

## NAMI-GBA Membership Meeting

Honoring Lee and Al Strickholm

Hello Everyone,

I hope you are enjoying the Fall weather! We will be holding our annual NAMI-GBA Membership Meeting on Saturday, October 20, from 2-4pm at the First United Church (2420 E 3rd St) in the Roger Williams room. This will be a very special gathering as we honor Lee and Al Strickholm for their generous contribution of time, energy and love over the many years our local NAMI affiliate has been in existence. It was a call-out from the Strickholms back in 2003 that resulted in the formation of a new board and a new effort for us to create a viable organization that is providing quality services and programs to our local community. Please come share in our celebration of these two wonderful people for the gift they have been to, not only this organization but also to the quality of life for families with mental illness here in Bloomington, Indiana.

If you are interested in sharing a few minutes of testimony at the annual meeting about how the Strickholms have made a positive contribution to your lives in living with mental illness, please let us know when you RSVP for the afternoon event and we will include you in the agenda for the day. In addition to celebrating the Strickholms we will vote for our new board members. We hope to see you all there.

Jill Bolte Taylor

NAMI Greater Bloomington Area

P.O. Box 7794

Bloomington, IN 47407

**New  
NAMI  
phone  
number**

**NAMI has a new  
phone number.  
Please make  
note.**

**812 369 3119**



# BRAIN PAGES

The newsletter of

**NAMI** Greater  
Bloomington  
Area

National Alliance on Mental Illness

*Providing  
Support and a Voice  
on Mental Illness*

Issue no. 19

October 2012

## Medicaid Expansion

What would it mean to Indiana's mental health consumers?

by the NAMI board

Beginning January 2014, Medicaid expands eligibility to all people under 133% of the federal poverty level which means that individuals earning less than \$14,856/yr and a family of four with less than \$30,657/yr can access Medicaid.

Approximately 500,000 new Indiana enrollees will be able to have health insurance if our State decides to expand Medicaid afforded under the Presidents' Affordable Health Care, ("Obamacare") legislation. It is estimated that one-fifth to one-third of uninsured Hoosiers have mental and substance use disorders. These individuals could be potentially treated in a more cost effective manner than with our existing wasteful system of emergency room care and incarceration. The Federal Government will assume 93% of expansion costs over the years 2014-2022 with Indiana's share being approximately 10 billion over the next 10 years. There are also inherent budget savings for the State but estimates vary a great deal at this time.

"Obamacare" represents a significant step forward in efforts to expand access to proper health care for individuals with mental health and substance abuse concerns. It has long been recognized that early prevention of these conditions is key to lessening a lifetime of family distress and loss of productivity to our society. Mental health and substance use conditions are among the most prevalent of health conditions, with the age of onset for these illnesses occurring in adolescence and young adulthood. Half of all people with a mental health diagnosis first experience some symptoms by age 14, but until now have not been able to obtain treatment until age 24 or after. This is largely due to discrimination by our health insurance industry that historically has severely limited access to treatment for these conditions and a public system that required enrollees to be permanently disabled.

If Indiana elects not to expand Medicaid coverage for its poorest citizens then we will have missed out on a huge opportunity to provide essential preventative care to those most vulnerable to lifetime illnesses. In the next few weeks the voters of Indiana will have to choose which direction is best for our state. All of us need to carefully consider the implications of our choice before deciding what direction is best for our state.



*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**

*call (812) 332 7164  
for location  
7:00pm*



# IN THIS ISSUE...



- 1 Medicaid Expansion
- 2 Out of Darkness Walk
- 2 Family Support Groups
- 3 Family to Family Class
- 4 NAMI-GBA Book Club
- 5 FaithNet Training
- 5 Candidate Forum on Disabilities
- 6 Parents and Teachers as Allies
- 6 Stigma
- 7 Join NAMI
- 8 Membership Meeting

*Check out NAMI on Facebook!*

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

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This issue's editor is  
 Laura Jesseph

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

## Out of the Darkness Community Walk

For the fourth straight year, Team NAMI-GBA will walk in support of the Out of the Darkness Community Walk benefitting the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP).

**Where:**

Indiana University Football Stadium

**When:** Saturday, 10/27/2012

10:00 am to 1:00 pm

(check-in 9:00-10:00)

To join Team NAMI-GBA or to

Donate: visit [http://](http://afsp.donordrive.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=donorDrive.team&teamID=40523)

[afsp.donordrive.com/index.cfm?](http://afsp.donordrive.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=donorDrive.team&teamID=40523)

[fuseaction=donorDrive.team&tea](http://afsp.donordrive.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=donorDrive.team&teamID=40523)

[mID=40523](http://afsp.donordrive.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=donorDrive.team&teamID=40523)

**Family Support Groups  
 Please Drop In !**

The welcome mat is always out at NAMI GBA support groups, no reservation needed. Come once, come regularly, or come now and then. Come when you're worried sick or when things are going well. (Good news gives us all hope!) It's a safe and confidential place to talk, seek resources and advice, or just say things out loud. You'll go home feeling less alone.

**Bloomington**

3rd Monday each month, 7pm  
 First United Methodist Church, Rm 302  
 4th St. at Lincoln, Bloomington

**Bedford**

2nd Tuesday each month, 7 pm  
 Free Methodist Church  
 640 R St., Bedford

**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.

\_\_\_\_\_ \$35.00 Individual/Family

\_\_\_\_\_ \$3.00 Open Door

\_\_\_\_\_ I want to support NAMI-GBA with a tax-deductible gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_

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

**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 Parents and Teachers as Allies Program

by Jill Giffin

NAMI-GBA is searching for four individuals to serve as panelists for a NAMI in-service mental health education program for school professionals called Parents and Teachers as Allies. The goals of this program are to help school professionals and families understand the early warning signs of mental illnesses in children and adolescents, to provide information on the best ways to intercede, and to link students and their families with mental health treatment services. Prior to presenting the program in a school in Bloomington, the panelists will receive Parents and Teachers as Allies training from NAMI Indiana instructors. The program requires that the presenter team consist of four individuals. One individual is an education professional, who is also a family member of someone who has lived with mental illness. The second is a Family to Family class teacher. The third is a parent with a young child or youth currently struggling with a brain disorder, and the fourth is a person who had mental illness as a child. Presenters will lead sections on the early warning signs of mental illnesses, on the family response, and on living with mental illness. In addition, there will be a discussion portion of the program. If you would like to make a positive difference in the lives of parents and their children living with early onset mental illnesses, please consider volunteering to participate as a panelist in the Parents and Teachers as Allies program. For more information about the program or to volunteer please call (812)369-3119 or e-mail Jill Giffin at [jillleathgiffin@yahoo.com](mailto:jillleathgiffin@yahoo.com).

## Stigma

by Jan Reeves

At the 2012 National NAMI Convention, Dr. Thomas Insel, director of National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), addressed the lack of measurable improvement in the outcomes for treatments of mental illness over the last decade.

One roadblock to progress has been thought to be the stigma of mental illness. "Stigma" is a word Dr. Insel tries to avoid. "It's sort of a victim word," he said. "I think what we're trying to do is to get people more empowered and trying to talk about this more as discrimination or injustice."

In addition, according to Insel we should rethink the way we conceptualize mental illness. He feels the terms "behavioral health" and "mental health," may be further confusing the problem. "It would be like calling ischemic heart disease a chest pain problem," he said. "In many ways we are about where cancer was 35 or 40 years ago or where heart disease was 45 or 50 years ago."

Dr. Insel feels that when the focus is changed from the obvious cognitive impairments to the underlying mechanisms involved, real improvements will follow. "Continued research on the early stages of the development of mental illness will result in treatments that can truly begin to address the core of the problem rather than focusing on mitigating the visible expressions of the illness."

For Dr. Insel, beyond progress in basic medical science, "If you look at those things that help to build resilience... one of the best is simply by getting families involved."

## Family to Family Can Help

by Laura Jesseph

Maybe it's a change in sleeping patterns or in mood that gets our attention. Maybe it's laziness or lethargy or, conversely, heightened energy and enthusiasm. It could be over-eating or under-eating. It could be withdrawal from society or paranoia or inappropriate interaction with others. Or it could be a full-blown psychotic crisis that demands the involvement of family and/or friends. Something eventually happens that shines a light on the 'elephant in the room'-- mental illness. No person wishes to have mental illness. No mother, brother, husband, child, wants his/her loved one to suffer. Nor do we wish to abandon certain expectations we all have for our relationships.

Coming to terms with mental illness in our families is a process. As we move out of the darkness of denial, we might feel overwhelmed with the demands and uncertainty of our reality. Mental illness can rob a person of relationships, jobs, financial security, self-esteem and happiness. Family members lose too, and are left trying to make sense of it all and to create a new vision for the family that considers their new reality.

Family to Family can help. Designed, not for the persons suffering from mental illness, but rather for the family members or primary caretakers of someone with a serious mental illness. This national NAMI curriculum is available in our community for free to anyone who meets this criteria. The class meets once a week for two and a half hours and educates family members about issues that can help them understand and navigate their role as caregiver. These are topics covered in class:

- Current information about schizophrenia, major depression, bipolar disorder (manic depression), panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, borderline personality disorder, and co-occurring brain disorders and addictive disorders
- Up-to-date information about medications, side effects, and strategies for medication adherence
- Current research related to the biology of brain disorders and the evidence-based, most effective treatments to promote recovery
- Gaining empathy by understanding the subjective, lived experience of a person with mental illness
- Learning in special workshops for problem solving, listening, and communication techniques
- Acquiring strategies for handling crises and relapse
- Focusing on care for the caregiver: coping with worry, stress, and emotional overload
- Guidance on locating appropriate supports and services within the community
- Information on advocacy initiatives designed to improve and expand services

We are well into our fall class and are building a waiting list for the class that will, we hope, begin in February. If you are interested in joining the next class contact Janet James (812) 345 3294/[jjames@indiana.edu](mailto:jjames@indiana.edu) or Laura Jesseph (812) 333 0341/[ljesseph@aol.com](mailto:ljesseph@aol.com).

A lot of attention and resources are required when someone is in the throes of a mental illness -- attention and resources directed at the person with the mental illness, not the caregiver. Family to Family is there to fill this need. It is a lifeline for caregivers.

# Fall Reminder notice of NAMI-GBA Book Club

by Janet James



**NEXT MEETING**  
**NAMI-GBA BOOK CLUB**  
**October 17, 2012.**  
Book titles chosen for this meeting:  
**An Unquiet Mind**, by Kay Redfield Jamison  
**Over My Head**, by Cornelia Osborn  
Both are available at the Monroe County Library.

At our last book club meeting on a beautiful, cool evening, we moved to the comfortable sofas in 'our' room, and talked about the two books we had read: Stop Walking on Eggshells, and I Am Not Sick, I Don't Need Help. We selected these books because we were interested in approaching mental illness, this time, from the point of view of loving someone who is sick. We plunged into a discussion about *communicating*, how to talk to the people we love so that they *hear us, and*

*believe us, and trust us*. Reflective listening (one of the author's terms) is a social skill that calls for the listener to drop his or her own agenda and focus on trying to understand, and to empathize with the speaker, regardless of their psychological idiosyncrasies. We thought of the times we needed to be reminded to listen without judging, to respect another point of view. The hardest part, to us, is to apply this technique. It's hard to do without practice. We have been accused of being parental and patronizing (why we sometimes feel we are "walking on eggshells").

Discussing empathy took us to the question of how often it seems that persons with brain disorders lack insight into their illness. One of the common manifestations of borderline personality disorder and schizophrenia is the absence of the capacity to empathize. On the other hand, we too, as caregivers are challenged to even understand how persons with dysfunctional areas of the brain, see life, experience the world, rationalize the confabulations that occur, and process the stimuli flooding their senses, - all creating a reality different from ours. How do we empathize when we know so little about behavioral changes resulting from the brain misfiring?

**OUR MEETING SCHEDULE**  
Wednesday, October 17, 2012  
Wednesday, December 12, 2012  
7:00 to 8:30 pm  
**First Christian Church**  
Sanctuary/Gathering Room

We were reluctant to let this line of thought go, so we selected the two books in the box above. We wanted to read more about brain dysfunction. These two books are first person accounts by two accomplished women of how it feels to be them, coping with brains that are not working properly. One, a doctor, had a traumatic brain injury that changed the way she behaved, thought, and perceived the world. The other author, a professor of psychiatry, draws from her

personal history with bipolar disease to ask whether her brain is her behavior". Biology, genetics, circuitry and chemistry lead them, and us, in the direction of an organic understanding of brain dysfunction.

We want meetings to be interesting and open. If you haven't finished the book(s), come and participate anyway. Your experience, your reaction, your ideas all belong in the NAMI Book Club. We welcome suggestions to add to our list of proposed books to read.

Please call Janet James, (812) 345-3294, or e-mail [jjames@indiana.edu](mailto:jjames@indiana.edu), to suggest a book, or ask a question about the group.

# NAMI FaithNet Training

Would you like to learn more about the connection between mental health and faith communities? Then come to NAMI's upcoming FaithNet training! Let me quote the event organizer: "We are thrilled that so many of you are interested in learning more about educating clergy and people of faith about mental illness. The immediate purpose of the training Reaching Out to Faith Communities is to empower NAMI members and leaders to become catalysts for raising awareness in faith groups, for breaking the silence surrounding mental illness, for sharing the NAMI story and for creating caring congregations. I am confident you will gain a great deal, if for no other reason than by connecting with other NAMI Indiana volunteers who are endeavoring to create more informed, supportive congregations."

Interested? Please contact John Isbell (NAMI-GBA) at [clayisbell@earthlink.net](mailto:clayisbell@earthlink.net), tel. 339-5754.

Saturday, October 27  
8:30 – 2:30  
(check-in 8:00 to 8:30 AM)  
Unitarian Universalist Church  
2120 North Fee Lane  
Bloomington, IN 47408

## Successful Candidate Forum on Disability Issues

by Jill Giffin

On July 17, over 135 people attended a very successful Candidate Forum on Disability Issues sponsored by NAMI-GBA, Stone Belt, Mental Health America, Life Designs and the Arc of Indiana. Over 135 people were introduced to eight candidates on the state and/or federal level. The candidates presented opening comments and later answered questions from the audience. The goal of the forum was to not only learn the candidates' positions but also to help the candidates better understand the issues important to the disabilities community. In that vein, NAMI-GBA board member Sarah Hunt shared her and her daughter's story and the tough decisions that she and other parents like her must make when insurance coverage is inadequate to meet the needs of children requiring long term treatment for serious mental illness. Jill Bolte Taylor, our NAMI-GBA president, shared two powerful personal stories. One story illustrated that mental illness does not discriminate. It can affect the well-off, the poor, those on the right or the left of the political spectrum, and that we need to see each other as human beings first and that will help us interact better when we disagree on issues. Jill Bolte Taylor also shared her brother's experiences with the justice system. The lesson learned from that story, one echoed by several of the candidates after hearing the story, was that we can pay less by helping individuals get appropriate early treatment or we can pay much more later when problems arise due to inadequate treatment. Many of the candidates urged the audience to contact them and help them better understand disability-related issues. It is important to take the time to research your candidates' positions, to vote on November 6th, and to contact your elected officials when legislation impacting our community is pending. You can view the forum online via the CATS website: <http://catstv.net/government.php?isearch=banner&webquery=disabilities> (search Candidates' Forum on Issues Related to Disabilities).