

Family to Family Program Trains 20 New Indiana Teachers

by Nan Miller

Kathleen Mickel and I recently attended an intensive training session for new teachers of NAMI's Family to Family classes. With the addition of the 20 new teachers certified in April, Indiana now has 150 teacher-facilitators throughout the state. We will be preparing a fall offering of this free 12-week class to begin in September in the Bloomington area.

The spring 2010 Family to Family class, which began in February and ended 29 April, was taught by Lee and Al Strickholm with Judy Eichhorn as resource person, and provided 20 family members with valuable support and information as they learn to assist their mentally ill family members in coping with

problems of daily living in our ever increasingly-complex world.

Topics covered in the 12-week class include descriptions of the major mental illnesses (Schizophrenia, Depression, Mania, Bipolar Disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder, Panic Disorder, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, co-occurring brain and addictive disorders, etc.), basic brain biology and the causes of brain disorders, available medications, what it is like to have a mental disorder, programs for rehabilitation and recovery, fighting stigma, support groups, advocacy, and self-care for the entire family.

We encourage family members with a loved one learning to cope with a severe mental illness to take advantage of this free course. Please call Kathleen Mickel, (812) 336-3992, to sign up for the fall class.

NAMI Greater Bloomington Area
P.O. Box 7794
Bloomington, IN 47407



BRAIN PAGES

The newsletter of
NAMI

Greater Bloomington Area

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

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**Recurring Events
all free**

1st and 3rd Mondays:

Family Support Group

First United

Methodist Church 7:00pm

1st and 3rd Thursdays:

Depression and Bipolar

Support Group

St. Marks

Methodist Church 7:00pm

2nd and 4th Thursdays:

Schizophrenia Support Group

Fairview Methodist Church

7:00pm

Family to Family

Tuesdays 7pm-9:30pm

for 12 weeks beginning

August 31

First United Church

2420 E. 3rd St.

Call Kathleen Mickel 336-3992

Public Forum

What should we expect if our mentally ill loved one goes to jail?

by Jill Bolte-Taylor

Hello NAMI friends and family. Welcome to May, Mental Health Awareness month. If you are anything like me then you are completely hesitant to call 9-1-1 when your family member with mental illness becomes so psychotic that they need immediate attention. As family members, once we call the police or sheriff's office we no longer have any say in the process of how that person is treated, and our fears of what might happen - how my loved one might be treated or how angry my loved one may become at me for calling at all, become very real.

On May 24, 2010, our local NAMI-GBA will be holding a public forum that will ask the question "What can we expect to happen to our mentally ill family member who ends up in the jail?" Our panel of local experts will include Dr. Don Weller, Chief Deputy Sheriff Mike Pershing, Andy Chandler from probation, Trisha Huffman from the prosecutor's office, a representative from the office of the defender and the courts.

We will hold this forum at the Monroe County Public Library auditorium on May 24 from 7pm-8:45pm. Everyone is welcome.

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A FEW WEBSITES OF INTEREST

compiled by John Isbell and Nan Miller

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The best online source for information about mental illness may be wikipedia.

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mental_Illness is an overview of mental illness, with sections on gender disparities, societal factors including Western bias, history, laws, stigma and mental illness in primates.

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_mental_illnesses is a comprehensive alphabetical list of individual mental illnesses, with causes, symptoms and treatment.

www.nami.org, the website of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, offers information on different illnesses, support and programs, medications, how you can help, news and and a link grading the states on their handling of mental illness.

namiindiana.org the Indiana NAMI website

nimh.nih.gov is the National Institute of Mental Health, National Institute of Health

schizophrenia.com

facingbipolar.com

If you search mental illness online, the first results will be sponsored by drug companies:

www.managingbipolar.com and

www.BipolarTreatmentInfo.com, for instance, describe causes, symptoms and treatment for bipolar disorder and schizophrenia while also having sections promoting individual drugs.

www.Help-Treat-Depression.com is sponsored by a drug company, but offers fairly useful tests to determine whether you suffer from depression or anxiety.

thebipolarbearmd.wordpress.com and

lunaticfringe.wordpress.com are two blogs devoted to mental illness.

You can google almost any topic and search selectively for information; for example, panic disorder, borderline personality disorder, etc. Then check out our local library or the IU Library and settle in for a summer of reading.

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

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This issue's editor is
Laura Jessep

NAMI-GBA wishes to thank
Centerstone for helping to
underwrite this issue of the
newsletter.

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.

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I am interested in:

_____ Helping to prepare mailings

_____ Writing an article or book review for the newsletter

_____ Helping with outreach for Mental Illness Awareness Week

_____ Participating on the NAMI Family Panel for CIT Training

_____ Training to be a Support Group Co-Facilitator

_____ Training to be a Family-to-Family class Co-Teacher

_____ Telling my story to church groups, university classes, etc.

_____ Other creative ideas:

Name _____ Home Phone _____

Address _____ E-mail _____

_____ Preferred method of contact _____

NAMI Founder Harriet Shetler's Legacy Statement

by Michael J. Fitzpatrick
National Executive Director
April 6, 2010

Harriet Shetler, whose wit and tenacious advocacy endeared her to NAMI members across the nation, died March 30 in Madison, Wis. She was 92.

She has often been considered NAMI's founder—although in fact, she was part of a larger movement.

With Beverly Young, also of Wisconsin, and more than 250 other grassroots leaders from around the country, Harriet convened a meeting in Madison in 1979 that resulted in the founding of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill.

From the Madison meeting, individuals and families affected by mental illness have risen out of isolation, anxiety and anger to become a force to be reckoned with at local, state and national levels—challenging medical assumptions and the mental health care system.

The story of the historic Madison meeting is included in the documentary *When Medicine Got It Wrong*, which will be aired on many PBS stations in May 2010, during Mental Health Month.

Today NAMI says thank you to Harriet, and the thousands of NAMI volunteers and members who have followed her, whether they knew her or not.

We thank her and all those who are our Harriet Shetlers today, working to build a better future for our children.

A New Hope. A Newer Antipsychotic Drug for Schizophrenia

Research Literature Reviewed by
Alfred Strickholm

In the beginning days of medications for schizophrenia, there were few drug options for treatment, and many had serious side effects. This led to medications on top of medications to counteract the side effects. This with time led to non-compliance and refusal to take medication. A major advance occurred over the last decade. Here, there appeared the newer anti-psychotics which avoided the previous side effects with the consequence of higher drug compliance. The newer antipsychotics mostly were largely variations of operating on the dopamine and serotonin neurotransmitter systems. However, these newer medications were not without problems and some had the problem of increased weight gain. Even though the newer medications improved overall treatment, they were often far from being satisfactory and the search for better ways of treating schizophrenia continued. It was clear there was more to understanding schizophrenia than the seeming defects in the dopamine and serotonin neurotransmitter systems.

An unfortunate but significant street drug accident indicated another pathway for treating schizophrenia. It was found that drug addicts, who used the street drug phencyclidine (PCP), acquired symptoms very similar to schizophrenia. The street drug phencyclidine worked on the neurotransmitter glutamate by impairing its ability to attach to a specific type of receptor site called the NMDA glutamate subtype. Since this discovery, research has focused on ways to enhance or modulate NMDA receptor function. The pharmaceutical firm Eli Lilly, has developed a new drug to do just that with drug title LY2140023, which is in clinical trials. It is believed this new drug will work largely on the negative schizophrenia symptoms such as introversion, apathy, low self-esteem, leading to personal neglect and more rarely catatonia. This is an exciting time for schizophrenia research and has pointed to new approaches for this very debilitating brain disease. We at NAMI have always encouraged family members to never give up hope and this newer drug, if successful, may open up newer ways of treating schizophrenia with more success.

NAMI Basics Class: Parenting Kids with Mental Illness

by Daunna Minnich

A child's mental illness affects every member of the family and poses unique challenges at home, school, and in the community. Ordinary parenting books and workshops do not touch on the things caregivers must do to help the child reach a state of wellness and restore balance to family life. To help parents and caregivers, NAMI is offering a six-week class in Bloomington this summer. Details on the course content of NAMI Basics can be found at http://www.nami.org/template.cfm?section=nami_basics1.

NAMI is able to offer this class free thanks to volunteer teachers and the generosity of a local agency offering its facilities for our meetings. Dates, times, and place are not quite firmed up as we go to press, so please contact either of the teachers for details: Sarah Hunt at sarah.f.hunt@gmail.com or Daunna Minnich at (812) 333-6660.

NAMI Information Table at the Bloomington Farmers' Market

by Jill Giffin

May is Mental Health Month. In addition to NAMI-GBA's May membership meeting and Mental Health Month public library displays, NAMI-GBA celebrates Mental Health Month by having an information table at the Bloomington Farmers' Market. From 8:00AM until noon every Saturday in May, friendly NAMI volunteers staff the table. At the table, volunteers provide brochures on subjects such as depression, schizophrenia and suicide prevention. They also offer information

about NAMI and its support groups and classes. While at the table, individuals can sign up to receive NAMI-GBA's newsletter, Brain Pages, and/or sign-up for the fall 2010 "Family to Family" class waiting list. Many of the information table volunteers have taken "Family to Family" and are happy to talk about this popular, free, twelve week course which provides a wealth of useful information to family members with loved ones living with mental illness. The volunteers also enjoy talking about initiatives to reduce the stigma of mental illness like NAMI StigmaBusters. If you visit the Farmers' Market this May, please stop by our table to pick up a brochure, to chat, or just to say a quick "hello".

MENTAL ILLNESS AT THE MOVIES

By Robert David Jaffee, author, journalist,
mental-health activist

The Huffington Post, February 25, 2010

Avatar, a film that has broken box office records, is likely to win a number of Oscars at the upcoming Academy Awards. But one of the films that recently caught my attention and may win a few Oscars next year is Shutter Island, a haunting noir directed by Martin Scorsese. Much has already been written about Shutter Island, but my perspective may be a bit different because the film reminded me of my own state of mind years ago, in 1999, when I had my last psychotic break. Like Leonardo DiCaprio's federal marshal, I too once sensed that every subtle wink, nod or gaze from the patients,

orderlies or doctors at a psychiatric ward could mean a conspiracy at work. My psychosis did not involve the Nazis or the House Un-American Activities Committee, two preoccupations of DiCaprio's character, but it did take on a political dimension. I feared that I would be blamed for the failure of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and believed that President Clinton, who was in the process of being impeached, was one of the few people who could save me. Some critics have argued that Shutter Island tries to do too much, in jamming in all these red herrings, but psychosis is often like that, a kitchen sink of conspiracies roiling in one's head. The delusional person extrapolates very easily, from the benign to the sinister. So, it is

completely convincing to me to have all these MacGuffins in the script. Those are not the only aspects of the film that ring true. Just as DiCaprio's character worries about experiments being done on patients, I worried that the nurse at the UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute (now known as the Resnick Neuropsychiatric Hospital) was going to contaminate my medication. Finally, there is DiCaprio's performance itself, which is quite impressive. While some have mocked his Boston accent in the film, DiCaprio does a fine



job of demonstrating what it is like to lose one's sanity. It does not happen all at once; it trickles in slowly, until you start to question the strange looks of all of your seeming adversaries. I sometimes wonder how our brains can conjure all these details into a parallel reality akin to a horror film. Shutter Island's actors notwithstanding, we often see over-the-top portrayals of the mentally ill. Consider the patients, other than Jack Nicholson's Randall McMurphy, in One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest, many of whom have a tic of some sort, or the extremely florid turn of

Vivien Leigh in A Streetcar Named Desire. Then there are the reductive diagnoses of the mentally ill in movies like Spellbound and Psycho. Of course, there are exceptions. We all remember Russell Crowe's excellent performance as a schizophrenic mathematician in A Beautiful Mind. Like DiCaprio, Crowe showed a range of emotion in that role, which pleased me since the mentally ill are as likely to have depth to their personalities as the non-mentally ill. Another recent movie dealing with mental illness, Creation, is notable not so much for its acting as for its conceit that Charles Darwin, the embodiment or avatar, if I may use the term, of the man of science, experienced hallucinations. His visions were not of blue people but rather of his late daughter, who died in childhood. It is astonishing to think that the genius, who postulated that over tens of thousands of years we have evolved through natural selection, may himself have been psychotic, an illness that many have wrongly viewed as a weakness or a failure of the will. As Darwin, Paul Bettany, who essayed Crowe's imaginary roommate in A Beautiful Mind, plays a man who himself becomes delusional. Grief-stricken over his favorite child's death, Darwin communicates with her ghost, a little sprite who turns up from time to time asking him to tell her sad stories. When I had my two psychotic breaks, I had great difficulty reading and writing. I thought that there was a conspiracy to frame me for a series of nefarious crimes. It may be a minor miracle that I was able to write at all at that time, but I wrote because I had to. It was the one thing that was keeping me sane, the one thing that was keeping me alive.

When I finished my novel, I had no goals, nothing left, to keep me from the flood of delusion. I ended up in the psychiatric ward at USC in 1997 (and UCLA in 1999). Years later, I have been able to manage my psychosis with good therapy, a lot of love from my wife, Barbara (not unlike that which Darwin received from his wife, as we know from the film), and a determination to write. As detrimental as psychosis is, it is possible that it has its benefits, in terms of creativity and perhaps even survival. Darwin was enfeebled for decades by a parasite, which he acquired in his travels around the world. That he fought through his illnesses and wrote The Origin of Species and The Voyage of the Beagle, tomes that will forever enrich humanity, should tell us that the psychotic strand may in the end be an advantageous trait.

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