MAY 17, 2017

Conversations with Clergy & Community:
Exploring Faith, Religion and Spirituality as Resources for Individuals and Families Struggling with Mental Illness

PLEASE NOTE: This special meeting will be taking place at 6:30 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock 48 Shelter Rock Road, Manhasset.

Clergy from all faiths throughout Nassau and Queens will come together to learn and explore ways to help and support people and their families struggling with mental illness for whom faith is an important part of their lives and recovery.

JUNE 21, 2017

The Story of My Suffering

FURWA JAWAD, author and educator

Furwa is a volunteer with Who Is Hussain?, an international nonprofit working for social justice through community service. Furwa will read selections from her book, The Story of My Suffering, a collection of short stories from people who endured abusive childhoods because one or more of their parents were mentally ill. Her reading at the NAMIWalks Kickoff drew a standing ovation.
# NAMI Queens/Nassau Support Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP</th>
<th>LEADER/PHONE</th>
<th>DATE/TIME</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sharing &amp; Caring</strong></td>
<td>Hillside Hospital Social Worker</td>
<td>3rd Wednesday of each month 6:00—7:15 p.m.</td>
<td>The Zucker Hillside Hospital Sloman Auditorium 266th St. &amp; 76th Ave., Glen Oaks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evening Family/Sibling/ Adult Children</strong></td>
<td>Rosalie Weiner, LMSW (718) 776-4790 Please call first</td>
<td>1st &amp; 3rd Mondays 7:30—9:30 p.m.</td>
<td>NAMI Queens/Nassau office 1981 Marcus Ave, Suite C117 Lake Success, NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Afternoon Family &amp; Friends</strong></td>
<td>Rosalie Weiner, LMSW (718) 776-4790 Please call first</td>
<td>1st Tuesday of each month 12:30-2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Advanced Center for Psychotherapy 103-26 68th Rd. Forest Hills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family/Friends</strong></td>
<td>Christine Scotten, CSW (516) 521-8341 Please call first</td>
<td>2nd &amp; 4th Wednesdays 7:30—9:30 p.m.</td>
<td>NAMI Queens/Nassau office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Those with Bipolar Disorder</strong></td>
<td>Sandra Kalman, LCSW (718) 470-9552 Please call first</td>
<td>1st &amp; 3rd Tuesdays 7:00—8:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Zucker-Hillside Hospital Kaufman Building, Room 115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family to Family 12-week Psycho-education Course</strong></td>
<td>Jeannette Wells, LCSW-R (646) 483-3885</td>
<td>Call the office (516) 326-0797 or (718) 347-7284 Registration is required</td>
<td>Locations: Manhasset North Bellmore Glen Oaks Jamaica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whole Family Support Group</strong></td>
<td>Ellen &amp; Michelle Ritz (516) 330-9778 <a href="mailto:el.ritz@yahoo.com">el.ritz@yahoo.com</a> Please call or email first</td>
<td>2nd Wednesday of each month 7:00—9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock (UUCSR) 48 Shelter Rock Rd, Room 15 Manhasset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family to Family Graduates Support Group</strong></td>
<td>Ellen Ritz (516) 330-9778, <a href="mailto:el.ritz@yahoo.com">el.ritz@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td>4th Wednesday of each month 7:00—9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock (UUCSR) 48 Shelter Rock Rd, Room 15 Manhasset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sibling Support Group</strong></td>
<td>Ruth Proller &amp; Lisa Horowitz-Tambor, LCSW Email <a href="mailto:rrproller@aol.com">rrproller@aol.com</a> or call (718) 767-8481</td>
<td>3rd Thursday of each month 7:00—8:30 p.m. Registration is required.</td>
<td>Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock (UUCSR) 48 Shelter Rock Rd, Room 19 Manhasset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>South Asian Support Group</strong></td>
<td>“Raghu” Raghavendran (516) 944-8537</td>
<td>3rd Saturday of each month 10:30 a.m.</td>
<td>YICG New Hyde Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Senior Caregivers and Their Adult Children 40+</strong></td>
<td>Isabelle Mesholam, LMSW (516) 626-3258 Please call first</td>
<td>2nd &amp; 4th Thursdays of each month 1:30 pm</td>
<td>NAMI Queens/Nassau office</td>
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Protecting Our Hard Won Mental Health Gains

By JANET SUSIN
President

Once again the issue of mental health parity made its way into the news and raised fears in the mental health community that a significant portion of the population would soon lose their hard won access to mental health care gained through Obama’s Affordable Care Act (ACA). It was nail biting time for advocates as they fought to retain the mental health benefits for those who lacked insurance through an employer or were self-employed.

Let me back up a little bit to put this all in perspective for you. For days the public was riveted by breathless TV and newspaper coverage of the Republican attempt to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. There was talk of making the Essential Benefits package which included mental health and substance abuse, well, non-essential by making it either optional or eliminating it entirely.

There was also a group pushing to convert Medicaid to a per capita rate based on what each state spent in 2016. According to Andrew Sperling, NAMI’s public policy guru, the cap would have resulted in a cut of $880 billion over a ten year period and deep reductions in optional services such as peer support.

More than half of the people who gained coverage under the ACA did so through Medicaid. According to the New York Times, “To date, 31 states have expanded Medicaid, and 19, including Florida and Texas, have not. The federal government pays at least 90 percent of the costs for newly eligible beneficiaries.”

Fortunately, with the collapse of the “repeal and replace” effort we’ve bought ourselves some time, but I suspect that another attempt at revoking it is in our future. In the meantime, it’s worth reviewing where we are with access to mental health care and where we still need to go.

Looking back to insurance wins

Way back in 1996 the Mental Health Parity Act was signed into law. That law stated that annual or lifetime limits on mental health care could be no lower than dollar limits on medical or surgical care. However, there were three caveats: (1) If businesses chose not to offer mental health coverage at all, they could do so. (2) The legislation only applied to businesses with 50 employees or more, and (3) Businesses could opt out if they could document a one percent increase in expenses or more as a result of implementing this provision. And businesses found a way of circumventing even these modest requirements.

Things improved in 2008 when, under the inspired leadership of Senators Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici, both of whom had close family members struggling with mental illness, the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act was passed. It was still restricted to employers with over 50 employees or more, but it attempted to fix the loopholes in the original parity legislation, guaranteeing that financial benefit requirements were no more restrictive than those for medical or surgical benefits. This included co-pays, deductibles, and out of pocket maximums. However, it was not officially implemented until 2010.

With the passage of the Affordable Care Act, we took another step forward in coverage, at least on paper. Besides mental health and substance abuse being included as an Essential Health Benefit, parity was no longer just for those covered by large health plans. Small group plans and those who are self-employed and purchase insurance on the independent market are also to be covered.

Implementing what we’ve won

Of course, we know that although something sounds good on paper, making sure that it’s implemented is a whole other matter. Oversight of mental health coverage is lax, and insurance companies still find a way of getting around these kind of requirements.

Another serious problem is that even though insurers may want to implement mental health coverage as required by law, it is difficult to find qualified psychiatrists, social workers, psychologists, and other mental health professionals. I recall vividly my first experience with managed mental health care in the 90s. I was given the names of three psychiatrists at a time as potential caregivers for our son who had a diagnosis of schizophrenia. Many names and phone calls later, I discovered that none of them were specialists in treating his diagnosis or familiar with the medications he was on.

Eventually, I begged our son’s psychiatrist to sign on as managed care provider with our insurance company. That lasted less than a year. He quickly became disgusted with all the paperwork involved and the low rates of reimbursement. We’ve been paying out of pocket ever since. I’ll bet many of you can tell the same story.

So really our approach needs to be multi-pronged: Keep an eye on future attempts to eliminate mental health and substance abuse care as health care “reform” moves forward. Advocate for more qualified people to provide mental health services and for insurers to increase their rates. And educate our legislators about our needs through sharing personal stories and following through on advocacy alerts from NAMI-NYS and NAMI.

But it takes an army to soldier up and fight for what we need. So get on your advocacy caps and let our legislators know that we’re out here and expect them to act in our best interests. Together we can and must make a difference!

PREVALENCE OF MENTAL ILLNESS

1.1% of adults in the U.S. live with schizophrenia.

2.6% of adult in the U.S. live with bipolar disorder.

6.9% of adults in the U.S.—16 million—had at least one major depressive episode in the past year.

18.1% of adults in the U.S. experienced an anxiety disorder such as posttraumatic stress disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder and specific phobias.

Among the 20.2 million adults in the U.S. who experienced a substance use disorder, 50.5%—10.2 million adults—had a co-occurring mental illness.

See more at http://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-By-the-Numbers#sthash.ax9y8Xn.dpuf
Correction: Increasing Savings for a Loved One

By Ruth Wolosoff, Board Member

Regarding the article entitled Increasing Savings for a Loved One Through an ABLE Account that appeared on page 10 in the March/April 2017 newsletter, some points were inadvertently left out.

These are:

• A person with a disability they received before the age of 26 can apply for an ABLE account. Currently, there is a bill in Congress to raise the onset of disability from 26 to 46, but this bill is stalled.

• New York State hopes to implement the ABLE program by late June 2017. Be aware that this date may be delayed somewhat.

• There are a number of other states that have implemented the program already. To find out more about other states, go to www.ablenrc.org. ABLE accounts are clearly explained on the website. A map is included. The states colored in blue have ABLE accounts already implemented and are available to out of state people. One can click on the various states to learn about which state would be best for a person to join now.

• New York State is setting up a website to explain the NYS ABLE program, which is expected to be ready by the end of May 2017.

• The upper limit for ABLE accounts in New York State will be $300,000, but once the account reaches $102,000, there will be an impact on entitlements such as Medicaid.

Below is the article as it appeared on page 10 of the March/April 2017 newsletter.

As we are all painfully aware, millions of mentally ill adults and children depend on public benefits for income, health care, food, housing assistance, etc. In order to get these benefits, individuals are limited to having no more than $2,000 in savings accounts. I have always felt this to be extremely inhumane.

Fortunately, in 2014 a federal law, the ABLE Act, was passed recognizing that people with disabilities need access to more funds. For the first time, eligible individuals and their families were allowed to open accounts that will NOT affect their eligibility for SSI or Medicaid and other public benefits. The beneficiary will have access to the account unless there is a guardian or someone with power of attorney.

Different states have different limitations on how much can be in the account. In New York State, the account limit is expected to be $100,000. However, currently, if you want to open an ABLE account, you can do it through another state which may have higher maximums.

However, in all states, there is an annual cap of $14,000 which can be deposited in a given year. Under current law, $14,000 is the maximum amount that individuals can make as a gift to someone else and not report the gift to the IRS (gift exclusion tax). Another advantage is that income earned from an ABLE account will not be taxed.

The following expenses are allowable under the ABLE Act. These may include education, housing, transportation, employment training and support, assistive technology, personal support services, health care expenses, financial management and administrative services, and other expenses which help improve health, independence and/or quality of life.

There is one disadvantage. Upon the death of the beneficiary, the state in which the person lived may file a claim to all or a portion of the funds in the account equal to the money spent by Medicaid from the time the ABLE account was opened.

If you would like to learn more, go on the website for the ABLE National Resource Center at www.ablenrc.org. The phone number for the ABLE National Resource Center is (202) 296-2040.

A Must Read

No One Cares about Crazy People: The Chaos and Heartbreak of Mental Health in America

At the outset of the book we meet Ron Powers, a fiction writer, and his wife, Honoree, a scientist and college professor, who clearly have a loving relationship and a strong marriage. When their two sons, Kevin and Keith, are born three years apart, the new parents revel in the gifts of their sons, and they seem ideal parents for these two bright and talented children. Like parents, like children. Unfortunately, it is not to be.

Their world comes crashing down, as it has for so many of us, with the onslaught of mental illness. Both boys develop schizophrenia. One tragically and unexpectedly takes his own life, and the other lives with his parents—stable, but not living anything like the life both he and his parents dreamed of before the onset of mental illness.

Powers, a gifted writer, paints an extraordinarily vivid and moving picture of their life before, so that when mental illness strikes we feel the loss along with the family. But this isn’t just a gripping personal narrative. Chapters of family life are interspersed with a historical look at the way we’ve treated mental illness through the ages, which Powers feels is only marginally better today.

Do you know the impact Thomas Szasz, a mid-twentieth century philosopher and writer, has had on the way we view people with serious mental illness? Or Dorothea Dix, E. Fuller Torrey, and the civil libertarians? If you don’t, you should, because to understand what’s going on today in what is laughingly called our “mental health system” has deep roots in historical context. The picture isn’t pretty, but if we’re going to make strides in treatment and how we care for those with serious mental illness, it’s vital to put where we are today in perspective.

And I can’t think of a better way to learn about it than to read what is both a moving personal narrative, side-by-side with a condemnation of the insanity of how we treat our seriously mentally ill population.

Review by Janet Susin
Hitting the Books After Hitting a Wall

Miguel Garcia ’17 returns from mental health struggle with new perspective on life, literature, and his future

March 20, 2017
By JILL RADSKEN, Harvard Staff Writer

This article is part of a series on the impact of humanities studies in and out of the classroom.

Miguel Garcia is a student again, back on campus to complete his degree after a bipolar diagnosis changed the course of his education and life.

“It’s been a challenge,” said Garcia ’17, a history and literature concentrator in American Studies. “I never thought I’d be back. But I don’t think any of those experiences have been in vain.”

Garcia’s grit and resilience took shape in Detroit, where he grew up the son of Mexican immigrants. Neither his mom, who works in an industrial laundromat, nor his dad, a housekeeper at a casino, speaks English. Garcia was the first in his family to graduate high school.

“I was initially rejected at Cass Technical High School because my test scores were pretty low, but I asked for another shot, and a guidance counselor said, ‘If you go to summer school here and get all A’s, I’ll let you in,’” he recalled. “I graduated as valedictorian.”

His arrival at Harvard in 2010 was a bit brutal, and the mundane.”

humanities have provided cathartic insight to his journey back to health. “Both the study of history and literature deal with the nuances of the human experience—the beautiful, the brutal, and the mundane.”

leaving the house. My older sister, Dolores, is a nurse, and she took care of me.”

In time, he improved, eating better, exercising, and eventually finding work—first as an English teacher in a middle school near Detroit, then, inside the city lines, as a peer support specialist helping clients navigate the mental health system at Adult Well-Being Services.

“It’s been my favorite job and I’ve been working since I was 14,” he said, “I can make a difference in someone’s life to someone who is going through something similar.”

When he returned to Harvard last fall, after four years away, Garcia felt determined to finish his degree, but in tough moments found himself “afraid of failing again.” With his friends having graduated and moved on, he worried about making new ones. Happily, he quickly found support from many students and faculty, including Lorgia García Peña, an assistant professor of romance languages and literatures and of history and literature.

In his humanities studies he also found meaning to help explain parts of his own narrative.

“Both the study of history and literature deal with the nuances of the human experience—the beautiful, the brutal, and the mundane,” said Garcia, who is studying for the GREs and has plans for graduate school to get dual master’s degrees in public health and social work. “Having a foundation in liberal studies is really helpful when talking about challenges in modern society. I wouldn’t have had that if I had gone straight into the mental health field.”

Peña, whom Garcia also credits with easing his transition back to Harvard, described her student as “incredibly engaged.” She recalled specifically his sharp observations while reading Arlene Davila’s “Latinos Inc.: The Marketing and the Making of a People” in her course “Performing Latinidad.”

“He looked at the board where I had scribbled some concepts, then back at me, finally raising his hand, not with a question but with a critical observation about the role of the media in shaping cultural perceptions of Latinos in the U.S.,” she said. “It stayed with me, the seriousness with which he approached both the text and the question I had scribbled. I am most impressed about Miguel’s commitment to social justice — his passion about what is right and the fact that he takes actions to make his community better.”

Garcia, who was recently honored with the 2016 Life Unlimited Award from the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance, said his battle with mental illness has allowed him to see his scholarship in a new light.

“Before I was taking courses to put on my resume,” he said. “Now I’m thinking about how they can help me combat mental health stigma and help people access competent health care.”
Co-Sponsored by the UUCSR Mental Health Sub-Committee, Social Justice Committee, and NAMI Queens/Nassau (National Alliance on Mental Illness)

MINDS on the EDGE
Facing Mental Illness

Thursday, May 4
7:00 PM • Art Gallery

Breaking the Silence: Mental Illness and the Family

- Do you have a family member suffering from bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, or other serious mental illness?
- Do you know where to find help?
- Do you think enough support is available?

Presenting a screening and discussion of the eye-opening public television program
MINDS ON THE EDGE: Facing Mental Illness

Discussion to Follow - Led by Jean Judd, Retired Psychiatrist

Let’s talk about improving support and treatment for people with mental illness in our community!

Learn more about mental illness at
www.mindsontheedge.org

UPCOMING MOVIE:
Friday, June 2, 2017
Buried Above Ground

For further information contact Sharyn Esposito 516.472.2960 or sesposito@uucsr.org

Funding for MINDS ON THE EDGE: Facing Mental Illness provided by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to enhance public understanding of science and technology in the modern world. Additional Funding for outreach initiatives provided by the van Ameringen Foundation.

Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock
48 Shelter Rock Rd. Manhasset, NY 11030
516.827.6560 • www.uucsr.org

NAMI Queens/Nassau
www.namiqn.org • 516.326.0797 • Namiqn@aol.com
NAMIWalks Kickoff Festivities

NAMI Queens/Nassau extends a big thank you to State Senator Elaine Phillips, who presented NAMI-QN with a proclamation at our NAMIWalks Kickoff on Thursday, March 16, at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock. Senator Phillips congratulated our affiliate on our good work and expressed her appreciation for our commitment to the cause of mental illness. She also shared that she has a sister disabled by schizophrenia, so NAMI’s mission is very personal for her.

The presentation was an inspirational start for our NAMIWalks Kickoff. We want to acknowledge the hard work of our NAMIWalks Manager, Natasha Edwards; the NAMIWalks Kickoff planning committee members, Ellen Ritz, Carol Ann Viccora, and Janet Susin; and all the team captains, participants, and guests who attended. A special thank you to our guest speakers, Furwa Jawad from team Who Is Hussain? and Nkenge Gilliam, President of AKA-Theta Iota Omega-IFSNC chapter, who put a face on our theme of diversity. NAMIWalks LongIsland/Queens will take place on May 6 at Jones Beach, Zach’s Bay, Parking Field #5. Looking forward to seeing you all there!
Our special thanks to our proud sponsors!

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ROTARY CLUB OF GREAT NECK

RUTH WOLOSOFF

SHEEHAN & COMPANY, CPA, PC
My name is Rosie Rinsler, and I am a survivor of mental illness. For the last 15 years I have been symptom-free and feel I’ve recovered from schizoaffective disorder, paranoia (thinking the TV was talking about me, etc.), and depression. With the right medication; therapy; a support system; my partner of 20 years, Josh; and especially my art and music, I am a happy, healthy person.

My favorite activity is being an artist and networking for my artwork. I have a website for my greeting cards, prints and books, and I am so excited to have had over 20,000 hits. My work is also in numerous venues (restaurants doctors’ offices, etc).

I network constantly to get my artwork out there. For example, I was in a local restaurant and saw bare walls, so I showed the owner my small card portfolio of which I have large framed prints, and they hung three pieces! The other day I went to my boyfriend’s busy clinic and saw the waiting room had no art on walls, so I showed the office manager my work and she agreed I could bring a large piece of art to hang. Believe it or not, the next day I came with a framed picture and a hammer and nails, and they hung it up in middle of waiting room for all to see. I just had an art opening in the Red Pipe Cafe in Forest Hills, and the owner, who also runs a yoga studio, offered to hang my work at the studio.

Presently, I have the honor of having my paintings displayed at Primadonna Restaurant, Patin Medical Offices, Forest Hills Psychiatric Services, Genesis Tree of Life Yoga Studios, Advanced Center for Psychotherapy and the Red Pipe Cafe. My greeting cards are being sold at MB Pharmacy, Potter’s Wheel, Me & Hue Gallery, Judaica Gift Shop and Chatham Booksellers.

I also approach people in Starbucks, Dunkin Donuts, etc., with my pitch, “You look like a creative person. Would you like to see some uplifting, whimsical artwork?” I give out my business card and often get greeting card sales right then and there. My motto is You don’t show, you don’t sell. I just love getting my artwork out there for people to see—what artist doesn’t?

Besides my art being a great support, NAMI and the Friendship Network have been there for me through many great years, and I thank them.

Below are examples of my artwork.

Visit rosiesoriginalcards.com to see more of or buy her artwork.
Remembering NAMI Queens/Nassau in Your Will

NAMI Queens/Nassau depends upon the generosity of our supporters to continue to be able to provide support and education for those living with mental illness who are in need. Leaving a bequest in your will is one way to support our efforts.

Sample Language

Once you’ve determined that you would like to make a bequest to NAMI, the following sample charitable bequest language can be used in your will or revocable living trust. However, it is important to consult an attorney when drafting your will.

An Unrestricted Bequest:

"I give, devise and bequeath to NAMI Queens/Nassau, a charitable organization which qualifies as a charitable recipient under Internal Revenue Code section 2055 as amended from time to time, located at 1981 Marcus Avenue, C-117 Lake Success, NY 11042, the sum of $_____ to be used for the general purpose of the organization, at the discretion of its Board of Directors."

A Restricted Bequest: (to support a particular program or area of interest to you)

"I give, devise and bequeath to NAMI Queens/Nassau, a charitable organization which qualifies as a charitable recipient under Internal Revenue Code section 2055 as amended from time to time, located at 1981 Marcus Avenue, C-117 Lake Success, NY 11042, the sum of $_____ to be used for the purpose of___________."

A Residuary Bequest: (which leaves any remaining assets from your estate after all other obligations have been met)

"I give, devise and bequeath to NAMI Queens/Nassau, a charitable organization which qualifies as a charitable recipient under Internal Revenue Code section 2055 as amended from time to time, located at 1981 Marcus Avenue, C-117 Lake Success, NY 11042, all the rest, residue and remainder of my estate.

Thank you!

NAMI Queens/Nassau gratefully acknowledges the following donations

Burton Aufrichtig in honor of Sandy Kalman
Temple Beth-El of Great Neck in honor of Dr. Jeffrey Lieberman, Janet Susin, Leslie Granoff and Shari Isacowitz
Rhoda & Ron Nadell in memory of Wendy Ann Frank
Rhonda L. Wurzak in memory of Jordan Stewart
Daniel Schweber in honor of Temple Israel presenters
Dorothea Braun in memory of James Tully

General Contributions: Ethel Matin; Men’s Assoc of Garden City High School; Roberta McTigue; Anselmo & Catherine Cardillo; Marilyn O’Keefe; FJC

Friendship Network gratefully acknowledges the following Donations

Marilyn Parker in memory of Seena Michelson
Barbara Garner in memory of Nancy Singer
Friendship Network in memory of Jennifer Lamere’s grandmother
Friendship Network in memory of Al Seyfert’s wife
Friendship Network in memory of Marie Morcos’s father
Friendship Network in memory of Joan Wick’s grandmother
Barbara Garner in memory of Rosemarie Pelligrino’s father
Jerri & Jake Schnidler in memory of Miriam Meadow
Alice Cohen in memory of Miriam Meadow

Save a tree!

If you’d prefer to get your newsletter as an email, please contact us at office@namiqn.org and let us know. It will save postage and paper.
**Governor Cuomo, Legislature Reaches Budget Agreement**

From NYAPRS on behalf of Harvey Rosenthal

*Note: The following is an excerpt from a longer article. The full article is available [here](http://www.nyaprs.org/e-news-bulletins/2017/015519.cfm)*

A few highlights as we understand them now:

**OPWDD/OMH/OASAS WORKFORCE HIKE**

As per previous agreements, the 3 sides have agreed to:

- Increase salaries for direct care, direct support professionals who work in OPWDD, OMH and OASAS funded programs by 3.25% this January 1, 2018 and by another 3.25% in April 1, 2018.
- Increase salaries for clinical staff working in those same community agencies by April 1, 2108.

The goal of these increases is “to help alleviate the recruitment and retention challenges of direct care staff, direct support professionals and clinical staff employed in eligible programs and to continue and to expand efforts to support the professionalism of the direct care workforce.”

In an earlier statement by the Governor, “These increases will help state-funded non-profits that specialize in the care of vulnerable New Yorkers not only retain and retain employees, but continue to provide the same level of excellent care that have made them the backbone of New York’s developmentally disabled and behavioral health system.”

*Building on the terrific work of advocates for those serving New Yorkers with developmental disabilities, an 11 member coalition of state/regional behavioral health advocacy groups (http://www.nyaprs.org/e-news-bulletins/2017/015519.cfm) feverishly worked in the remaining weeks of the session to add OMH and OASAS workers into the agreement. Great thanks are due to representatives of both houses and the Governor and to all of our respective members for their impassioned calls, marches and meetings! Special thanks are due to NYAPRS/MHANYS lobbyist Kevin Cleary.*

**MINIMUM WAGE RELATED INCREASES**

The Governor provided $3.5 million in his original budget proposal to keep pace with raising the salaries of the lowest paid OMH funded workers. We believe this is in addition to the broader wage hike above.

**RAISE THE AGE**

Another top NYAPRS priority, here’s a description of the agreement via the NY Post:

“All misdemeanors would go through family court,” said Sen. Patrick Gallivan, who played a key role in negotiating the bill. “Violent felonies would stay in a criminal court, youth part. All other felonies would go to family court unless the DA objected and that would have to meet a standard.”

Instead of relying on existing state laws that say it’s violent to rob someone by shoving them and grabbing their property, judges will first use a three-part test and the judgement to determine whether a youth crime is violent.

That test includes whether injuries were caused in the commission of their crimes, whether deadly weapons were used and whether the defendant committed a sexual crime.

District attorneys would also have leeway to argue that “extraordinary circumstances,” outside of the three factors warrant youth criminal court, instead of family court, sources said.

In some counties with tough district attorneys that could mean a large drug bust of a dealer whose stash has killed other teens in the community may be considered “extraordinary,” and therefore violent, sources said.

Finally, the provision requires 16-and 17-year-olds to be housed away from adult inmates — either in different facilities or in jails that manage to keep the populations completely separate at all times.”

**CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAMS, DIVERSIONARY SERVICES**

The budget includes another $1.4 million to fund CIT and criminal justice diversion services, a special priority for both houses over the past 4 years for which we are extremely grateful.

**MILLIONAIRE’S TAX EXTENDED**

People who make more than $1 million a year will not, as scheduled, see their tax rates fall in the coming year. Instead, they will pay a marginal top rate of 8.82%, instead of dropping to 6.85%, for two years, one year shorter than proposed by Cuomo. Senate Republicans bowed to the idea as a revenue-raising move, though they beat back an attempt by Assembly Democrats to boost the tax rates even higher on high-income earners. There are roughly 45,000 millionaires in the state who pay money under that tax rate.

**MEDICAID PRESCRIPTION CAP**

A cap on what the state will pay for certain prescription drugs for Medicaid enrollees was approved. The legislation states that the state has a “significant public interest” in controlling drug costs and is one that “ensures patient access while providing financial stability for the state and participating providers.”

**STILL ON THE NAMI-NYS ADVOCACY AGENDA**

**Re-fund Kendra’s Law & make it permanent**

- Kendra’s law has reduced homelessness, incarceration, hospitalizations and suicide.
- Support Assembly Bill A-00604 and Senate Bill S-00516 to enhance this successful program and make it permanent.

**Pass HALT legislation A-3080/S-3824 to reform the use of solitary confinement.**

- Support humane alternatives to Long Term (HALT) Solitary Confinement.
- Cap the amount of time someone serves in solitary.
- Ensure people with mental illness are not put in solitary.
Who Am I?

By JOHN L. KENNY

I come from all walks of life—all social, economic, and educational levels. My preparation for who I am is never enough to deal with the burden that I must assume. While I never view who I am as a burden, others around me often come to that conclusion.

All of my strength, both mentally and physically, is taxed to the limit by my unchosen profession. Many times my emotional strength is put to the test. My unchosen profession takes all that I have, and sometimes even more.

I rally day after day, often long into the night to perform my task. My heart often breaks, and I cry inside. I feel the deepest sympathy for what I do.

My anger and frustration get to almost unbearable limits, but I realize that I must go on.

My profession has its base in deep and infinite love toward the object of my vocation.

I am like the millions who practice my profession with faith and dignity.

Only those who are the recipients of what I do really understand who I am!

My unchosen profession tends to all of their needs. I am the gatekeeper of their existence. I try to meet all their emotional and physical needs.

I do my best to enhance their capacity to live as comfortably as possible.

Their needs often come before my own.

Who am I? I am the millions who practice the unchosen profession: I am a caretaker.

FREE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

for family members, and friends of Individuals with

- Major Depression
- Bipolar Disorder (Manic Depression)
- Schizophrenia and Schizoaffective Disorder
- Borderline Personality Disorder
- Panic Disorder and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Co-occurring Brain Disorders and Addictive Disorders

Family to Family is a FREE series of 12 weekly classes structured to help caregivers understand and support individuals with serious mental illness while maintaining their own wellbeing. The course is taught by a team of trained NAMI family member volunteers who know what it’s like to have a loved one struggling with one of these brain disorders. Over 1,300,000 people in the U.S., Canada and Mexico have completed this course. We think you will be pleased by how much assistance the program offers. We invite you to call for more information and register.

Pick a site convenient to you:

**The Greater Allen A.M.E Cathedral of New York**
110-31 Merrick Blvd.
Jamaica, NY 11434
Saturday, June 3, 2017 – August 26, 2017, 1:30 -4:00 PM

**Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock**
48 Shelter Rock Rd.
Manhasset, NY 11030
Thursday, June 1, 2017 – August 24, 2017, 10:00 AM -12:30 PM

To register: call (516) 326-0797 or (718) 347-7284 or email namiqn@aol.com

Registration and interview required. Classes limited to 25 Participants. Funded and Sponsored by NAMI-NYS and NAMI Queens Nassau
NAMI Queens/Nassau Leaders Raise Awareness About Mental Illness in the Community

VOICE DAY AT HOFSTRA

Co-1st Vice President Ellen Ritz and board member Carol Ann Viccora hosted a Wellness Booth at VOICE Day 2017 at Hofstra University. They met the request that their booth be interactive by creating a What is Mental Illness? questionnaire. They were thrilled with the level of discussion the questionnaire sparked. Here are some of the questions that were discussed:

• What causes mental illness?
  (a) Bad parenting, (b) A character flaw, (c) A chemical or neurological imbalance in the brain
• Can you get mental illness from taking street drugs?
  (a) Yes, (b) No, (c) Maybe
• Would you rather have mental illness or an STD like herpes?
• Would you rather tell a friend you were in jail or a mental hospital?

REMOVING THE STIGMA OF MENTAL ILLNESS AT TEMPLE ISRAEL

Temple Israel invited NAMI Queens/Nassau to participate in their Lifelong Learning Event: A Shabbat Talk on Removing the Stigma of Mental Illness on March 4. Panel members for the well-attended event were Janet Susin, President; Ellen Ritz, Co-1st Vice President; and Nancy Schlessel, Director of Program Services, The Friendship Network

CONFERENCE FOR HEALTH EDUCATORS AT ADELPHI

On March 31, Janet Susin and Carol Ann Viccora tabled at the Nassau Zone AHPERD Conference (Association of Health Education, Physical Education Recreation, and Dance) to promote mental illness education in the schools.

ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA AT HOFSTRA

Janet Susin had the opportunity to promote NAMIWalks 2017 and speak about our Breaking the Silence educational materials at an event sponsored by Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Kappa Phi and Eta Iota Omega Chapters. It was held at the Mack Student Center on Saturday, April 1. We are grateful that local AKA chapters are such big walk supporters.

NAMI-QUEENS/NASSAU PRESIDENT INTERVIEWED ON RADIO SHOW

Janet Susin, NAMI-Queens/Nassau President, was interviewed on Friday, April 14 by Ellen Victor, Esq, NAMI-Queens/Nassau’s Co-Vice President, on her radio show, Special Needs Long Island, a show that Ellen co-hosts with Jeff Silverman, JD, CFP.

In truth it was more like a conversation, with both Ellen and Janet sharing personal stories about the impact NAMI-Queens/Nassau has had on their lives and the lives of their adult children. Topics covered during the interview included NAMI’s mission, services offered including support groups, monthly meetings with guest speakers, and NAMI signature programs, Family-to-Family and In Our Own Voice. Ellen spoke in depth about the impact the Friendship Network has had on her daughter’s life and their family, and Janet shared how her son’s high school experience with mental illness was the impetus for developing the “Breaking the Silence” lessons, educational materials for upper elementary, middle school, and high school (http://www.btslessonplans.org).

The show is broadcast on WLIE, 540 AM, on Sunday mornings from 9:00 to 9:30 am. To hear a replay of the show go to http://www.victorialawfirm.com/radio-show/.

HUMAN RELATIONS DAY AT OCEANSIDE HIGH SCHOOL

Janet Susin and Jacob Rosen, an In Our Own Voice presenter, taught three classes at Oceanside High School to educate students about mental illness and fight stigma. Their well-received presentation was part of a Human Relations Day event on April 5.

SPEAKING TO PSYCHOLOGISTS IN TRAINING AT ZUCKER HILLSIDE HOSPITAL

On April 5, Ellen Victor, Co-1st Vice President, spoke to an attentive group, sharing the family experience of mental illness and informing the participants about NAMI Queens/Nassau’s support and education opportunities

SUICIDE PREVENTION IN JAMAICA, QUEENS

Under the leadership of board member Jeannette Wells, NAMI Queens/Nassau co-sponsored a suicide prevention event, Building a Stronger Community Together: Suicide Prevention & Family Resources, with the Rochdale Village Community Center on April 19. This event was inspired by two suicides in the Jamaica community. NAMI Queens/Nassau participants were Dr. Lukisha Homer, Rev. Val Gittens, John Johnson, and Monica Johnson, TTC Studio
NAMI Queens/Nassau Donation & Membership Form

Yes! I want to join NAMI Queens/Nassau to receive useful information and to help improve conditions for those with mental illness. I will receive newsletters from NAMI Queens/Nassau, NAMI, and NAMI-NYS.

**MEMBERSHIP DUES:**  
Basic $35  
Open Door $3  
(A portion of the dues goes to NAMI and NAMI-NYS)

**ADDITIONAL DONATION:**  
TOTAL:

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<th>Name</th>
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**DONATION IN MEMORY OR HONOR OF** (please indicate by circling)

| Name of honoree or decedent: | Address | City | State | Zip |

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Save a tree! If you would prefer to receive a digital copy of the newsletter, email office@namiqn.org to indicate your preference.

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**Nassau County NAMI Affiliates Meeting Info**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affiliate</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>Contact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NAMI Long Island Regional Council, Inc.</td>
<td>North Shore University Hospital 888 Old Country Rd. Plainview</td>
<td>3rd Thursdays 7:00 p.m. Support 7:30 p.m. Business 8:00 p.m. Speaker</td>
<td>Barbara Roth (516) 694-7327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAMI North Shore</td>
<td>Glen Cove Hospital 101 St. Andrew’s Lane Glen Cove, NY 11542</td>
<td>3rd Tuesday 7:00—9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Al Dunlop (516) 671-3957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Oaks NAMI</td>
<td>South Oaks Hospital 400 Sunrise Highway Amityville</td>
<td>4th Thursdays 7:00—9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Una Ward (631) 264-4000 Ext. 1-2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAMI LAMP/ SW NASSAU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maureen Hennessey (516) 572-6888 <a href="mailto:libaqmbh@hofstra.edu">libaqmbh@hofstra.edu</a></td>
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Opinions expressed in PATHways do not necessarily reflect the views of NAMI Queens/Nassau or any affiliated organization, and we cannot attest to their accuracy.

NAMI Queens/Nassau, an affiliate of the National Alliance on Mentally Illness and NAMI/NYS, gratefully acknowledges the continuing support of the FLB Foundation.