

The Alliance

 **NAMI** | Fox Valley
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'Iris Place' set to open in March

By: Karen Iverson Riggers, CPS, Peer Run Respite Director

We are excited to announce that NAMI Fox Valley's Peer Run Respite, officially named "Iris Place," will open in mid-to-late March at 1213 S. Matthias St. in southeast Appleton. Our spacious building is located on the St. Bernadette Parish campus and is the former home of Head Start, where

– coincidentally – Executive Director Beth Clay worked before coming to NAMI Fox Valley.

Our Iris Place staff, advisory board members and volunteers have been hard at work getting our new home ready for guests. Renovations are underway and are being managed by Housing Partnership of the Fox Cities.

Our respite will feature five private bedrooms, shared bathrooms, a renovated kitchen where guests will prepare their own meals, and a large living room. The house features accessible bedrooms and bathrooms on the main floor along with a resource room/library.

Our opening date is dependent on the renovations being completed and approved by city inspectors, but we expect to open by the end of March. We are excited to hold a community open house from 3 – 7 p.m., Thursday, March 12 with a ribbon cutting at 4:30 p.m.

NAMI Fox Valley was one of three agencies to receive funding from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services to develop a peer run respite for mental health consumers. NAMI Fox Valley participated in the state advisory board that developed the concept, funding and outcomes for peer run respite in Wisconsin. More than \$1.2 million of the state's \$29 million increase in funding for mental health went to peer run respite.

The respite, which will offer an alternative to hospitalization, will provide a welcoming and healing place for people who are having difficulty coping with mental illness or substance abuse issues. Guests will receive support from our trained peer staff, who will utilize their lived experience to support others.

Continued on Page 2



Iris Place is located at: 1213 S. Matthias St., Appleton.

Get involved! Please "Like" us on Facebook for updates – www.facebook.com/IrisPlacePeerRunRespite or visit www.namifoxvalley.org for our wish list and volunteer opportunities!

Join us for our March open houses!

Monday, March 9, 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and 4 to 7 p.m. – Special open house for our NAMI Fox Valley members, friends and volunteers!

Thursday, March 12, 3 to 7 p.m. – Community open house. Join us to cut our ribbon at 4:30 p.m. Bring a pair of scissors to join us in cutting the ribbon and take home a piece of our ribbon to remember our opening!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Meet Iris Place's peer companions	p. 2-3
Housing Coalition mental health training draws large crowd	p. 4
Thank you to our 2014 supporters	p. 4-5
Peer specialists graduate, land new jobs	p. 6
Beth Clay resigns from agency	p. 7
NAMI FV reports to the community	p. 8
Congratulations to our 2014-15 Award Recipients	p. 9-10
Upcoming classes	p. 11

Iris Place will be open 24/7/365 to adults, no matter where they live in Wisconsin. Individuals will self-refer, and together the staff and prospective guest will determine if the respite is a good fit for what they need. Services will be provided free of charge, and the average stay is expected to be one to five days. Our staff will also provide connections to community supports and services.

We are now fully staffed and our newly hired peer companions are completing their training. Our staff totals nine employees, including me (director); Val Neff, house manager; Kara Patterson, program coordinator John Rose, guest services coordinator; and five peer companions. I'm so proud of all of our employees! In addition to their training, all of our staff members "have been there" and have had experiences with the mental health system, trauma, psychiatric diagnoses, substance abuse issues or emotional distress. Our guests will be among peers who understand the journey and are there to provide help, hope and support for recovery.

NAMI FV hires five 'peer companions' for Iris Place

We are excited to announce that we've hired five new employees to serve as peer companions at Iris Place Peer Run Respite. The peer companions will provide 24/7/365 on-site peer support (during shifts which will be no more than eight hours) at the respite. They will be responsible for supporting guests, ensuring a safe and welcoming environment, and providing one-on-one and group peer support. The companions, who have all had extensive training, will also offer referrals and connections to community resources, and draw on their lived experience with mental illness and/or substance abuse to support the needs and wants of guests.

Be Alford

Be Alford, a recent graduate of the NEW Hope Peer Specialist training program, comes to Iris Place having taught yoga for the last sixteen years. Be, who began studying yoga in 1982, is an Ayurvedic Educator and studied at Kanyakumari Ayurveda in Milwaukee. Her first trip to India was in 1995 and ten years later, she was lucky enough to be able to go again. She studied Anusara Yoga from 1998-2005.



She hopes her experience using body-mind-spirit practices can help bring this aspect into the realm of options available to guests at Iris Place.

"I'm super excited to bring my decades-long experience in recovery from alcoholism coupled with my more recent recovery from depression to work at the respite center," said Be, who lives in Appleton and grew up in Texas. "I'm also excited to be a part of this paradigm shift for mental wellness."

Be is also a singer and songwriter. Be's journey into folk music began when she met the trio Peter Paul and Mary as a child. She began her own songwriting career at age 13 and her favorite instrument is the mandolin.

Jeanne Dixon

Jeanne Dixon is a former elementary school teacher who later pursued a career in counseling. She has worked as a crisis counselor and also spent two years working as a mental health and substance abuse counselor for two agencies. Jeanne, who has been involved with NAMI Fox Valley the past four years, is also a recent NEW Hope Peer Specialist graduate. She says she is excited and ready to use her experience, training and recovery journey to help others.



"I feel I have something to offer at Iris Place," said Jeanne. "I am sensitive to other people's feelings and know when to listen and know how to help people look at their strengths. This can lead to recovery. It's a beautiful thing to watch happen."

Amanda Farrell



Amanda, who was born and raised in the Fox Cities, lives in Appleton with her husband, Craig, and two fur-children, Baily and Lolly. Amanda also graduated from the NEW Hope Peer Specialist class in December. She has worked and volunteered in various places with adults and children, including group home and assisted living facilities, YMCA childcare, and she also worked as a nanny for several years.

Amanda, who is a PTSD survivor, has a strong passion for helping those who have experienced trauma. She enjoys singing and dancing and loves hanging out with her friends.

"I have always held a great love for people," said Amanda. "I enjoy meeting them, socializing, and especially serving them in any way I can."

Amanda values a spiritual approach to her recovery, and believes her testimony and faith have brought her through

many challenges.

“I am extremely excited to have this opportunity to work at Iris Place. During my darkest hours, I only could dream of a place such as this. Now, this is an even bigger dream to work at such a place.”

Amanda Hofacker



Amanda Hofacker, who is new to NAMI Fox Valley, is thrilled to be joining the staff at Iris Place. Amanda has seven years of combined professional experience in the social services field for several non-profit agencies and Winnebago County Crisis Intervention.

She graduated in 2012 from the UW-Oshkosh Social Work and Social Justice program and is passionate about empowering people to live up to their highest potential. She believes that the most powerful tools we have for helping others are our own shared experiences along with empathy, compassion, and connection.

“I was having a hard time finding an agency that truly operated by these values when it came to helping those facing challenging circumstances and crisis,” she said. “When I stumbled across the posting for NAMI’s peer companion position I knew instantly in my heart that this job was the right fit for me.”

Michelle Wegner

Michelle, who first connected with NAMI’s Peer-to-Peer class, support groups and volunteer opportunities in 2006 and 2007, is enthusiastic about sharing the message of recovery through the respite house.



“I wanted to be a part of Iris Place because I believe those struggling with mental illness can thrive in their lives and in the community.

Mental illness does not define a person and it is through their strengths that they thrive and overcome obstacles in their lives,” said Michelle.

Michelle, who lives in the Fox Cities, graduated in 2012 with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from UW-Stevens Point. Michelle is also certified in Moral Reconciliation Therapy and Motivational Interviewing with a background serving the criminal justice and dual diagnosis populations. She enjoys antiquing, hiking, traveling and writing.



Young Adult Support & Transition Group moved to Outreach Center

NAMI Fox Valley’s Young Adult Support & Transition Group meets 6 - 8 p.m., Wednesdays at the Community Outreach Center, located at 322 N. Appleton St. in Appleton.

Young adults, between the ages of 18 and 26, who are living with mental illness are invited to come hang out with others who understand. This confidential support group is led by trained peer facilitators who “get it.”

The group offers a safe and supportive place for participants to receive and offer mutual support, share information and learn about resources in our community,



make new friends, and connect with others who understand the journey.

Parent & Caregiver Support Group meets second Tuesday of each month

Is your child or teen struggling with mental health issues? Are you in need of support? NAMI Fox Valley can help.

Our Parent & Caregiver Support Group meets the second Tuesday of each month from 6 - 7:30 p.m. at NAMI Fox Valley, 211 E. Franklin St., Appleton.

Led by trained facilitators who have a child living with mental illness, the group is for parents and other caregivers of children and adolescents living with mental health challenges or mental illness.

The support group helps parents and caregivers discover resources, learn coping skills and problem-solving skills, and experience mutual compassion and support from others who understand their journey.

NAMI Fox Valley, Housing Coalition training draws more than 100 participants



Executive Director Beth Clay presents an update on NAMI Fox Valley to participants who attended the Feb. 19 mental health training.

By Wendy Magas, Communications Director

More than 100 community members attended a daylong mental health training on Feb. 19 held by NAMI Fox Valley in conjunction with the Fox Cities Housing Coalition.

“We had a packed room which tells us our community partners and their employees are hungry for this information and how to better understand and support people in our community who are affected by mental illness,” said Ann Jadin, NAMI Fox Valley’s Community Engagement Director. “We received a lot of positive feedback and look forward to holding additional trainings in the future.”

The training, held at Riverview Gardens in Appleton, included an update on NAMI Fox Valley’s programs and services; a two-hour session on trauma-informed care; a 90-minute presentation on dual diagnosis (mental illness and problematic drug and/or alcohol use); and a 90-minute talk on crisis de-escalation.

The event was held in partnership with the Fox Cities Housing Coalition, which encouraged its employees to attend. The event, which was open to the community, drew a wide variety of participants, including mental health, social service and law enforcement employees and members of the faith community, among others.

“Thanks for a wonderful day of sharing, conversation and networking,” wrote one participant on an evaluation form. “(The training provided) very helpful, practical information that I can use at work.”

Thank you to our 2014 supporting businesses and organizations

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Peer Specialist students graduate, start new jobs

By Paula Verrett, Recovery Specialist

Congratulations to our first class of NEW Hope Peer Specialists, who graduated Jan. 8. It was a beautiful graduation ceremony, held at the Fox River Environmental Education Alliance's historical building overlooking the Fox River at 1000 N. Ballard Road in Appleton. Despite the snowy evening, more than 50 friends and family members of graduates filled



the chapel to celebrate our 11 graduates.

Since then, all of them have been hired and are working to support people affected by mental illness. We are so proud of their success! They are working at the following locations:

- 2 at Homeless Connections, Appleton
- 4 at Iris Place, Appleton
- 2 at Kewaunee County
- 1 at Villa Phoenix, Appleton
- 1 at NAMI Fox Valley, Appleton
- 1 at Options for Independent Living, Green Bay

Our second class of 9 NEW Hope Peer Specialist students, who recently completed their coursework, took their final exam during the last week of February, and they all passed! They will begin their internships at the following sites:

- 2 at Winnebago County Human Services, Oshkosh
- 1 at the Fox Cities Warming Shelter, Appleton
- 1 at Homeless Connections, Appleton
- 1 at Mooring House, Appleton
- 1 at Iris Place, Appleton
- 1 at NAMI Fox Valley, Appleton
- 1 at Christine Ann Domestic Abuse Services, Oshkosh

Q: What is a Certified Peer Specialist?

A: A Certified Peer Specialist is a person who has not only lived the experience of mental illness but also has had formal training in the peer specialist model of mental health supports. They use their unique set of recovery experiences in combination with solid skills training to support peers who live with mental illness. Peer Specialists actively incorporate peer support into their work while working within an agency's team support structure as a defined part of the recovery team.



Peer Specialist graduates include B.W. Alford, Steven Anderson, Jeanne Dixon, Amanda Farrell, Heather Gozdziwski, Tom Jadin, Evelyn Koehnke, Valerie Neff, Philip Stuard, Michael Urmanski, and David Zanon.

Graduate Heather Gozdziwski, offered these comments during her graduation speech Jan. 8:

"For individuals with mental illness, recovery can be a hard uphill climb. You have to literally re-cover yourself or re-invent yourself with new ideas, a better self-image, and an understanding that you can make your dreams a reality. Recovery isn't an easy choice, but it's the right choice that all of us deserve.

"You can't buy life experience or the honesty and compassion that comes with peers helping peers. Enduring what we have endured so that we can help others is so powerful, and is essential to the growth and the gradual incline that recovery stands for. There is beauty in being who we truly are and breaking the chains of being defined by our mental illness. Everyone has choices. Life came at us with heartbreak and lack of hope, and we still choose to fight. That fight and our mission isn't over; after today, we fight for others and keep their hope alive."



The graduates receive a round of applause at the Jan. 8 graduation ceremony.

Beth Writes

Thank you for allowing me to serve

By Beth Clay, Executive Director



To all of NAMI Fox Valley's members, community partners and friends:

My heart aches as I write this letter to share with you my resignation as Executive Director of NAMI Fox Valley. I love this work with my heart and soul and it has been my

greatest honor and privilege to lead the agency over the last four years.

Just as it was when I stepped into this role in 2011, NAMI Fox Valley is once again standing on the brink of enormous capacity building opportunities to serve consumers, family members and our community in more impactful, effective and innovative ways than ever before. It's time to take those steps... but not with me at the helm.

As many of you know, not only do I deal with mental illness in my work life, but also at home as a caregiver. I have struggled, over the last year especially, feeling like my life is 'saturated' in mental illness and feeling as though the resource bucket from which I pull for work is the same one from which I pull for home. This leaves me depleted and feeling like the tank is empty, unable to find the time or space to refill my resource bucket anywhere in my life.

As hard as I've worked to balance the nurturing of work and home, NAMI's needs from its leader are growing and my family's mental health care giving needs are growing, and, though I hate to admit it, I am a finite resource. I can't live with giving less than 100% to NAMI or less than 100% to my family – and, though I wish a red cape could make it so, I do not have the superhuman strength to bring 100% to both! My family's needs come first. And protecting my wellbeing as a caregiver is my responsibility.

In 2011, I was the right leader at the right time to do the work that needed to be done. I am so proud of that. I know that there is a "right leader" for this "right time" as well – one who will courageously take on the amazing next steps for NAMI Fox Valley's future.

Thank you for the gift of this chance to serve. What a blessing it's been to serve under a Board of Directors, alongside a staff, in the midst of volunteers, within an organization, in the company of colleagues, as part of a community with such wisdom, compassion, and dedication.

I spent my time at NAMI Fox Valley in awe of the people I've had the honor of serving alongside – thank you all for loving and believing in this mission as much as I do. At this time, we do not have an exit timeline (I do not yet

have a job for which I am leaving), but an executive search has begun. I will ensure that NAMI Fox Valley continues to be a gift to this community until my last day in the driver's seat.

With deepest gratitude,

Beth Clay



Library Corner

Did you know that NAMI Fox Valley has a resource library in our building with more than 700 books and materials on mental illness and related subjects? We invite you to come in, browse our selection, and fill out a 2015 registration form so you can check out materials.

The forms are kept in a labeled binder on the table in the library, which is open during regular office and program hours. The binder also contains copies of library use guidelines for patrons to take if they wish.

To register, complete the form and turn it in to a NFV representative in the library or at the reception desk. Once you complete this form, you will not need to register again until 2016 unless your contact information changes.

Reference materials are marked with a single red dot sticker on their spines. They are not available for checkout.

To suggest additional items for the library, complete the purchase suggestion form, which you will also find in the library.

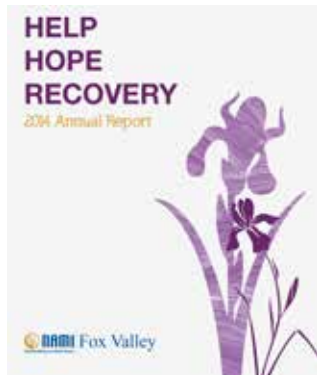
For information about the library or its materials, contact Kara Patterson at 920-954-1550 or email her at kara@namifoxvalley.org or stop by the library at the NAMI Fox Valley office at 211 E. Franklin Street in downtown Appleton.

NAMI Fox Valley celebrates banner year, award recipients at Annual Meeting

By Wendy Magas, Communications Director

Thank you to everyone who turned out Feb. 5 for our Report to the Community and Annual Awards Celebration held at the Grand Meridian in Appleton.

It was exciting to have such a large crowd – more than 125 people – gathered for the event as we celebrated NAMI Fox Valley’s 2014 accomplishments and our award recipients.



To read our 2014 Annual Report, visit www.namifoxvalley.org

“2014 was an unprecedented year for our agency,” Executive Director Beth Clay told the crowd. “NAMI Fox Valley served more than 7,000 community members with our education, support, advocacy and outreach programs. In the past four years, we have increased the number of community members we’ve served by 500 percent.”

Beth credited the visionary leadership of her predecessors and a supportive community for building the foundation for the agency’s continued success.

“Thanks to the visionary leadership of the directors before me, Marilyn Mosher, Mary Jo Wiegatz, Karen Aspenson, dedicated boards of directors, committed and generous funders, a forward thinking community, thousands of amazing volunteers and the love and belief behind the mission, our affiliate stands out as one of the most robust, active and thriving of all NAMI affiliates, in Wisconsin and in the nation,” Beth added.

In 2014, the agency welcomed five new staff members to its main office, and also hired nine staff members under the state grant for the Peer Run Respite.

Meanwhile, we offered a record number of education classes that impacted a record number of participants. We held five Family-to-Family classes and five Peer-to-Peer classes, the most our agency has offered in a year.

“A record number of 89 participants graduated from Family-to-Family and a total of 30 mental health consumers graduated from Peer-to-Peer,” Beth said.

“We are keeping families and consumers off waiting lists and getting them into classes, allowing them to receive the support and education they need.”

The agency also offered 2,200 hours of peer, family and parent advocate support; one-on-one to those in need.

“Just as we did in the earliest days, when you call NAMI

Fox Valley, you talk to someone who’s walked in your shoes,” Beth said. “No matter how large our building or how many people we serve, or how many staff members we have, that is the heart of who we are and what we do.”

Following Beth’s Report to the Community, NAMI Fox Valley staff celebrated the 2014-15 award recipients, including Brian Bezier, Julie Caffisch, Norma Czarnik, Todd Freeman, Ryan Kust, Linda Speering and Bud Broussard, YMCA of the Fox Cities, United Way Fox Cities, and Image Studios.

At the end of the evening, NAMI Fox Valley staff also paid a short tribute to Beth, who had announced a few weeks prior that she was resigning from the agency.

“Tonight, we were asked by our ‘boss’ not to shine the light on her four amazing years of service that has led this agency to new heights,” Paula Verrett told the crowd. “Beth, you see, is a humble, servant leader who leads by example and takes pleasure in serving others and the common good.”

“She is not one to call attention to herself and her many successes. And tonight, she wanted all of the focus to be on our NAMI friends, our NAMI supporters, and our award recipients. But since she’s leaving anyway, we figured we couldn’t get into too much trouble by paying tribute to a wonderful boss, an inspiring community leader, and an amazing human being who is touching lives, affecting positive change, blazing trails and making ripples in the community and beyond that will be felt for years to come. We want to thank you, Beth, for all of your love, your hard work and your dedication.”



Julie Caffisch, a longtime NAMI Fox Valley volunteer and support group facilitator, is brought to tears as she listens to her tribute as the recipient of the “Tammy Bradley Heart of NAMI Award.” The award was created in memory of Tammy, a former NAMI Fox Valley employee and passionate advocate. Tammy and Julie were also dear friends.

Congratulations to our 2014-15 award recipients!

NAMI Fox Valley could not do its work in the community without dedicated volunteers and community members who help advocate and make a difference for those affected by mental illness. Each year we honor several individuals who have gone above and beyond to not only support NAMI Fox Valley's mission, but who are also working to improve the mental health of the Fox Cities in meaningful ways. Here are their stories:

Norma Czarnik, recipient of the Frank Mixdorf Distinguished Service Award

NAMI Fox Valley is honored to recognize Norma Czarnik with its highest award for being instrumental in co-founding and co-facilitating its inaugural support group for teenagers who are living with mental illness. Norma's years of experience as a certified AODA counselor prepared her well for her role, and her approachable, nonjudgmental and trustworthy nature has endeared her to the teens.



When then-NAMI Fox Valley Executive Director Karen Aspenson asked Norma more than a decade ago to help establish the teen support group, the opportunity was a natural fit. The Appleton-based group now is one of four once-weekly NAMI Fox Valley teen support groups in the Fox Valley.

Julie Caflich, recipient of the Tammy Bradley Heart of NAMI Award

It is with deep appreciation that NAMI Fox Valley names longtime volunteer Julie Caflich as the recipient of its Tammy Bradley Heart of NAMI Award. Created in memory of Tammy Bradley, whose presence at NAMI warmed many hearts during her time there, the award recognizes Julie for all of her meaningful contributions to the agency, including how she instills hope in her peers and exemplifies that recovery is possible.



Julie has co-facilitated support groups at NAMI Fox Valley for seven years. She also teaches Peer-to-Peer, volunteers as fill-in front desk receptionist and helps out at agency events. She says Tammy inspired her to become the person she is today in mental health recovery. And we have watched Julie grow and shine since she walked through NAMI's doors in 2006. Julie loves to give back to others, and we are grateful to her for so generously sharing gifts

and talents with NAMI Fox Valley.

Julie, like Tammy, demonstrates what makes the agency special. Julie is always ready with a hug, a smile, an offer of help, a meaningful connection. Julie embodies the heart of NAMI and we can't imagine our NAMI family without her, and we know Tammy would be so proud.

Brian Bezier, recipient of the Professional Service Award

NAMI Fox Valley is proud to honor Brian Bezier, Clinical Director & Manager of Outagamie County's Mental Health and Substance Abuse Division, for his tireless efforts to support our agency's mission and the welfare of people affected by mental illness.



Brian is a valued partner of NAMI Fox Valley, a compassionate and ardent advocate for mental health consumers, and a mental health care innovator who embraces a holistic view of recovery.

Brian has been an advocate for mental health in many ways, from securing funds for Peer Specialist positions in a tight budget to supporting peer services at the Outreach Center to supporting Outagamie's Mental Health Court. He also serves on our Peer Run Respite Advisory Board. Brian understands the importance of including the voice of those with lived experience in services and programs and he models how providers can promote recovery and recognize the strengths of individuals.

Todd Freeman, recipient of the Karen Aspenson CIT Officer of the Year Award



NAMI Fox Valley is proud to honor Capt. Todd Freeman in celebration of his tireless dedication to forwarding the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training Initiative within the Appleton Police Department, in the Fox Valley, and in the state of Wisconsin. Todd, who has been with the Appleton Police Department since 2000, was among the nine officers who attended the inaugural CIT class held in Appleton in October 2004.

During Todd's tenure at the APD, the number of CIT trained officers at the department has grown to 50 of its 109 sworn officers.

His work as a CIT officer and administrator has been instrumental in promoting the initiative, through his example and his leadership at the Appleton Police Department, in the lives of his fellow officers, and for individuals in our community living with mental illness.

Ryan Kust, recipient of the Recovery in Action Award



Ryan Kust is honored as NAMI Fox Valley's first Recovery in Action Award recipient. This award recognizes Ryan's resiliency in both actively sustaining his mental health recovery and also inspiring and supporting others on their recovery journeys.

Ryan discovered NAMI Fox Valley shortly after he moved to Appleton in 2012. He stopped by the agency's former home, the "NAMI House" on Sixth Street, and started attending a weekly support group. He went on to take a Peer-to-Peer class.

He now co-facilitates three support groups, including NAMI Fox Valley's new men's group at the Community Outreach Center in Appleton where he works as Program Coordinator. Ryan also is a mentor for Peer-to-Peer and participates on the NAMI Fox Valley Peer Run Respite Advisory Board. Additionally, Ryan has earned the title of Wisconsin Certified Peer Specialist.



Photo courtesy of The Post-Crescent

Linda Speering and Bud Broussard, Volunteers of the Year

NAMI Fox Valley is thrilled to name Family-to-Family instructors Linda Speering and Bud Broussard as its Volunteers of the Year. Linda and Bud are committed instructors who have helped dozens of families with their support, empathy and deep and personal understanding of mental illness.

Linda and Bud connected with NAMI Fox Valley five years ago when they took a Mental Health First Aid class that the affiliate offered. Inspired by what they learned, they went on to receive training to become Family-to-Family instructors and taught their first class in 2011. They made it their mission to pilot and expand the F2F program in Calumet County. Thanks to their work, the affiliate has

held F2F classes in Brillion and Chilton.

Linda and Bud also help out at the agency's annual summer picnic, holiday party, Bowl-a-Thon and many other special events and activities.



Maeghan Johnson, Jeanne Hoest and Kourtney Kositzke of the YMCA of the Fox Cities are shown with their award.

YMCA of the Fox Cities, recipient of the Community Partnership Award

NAMI Fox Valley is proud to honor the YMCA of the Fox Cities for its collaborative partnership to offer the Artful Expression program to area youth. During the 15-week program, participants create their own project using a medium of their choice, such as sculpture, dance, photography, music, painting and drawing. The program is designed to empower students who are living with mental health challenges or mental illness and help them develop coping skills through the arts.

The program, which served 17 students in 2014, is touching youth in meaningful and impactful ways. Special thanks to the YMCA's Arts and Humanities instructors Jeanne Hoest (recently retired), Kourtney Kositzke and Maeghan Johnson, who work one-on-one with the students and support them to create their works of art.

United Way Fox Cities, Image Studios receive 'Ally Awards.'

NAMI Fox Valley extends its deep gratitude to the United Way Fox Cities and Image Studios for supporting NAMI Fox Valley's mission and being "allies" with our agency.

Thank you to the United Way Fox Cities for making access and delivery of mental health services a top priority in 2014, and partnering with our affiliate to educate the public about mental illness.

Thank you, also, to Image Studios, including the many photographers, crew members and editors, for producing teen testimonial videos featuring members of NAMI Fox Valley's Teen Support Groups. The videos are helping us break down stigma and educate the public about mental illness, and promote our Teen Support Groups.

Family-to-Family courses offered in March and June

NAMI Fox Valley will offer its Family-to-Family Education Program beginning March 25. We will also offer a summer session that begins June 11. The free, 12-session education course is designed for family members of adults living with mental illness.

The spring course will be held Wednesdays, March 25 to June 3, from 6 to 8:30 p.m. at NAMI Fox Valley. The summer course will be held Thursdays, June 11 to Aug. 27 (skipping July 2) at the same time.

Taught by trained instructors who have family members living with mental illness, this nationally-acclaimed course is designed to help family members understand and support their loved one with mental illness while maintaining their own well-being.

Participants learn how to handle and de-escalate crisis situations and explore how to effectively communicate with their loved one so they feel like they are on the same recovery “team.” Participants become empowered with tools and resources to offer support, understand their loved one’s situation, and join them on their journey.

For more information or to reserve a spot in the class, contact Kelly at kelly@namifoxvalley.org or call (920) 954-1550.

NAMI Peer-to-Peer

NAMI Fox Valley is pleased to offer its Peer-to-Peer recovery education program beginning April 1. This free, 10-week education course focuses on mental health recovery and is designed for adults living with mental illness. The course will be held Wednesdays, April 1 to June 3, from 6 - 8:30 p.m. at NAMI Fox Valley.

Taught by peer mentors who themselves are living well with mental illness, participants learn comprehensive information about the major mental illnesses, coping skills, recovery strategies, relapse prevention, self-advocacy and other topics.

The course also helps participants learn to identify feelings, thoughts, behaviors and events that can trigger a possible relapse; how to be an active participant in your treatment plan; and how to strengthen interpersonal relationships.

For more information or to reserve a spot in the class, contact Paula at paula@namifoxvalley.org or call (920) 954-1550.



Teen Support Group locations confirmed

With the closing of Harmony Café in downtown Appleton, we have found new homes for our Wednesday and Thursday Teen Support Groups.

Here is the updated schedule for our four teen support groups, which we offer in Appleton, Neenah and Kimberly.

- 6 - 7:30 p.m., Mondays at The Heart of the Valley YMCA, 225 W. Kennedy Ave., Kimberly
- 4:30 - 6 p.m., Tuesdays at Perkins, 1121 Westowne Drive, Neenah.
- 4:30 - 6 p.m., Wednesdays at Copper Rock Cafe, 210 W. College Ave., Appleton.
- 4:30 - 6 p.m., Thursdays at Boys & Girls Club, 160 S. Badger St., Appleton.

The Teen Support Groups are designed for teens, ages 13 to 18 (must still be in high school), who have a mental illness and are looking for a supportive environment where they will learn about symptoms, treatment, coping skills, and resources, as well as spend time socializing with peers.

Two mental health professionals facilitate the groups. Registration by a parent or guardian is required for teens under 18. New participants are always welcome at any time.

NAMI Fox Valley Newsletter
211 E. Franklin St.
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The Alliance is the newsletter of NAMI Fox Valley, published quarterly in March, May, September and December. Send news items related to chronic mental illness, opinions, or recovery to: Wendy Magas, Communications Director, NAMI Fox Valley, 211 E. Franklin Street, Appleton, WI 54911 or wendy@namifoxvalley.org

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Our Mission
NAMI Fox Valley works to support and empower everyone touched by mental illness. We commit to eliminate stigma and nurture recovery through education, support, advocacy and outreach.

Our Vision
We envision a community, free of stigma, that supports and promotes mental health and recovery.

How to reach us:

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