The Best Western Premier, The Central Hotel and Conference Center in Harrisburg was packed with energy and excitement as NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania hosted its second annual statewide mental health and wellness conference, Champions of Mental Wellness: Fighting Stigma and Stereotypes in the System and Society.

The two-day conference took place March 12-13, 2018, and this year’s event grew significantly from the year before. “We exceeded our goal for exhibitors and registration, which was a great sign,” said Christine Michaels, CEO of NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania. “In fact, the host hotel was sold out of rooms weeks before the conference, so we had to find additional options for the overflow.”

The conference tackled the difficult topics of stigma and stereotypes that people living with mental illness face every day. “We wanted to focus on some of the more serious issues affecting individuals with mental health conditions,” said Susan Caban, Director of Education at NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania. “But we also wanted to highlight some of the work that’s underway to address these concerns.”

One of the most damaging stereotypes about people living with mental illness is that they are violent. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, only 3%-5% of violent acts can be attributed to individuals living with a serious mental illness. Yet, a negative perception is often perpetuated. “When we hear a sensational story about an individual with a mental health issue who was violent, the public can generalize this and think that all individuals affected by mental illness are likely to be violent,” said Jack Cahalane, PhD, Chief of Adult Services and Clinical Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic.

Dr. Cahalane, a NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania board member, introduced the keynote presentation, which was delivered by Edward Mulvey, PhD, the Director of the Law and Psychiatry Program at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine.

Dr. Mulvey’s research focuses on violence and mental illness. His team also tracks data to better understand what causes
I’m excited to say that this newsletter includes a number of highlights from our second successful statewide annual mental health and wellness conference in Harrisburg. We had another great turnout this year and another interesting group of presenters and workshops. Our keynote speakers discussed the stigma and stereotypes facing people living with mental illness and their families. The topics were of great interest to our audience and it showed in the Q&A sessions that followed.

We also had a very informative affiliate leadership business meeting. It was nice to see the affiliate leaders from across the state and bring them up to speed on our plans for the future.

We’re now in the midst of planning for our annual child and adolescent mental health conference in Pittsburgh. Ross W. Greene, PhD, a clinical psychologist, author, and originator of the Collaborative & Proactive Solutions model of care, and Dior Vargas, a Latina feminist mental health activist, are our two keynote presenters. We also have a long list of workshops to choose from. Registration is open and we’re accepting sponsors and exhibitors, so spread the word.

This newsletter also highlights a number of new initiatives. Our new website is up and running with a lot of updates including an expanded list of regional and statewide resources and a “Find Your Local NAMI” section. We’re also excited about our new author series, Stories That Heal. And with spring in full swing, there are a number of upcoming events and walks at NAMI affiliates across the state, including NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania’s 12th annual NAMIWalks. You’ll find information on all those events in the Keystone Connection section.

Another thing I’d like to mention is membership renewal. We had a very successful annual appeal at the end of 2017 and at the beginning of 2018, we had an encouraging renewal campaign. On page 3, you’ll find information on how to renew your membership if you think it’s close to expiring.

As a membership organization, NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania appreciates your continued support for our mission of improving the lives of children, adolescents, adults, and families affected by mental illness through recovery-focused support, education, and advocacy.

Warmest Regards,

Christine Michaels, MSHSA
CEO, NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania

NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania is a 501(c)(3) grassroots, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of children, adolescents, adults, and families affected by mental illness through recovery-focused support, education, and advocacy.
Medicaid Work Requirement Bill

State legislators are once again debating work requirements for Medicaid recipients. In April 2018, the state House of Representatives voted in favor of requiring some “able-bodied” Medicaid recipients to be employed or engaged in some kind of job training. Groups that would be exempt include: recipients of temporary or permanent long-term disability benefits; pregnant women; Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients; those in a mental health institution or correctional institution; anyone experiencing a crisis, serious medical condition, or temporary condition that prevents the individual from seeking employment. In Oct. 2017, Gov. Wolf vetoed a similar proposal. As an organization, NAMI does not support work requirements in Medicaid because we don’t believe they advance the goal of employment for many people with mental illness. NAMI is on the record for supporting state investment in robust, evidence-based Supported Employment programs that help people get and keep competitive employment.

Assisted Outpatient Treatment

House Bill 1233 passed the state Senate Health and Human Services Committee in March 2018. NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania, along with other advocacy groups, has opposed the bill. The primary concern is that the bill is based on the premise that the existing mental health service delivery system can support a new AOT involuntary commitment process. HB 1233 has been promoted as needing only a small amount of funding to support the legal process. NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania does not believe the bill is financially viable or programmatically operational. An added complicating factor is county participation is optional. Advocates have requested that a clarification be added to the bill indicating that an increase in funding would be needed. There was also an added request that individuals be offered a voluntary targeted outreach and engagement service before being placed on an involuntary assisted outpatient commitment.

Early Intervention Depression Screenings

House Bill 2095, formerly HB 2057, introduces depression screenings for school-aged children as an early intervention measure. While it would be included in the education code, the child’s pediatrician would conduct the screening and the health department would oversee the process, similar to immunizations for schools. The school does not get the results, only confirmation that the screening has occurred and parents may opt out. The screenings should adhere to the age guidelines established by the American Academy of Pediatrics. NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania worked on drafting the former bill (HB 2057) and support is being sought for the new bill.

Keep our network strong by renewing your membership today.

If you’re unsure whether your membership is close to expiring, contact the NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania office by phone at 412-366-3788 or by email at info@namikeystonepa.org.

You can renew online at www.namikeystonepa.org/get-involved/join.
violence. “It is extremely difficult to predict future episodes of violence or dangerousness, but understanding risk factors and preparing a plan to manage the situation can be very empowering,” said Cahalane.

During Dr. Mulvey’s presentation, Reducing Violence: A Model for Support and Prevention, he made the case for an education and support model to help the small percentage of people with mental illness who do have violent tendencies by giving them skills to cope with potentially violent situations. “Human nature is such that people tend to react and try to manage the best they can but don’t necessarily have a clear plan or guideline about how to manage the situation,” said Cahalane.

The model would also help individuals and their families de-escalate situations before they become dangerous. “Understanding patterns and having a plan to manage things can help family members feel more prepared when a situation arises that involves violence or the threat of violence.”

Other stories of stigma that were shared at the conference came from individuals in recovery. Bethany Yeiser started experiencing psychosis while in college. “I told myself that I was the next Mother Teresa, and so I did not need to complete my college education.”

Her delusions grew with time. The university honors student became isolated and eventually homeless. “The delusions were distracting to a point where it was impossible to work a normal job or live a normal life.”

Bethany shared her experience with Mark Fuller, MD, the CEO and Vice President of the Engagement Center-PA for Beacon Health Options. “Schizophrenia is one of the most misunderstood diseases on earth, and stigma reinforces wrong beliefs about the illness,” said Bethany Yeiser.

Because of the stigma, Bethany didn’t think she could experience mental illness. “I did not know that anyone could develop it-- people of all levels of intelligence, poor and rich, and every race.”

Her mother, Karen, was also part of the discussion. Karen explained how her daughter’s illness affected the entire family. “We were a family in crisis with very little support. Our coping skills consisted of aggressive determination, drawing on personal professional experience, and pure, raw grit.”

The mother and daughter now tour the country telling their story and advocating for changes in the way people with mental illness are viewed and treated. “I believe stigma will be reduced only through broad scale societal education and better understanding,” said Karen. “Everyone should know that, statistically, people with schizophrenia are not dangerous. We are ordinary people struggling with a medical condition, and we deserve compassion, understanding and support,” said Bethany.
University of Pittsburgh researchers, led by Dr. Edward Mulvey, PhD, Director of the Law and Psychiatry Program at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, are in the process of developing educational materials to help families manage serious conflict situations. They are looking for families with a loved one between the ages of 18-60 who is living with mental illness (schizophrenia spectrum or other psychotic disorders, depression, or bipolar disorder) and who has been involved in a physically-violent incident in the past six months. The study involves an interview with this individual and with a person who was involved in or helped to manage the incident. Learning about these events will enable researchers to understand what helps to calm these situations and what things make them worse. Compensation of $50 is provided to each party.

To learn more, contact Carol Schubert by phone at 412-647-4760 or by email at schubertca@upmc.edu.
Representatives from NAMI affiliates across Pennsylvania attended the affiliate leadership business meeting and dinner that was held on Sunday, March 11, 2018, the evening before the state mental health and wellness conference in Harrisburg. The yearly meeting serves as an opportunity for affiliate leaders to unite to talk about what’s new with NAMI in Pennsylvania.

“We want the affiliate meeting to be an annual event that leaders can count on to bring them up to speed with what’s going on at the state level, but also at the national level,” said Christine Michaels, CEO of NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania.

The theme to this year’s event was “Charting Our Course” and the main topic of discussion included NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania’s strategic planning process for 2018-2020. “It was important for us to review the plan with the affiliate leaders to outline the state organization’s goals for the future,” said Debbie Ference, COO of NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania.

The meeting is important to executive directors like Susan Hein from NAMI York. “The lines of communication should always be open with a flow of info going to and from.”

Abby Grasso, executive director of NAMI Montgomery County, says the affiliate meeting and conference are proving to be useful networking opportunities. “It is a chance to discover trends in the mental health system, be inspired by the work of others, and to form connections that allow us to continue to grow our affiliates to best serve our communities.”
Registration is open for NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania’s annual Child and Adolescent Mental Health Conference that’s taking place Friday, June 8, 2018, at the Pittsburgh Airport Marriott. This year’s conference is titled, *Expanding the Conversation: Giving Voice to Children, Adolescents, and Families in the Behavioral Health System*. Presenters will discuss how through research, practice, and advocacy they’re giving children and families the confidence to come forward and talk about their mental health concerns despite the stigma, while also giving them tools they need to play an active role in identifying and addressing challenges.

**Keynote Presenters**

**Ross W. Greene, PhD**, is a clinical psychologist who believes that adults and children must work together to reduce challenging behaviors. Dr. Greene’s experience working with families spans more than three decades and is recognized around the world. He is also a New York Times bestselling author of the books, *The Explosive Child, Lost at School, Lost and Found*, and *Raising Human Beings*. Dr. Greene is the originator of the model of care described in those books, called Collaborative & Proactive Solutions (CPS).

**Dior Vargas** is a Latina feminist mental health activist who works to remove the stigma of mental illness in the Latino community. Ms. Vargas is the creator of the People of Color and Mental Illness Photo Project, which is a response to the invisibility of people of color in the media representation of mental illness. She is also the recipient of numerous awards including being named a White House Champion of Change for Disability Advocacy Across Generations.

**Workshops Offered**

1. Our Stories Matter: A New Approach to Mental Health Engagement
2. How School Counselors Can Educate Teachers About Anxiety in the Classroom
3. Social Media Awareness for Parents/Caregivers, Family Members, and Individuals Working with Youth
4. First Episode Psychosis Programs in Pennsylvania
5. Inside the Adolescent Brain: Contributing Factors to Substance Use
6. Understanding and Treating Medication and Therapy Adherence Issues for Teens with Bipolar Disorder
7. Insights for Working with LGBTQIA+ Youth And Families
8. Meeting the Special Needs of Siblings
9. Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction in the Classroom
10. Ask the Doctor
11. An Overview of Adolescent Mental Health and Technology
12. Family Focused Solution Based Treatment: A Unique Service for Court-Involved Youth and Families in Allegheny County

**Register online at** [www.namikeyestonepa.org](http://www.namikeyestonepa.org)
Stories That Heal
Celebrating Pittsburgh Literature and Stories of Resilience

NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania, in collaboration with City of Asylum, is introducing Stories That Heal, a reading series that highlights local authors who address their experiences living with a mental health diagnosis and/or have a loved one with a mental health diagnosis. Their stories promote empathy, foster resilience, and uncover the truths about life with a mental illness. Each event includes an intimate conversation with the author about their lived experience. They also read from their book and end with audience Q and A.

To register to attend the next author series and for location and parking information for City of Asylum, please visit the events section at http://www.alphabetcity.org/

Jordan Corcoran (right), author of Write It Out and Listen, Lucy, kicked off the author series on April 18, 2018. Jordan read excerpts from her book and took Q&A from the audience, which was at capacity.

Jordan Corcoran, pictured with Susan Caban, Director of Education, and Nicole Campbell, Peer Engagement and Education Specialist.
Keystone Connection: Highlights from Across the State

**NAMIWalks Greater Philadelphia**  
Saturday, May 5 at Montgomery County Community College  
Blue Bell

**NAMI Scranton Northeast Region’s Walk for Mental Health Awareness**  
Saturday, May 5 from 9:30 am - 1:00 pm at the Lackawanna County Courthouse

**NAMI Main Line features “Just Talk About It”**  
Sunday, May 6 from 6:00 pm - 8:30pm. Participants will be encouraged to “Just Talk About It” as NAMI Main Line and Minding Your Mind help them to recognize the warning signs of stress, anxiety, depression and crisis. Designed for adolescents, teens and the adults who support them. Participants will learn to look beyond the stigma of mental health and notice warning signs in themselves and their peers.

**NAMI Bucks 4th Annual Stride For Mental Health Awareness**  
Saturday, May 12 at Fonthill Park in Doylestown

**NAMI Dauphin County’s 9th Annual Walk/Run to Stomp Out Stigma**  
Saturday, June 16 at City Island

**NAMI Erie’s Sixth Annual Fabulous Golf Outing**  
Friday, June 22 at Venango Valley Inn and Golf Course

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**NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania Launched New Website**  
www.namikeystonepa.org

As the state organization in Pennsylvania for the National Alliance on Mental Illness, NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania’s new website features an expanded list of regional and statewide resources:

- The “Find Your Local NAMI” tab connects users with the Pennsylvania NAMI affiliate closest to them to access contact information, support groups, and classes.
- The “Find Your Legislator” tool helps people find their local, state, and federal legislators just by typing in their address.
- A “Featured News and Events” section relays important information on new classes, trainings, and action alerts.
- The “Events” page has dates, locations, and registration information for our two major conferences, NAMIWalks, and other activities.

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The 12th annual NAMIWalks is scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 14, 2018 at The Waterfront in Homestead. The NAMIWalks registration page is open, so log on and start building your team!

For more information email slsteinberg@namikeystonepa.org or call 412-366-3788.

Registration 9 a.m. | Walk 10 a.m  
www.namiwalks.org/keystonepa
When did you start working at NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania and in what capacity?
I started working here in August 2009 (when it was NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania) in a temporary part-time position to help out with NAMIWalks. In October, once the Walk was over, I was hired to stay on in a permanent part-time role, which then became full-time.

Your title is Event and Technology Coordinator. What are some of the events you play a role in coordinating and how?
I plan all of the logistics for the state Mental Health and Wellness Conference in Harrisburg and I help plan the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Conference in Pittsburgh. It’s my job to obtain the sponsors and exhibitors for each conference. I also work closely with the presenters to make sure their travel plans are smooth and I get all of the AV needs from each presenter so they have what they need for the day of the event.

You’re also the NAMIWalks manager, which is NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania’s biggest awareness and fundraising event. What goes into planning the Walk? There is a lot that goes into planning the Walk! I secure sponsors, I participate in national trainings and webinars to stay up to date, and I also plan a luncheon that kicks off the Walk. There is a Walk website that I keep updated and I’m always in contact with Walkers and teams to make sure they have what they need. And there’s a lot that goes into Walk day, too! The NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania staff and volunteers are on site bright and early to help set up the tents, tables, chairs, food, signs, banners, and so much more. NAMIWalks wouldn’t happen without the whole team!

What do we have to look forward to for the 2018 NAMIWalks?
Well, the 2018 NAMIWalks will take place Sunday, October 14 at The Waterfront in Homestead. Deb Wasilchak of Community Care Behavioral Health is back as Walk Chair and WTAE-TV news anchor Michelle Wright is returning as our Honorary Chair. Something new and exciting this year is that there is a brand new logo to look forward to. Also, the Walk website is open, to log on to www.namiwalks.org/keystonepa to register your team.

You also exhibit for NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania at various conferences and events. What does that entail and why is it important?
When NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania exhibits at other conferences and events, it’s an opportunity for us to reach different audiences and showcase what we do and how we help people. We bring informational flyers about our programs, classes, and events. It’s also an opportunity for us to network with individuals and organizations and I enjoy having the chance to meet new people - that’s always fun.

How do you help keep NAMI Keystone PA on the cutting-edge of technology?
For the technology part of my job I make sure that all of the employees have updated computers that are running smoothly. Also, we just got our first smart board television for the conference room. This allows us to do all of our presentations right from the board without needing a laptop or projector. We can also Skype people into meetings if they aren’t able to attend in person.

Stay Connected
@NAMIKeystonePA
NAMI Support Groups

Visit the NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania website, www.namikeystonepa.org for additional support group information and for a link to support groups throughout Pennsylvania.

Allegheny County

NAMI Connection Peer Recovery Support Group - Dormont Library, 2950 West Liberty Avenue. Meets 2nd and 4th Mon., 6-7:30 p.m. Contact 412-366-3788 for information.

NAMI Parent Support Group - Youth and Transition-Age Crossroads Church, East Liberty. 2nd Mon., 5:30-7:30 p.m. Contact: Linda Thornhill, 412-247-7489.

NAMI Pittsburgh South - Mt. Lebanon, 3rd Wed., 7:30-9 pm. Contact Email: nami.south@gmail.com

NAMI Pittsburgh North - Ross Township, 1st Wed., 7-9 pm. Contact: Candy/Pete 412-361-8916

NAMI Pittsburgh East-FAMILIAS - Churchill, Beulah Presbyterian Church. 4th Wed., 7-9 pm. Contact: Mim Schwartz 412-731-4855

NAMI Spouse Support Group - Churchill, Beulah Presbyterian Church. 1st Wed., 7-9 pm. Contact: Mim Schwartz 412-731-4855

NAMI McKeesport, Penn State McKeesport, Frable Bldg., Rm 122. 3rd Thurs., 7-8:30 pm. Contact: Anna Lisa 412-527-6600

NAMI Western PA Borderline/Personality Disorders Family Support Group - Ross Township, 3rd Sat., 11-1 pm. Contact: Jo Burkholder 724-776-5974

NAMI W.P.I.C. Family Support Group - Oakland, 2nd Mon. 6-7 pm. Contact: Ray 412-379-3902

Butler County

NAMI PA Butler County - Butler MHA. Contact: Butler NAMI Office 724-431-0069 for more information.

Family Support Groups:
Butler – Last Tues. each month, 6 pm, St. Andrew’s Presbyterian, 201 E. Jefferson Street
Zelienople – 2nd Tues., 5:30 pm, Passavant Retirement Community Center, 401 S. Main Street

NAMI Connections - Peer Facilitated Recovery Support Group 2nd Tues., 4 pm, Grapevine Center, Butler.

Fayette County

NAMI-C.A.R.E. Fayette County (Consumers Advocating Recovery through Empowerment) - 1st and 3rd Tues., 5-6:30 pm, Oak House Drop-In Center, 100 New Salem Road (ground floor, first door on the right). Contact: 724-438-6738

Lawrence County

Contact Sandy Hause 724-657-0226

Washington County

NAMI Washington County - Washington, Court House Sq., Rm 103. 4th Thurs., 7-8:30 pm. Contact: Jim Gleason 724-416-7574

Westmoreland County

NAMI Alle-Kiski - New Kensington, 2nd Tues., 6 pm. Maverick Drop-In Center, 310 Central City Plaza. Contact: Marci at 724-335-9883 x526.

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

- Irwin, West Hempfield Presbyterian Church, 2nd Tues. except July and December, 7-9 pm
NAMI MEMBERSHIP FORM

Annual dues include discounted rates for educational events, resource and referral information, newsletters, call to action alerts and membership in NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania and national NAMI.

☐ *Household membership  $60.00
☐ *Individual membership  $40.00
☐ *Open Door/Limited income (minimum dues rate $5.00)  $________
☐ Additional Contribution $_________ Donation to remain anonymous ☐

NAME ___________________________________________________
ADDRESS ________________________________________________
CITY ____________________________  STATE _____ ZIP _________
PHONE (H) ______________________
E-mail ____________________________________________________

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

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

Join or donate via the website at www.namikeystonepa.org.

Membership is tax-deductible. Official registration and financial information of NAMI Keystone 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.