



nami-savannah news

namisavannah.org
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September 2013

General Meeting

PLEASE NOTE: The NAMI Savannah general meeting will take place Tuesday, October 8, 2013 at 6:00pm at Reed House, Cornell St. Guest Speaker: Andy Mannich, GRHS Administrator.

Peer to Peer Group

Peer to Peer will have its graduation ceremony at the October's monthly meeting. Please come and congratulate the graduates.

Family Support Group

Will meet at Starbucks at Victory & Skidaway Road for month of September. The meetings are held the LAST Tuesday of EVERY month. The dates will be: Sept. 24th, Oct 29th, Nov. 26th, 2013. Locations will vary, so please keep in touch with Lisa Breitberg @ (912) 313-3272.

NAMI Connections

Talk to someone who understands. Someone just like you. NAMI Connections is a weekly recovery support group program for people living with mental illness which offers a structured group process designed to encourage, support and empower. NAMI Connections will be held every Tuesday at Reed House, 1144 Cornell Street, from 6:00-8:00pm.

"Stir It Up"

Don't miss NAMI-Savannah's monthly 30/60 minute radio show with Jacqueline Awe broadcast on SSU's 90.3 FM the 1st Friday of every month at noon.

Peer Support "Warm Line" at 1-888-945-1414

The Georgia Mental Health Consumer consumer-directed "warm line" for anyone struggling with mental health issues, 24 hours a day.

CRISIS HOTLINE

The 24-hour Georgia Crisis and Access Line, operated by Behavioral Health Link and sponsored by the state is: **1-800-715-4225**

NAMI-Savannah, Inc. is a member of the National Alliance on Mental Illness
7805 Waters Ave., Suite 2B, Savannah, Georgia 31406
Mail to: NAMI-Savannah, P. O. Box 13731, Savannah, Georgia 31416
Phone: 912-353-7143

Department of Behavioral Health Development and Disabilities - Region 5 Charles Ringling, Regional Coordinator



NAMI-Savannah recently interviewed Charles Ringling, a NAMI Savannah member for seven years. He also works for the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities as the Regional Coordinator for Region 5, an area that covers 34 counties in Southeast Georgia.

Q. How did you get involved in the behavioral health field?

A. Before entering into the healthcare field I was interested in the Social Sciences, taking numerous undergraduate Sociology and Psychology courses. Eventually I entered into healthcare as a practical nurse and went on to complete a master's degree in counseling in Kansas while working in various psychiatric hospital-based management positions. Later I would enter into a Public Health/Health Administration Program in Florida. Like many other people our profession I'd become interested in and wanted to understand how people grow & develop over time because my own family had been very unstable due to loved ones living with serious mental illness, addictions and domestic violence. After working as a psychiatric nurse for roughly seven years I'd grown dissatisfied with the inadequacies of local community support systems and how this seriously hurt the chances for people with serious mental illnesses (with or without addictions) for being able to lead meaningful lives in their communities. I also became very aware of and distressed by how in general people with serious mental illness and addictions have so few to advocate for them. So I began looking for opportunities to impact systems of care.

Q. What do you enjoy most about your job?

A. Before I came to Georgia in 2006 I had worked primarily in behavioral health provider organizations. It is a different role working in a state behavioral health and developmental disability authority vs. working in a provider organization. My responsibilities include organizing, directing, overseeing and managing the DBHDD Region's community based programs; promoting integration of state hospital and community services; promoting consumer protection, quality services and consumer satisfaction; managing all Regional Planning activities and working in partnership and consultation with the Regional Planning Board to ensure service needs/gaps are addressed; establishing and maintaining effective communication and working relationships with private and public organizations, providers, advocates, local governing authorities, elected officials, media, and other stakeholders; and supervising Regional Office staff. There are several things that I enjoy about my work. First let me say that we have a solid team of staff who work @ the Regional Office and I am very grateful for that. They are dedicated professionals who are very motivated to help improve the lives of people with disabilities. They do a lot of good work.

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I find a lot of gratification from leading or participating in work that improves systems of care because I've seen how it directly impacts peoples' lives in a positive way. And ultimately that is what it's all about, people, all people having an equal opportunity to live meaningful lives in their local community.

I continue to have the good fortune to work with people at all levels in other organizations who realize that no one agency can ever have all the necessary resources and that the best way to have a positive impact on people's lives is to leverage those resources – to pool resources and to innovate wherever possible. This includes leaders, middle managers, direct care staff, professionals, and paraprofessionals.

One program that DBHDD initiated as a result of the ADA Settlement Agreement was the Georgia Housing Voucher Program (GHVP). As the RC my role is to review the requests made by providers of higher intensity services such as ACT for people who might benefit from having their own apartment. This program has been highly successful and I am very grateful for playing a part in that program's ongoing success in our region.

Q. You are a long -time member of NAMI-Savannah, what does membership in NAMI mean for you?

A. NAMI SAV membership offers me an opportunity as a citizen to support individuals and family members of those who live with serious mental illness. NAMI SAV offers many valuable supports including CIT for law enforcement, Family to Family, Peer to Peer just to name a few.

What do you see as major challenges in your position?

A. Sometime it takes me a few minutes to switch on very short notice from working with a provider or individual concerning an immediate crisis situation to looking at an entrenched, complex problem that involves systemic challenges and multiple stakeholders.

Q. You have been part of several NAMI -Savannah cutting edge initiatives including the Blue Ribbon Task Force and Opening Doors to Recovery. How does partnering with NAMI help you with your work?

A. Well as I mentioned before no one person or organization has all the resources and certainly not all the answers. NAMI SAV members have "lived experience" and wisdom which helps me to remember just what is at stake when we come up short in our efforts to support people in their attempts to live lives of recovery.

Q. The Department (DBHDD) has been through some changes in the past few years and is currently planning to meet the needs of the future. What do you see as the biggest challenges facing Georgia in the future?

A. There have been many successes that have been achieved over the past 2 1/2 years but there is more work to be done as our state continues its transformation from an institutional based system to a community based system of care. I hope we have the fortitude to continue to build upon that momentum because it is the right thing to do.



Celebrating 25 Years OF CIT TRAINING

Visit the NAMI CIT center for more information at www.nami.org/cit.

More from NAMI -Savannah News



NAMI Walks in South Carolina

Attached is the flyer for the annual NAMI Walks in South Carolina which we have been invited to participate in. The board has approved our joining with them for this walk. I have invited our public and private supporters to join us and raise awareness and monies for our programs. The management and administration will be handled by NAMI Beaufort and we will only be required to travel to Hilton Head beach for the walk. NAMI Statesboro has agreed to join us also and we hope NAMI Golden Isles will also. I will begin the process of getting new t-shirts and adequate hats for our group.

John Richards, President

NAMI Walk with Hilton Head, S.C.

Please join us on Saturday, OCT. 26, 2013 for our NAMI-Walk with Hilton Head.

There is **NO** registration fee for this walk. All participants are encouraged to collect donations from family members, friends, co-workers, & business associates. All walkers who raise \$100.00 or more will receive a NAMI-walk event T-shirt. Companies, organizations, and families are encouraged to organize into teams. To register a team online, please go to www.namiwalk.org/BeaufortCounty.

Location : Coligny Beach Hilton Head Distance: 5K

Check-in time: 8:30 AM Official Walk time: 10:00 AM

If you can't walk, please be a **virtual-walker** for us, go online, ask for donations under your teams name, and help raise funds.

Also, listen in on our radio broadcast with Savannah State University on Oct. 1, 2013, WHCJ 90.1 FM where NAMI-Savannah will host Laura Conway from NAMI-Beaufort County, as she talks about the walk, and what we hope to accomplish.

Georgia Crisis Intervention Team Conference Honors NAMI Savannah Member



Diane Reeder

The Georgia crisis Intervention Team Conference Honors Program was held in Savannah on August 12, 2013.

Diane Reeder, former president of NAMI Savannah, was presented the award for the CIT Family Member of the Year. It was also announced that Pat Strode, the NAMI Georgia CIT Coordinator was notified that she will be receiving the award for CIT National Coordinator of the Year later this year at the National Conference. Also recognized at the

Conference was Major Sam Cochran (retired) who is considered the "father" of the CIT program.

NAMI-Savannah, Inc.
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The Nation's Voice on
Mental Illness

With more than 230,000 members, NAMI is the leading grassroots advocacy organization solely dedicated to improving the lives of persons with severe mental illness including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, and severe anxiety disorders.

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**JOIN NAMI
TODAY!!**

Go to namiga.org and
be sure to select NAMI-
Savannah!

CONSUMER NOTES

Jodi C. Whitaker
Program Director and Facilitator for NAMI-Savannah

NAMI Savannah has begun a new consumer council that Jodi Whitaker, our Program Director, and Pat Bray, our long time great volunteer, are starting. Those members wishing to be a part of this process are invited to contact Jodi or Pat to become a part of this new council. The purpose of this council is to allow our survivors to meet and discuss issues and needs to be presented to the Board of Directors for discussion and possible action. In addition representatives of the council will be invited to all board meetings to present concerns and requests for supports and to monitor the board activities. If interested, please contact Jodi or Pat at 912-353-7143.

***"Mental illness affects one in four ...
Americans every year."
Go to NAMI.org to learn more.***

NAMI Savannah NEW Office Manager

Please welcome to NAMI Savannah, VieAnna Mattox, our new Office Manager/Administrative Assistant! She comes to us from the Sullivan Group.

VieAnna has over twelve years administrative experience working in the non-profit, legal, retail, retirement community living, and education sectors; extensive volunteer experience working with the homeless, alcohol/substance abusers, domestic violence victims, etc.; and over 15 years working in technology. She is a Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer, has a Bachelor degree in Sociology, minor/certification in Gerontology from Marygrove College in Detroit, MI, completed Master level courses in Information Systems, and is currently pursuing her Masters' degree in Clinical Mental Health Professional Counseling at South University-Savannah.

She will work in the office from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Please welcome her to NAMI Savannah family!!