitalization and calling the police, but puts minimal emphasis on the role of support groups. The article on coping provides useful advice for those in a long term care giving role. This is when support groups are important. Ways of coping are described and include physical activity, becoming educated about the illness, avoiding social isolation, and taking time off to address your own needs. It also encourages caregivers to never give up hope since research on mental illness is ongoing.

# CHADD: Children and Adults with AD/HD

by Joan Hart

NAMI board members Joan and Jeffrey Hart attended the CHADD National Conference in Chicago in late October. CHADD stands for Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorders. Every aspect of AD/HD issues through the lifespan were discussed at the meeting, which features experts from all over the world. Researchers from the National Institutes of Mental Health described the results from longitudinal studies of adults with AD/HD.

The prognosis is not good:

80% are under-educated, under-employed, do not have health insurance, and struggle with executive functioning issues. AD/HD is a serious mental health issue in the United States and is not being seriously addressed.

On a more positive note, another researcher from the NIMH provided information on the search for genes associated with AD/HD. In comparing populations in South America, Germany, the United States, and South Africa, they have discovered four genes that cause AD/HD. They predict that new

therapies will result from these findings.

Russell Barkley proposed nine symptoms of adult AD/HD. Up until recently, medical professionals have been using child symptoms of AD/HD for diagnosis of adults with AD/HD. Since AD/HD is a developmental disability, and lasts into adulthood for the majority, diagnostic criteria appropriate for adults is needed. Barkley's longitudinal studies of individuals with AD/HD over the past 30 years is providing new insights into adult and child issues.

## CBH Announces New Hire: Stephanie Crane

by Lee Strickholm

The Center for Behavioral Health has announced a new staff position to work with clients at risk for serious medical conditions. The new employee, Stephanie Crane LPN, will take on a variety of responsibilities ranging from monitoring patients' screenings to assessing that their basic health needs are being met.

She will also serve as a liaison to the clients' private physicians to ensure that any abnormalities which might occur with the antipsychotic medications being prescribed

by the Center's psychiatrists are being identified and treated. The most common concerns for which monitoring guidelines have been established refer to excessive weight gain (obesity), glucose imbalance (diabetes) and lipid imbalance (cardiovascular disease). Communication between the psychiatrist and other physicians is essential to potentially save lives and help individual clients effectively integrate and function in society.

Ms. Crane will also work with the clients who participate in the Horizons Wellness

Project by providing nutritional assessments and follow up education. In addition, she will be available for referrals from case managers. Another area of focus will be with dual diagnosed clients where coordination of services is essential.

Funding problems are a constant source of concern for the Center. New state programs are often financed by the Department of Mental Health by shifting monies from a current program without making additional funds available for

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# What's New with New Leaf - New Life

by Vid Beldavs

As state mental hospitals closed, the population within jails and prisons rose dramatically. Deinstitutionalization led to re-institutionalization, but in places not designed to care for the mentally ill. Now, as resources for mental health care are shrinking, we must figure out how to make our system work better.

New Leaf - New Life is one response to this problem. When James Borden died in our jail after being assaulted and tasered by corrections officers in November 2003, a group of citizens began asking questions about what works and what does not work in the system.

One of the problems we identified was that police officers were not trained to divert mentally ill people out of the criminal justice system. We began to advocate for a program called crisis intervention team (CIT). In March 2004 Captain Dottie Davis of the Fort Wayne police, was invited to speak to the Monroe County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council. This launched an effort that led to CIT classes in July 2006.

We also determined that little was being done to prepare inmates for re-entry to the life and work of the community upon their release from jail. This led to the Transition

Program, which links volunteer navigators with inmates preparing for release to help them to find jobs and sources of support in the community.

In May, 2006 New Leaf - New Life began launching programs in the jail to help inmates make a smoother transition to community life. Among the volunteer-driven initiatives are three writing programs, three drama reading programs, and a group addictions treatment program.

In July 2006, New Leaf - New Life, secured a \$171,520 grant aimed at building programs inside the jail to develop a culture among inmates that fosters self-determination skills. We started with a men's pod in August and in late November began a women's pod. In Janu-

ary 2007, the men's pod will be expanded from the present 11 inmates to 24 or 30.

We are planning additional volunteer-driven programs including ones that target families and children of inmates. We are planning to work with other communities to start similar programs once the Bloomington model stabilizes.

New Leaf - New Life welcomes volunteers, both for programs inside the jail as well as outside mentoring released inmates and families. We are open to creativity and innovation and will help you find support and other volunteers to make your ideas work. Volunteers can contact Tania Karnofsky at [tania@newleaf-cej.org](mailto:tania@newleaf-cej.org) or Vid Beldavs at [vidbeldavs@newleaf-cej.org](mailto:vidbeldavs@newleaf-cej.org).

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## CBH Announces New Hire

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the ongoing services. In addition, private insurance companies have lower reimbursement rates for mental health than for other medical services. This new position will be funded by Medicaid reimbursement fees, which will consequently limit the services to only those clients who are eligible for Medicaid.

The NAMI-GBA Family Advisory Committee commends the Center for addressing this need. For the past year the Committee and the Center have been discussing guidelines to better monitor the serious side effects of psychotropic medications. NAMI members and friends can advocate for adequate funding to treat the seriously mentally ill by contacting Governor Daniels and their state legislators.

# NAMI: The Benefits of Membership

by Janet James

Why become a NAMI member? NAMI membership gives BACK to you. This time of the year, fund drives and earnest requests for you to join or donate to your favorite charity flood your mailbox. NAMI-GBA knows that the holiday season fosters nurturing and sharing with others who need help, but we approach the same goal from a different direction. We want to enlarge the community of people who seek comfort, information, resources, and support for families of persons with severe mental illness. We hope you will join NAMI-GBA so we can share our resources with you. Official membership is not a prerequisite to belonging to the community of Bloomington area persons and families who need the emotional support and advocacy that NAMI-GBA offers. It just makes it easier for us to reach out and welcome you into a collection of folks who have wrestled with and learned from some of the same experiences as you have had.

The purpose of NAMI-GBA is to provide emotional support; to provide information; to educate the public about the stigma of mental illness; to advocate for better public policy; to promote better quality of care; and to support families in crisis. Won't you join us? Among the tangible benefits of membership is the national magazine, *The Advocate*, real-time announcements and updates on medical advances, news of pending legislation affecting the mentally ill, local meetings featuring members of our own Bloomington area who are powerful advocates, and perhaps the most important benefit is knowing that there is a true community who wants to welcome you.

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## Not yet a member of NAMI-GBA? Join today!

Your annual membership includes newsletters from NAMI National, NAMI Indiana, and NAMI Greater Bloomington Area, as well as access to NAMI's wealth of resources and information.

- \_\_\_\_\_ \$25.00 Individual
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$35.00 Family
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$3.00 Consumer
- \_\_\_\_\_ I want to support NAMI-GBA with a tax-deductible gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_

**Please make checks payable to NAMI Greater Bloomington Area  
P.O. Box 7794, Bloomington, IN 47407  
[www.namibloomington.org](http://www.namibloomington.org)**

I am interested in:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Learning about volunteer activities
- \_\_\_\_\_ Arranging for speakers for my organization, church, or other group
- \_\_\_\_\_ Being a speaker about mental illness

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
Preferred method of contact \_\_\_\_\_

## **Study of Bipolar Disorder: Participants Needed**

Individuals with the diagnosis of Bipolar I Disorder (the severe form of mania) are currently being recruited to participate in an Indiana University School of Medicine research study to determine the genetic and environmental factors associated with this disorder.

### **Participation will include:**

- A confidential personal and family interview
- Small blood sample for the genetic analysis phase of the research study
- Monetary compensation for time and travel

**For more information about the study, please  
call the toll free number: 1-888-750-2201,  
send an e-mail to [bipolar@iupui.edu](mailto:bipolar@iupui.edu),  
or visit the website at [www.iupui.edu/~bipolar](http://www.iupui.edu/~bipolar)**

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