Bringing hope to Texans one Texan at a time

Support | Education | Advocacy
Mission Statement

NAMI Texas, in partnership with our Affiliates, is dedicated to eradicating the stigma, myths, and misconceptions of mental illnesses, to improving the quality of life for all who are affected by these illnesses, and to supporting recovery.

We support our affiliates by providing leadership, training, and technical assistance. We are dedicated to serving communities by empowering consumers and families and promoting meaningful systems change.

NAMI Texas Staff

Robin Peyson, MHSA
Executive Director

Suzanne Leon, BSBA
Finance Manager (FT)

Kelly Jeschke
Membership Coordinator/ Office Manager (FT)

Julia Wilson, BBA
Executive Assistant (PT)

Patti Haynes
Education Director (PT)

Aeren Martinez
Development Director (PT)

Kathleen Burnside
Grant Writer (PT)

Alexis Wadsworth
Communications Director (PT)

Maurice Whitfield, MPA
Advocacy Coordinator (PT)

Stacy Hollingsworth, BA
Standards of Excellence Coordinator (PT)

Tammarrow Constantine
Operation Resilient Families Coordinator (FT)

NAMI Staff at Via Hope

Nancy Arnold, BSJ
Training Coordinator (FT)

Michelle Bibby, BA, CPS
Consumer Coordinator (FT)

Lauren Cohen, LMSW
Youth Coordinator (FT)

Angie Jackson, MBA
Family Partner Coordinator (FT)

Neal Nored, CPS
Certified Peer Specialist Training Coordinator (FT)

Legend:
(FT) Full Time Employee 32 - 40 hours per week
(PT) Part Time or Contract less than 32 hours per week

Cover photo by Wendy Rusin© taken at Adkins, Texas just outside of San Antonio. Used with photographer’s permission.
A Message from the President & Executive Director

Dear NAMI TX members and friends,

Thanks to your partnership, dedication, and generosity NAMI TX is making a real difference in the lives of more Texans each year. This report describes the progress made with your help in 2011.

Support, education and advocacy form the backbone of NAMI TX anchored to a cornerstone of hope. We believe that education can make a difference, that supporting one another makes a difference, and that raising our voices across Texas to change and improve our system through advocacy has a real, measurable impact.

NAMI TX is …

• A core of 330 individuals, corporations, and foundations financially partnering with NAMI Texas and local Affiliates to directly impact nearly 5,000 more people in 2011. Countless others indirectly benefited through the subsequent efforts and influence of those served directly.

• A dedicated Board of Directors leading the way with vision, strategic thinking, and proactive planning to grow the capacity of NAMI TX

• A cadre of office staff supporting the work of local Affiliates in communities across Texas by providing training for teachers and state trainers, technical assistance, and most importantly connecting Texans living with mental illness and their families with the NAMI Affiliate closest to their home where they find help and hope.

• An army of volunteers working tirelessly in local communities donating time and effort to reach individuals with serious mental illness, their family members, their friends, first responders, and community leaders.

• Individuals sharing their personal stories and spreading a message of hope by spoken and written word throughout Texas communities.

• A starting point, a place to begin the journey of recovery, and support for taking the first step.

This year, Texas moved from 50th to 51st in the nation for public mental health funding, behind all the states and the District of Columbia. According to the newly published report from SAMHSA on Mental Health in the United States, Texas is below the national average in many areas. Texas lags behind in the number of psychiatric beds with only 41.1 beds per 100,000 adults compared to a national average of 52.2. Texas also is severely trailing in the area of mental health professionals per 100,000 population in the critical areas of psychiatry, psychology, psychiatric nurses, counseling, marriage and family therapy, and social work.

Clearly, we are moving in the wrong direction. It adds an urgency to the work we do, trying to fill the gaps that are left in an underfunded system that can’t keep pace with the need. We get calls every day at NAMI Texas from individuals looking for help. Like Dan, who called today from East Texas, struggling with depression, or Lisa, who lives in Central Texas and whose son is in jail with no medication or assistance for his bipolar disorder.

Connecting people to their closest NAMI Affiliate so that they know they are not alone makes such a big difference. NAMI really can create hope for those in need and provide a person to talk to when reaching out for help and information. We provide a starting point, a place to begin the journey of recovery, support for taking the first step, which can often be the hardest. It is what we do, and why we bring hope to Texans, one Texan at a time.

With your continued help, we can train more teachers, raise public understanding and awareness, and reach out to areas that don’t have a NAMI Affiliate to support individuals who want to start one. Thank you.

Andrea Hazlitt
President

Robin Peyson
Executive Director
Effective Jan. 1, 2012, NAMI TX’s fiscal year was changed to coincide with the calendar year. To close out the previous fiscal year and align the new calendar year, our auditors conducted a twelve month audit from Sept. 1, 2010-Aug. 30, 2011 with an additional four months audit from Sept. 1, 2011-Dec. 31, 2011. The figures below represent a consolidation of those 16 months. Contact NAMI Texas if you’d like a copy of the audit or go to [www.namitexas.org/about/reports.shtml](http://www.namitexas.org/about/reports.shtml)
**Financial Report (continued)**

**Note 1 Revenue:** As the revenue charts indicate, NAMI Texas is fortunate to have strong funding for a variety of programs, but we have very limited day-to-day operational and unrestricted funding. NAMI Texas works hard to identify and apply for grants that support our mission. However, truly unrestricted funds (not tied to a specific grant deliverable) currently make up 26% of our revenues. The majority of the restricted assets are tied to our Via Hope funding. (See page 7 for details on how these funds are used to support individuals with mental illness, families and youth). Financially, we want to improve our ability to meet the needs of our Affiliates and fund more training for teachers and facilitators. To do this, we need to increase our unrestricted funding so that we have more flexibility for our programs.

**Note 2 Expenses:** NAMI Texas is a careful steward of the funds that have been entrusted to us by our supporters, grantors, members, and donors. As the chart indicates, the majority of our funding, 82%, is spent for “Programs” which includes all support, education, and advocacy expenses. Management comprises 15.75% and fundraising comprises another 2.27% of our total expenses.
Education Programs

In Our Own Voice: Living with Mental Illness (IOOV) *(NAMI Signature Program)*

Two trained In Our Own Voice speakers share compelling personal testimonies of living with, and overcoming the challenges posed by mental illness. Ten affiliates made 117 presentations to 2,140 audience members.

Family-to-Family (F2F) *(NAMI Signature Program)*

The NAMI Family-to-Family Education Program is a free 12-week course for family caregivers of individuals with severe mental illness. The series is structured to help caregivers maintain their own well-being while they provide care and support to someone with serious mental illness. This year, sixteen affiliates offered F2F in their regions for a total of 595 participants in 42 classes, with an additional 3 classes taught in Spanish.

Peer-to-Peer (P2P) *(NAMI Signature Program)*

Peer-to-Peer is a free ten-week experiential education course for any person with serious mental illness who is interested in establishing and maintaining wellness. Eight affiliates offered 17 classes, graduating 146 participants. The number of participants in P2P reflects a 300% increase from 2010.

NAMI Basics *(NAMI Signature Program)*

NAMI Basics is a free six-week education program for parents and other caregivers of children and adolescents living with mental illnesses. Two affiliates held 9 classes and graduated 82 participants this year.

NAMI Connection Support Group *(NAMI Signature Program)*

NAMI Connection is a free weekly recovery support group for people living with mental illness in which people learn from each others’ experiences, share coping strategies, and offer each other encouragement and understanding. Currently, twelve affiliates offer Connection groups to a total of 18 active groups. Additionally, there are 31 other support groups available.

Education is at the heart of the mission of NAMI Texas and our Affiliates. We provide support for and training on both NAMI Signature Programs and NAMI Texas programs. Signature programs are developed and maintained at NAMI, and NAMI Texas programs are developed and maintained by NAMI Texas.

At NAMI Texas, we are always striving to secure additional resources so that we can build capacity and increase the number of state trainers in these programs. We also work to identify additional funding to train more teachers, support existing education programs, and assist Affiliates in expanding what is available in their communities. As a grassroots organization, our Affiliates are on the frontline, offering peer-provided education and support for free to those who seek our help.
**NAMI Family Support Group (FSG) (NAMI Signature Program)**

Formerly called the “Family-to-Family Support Group”, this free support group meets on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis. Family members and friends receive support from each other by sharing their experience, strength, and hope while caring for a loved one who has a mental illness. Currently fifteen affiliates offer Family Support Groups, with 18 active groups. Additionally, there are another 48 support groups.  

**Great Minds Think Alike (GMTA) (NAMI Texas Program)**

Great Minds Think Alike is a free curriculum for youth, ages 12-17, diagnosed with mental illness. This program is taught in several formats; 8-week, 10-week, or 3 weekends. GMTA is designed to provide youth with the skills necessary to take a leadership role in their own recovery. This year three affiliates taught 3 classes, graduating 18 participants.  

**Visions for Tomorrow (VFT) (NAMI Texas Program)**

Visions for Tomorrow is a free 12-week course that addresses many of the needs families have when raising children and adolescents with mental illnesses. Taught by primary caregivers, VFT classes offer families a safe and supportive place to share experiences and learn from other adults who care for children and adolescents with mental illness. Five affiliates offered 9 VFT classes in their regions, with 90 participants graduating.  

**Partnerships (NAMI Texas Program)**

The Partnerships program is a free four-week curriculum that allows teams comprised of family members and professionals to provide collaborative educational workshops. Partnerships is an education program that consumers and family members can attend together. This year, three affiliates offered Partnerships with 46 people graduating. In 2011, the Partnerships workbook was revised, and is now on sale at Amazon.com. It can be used as a stand-alone self-help guide or for group education in a wide variety of settings.  

**Training Trainers and Teachers**

Standardized curricula-based training for NAMI Signature Programs and NAMI Texas Programs ensures that our teachers and trainers are well prepared and maintain fidelity. Our Affiliates and NAMI Texas often leveraged limited funding by collaborating with each other. Together, the following trainings were supported:

**NAMI Provider Education (NAMI Signature Program)**

The NAMI Provider Education Program is a five-week course that presents a penetrating, subjective view of family and consumer experiences with serious mental illness to line staff at public agencies who work directly with people experiencing severe and persistent mental illnesses. The course helps providers realize the hardships that families and consumers face and also helps them appreciate the courage and persistence it takes to live with and recover from mental illness. This year, NAMI San Antonio held the first Provider Education training in Texas, led by Joyce Burland. We now have 36 individuals ready to deliver the Provider Education program in their communities.

NAMI Texas supports our affiliates by providing 15 hours of continuing education credits (CEUs) for Social Workers, Counselors, and Educators for this program.

*Education continued on page 7*
Via Hope is a training and technical assistance resource for individuals with serious mental illness, as well as their family members, and youth with an interest in mental health. It is jointly administered by Mental Health America of Texas and the National Alliance on Mental Illness Texas, with funding provided by the Department of State Health Services and the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health. Via Hope promotes mental health transformation through the provision of innovative training and technical assistance initiatives designed to change the traditional mental health system to one that is recovery-oriented, strengths-based, and person centered. Provider organizations and professionals also receive training about recovery-oriented services and systems.

Through generous funding by the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, NAMI Texas provides five specialists to organize and oversee the following programs:

**Training and certification for peer specialists**
A Certified Peer Specialist (CPS) is an individual in recovery from mental illness who uses his or her recovery story as an effective tool to provide hope and encouragement to other individuals in their recovery. In 2011, Via Hope’s four trainings produced 95 new Certified Peer Specialists. Neal Nored is the Certified Peer Specialist Training Coordinator.

**Training and certification for family partners**
A Certified Family Partner is a person who has real life experiences parenting a child with mental, emotional, or behavioral health disorders. The role of the Family Partner is to articulate that experience for another parent or family member, and assist other parents and family members in navigating the mental health system. Via Hope developed the training curriculum during 2011 and trained the first class of 12 new Certified Family Partners. Angie Jackson is the Family Partner Coordinator.

**Youth engagement**
Transition age youth from age 14 through 24 are a distinct and unique population with their own needs and interests. Via Hope works directly with these youth and helps families and providers understand these specific needs. As part of this initiative, Via Hope sponsored a youth advocacy retreat in August at the University of Houston for 24 youth in the transition age range. Lauren Cohen is the Youth Coordinator.

**Engagement of Persons with Mental Illness**
To encourage the participation of persons with mental illness in the transformed system, Via Hope provides financial and staff support to a new grassroots consumer network called the Texas Catalyst for Empowerment (TCE). With Via Hope’s sponsorship, TCE held a Consumer Leadership Symposium in Austin in August for 85 emerging consumer leaders from across the state. Michelle Bibby provides support as the Consumer Coordinator.
NA MI has made a difference in my life in many ways. One of the most important is the people we have in our great organization. They are supportive, creative, active and hard workers. They advocate for people with mental illness and their families...I don’t see how people fighting mental illness can survive without having NA MI people to help them.

~ Jerry Fulenwider, San Antonio

**Family to Family Teacher Training**
NAMI Texas supported 3 individuals for train-the-trainer classes in St. Louis. These individuals will be able to help train other teachers in Texas.

**Parents and Teachers as Allies (NAMI Signature Program)**
The NAMI Parents and Teachers as Allies is a free two-hour in-service program that focuses on helping school professionals and families in the school community better understand the early warning signs of mental illnesses in children and adolescents. It focuses on the specific, age-related symptoms of mental illnesses in youth and how best to intervene and link families to services. NAMI Texas is able to support the affiliates by providing 2 hours of continuing education credits (CEUs) for Social Workers, Counselors, and Educators. One class was conducted this year with 14 graduates.

**Family Support Group (NAMI Signature Program)**
This year, 1 individual attended the train-the-trainer facilitator training in St. Louis.

**NAMI Connection Support Group Facilitator Training**
NAMI Texas graduated 9 facilitators in 2 classes this year.

**NAMI Training for Via Hope**
In 2011, NAMI Texas through Via Hope funding from the Department of State Health Services, held one training each of Peer to Peer (13), Great Minds Think Alike (13), Connection (19), In Our Own Voice (16), and Family Support Group Training (16). In total, 77 new leaders graduated from these programs. Each of these programs allows participants to return to their local community and teach the respective classes. Patti Haynes is the Education Director.

*In Our Own Voice Training, March 2011*
We would not be able to do the work we do without the support of our wonderful donors. Thank you!

**Patron Level**  
($10,000 – 19,999)  
Beth Swalm  
Family Support Foundation for Mental Illness

**Benefactor Level**  
($5,000 – 9,999)  
Astra Zeneca  
Bristol-Myers Squibb Company  
Central Counties MHMR  
Eli Lilly and Company  
Karen M. Garber  
Loud Management  
PhRMA  
Stanley Family Foundation  
Sunovion  
The GEO Group Foundation

**Visionary Level**  
($1,000 – 4,999)  
Amerigroup  
Austin Lakes Hospital  
Lawrence Brzozowski  
Cenpatico Centene Management Co.  
Riba Foods  
David Hannah  
Health Care Service Corp.  
IBM Employee Services Center  
Janssen Pharmaceutical  
Todd Jones  
Troy G. Martin, Jr.  
Merrill A. May  
Outhouse Music  
Pfizer  
Jacqueline L. Shannon  
Shenandoah Petroleum Corporation  
Shire US  
Smith Music Group  
Truist Altruism Connected  
Tommy Tullo  
Value Options  
Olivia Bannan  
Lynn Bannan  
Gwendalyn Barker  
Patricia Ann Barth  
Lee Baughman  
Barbie Beach  
Conquest Construction  
Judy Craig  
Cynthia Cunningham  
Lynne Curran  
Sharon DeBlanc  
Susan Denyes-Moody  
Ed & Jackie Dickey

**Catalyst Level**  
($500 – 999)  
Anonymous  
Austin/Travis County Integral Care (ATCIC)  
Terry Barker  
Paul E. Berndt  
Chevron Humankind Matching Gift Program  
FBR Management  
James & Margaret Gerstle  
Melissa Gibbons  
Give With Liberty  
Global Impact  
David Heltzel  
The Menninger Clinic  
Kety Messersmith  
Robert & Kathy Phillips  
Rose Hill Center  
Southern Thread  
Priscilla Beadle  
Diane Black  
BMS Match Program  
Maxine Bobco  
Alice H. Brink  
Peg Brown  
Brent & Peggy Brown  
William or Leslie Buck  
Bridgett Bykowski  
Janet Carr  
Basil P Casteleyn, Jr.  
Charity Buzz  
Ross Doan  
John Dornheim  
Susan Downs  
Phillip Downs  
Carl Dunn  
Maurice Dutton  
Jinneh Dyson  
Dick & Jane Easterwood  
William Epp

**Supporter Level**  
($100 – 499)  
Rosie Acosta  
Karen C. Adkins  
Carolyn Apodaca  
Norma G. Bangs  
Bank of America  
BMS Match Program  
Maxine Bobco  
Alice H. Brink  
Peg Brown  
Brent & Peggy Brown  
William or Leslie Buck  
Bridgett Bykowski  
Janet Carr  
Basil P Casteleyn, Jr.  
Charity Buzz  
Ross Doan  
John Dornheim  
Susan Downs  
Phillip Downs  
Carl Dunn  
Maurice Dutton  
Jinneh Dyson  
Dick & Jane Easterwood  
William Epp
Donna & Russell Erwin
Jerry Fulenwider
David Gibson
Beth Glass
Elizabeth Goff
Janice Goodspeed
Joy Gray
Shelley Green
Carolyn Hamilton
Jane Harmon
Don Harnden
Patti Haynes
Andrea Hazlitt
HCA Caring for the Community
Joan A. Helfgott
Janet E. Helgesen
Doug Hicks
Edith Hicks
David L. Huckabee
Angelina Brown Hudson
Kristalle Jaime
Jimenez Trust, Robin & Donn Greiner
Faye Johnson
Mark Johnson
Christina Judge
Bruce Kaiser
Colette Kaiser
Bruce Kalmick
Jennette Kinard
Daniel & Susan Kovich
Josh Lancaster
Jordan Langlois
Christine Lynn Latchaw
Roy Lee
Mary Ann Lockwood
Joe B. Lovelace
Patricia & George Loveland
Liz Lundeen
Yolin & G.R. Magee
Mark Marek
Laura Marsh
Melinda Martin
Clifford McGlotten
MHA of Greater Houston
MHMR Services for Concho Valley
Lila & Milton Moorer
Frances Musgrove
NAMI Wichita Falls
National Education Alliance for Borderline Personality Disorder
National Instruments
Brett Niles
Kara Niles
Sandra Orr
Carmen Ortiz
Pete Ortiz
Janet Paleo
Marsha Phillips
Margarita C. Roehricht
Jack & Virginia Rounds
Shirley Rowland
Kathleen Schneiderwind
Schoepf’s BBQ
June Scogin
John & Barbara Seaworth
Elizabeth Smalling
Amanda Smith
Marilyn Smith
Rustin James Smith
Elizabeth Spencer
John Tatum
Arthur Temple, III
Samantha Tew
Esther Thames
The Gulf Coast Center, MHMR
Elizabeth & Trevor Thompson Tollefsbol
Domenic & Ann Tolotta
TWG Investments
Renée Ann Urban
USPRA Texas
Robb Wasielewski
Catherine Weaver
West Texas Centers for MHMR
Jessica Wheeler
Tisa Whitfill
William G. Whitsitt
Michael Wilkins
Ricky A. Wilkins
Eric Willard
William “Bill” Reuter
Gary Wisdom
Christine Woods Consulting

Friends Level
(Up to $99)
Mr. & Mrs. Tim G. Abrams
Sue Adams
Hazel W. Adams
Mary Aldrich
Darlene Aldrich
Jana Anderson
John & Sheila Anderson
Anderson Art Gallery
Steven Avant
Margaret Balfour
Dara Baumann
Kathy Blair
Polly Bohmfalk
Karen Bosscher
Dr. & Mrs. Robert Brown, Jr.
Mary Anne Caponegro
Jeannine Caracciolo & Aeren Martinez
JoEllen Carlos
Sue Castles
Gregory Cauthen

continued on page 10
Our Supporters (continued)

Frank & Wanda Cernosek
Richard & Jennifer Chancellor
Cynthia Chenet
Martha Clark
Jo Rae Crofton
Timothy & Melissa Daggett
Jan DeWitt
Cecile DeWitt
Kelly Doyle
Herschel & Pat Duckworth
Suzanne Duvall
Jacqueline Eckersley
Tonya Engelbrecht
Edward Epp
Carl Farley
Mary & Scott Ferree
Lona Flocke
Cathy & Bill French
Loretta Friedman
Mary Lou Froh
Juanita Fusbahn
Joseph Gaines
Patricia L. Gatling
Kathy Ghrist
Diana Goodloe
Nydia Guerrero
Lee R. & Annelle Harp
Kelley Harper
Jeanine Hayes
John Holt
T.H. Homerding
Nancy Hoover
Polyanna Hopson
Polly Ross Hughes
Jill E. Jendrzej
Kelly Jeschke
Joann Kalaitzes
Michael & Norma Katz
Madeline A Kelley
Nancy Klementich
Ann C. Koster
Lynn Kuehn Bassett
Linda Kujawski
Corrie Lanagan
Helen A. Lanagan
Jack & Jo Ann Leavitt
Monique Lehning
John Lewis
Jolene Liheuski
Frank Jr. & Patricia Lobsch
Maxine A. Long
Jane Metzinger
Lawrence Michaelis
Jeff Mikolajek
B.P. Miller
Cheryl Miller
Irene Miloslavskaya
Michael Moore
Daniel Nichter
Philip B. Nieri
Erika Oneil
Michael & Marion O’Neill
Margaret & Lou Porcello
Mary Anne Potter
Joe Powell
Michael Price
F. Dean Price, Jr.
Carolyn Quillen
Nageswara Rao
Susan Reinhart
Oma Richardson
Alexandria & Lazaro Rodriguez
Alice Rogers
Patricia & Bob Rogers
Cristina Ross
Marvin Rouhota
Elvia Ruelas
Ruth F. Klinger
Safeway
Joni E. Sager
Anna Maria Salazar
Olga G. Sanchez
Lulu R. Savino
Savannah Schulz
Jody Schulz
Donna Shands
Bobbie & Carole Sinclair
Ernest & Gail Smith
Jeanette & Marc Taylor
Leah Thedford
John Yeong Long Tyan
Karen Vanderwerken
Karen Walters
John B. or Vicki Westover
Hal & Dee Whitfield
LouAnn Wiggins
Cecelia Williams
Bernice Williams
Anita & Craig Woods
Fred & Dorothy Yondorf
P T. Youmans
Guy Youngblood
Nicholas Zamir

Basics Teacher training conducted in Austin, TX October of 2011.

We make every effort to ensure all supporters are included in the annual report. We have a number of donors that wish to remain anonymous, but if you wanted to be included in the report and were not, please bring it to our attention.
Every month, for the past fourteen years, Larry Brzozowski has been a faithful contributor to NAMI Texas. With such dedication we contacted Larry to ask him why he is so devoted to our organization.

Larry is a 22-year Navy veteran who served his country for 11 years as an enlisted man, and then spent 11 more years as an officer before retiring. After the Navy, he found himself looking at five college bound children. He realized retirement would have to wait, so he started working in the supply department of a large Houston engineering firm.

A long time donor to NAMI Texas, we asked Larry about his motivation for giving. “My motivation is pretty straightforward. Loretta, my wife of 43-years, had bipolar disorder and committed suicide in 1998.”

Larry shared that she suffered with the disorder for about 15 years. He believes that the condition was triggered in the 80’s after Loretta was diagnosed with breast cancer and had a mastectomy. He noted that she began making odd accusations about the doctor, who they had known for a long time. “I didn’t believe it, and then her condition got worse. I had to take time off work, and spend more and more time with her. She lived with the disease for 15 years before she committed suicide.”

“In those years there was little assistance out here for her. I didn’t know who to talk to, felt totally helpless. When I was in the Navy she was a great Navy spouse, taking care of our five children and keeping up with everything when I was deployed. I didn’t have a clue how to help her when she needed me most.” Larry’s voice cracked a little in our conversation, it was obvious that even after 14 years he still grieves her loss.

“I only learned of NAMI after she died. I went to Family-to-Family and learned about bipolar and it finally all made sense. I give to NAMI Texas and Metro Houston because I don’t want anyone else to go through what we went through. I wanted to honor my wife, Loretta, and this was the best way I could think of doing it. I will give to NAMI until I die.”

With your help NAMI Texas will be able to more quickly reach Texans in need like Larry Brzozowski’s family through increased public awareness campaigns. Won’t you help us bring hope to all Texans and their families coping with mental illness? Fill out the enclosed envelope and mail in your contribution today.

Supporting the Public – 2,768 contacts

NAMI Texas fields an average of 180 phone calls and e-mails a month. Questions range from inquiries about services like “I don’t have insurance, where can I get help for my bipolar medication?” to “What resources are available for a child with mental illness?” On occasion we receive walk-in visitors asking for assistance.
The doctor said it was supposed to be good—this new short-term acute care hospital. Now it had our daughter in it. Severe postpartum depression. Since she had needed help immediately, we had to take his word for it. There was no time not to.

We didn’t call it mental illness yet, because we weren’t really sure what that was. We didn’t call it anything, even to ourselves, for a long time. I guess we thought that would make it less real, like a bad dream, and we would wake up and go back to our normal lives.

My husband, son-in-law and I, along with our two-week-old grandson, were in the hospital lobby, waiting for visiting hour to begin. It was our first time. Our daughter had been admitted only the day before, but it already seemed like a lifetime ago. We tried to make small talk, but doing small is hard when the pain is so large.

“You may come up now,” said a pleasant young man. He smiled as he held the elevator door open for us. The simple kindness of strangers. It helps, sometimes. He then escorted us to a large, nondescript room partitioned into cubicles. We were barely acknowledged by the nurse at the front desk when asked where we might find our daughter. She pointed towards the back, and after weaving our way through the cubicles we finally located her, propped up in a chair, eyes half-closed.

“Hello, honey.” We tried to rouse her. “Look who came to see you.” Her eyes struggled to stay open as she attempted to focus. Then she saw her newborn son. Smiling, she held out her arms and leaned forward to kiss him. Before she made it to his cheek, however, her head dropped and she nodded off. That’s when I finally broke down.

Her two-week-old son never received his mommy’s kiss. Even now, thinking back, it’s the moment that still gets me. I hurried back to the nurse at the front desk. “I think my daughter is over-medicated,” I said. “Can you please tell the doctor?”

“I’m sorry, ma’am,” she replied, not bothering to hide her annoyance. “She’s an adult and she’ll have to tell him herself.” I thought that was about the craziest thing I had ever heard, and suggested to the nurse just how impossible that would be. The sad thing is, I found out...it’s true.

My daughter was too drugged to tell the doctor that she was too drugged. I believe you would call that Catch-22: “A situation in which a desired outcome or solution is impossible to attain because of a set of inherently illogical rules or conditions.”Yep, that’s it alright.

Thus began our initiation into this seemingly alternate universe of the mental health system.

Like rats in a maze of misinformation, no information and red tape, we hit walls every way we turned. Not surprisingly, one of the things we did find out is that Texas ranks 50th among the states for mental health resources.

Then one day, a small, mustard seed-sized tidbit of information that I almost didn’t even notice led us to a real live doorway.

It came in the form of a blurb in the Longview News-Journal. It said that a twelve-week education course for families of individuals with mental illness, called Family-to-Family, was to begin soon. Sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), the curriculum would focus on the major mental illnesses and their clinical treatment. It would also provide knowledge and skills that family members needed when dealing with the difficulties of living with mental illness.

We signed up fast. This doorway led us not only out of the maze, but right into the arms of hope, with a capital H. I don’t know how we would have made it otherwise.

We found that NAMI helps fill the gap between the scarce mental health resources and individuals and families who need them. Through the classes, we gained not only knowledge and understanding about mental illnesses, treatments and available options, but perhaps most importantly, we gained a community.

We finally did not have to go it alone. Yes, I think that was the best part. 😊

(postscript - Our daughter is doing well, thanks be to God. She and her husband now have two lively boys, ages 4 1/2 and almost 2.)
Faith-Based Initiative

The NAMI signature program, Sharing Hope, as well as the NAMI Texas Faithbased Toolkit, were born out of research and experience. Studies have found that African Americans, when facing a mental health crises, often seek help from clergy, rather than seeking out assistance from mental health professionals. In addition, we know that, as a result of the stigma of mental illness, it is not uncommon for these individuals who seek a place to worship to meet with rejection and isolation. Sharing Hope is designed for outreach to the African-American faith community and the Toolkit is designed to be a general resource for faith leaders.

In 2011, NAMI Texas continued our Faith-Based outreach in East Texas. In collaboration with NAMI Metropolitan Houston and NAMI Longview, we held a training seminar in Longview. Angelina Hudson Brown, Gary Eagleton, and Paula Lilly used the NAMI Sharing Hope program to make a powerful presentation. Through their own stories of struggle and hope, they shared their journeys of recovery. Judge Sterling Lacey, County Judge of Bowie County, who has years of experience in Christian counseling, made an outstanding presentation on faith, outreach, and mental illness.

Robin Peyson provided training on how to use the NAMI Texas Faith-Based Toolkit. Most participants were leaders/pastors/ministers from various churches and all were provided free copies of the Toolkit. The Toolkit includes a video, a book, and a curricula to use in providing education to members of a variety of faiths and religions. It includes a guide that provides step-by-step instructions, activities and ideas about how to best use the materials, so that individuals who have mental illness, and their family members will be welcome when they look for a spiritual home.

A NAMI Story

Our son, Thomas, started showing signs that something was not going well emotionally somewhere around 1980. We were at a loss to understand what was wrong. We started working with a wonderful psychologist about 1981 or so. After a period, she said we needed to see a psychiatrist. The first few we saw did not recognize the biological nature of his illness and did absolutely no good.

We were as lost as we could be. Our family was so worried we were sliding towards a dangerous outcome. We finally found a psychiatrist who made a diagnosis and started treating our son. The doctor’s diagnosis was incomplete, but he introduced us to NAMI. We met friends who helped us through our troubles, and our family again became the stable and loving unit that it had always been.

We learned so much about what our wonderful son was going through and ways for us to cope and remain strong—strong so that we could be of proper help to him. We now have lifetime friends in the NAMI family and because of the help NAMI gave us, we continue to carry on the NAMI tradition and will as long as we can.

~Sally, Ed, and Thomas Kuny and family

When I came to NAMI over three years ago, I was searching for answers. I came looking for a way to help my mother who had reached the lowest point in her life due to schizophrenia. I needed to talk to people who knew about mental illness and understood what I was going through. I needed support, education, and information on how to be an advocate. At NAMI, I found all of those things and much more. I found a new purpose in life — to help and encourage others going through the same mental health issues I have dealt with my whole life.

~ Melinda Martin, NAMI Concho Valley
NAMI Texas’s role as an advocacy organization grew from the need of its members – consumers and families – to effect a positive change in the response of society, government and business to an individual with a mental illness.

NAMI Smarts: A Framework for Learning and Applying Effective Advocacy Skills
NAMI Smarts helps teach advocacy skills to consumers and family members, providing training on the most effective way to communicate with legislators, policy makers and community leaders. The program is a series of skill-building modules that help individuals harness the power of their stories to drive home their organization’s advocacy agenda – and to communicate with and inspire members, funders, coalition partners, and more. For 2011, through funding from the Texas Council on Developmental Disabilities, a total of 123 individuals with individual with mental illness received NAMI Smarts Training.

Rally Days
On February 17th, NAMI Texas and it’s affiliates, mental health professionals and board members gathered for Rally Day at the Capitol. For most, the day began with getting on a bus before daybreak to travel to Austin. However, the fourteen–sixteen hour day was well worth the opportunity to speak with state representatives.

Lawmakers learned that cutting mental health spending is “penny-wise and pound foolish” Providing care through hospital emergency rooms and the criminal justice system is not an efficient or effective approach.

Unfortunately, the Texas mental system is ranked the lowest in the nation. Texas has the highest uninsured rate in the nation (26%) and the lowest per capita spending on mental health. We are now ranked fifty-first in the country, below the District of Columbia, having dropped from fiftieth last year.

NAMI Texas will continue to advocate passionately for mental health system transformation. We know the difference our voices make, when we work together to educate our communities, our policy makers and other stakeholders. We will continue to advocate for the changes that must take place in order to build a system of services and supports that are based on recovery.

To keep informed, go to www.namitexas.org and click on our link to the NAMI Texas Public Policy Blog.
Support

Operation Resilient Families (ORF)
Operation Resilient Families (ORF) is a free eight-session peer-led program for veterans of Operation Enduring and Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) and their families. While openly acknowledging difficult post-deployment issues, this program uses a strength-based and strategic approach. The ORF program focuses on enhancing family resilience through a process designed to help prevent overwhelming readjustment challenges.

The program was funded by the Department of State Health Services and was available at fifteen local mental health authorities and NorthSTAR. In 2011, a festival called “Taste of Texas Music Festival” was held in Georgetown to raise funds for ORF. They raised $49,945! We can’t thank Big Hearted Babes and Brandon Rhyder enough for supporting veterans through their generous efforts.

Brandon Rhyder performing at Taste of Texas

“I don’t know what we would have done without Operation Resilient Families. My husband and I went to the training and now we are working with other veteran families. It’s brought us closer together and opened us up to new friends who understand what we’ve gone through.”

2012 NAMIWalks

NAMI Texas has worked hard to support our affiliates and we are fortunate to have seven NAMIWalks throughout the state. NAMI Dallas, Gulf Coast, Houston, and El Paso hold their walks in April and May. But there is still time to participate at one of the following walks. You’ve heard of Super Tuesday, we have Super Saturday! Ours is more fun. This year NAMI affiliates at Austin, Fort Worth, and San Antonio are all holding their NAMIWalks on October 6, 2012. If you haven’t been to a walk, join one of these affiliates as a virtual or actual walker!

For more information on these events go to www.namitexas.org and click on NAMIWALKS.
NAMI TEXAS
DEPENDS UPON
YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS

Please select one of the following or fill in your own amount:

☐ $1,000  ☐ $500  ☐ $250  ☐ $100

☐ $50  ☐ $25  ☐ Other ______________________

I would like my contribution to be in

honor of ________________________________

or in memory of __________________________

Please notify the following individual of the gift:*

Name ___________________________________

Address __________________________________

City _____________________________________

State _____  Zip _________________________

Daytime Phone ___________________________

Email ___________________________________

☐ Please keep my gift anonymous.

Send your Contribution/Membership to:

NAMI Texas
2800 South IH 35, Suite 140
Austin, TX 78704

*Open Door is a reduced rate for members with limited financial resources. Open Door members enjoy all the same rights and privileges of regular membership.

To join NAMI as a consumer/family member; please visit the NAMI Texas website at www.namitexas.org or contact your local Affiliate. A listing of our local affiliates can also be found on our website. Please check to see which Affiliate is closest to you. You may also make a donation at www.namitexas.org.
NAMI Texas Affiliates

NAMI Texas
Andrea Hazlitt, President
Robin Peyson
Executive Director

Region 1
NAMI Lubbock
David Gibson, President

NAMI Texas Panhandle
Patty Robertson, President

Region 2
NAMI Collin County
Sharon DeBlanc, President

NAMI Dallas
Sherry Cusumano, President
Ashley Zugelter, Executive Director

NAMI Southern Sector
Dallas
Anne Leggett Walker, President

NAMI Denton
Esther Fidler, President

NAMI Ellis County
Marsha Rutenbar, President

NAMI Gayson, Fannin & Cooke Counties
Lois Robinson, President

NAMI Tarrant County
Carolyn Apodaca, President

NAMI Kaufman County
Emma Glenn, President

Region 3
NAMI El Paso
Sindi Elorreaga, President

NAMI Waco
Wayne Gregory, President

Region 4
NAMI Concho Valley
Melinda Martin, President

NAMI Greater Longview
Paula Hendrix, President

Region 5
NAMI Austin
Adrienne Kennedy, President

NAMI Brazos Valley
Karen Garber, President

Region 6
NAMI Waco
Wayne Gregory, President

NAMI Lufkin
Carolyn Faulkner, President

Region 7
NAMI Kerrville
Bill Matthews, President

Region 8
NAMI Ft. Bend
Barbara Stegmann, President

Region 9
NAMI Victoria
Patsy Weppler, President

NAMI Johnson County
Debbie Aaron, President

NAMI Wichita Falls
Kim Robinson, President

NAMI El Paso
Sindi Elorreaga, President

NAMI Midland
Judy Craig, President

Region 1
NAMI Lubbock
David Gibson, President

Region 2
NAMI Collin County
Sharon DeBlanc, President

Region 3
NAMI El Paso
Sindi Elorreaga, President

Region 4
NAMI Concho Valley
Melinda Martin, President

Region 5
NAMI Austin
Adrienne Kennedy, President

Region 6
NAMI Waco
Wayne Gregory, President

Region 7
NAMI Kerrville
Bill Matthews, President

Region 8
NAMI Ft. Bend
Barbara Stegmann, President

Region 9
NAMI Victoria
Patsy Weppler, President
Save the Date
Partnering for Change – Building the Future

NAMI Texas 2012 Annual Conference

Thursday, November 1 – Saturday, November 3
Sheraton Austin Hotel
701 East 11th Street
Austin, TX 78701
Hotel Reservations: (512) 478-1111

Photo by Michael Tuuk ©
Used with permission