



April 2009 NAMI Connection Training of Trainers

NAMI Connection held its third training of state trainers last month in St. Louis. This event included 43 trainers from 17 states, and this group was nothing less than stellar!

The training took place over three days in St. Louis, and included several workshops. Trainers learned about the different elements of adult learning, classroom management, cultural diversity and how to handle challenging situations. In addition to this, the trainers also had a full day of skill development and team building exercises. By the end of the weekend, all of the trainers had developed a strong bond with each other and were fully prepared to run their own trainings.

The event was a wonderful success, and we look forward to welcoming another group in October!



Please note that the list below does not correlate with position in the above photograph.

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| Trainers: Anna Goodwin, Anthony Holscher, Carol Hall, Deanna Green, Deb Strong, Gretchen Anglin, Pete Aresco, Royal Riddick | Michigan: Zach Edgerton |
| Key Assistants: Candita Wacker & Laura Sweeney | Nebraska: Roni Wilder, Constance Zimmer, Thomas Rundall, Patti Lindteigen |
| State Trainers: | New Mexico: Lorette Enochs, Andrea Blumenthal, Debra Bryant |
| Arizona: Scott Whitley, Millie Alvarado, Mary Frost | Pennsylvania: Suzanne Vogel-Scibilia, Rose Alberghini, David Hamilton |
| Arkansas: Stephen McDermott, Ruth Trowbridge, Linda Spillers | South Dakota: Jennifer Constantine, John Baxter |
| Georgia: April Warner | Texas: Rosemary Wood, Linda Smith, Andy Gibson |
| Kentucky: Gayla Hayes | Utah: Spencer Hinckley, Shane Bullock, Eileen Saunders |
| Louisiana: Joe Dupuis, Joy Mullen | Virginia: Chris Cox, Lillie Ray, Evelyn Gay |
| Maryland: Sarah Ashworth, Michael Platt | Washington: Antonella Novi, Brian Youngberg, Charan Bird, Liz Locke-Fry |
| Massachusetts: Thomas Lavoie, Thelma Maczka, Jaqueline Martinez | |

Testimonials

Getting involved with NAMI Connection has helped me to get involved with other people who share the same issues as I do, which means I've made some really good friends. It has also helped me to become more of an advocate for myself in dealing with illness and has helped me to start taking better care of myself.

The night I attended my first NAMI consumer support group, I realized I am not alone! There is a place where people understand me, and are there to help me. I feel better about myself when I help someone else. I can get involved in NAMI and make a difference!



Training Progress:

- Facilitator Trainings: 87
- Total Facilitators Trained: 1587
- Total Support Groups: 349

For more information on NAMI Connection:

- Visit our website at www.nami.org/connection
- Call the HelpLine at 1(800) 950-NAMI (6264)
- Send an email to connection@nami.org



Pete Aresco, NAMI Connecticut

Facilitator, Champion, National Trainer

My name is Pete Aresco and I am 30 years old living with my life partner in New Haven, CT. I was diagnosed with a mental illness at the young age of 17 as a senior in high school in Meriden, CT. I became involved with NAMI a few years after my mother, Barbara, discovered what a Family-to-Family class was in 1999. Since that time, we both have been deeply involved with the NAMI organization.

I have been involved with NAMI Connection since the start of this program in February 2007 when Connecticut became one of the first pilot states of this new program. After the facilitator training, I was asked if I would like to interview to be a possible national trainer for NAMI Connection. Since that time, I have focused a lot of my time and energy on this program because I believe in this program and I have seen the wellness, happiness, and success in myself and from others that it brings.

Today, the role I have with NAMI Connection is as a facilitator for the support group in New Haven CT and I am still a national trainer for the third year of the program rollout. I currently am working together with Don Fischer in the NAMI CT office and have been the NAMI Connection Administrative Assistance for CT for the last year.

I have various responsibilities for CT with this position and one of them includes being the “champion” for the entire state and assisting everyone with success of this program. Even though CT is not the biggest state, we do have nine successful weekly supports groups. I am involved with a variety of activities from co-facilitating with others in their groups to getting more resources out, helping advertising the support groups, and going to different community events to talk about NAMI Connection.

I believe that being a Connection Champion is a 24-hour job and I am always carrying NAMI materials in my car with me everywhere I go. If I

am driving and I see a library or a supermarket or a mental health place, I always stop and put up a brochure or flyer to let people know that there is a safe place for people to go to so they are not alone with this illness.

These past three years since I have become involved with NAMI Connection have been the happiest and the healthiest years since my diagnosis. I believe that this support group has let me discover new ways of coping with my illness. I have seen so much of a self-improvement on my illness and my own lifestyle. However, one of the greatest joys I have is seeing the countless people coming out of these groups with a new attitude on life and a new way of looking at this illness. I believe people are not alone anymore and the stigma of mental illness is fading due to NAMI Connection groups because I see how the people are not afraid to talk about their illness.

I truly am honored to be part of this program and being a Connecticut “champion” is in actuality a privilege to me because I am able to be out in the community, talking about and being directly involved with a support group that I sincerely believe and trust in and I know it does work.

If I could tell someone who has never heard of NAMI Connection what it is about, I would say “it is a place where everyone is the most sincere and accepting of me. I have found that no matter who I am, what I look like, where I come from or who I believe in, that I am loved and cared about. This is a dream come true for me and it could be for so many others living with a mental illness.”



Ruth Trowbridge, NAMI Arkansas

Facilitator, Champion, State Trainer

My name is Ruth Trowbridge. I became a member of NAMI in 2004. I took Family Support group training and started a support group with Carol Hall in June 2004.

Carol and I then heard about NAMI C.A.R.E. and started a group for consumers using the C.A.R.E. guidelines. In 2007, we started a NAMI Connection group after receiving the facilitator training and were able to do a simulated NAMI Connection Group at the Illinois State Convention that was well-received.

I also worked part-time for NAMI DuPage as Assistant to the Education Program Director from August until I moved to Arkansas in May 2008, where I took the Connection training again.

I help other NAMI Connection groups by attending their first few meetings in order to help them get settled and give them some of the resource materials that I’ve collected. In the community, whenever I get a chance, I talk about NAMI Connection: at the pharmacy counter, to other people in the community, and encouraging people to contrib-

ute to NAMI Walks. I’ve encouraged our support group members to participate in the walk, and one of them even did the graphics for our team t-shirts.

I would encourage anyone diagnosed with a mental illness to attend a NAMI Connection group for the growth of themselves, companionship, and social interaction.

I feel like the program keeps improving and it is my hope that we can make NAMI Connection grow in AR because I feel with the program there is hope. I am currently running a NAMI Connection group in Little Rock. I recently took the Training of Trainers for NAMI Connection in April 2009 with Stephen Mc Dermott and Linda Spillers. We are hoping to get some great new facilitators. It is my goal to start a NAMI Connection Group in the town I live in, Cabot, AR, within the next two months.





Are you interested in being a champion for NAMI Connection?

In every community, NAMI is looking for Champions to help ensure that NAMI Connection becomes a successful and flourishing program.

Champions can:

- Work with facilitators and local affiliates to distribute NAMI Connection marketing materials to agencies, mental health centers, and other local locations
- Identify sites for NAMI Connection support groups, such as churches, clubhouses, drop-in centers, and hospitals.
- Identify and recruit potential champions and support group facilitators.

Who can become a champion? Champions are consumers, family members, peer support specialists, mental health professionals, former affiliate board members; anyone who is interested in making NAMI Connection succeed in their local area.

If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a champion, contact your state office or email connection@nami.org for more information on how to help!



Monthly Facilitator Calls

NAMI Connection Field Managers hold a monthly teleconference call for the **facilitators, affiliate leaders, and state coordinators** in each state covering a wide variety of topics. Please contact the field manager* for your state for more information.

IL, MI, MN, SD, UT, WI

- Anna Goodwin, 1 (866) 446-8433 or agoodwin@nami.org

AL, CA, NC, NV, OK, VT

- Deanna Green, 1 (888) 221-0273 or dgreen@nami.org

AK, CO, KS, MA, NH, NJ, NY

- Harriet Kronick, 1 (877) 400-2092 or hkronick@nami.org

HI, MT, OR, RI, WY

- Carol Porch, 1 (877) 243-3466 or cporch1@nami.org

AR, CT, DE, FL, GA, LA, IN, IA, KY, MD, ME, MS, MO, NE, NM, OH, PA, SC, TX, VA, WA

- Gretchen Anglin, 1 (800) 985-2958 or gmeyer@nami.org

*Please note that your state may now have a different field manager.

NAMI Connection at the Annual NAMI Convention

NAMI Connection will be busy this year in San Francisco at the NAMI Annual Convention. We will be celebrating our third and final successful launch year at the NAMI Connection Celebration Luncheon, hosting a breakfast for NAMI Connection Executive Directors, presenting at our symposium, talking with attendees at our booth in NAMI Land, and running two NAMI Connection Support groups Monday—Thursday of the Convention.

We hope to see you there!

Upcoming Facilitator Trainings:

June 5-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michigan (Lansing) 	August 14-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ohio (Columbus)
June 12-14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alabama (Montgomery) 	August 21-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rhode Island (Warwick)
June 26-28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nevada (Reno) • Virginia (Richmond) • Washington (Wenatchee) 	August 27-30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Montana (Bozeman)
July 17-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Georgia (Atlanta) 	September 11-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Jersey (TBA)
July 24-26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wyoming (Casper) • North Carolina (Raleigh) • Nebraska (Omaha) 	October 3-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alaska (Anchorage)
July 31-August 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New York (Syracuse) • Wisconsin (Milwaukee) • Oregon (Portland) 	October 16-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Hampshire (Concord) • Delaware (Dover)
		November 13-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vermont (Rutland/Killington) • Minnesota (Minneapolis)
		December 4-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alabama (TBA)



The NAMI Connection Team would like to introduce its newest member, Carol Porch. Carol is the new Field Manager for Area 4, and started working with us at the beginning of May. Carol comes to us from Iowa, where she was coordinating the Family-to-Family Program. Carol has also been with the NAMI Connection Program as a National Trainer since April 2007, and brings a great deal of knowledge to her role. Please help us give her a warm welcome into the NAMI Connection National family!

