

Thanks to Our Volunteers for an Extraordinary 2010

Due to the wonderful efforts of our large corps of volunteers, who contributed 21,000 hours of their time, 2010 was a year of extraordinary accomplishments by NAMI SCC. We were also greatly supported by grants from Santa Clara County Mental Health, Cisco Systems, SanDisk Corporation, Lilly Pharmaceuticals, Farrington Historical Foundation, El Camino Hospital, Janssen Pharmaceuticals and donations from our members. In the area of formal courses we taught 4 sections of our Provider Course and 13 sections, including two in Spanish and two in Chinese, of Family-to-Family. Our Chinese Group, with the blessing and encouragement of NAMI National started a translation of the complete Family-to-Family Course into Chinese. When this is completed in 2011 the Course will be able to be taught to Chinese speakers throughout the U.S. Our 7 sections of Peer-to-Peer included one in Spanish and included participants referred to the course by Judge Manley of the Mental Health Court and others referred by the Veterans Administration. We are one of the few NAMI affiliates in the country to teach two sections of Basics, a course for families whose school age child has a mental illness. We continued our NAMI Parents and Teachers as Allies program to help to alert teachers to the possibility that they might have a student with a mental illness. Together with the San Jose Police Department, Santa Clara County Office of Sheriff and the Santa Clara County Mental Health Department we had five Crisis Intervention Team Academies. These 40-hour academies have proved to be very successful in helping law enforcement personnel learn how to deal with crisis situations involving those with a serious mental illness.

One of our most successful single events ever was our 35th Anniversary Celebration in November. In this full house event we honored our two surviving founders, five important volunteers, and the retired police officer who brought CIT programs to San Jose and to California. This event was supported and attended by the broad community. U.S. Congresswoman Lofgren and State Assemblymen Fong and Beall attended.

We continued three excellent annual special events for those with severe mental illness and their families. Our participation in the NAMIWALK San Francisco Bay Area is a very important fundraiser. It and the accompanying Kickoff Lunch are also important outings for our membership and others and are valuable in bringing our message to the public. The annual summer picnic was a fun occasion for families and consumers, and the Holiday Gift Drive was again successful in reaching out to hundreds of consumers, many of whom have limited contact with their families.

Our volunteers spent numerous hours representing consumers and families on the County Mental Health Board and at the many County meetings to plan the continuing wise use of the MHSA (Prop. 63) funds. We regularly lobbied on the state and national level on mental health issues.

Our locally developed Peer PALS Program is doing well with a growing demand for its services and with excellent evaluations of its effectiveness from the participants. The Program has the goal of increasing the mental and spiritual wellness for those with a mental illness through the support and friendship of their peers. NAMI Stanislaus County and John George Psychiatric Pavilion in Alameda County have validated its usefulness by introducing their versions of Peer PALS.

In addition to continuing our family support groups in English, Spanish, Cantonese, and Mandarin we now have a very well attended weekly consumer support group with trained consumers running it. The monthly general meeting and our 20-hour per week hotline and front desk support continue to meet important needs in our community. In fact the front desk/warmline is so well used by the community that we now have two volunteers staffing each weekday. We staff a similar helpdesk at Barbara Arons Pavilion. The appreciation of our newsletter, written and published by volunteers, and our website with volunteer webmaster continues to grow. Our lending library is an excellent source of valuable information to all about mental illnesses.

Our volunteers distributed thousands of newsletters and brochures to mental health facilities throughout the County to bring our message of support, education and advocacy to the wider community. We regularly represented NAMI at health fairs, Kaiser-San Jose, Stanford bipolar and schizophrenia education days, and various churches and synagogues. We worked with the faith community as they are setting up their mental health programs.

The combination of financial support and volunteer efforts allowed ALL NAMI programs and services to be presented free of charge to participants.

Thank You All!

John Mitchem, Immediate Past President NAMI SCC