Meet our New Board President

NAMI Greater Cleveland is pleased to announce John S. Cipolla, Esq. as the new President of the organization’s Board of Directors. He succeeds Christine Young, MSSA, LSW.

John became involved with NAMI GC more than 9 years ago after he and his wife Kristin took the Family-to-Family class when a family member was diagnosed with a mental health condition. In that time, John has served as Parliamentarian, Vice President, and Co-Chair of the Development/Marketing Committee. As John steps into the role of Board President, NAMI Greater Cleveland begins the second year of its strategic plan “Making Recovery a Reality”.

Upon assuming the role of Board President, John commented, “after taking Family-to-Family, my wife and I had a better understanding of mental illness, how we could support our family member, and where to access community resources. Not to mention the tremendous support we received from others taking the class with us. I am looking forward to working with the NAMI Greater Cleveland staff and volunteers to ensure that more families have access to this same support.”

John is an attorney specializing in patent and trademark law for more than 30 years. For over 10 years, he has served as Chair of the Intellectual Property group for Calfee Halter & Griswold. Join us in welcoming John to his new role.

Save the Date
NAMIWalks Greater Cleveland
Saturday, September 19, 2020
Edgewater Park - Kite Field
(Note new location)
Goal: $165,000
Registration is open.
Go to namiwalks.org/greatercleveland

Views expressed in this newsletter are those of the writers and not necessarily those of our officers, staff or funding sources.
Community Education Night
Understanding STABLE Accounts

Tuesday, March 3, 2020
6 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
ADAMHS Board of Cuyahoga County
(Buckeye Room)
2012 West 25 Street, 6th Floor
Cleveland, OH 44113

NAMI Greater Cleveland is pleased to acknowledge the generosity of the individuals, corporations, foundations, and organizations listed below. Their gifts allow peers and family members alike to take the next step on their mental health journeys.

Anonymous (2)
Rafat Abou-Idriss
Hinda & Howard Abramoff
Louise Abrams & Robert Fuerst
Donna Adie
Sandy Ammon
Terry Amon – In Honor of Ines Ades’ birthday
Joyce & Bruce Baker
Cookie Baron
Judy Bateman
Sarah Bays
Susan & John Bazyk
Marilyn M. Bedol – Marilyn M. Bedol
Phanphilic
Paul Becker, Ph.D.
Mrs. Nadine Bendycki
Marva Berensen – Mental Illness Awareness & Volunteers’ Education for Hospital Network
Margaret L. Berry
James Betts
Doylene & William Beuther
Matt Bianco
Lauren Borato
Laurel & William Bowles
Karen Bradley, M.D.
Brainpower LLC – John Adamo
Sarah J. Buck
Judith Bulloch
Donald Cairns
Juliana Capuano
Rita M. Carfagna – In Memory of Karen Karata
Linda Jones Carlson
Mary Ann Caroniti
Mary Carter
Maureen & Richard Cerny – In Recognition of Residents in Psychiatry University Hospital
Kris & John Cipolla
Barbara & Javier Clemente
Andrea Corrigan
Loretta Cosgrove
Marlene Costanzo
Alice & Donald Cotter
Barb & Dan Croycraft
Marcel Culkin
Tony Cveihar
Anna & Frank D’Amico – In Memory of Frank John D’Amico, D.D.S.
Sandra Kay Demart
Mary Jane Daley
Ileen Davidson
James Davidson
Josephine deHastah
Mary & William Denihan
Mary & James Derrick
Judy & Dale Destro – The Dale & Judy DAF Fund
Timothy Diamond
Maureen Doerner – In Honor of Alan Riga, PhD
Helen & Bernard Doherty
Edward Dolinar
Rae Ducatman – in Memory of Glenn Aalschult Jr.
Ebb & Flow Counseling, LLC
Natalie Epstein
Debbie & Alan Erenrich
Susan & Phillip Ertel
Lisa & Chris Fiorello
Jeanne Fiozzo
Julie Forte – In Honor of William Forte
Dr. & Mrs. Lawrence Frankel
Mary & Patrick Gallagher
Nancy & John Gibson – in Memory of Cecelia Bianco
Mary Gueli
Mary Ellen Grady – In Memory of Elana Cairns
Amber Greenwolf
Linda Gribcheck
Deanne Gulick
Kent & Jerry Haynes – In Honor of Greg Hayes
John R. Higgins
Deborah Hillyer
Marc Hull – in Memory of Elana Cairns
George Jacobs – In Honor of Marie Gallagher
Robert Hofler Family Foundation/Liz Hofler – In Honor of Ellen Riemh
Craig Hynp
Lois M. Jancik
Karen Jarr
Linda Johanek – In Honor of Sarah Johanek
Evanne Juratovac
Shelley Kabert
Kari Kepic – In Honor of All who Keep Moving On
KeyBank Foundation
Sarah Kirkpatrick
Abbie & Jonathan Klein
Alex J. Koleszar
Susie Kornbluth – In Honor of Harvey Snider
Kathiann M. Kowalski
Vladimir Krilov
Gay & Roy Lanctot
Bonnie Miller Leitch
Sunny Lurie
Mary Kay McLean
Linda Marsh
Joseph Martincic
William Mayer
Martha & Patrick McGraw
Amanda Meitz
Wendy Miano – In Honor of Daughters
Florence & Dennis Mitchell
Catherine Mohney
Colleen Moran
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Paula & David Mullet
Carol & Terrence Murello
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Rachel & John Mussel
Robert Myers Insurance Agency LLC
David Nagusky
Network for Good

SAVE THE DATE!
Be a Member
Have a Vote –
Have a Voice –
To become a member or renew an existing membership, contact Liz at: 216-875-0266, or call 216-875-7776.
For more information, email: lkrull@namicleveland.org, or go to: www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Join.

Nicholas Hancart from the State of Ohio Treasurers Office will explain what a STABLE Account is, the benefits, eligibility and how to enroll.

STABLE Accounts allow individuals with disabilities the ability to save and invest without losing benefits such as Medicaid or SSI.

This program is free but registration is required. For more information or to register, contact Joicelyn at 216-875-7776 or jweems@namicleveland.org.
In Memory of Barbara Gang
Susan Dolan-Laughlin
Cheri O’Brien

In Memory of Nate Giffels
Linda Denning
FormFire, LLC
PGP/Moen COE Team
Marjorie Hildebrandt
Cindy Hulse
Kathleen Keane
Jim Kenny
Tami Matsuoka
Paul McClain
Colleen M. Moran
Jennifer Nelson
Michael Prokle
Kevin Rowley
Robert Rowley
Karen Wagner
Marc & Lori Waite
Beth Walsh-Moormon
Fern M. Weiss
Christine & Tom Zirbs

In Memory of Joel Kraus
Paul Sobel

In Memory of Madeleine Mihalic
Michael Battaglia
Michelle Culley
Ellen Kubis
Margaret Moosa
June & James Nucciarone
Kerrie Wolf

In Memory of Eric Slesinger
Douglas Patch
Diana Rink

In Memory of Michael Snow
Cindy & Al Flanholter
Noreen Thornton

Support NAMI GC
Support your organization by shopping at AmazonSmile. This will link your supporters directly to smile.amazon.com in support of NAMIGC  https://smile.amazon.com/ch/20-2254268

Support Group Leaders Needed
NAMI GC is looking for peers and family members who are interested in facilitating support groups.

Our most immediate needs are individuals who are fluent in Spanish or American Sign Language.

Training is provided. Interested in learning more? Contact Amber at 216-875-7776 or go to www.namigreatercleveland.org/get-involved/volunteersinterns/
NAMI Greater Cleveland is pleased to share with you these articles from the NAMI blog. We hope that peers and families alike may find a pearl or two of wisdom that will support the next steps of their mental health journeys.

How to Move Forward After Going through A Crisis  By Becky Brasfield
After a crisis, recovery can be challenging. Our lives are left in turmoil caused by the stressful situation we just managed to overcome. With the worst behind us, we have to pick up the pieces. But unfortunately, there's no one-size-fits-all formula for how to take steps toward the future. So how do we move forward?

Determining Priorities
By prioritizing our goals and responsibilities, we can create an action plan. That action plan helps us reduce stress and live according to our values and priorities. Prioritizing also frees up energy we may be expending on the anxiety of not knowing what to do. Not knowing what to focus on can cause us to feel overwhelmed or even lead to another setback.

Here are some questions we can ask ourselves to help clarify our priorities.
- What issues are most important to me?
- What do I think about the most?
- What is causing me the most stress?
- What needs my attention right now?

Getting Proper Self-Care And Support
After a setback, we can’t place enough emphasis on taking care of ourselves. Self-care encompasses so much, from being emotionally kind and gentle to ourselves, to tending to our daily grooming and health to getting adequate nutrition. Self-care also means being supported by caring people who can help us feel better.

Reminders for different aspects of self-care and support include asking ourselves:
- What can I do to be kind to myself today?
- How can I take care of my needs right now?
- How do I really feel?
- What kind of support do I need from others?
- What kind of support do I need to provide for myself?
- What kind of self-care or support will help me achieve my goals?

Attending To Paperwork
Many of us don’t like it, but attending to paperwork is a normal part of recovery. Medical bills, prescriptions, resumes, emails and documentation are all types of paperwork that may require our attention. Straightening out our lives after going through a hard time can be even more difficult if we don’t enjoy writing or filling out forms, but it’s okay to ask for help.

The following questions may be helpful in getting ahead and getting organized in our paperwork:
- What paperwork do I need to request? What paperwork do I need to provide?
- Are all my bills up to date? Do I have copies of all my payments and invoices?
- Do I need to update my resume or cover letter? Do I need to update my contact information?
- Do I need to send any emails or make any phone calls?

There’s no right or wrong way to recover from a crisis. The goal is to lessen stressful situations in order to create more peaceful ones and increase our wellness. Getting organized and creating an action plan is a great way to start a new beginning in our lives.

Going through a crisis is one of the hardest parts of living with mental illness, so if you can get through that, you can also get through this process of moving forward.

Becky Brasfield is a Certified Recovery Support Specialist and mental health advocate in Chicago, Illinois. Becky has been volunteering with NAMI Chicago since 2013 and was a keynote speaker at the 2015 NAMI Light the Darkness Mental Health Awareness gala.
I Can’t Cure My Mental Illness, But I Can Make Progress  By Tracy Riggs

I’ve been going to my current therapist every week or two for over a year now. We have made some real breakthroughs, and I’ve learned a lot from her. She’s an incredible counselor, understanding yet tough.

Before each session, I fill out a check-in form that gauges how I’ve been doing since my last session. It has different symptoms, emotions and issues I mark if I’ve been experiencing them, such as sleep disturbances, anger or family issues. Not long after I started working with this therapist, she looked at my form, and said I might as well just do a big circle around all the possible answers because I marked so many of them.

I’ve been going to therapy for a year, attending support groups for a year and a half and working on the 12 steps with an addiction sponsor for over a year — but that stupid paper probably has the same things circled at my last visit as it did at my first. All this time and work, and I’m no closer to that wonderful day that I’ll circle only a few things...or none.

While thinking about this in my support group, it hit me — this thing called bipolar disorder really will never go away. I will always be an addict. I talk about it. I write about it. I advocate for people going through it. I know bipolar doesn’t have a cure. I know that addiction can’t be willed away. But it wasn’t until recently that I realized that my bipolar doesn’t have a cure, and my addictions won’t just go away.

It’s sobering to think that unless a miracle happens, I will never be free of this bipolar/addict thing. It’s exhausting to think of the battle I will probably have to fight every day. For the rest of my life, I will still have to manage all the issues on the form. I will have all those emotions — both the good and bad ones. I will probably still have nightmares. My anxiety and my depression levels may never get below an average of 8 out of 10.

But what I need to keep in mind is that even if my check-in form is still marked up, that doesn’t mean I haven’t made progress. It’s hard for me to see when I’ve made progress, but I know I have and will continue to do so. The Alcoholics Anonymous saying is “progress not perfection.” So, I’m thankful for my progress.

I have to learn to put my hope in each day. I have to stop looking for an overall cure or even a way to permanently manage my illness away. I’m going to have to learn to focus on doing the best I can, knowing that I can make every single day the best it can be with my illness.

Tracy Riggs is a professional photographer (cmbtphotography.com) and writer. She deals with several invisible illnesses in her and her loved ones’ lives and is passionate about lessening the stigma (spotlightonstigma.com). She has one daughter in college and is in a steady relationship with a fellow photographer.
Using Humor As A Coping Tool  By Bob Griggs

At times, I need to talk honestly and directly about my depression. It’s hard, but my recovery depends on it. Then, after a while, I need a break. For me, the best break is something that makes me laugh.

You can find humor in a lot of places, but I wasn’t expecting to find it during one of my earliest sessions with my therapist. I was waiting for him to bring me a cup of coffee. Offering me a cup of coffee was how he started each session – a simple act of kindness that did much to cement our relationship.

While I waited, I read the titles of the books on his bookshelf. I don’t remember the exact titles, but I do remember that if you put them all together, you’d have a mental health train wreck. It was a bookshelf of doom. My thoughts went something like: Okay, I know I’m sick, but I can’t have all this stuff wrong with me. It was so over the top, I couldn’t help but laugh. Just then, he came in with my coffee. I’ll always wonder what he thought of me sitting there laughing alone, though I’m sure that there’s an explanation for it in one of his books.

Going into the therapist’s office, my main feelings were shame and fear. My meds were making me feel like a stranger to my own mind. Though he had reassured me, I still feared that my therapist would tell me my problems were boring, a waste of his professional time. I could barely keep it all together, yet the bookcase full of doom struck me as funny. Something about being able to laugh in that place gave me hope that therapy was going to be okay. Humor sustains resilience.

Finding some humor in a situation allows you to step back and see things more clearly. Laughing is like taking a deep breath and bringing everything back down to earth. For example, when I catch myself brooding on my life as nothing but a sea of troubles, I remember what a girlfriend called me in high school: “Woeful Wobert.” It always makes me smile. Or when I was in a psych unit, and I would watch movies with the other patients, laughing hard at the best lines and funniest scenes. Locked in that place with no control over what happened next, we could laugh, which meant we had some control after all.

I cannot write about using humor in recovery without a caution. Humor can help in many ways, but it can also do harm. There’s a kind of humor that restores our spirits, and there’s also sarcasm that inflicts pain. Unacknowledged anger at another person can so often sneak out this way. I do my best not to do this, and I do my best to apologize when I do it anyway. This same caution applies when I direct humor inward. I’ve laughed at myself with contempt and fierce anger, which can be emotionally self-harming. This doesn’t happen much anymore, but I still have to pay attention to what I’m laughing at.

If used in the right way, humor is a way to take depression down a notch, a way to tell the truth and a way to cope. I use humor because I need every tool available to help me in recovery, and when I laugh at the irrationality of depression, I move my recovery along.

Bob is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ and lives in St. Louis Park, Minnesota. He is active in Vail Place Uptown, a clubhouse for people living with mental illness. This piece is an excerpt from his recent book, “Recovering from Depression: Forty-Nine Helps.”
Have a Voice – Have a Vote – Be a Member

Members of NAMI Greater Cleveland are part of NAMI’s movement to improve the mental health system, to end stigma, and to create a culture of knowledge and understanding about mental illness.

Membership is the first level of grassroots advocacy and the best way to support the NAMI movement. The more members who stand behind NAMI, the more it strengthens our collective voice as we advocate on mental health issues!

To become a member or renew an existing membership, contact Liz at: 216-875-0266, email: lkrull@namicleveland.org, or go to: www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Join.

Do You Know a Place…

… that could display NAMI GC’s brochures? Doctors or agency waiting room? Library or church? Workplace? Brochures and Plexiglass holders are available – for free. Pick them up at our office or we can deliver them to you. Help us get the word out about NAMI GC.

For more information, contact Joicelyn Weems at: jweems@namicleveland.org or call 216-875-7776.

NAMICOn 2020
Atlanta • July 15-18

The NAMI National Convention is one of the largest community gatherings of mental health advocates in the United States. Join us in Atlanta as we celebrate 40 years of NAMI.

SAVE THE DATE!

For more information, visit www.nami.org/convention
SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION IN OLDER ADULTS

...increased worry or stress or obsessive thinking... irritability, anger or lashing out at others... trouble concentrating; feeling empty or listless... noticeable changes in mood; feeling blue or sad... weight loss or gain; increased appetite... restless or on edge... sleeping, or sleeping too much... number of referrals from primary care providers to geriatric care and mental health providers... small number of symptoms of depression in their older patients... misdiagnosis may be subtler than just feelings of sadness... depression is a common problem among older adults, but it’s not a normal part of aging... what’s happening at NAMI Greater Cleveland... John has served as Parliamentarian, Vice President, and Co-Chair of the class... in mid-January, we were literally on the dust is beginning to settle... we are grateful to all of our stakeholders... Edward Park - Kite Field... Save the Date... NAMIWalks Greater Cleveland... views expressed in this newsletter are those of the writers and not necessarily those of our officers, staff or funding sources... DISCUSSING MENTAL HEALTH AND THE ELDERLY...