Benefit Concert a Huge Success for NAMI-Humboldt

Thanks to the generosity of Fred Tempas, well known local tuba player and music teacher, and his friends, we cleared over $2,300 at the September concert at the Arcata Presbyterian Church. Eighty people enjoyed a unique all-brass concert in the cozy setting of the church sanctuary, and many stayed afterward to share refreshments (graciously served by Hope Center volunteers) and visit with old and new friends. Special thanks are due to the NAMI members who made this all happen despite numerous challenges. Hurrah to those of you who sold and bought tickets, donated refreshments and helped with logistics and publicity!

Special thanks are due to the Central Office Copy Center for printing tickets and flyers, Berliner's Cornucopia and Fortuna Music Mart for ticket sales and Judy Aronoff for designing the striking flyer.

This was our first fundraiser in years and will support services like training for volunteer teachers who present our nationally sanctioned educational programs. Funds also support the purchase of informational materials for the community and our general expenses including required liability insurance.
Humboldt County Takes on New Role with Released Offenders

With treatment options sadly limited, individuals with mental illness who are convicted of crimes are housed in prisons where they go undiagnosed and untreated. Statistics from nami.org indicate percentages ranging from 25 to 50 per cent of prison inmates have a mental health disorder.

In the fall of 2011 California passed AB 109 to solve prison overcrowding by releasing designated non-violent offenders to the supervision of counties. Our local officials have had just a few months to set up services for these offenders, some of whom have mental illnesses. To address mental health issues, Asha George, acting Mental Health Director reported to NAMI Humboldt in April that the County has put together a team including a MH clinician, 2 substance abuse counselors, and nursing staff, who work with probation officers.

Residential treatment for those with substance abuse disorders is being offered. Concerns about the special needs of offenders with both mental illness and substance abuse issues are being raised by Behavioral Health Board members. NAMI members on that board include Tim Ash, Tim Doty and Jana Kirk-Levine. Folks with co-occurring disorders like bi-polar or schizophrenia don’t fit well in a residential setting with others whose problem is substance abuse alone. Having NAMI members offer input on the design of local services is a way to use the special knowledge of family members to benefit those living with a mental illness.

Continued next page

MESSAGE from President Edith Fritzsche

I have enjoyed being your president for the past two years. I hope NAMI Humboldt has served you well and help meets some of your family’s needs. Your Board of Directors are all family members, volunteers who are living the same experiences as you, and have empathy for you and your loved ones.

This fall, we took part in another Crisis Intervention Training for County and State first responders. NAMI provided a Parents Panel Discussion as well as members who spoke on the Consumers’ Panel. Many of the attendees felt this was the most empathy-awarening activity of the training.

The Family to Family Classes have been filled to overflowing, and we have so many grateful graduates, now better able to help and communicate with all their family members. Huge thanks to teachers Brenda Flores, Angela Winogradov, Sandy Sweitzer, and Christina Allbright. Our next class will be Saturday mornings begining February 2, taught by Marcia and Simeon Tauber. To register please call Sharon Benda at 725-8853. Sharon has been coordinating the Family to Family classes these past two years. Many thanks to Sharon.

Two weekly support groups are now available! In addition to the Fortuna group (see page 5) Lea Nagy continues to lead a group in Eureka with assistance from NAMI trained leaders Tim Doty and Sandy Sweitzer. (268-2963) Four local folks took the NAMI Cal training last spring for the In Our Own Voice program. These speakers have lived experience with a mental illness, and are prepared to share their stories of recovery. You may contact Karen Diers at KDiers@co.humboldt.ca.us, or Shelly Fitzgerald at the Hope Center for information.

Thank you Barbara May, Angela Winogradov and Cheryl Ash for attending training for an exciting new NAMI program. Parents and Teachers as Allies consists of two-hour workshops on recognizing mental illness in children and helping parents and teachers communicate. Call Barbara at 826-2663 to schedule a workshop for the school personnel of your choice.

We are currently in the process of accepting your kind annual donations of new, warm clothing -- gifts for those who are living in County facilities. A donation of money for clothing is also appreciated, and we will do your shopping for you! Send donations to NAMI Humboldt, PO Box 1225, Eureka, CA 95502. Call Angela for more information 443-1009.

May your holidays be filled with cheer and your new year a healthy one.

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Join NAMI Now—Fill Out and mail with your check to NAMI Treasurer, PO Box 1225, Eureka, CA 95502

Name_________________________________________
Address_______________________________________
City, State, Zip Code_____________________________
Phone_____________  E-mail________________
My membership is: New____________
Renewal____________

Family Membership ___ $35
Professional Membership___ $50
Low income Membership ___$12
Donation of ___________ in memory

We thank you in advance for your deductible donation. Your dues support and provide membership in our affiliate as well as membership in NAMI California and NAMI National. When you join NAMI Humboldt, you will receive membership in all three and will receive publications in the mail: The Advocate, the Connection and NAMI Humboldt News.

Please let us know if your contact info has changed.

You may also join on-line at NAMI.org

Please state your relationship to your family member (spouse, child, parent) for NAMI National data collected to help provide services and information:

__________________________

Released offenders continued from page 2:
Recent news stories in the Times Standard and on Channel Three News have implied that the return of offenders to our local area has contributed to a rising property crime rate in Eureka. Such claims of cause and effect are dubious at this stage when the program is new. Asha George told our board that based on what she knows about the follow up of released offenders, they are not being arrested for reoffending in great numbers. Bill Damiano of County Probation also stated in the Northcoast Journal that “Affixing cause isn’t possible without more information.”

Some see release of prisoners to locals as an opportunity for rehabilitation, which has clearly not been a side effect of imprisonment in this state, where 70% of released felons end up back in prison.

Behavioral Health Board Meetings and Community Corrections Partnership meetings are open to the public. The BHB meets on the third Thursday of the month at 12:15 at the Wood St. campus of County Mental Health. The Corrections Partnership meets in Rm.1 of the courthouse on the second Wednesday of the month at noon.
Board Member Angela Winogradov Shares Thoughts

My name is Angela Winogradov, I joined the NAMI Humboldt board of directors in 2011. I joined the board hoping to make a difference in other people’s lives that have family members living with mental illness. It is a hard road with lots of ups and downs. Knowing other people have gone through it and survived gives me hope, which is what I am trying to do for others.

I am a Family to Family teacher and a new A Parents and Teachers as Allies trainer. I also work full time at Hospice of Humboldt as a Team Leader. I have been married for twenty-five years and have two children. We live in a beautiful small community and have an opportunity to help each other out by breaking the stigma associated with mental illness.

(Besides her other NAMI activities, Angela played a key part in making our Brass Bash fundraiser a success. Thanks for all you do, Angela!)

Tim Ash, NAMI-Humboldt vice president addresses the crowd during the May is Mental Health activities in Eureka.

May activities included acceptance of a proclamation by the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, a march through Eureka, and a barbecue put on by the Hope Center, which is a drop-in peer support program.

**Current NAMI Humboldt Board and Committee Members 2012**

- **President:** Edith Fritzsche
- **Vice President:** Tim Ash
- **Treasurer:** Tim Doty
- **Secretary:** Debbe Hartridge

**Board Members:** Ira Blatt, Mollie Bridenbaugh, Shelly Fitzgerald, Brenda Flores, Kellie Jack, Lea Nagy, Angela Winogradov

**Family to Family:** Sharon Benda
**Membership and Volunteers:** Brenda Flores
**Newsletter:** Debbe Hartridge
**Programs:** Mollie Bridenbaugh, John Sisson
New Support Group in Fortuna Started this Year
By Sharon Benda

I joined NAMI in 2001 after I took a Family to Family class. My son had just been hospitalized for a month. I jumped right in with both feet, as I usually do, and went to support groups and started attending the NAMI meetings in Sacramento. NAMI had a cubicle in the Health and Human Service's building, so I volunteered to work there each week, to answer the phone and send out information. I joined the NAMI Sacramento Board and was Vice President and then President until I moved to Fortuna.

I have taught 10 or 11 Family to Family classes and am now the coordinator for the class. I absolutely love teaching this class and seeing it grow so that we can now offer 2 classes a year. I started the support group in Fortuna because I knew there was a need here. I live in Fortuna, I need support, so when the time was right, I placed an article in the paper stating a support group was now being offered.

We have a core group of about 5-6 folks. With support groups, people come and go and that is fine. We are there for each other as well as ourselves. It is a blessing to be able to have a group of people to talk to about what our week was like. If we are having a good week, we can help others, if our week is going badly, then they are there for us.
I am able to incorporate many of the educational tools that I have learned in the Family to Family class.

We meet every Monday evening from 6 pm to 7pm at 922 N St (corner of 10th and N) in Fortuna. For more information please call me at 725-8853 or sharonbenda@att.net.

Current and Ongoing Support and Education

E-mail namihumboldt@gmail for information about upcoming classes and groups.

Family to Family: A twelve session class for family members with loved ones living with mental illness. Taught by trained NAMI volunteers. Contact Sharon Benda 725-8853 or sharonbenda@att.net.

Support Groups for family members: In Eureka located at Humboldt County Mental Health Campus. Contact Lea for information. 707-268-2963. (see above story about the Fortuna group)


HOPE Center: Peer support in a welcoming environment on the HC Mental Health Campus. 441-3783

PTSD Support Groups for eligible veterans: (Post traumatic stress disorder.) At the Vet Center, 2830 G St. Eureka 444-8271

Depression Support Group in McKinleyville, Mondays at Grace Good Shepherd Church. Call Diane at 839-4753
NAMI Humboldt
P.O. Box 1225
Eureka, CA 95502

NAMI members participated in the awareness walk from the Hope Center to downtown Eureka during May is Mental Health Month activities. This year, the barbecue put on by the Hope Center was held at Carson Park and had a great turnout. Thanks to all who made May events such a success!

For those of you who’ve enjoyed our holiday party in past years, note that our board has chosen not to organize one this year. As you can see from the stories in our newsletter, much energy goes into our programs and projects, reaching our community with education, advocacy and support. In December, we’ll concentrate on our clothing and gift drive.