Many of us are well aware of the stigma surrounding mental illness, and can imagine how high school students would be particularly vulnerable to its effects. NAMI Seattle is helping to address this issue by piloting a new NAMI signature program called Ending the Silence. In this program, trained presenters visit local high schools and share a presentation that aims to “end the silence” surrounding mental illness by both providing accurate information, and encouraging students to speak up when they or their friends are in trouble. The presentation also includes a personal story from a young adult guest speaker who shares his or her experience with mental illness and journey to recovery. Students learn the warning signs of mental disorders, suicide prevention strategies, how to support friends who are struggling, and ways to reduce stigma. On top of that, hearing success stories from young people who live with mental health conditions shows them that mental illness is not debilitating, and that those who experience it can lead productive and meaningful lives.

I was fortunate enough to help present for four high school health classes this year. The first question I would ask the class at the beginning of the presentation was “How many of you know someone who is living with a mental health condition?” A small number of hands would go up immediately, but I found that if I waited a few seconds the hands seemed to slowly multiply until the majority of the class was raising their hands. It was encouraging to see that even this small exercise at the beginning of the presentation seemed to help students realize the prevalence of mental illness and that it is alright to acknowledge it. One student wrote the following on an evaluation form “I agree with them, we could help in so many ways if we speak up, if we end the silence.”

— continued on page 2
Why is this important?

- 50% of students age 14+ with a mental health condition drop out of school
- 1 in 5 kids experiences a mental health condition, but only 20% of them actually get help

Who is this presentation for?

- Students ages 14-18

What does Ending the Silence cover?

- Early warning signs
- Facts and statistics about youth and mental health conditions
- When, where and how to get help for themselves or their friends
- When it’s not okay to keep a secret

Who can become a presenter?

- Young adults ages 18-35 living with a mental illness in recovery
- Adults who are either a family member or an individual living with a mental illness in recovery
- Presenters must be a NAMI Seattle member or willing to become one.

FAQ about Stigma Busting with Ending the Silence

Are you convinced about the importance of Ending the Silence for students? Become an EtS presenter! People like you can make a world of difference. Email our Program Coordinator, Katie, at katiem@nami-greaterseattle.org for an application.

Based on the student evaluation forms we have received so far, the students’ favorite part of the presentation was the personal story from the young adult presenter. Several presenters have been trained over the last few months, and I have sincerely enjoyed working with such brave individuals who are willing to share their life experiences to inspire other young people.

by Selena Aston, NAMI Seattle AmeriCorps Member with Washington Service Corps
My name is Jen Dold. I’m the sister of a fantastic guy named Alex who developed schizophrenia about 10 years ago. I’ve been his caretaker of sorts over the years, helping him navigate the broken mental health system, and facing the stigma of mental illness right by his side.

Our family was given contact information for NAMI by a nurse during one of our first hospital visits with Alex. We were so scared, it felt like in the blink of an eye we were dropped onto a deserted island all alone. Until recent years, conversation on the subject of mental illness has been little to none, it has been an almost taboo topic of conversation. This being said, there really is no point of reference on what to do when mental illness turns your world upside down. Where do we go to get help for him? What is Schizophrenia? What are people going to say, and think about him, and how will they treat him? How did this happen? Will my brother ever get better?

One of the first things that we did was join a 12 week NAMI family-to-family class, and NAMI provided us with the road map that we so desperately needed. We were given a wealth of knowledge, names of mental health providers, social services groups, education on Schizophrenia and other brain illnesses, and most of all we were able to connect with other families dealing with the same thing. We felt supported and understood, no longer stranded on that deserted island. The class was life-changing for our family, and that is why I am now so committed to helping make sure that NAMI programs continue to be available to other families in need as well.

Since taking that first class I have been involved in a number of volunteer activities for NAMI. I went through training to become a Family-to-Family instructor, and am teaching an upcoming class to families in January 2016. I have been on the Development Committee for numerous years, planning fundraising events and community awareness opportunities. I’ve also raised money for and walked in the annual NAMIwalk.

When I’m not volunteering with NAMI I’m a 13 year real estate broker with HomeSmart Real Estate Associates in Greenlake. I’m excited to finally be able to merge a job that I love, and my passion of volunteering and advocacy, by partnering with NAMI Seattle. For those of you who are interested in buying or selling a home, I would be honored to donate 15% of my commission from your home purchase or sale, back to NAMI Seattle. The donations will help NAMI Seattle continue to provide support groups, education and advocacy to create that road map for community members in need.

I look forward to the opportunity to help you with your real estate needs, while supporting a cause and a non-profit so near and dear to my heart!

— Jen Dold
You Can Take a Stand for Mental Health

Here is where NAMI advocates pick up the ball. Advocates see the broken system and challenges that are preventing people from getting the help they need and ask, “How can I make it better? What can we as a community, state or country do to fix what I see going wrong?” Then they work hard to change it.

You have the power to be a NAMI advocate. All you need is your voice and the fire inside to make the system better for yourself, your loved ones, and your NAMI family.

We can limit or prevent the homelessness, loss of productivity in the workforce and mental anguish brought on by depression, delusions, hallucinations, substance use and other brain disorders by focusing on prevention and recovery and not just crisis intervention. Join us in Olympia to amplify your voice and take a stand for mental health in our great state!

NAMI Day is January 18, 2016
First Christian Church
701 Franklin Street SE
Olympia, WA 98501

Tentative schedule:
8:30–9am...............Arrival and Continental Breakfast
9–10:30am..........Issues and Advocacy Training
10:45am–3pm.....Legislative Visits
12:30pm..............Legislative Luncheon Reception in Columbia Room located in Legislative Building across from Dome Deli

This year, NAMIs across Washington will focus on 3 core themes:
1. Adequacy of access to quality mental health treatment
2. Improving the quality of life for people living with mental illness
3. Ensuring the fiscal sustainability of a quality mental health care system

Please be sure to register so that NAMI Washington can plan for breakfast and lunch, and NAMI Seattle can assist you in setting up legislative appointments.

Register at: http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2467569
NAMI DAY

2016 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

PROTECT ACCESS TO QUALITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Address Issues Related to Western State Hospital and Attracting & Keeping Licensed Mental Health Professionals: To address the issues of workforce growth and stability at Western State Hospital and in the mental health workforce community as a whole, NAMI Washington supports legislation and Operating Budget items that will address Workforce Development issues related to Mental Health Professions which would impact not only Western State Hospital, but the Mental Health Service Community as a whole.

Integration of Behavioral Health Involuntary Treatment Act Laws and Launch Secure Detoxification Facilities: NAMI supports the creation of integrated involuntary commitment processes encompassing both mental health and substance abuse, including secure detoxification facilities. This would bring crisis systems into alignment with overall behavioral health integration.

Prescriptive Continuity of Care (Amending RCW 48.43.515): Enact legislation to prevent non-medical treatment switching which would include: transparent out-of-pocket costs for prescription medications; consistent coverage preventing insurers from making formulary changes which force stable patients off treatments that have been previously approved for a plan; protection for stable patients having to switch health plans to ensure continued access to the treatments received under their previous health plan.

Involuntary Treatment Standard (Amending RCW 71.05.153): Enabling early emergency treatment can prevent life-threatening danger or further loss of mental capacity and can eliminate mental health crisis. NAMI advocates changing the current “imminent” standard for involuntarily committing patients for hospitalization with a “substantial” likelihood of serious harm to others, self or grave disability.

IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH MENTAL ILLNESS and DECRIMINALIZE MENTAL ILLNESS

Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE): In 2015 the legislature passed the Achieving a Better Life Experience Act (HB2063). If Washington implements an ABLE program, eligible people with disabilities could hold up to a maximum of $100,000 of their own money in tax-advantaged savings accounts with contributions up to $14,000 per year – without affecting their eligibility for SSI, Medicaid and other means-tested public benefits. Any person, including family members and friends, can also contribute to the accounts on behalf of their relatives.

Certificate of Restoration of Opportunity for People with Criminal History: A Certificate of Restoration of Opportunity (CROP) would reduce barriers to work and housing which stem from past criminal convictions by providing additional context to employers or landlords to encourage them to accept individuals who have achieved significant recovery but who still have criminal records.

Legal Financial Obligations (LFOs): LFOs trap many people and their families into cycles of poverty and debt. LFOs are financial penalties assessed as part of a criminal sentence, only a small portion of which is used for restitution. These fines carry a 12% interest rate, one of the highest in the nation, which accrues throughout incarceration. Most people assigned LFOs have limited incomes and struggle to pay these fines after their incarceration. NAMI Washington supports legislation that reduces or eliminates non-restitution LFO debt.

ENSURE THE FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY OF A QUALITY MENTAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Change the content of Fiscal Notes attached to Bills in the legislature to include costs of not implementing proposed legislation: Currently the fiscal notes provided to legislators give only the projected cost of enactment and implementation of the proposed legislation. They do not show the cost of not implementing the legislation-an important consideration in any reliable cost/benefit analysis. It is imperative that legislators understand that larger picture so that they can make truly informed decisions. This bill would require non-implementation cost projections for Mental Health Programs, Children’s Services, and Corrections.

Revenue: Washington State lacks the revenue to adequately fund its most basic services. This is because we have the most unfair and unstable revenue system in the nation. Lack of revenue combined with the recession has resulted in $12 billion in cuts and chronic underfunding for our important social service safety net programs. NAMI Washington supports ideas for new revenue.

ORIGINAL ARTWORK NOTE CARDS FOR SALE

PROCEEDS SUPPORT NAMI SEATTLE PROGRAMS

If you would like to purchase note cards with a beautiful collage of irises, please contact Trez Buckland at bucklandmike@hotmail.com or 206-930-2739. Pat Brown, volunteer with the Appreciative Living Learning Circle (ALLC), is the designer. The ALLC group has been offering the cards for a suggested donation of $10 for a five pack and $20 for a ten pack. The cards are 4” x 5 1/2” and are blank inside so they can be used throughout the year.
NAMI SEATTLE VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION

With our online volunteer form, we’ve been getting so many great volunteer applications – tons of them! Now we’ve got a new process in place to keep up with all you great mental health do-gooders. Starting in January, we’ll have a regular volunteer orientation every 6-8 weeks. You’ll learn about what NAMI Seattle does, what volunteer roles are available, and you’ll get to meet other great volunteers like you.

**Our next orientation is: Thursday, January 21, 2016**

Email our Program Coordinator, Katie Mahoney, at katiem@nami-greaterseattle.org or call (206) 783-9264 to register and get the full details on time and location. Snacks are provided.

You can complete the volunteer application here if you haven’t already: [http://nami-greaterseattle.org/volunteer-application](http://nami-greaterseattle.org/volunteer-application)

SUPPORT GROUP UPDATES

**Our Tuesday Women’s Group will no longer meet, starting December 2015**

**New!**

**What:** Crochet & Knitting Group of NAMI Seattle

**When:** Starts January 14, 2016
Every Thursday, 10am-12pm

**Who:** Liz and Suzie facilitating; open to the community

**Where:** NAMI Seattle, recreation room (downstairs)

Come join us for a few hours a week to knit, crochet, embroider, weave, macrame or any other fiber art you want to work on. Great way to unwind and connect with community members. Bring your unfinished projects or start your own here. Some supplies available. The focus of this group is support and building community: instruction provided by the facilitators is minimal.

**Mental Health First Aid Workshop**

**Saturday, January 16, 2016 • 8:00am – 5:30pm**

St. James Cathedral • Cathedral Place Bldg. Rm 1E-W, 803 Terry Ave, Seattle
Facilitated by Dwayne Stone, LMHC and Brooke Amyx, LICSW

This evidence-based program is appropriate for people from all walks of life including professionals, volunteers, family members, and the general public. Learn to understand and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorders, practice a simple five-step action plan to help an individual in crisis, and take home a helpful workbook to review strategies.

Scholarships available to eligible King County residents through NAMI Seattle. Please bring your own lunch, snacks and beverages provided

To register or inquire about scholarships please contact: Nancy Granger (206) 382-4269 • ngranger@stjames-cathedral.org or Katie Mahoney (206) 783-9264 • katiem@nami-greaterseattle.org
VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

THIS EDITION’S MVV
Recovery Journey Experts: Richard Martin & Steve Murphy
Steve has been a dedicated In Our Own Voice presenter since 2013. Every month, he offers insight and inspiration to people in Harborview’s psychiatric unit, sharing his story through In Our Own Voice.

Richard wears many hats: he’s an In Our Own Voice Presenter, a Family-to-Family teacher, Peer-to-Peer instructor, Ending the Silence presenter, and most recently became a new board member for NAMI Seattle.

Both Richard and Steve bring their own sense of humor to talking about their experience with mental illness. While each of their stories took a different path, they are equally passionate about breaking down stigma and love to talk to people. Their “open book” approach to answering questions really makes a difference! Thank you to these devoted volunteers for smashing stigma at its roots.

STORYTELLERS WANTED
Next Training: May 14-15, 2016 in Kirkland
Have you been looking for a way to share your mental health journey, your story of hope and recovery? NAMI Seattle is seeking storytellers like you to join the ranks of In Our Own Voice presenters fighting stigma in the Seattle area. Contact our Program Coordinator, Katie, for more details or for an application: katiem@nami-greaterseattle.org or (206) 783-9264.

6 YEARS OF SERVICE: THANK YOU!

Thank you to our exiting board members for 6 years — each! — of steadfast service to NAMI Seattle and our vision to create a world where everyone impacted by mental illness knows they are not alone, and are empowered to live a fulfilling life. We appreciate all your hard work.

Exiting board members (Left to Right): Board President Lucy Woodworth, Maryam Borghey and Gorm Nykreim.
OFFICE HOURS
The NAMI Seattle office is staffed 8am–5pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Wednesday 9am–6pm. Callers to our Support Link 206-783-9264 will reach a staff member, intern or volunteer who will offer supportive resources and referrals.

UPCOMING FAMILY-TO-FAMILY CLASSES
Family-to-Family is an evidence-based class designed for family members, friends, and caretakers who support a person living with a mental illness. This course improves the coping and problem-solving abilities of family members, and there is no cost to register. Each class is taught by two trained volunteers who have their own experience as a family member or friend supporting someone with a mental health issue. For more information, visit http://nami-greaterseattle.org/family-to-family
*REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED* Each class has a limited number of seats. Email katiem@nami-greaterseattle.org or call 206-783-9264.

Monday Night Class • Beginning January 11, 2016
12 weekly sessions • 6:30-9pm
St. Dunstan’s Church (722 N 145th Street, Shoreline)

Saturday Class • Beginning January 16, 2016
6 Weekly Sessions • 9am-4pm
Dale Turner YMCA — Rotary Room (19290 Aurora Ave N, Shoreline)
Note: these Saturday sessions are double classes, which reduces the class length to 6 weeks instead of 12.

Wednesday Class • Beginning March 16, 2016
12 weekly sessions • 6:30-9pm
JFS Capitol Hill Campus (1601 16th Ave, Seattle)
This class includes consideration of Jewish cultural attitudes around mental illness and opportunities to discuss specific Jewish issues that arise when caring for a family member.