



NAMI Blue Ridge Family Alliance

Newsletter

September 2007

Upcoming Meetings Visitors Welcome

Informal Support Group Meetings

First Thursdays from 5:30pm-7:00pm

- October 4 • November 1 • December 6
- January 3 • February 7 • March 6
- April 3 • May 1 • June 5

Speaker Meetings

Third Thursdays from 5:30pm-7:00pm

**Thursday, September 20, 5:30pm-7:00pm
Treating Mental Illness in Virginia**

Mira Signer is the new Executive Director of NAMI/Virginia. Virginia has multiple commissions looking at mental health treatment in our state. Mira will report on their results to date. She will also discuss the role of her NAMI/Virginia organization.

**Thursday, October 18, 5:30pm-7:00pm
Outpatient Commitment**

John Snook of the Treatment Advocacy Center (TAC) will discuss outpatient commitment. TAC monitors the laws on treating the mentally ill in all 50 states and also advocates for better laws and treatment. Outpatient commitment has not been used in the Charlottesville area but its misuse was an important aspect of the Virginia Tech tragedy. Should we add outpatient commitment to the range of mental health services in our area?

**Thursday, November 15, 5:30pm-7:00pm
Ask the Doctor**

Dr. Barbara Haskins, a psychiatrist at Western State Hospital, is back by popular demand. Dr. Haskins has many years working with a wide variety of individuals suffering from serious mental illnesses. This is your opportunity to meet with Dr. Haskins in a small, informal group setting and ask her all those tough questions you have been struggling with.

**Thursday, December 13, 5:30pm-7:00pm
[Note this is SECOND Thursday of month]**

Meet Region Ten's New Executive Director Robert Johnson is the new Executive Director of Region Ten. Mr. Johnson will provide his perspective on Region Ten and the many changes in progress. He also looks forward to hearing your Region Ten stories, both good and bad.

***** Location *****

BRFA/NAMI meetings are held at the new Region Ten location at 500 Old Lynchburg Rd. From I64 Exit 120, take 5th Street Extended south (away from Charlottesville) for about a mile to Old Lynchburg Rd on the right. (You passed the new county office building on your left.) Turn right on Old Lynchburg Rd and then right again at the first driveway. The new Board Room is in the administrative building at the rear of the property.

NAMI-Blue Ridge Family Alliance

[a 501(c)(3) organization]

Charlottesville, VA 22903

Voice Mail: (434) 970-1257

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Address:
250 Pantops Mountain Rd.,
Apt. 5323
Charlottesville, VA 22911

NEWSLETTER

Editor: April Ballard
Circulation: James and Shelah Scott

This newsletter is published bi-annually.
Persons wishing to contribute an original
article are asked to contact the editor.

Monticello Avenue site
<http://avenue.org/brfa>

Charlottesville Community Calendar
www.chvillecalendar.com

What's New?
Announcements

**Building Community/
Taking Action**
October 7-13, 2007

Since 1990, mental health advocates across the country have joined together during the first week of October to celebrate Mental Illness Awareness Week (MIAW).

What is Mental Illness Awareness Week?

Established in 1990 by Congress, the first week of October is designated as "Mental Illness Awareness Week" (MIAW) in recognition of NAMI's efforts to raise mental illness awareness. "Bipolar Disorder Awareness Day" (BDAD) is held each year on the Thursday of MIAW to encourage further understanding and promote early intervention and treatment for this mental illness.

MIAW and BDAD are NAMI's premiere public awareness and public education campaigns that link the organization nationally to the organization's over 1100 local affiliates across the country.

Over the past 16 years, MIAW has become a tradition in NAMI. It presents an opportunity for all three levels of NAMI – national, state and local – to work together in communities across the country in meeting the NAMI mission through a variety of outreach, educational, and advocacy efforts.

Save the date! **National Day of Prayer**

Mark your calendars now for the 4th annual National Day of Prayer for Mental Illness Recovery and Understanding. Held on the Tuesday of Mental Illness Awareness Week, this year the date will be October 9, 2007.

It is not too early to begin planning for this day within your faith community. To learn more and access resources, visit the Day of Prayer page on the FaithNet Web site.

New booklet for faith community outreach Deacon Tom and Rita Lambert of the Commission on Mental Illness of the Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago have produced a brief but comprehensive booklet for equipping faith communities for mental illness ministries.

Sections within this 22-page guide include an overview of the needs of people and families affected by mental illness, the role that the faith community can play, theological bases for a faith response, and practical resources such as sample prayers, newsletter articles, and workshops.

Download the guide at <http://www.nami.org>.

In January 2007, BRFA/NAMI spotlighted the new **Charlottesville Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT)**, coordinated by Tom von Hemert, a criminal justice planner for the Thomas Jefferson Area. CIT is a community partnership between police, mental health consumers and family members; the following is an update on the year's activities and objectives for moving forward.

Thomas Jefferson Area CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM

Objectives for FY08 (July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008) with Continuation Funding:

The following objectives are to be completed by June 30, 2008.

- 1.) Specialized training of **40%** of the patrol force (Charlottesville, Albemarle, and University of Virginia Police Departments) in the handling of the mentally ill and substance abusing persons exhibiting signs of mental disorder will be provided during this year of this grant.
 - Keep CIT Training available to:
 - Charlottesville Sheriff's Department
 - Albemarle Sheriff's Department
 - Albemarle-Charlottesville Regional Jail
 - Emergency Services Dispatchers
- 2.) Develop and improve trained CIT instructors, faculty, and course refinement.
 - Conduct a three-day Train-the-Trainer Training by Spring 2008.

- 3.) Expand CIT training and services to all seven rural sheriff's departments within the Thomas Jefferson Area Community Criminal Justice Board region. Specialized training of **20%** of the patrol force in the handling of the mentally ill and substance abusing persons exhibiting signs of mental disorder will be provided during this year of this grant in the following counties.

- Nelson County
- Goochland County
- Louisa County
- Orange County
- Greene County
- Madison County
- Fluvanna County

- 4.) Further enhance the continuum of services for people with mental illness in crisis for the Charlottesville-Albemarle area.
 - Develop a Peer-Run Crisis Alternatives to prevent people with mental illness from entering the criminal justice system.

News

Virginia Tech Tragedy

The Washington Post (The 'Toll Would Have Been Less': Panel Details Problems That Could Take Years to Fix, By Tim Craig and Sandhya Somashekhar, Friday, August 31, 2007) reports that the eight-member panel that investigated the April tragedy at Virginia Tech cited communication breakdowns, a flawed mental health system and confusion over student privacy laws as key factors in the report, released August 29.

As reported in *The Washington Post*, the panel report also revealed, for the first time, the strong involvement Seung Hui Cho's family, educators, and mental health professionals had with him during his middle

and high school years.

Last year, Virginia's mental healthcare system received a 'D' grade in a national survey. The national average also was 'D.'

Resources:

[Virginia Tech Panel Report](#)

<http://www.governor.virginia.gov/TempContent/techPanelReport.cfm>

[NAMI Statement](#)

<http://www.nami.org>

Charlottesville Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Forum Briefing for Legislators

The residents, consumers, family members, and service providers of Charlottesville and surrounding counties gathered together on Thursday, April 26, 2007 to discuss their concerns related to mental health, mental retardation and substance abuse issues and how these services are provided in our community. Those who organized the legislative forum - the Region Ten Community Services Board, the Virginia Organizing Project, the Quality Community Council, and the University of Virginia intended to facilitate carefully considered legislation that will be brought up this fall and in the future.

A summary of the briefing is available (<http://avenue.org/brfa>)

Represented Organizations:

Children Youth and Family Services

(<http://www.cyfs.org/>)

FACES: Family Advocacy Creating Education and Support (<http://www.facesva.org/>)

Women's Initiative (434-872-0047)

VOCAL: Virginia Organization of Consumers Asserting Leadership

(<http://www.vocalsupportcenter.org/>)

Mental Health America

(<http://www.nmha.org/>)