



Of Walla Walla

NAMI NEWS: October-November 2015 Volume XXIX No. 6

NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS

P.O. Box 401, Walla Walla, WA 99362 (509) 529-6160

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COMING EVENTS

NAMI General Meeting

Wednesday, October 28, 2015. This meeting will be held, as usual, in the SonBridge meeting room, 6:30 pm, 1200 SE 12th, College Place, WA. Catherine Donaldson, psychiatrist at the Veterans Administration Medical Center, will be speaking about the brain.

Other Events:

There will be no general meeting in either November or December because of the holidays; however, we will be hosting our usual holiday party at the Veteran's Administration Medical Center, with luncheon and gifts for all persons with mental illness. Date to be announced.

2015 NAMI WALLA WALLA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Justine Taylor, Board President
Cathy Carlin, Secretary
Tam Lennox, Vice-President
David Surratt, Treasurer
Bobi Goodson
Dale Goodson
Kay Maxfield
Michelle Meyer

Notice:

Kay Maxfield is retiring from editorship of the NAMI Walla Walla Newsletter, which is currently appearing six times a year. Parties interested in taking over editorship are begged to contact Justine Taylor at 525-5740.

We are looking forward to enlarging our NAMI Walla Walla Board of Directors. If you are interested in applying to be a member of the board, please contact Kay Maxfield for an application. For more information, you may call president Justine Taylor at 525-5740. Applications will be available at the October 28 general meeting.

Local Member Featured in BP Magazine

NAMI Walla Walla member and support group facilitator Lisbeth Fry is featured in the most recent issues of BP, the BiPolar national magazine. The article, called Heroes of Hope, features several individuals including Liz Fry, who speaks of the importance of close supportive friends, described as mentors in recovery, when undergoing

a dark episode of depression, which Liz endured three years ago. Her friend was there for her and gave her wonderful support and love as she struggled with her terrible episode. Liz understands the importance of staying involved in the community. A professional flutist herself, she coaches middle and high school students in flute three days a week, and also facilitates support groups both for families and for personal mental illnesses. She loves attending symphony concerts and chamber music festivals locally.

News Notes:

The Homeless Alliance is making arrangements with the Christian Aid Center to provide the first set of post office boxes which will be available for homeless people to acquire. Dan Clark, founder of the Homeless Alliance, reports that box assignments, maintenance, and keys to the individual boxes will be provided by the Alliance. Information on how to apply for an Alliance mailbox can be found at wwalliance.blogspot.com, through email at wwalliance@charter.net or by calling 522-0399.

SUPPORT GROUPS UPDATE

Local NAMI Support Groups Liz Fry, Tam Lennox, and Kay Maxfield are offering the NAMI Family Support Group. As no one came to the first group, which was scheduled for Tuesday, October 6, we are offering one more Tuesday evening opportunity, on October 20. If no one wishes to participate at that time and no one comes, we will be trying a new schedule—the first and third Wednesday of the month at 10:00 am. We have discovered conflicts Tuesday evenings, including the Walla Walla symphony performances, and we are hoping Wednesday mornings will work out better. The location will be St Paul's Episcopal Church in the new library at 10 am. The training has revised the structure of the support group to facilitate more specific input from group members regarding possible solutions to problems encountered by those families whose family members have recently been diagnosed or those for whom new problems are being faced. Call Tam 200-8996 or Kay 529-4854.

In addition, Liz Fry is offering a NAMI Connections Support Group, which is open to anyone who has a mental illness, at 8:45 am on Wednesdays in the New Library at St Paul's Episcopal Church, Catherine and Birch, Walla Walla. For information call 509-529-7974.

Message from the President

By Justine Taylor

As we begin preparing for the 2015 holiday season, NAMI Walla Walla has many reasons to feel grateful. We continue to support and implement community education and events to reduce stigma and improve assistance for people with a mental illness. Our dedicated board of directors are generous with their time and talents to improve the lives of those affected by mental illness. We have sincere gratitude for the many donors and volunteers that support our activities.

One important aspect of our mission is to provide community education regarding mental health issues. Recently we had a free screening at the VA Theater of the acclaimed film, *Hidden Pictures*, created by award-winning filmmaker and physician Delaney Ruston, who grew up in the shadow of her dad's schizophrenia, and explores the hidden struggles faced by the 450 million people living with mental illness worldwide. Through deeply personal stories involving bipolar illness, depression, schizophrenia and anxiety in India, China, South Africa, France, and the US, *Hidden Pictures* reveals a global epidemic of silence around mental illness, as well as moments of profound compassion and remarkable change. Our hope is to have more screenings in our community of this important film.

In December, we will be hosting our annual "Holiday Party" to help support a sense of community and positive experiences for those with a mental illness. NAMI WW and the VA Medical Center sponsor our annual "Holiday Celebration" where lasagna lunches will be served and gift bags and door prizes will be distributed. We are always so grateful for the many donors and volunteers that support this joyous occasion.

DAN CLARK—WALLA WALLA ALLIANCE FOR THE HOMELESS

BY CATHY CARLIN

At the September 23, 2015 NAMI General Meeting, Dan Clark gave a presentation on the Walla Walla Alliance for the Homeless. The focus for the Alliance is a day center and place to spend the night for the homeless. Dan Clark pointed out that park restrooms are closed at night. There is nowhere to launder clothes, charge a cell phone, or get mail.

Dan Clark's wife is on the City Council, and people have asked why the council is not doing anything about the problem. Dan Clark told the story of seeing some homeless people sleeping under the awning at Memorial Pool. They were kicked out into the rain. He wondered how to help them.

The potential place for the day center and shelter sight is on land bought by Bill and Diane Madison in 2010 for a possible location for a clubhouse for the mentally ill. It wasn't used for that, and some people thought it would be a good place for homeless people. It's buffered by the highway and a railroad.

It is also near the Walla Walla Housing Authority and Washington Park where the new splash pad for kids is located. During this past summer many kids went there to frolic in the water. The Housing Authority did not like the idea of the homeless center being near them, and the neighbors who live near the location were unhappy when they heard of the plan. Also, various agencies closed ranks around the money allocated by the county for homelessness.

The property was put up for sale, and it was leased by new owners to the Walla Walla Alliance for the Homeless for \$1 a year for five years with potential to renew. There is the possibility of purchasing the property for the original price it was bought at.

If this day center and place for some twenty people to spend the night becomes a reality, who will run it? One answer was to form a new nonprofit, the Walla Walla Alliance for the Homeless, a 501(3)(c) organization, with a 25-member steering committee.

Dan Clark presented the idea of having tiny homes on the property that would be insulated and meet current code, but have no plumbing or kitchen. The existing building would be upgraded into a facility with kitchen, laundry, bathroom and shower, and an office. A portion of the land would be allotted for tents since some homeless people cannot stand four walls.

The Alliance has begun talking with the neighbors in the community who have put up resistance. One helpful idea is to do the intakes off-site. There would be no drugs, no alcohol, no weapons, no violence. No unaccompanied minors. No sex offenders. Certain felonies would be OK to have on one's record. People don't have to be sober and clean already, but there would be no drugs or alcohol on the property. One difficulty for homeless people trying to stay at the Christian Aid Center is while you don't have to immediately be sober to stay there, on the second night you are given a urine analysis. There would be no UAs at Madison Park, the name given to this day center property in honor of the couple who bought it with the mentally ill in mind.

Some people object that if you make it easier to handle being homeless, it lessens the incentive to stop being homeless. But efforts would be made to help homeless people upgrade their lives. They would register with

the county's Coordinated Entry Program. They would work with the Housing Authority and BMAC (Blue Mountain Action Council).

A retired contractor, maintenance director at Walla Walla University, has volunteered to work on the project. Comprehensive Mental Health would like to be on-site. The Alliance wants social services agencies to get involved. Volunteers are needed.

Portland and Seattle have had similar sites for homeless people. The police there say they have had fewer calls because of the sites. Merchants say things have improved.

While residents will participate to some degree in self-governance, the Walla Walla site would have a paid manager. Needed are some brave souls to stay there like campground hosts.

The bus goes to the door of Madison Park. Also in the works is a set of postal mailboxes so homeless people can have an address and a place to get mail. Social Security often sends its notices and communications through the mail. (The postal boxes are becoming a reality and are being located near the Christian Aid Center.)

Of course, the project needs authorization from the City of Walla Walla, and that is being worked on. Expect updates in the *Walla Walla Union-Bulletin*.

The 2014 count on a day in winter of how many homeless people were out in the weather was about 50 people. Those who are couch surfing or in cars are about 561 persons.

Walla Walla County has adopted a 5-year plan that would put all money into getting the homeless into permanent housing. This would take away all money from shelters and transitional housing.

The Walla Walla Alliance for the Homeless hopes to work with churches and other private parties. Some churches provide lunches. Three churches have a shower. The Rising Sun Clubhouse provides lunch for a small sum, but no laundry or shower facilities.

If the site is downtown it might be spread between several locations so security would be stretched. Dan Clark and the Walla Walla Alliance for the Homeless are convinced we need a day center some place as well as a place for about 20 people to spend the night at Madison Park.



1520 Kelly Place Suite 130, Walla Walla, WA 99362, (509) 529-0120

We have a new director. Jesus (Jesse) Ceja—who replaces Michelle Salazar. Please contact him at risingsunclubhouse@yahoo.com if you know anyone interested in volunteering at the Clubhouse.

Weekly Schedule:

Monday: 10:00 AM Clubmember's square table meeting, meal planning, grocery shopping

Tuesday: 10:00AM Gardening & Journaling

Wednesday: 10:00AM IMPACT program volunteer lead activity

Thursday: 10:00AM Walking & Exercise Club

Friday: 9:00AM Art with Anne

DONATIONS MADE EASY!

by Michelle Meyer Visit our website
at www.NAMIwallawalla.org today! You'll find all kinds of useful
news and information there as well as notices about our
upcoming events.

In addition, you'll notice a PayPal button on the HOME page and
on the SUPPORT page. This makes it easy for you to support
your local chapter of NAMI and all the work we do to advocate for
those with mental illness in our community. Your donations are
tax deductible.



And if your membership has lapsed, you can also renew that on our SUPPORT page. If you're not a member yet, you can join...just click "Join Online" and you'll be taken to the national website where you can create your profile and pay your annual dues.

Don't forget to check out our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/wallawallaNAMI for a great source of information about happenings in the community and a regular dose of inspiration!

2016 DUES AND DONATIONS DRIVE

If you have not already done so, it may be time to renew your membership in NAMI Walla Walla. NAMI Walla Walla is a non-profit organization under IRS rules. Dues and/or donations are tax deductible. If you prefer to join online, please go to www.nami.org and click on the join button. We urge you to send us your e-mail address so we may send you your newsletter via e-mail. To do that, contact klmaxfield@live.com or give her a call at 529-4854.

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TO: NAMI Walla Walla P.O. Box 401, Walla Walla, WA
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