

April 2017 e-Newsletter



Greater Houston

NAMI Greater Houston Wins Outstanding NAMI Affiliate of the Year!

The Outstanding NAMI Affiliate Award is given to recognize exceptional efforts on the local level in carrying out the NAMI mission as defined by the NAMI Standard of Excellence. The NAMI Board of Directors applauds NAMI Greater Houston for their strong board leadership, governance and being a leader in reaching out to diverse communities through events, providing quality year-round education programs, in English and Spanish, support groups, and the NAMIWalks.

The accomplishments of NAMI Greater Houston have continued to build over the years and are impressive with most recently finishing the re-affiliation process and being endorsed by the NAMI Board in November 2016.

What: 2017 NAMI National Convention

When: June 28-July 1, 2017

Where: Washington Hilton Hotel 1919 Connecticut Ave. NW Washington, DC 20009

[Register for the NAMI National Conference HERE](#)

A Message from the President

Your volunteer work makes NAMI Greater Houston an essential organization in our communities. Our no-cost training and support help so many individuals and families affected by trauma and brain disorders.

We are working to reach even more.

NAMI Greater Houston's work at the local level this past year has resulted in our organization receiving the highest possible NAMI National Award, **2017 Outstanding NAMI Affiliate of the Year**.

We are proud of our work with the Harris County District Attorney's Office this past year on the "Jenny case", which has resulted in NAMI Greater Houston providing its Provider Education class to over 70 staff members with the Harris County District Attorney's Office.

The **2017 Outstanding NAMI Affiliate of the Year** will be presented to YOUR NAMI Greater Houston at the 2017 NAMI National Convention in Washington D.C. Our Executive Director Glenn Urbach, Program Director Angelina Hudson, and past president Alice Brink will accept the award.

We're getting ready to have fun and make our voices heard at our 2017 NAMIWalks event on May 6. Lead an NAMIWalks team or join one, even if it is as a virtual walker if you're not able to walk. Again, there is NO registration fee and there is NO minimum amount to raise.

If you can't walk, there are plenty of volunteer opportunities on Walk Day or leading up to the Walk. Contact our Walk Manager, Rachel Bromley, at rbromley@namigreaterhouston.org or (713) 970-4424

In terms of mental health legislation and advocacy, there are many state and federal opportunities for advocacy this spring. You can make a big difference for mental health services and justice by making at least one phone or email contact every week. NAMI email alerts make it easy! Visit www.namitx.org to learn more about pending mental health legislation and what YOU can DO to make tomorrow a better place for all affected by a mental illness.

Thank you for all you do.

Dr. Jane Malin
Board President
NAMI Greater Houston

Join us Saturday, May 6th

Sam Houston Park Downtown
1000 Bagby St.
8:00 Check In
8:30 Program
9:00 Walk!

Our 12th annual NAMIWalks is a month away! Please register now at www.namiwalks.org/greaterhouston Registration is free and there is no minimum fundraising amount! You can captain a team, walk on a team or solo, or even be a virtual walker if you cannot attend on May 6th!

This is a family event and will happen rain or shine.

Team Captain Rally Call

Wednesday, April 12th 7 pm - 7:30 pm

All your team captain questions answered in one place!
If you are a team captain or thinking of becoming one, please join our NAMIWalks Manager Rachel Bromley for a conference call.
Register to receive the call in info by texting Rachel at 713.298.6616

Just have a quick question? Text Rachel at 713.298.6616 any time between 9 am and 9 pm Monday through Saturday and she will respond as soon as she can!



NAMIWalks Greater Houston 2017



The Not Normal Life

The trouble with New Year's resolutions is, so few of them outlive the year's "newness." Many people have made the same resolution to change the same habit for five years straight, always forgetting by January 15.

With mental illness, you may have an opposite problem: you may be beset by people who want to make your resolutions

for you, in January, February, or July. I refer to the unsolicited advice of acquaintances, relatives, and one-time contacts who consider most mental illness a bad attitude and an excuse for irresponsibility, and who hand out "just snap out of it" or "just have faith for healing" admonitions at every opportunity. Too much of that can tempt a patient to follow the example of the young actor in

Dead Poets Society who, sick of his father's demands that he forget about the theater and concentrate on the study of medicine, ultimately "solved" that problem by taking a gun and quitting the whole pushy world.

I hope you haven't seriously considered such an extreme response. But I do understand how you feel. Trying to function with the handicap of a mental illness is hard enough without having guilt trips and stigma imposed from outside. Whatever the overall societal view, there will always be narrow-minded people in this world.

For what it's worth, the biggest problem is theirs, not yours. Most narrow-minded people get that way through fear-they think that putting others down is a way of validating themselves and taking out insurance against a similar misfortune. You've got no obligation to feed their false consolation-or to believe anything simply because someone else says it. After all, even if your brain has

its information-processing difficulties, you still know it better from inside than a casual acquaintance does from outside.

Don't let yourself be drawn into arguments: emulate the classic advice given to school kids, and just walk away. If there's a real bully among the people you can't avoid completely, don't hesitate to enlist the support of your friends and, if necessary, make an official complaint to a higher authority. And never, ever waste your time arguing online with strangers who talk like stereotypical "psychos" themselves-don't even feed your bad feelings by reading their rants.

In any case, spend all the time you can with those who do understand and empathize. With regular input from true friends who validate your strengths, you'll absorb increased ability to focus on the positive.

Katherine Swarts

Social Media Marketer/Professional Writer

Open Door Membership Rate Now Available Online

The \$3 Open Door membership rate is now available for new members and renewing members through the national NAMI.org website! Members can sign up the same way they have done in the past; however, there will now be both the Regular and Open Door options in the "Membership" drop-down menu for them to choose from.

Join via our website to use a credit card or email Carolyn Hamilton at chamilton@namigreaterhouston.org and she will mail you a form to complete. You can mail your application with a check to our office. Also, you may download the form from our website here: [Join NAMI Greater Houston by Mail](#)

[Click to Join](#)

Program Spotlight

NAMI Greater Houston was among the first affiliates in Texas to offer the new

NAMI Homefront class. Homefront is a free six-week program geared towards family members of active-duty military and veterans. We partnered with the Michael DeBakey Veterans Affairs Hospital here in Houston to bring this program to our service area.



The program, adapted from the NAMI Family-to-Family curriculum, was piloted in several states earlier this year. The first course in Houston was conducted in a compressed format over a weekend. Future courses will follow a more traditional weekly format across six weeks.

NAMI Education Manager Suzanne Robinson co-wrote the curriculum and adapted the NAMI Family-to-Family Signature Program for military family situations. "We didn't leave topics out, we just spend less time on some of them," Robinson said of the condensed timeframe, which is intended to accommodate deployments, busy military schedules, and the frequent coexistence of medical issues among service members.

Other differences include the language used, which is adapted to military terminology, and the resources discussed. For example, feedback from pilot programs has shown that military families prefer the terms "brain disorder" and "mental health condition" over "mental illness."

"We don't want to turn them off with civilian language. We want to be respectful," Robinson said. She also added support resources from the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs to the civilian resources discussed throughout the course.

The classes provide information about schizophrenia, mood disorders, and PTSD. They also offer coping skills, communication techniques and self-care for caregivers and family members.

The coordinators of YOUR NAMI Greater Houston Homefront program are Gary Egleton, a Vietnam Veteran and Margaret Gallagher, a Military Brat [her words] who grew up on Air Force Bases and is a Navy wife, mother, and grandmother. Gary and Margaret led the first Homefront course in Houston. All Homefront teachers have a military connection and experience living with a mental health condition. Our

teaching teams look forward to bringing a course to your organization to serve service-connected caregivers and family members!

IF THIS PROGRAM INTERESTS YOU, THEN JOIN OUR NEXT HOMEFRONT CLASS! For more information or to register, please contact Margaret Gallagher at 713-569-6432, margi1@att.net or Gary Eagleton at 832-693-4049, gary.eagleton@swbell.net



Register your NAMIWalks Team [HERE](#)



April 17, 2017: Westside Monthly Meeting
Memorial Drive United Methodist Church 12955 Memorial Drive; 77079
Wesley Hall; 7:00 pm
Guest Speaker:
Topics:

April 4, 2017: Clear Lake Support Group
Bay Area Unitarian Universalist Church
17503 El Camino Real; 77058
Cockrell Hall; 7:00 pm

April 18, 2017: Clear Lake Support Group
Bay Area Unitarian Universalist Church
17503 El Camino Real; 77058
Cockrell Hall; 7:00 pm

All monthly meetings and support groups are free and open to the public.

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