

The Alliance

NAMI Fox Valley

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Introducing Beth Clay, Executive Director

Welcome to Beth Clay, who joined NAMI Fox Valley in early September as the new Executive Director! Her goal in applying for this directorship was to “bring to NAMI her unique enthusiasm for service, fresh insight, life-long dedication to advocacy, and solid knowledge of mental health and the system of care in the Fox Valley.” She is doing all of that and more as she settles into her new leadership role.

Beth has worked as a dedicated mental health professional for 15 years, and feels she has “been blessed to practice in a wide variety of settings, supporting a variety of mental health needs over the years.” She has held positions in community-based mental health clinics, including Lutheran Social Services and The Counseling Center of Milwaukee. As well as providing mental health services within a Milwaukee-based AIDS Hospice, and a men’s homeless shelter, Beth holds a Masters degree in Community-based Counseling from Marquette University, and has received specialized training in trauma informed care, grant writing, and the culture of poverty. Most recently, Beth served as the Disabilities and Mental Health Coordinator for UW-Oshkosh Head Start.

Beth and her husband, Mike, came to Appleton in 2001 and love living in the Fox Valley. The Clays have two children, Hannah, age 9, and Brady, age 7. Their lives are enriched by the fact that Hannah was born with Autism and that Brady was born with “enormous empathy for his big sister’s challenges in life.” Beth says, “Hannah has given us the opportunity to live a much deeper life than we might have without the challenges and amazing opportunities that come with Autism.”

Beth also serves, in her personal life, as a support person for several family members and friends who live with OCD, Major Depression, PTSD and Generalized Anxiety Disorder. Beth tells us, “I have had a long-time love affair with NAMI and have been drawn to my local NAMI affiliate more than once in my life, to refer others and to receive services.”

Beth is thrilled to join the NAMI family and looks forward to guiding and supporting NAMI Fox Valley

as ‘the community’s voice on mental illness.’ Please join us in welcoming Beth!

Thank you, Tammy

Please join us in appreciating Tammy Bradley, who recently stepped down from her position as Consumer Coordinator after almost 10 years of service to NAMI Fox Valley. We are thrilled to share that Tammy will continue to be seen at the NAMI house, as she maintains her active role as a volunteer and friend. Thank you for your years of service, Tammy!

Welcome Georgie

We are thrilled to welcome Georgie Halpin as the Consumer Coordinator for NAMI Fox Valley. She has been enthusiastically serving in that capacity since August of this year. Georgie has been an active volunteer, support group facilitator, IOOV speaker, and friend to the affiliate over the last year. We are pleased to be able to use her skills, professionalism, and passion to benefit our NAMI family. Please join the staff in welcoming Georgie!



Thank you, Karen

On behalf of the Board of Directors, NAMI Fox Valley staff, volunteers, members, and community partners, we wish to sincerely thank Karen Aspenson for her amazing 8 years of service. Since Karen took the helm of NFV in August 2003, programs and services have grown to necessitate two full-time and seven part-time staff members, plus nearly 300 volunteers. Our affiliate has hosted the most successful NAMI Walk event in the state of

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Wisconsin for six straight years. Under her leadership, the In Our Own Voice program has reached record audiences, and the core education classes, Family-to-Family and Peer-to-Peer, are stronger than ever. Under Karen, NAMI Fox Valley was the first to bring Crisis Intervention Team Training, Veterans Mental Health Support Programming, and Mental Health First Aid to the state. We are so grateful for Karen's passion and dedication, which have put NAMI Fox Valley on the map and in a position to be a role model for other NAMI affiliates.

We are especially thrilled to share that Karen will be staying on, part-time, as the CIT/CIP Coordinator! NAMI Fox Valley looks forward to having Karen serving the programs that are her true passion, and that have benefited from and grown through her specialized knowledge and her careful nurturing.

A Night at Lambeau

It was the night before the first game of the year when Jill Mitchler and Helene Iverson attended the "NFL Community Huddle: Taking a Goal Line Stand for Your Mind and Body", a forum to discuss mental health and the effects of sports-related head injuries on mental health, held in the Legends Room at Lambeau Stadium. Organized by Satcher Health Leadership Institute at Morehouse School of Medicine and the NFL to provide a series of town hall meetings in each NFL market to educate, motivate, and mobilize communities to address issues such as dementia, depression, and the stigma connected to mental illness.

According to the 1999 Surgeon General's Report on Mental Health, over the course of a lifetime, 1 in 2 people will experience a mental illness, while 1 in 4 lives with a diagnosable mental illness. Less than 1/2 of the adults will receive treatment, while less than 1/3 of children will receive treatment. Mental illnesses are treatable.

Mark Kelso, a former Buffalo Bill who played in four Super Bowls, said he was laughed at for wearing one of the first Pro Cap helmets to protect himself from getting further concussions. It didn't fit the macho culture of pro football. He spoke oft the need to play sports safely, especially with respect to head injuries.

Alicia Duerson, whose ex-husband Dave played for the Bears, Giants, and Cardinals told the sad story of how her husband's life was affected by multiple concussions. His personality changes, bad business decisions, anger issues, and uncontrolled depression after his mother's death, eventually led to their divorce in 2010. Dave took his life in February of 2011 after texting Alicia that he wanted his brain donated to science. Upon autopsy, he was diagnosed as having

Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE), a direct result of repeated head trauma.

Detroit Lions quarterback and NFL MVP, Eric Hipple, described how he had periods of depression throughout his college and pro career. Too macho to seek help, he kept dealing with it the best he could. He described how he couldn't see the same signs in his son, who took his life in 2000 at the age of 15. Since then Hipple has devoted his life to building awareness and breaking down the stigma surrounding depressive illness. He stated, "stigma is fear driven and we have to educate our families and communities."

Sylvia Mackey's husband, John, played for the Colts and Chargers. In 2001, John was diagnosed with Frontal Temporal Lobe Dementia. John died in July 2011 after many years of confusion, anger, and loss of personal hygiene.

The commonality in all of these stories was that traumatic brain injuries, primarily concussions, and the stigma involved in seeking help, caused all of these people to lose their health and for some, their lives.

The 30 minute audience discussion that followed covered topics that ranged from Mental Health First Aid, the "Psycho" named defense of the Packers last year, what NAMI is and does, what high school coaches can do to prevent concussions, and information about agencies in the area such as the Alzheimers Association.

Besides getting a chance to gawk at all the pre-game preparations outside Lambeau, we learned that these people are spreading the message about mental illness, stigma reduction and education in the testosterone-charged pro football arena. Let us continue to do the same in our families, churches, places of employment, government, and in our Fox Valley communities.

Holiday party

The holiday season is almost here! Please mark your calendars and come to the annual holiday party on **Monday, December 12** at 5:00 pm at the First Congregational United Church of Christ, 724 E. South River Street in Appleton. There is no need to register, and this event is free of charge for consumers, family members and friends.

Interested in volunteering? We need help with set up, serving and clean up. Contact Jill Mitchler at (920) 954-1550 or jill@namifoxvalley.org. We need your help to make this traditional event a success. Please plan to join us for good fellowship, food and fun! Happy Holidays!



First Be Well program concludes

NAMI Fox Valley is proud to announce that the first Be Well series of classes recently graduated 12 participants! We would like to thank the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region, Inc. for their generous grant which made Be Well possible. Thanks, also, to the program committee, Jessica Aycock, Jennifer Parsons, and Kara Patterson for their preparation which resulted in this program being such a huge success!

The inaugural Be Well session was held at the NAMI House on Wednesdays from 4-5 pm from August 3 through October 18. Through different presenters and experts at each class, attendees learned about healthy eating habits, planning a healthy daily menu, exercises that can be done at home, an introduction to yoga, the side effects of medications, coping strategies, safe food handling, preparing healthy snacks and meditation/sound healing. In addition, a representative of the YMCA spoke about healthy lifestyles, fitness and the scholarship program at the Y. Dr. Bradley Lauderdale presented on the topic of sleep and stress. After each class, attendees could participate in an optional walking club.

Incentives, such as water bottles, pedometers, stress balls, books, pens and journals were given out throughout the 12-week program. Every class featured a healthy snack and Graduation Day was celebrated with attendees bringing a healthy dish to pass. Everyone present received a door prize such as a book on healthy eating, cooking and grocery shopping or one of two 3-month memberships at the YMCA. Everyone received a certificate of completion, as well as a Be Well t-shirt.

In addition to providing some great suggestions for future topics to be covered, we are proud to share some comments from our attendees' evaluations such as,

"Get the word out – it's a great class!" and "I can't wait for the next session of Be Well!"

Be Well will be offered again on Wednesdays from 5-6 pm beginning January 18 and ending April 4 at Fox Valley Technical College in Appleton. If you would like to register for this free program for adults who live with mental illness, please call NAMI Fox Valley at 954-1550 or email angel@namifoxvalley.org. Space is limited!

Crisis Intervention Partners (CIP)

Karen Aspenson, CIT/CIP Coordinator

NAMI Fox Valley hosted its tenth class of Crisis Intervention Partners (CIP) in October, graduating 38 students representing jail personnel, residential service providers, and other professions such as youth social workers and even a custodian at a college. CIP is a two-day offering targeted at professionals whose work brings them into contact with individuals living with mental illness, even though that may not be the primary purpose of their job. The curriculum offers training on the signs and symptoms of the major mental illnesses, suicide risk assessment, and details crisis response with special populations such as children, the elderly, and veterans. A strong emphasis is on de-escalation of crisis situations so that all involved remain safe. Upon completion of the course, an individual who serves as a corrections officer shared not only his thanks for the useful information provided during the course, but also commented that he had already used some of the techniques and skills we taught and found them to be very effective in both de-escalating emotions but also in building rapport. For more information about CIP, or to see the dates of training for 2012, please visit the NAMI Fox Valley website, www.namifoxvalley.org.

HAVE YOU EXPIRED?

ALL MEMBERSHIP DUES

WILL EXPIRE 12/31/11.

CHECK YOUR MAILING LABEL...

YOUR EXPIRATION DATE IS TO THE RIGHT OF YOUR NAME.

ANY ADDITIONAL DONATION RECEIVED BY 12/31/11 CAN BE APPLIED TOWARD YOUR 2011 TAX DEDUCTIONS.

A MEMBERSHIP ENVELOPE HAS BEEN INSERTED IN THIS NEWSLETTER FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE.

NAMIWalk Raises More Than \$150,000

Karen Schiller, Development Director

NAMIWalk season had its Kickoff Breakfast on August 17 at the Radisson Paper Valley Hotel. More than 75 people joined our agency to celebrate the beginning of our Walk efforts. The individuals in attendance helped with their leadership by becoming volunteers and Team Captains. Thanks to Bill Jartz for being our emcee and Honorary Chair. A special thanks to Sue Kennedy, Pete Mutschler and Aaron Zemlock for sharing testimonials about their experiences with our agency and the Walk. Thank you to our Kickoff Breakfast committee who helped kick off Walk season with a great breakfast.

More than 700 walkers joined NAMI Fox Valley on October 8, a warm and sunny day, for our sixth annual NAMIWalk. This year we had a record of 78 teams registered! The program featured Bill Jartz, our honorary chair who always brings enthusiasm and energy to our day. Adam Kumbier sang the National Anthem and Appleton Police Department's Color Guard led the walkers on their way. NAMI Fox Valley Executive Director, Beth Clay, shared that the proceeds from the NAMIWalk provide 1/3 of our annual budget. She praised the involvement of walkers in raising awareness of mental illness and breaking the stigma around mental illness. We raised a record \$63,600 in sponsorships this year from 47 community businesses, organizations and individuals. The original goal for our Walk was \$125,000 and our dream goal was \$150,000. As of 10/25 we have raised more than \$152,000. The raffle was also very popular this year raising more than \$1600 thanks to the generous donations from community.

Thank you to all of the volunteers who helped before, during and after the Walk. Without our dedicated volunteers, we wouldn't have had a smooth and fun Walk day. Special thanks to Ralph Timm and Jeff Aspenson, our logistics chairs. You may have seen an article in October's Post Crescent about their involvement since the Walk began. Thanks to Paula Verrett for her assistance with a multitude of tasks including arranging all of our sponsor boards and chairing the Kickoff Breakfast committee. Thanks to Jenny Walter for coordinating the raffle and helping with other tasks for the Walk. Thanks to Pete Mutschler, our Family Team Chair who continues to demonstrate leadership in team efforts on the Walk. Thank you to Business Team Chair, Dave VanderZanden for helping to secure new sponsors for our 2011 Walk.

Thank you to all of our sponsors! Special thanks to the JJ Keller Foundation and School Specialty who were our Presenting Sponsors this year. Their

generous lead contributions helped set the pace for our sponsorship campaign.

2011 Walk Sponsors

Presenting Sponsor (\$10,000)

JJ Keller Foundation
School Specialty

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Thank you to the hundreds of community donors who contributed to our Walk by supporting individual walkers. The funds we raised through our NAMIWalk will support our education, support and advocacy programs.

The NAMIWalk is not only a way for our agency to raise funds to support our programs and services, but is also a way for us to show that mental health matters in our community. By breaking the stigma around mental illness, we can encourage the 1 in 4 people in our community who live with mental illness that recovery is possible! Thank you to all of our volunteers, donors, team captains and walkers who helped us make our 2011 NAMIWalk a great success!



IRIS GARDEN

*Submitted By Helen Timm, Administrative Coordinator
& Jill Mitchler, Volunteer Coordinator*

In which NAMI-FV celebrates our generous friends and contributors!

The following donations have been received:

Thank you to the *Charles and Marsha Sauter Family Fund* within the **Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region** for a \$700 grant for unrestricted use.

Thank you to **Peg Otis** for a gift of \$50 in honor of **Karen Aspenson** for all her hard work and dedication to NAMI.

Thank you to the **Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region** for a \$100 grant in appreciation of their employee Linda Heckel.

Thank you to **Piggly Wiggly** on Northland Avenue for donating 42 packs of buns, **Copps** on Ballard Road for donating a \$20 gift card and **Walmart** on Mutual Way for donating a \$50 gift card that were used at the summer picnic.

Thank you to **Paula Verrett** for a donation of 3-ring binders for the REAP Class.

Thank you to the **Fox Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship** for a donation of \$1,022 to support the Wings of Change program and for a donation of Iris plants.

Thank you to **Principal Financial Group** for a \$1,000 grant to be used for education and support for families of veterans.

Thank you to the **Wisconsin Energy Foundation** for a \$500 grant for unrestricted use.

Thank you to **Atlas Coffee Mill** for a donation of four \$10 gift cards for our clientele.

Thank you to **Frank Piasecki** for a \$10 donation to purchase pizza for the New Hope Support Group.

Thank you to **Jenny Walter** for a donation of two books for the NAMI library.

Thank you to the **Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region** for a \$6,000 grant to fund the Ending the Silence program.

Thank you to **Dave Grueneberg** for a donation of a table for use in the copy room.

Thank you to the *Allan J. and Marvel A. Williamson Fund* within the **Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region** for a \$1,000 grant in memory of **Allan J. Williamson**.

Thank you to **Harry E. Wendlandt Company** for donating supplies and labor to repair the roof of the NAMI house.

Thank you to the *Harley and Cody Splitt Charitable Fund* within the **Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region** for a \$200 grant awarded for

unrestricted use.

Thank you to the **Wal-Mart Foundation** for a \$500 grant awarded for education and support programs.

Thank you to the **Menasha Corporation Foundation** for a \$1,000 grant for program support.

Thank you to **Morton Pharmacy** for a donation of \$40.32 and to Morton customers for participating in the Morton Members customer appreciation program.

Thank you to **John Laka** for a donation directed to NAMI Fox Valley through the Brown County United Way.

Thank you to the **YMCA of the Fox Cities** for a donation of two 3-month YMCA memberships for the Be Well Program.

Thanks to **Tony Kuranda** and **Mark Dorsey** for cleaning the gutters.

Thanks to **Mike Mitchler** for the donation of a lawn mower and for repairing the old one.

Thank you to the following for donations of matching funds:

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Foundation: \$156.20 to match gifts from **Judy Brooks, Carla Strauch, Paul Krueger & Christine Peterson**

The Prudential Foundation Matching Gifts: \$50 to match a gift from **Herb Clark**

Target Corporation: \$9.88 to match an anonymous gift

Sara Lee Foundation: \$100 to match a gift from **Michael Huzzar**

Thank you to the following for memorial gifts:

Jane B. Beddard - \$50 in memory of Dennis J. Roberts

Steven Kaplan - \$100 in memory of Harold Winius

Isabelle Winius - \$500 in memory of Harold Winius

Herb Clark - \$25 in memory of Mrs. Perleberg, grandmother of Kate Perleberg

Thank you to the following for their donations:

Gifts under \$100

Anonymous - \$35

Mary Anne Brown & Annie Press LLC - \$42

Carol Ligare - \$50

Patty Morlock - \$25

Terry Petrenchik - \$50

Mary Ellyn Vicksta - \$10

Dorothy Weiland - \$20

Gifts of \$100

Terry & Betty Weiland

Gifts over \$100

Gene & Barbara Wulf - \$250 + Matching Funds from Bemis Company Foundation

The following donations have been made in memory of **Sue Schouten** to the *Sue Schouten Memorial Fund* within the **NAMI Fox Valley Endowment Fund**:

Joseph Schouten, DDS - \$1,000

Irene Schouten Charity Fund - \$1,000

The following donations have been made to the **Daniel S. Evans Memorial Fund** within the **NAMI Fox Valley Endowment Fund**.

Dennis & Marlene Braun - \$100

To everyone who volunteered at the **NAMI Walk** on Saturday, October 8. And what a success! Everything went very smoothly thanks to over 50 **NAMI Walk volunteers** covering more than 100 roles in preparation on the days that led up to the event, as well as on Walk day. Incredible!

Thank you to the facilitators and presenters at the inaugural **Be Well** program session which ended on October 19: **Jessica Aycock, Lewis Kumbier, Dr. Bradley Lauderdale, Tina Lyon, Jenn Parsons, Kara Patterson, Jill Rasmussen, Sue Schroeder, Kristine Soper and Paula Verrett,**

Thanks to **Julie Edwards, Micky Jones and Sandy Pharis** who started teaching the current **Peer to Peer** class which started in September and to **Paula Verrett** for teaching the **REAP** class which ended on October 12.

For teaching the current **Family to Family** classes in Appleton thank you to **George Butz and Ann Jadin.**

Thanks to **Bud Broussard and Linda Speering** for teaching the current **Brillion Family to Family** class.

Thanks to **Mindy and Mary Beth Arneson** for teaching the current **Mental Health First Aid** class.

Thank you to the facilitators, presenters and panelists of our current **SPARK** class (Supporting Parents as Advocates and Resources for Kids): **Becky Brown, Beth Clay, Christine Cornell, Cindy Czarnik-Neimeyer, Casey Hanson, Joan Helbing, Amy Jordan, Cherie Lindberg, Laurie McCulloch, Rhonda McMaster, Sarah Palmer, Karen Schiller, Emily Ella Schuh and John Wallshlaeger.**

Thanks to the presenters and volunteers for the September **CIT** (Crisis Intervention Team) training for law enforcement: **Karen Aspenson, Ron Diamond, Brian Figy, Joan Helbing, Steve and Pat Hirby, Joan Johnson, Randy Kerswill, David Mays, Dave Nickels, Todd Peters, Mark Rovick, Aaron Sabel, Helen Timm, Lee Vogel, Brandt Swardenski and John Wallschlaeger.** Many thanks to the actors in the role plays, as well.

To **CIT Initiative Committee**: **Karen Aspenson, Chris Craggs, Leon Fischer, Todd Freeman, Barb Gerarden, Chris Groeschel, Polly Olson, Helen Timm, Katie Vanderheiden and John Wallschlaeger,**

thank you so very much!

We also thank the presenters of the October **CIP** (Crisis Intervention Partner) training for personnel working within corrections, residential, vocational, medical and first responder settings: **Karen Aspenson, Doug Bisbee, Steve and Pat Hirby, Jon Lidonne, Jeff Marks, Karen Schiller, Tim Styka and John Wallschlaeger.**

Thank you to **Mary Baker, Lissa Barklow, Joanne Ehrhardt, Hope Houseman, Debbie Tracy, and Connie Weber** for helping us with the large postcard mailing relating to the **25 for 25 Charity Challenge**, and to the many volunteers, including **Dinny Grueneberg**, who helped with the August newsletter mailing!

Our continued appreciation goes out to our wonderful office volunteers: **Cathy Grambsch** for putting together folders for many of our education and support programs, to **Wade Howell** for his support and dedication to the **Veterans Program**, to **Wendy Harris** for her work on our web site and our **FaceBook** page. To our volunteer librarian, **Ras Rozite**, thank you for keeping our library a great resource for all who walk through our doors. Thanks to **Dinny Grueneberg** for putting together materials for our education classes, to **Paula Verrett, Jenny Walter, Rissa Huntington and Hope Houseman** for helping with data entry, and many thanks to **Mary Baker, Tamra Retlick, Kimberly King and Richard Bauer** for helping out with various tasks in the office. Special thanks to a great all around volunteer and our newsletter editor, **Paula Verrett.**

For keeping our lawn cut this summer, thank you to **Chris Richards and Brian Hildebrandt.** Many thanks to **Kristin Zeigler and the volunteers at Outagamie County Division of Youth and Family, Shelter Care**, for keeping our flowers watered and looking beautiful during the summer and fall!

We wish to thank **Jessica Marhefke and the volunteers from Miller Electric** for their work on three separate days in September doing a wonderful job cleaning the basement, the garage and washing windows. Thanks, too, for providing several volunteers for the **NAMI Walk!**

To **Jason Swiertz**, thank you for his continuing role as our **Treatment Court Advocate.**

Sincere thanks to the continued dedication of our **NAMI Fox Valley Board Members**: **President – Joan Helbing, Vice President – Joe Troy, Secretary – Kara Patterson, Treasurer – Craig Harrell.** **At-large members are Clance Catlin, Christine Cornell, Chris Craggs, Rachel Fitzgerald, Brandt Swardenski, Tom Tatlock, Paula Verrett, Mary Ellyn Vicksta and Mike Williams.**

Each week NAMI Fox Valley has eight support groups that are led by trained and dedicated facilitators. To these support group facilitators, we owe a debt of gratitude: **Mindy Arneson, Richard Bauer, Tammy Bradley, Bob Brooks, Chris Craggs, Norma Czarnik, Kay Edelbeck, Julie Edwards, Karen Engel, Angel Gruber, Georgie Halpin, Steve Hirby, Wade Howell, Cindy Kolbe, David Langner, Shedrene Logan, Janet Malcolm, Tom Morrissey, Danielle Ostorero, Kara Patterson, Steve Radtke, John Rose, Miles Sutter, Andrea Swanson and Steve Ware.** Congratulations and thank you to our newest group facilitators who were trained in August, **Jenny Albrecht and Jenny Walter!**

Thanks to our In Our Own Voice presenters who share their story with members of our community. **Mindy Arneson, Richard Bauer, Georgie Halpin, Patrick Nelson, Tamra Retlick, Greg Pekarske-Siers and Jason Swiertz** have all made presentations in the

past three months. Thank you and congratulations to our new presenters, trained in October: **Andy Andrews, Betsy-Lou Pritzl, Christopher Richards and Jenny Walter.**

Thanks to our helpline volunteers who answer calls when the office is closed – **Bud Broussard, George Butz, Helene Iverson, Linda Speering and Sherry Williams.**

To **Nick and the staff at Print Source Plus**, thanks for the wonderful job printing our newsletter and getting it done promptly each time.

Please forgive us if we have overlooked thanking anyone that may have helped out in any way or made a donation. We appreciate all volunteers and donors and are grateful for everything they do to help our organization!

Over 700,000 New Vets Seek Health Care, Half with Mental Problems

Posted by Mark Benjamin

Monday, October 3, 2011 at 12:17 pm

From www.time.com

The beginning of years of health care?

Nearly three-quarters of a million veterans back from Iraq and Afghanistan who are now out of the military have sought medical care from the government, and more than half of those service members suffer from a mental health condition, including post-traumatic stress disorder.

These are among the stunning numbers in a new report compiled by Veterans for Common Sense, a veterans' advocacy organization. VCS shared the new report with TIME prior to public release scheduled for this week. The group culled the information from government data mostly obtained through a raft of Freedom of Information Act requests submitted to the Defense Department and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The bullet-point report portrays the sweeping impact of a decade of war on U.S. troops, including the fact that over 2.2 million service members have fought in Iraq and Afghanistan and 42 percent of those troops have deployed to war two times or more.

The study reports the 6,211 deaths and 45,889 troops

wounded in action so far, but it also sheds light on a dirty little secret about how the Pentagon has long minimized the number of reported casualties by excluding the number of injuries that are not the direct result of the bullets and bombs of the enemy. Another 56,874 service members have been medically evacuated from Iraq or Afghanistan because of accidents and other injuries. That brings the total number of casualties to 108,974.



The Pentagon says those 56,874 troops mostly are not casualties, but troops evacuated for medical problems unrelated to service. Go visit Walter Reed and chat with the troops banged up in Humvee wrecks and other incidents and tell them that. Also, the Pentagon's own dictionary (yes, they have one) defines a casualty as, "Any person who is lost to the organization by having been

declared dead, duty status - whereabouts unknown, missing, ill, or injured."

The precise number of service members back from war, out of the military, and seeking treatment from the VA is 711,986, according to VCS. More than half of those troops, 367,749, suffers from a mental health condition.

A typical veteran is in his early twenties. The U.S. will be caring for hundreds of thousands of these vets for decades.

Vets' Corner

Sandy Pharis,
Project Coordinator

What an exciting couple of months.

Wade and I were invited to go to the LZ Lambeau event in Green Bay for the job fair and service providers' day. We are now considered by the Department of Veterans Affairs to be a preferred service provider for veterans and their families. There were many people interested in what we do here at NAMI Fox Valley. Many did not know of our services and programs so we provided them with information about NAMI affiliates around Wisconsin.

On October 21st we presented to faculty and staff at Fox Valley Technical College in Appleton for an hour and a half on veterans and PTSD and what they can do to help students in their classes. We will continue to advocate for veterans and families here at NAMI Fox Valley, so please let others who may need our services know.

We sent out 22 invitations to current and former members of the Veterans Support Group for a free meal at Applebee's and Golden Coral to celebrate Veterans' Day. We appreciate these community organizations honoring our veterans and providing this opportunity for vets to gather and socialize. Remember to thank a veteran.

Book Reviews

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest by Ken Kesey is a journey that squashes the patient's free spirits through the negative aspects of mental health care.

Character, Nurse Ratched attempts absolute power over the patients on her unit. She is a strait-laced, inflexible woman who administers by the book without flexibility. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is a cautionary allegory of what happens when an evil incarnate is given too much power.

The patient's fate is presented in a very uncompromising manner, and is like a punch to the gut, that brings a tear to the eye. The final chapter is a discharge of pent-up emotions.

Reading *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* made me appreciate the advancement in today's care for those who live with mental illness!

Wrestling With Our Inner Angels, by Nancy Kehoe is a journey that brings a patient's spirit to wholeness through freedom of spiritual-faith expression.

Kehoe writes about people living with mental illness who were given "numerous neuroleptics, antidepressants, tranquilizers, and mood stabilizers

and had received ECTs (electroconvulsive therapy treatments), generally given without anesthesia, as well as insulin shock..." Kehoe relates to a "patient who cannot be categorized and thought herself a spiritual and emotional anomaly."

It is a fact that years ago psychiatric medications were less effective than they are today. Good state-of-the-art treatment for mental illnesses are still being researched today. Kehoe's "Wrestling with our Inner Angels" confirms our need to continue this important endeavor!

I found this book easy to read! It provides a very unique insight into the "thinking" of those living with mental illness. Kehoe helped me understand the side of those living with mental illness as spiritual beings!

Specifically, Kehoe provides the avenue for society to give individuals the freedom to share their faith. Kehoe points out that some professional caregivers stigmatized patients by referring to their spiritual life as evidence of a complex illness. As Kehoe writes, "Many who suffer from mental illness live with a personally defined "dual diagnosis: "mentally ill" and "sinner"; they have two "disorders." --- Conversely, mental health professionals deal with the illness of the clients but not with their sense of sin."(p.88).

Whether one accepts the Judeo-Christian concept of "sin" or not, the universal human experience of guilt, shame, fear, having wronged another or self, coupled with the yearning for forgiveness, peace, acceptance, understanding and confession are paramount to the journey toward wholeness. I like the way this book clearly points out that fact!

After reading this book, I understand the significance of how one's religious traditions can truly serve people: "they take us out of ourselves and link us to something transcendent, fostering a new sense that we are part of a larger whole." (p. 87).

Kehoe points out: "When the voices of parents, ministers, teachers and caregivers fall on the ears of people in a vulnerable position because of their illness, they have the potential to be as harmful as internal voices. The voices of others can limit us, define us and instill guilt and fear." (p.104).

I found courage, hope and inspiration in Kehoe's writings. *Wrestling with our Inner Angels* gives compassion to those with a mental illness. We can all learn a great deal from Kehoe's writings.

Read this 2009 non-fiction novel and discover your strongest inner being!

Consumer Corner

By Georgie Halpin
Consumer Coordinator

Thanks to all the dedicated, hard working volunteers for the Brat Fry on Sept 11th. We stayed busy throughout the day and it was fun working with everyone. Our September outing at Bubolz Nature Preserve was great with our very own guides, Rachel, John and Nolan, and our wild life spotter, Tina, who pointed out the snake and toad. Thanks also to our photographer, Richard. The rest of us just enjoyed being followers. Everyone enjoyed Tom's Drive Inn with all the ice cream treats. A special thanks to Richard.B for saving New Hope's pizza's during the blackout.

Twenty-one people attended our Halloween party which took place on Oct 29th at Appleton Housing Partnership. We had an over abundance of great food! Games and good conversations made for a great event. People who had not met before and those who have known each other for years came together for some fun and food. The song, *We are Family*, popped into mind as I looked around at all the happy faces.

Upcoming New Hope Support Group events:

Please sign up for all events during New Hope Support group or call Georgie at (920) 954-1550.

Thanksgiving pot luck

Saturday, November 19th

Appleton Housing Partnership

On the corner of Lawe and Hancock Streets
5:30pm -8:00pm

The New Hope Connections

Holiday pot luck/party

Saturday, December 17,

Appleton Housing Partnership, 5:30pm-8:00pm

Golden Coral dinner buffet

Saturday, January 14, 6:00pm-8:30pm

Telling someone you have a mental illness

Taken from *Healthy Place Mental Health Newsletter* online

Over the last two months, our bloggers have written several articles on whether or not to disclose you have a mental illness.

To be sure, it's a popular question we get from people coming to the HealthyPlace.com website. And it's not an easy one to answer.

It seems many of you are worried about the ramifications of disclosing your depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorder to your employer or fellow employees. It's a tough decision; one that weighs

heavily on the mind. Peace of mind vs. keeping a big secret. Maybe you need workplace accommodations? Oh sure! There are laws in place to protect you from job discrimination, but we know how employers can get around that.

Many also want to be honest and share their mental illness with family members and loved ones, hoping they'll be accepting and supportive. There are many kind people out there who will be. There are also many who won't be or aren't ready to be.

So should you tell people about your mental illness? I don't have an answer. I guess it just depends on what your needs are and if you're ready to accept the good or bad results that may stem from your disclosure. We all know the bad results (Read: *The Price of Being Bipolar in Public and Bipolar as Love Thief*). I'd like to hear from people who are glad they told someone about their mental illness. How about calling our "Share Your Mental Health Experiences" line, **1-888-883-8045**? Tell us who you told and why, how you did it and how things turned out. It would be helpful to many people.

Mental health parity by Paula Verrett

On October 3, 2008, The Wellstone-Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act was passed by President George W. Bush. Implementation was started in January of 2010. The Wisconsin Mental Health Parity Act was signed into law on April 30, 2010 by Governor Jim Doyle. It went into effect for most people on January 1, 2011. The Wisconsin Parity Act applies to "group health plans purchased by large and small employers; local and state governmental, self-insured group health plans; and individual health plans." The law lifts the \$7000 minimum annual cap requiring insurance policies that provide mental health and substance abuse coverage to provide coverage equal to that of other medical coverage. The Wisconsin Parity Act does not mandate that insurance policies cover mental health and substance abuse services, but if they do, they must be provided at parity levels. Therefore, it is important for you to know what your insurance policy covers.

The Wisconsin Parity Act requires your insurance company to provide a copy of their criteria for medical necessity. Discuss this information with your mental health provider. If you have questions regarding your policy, contact the company and talk to them. If you are in need of more information on mental health parity, go to www.parityforwisconsin.org. This website provides more information on the Wisconsin Parity Act and links to resources. For information on how to file insurance complaints call the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance at: 1-800-236-8517 or go to their web site at www.oci.wi.gov.

The Alliance is the newsletter of NAMI Fox Valley, published quarterly in February, May, August and November.

Send news items related to chronic mental illness, opinions, or complaints (no poetry please) to: Paula Verrett

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Beth writes...



As I sit to write this, my first column for *The Alliance*, I am overwhelmed with feelings of gratitude for the opportunity to serve and to lead this vibrant, energized, and growth-oriented NAMI affiliate! I truly appreciate the warm welcome I have received since my start in early September. I must begin by acknowledging the incredible job Karen Aspenson did in this position over the past 8 years, as she guided this affiliate to its high level standing among NAMIs in the state and in the nation. It has been a gift to be mentored by her, and to learn from her compassion and experience, as I grow into my new leadership role. To say that Karen left 'big shoes to fill' is most definitely an understatement!

The quickly changing leaves remind me that, both outside and within NAMI FV, it is a time of change. A change in leadership always provides an organization with challenges and with opportunities, and NAMI FV is no different. It is my sincere hope to address, head on, the challenges facing our affiliate, most importantly, securing funding, and building our capacity to meet the growing needs for a depth and breadth of critical programs. It is my hope as well to capitalize on the opportunities before us, by turning our focus inward to ensure the quality of all of our education, support, advocacy, and outreach programs. It is a very exciting time to work in the field of mental health, as all of the 'movers and shakers' in the Fox Valley are mobilized around the issue of Mental Illness. We are fortunate to have the support of many committed and active community

partners. Most importantly, NAMI FV is at the table to represent the consumer voice in the planning, creation, and implementation of well-coordinated mental health care in our community.

I am thrilled to share that we had a very successful Staff Retreat in early October, during which we, not only shared a delicious meal at Atlas Coffee Mill, but laid out the program calendar for 2012. We have a very busy affiliate with support groups running nearly every day of the week, and education programming being offered in cycles of three or more times per year.

My priority, as I begin this journey with NAMI FV, is to meet YOU, our consumers, friends, volunteers, families, funders, and community partners! I am here to serve... please connect with me when you are at the NAMI house – my door is open! And don't hesitate to let me know what I can do for you.

Happy Autumn,
Beth

2012 Program guide

As 2011 comes to a close, NAMI Fox Valley will be sending out the 2012 Program Guide in mid-December. We will continue to offer many educational classes and programs to consumers, family members and the general public. If you would like more information about any of our programs, or to register, please call 920-954-1550 or email: angel@namifoxvalley.org.



Be Well Leadership

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Upcoming events

November

- 19 NHS Thanksgiving Potluck at Appleton Housing Partnership 5:30pm - 8pm
- 24 Happy Thanksgiving

December

- 12 Holiday Party for Consumer and Family Members at First Congregational Church of Christ 724 E. South River Street - 5:00pm
- 17 NHS Holiday Party at Appleton Housing Partnership - 5:30pm - 8:00pm
- 25 Merry Christmas

January

- 1 Happy New Year
- 9 Family-to-Family Begins at FVTC - 6-8:30pm
- 17 Annual Board of Directors Meeting 4-6pm
Location to be determined
- 12 Advanced CIT
- 14 NHS Outing: Golden Coral - 6:00
- 18 Be Well Begins
FVTC - 5-6
- 21 NHS Facilitator Training



Our Mission

NAMI Fox Valley exists to improve the quality of life for those with brain disorders (mental illness) and their families and friends through education, support, advocacy and research. It is affiliated with NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) and NAMI Wisconsin.

Our Vision

Live well with mental illness.

How to reach us:

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