

2014 Annual Report

NAMI-Virginia Beach is a grassroots volunteer organization working to bring together people with the common goal of improving the quality of life for those affected by mental illness. NAMI-Virginia Beach is a 501 C (3) charitable non-profit corporation governed by a board of directors elected by the membership. Board members serve without compensation and are from various professional and business backgrounds. We are an affiliate of NAMI-Virginia, which maintains an office in Richmond and the national NAMI organization headquartered in Arlington, Virginia.

NAMI-Virginia Beach provides support groups for families and consumers, education and advocacy programs, a quarterly newsletter and an e-letter for the other eight months. Volunteers staff the office between fifteen and thirty hours a week. A volunteer is available by phone after hours. The phone call volume for 2014 was over 198. In addition to calls received during office hours, there were over 100 calls received after hours, including more than 11 from out of state. The majority of callers are inquiring about community mental health services. An increasing number of contacts are made by e-mail from our website. There were 26 such requests this year. Our website continues to provide information about mental illnesses and contact information.

Support groups have grown in attendance and scope in 2014. NAMI Family support group, *Care and Share* – for friends and families of individuals affected by a mental illness and/or substance use meets twice a month. Trained facilitators held 24 meetings with a total of 264 people served. We have trained an additional family facilitator this year.

NAMI Connections, a support group for individuals recovering from mental illness, has 12 trained facilitators who provide weekly support groups in three separate locations. One of these groups targets the military active duty, retired and disabled veterans. There have been a total of 156 groups serving approximately 278 individuals.

Our education programs for family members and individuals recovering from mental illness continue. The NAMI Family to Family education program, led by two trained facilitators, met for five 12-week sessions that served 90 family members. NAMI Basics, for the parent or caregiver of individuals who developed the symptoms of mental illness prior to the age of 18 years, met for three 10 week classes with a total of 27 participants. We have trained 4 new family to family facilitators.

The "In Our Own Voice" presentation aims to educate the public about mental illness and the recovery that is possible. The teams presented over 60 times with an average audience of 25 for a total of 1500 people. We have trained an additional 4 presenters this year.

Advocacy efforts increase. NAMI members joined with the Virginia Beach Community Services Board and spoke to the Virginia Congressional delegation concerning mental health coverage in any new legislation. NAMI members spoke to all state senators and legislators in their home offices. In addition, NAMI presented at the regional budget hearings with 15 members from Beach House, the Virginia Beach day treatment

psychosocial program. In addition, 20 individuals went to Richmond for the Coalition for Virginians With Mental Disabilities' annual Rally Day in Richmond on January 20, 2014. A legislative breakfast for members preceded visits to the Virginia Beach delegation.

NAMI had four quarterly meetings one of which was held in conjunction with the Kempsville Center for Behavioral Health on the state of child and youth mental health issues. Over 130 people attended this dinner program. The other quarterly meetings offered topics of interest to those with mental illness, their family and friends and professionals including an In Our Own Voice Presentation; a conversation with the heads of the Department of Mental Health Substance Abuse and Child and Youth Services; and an Ask the Doctor and the Pharmacist evening. NAMI continues to provide transportation to interested members from Beach House and The Harbors, both day treatment programs. Membership at the meetings has averaged over 60. We have begun to serve a light meal to encourage attendance. Beyond the meetings, members are kept informed by a quarterly newsletter complimented by e-letters.

In observance of Mental Illness Awareness Week, the affiliate members sponsored a team for the NAMI-Virginia Walk. The Virginia Beach team had over 40 walkers from Beach House, the day treatment clubhouse. In addition there were 45 family members and friends. Participants wore a blue T-Shirt's designed by a member of the Cox High School. The walk has become a major source of income for the affiliate allowing us to expand our program and services. This year the three of the top five fund raisers in the state were members of NAMI Virginia Beach.

The high school I Need A Lighthouse Psychology clubs sponsored by NAMI-Virginia Beach and I NEED A LIGHTHOUSE, a Depression and Suicide Awareness Program completed, their sixth year. The clubs meet monthly with presenters from the mental health profession as well as individuals recovering from mental illness. This year we added an additional high school bringing our total to 5. The clubs average 25 students per meeting. There are 7 teacher-sponsors. Our NAMI board now includes a teacher-sponsor and 2 high school ex officio board members.

NAMI-Virginia Beach continues to expand its website to serve as both a source of education and as a tool for members of the community. We have also set up a Facebook page in an effort to reach a younger audience.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen H. Ashby, President
President