

NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania: Celebrating 25 Years of Support, Education and Advocacy

The year 2008-2009 was a year of many accomplishments and achievements ranging from very fun and festive to very serious and sobering. The NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania Board of Directors celebrated its 25th anniversary as well organized an ad hoc work group to address the mortality disparity of persons with serious mental illness dying 25 years earlier than general population.

The second annual NAMI Walk was held on Oct. 5, 2008 and exceeded all expectations. The NAMI Walk has become our biggest and most successful public awareness and anti-stigma event, an uplifting morning when consumers, families and professionals celebrate recovery. Two thousand walkers raised \$120,000 to support the education and advocacy efforts of NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania.

In December 2008, Mayview State Hospital, which served five counties in the southwest region (Allegheny, Beaver, Green, Lawrence and Washington), closed its doors. NAMI Southwestern devoted many hours of advocacy for responsible closure that provided adequate resources and services in the community.

In early 2009, the very first "Breakfast of Champions," a volunteer recognition event, was held to show our appreciation and to thank our many NAMI volunteers, who are instrumental in fulfilling our mission of support, education and advocacy. Our volunteers represent a diverse and passionate group: individual's living with mental illness, family members and professionals in the mental health field.

The Mortality Disparity Work Group of the NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania Board of Directors provided the theme for the 9th Annual Education Conference. On April 18, 2009, the annual conference *Take Back your Life: Living Longer with Serious Mental Illness* was a full house with over 300 attendees. Matt Kuntz, JD, Executive Director of NAMI Montana—himself an army veteran—provided a powerful keynote revealing the plight of returning combat veterans and the lack of mental health services and treatment to meet their needs.

Throughout the year, various public relations and marketing initiatives unfolded. The NAMI Blog launched in January, and in March, NAMIpedia went "live" online. In 2008-2009, an increased number of media opportunities were experienced. NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania participated in newspaper articles, radio broadcast, a magazine feature story and live public television on April 30, followed by an anti-stigma segment recorded from cable television broadcast. Whether we were celebrating or providing serious testimony, giving a media interview or teaching a class, NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania remained true to its mission. Through our work efforts in support, education and advocacy, and our focus on recovery, families and individuals affected by mental illness were helped to achieve lives of quality and respect.

I invite you to review our annual report that highlights our accomplishments throughout the year. To all of our members and supporters, thank you for a tremendous year.

Sincerely yours,

Christine Michaels, MSHSA
Executive Director, NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania

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MISSION STATEMENT

NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania is a regional grassroots organization dedicated to helping families and individuals affected by mental illness achieve lives of quality and respect, through education and advocacy that supports recovery.

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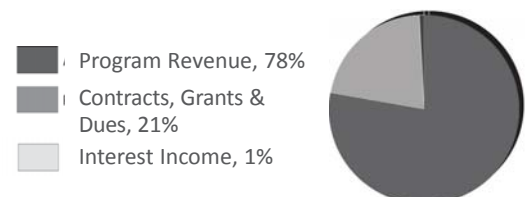
Christine Michaels, MSHSA

In 2008-2009, NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania worked diligently to meet its mission of developing and promoting opportunities that encourage recovery through education, support and advocacy:

1. Responded to 1,932 telephone inquiries and received 375,000 website hits and email requests for information, education and support services from consumers and family members.
2. Offered technical assistance and support to volunteers leading 20 affiliate and peer support groups in the 10-county region.
3. Developed and presented informative NAMI Education workshops at:
 - a. University of Pittsburgh, Chatham University, Duquesne University and Indiana University of Pennsylvania
 - b. 2008 Annual Schizophrenia Conference, Pittsburgh
 - c. Spirituality Conference, Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic
 - d. Consumer Family Conference, Torrance State Hospital
4. Developed NAMIpedia—in collaboration with MedRespond—a customized, user-friendly online tool simulating a real-time conversation through the internet. NAMIpedia was supported by a grant provided by the Staunton Farm Foundation.
5. Coordinated 7 *Family-to-Family* classes that provided educational support to 58 family members.
6. Organized the recovery presentation, *In Our Own Voice*, reaching 428 consumers, professionals and students during 14 presentations.
7. Focused advocacy activities on the Mayview and Torrance State Hospital Service Area Planning and the closure of Mayview on Dec. 29, 2008. Provided testimony at the Mayview Land Re-use committee and at the southwestern PA mental health hearings conducted by Rep. Jake Wheatley.
8. Presented *Take Back Your Life: Living Longer with Mental Illness*, for the 9th Annual NAMI Southwestern Pa. Regional Conference, attracting 300 attendees. Matt Kuntz, JD, Executive Director, NAMI Montana provided a powerful and moving keynote. John P. Seasock, PhD, a nationally recognized speaker presented the Morning Plenary: *Returning Home, Returning Memories: PTSD and Veterans*.
9. Produced and distributed 4,000 copies of the quarterly newsletter, *The Voice*. Action alerts were emailed to 248 members and stakeholders.
10. Held the Second Annual NAMI Walk on October 3, 2008, a 5K walk along the SouthSide Works Three Rivers Heritage Trail. Two thousand walkers raised over \$120,000. A kick-off reception was held at Sheraton Station Square in August of 2008.
11. NAMI Southwestern Pa. and Mental Health America of Westmoreland County collaborated to film anti-stigma PSA's and to jointly sponsor a weekly segment of the *What's on Your Mind* cable television show created by Dr. Safdar Chaudhary. The show devoted to educate viewers about the damaging effects of stigma against mental illness was broadcast May 18, 2009. This partnership was funded by the Staunton Farm Foundation.
12. Trained 30 individuals from 6 counties as NAMI Connection Facilitators to conduct weekly recovery support groups for individuals living with mental illness. Funding for NAMI Connections was provided by the Vitasta Bazaz and Sheen Sehgal Fund of the Pittsburgh Foundation.
13. The Consumer Action and Response Team of Allegheny County (CART) interviewed former Mayview patients regarding the quality of their lives and the services they are receiving in the community. As one of 12 pilot counties in Pa., CART participated in the Recovery Oriented Service Indicators (ROSE) to obtain consumer feedback about the degree to which their services promote recovery.

Audited Financial Statement

Revenue 2008-2009



Expenses 2008-2009

