With ever-increasing challenges facing nonprofits, NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania chose to invest significant time and effort during 2013 to develop a strategic plan for the next three years that promotes the organization’s sustainability and increases its level of impact throughout the region.

The guiding principles that will shape NAMI’s efforts through 2016 include diversity, collaboration, sustainability and a focus on children and youth as well as adults.

“We have always operated under the guidance of a strategic plan, but this effort marked the first time in more than 10 years that we sought such a targeted, determined endeavor,” explains Chris Michaels, Executive Director of NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania. “Sustainability needs to be a core focus so that we can continue to successfully serve our constituents into the future.”

With Board approval and partially funded by the Forbes Fund, NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania hired nonprofit management consultants Kate Sphar and Leslie Bonner to facilitate the strategic planning process and collect information through both an internal analysis and an extensive external scan of how partners, stakeholders and funders perceive NAMI. In addition to an environmental analysis, Sphar and Bonner surveyed staff and Board members and other mental health leaders who are connected with NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania. They also provided benchmarks from NAMI state and regional affiliates from across the country.

A planning team of staff members and Board representatives reviewed the scan results and began next steps while the

continued on page 4
I am always very proud of the articles in our newsletter, the topics we discuss and the information we share. I am very proud of the work we do, the activities we participate in, the events we sponsor and the relationships we form and develop with our NAMI Southwestern PA stakeholders.

It should not be surprising then that the featured article on our strategic planning process is a major announcement to everyone that NAMI Southwestern PA intends to be here—to be around for a good long time. Think of it as a declaration of sustainability, our sustainability.

Like many non-profits, we did some significant soul searching and decided we needed to change in order to meet the needs of those we serve and represent. We realized the added value of collaboration and embraced the opportunity to partner with Allegheny Family Network and Mental Health America of Allegheny County. We recognized that a family focused organization limited to families of adult children placed additional limitations on inclusion and diversity and threatened our longevity and relevance. Adding a position focused on children, adolescents, transition age youth and the mental health system emerged as an essential key to our sustainability. We will continue to strengthen and grow our education programs, build upon our solid advocacy reputation and fortify our public relations and communication through website technology and social media. In the words of staff person Darcey Garda, “It’s a very exciting time.”

We are inspired, motivated and focused; we have a plan! So look out. There are great things on the horizon for NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania. We will keep you posted!

Thank you,

Christine Michaels, MSHSA
Executive Director, NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania

NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania
Mission Statement

NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania is dedicated to improving the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness through recovery focused support, education and advocacy.
Public Policy Updates

PA Budget Update

While the 2013-2014 budget is on track, the Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center is forecasting a tough 2014-2015 budget season. Gov. Corbett will deliver his annual budget address on Feb. 4.

Of the 10 Southwestern PA counties, Washington and Westmoreland joined Allegheny, Beaver, Butler and Greene in the County Human Services Block Grant program.

The Food Stamp program may see more cuts. In November, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly called food stamps, was cut. Now Congress is working on a farm bill that may bring additional cuts. Research from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Penn Charitable Trusts estimates a $2 billion a year cut in food stamps could trigger a $15 billion increase in medical costs for diabetes over the next decade.

Medicaid Expansion in PA

Pennsylvania is not expanding regular Medicaid coverage under the Affordable Care Act. The Supreme Court ruled that Medicaid expansion must be voluntary, and Pennsylvania has chosen not to expand.

Instead, Gov. Corbett has proposed a new program called Healthy Pennsylvania, which would use the same Medicaid expansion dollars from the federal government. Because it is an alternative to expanding regular Medicaid, a federal application called a 1115 waiver must be filed with and approved by the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania provided testimony on Dec. 20 at a public hearing, outlining serious concerns and objections to the proposed Healthy Pennsylvania Private Option. Healthy Pennsylvania would significantly alter the coverage and benefits of not only new but existing Medicaid recipients. NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania’s position is Medicaid Expansion in 2014 is the best choice for Pennsylvania, not the governor’s alternative program.

National News

In mid-December, local U.S. Congressman Tim Murphy announced mental health legislation, which generated controversy in the mental health field because it proposed significant changes to SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration), Disability Rights Network, and federal regulations on Assisted Outpatient Treatment, among others. Some of the positive provisions include endorsing the reauthorization of the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act (suicide prevention), Mental Health First Aid, Children’s Recovery from Trauma Act, Excellence in Mental Health Act and Mentally Ill Offenders Treatment and Crime Reduction Act.

NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania Executive Director Christine Michaels and Carol Horowitz from the Disability Rights Network met with Congressman Murphy on Dec. 31 at his Mt. Lebanon office to express serious concerns with H.R. 3717.
**NAMI Announces New Strategic Plan continued from page one**

A full Board convened to identify a long-term cohesive vision and determine key priorities for the organization.

“In my years of experience leading nonprofit organizations in their strategic planning processes, I have learned that those who are most receptive to change are the ones who succeed,” says Sphar. “The NAMI planning team was invested in studying and understanding our research findings and highly motivated to make necessary changes. The Board of Directors was truly engaged in the process.”

Christine Michaels agrees. “The strategic planning process has given our Board members and our staff clarity and consensus in our direction going forward,” she explains. “I have great confidence that we know what our priorities are, and we are working now to complete those identified tasks that will best help us to achieve our goals.”

One of NAMI’s new objectives is to build relationships with other organizations that have similar missions. Collaboration was a key message identified through the external scan, and NAMI has now joined with Allegheny Family Network (AFN) and Mental Health America (MHA) of Allegheny County to create a mental health advocacy collaborative. Each of these three organizations provides a unique set of contributions toward the same mission, and they will be able to deliver a stronger, more effective message together than each one alone.

Another new objective for NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania that was identified through the strategic planning process targets children and adolescents.

“NAMI has always focused on families, but now we are making a major commitment to address the needs of children and transition-age youth,” explains NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania’s Associate Director Debbie Ference. “Through the strategic plan, we will be directing resources into training educators and others who work with children and youth, offering more support to parents, and advocating for improved mental health services for young people in our region.”

Advocacy, a flagship activity for NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania since its inception, is also included in the strategic plan. NAMI is taking the lead in creating an advocacy hub in the region that will set an agenda and influence public policy and legislation.

Providing support and information continues to be a priority for the organization.

“The guiding principles of our new strategic plan describe a culture of transformation, a desire to reach new, diverse populations,” comments Darcey Garda, NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania’s Manager of Marketing and Development. “Strengthening NAMI’s online and social media presence will be an integral part of achieving our objectives over the next three years. It’s a very exciting time!”

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**Train to Be a NAMI Family-to-Family Teacher**

**February 21-23, 2014**

**DoubleTree Hotel, Monroeville PA**

If you are looking for a rewarding volunteer opportunity, consider becoming a teacher in the nationally recognized NAMI Family-to-Family Education program. This weekend training prepares volunteers who are family members of someone with a mental illness to teach the 12-week Family-to-Family Education course in their community.

**Training Eligibility:** Applicants must have the experience of having a loved one in their life with a mental illness. It is not a requirement to have taken the Family-to-Family course before becoming a teacher, but it is strongly recommended. Teachers are asked to make a commitment to teach a minimum of two courses within two years. No formal teaching experience is required. Training, materials and meals are provided at no cost to participants. Travel and lodging expenses are the individual’s responsibility.

**For more information and to access a training application, please contact Susan Harrington at the NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania office: (412) 366-3788 or email info@namiswpa.org.**
The rumble of the Pirate Parrot’s motorcycle signaled the beginning of festivities for the 7th Annual NAMI Walk—affectionately called our “Lucky Number 7”—on the beautiful fall day of Sunday, Oct. 13.

The Parrot was greeted by over 2,000 NAMI Walk participants, who came together at the SouthSide Works for the annual NAMI Walk to celebrate recovery of mental illness.

NAMI Walk Chair John Lovelace, President of UPMC for You and Chief Program Officer at Community Care Behavioral Health, greeted the crowd with enthusiasm. NAMI Southwestern PA Executive Director Chris Michaels offered her gratitude to the participants, teams and sponsors who came out to support the NAMI Walk again this year.

Hot chocolate and freshly brewed coffee warmed up the walkers in preparation for the 5K walk along the river trail. DJ Dangerous Dale provided high energy music while the UPMC Health Van provided free flu shots for all. The Pirate Parrot, caricature artists, Mike the Balloon Guy, a colorful moonbounce, kids activities and team photos kept the walkers entertained until the Walk started promptly at 10 a.m. NAMI supporter Rachna Iyer Palm sang the National Anthem and our cheerful and dedicated Honorary Chair Michelle Wright, morning news anchor on WTAE-TV, led the Walk for the 7th year in a row.

Not far behind was our enthusiastic Family Team Chair, Jim Ehrman, walking with his wife Nancy. “Something special is always in the air at the NAMI Walk,” said Jim, referring to the positive vibe that people associate with the Walk.

Not only did the 7th Annual NAMI Walk bring together the most participants in its history, it attracted media coverage on three news stations and (drum roll please) raised a record total of nearly $166,000.

Thank you to all of the sponsors, donors, volunteers, team captains and participants who supported the NAMI Walk. Together we will continue to raise awareness of mental illness and raise funds for NAMI’s mission of support, education and advocacy!
Look Who’s On Top!

Top 10 Walk Teams
(Team, Team Captain, Amount Raised)

1. **South Hills Stampede**, Eva Bednar, $9,488
2. **Bring Change 2 Mind**, Michael McCarthy, $9,240
3. **Community Care Behavioral Health & Askesis Development Group**, Duncan Bruce, $6,874
4. **UPMC Health Plan**, Mary Kay Macik, $5,875
5. **Family-to-Family Alums (& Family!)**, Susan Harrington, $5,590
7. **WPIC Call Center**, Natalie Gaston, $4,286.50
8. **Team Bellefield**, Kelly O’Toole, $3,985
10. **Walk the Walk**, Desiree Doyle, $3,040

Top 5 Fundraisers

1. **Libby Mascaro**, Bring Change 2 Mind, $8,360
2. **Jim Ehrman**, Jim’s Jocks, $4,430
3. **Eileen Lovell**, South Hills Stampede, $2,675
4. **Jack Cahalane**, Team Bellefield, $2,235
5. **Cathy O'Brien**, Family-to-Family Alums (& Family!), $2,050

Super Teams
Superteams are created when several teams fall under one organizational team.

**UPMC & UPMC Insurance Services**, (includes UPMC, Community Care Behavioral Health and Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic Teams.) $26,753.50

**NAMI Southwestern PA**, $10,238
Farewell to our NAMI Walk Chair John Lovelace

It is with mixed emotions that we bid farewell to John Lovelace as our NAMI Walk Chair. John, who is the President of UPMC for You and the Chief Program Officer at Community Care Behavioral Health, has completed his five-year tenure as Chair of the NAMI Walk.

A longtime mental health advocate and supporter of NAMI Southwestern PA, John became our NAMI Walk leader in 2009 with the agreement of a one-year term as Chairman. He was such an amazing leader that we couldn’t resist asking him to support us again… and the rest is NAMI Walk history.

Under John’s leadership, the NAMI Walk flourished, increasing not only in visibility but also in funds raised by 30 percent in five years. UPMC and Community Care’s participation also increased. UPMC & UPMC Insurance Services have become our Premier Sponsor and, in 2013 alone, their “Superteam” of employees raised an additional $26,753.50.

It is with enormous gratitude and also sadness that we say goodbye to John as our inspiring leader, the person who opened many doors for the NAMI Walk to engage new sponsors and attract new participants.

John’s giving spirit will live on through the NAMI Walk: he helped us to secure his replacement as the NAMI Walk Chair, and she is also a great leader and NAMI Walk supporter. We look forward to announcing the new NAMI Walk Chair in the spring.

In the meantime, we remain grateful to John Lovelace for his chairmanship, support, generosity, humor, and friendship over the past five years. As our Executive Director Chris Michaels said, “How lucky can we be to have John Lovelace as our Chair?”

Our Sincere Thanks to Our Generous 2013 Walk Sponsors

Premier Sponsor

UPMC & UPMC Insurance Services

Cindy and Norman McHolme           Allegheny HealthChoices, Inc          Dollar Bank
Matrix Medical Network             OptiCare Managed Vision              The Testoni Family
Clarion Psychiatric Center         Family Behavioral Resources          NHS Human Services
Pittsburgh Mercy Health System    Resource for Human Development
Value Behavioral Health of PA, Inc. Westmoreland Casemanagement and Supports, Inc.
Avesis                              Buchanan Ingersoll Rooney, PC       Dr. Jon and Jackie Lloyd
Ohio Valley General Hospital       Pepper Hamilton, LLP
Asti’s South Hills Pharmacy        Dasher, Inc.                          Charma D. Dudley, PhD, FPPR
Clifford A. & Dr. Cynthia Krey     Excela Health                         Project Transition
RG Johnson Company, Inc.           Wesley Spectrum Services
What motivated you to take an active role in the 2013 NAMI Walk?
My mother died by suicide on June 1, 2013, after a 20-year battle with bipolar disorder. My mom, my brother Sam and his wife Megan had enjoyed participating in the Walk for the first time in 2012, and the day after her death, Sam and I decided that we would participate in the Walk in 2013 in her memory.

What is the message you wanted to send to others as you sought donations for the Walk?
My mom was smart and beautiful, charming and funny, caring and loving. But she was sick; very sick. Mental illness stole her life - her job, her independence, her relationships and her joy. She suffered alone because too many people still don’t understand serious mental illness. She was often treated terribly and judged because of her illness when those with other debilitating, chronic illnesses are comforted and nurtured and loved. It’s this kind of stigma that I want to fight head-on, and the NAMI Walk gave me that opportunity.

Why were you so successful in seeking support?
Sam and I set our goal at $5,000, and we actually doubled that amount, thanks to our amazingly supportive family and friends. It was gratifying to have so many people want to honor our mother’s memory and encourage us. Even more humbling was that more than 60 people joined our team to walk with us that day, including the members of the Mt. Lebanon High School girls’ soccer team, of which I am a coach. I was so proud to see the courage they showed in stepping outside their comfort zone to participate. I believe they attained a new level of awareness at the Walk of what mental illness is and how to better show compassion toward others who are in need.

How has your family’s experience with mental illness inspired your future goals?
I have experienced firsthand the devastation of mental illness. My brother and I couldn’t save our mother, but I am determined to fight for changes in how our society treats people with mental illness. They deserve the same compassion, concern, respect and love that we lavish on anyone else who is challenged by a difficult disease. Sharing my mother’s story has lit a fire in me to do whatever I can to improve how people are treated, both in their communities and by the behavioral health system. Family members can be the best advocates to fight against the stigma that still affects their loved ones with mental illness.

Why do you believe NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania is a helpful resource for families like yours?
NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania is a great organization focused on improving the quality of care for those with mental illness, and on developing resources that are accessible and helpful to people with mental illness and their families. NAMI also provides a forum for family advocates to join in the collective voice to fight stigma. My hope for the future is that more and more people learn of this organization, and they talk about NAMI to others, and then those people tell even more people. I want NAMI to be a name that’s as recognized as The Susan G. Komen Foundation or the American Cancer Society. NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania staff work so hard for people like my mom. The more family members who stand with them, the more powerful they will be, and the greater impact their work will have.

The advocacy, education and support services provided by NAMI’s staff and dedicated volunteers give hope for recovery and a future filled with promise for the estimated 600,000 people in our region who experience a mental illness each year. In the Spotlight is one way NAMI recognizes these people who so diligently work to promote improvements in our behavioral health system while championing the needs of our constituents. To nominate someone to be featured In the Spotlight, please email dgarda@namiswpa.org.
NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania to Offer Youth Mental Health First Aid Program

President Obama has endorsed Mental Health First Aid’s youth training for teachers and staff. The course has been designed for any adult who regularly interacts with adolescents such as teachers, athletic coaches, mentors, juvenile justice professionals and other community organizations such as the Scouts.

Parents and families of youth experiencing behavioral health issues will find the course content useful but the course was created to provide a basic level of information and guidance, rather than more in-depth information on behavioral health diagnoses and working with the school system. Parents who are wishing to explore a more in-depth program should contact NAMI Southwestern PA and inquire about the NAMI Basics six week education course.

Upon successful completion of the course, participants will become certified as Mental Health First Aiders and will receive a comprehensive course manual filled with resource and disorder information.

Please contact Susan Harrington at the NAMI Southwestern PA office at sharrington@namiswpa.org or call her at 412-366-3788 for more information regarding the program and scheduling a presentation for your group or organization.

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14th Annual NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania Education Conference
Saturday, April 12, 2014

WHAT
Annual Education Conference aimed at increasing knowledge and gaining insight about the various forms of mental illness, effective treatments and appropriate services and supports available to aid in the recovery process.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND
Individuals living with mental illness and family members; mental health professionals; educators; local community leaders; and regional, county and state government leaders in southwestern Pennsylvania.

WHERE
Pittsburgh Airport Marriott Hotel
777 Aten Road
Coraopolis, PA 15108

Visit www.namiswpa.org for conference schedule and registration information.
What is the NAMI Family-to-Family Education Program?

NAMI Family-to-Family is a free, 12-session education program for family, partners, friends and significant others of adults living with mental illness. The course is designed to help all family members understand and support their loved one living with mental illness, while maintaining their own well-being. The course includes information on illnesses such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression and other mental health conditions. Thousands of families describe the program as life-changing. The program is taught by trained teachers who are also family members and know what it is like to have a loved one living with mental illness.

NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania, the local organization of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, offers the NAMI Family-to-Family Education Program throughout the year in various locations. Visit the [www.namiswpa.org](http://www.namiswpa.org) to learn more about Family-to-Family and NAMI’s Signature Education programs.

**Participant Perspectives**

“This course overall was the single most, without a doubt, helpful and informative thing ever offered in all my years searching for answers... It has helped me to understand better and communicate more effectively with my brother.”

**Contact NAMI Southwestern PA to register for upcoming classes!**
1-888-264-7972 or email info@namiswpa.org

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**Spring 2014 Class Schedule**

**Ross Township, NAMI Southwestern PA, 105 Braunlich Drive**
Classes begin Monday, March 3, 6:30 - 9 p.m.

**Squirrel Hill, Children’s Institute, 1405 Shady Avenue**
Classes begin Monday, March 3, 6:30 - 9:00 p.m.

**Upper St Clair, St Louise de Marillac Church, 320 McMurray Road**
Classes begin Wednesday, March 5, 6:30 - 9:00 p.m.
NAMI Support Groups...

Visit the NAMI Southwestern PA website, www.namiswpa.org, and click on the “Support” link at the top of the homepage for a complete listing and meeting dates of support groups.

**Allegheny County**

NAMI Parent Support Group - Youth and Transition-Age East
Liberty Carnegie Library, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. Contact: Linda Thornhill, (412) 403-9539 for more information.

NAMI Pittsburgh South - Mt. Lebanon
Contact Email: nami.south@gmail.com

NAMI Pittsburgh North - Ross Township
Contact: Tom/Janet Ammons (724) 443-4422

NAMI Pittsburgh East-FAMILIAS - Churchill
Contact: Anne Handler (412) 421-3656

NAMI Spouse Support Group - Churchill
Contact: Mim Schwartz (412) 731-4855

NAMI McKeesport, Penn State McKeesport
Contact: Violet Ludwig (412) 373-7977

NAMI Western PA Borderline/Personality Disorders Family Support Group - Ross Township
Contact: Jo Burkholder (412) 776-5974

Minority Families of the Mentally Ill - Oakland
Contact: Wilma Sirmons (412) 327-4890

NAMI W.P.I.C. Family Support Group - Oakland
Contact: Merle Morgenstern (412) 246-5851

**Butler County**

NAMI PA Butler County - Butler MHA
Contact: Butler NAMI Office (724) 431-0069

NEW: Teen Peer Support Group
Contact: 412-304-8521 for meeting information
Location: Guthrie Paganie & Associates, 162 Brickyard Road, Ste 100, Mars PA 16046

**Fayette County**

NAMI-C.A.R.E. Fayette County
Contact: Carol Warman (724) 439-1352

**Indiana County**

NAMI Indiana County - Second and Fourth Tuesday each month, 7:00 p.m., Trinity United Methodist Church, Indiana
Contact: Jim (724) 479-8824 or Dick (724) 463-8205

**Lawrence County**

NAMI Lawrence County
Contact: Sandi Hause (724) 657-0226

**Washington County**

NAMI Washington County - Washington, 4th Thursday of the month
Contact: Jim Gleason (724) 225-1607

**Westmoreland County**

NAMI Alle-Kiski - New Kensington, 2nd Wednesday of the month
Contact: Thad Kaminski (724) 339-1339

NAMI Mon Valley - Contact: Harriett Hetrick (724) 872-2186 for more information regarding the following locations:

- Monessen, 2nd Monday of the Month, 7-8:30 pm
- Irwin, 2nd Tuesday of the Month, 7-9:00 pm
- West Newton, 3rd Thursday of the month, 6:30-8:30 pm

**Armstrong County**

NAMI Armstrong County - Kittanning, 4th Thursday of the month, Family Counseling Center of Armstrong County
Contact: Linda Miller (724) 543-4581

**Beaver County**

NAMI Beaver County - Rochester, 3rd Thursday of each month
Contact: Carla Braund at carla.braund@gmail.com

NAMI-C.A.R.E. (Consumers Advocating Recovery through Empowerment), Beaver
Contact: Dr. Suzanne Vogel-Scibilia (724) 775-9152
NAMI Southwestern PA: Join Today — Let Your Voice be Heard!

Annual dues include access to our regional lending library, resource and referral information, newsletters, conference information and membership in NAMI Pennsylvania and national NAMI.

☐ Individual/Family/Friend $35.00
☐ Open Door (minimum of $3.00) $________
☐ Additional Contribution $________ Donation to remain anonymous ☐

NAME __________________________________________________________________________________________________________
ADDRESS ________________________________________________________________________________________________________
CITY ________________________________  STATE ________ ZIP _____________ COUNTY ____________________________________
PHONE (H) ______________________ PHONE (W) _________________________ FAX __________________________________
E-mail ________________________________________________________________________________________________________

☐ I would prefer my copy of the Voice electronically. (provide email) __________________________________________
☐ I am interested in receiving Call to Action alerts via email and participating in legislation and policy advocacy.
   (provide email) ______________________________________________________________________________________

Please make check payable and mail to:  NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania, 105 Braunlich Drive, 
McKnight Plaza, Suite 200, Pittsburgh, PA 15237

You may also join or donate via the website at www.namiswpa.org.

Membership is tax-deductible. Official registration and financial information of NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania may be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling toll-free within PA: 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.