

2015 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 e-letters. Volunteers staff the office between fifteen and thirty hours a week. A volunteer is available by phone after hours. The phone call volume for 2015 surpassed 300 calls including a number from out of state. Information requests are also received via e-mails from our website. The website provides up to date information on programs, community resources and contact information.

Support groups have grown in attendance and scope in 2015. NAMI Family support group, 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.

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 1,278 individuals. We will have trained an additional 6 facilitators by the end of the year.

Our education programs for family members and individuals recovering from mental illness continue to grow. The NAMI Family to Family education program, led by two trained facilitators, met for four 12-week sessions that served 72 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 two 10 week classes with a total 18 participants. Seven new facilitators trained for the two programs/ In addition, one facilitator trained for NAMI's new program for parents, Children's Challenging Behaviors and a first class will be in 2016. We've held three 6-week Peer to Peer Programs with a total of 24 participants

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 2 presenters this year. At a recent refresher, NAMI Virginia recognized the Virginia Beach coordinator and presenters for their top performance.

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 members from Beach House, the Virginia Beach day treatment psychosocial program. In addition, 18 individuals went to Richmond for the Coalition for Virginians with Mental Disabilities' annual Rally Day in Richmond in January, 2015. 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 Sexting, Texting and Cyberbullying. The three other meetings included Patrick Hurd, a practicing attorney, who spoke on living with bi-polar disorder; Dr. Petrie addressing the use of ETC and TMS therapy for depression; and a minister who spoke about on faith based counseling.. NAMI continues to provide transportation to interested members from both day treatment programs, Beach House and The Harbors, Membership at the meetings has averaged over 60. A light meal precedes the program.

A newly formed Mental Health Coalition worked on programs to promote Mental Health Awareness Month. The following organizations participated: Department of Human Services (Mental Health & Social Services), the Department of Public Health, I Need A Lighthouse, Virginia Beach Psychiatric Center, Kempsville Center for Behavioral Health, Lynnhaven Tricare, Sentara Behavioral Health, Community Services Board and NAMI. Posters, magnets and a calendar carried out the theme, "Celebrate your Mental Wealth, Invest in Yourself". The coalition passed out 12,000+ green ribbons, attended health fairs, distributed material at Lynnhaven Tricare, and co-sponsored mental health programs with other community groups. The Coalition is working on creating a much needed mental health resource handout.

From an administrative standpoint, a volunteer updated NAMI Virginia Beach's website which now enables on line membership, donations, and registration for classes. A summer intern from James Madison University created a user friendly volunteer training manual.

NAMI Virginia Beach worked with NAMI Norfolk to reach out to and work with area chapters of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. AKA is the largest African American Women's Sorority and entered into a four year alliance with NAMI to promote mental health. We have helped carry out a community mental health event, presented at the fall's regional convention as well as providing In Our Own Voice presentations.

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 green T-Shirt's designed by a student at Bayside High School. The walk has become a major source of income for the affiliate allowing us to expand our program and services. Two member of NAMI Virginia Beach topped the state fund raising list and the affiliate took top honors as well.

I Need A Lighthouse Psychology clubs sponsored by NAMI-Virginia Beach and I NEED A LIGHTHOUSE, a Depression and Suicide Awareness Program completed, their seventh year. Five high schools participate. The clubs meeting monthly and adveraged 25-30 students per meeting. There are 6 teacher-sponsors.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen H. Ashby, President
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