



*NAMI Connection Mission Statement: There will be a NAMI Connection recovery support group within reasonable traveling distance for every person in America who lives with a mental illness, every day of the week.*

## The Chicago Tribune

### Sees a NAMI Connection Group in Action

On April 22nd a NAMI Connection Demo group was featured in the Chicago Tribune. The article was written by reporter John Keilman; who was able to see what the group was like and how it operated. The meeting took place at the Good Samaritan Hospital in Illinois. The article focused on peer support and how empathy from people who have been there can be just as helpful, if not more so, than provider services when consumers are working on their recovery from mental illnesses.

Keilman said the article "made the national wire" which meant that the story could potentially be printed throughout the country, which it was; it appeared in The Sacramento Bee (CA), The Republic (IN), and The Seattle Times (WA), among other forums.

This article was possible thanks to the effort and hard work made by the Good Samaritan Hospital Facilitator Team, which includes Susan Piasecki, Jenny Wyza, Bill Schoeneberg, Facilitator/State Trainer Michelle Layfield and 18 NAMI Connection group members. Also, Good Samaritan Hospital Community and Government Relations, Behavioral Health Administration and the NAMI DuPage Administration were all very important in this effort. They all demonstrated great teamwork and commitment to make this a success.

The response they have received after the article was published has been outstanding; Susie Piasecki has received several phone calls from people asking where they could find their local support groups. Also, another group member featured in the article said that while he was at his bank, his teller thanked him for his contributions to the Chicago Tribune because her son has bipolar disorder, and for the first time ever after reading the article, her son said that he was willing to get treatment for his illness! We imagine the article has had a positive ripple effect like this to its readers in ways we are not even aware of. Congratulations to all those that were involved in making this achievement possible!

If you are interested on reading the article as it appeared on the Chicago Tribune, please go to the following link:

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/health/ct-met-recovery-20100422,0,1296754.story>

Pictured: Good Samaritan Hospital Facilitator Team



## Testimonials

Moments are all we are given, and some of the most rewarding moments in my life come from co-facilitating NAMI Connection at Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital. Most nights are encouraging and uplifting; group members receive support and strength to get through tough times. Some people return, some don't. Many nights we share in each others' troubles. Other nights we share in each others' triumphs. As all NAMI Connection groups go, sometimes we laugh, sometimes we cry, and sometimes there is nothing to say at all. But we go through these moments together as a group, as a whole, never alone. And I find great satisfaction in knowing there is more than just support stirring at each meeting. There is acceptance, acknowledgement, kindness, encouragement, inspiration, growth, progress, understanding, healing, possibilities, experience, recovery and, of course, hope. These intangibles generate the amazing moments that our Good Sam Facilitator Team gets to be a part of each week. How much more rewarding can it become? NAMI Connection creates change and provides hope for us all.

—Susan Piasecki

**Want to share a positive Connection thought? Please email testimonials to [connection@nami.org](mailto:connection@nami.org)**

### Program Progress

Facilitator Trainings: 138

Facilitators Trained: 2,236

Support Groups: 497

For more information on the NAMI Connection program, please visit [www.nami.org/connection](http://www.nami.org/connection) or call the HelpLine at 1(800) 950-NAMI (6264)

## Bringing Celebrity to Mental Illness- In a Good Way



By Anna Goodwin,  
NAMI Connection Training Manager



On Thursday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, I attended a screening of the powerful documentary *No Kidding, Me Too!* directed by Joe Pantoliano. You may know Joe as an actor in the TV show *The Sopranos*, or from the films *Canvas*, *The Matrix* or *Memento*, among many others. Joey Pants, as he calls himself, was at the screening and fielded questions and statements from the audience members. He was passionate about the message of the documentary and passionate about stomping the stigma of mental illness.

Mr. Pantoliano is the Founder and President of No Kidding, Me Too! Through NKM2, he is inspiring entertainers and everyone with a mental illness to step forward to stomp out the stigma of mental illness. On the NKM2 website <http://nkm2.org> there is the statement of the mission of the organization - "to remove the stigma attached to brain dis-ease through education and the breaking down of societal barriers" and cites the goal "to empower those with brain dis-ease to admit their illness, seek treatment, and become even greater members of society." My favorite goal is to "Make Brain Dis-ease cool and sexy." Really. How COOL would THAT be?

In his description of NKM2, "Our Story," he writes, "*We have found that by infusing humor into a message – by having a "spoonful of sugar help the medicine go down" – that the message not only grows faster but is retained longer. That is our hope. To use the humor in the name No Kidding, Me Too! to lighten the message, to cause people to remember the name, so when they are ready for the message, they will get it. To pay some recognition to the statistic that one in five adults in this country suffers from a mental illness. To allow people to have a conversation that includes, "...and I'm bipolar."*" *No Kidding, Me Too!*"

I encourage you to join the NKM2 campaign. Check out the website. The "Resources" link at the top of the home page takes you to a list that has NAMI right at the top! See the documentary - arrange for a local screening of it. It has a broad appeal. "The message of *No Kidding, Me Too!* is empowerment – empowering those with mental illness to admit their illness, seek treatment, become even greater contributing members of society and obliterate this stigma."

In the "Stages of Emotional Response to Trauma," the last stage is "Moving into Advocacy." This is the time in our recovery that we need to be empowered, to find meaning, to carry hope and give back - or pay it forward. In our roles as part of the NAMI Connection Family, we can provide a valuable resource in our communities to give people a welcoming place to start telling their stories and take the next step in recovery. I think that becoming involved with No Kidding, Me Too! will provide many of us with a way to help stomp the stigma surrounding mental illness and "Make Brain Dis-ease cool and sexy."

### **2010 NAMI National Convention**

NAMI National will hold its annual Convention from June 29–to July 3 in Washington D.C., just in time to enjoy the fourth of July celebration in our nation's capital! Connection has many exciting events taking place:

On Wednesday, June 30, we will begin with the Consumer Program Directors Meeting from 9:30am–12pm, co-hosted with Peer-to-Peer and In Our Own Voice. Following that, the Education, Training and Peer Support Center Institute will take place from 1:45–3:15pm, and finally we will host a Connection Master Class entitled *Addressing the Common Challenges of Facilitating a Support Group* from 3:30–4:30pm.

As in years past, our program will host two NAMI Connection support groups on both Wednesday and Friday evenings from 7-8:30pm, and we will also be saying hello to people in NAMILAND (in the exhibit hall). We hope you are able to attend some or all of these events... See you there!



Congratulations to this outstanding group of NAMI Connection trainees who completed their training in Waycross, GA. Way to go!

NAMI National Executive Director Mike Fitzpatrick and his wife enjoyed wearing their NAMI Connection Walk Shirts at the NAMI Walks in Maine. We want to see pictures of you wearing your shirts too! Send us photos to [connection@nami.org](mailto:connection@nami.org) so we can include them here.



### Monthly Facilitator Calls

Conference call number: 1-888-858-6021

Conference Pass code: 4294442760

*Facilitators are welcome on all calls, just pick the time and date that works best with your schedule!*

### June Facilitator Call Schedule

June 1st 1:00 PM	June 3rd 7:00 PM
June 9th 4:00 PM	June 15th 1:00 PM
June 17th 7:00 PM	June 23rd 4:00 PM

### Upcoming Trainings

- June 4-6, 2010- Montpelier, Vermont
- June 4-6, 2010- Woodbury, Minnesota
- June 4-6, 2010- Bakersfield, CA
- June 14-16, 2010- Providence, Rhode Island
- June 25-27, 2010- Jefferson City, Missouri
- July 14-16, 2010- Snoqualmie, Washington
- Sept 23-25, 2010- Cambria County, Pennsylvania
- September 27-29, 2010- Crawford County, Pennsylvania
- November 12-14, 2010- South Carolina
- November 12-14, 2010-Woodbury, Minnesota



### NAMI Connection is on Facebook

Check us out on Facebook:  
<http://www.facebook.com/thenamiconnection>

We want to thank everyone who has become a fan of NAMI Connection on Facebook — we have now reached over 470 fans already! Some great testimonials and fan photos can be found on the site...

### Are YOU a fan yet?

Have you had any recent **recognition events** in your community for NAMI Connection facilitators and/or trainers? Let us know so we can spotlight the event in one of our upcoming newsletters! [connection@nami.org](mailto:connection@nami.org)