



# Tulsa Alliance News

NAMI-Tulsa (formerly TAMI) is affiliated with The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and NAMI-Oklahoma  
Email: NAMI-Tulsa@sbcglobal.net  
Website: <http://tulsa.nami.org>



Telephone: 918-587-6264

Volume XXIV Number III

The Grassroots Voice on Mental Illness

March 2009

## NAMI Celebrates 30th Anniversary

The year 2009 marks the 30th anniversary of the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

“Thirty years ago, 284 individuals from around the country gathered in Madison, Wisconsin to form what was then called the Alliance for the Mentally Ill, now NAMI. Fueled by anger, anguish and adversity, these pioneers launched a unique grassroots movement that would be a catalyst for change and enhance the lives of millions of Americans.

In three decades, NAMI has established itself as the most formidable grassroots mental health advocacy organization in the country. Dedication, steadfast commitment and unceasing belief in NAMI's mission by grassroots advocates have produced profound changes.

This year NAMI will bring mental illness into the forefront of American culture like never before with the release of Grading The States 2009. The 2009 edition is a follow-up to our groundbreaking comprehensive state-by-state analysis of mental health care systems in 2006.

NAMI's greatest strength is the dedication of our grassroots leaders and members. We are the families, friends, and individuals who serve to strengthen communities across the country.” (NAMI Advocate e-newsletter, January 2009) [http://www.nami.org/gtstemplate.cfm?section=grading\\_the\\_states&lstid=682](http://www.nami.org/gtstemplate.cfm?section=grading_the_states&lstid=682)

Information on Grading the States 2009 should be available on the NAMI website ([www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)) on March 11th. Hopefully, Oklahoma has made some innovative strides since the last grade of a “D.”

Twenty years ago, NAMI-Tulsa was formed (formerly known as the Tulsa Alliance on Mental Illness). We will be celebrating our 20th Anniversary this summer. NAMI-Tulsa's Historian, Oscar Kastner, has been gathering our information and presenting it in the Tulsa Alliance News.

—Vi Gunnells

### From the Board President

As I take office as president of the NAMI-Tulsa Board, I hope you will join with me to help 2009 to be a great year for our organization! To help accomplish this goal, the board and I hope to keep you better informed as to what we consider important issues before us. Also we would like for our membership to grow and become more active. Please consider joining with board members in serving on the following standing committees: finance, membership, communications, program, education, and outreach. If

## March Meeting

**Date: Thursday, March 12, 2009**

**Time: 7:00 p.m.**

**Place: Fellowship Congregational Church  
2900 South Harvard**

**Topic: Ask the Doctor, with a panel of three  
Tulsa psychiatrists**

**Speakers:** Dr. Chris Johnson, Dr. Robert Guevara and  
Dr. Sarah Janes-Land

A panel of three doctors working in the field of psychiatry, all of whom practice at Tulsa Center for Behavioral Health, will be available at an "Ask the Doctor" session during which family members and consumers may ask questions about diagnoses, medications, other forms of treatments, etc.

Light refreshments will be served.

you are interested in serving on one of these committees please let me know by calling me at 252-7384.

Also, our opportunities continue to grow in the area of education. In April, we hope to be able to offer the Family-to-Family class to families of our veterans who are suffering Post Traumatic Syndrome (PTS) and other mental illnesses. In addition, we plan to offer the Basics class (Basics is a new signature education program for parents and other caregivers of children and adolescents living with mental illnesses.). Adding to our support efforts, there are at least two consumers who are going to attend training classes to begin support groups for consumers called Connections.

We also ask for you to join with the board in our advocacy efforts. We need you to write to your state representatives regarding your personal stories about difficulties you have had in getting treatment for your loved one's mental illness. Your stories would show how difficult it is to get treatment for the people we love.

Again if there are any questions give me a call. If I can't answer them, I will refer you to others who are more knowledgeable.

--Leta Lofton

*For your information, the history articles have been on hold due to health issues in Oscar Kastner's family. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers.*



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## CHADD (Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) Meeting Planned

**When:** Saturday, March 14th, 9:30-11:30 a.m.  
**Where:** Hardesty Library, 93rd & Memorial  
**Topic:** The treatment of ADHD  
**Speaker:** Sheenah Weber, Licensed Professional Counselor

Ms. Weber provides group therapy to children and parents participating in the ADHD clinic at Laureate Psychiatric Hospital and Clinic. She also helps facilitate coordination with the schools.

In April Dr. K. Michael Saliba, also from Laureate Psychiatric Hospital and Clinic, will be the speaker.

For more information, call  
Robin Howard  
CHADD Support  
857-2095

## Mental Health Association of Tulsa 2009 FASHION AND TALENT SHOW May 1, 2009

### Mental Health Day at the Capitol April 2009

More information will be on the website and the newsletter as it is received.



**Location:** Stars and Stripes Park, Oklahoma City, OK  
**Date:** May 16, 2009

This 5K walk raises funds and community awareness regarding mental illness. Funds raised support NAMI OK programs with a percent coming back to us, NAMI-Tulsa.

### Tulsa Alliance News

NAMI Tulsa is affiliated with  
The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Office: 918-587-6264  
and NAMI Oklahoma

#### Board Members

- |                  |                       |
|------------------|-----------------------|
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The Tulsa Alliance News is published monthly. Opinions expressed in articles, news items, editorials, and letters from our readers are those of the authors, and not necessarily those of the Tulsa Alliance on Mental Illness.

Contributions from our readers are encouraged, and are published subject to availability of space. Authors are responsible for the accuracy of their statements.

Contributions may be e-mailed to [NAMI-Tulsa@sbcglobal.net](mailto:NAMI-Tulsa@sbcglobal.net) or mailed to:

Tulsa Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI Tulsa)  
700 S. Boston, Suite 219  
Tulsa, OK 74119

You can access us through our website at <http://tulsa.nami.org> or NAMI's website at [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

Funded in part by the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

## Family to Family for families of Veterans is being offered in cooperation with the Veterans Administration In Tulsa, OK

Tentatively, an evening class is being organized to start in late April or May to be held in the VA clinic here in Tulsa.

Call Judy in our NAMI-Tulsa office (918-587-6264) if you are a family member of a Veteran and interested in taking this class. Our teachers/facilitators of this class are also Military Veterans.

**Class size is limited to 20**

For more information on NAMI and the Veterans Administration working together, please check out this website.

<http://www.nami.org/template.cfm?template=/contentManagement/contentDisplay.cfm&contentID=53586>

**NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:**

Several articles have been published in the past few weeks bringing attention to our children needing psychiatric assistance and the lack of child psychiatrist. Noting that some parents have been so desperate, they have given them up to the 'system' to be taken care of because their resources are depleted in trying to help their child.

As a parent of a child(ren) that needed psychiatric help, I can relate to the parents in these articles when dealing with the system. But what was really frustrating for me outside of the article were the comments attached in the blog of uncaring and pointing fingered people who didn't have a clue what parents deal with when trying to get services for their child(ren) with a mental illness. Here we go again, its the parent's fault! If you have a chance, click on the link and read the comments.

-Vi Gunnells

The New York Times

## Domestic Disturbances

Judith Warner

February 19, 2009, 9:00 pm

### Children in the Mental Health Void

<http://warner.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/02/19/is-there-no-place-on-earth/>

Remember the Nebraska law meant to keep desperate new mothers from abandoning their babies in dumpsters by offering them the possibility of legal drop-off points at "safe havens" like hospitals?

As was widely reported last year, the law neglected to set an age limit for dropped-off children, and eventually led to 36 children – mostly between the ages of 13 and 17 – being left with state authorities. Most of these children had serious mental health issues. Some were handed over to the state by relatives who had no other way of securing for them the heavy-duty psychiatric care they needed. Seven of the children came from out of state, including one who'd been driven 1,000 miles to Lincoln, Neb., from Smyrna, Ga.

Recently, The Omaha World-Herald acquired 10,000 pages of case files concerning these children from the state's Department of Health and Human Services. They paint a portrait of desperation – of out-of-control kids, overtaxed parents and guardians, and an overstretched health care system – that really deserves more widespread national notice.

Because even though the mentally ill "safe haven" children had extreme needs, and some of their parents and guardians had extremely limited capabilities (one grandmother said her charge had "demons inside of him"; a mother who dumped her two teenagers in an emergency room said they were "mouthy," "too much work" and "need to be voted off the island"), what their stories have to say about children's mental illness, parental limitations and the paucity of care available in our country is altogether typical. They illustrate how a lack of good care early on can create much bigger problems, for families and for society, in the long run.

Their example also serves as a necessary corrective to the popular view that children being labeled mentally ill today are just

spirited "Tom Sawyers" who don't fit our society's cookie-cutter norms, with parents who are desperate to drug them into conformity.

The children abandoned in Nebraska had big-deal problems. An 11-year-old boy, hearing voices since the third grade, had punched his fist through a glass door and smeared another child with his feces; other children had started fires, tortured pets, sexually abused younger children and made murder and suicide threats. Some of the adults charged with their care had problems, too, mental health issues that made them incapable of properly seeking help. Some parents and guardians had blocked earlier efforts by the state to provide care for their children, by not taking their children to Medicaid-funded therapy sessions or not picking up free psychiatric medications.

Others had tried hard to get help for their children; Matthew Hansen and Karyn Spencer, reporters for The World-Herald, noted that the 29 Nebraska "safe-haven" children alone had received nearly \$1.1 million in state-financed mental health services. But these services "were not provided in a coordinated and cohesive way," Kathy Bigsby Moore, executive director for the advocacy group Voices for Children in Nebraska, told me. She reviewed the state case records and found that some children received too little care too late and some, in desperate straits, were spending months on waiting lists for spots to open in residential treatment programs.

One Oklahoma woman who had been frustratedly trying to get her adopted son into a residential treatment program phoned a Nebraska official and threatened to bring the boy to his state unless she received help. The boy was admitted to a psychiatric program almost immediately.

"Why on God's green earth does it take all that to get help?" she asked The World-Herald.

This problem of lack of access to care – and lack of access to truly good care – is the real mental health "epidemic" affecting children in our time.

Insurance companies will no longer pay for long-term inpatient care for mentally ill children; as a result, psychiatric hospitals have been steadily closing, and residential treatment programs for the most difficult children, whose tuition is most often paid with public funds, are packed.

And yet the care available for children at home with their parents is severely lacking. Outside of big cities, where even under the best of circumstances there can be a two- to three-month wait to see a child psychiatrist, there is a severe shortage of children's mental health specialists.

In 1990, the Council on Graduate Medical Education estimated that by 2000, the United States would need 30,000 child psychiatrists; there are now 7,000. Many rural areas have no child psychiatrists or psychologists at all. Often, pediatricians end up providing mental health care, but they aren't trained for it and often aren't reimbursed for it by health insurance. The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry is currently working with the American Academy of Pediatrics to try to formalize ways to collaborate on caring for children with mental health needs, but models for such joint care are scarce. And doctors have no

(Continued on page 5)



## March Education Meeting to Feature "Ask the Doctor" Panel

The March 12 education meeting of NAMI-Tulsa at Fellowship Congregational Church, 2900 S. Harvard. A panel of three doctors working in the field of psychiatry will be available at an "Ask the Doctor" session during which family members and consumers may ask questions about diagnoses, medications, other forms of treatments, etc.

Speaking at the meeting will be Dr. Chris Johnson, a fourth-year resident in Psychiatry and Family Medicine at OU. Dr. Johnson, who was born and raised in Kansas, attended the University of Kansas School of Medicine and is interested in medical missions. He currently works part-time at Tulsa Center for Behavioral Health (TCBH).

Joining Dr. Johnson on the panel will be Dr. Robert Guevara, a fifth-year medical resident in OU's Family Practice/Psychiatry program. Dr. Guevara was born and raised in South Texas and worked as health reporter and a registered nurse before deciding to pursue a medical degree at University of Texas Medical Branch-Galveston. He came to Oklahoma for residency training and plans to stay with OU, working with underserved. He presently works part-time at the Tulsa Center for Behavioral Health.

The third panel member will be Sarah Janes-Land, D.O. Dr. Janes-Land was raised in Tulsa and graduated from OSU Medical School. She completed her Psychiatry residency with OU in 2007. She is married, with five children ranging in age from 7 to 15. She is in private practice and is also on staff at TCBH, Family and Children's Services and Cancer Treatment Centers of America.

—Irvin Mann

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**HEAR YE!  
HEAR YE!**

The new year has begun.  
\$ \$ \$  
Have you checked your  
mailing label to see if  
your membership is up-to-date?  
\$ \$ \$ \$

## Combat Corner

By: G.I. Jane

*Mission: Creating Order out of Disorder*  
A Monthly Commentary regarding the fundamentals of PTSD Rehabilitation and Recovery



### Support for Veteran Reintegration in the Workplace:

Securing meaningful employment is difficult amidst America's current economic crisis, especially for war veterans. Add combat-related post traumatic stress disorder to the mix and it can be nearly impossible. Some veterans are able to compartmentalize their war experiences, thereby lessening the chance that such experiences will interfere with their ability to obtain and maintain a fulfilling career. For several, however, many memories of combat bring about anger, tension and despondency which, if left unresolved, can eventually become barriers to a never-ending reintegration "process" where many veterans find themselves trapped. The VA refers to this trap as reintegration disorder.

Veterans suffering from reintegration disorder often lose the will to concern themselves with finding housing or employment and end up on the streets. Some go a step further and end their lives. Many times the responsibility of bringing these people back to living life falls on friends and family members.

Some words of wisdom for today's soldiers and soon-to-be-veterans: start looking for meaningful employment six months to a year prior to separation from the service. This is especially sound advice since many employers (especially federal) are lax in disclosing that they will not accept veterans for employment after having been separated from military service for more than one year.

**Next Month: The Code of Misconduct: Why Female Veterans Keep Quiet**

## Mental Health Association of Tulsa in Need of Household Items

The Mental Health Association of Tulsa (MHAT) is always accepting donations of household items and other staples to assist clients in need of help furnishing their apartments. In addition to beds and lamps, they need apartment-size furniture such as love seats, small dinette sets and coffee tables. MHAT also collects items such as paper towels, coffee, dishes, towels, and bed linens. You don't need to drive around looking for their building, as they will come to you and pick up your donated items. For more information contact Leah at MHAT at (918) 585-1213. You can find more information on their Web site (<http://www.mhat.org>).

—Rose Weller



## Membership Registration Form

Please check the "Membership paid to" date on your mailing label. If it says 00-00-00 or an expired date, would you consider sending us your membership? If your membership is current, then we **thank you!** New memberships or renewals are valid for one year and expire at the end of the same month in which your check is dated.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY: \_\_\_\_\_  
 STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 HOME: \_\_\_\_\_ WORK: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Your participation will help NAMI-Tulsa and NAMI-Oklahoma in our efforts to improve the quality of life for persons with mental illnesses and for their families. Please indicate the appropriate area(s) of interest if you are able to take an active part:

- Legislative Issues (Grassroots Leaders)
- Anti-Stigma Efforts
- Local Advocacy
- Program Committee
- Newsletter
- Children/Adolescent Network
- Hospitality
- Family-to-Family Teacher
- Fund-Raising
- Family-to-Family Course Participant
- Office Volunteer
- Support Group Leader
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Your dues entitles you to membership in NAMI-Tulsa, NAMI-Oklahoma and NAMI (the National Alliance). You will receive informative newsletters from all three organizations. Together, we can make a difference. Thank you for your support!

**Please choose your membership category below:**

- Family \$ 35.00
- Open Door 3.00
- Sponsoring 50.00
- Corporate 100.00
- Sustaining 500.00
- Extra Contribution \_\_\_\_\_
- TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Renewal  New Member

**Please mail this form with your payment to:**

NAMI Tulsa  
 700 S. Boston, Suite 219  
 Tulsa, OK 74119

*NAMI Tulsa is a non-profit organization. Your contributions are tax-deductible.*

**NAMI requests the following optional information:**

Relationship to Consumer:

- Parent of Adult Child
- Consumer
- Parent of Child Under 18
- Sibling
- Offspring/Adult Child
- Spouse
- Friend
- Professional
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Ethnicity:

- White
- Hispanic
- Native American
- African American
- Asian
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_



*(Children—Continued from page 3)*

financial incentives to talk to one another on the phone.

Programs that could help support mentally ill children and their families – therapeutic after-school care, community-based outpatient services, transitional care for children with chronic mental illness who sometimes suffer dramatic flare-ups of symptoms that send them to emergency rooms or to adult psych wards un-equipped to help them – are also very poorly developed around the country, and generally not reimbursed by health insurance.

The result of all this fractured, fragmented, chaotic or non-existent care, said Christopher Bellonci, a psychiatrist who is the medical director of the Walker School, a nonprofit residential treatment program in Needham, Mass., is that children with psychiatric problems get steadily worse, and eventually "fail up" through repeated trials of medication and short-term hospitalizations until they can no longer be kept at home. Getting these children into good treatment programs requires "significant advocacy on the part of parents who have to be extremely sophisticated," he said. And the cost of those programs is so great that, as was the case in Nebraska, some parents are actually forced to make their children wards of the state in order to get the child welfare system to pay for their care.

"Parents who have not been abusive or neglectful are put in the untenable situation of having to surrender custody," Bellonci told me. "It's criminal, frankly."

In Nebraska, where access to child mental health services is particularly poor, child advocates had hoped that last year's headline-making child abandonments would shock lawmakers into spending more money to develop better child mental health services. But that isn't happening.

So far, Moore says, the only legislation likely to win passage would create a uniform state hotline and provide "navigators" to help parents find mental health services for their children. There isn't, however, any increased funding for actual care. And without access to services, she said, "We fear it'll be a hotline and navigators to nowhere."

"Navigation to nowhere" perfectly sums up the experience of many parents I have interviewed about their attempts to secure mental health services for their children. As a country, it's really in our interest to provide them with a compass.

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- submitted by John Hair

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## **NAMI SUPPORT GROUPS FOR FAMILY MEMBERS AND OTHER CAREGIVERS**

**South Tulsa/Bixby Support Group - Home of Bob and Jo Ann Flake** - Meets the first Monday from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. at the home of Bob and JoAnn Flake. For information and directions, call 369-2371.

**Owasso Support Group - Westport Mennonite Church — Old 169 & Hwy 20 - (German Corner)** — Meets the second Monday evening of the month from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Call Joan Stuckey at 272-9290 for more information.

**Saturday Support Group - Crossroads, 1888 East 15th St.** Meets the second Saturday of each month from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. Call Mary Ellen Jones (743-9124) for information.

**NAMI-Washington County Support Group - Torrey Place I** Meets 2nd Thursday of each month at Torrey Place I, 901 SE 3rd Street in Bartlesville. For information call Toni Harjo (918)336-1288 or Charles (918)337-8080, ext. 2202.

**NAMI-Creek County Support Group - Sapulpa 1st Christian Church** - Meets the 3rd Monday of each month at 7:00 pm. Located at the corner of Lee & Elm (Annex on Lee Street - 1st door nearest the street). Contact Jean Coll at (918) 227-2016.

## **OTHER ADULT SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS**

**Asbury United Methodist Church Mental Health Support Group for Families Who Are Caregivers** — Meets in the church parlor the 4th Thursday from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. - 6767 S. Mingo. Use south door to enter. Special speakers will be:

**Depression and Bipolar Support Group** — Meets every Monday evening at 7:00 p.m. at the Fellowship Congregational Church, 2900 South Harvard. For information, call 258-1684 or Laurie at 836-0701.

**Bipolar/Depression Support Group** — Asbury United Methodist Church, 2nd & 4th Thursdays, 7:00 p.m., room 2821. For information call William Camp 640-1272.

**Christian Depression and Bipolar Support Group** – Call “Bright Tomorrows” at 744-5761 for information and address.

**Postpartum Depression Support Group** — Meets 1st Monday each month 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Boston Avenue United Methodist Church — call Anita Campbell 865-7824 or EvaMarie Campbell 699-0120. Free child care 699-0140.

**Parkside Family Support Group** — Meets every other Tuesday 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm at Parkside Outpatient Clinic, 2nd floor, 1620 East 12th Street, in Tulsa, 582-2131.

**Get Connected Military Family Support** — No longer meets at the library. For more information, contact (918) 492-2554 x750 or [militarysupport@actcares.org](mailto:militarysupport@actcares.org).

## **FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN**

**Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)** meets on the 2nd Saturday of the month from 9:30-11:00 a.m., Hardesty Library. For more information, call Robin at (918) 857-2095 or [Robin4CHADD@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Robin4CHADD@sbcglobal.net)

**Talk To Me Support Alliance Group** - for parents who have children with mental & behavioral problems. Meets every Monday night at the Kendall-Whittier School Cafeteria from 6-8 p.m. Call Grace at 850-7185.

**Hands to Success Support Group for children** -- meets every Monday night at the Kendall-Whittier School. Call Luke Handley at 948-5050 for more information.

## **MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF TULSA**

1870 South Boulder 585-1213  
**Bipolar Support Group** 1st & 3rd Tuesday 6:30 p.m.  
**Depression Support Group** 1st & 3rd Thursday 6:00 p.m.  
**Anxiety Support Group** 2nd & 4th Tuesday 6:30 p.m.  
**Survivors of Suicide** 1st & 3rd Thursday 6:30 p.m.  
**T-3 Support Group** (Teens Talking Amongst Teens)  
1st & 3rd Wednesday 6:00 p.m.  
**Families in Touch Support Group** (Caregivers of Family Members) 2nd & 4th Wednesday 6:00 p.m.