2016 ANNUAL AWARDS RECOGNITION

NAMI SWMO Business Partner of the Year: Cox Health

NAMI Southwest Missouri would like to recognize Cox Health for their outstanding support to NAMI Southwest Missouri. Through their participation as a team and vendor at our Miles for Minds Walk, as the Presenting Sponsor for our Illuminating the Darkness event, and as a trusted resource for our agency, Cox Health has provided much needed support that enables the services and programs of NAMI Southwest Missouri to continue.

NAMI SWMO Community Partner of the Year: Harmony House

NAMI Southwest Missouri would like to recognize Harmony House for their continued dedication loyalty and commitment to our community. Harmony House has gone above and beyond to help us accommodate the needs of our clients and staff. We are thankful to your organization for working to achieve the highest level of service to our most vulnerable population.

NAMI SWMO Volunteer of the Year: Beth Ponder

Beth has gone above and beyond for NAMI Southwest Missouri in her fundraising and advocacy efforts. She has been a voice for raising awareness about mental health issues not only among her peers but also the community. She has a unique ability to empathize with those in need. Beth truly makes our community a better place. Her spirit of volunteerism is a natural part of her life. She has volunteered with The Price Cutter Charity Golf Championship, generated donations for the NAMI Southwest Missouri Food Bank and educated her clients of the many resources available to them within the mental health community. She lives by the beautiful quote of Mother Teresa, “Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love.”
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Hope Center Member of the Year: Juanita Gitney

Juanita can be depended on to do whatever is asked of her and usually works 30+ hours per week at the Hope Center. She facilitates support groups, oversees reception, and is always willing to help a consumer find the resources they need. She is always willing to do what needs to be done! Juanita’s name has been added to the Member of the Year Plaque that is displayed at the Hope Center.

Hope Center Volunteer of the Year: Johnny Robinson

J.R. is a dedicated volunteer who goes above and beyond the basics of his duties. He regularly comes up with ideas to make the Hope Center a better place. He oversees reception, answers warm-line calls, and makes sure the kitchen stays clean and tidy. He is a hard worker who is always willing to step in when he sees a task that needs to be done. J.R’s name has been added to the Volunteer of the Year Plaque that is displayed at the Hope Center.

Hope Center Facilitator of the Year: Ra’Mon Stiles

Ra’Mon Stiles facilitates NAMI Connections, Wellness for Recovery, Living with Schizophrenia, Poetry to Music, and Dual Diagnosis. He has recently been certified as a warm line responder and is always willing to help out. He is a valuable part of our Hope Center family.

Hope Center Warm Line Responder of the Year: Jessie Meyer

Since Jessie first visited the Hope Center she has been a positive role model for all of our consumers and she quickly became interested in volunteering. Jessie became a welcoming and familiar face at the center providing hope and encouragement to everyone that walks through our door. She completed a four hour Warm Line responder training in July and has since been an active volunteer. Jessie is an exceptional responder for many reasons. She has a great attitude and is always willing to help out when needed. She provides non-judgmental support to each and every one of our callers. More importantly Jessie provides hope that recovery is truly possible. Jessie is very deserving of the Warm Line Responder of the Year award! We’re thankful to have her help and support and she truly provides hope to all she interacts with.
A typical day at the NAMI Southwest Missouri Hope Center is filled with a buzz of activities. Volunteers arrive, coffee is made, phones are ringing, support group rooms are filling up and staff prepares for another day. Supported by funding from The Missouri Department of Mental Health and United Way of the Ozarks and other fundraising efforts, the goal of the drop-in center is to help people with mental illnesses reintegrate into their communities. NAMI Southwest Missouri feels that when consumers are in charge, they empower themselves and others toward recovery, and reinvent attitudes on how to best treat serious mental illnesses. The Hope Center is based on the concept of self-determination. When people make choices and follow through on their own choices, they consistently do better. It is a supportive, recovery-promoting environment which brings us to Jessie Myers. She is just one of the many individuals that we serve whose self-determination has brought her to where she is today. Here is her story:

Raised in Springfield Missouri, Jessie was an overachieving teenager. Although surrounded by a loving support system she still felt something was off. She was always a perfectionist and a dedicated student who put a lot of pressure on herself. Jessie had always battled depression and anxiety. At age 14 and after experiencing some traumatic events in her life, Jessie decided to seek counseling for her depression. However in the midst of those debilitating challenges, she chugged along, spending hours doing her coursework until she graduated high school early at age 17.

By the time she turned 18, Jessie became suicidal and was hospitalized. Within two days of her hospitalization she was diagnosed with borderline personality disorder. Although she spent 10 days in the hospital, Jessie felt “pigeon-holed” by her quick diagnosis. When she was released from the hospital she felt that not only had her physician misdiagnosed her but she made the decision that she was not going to comply with her doctor’s orders. She describes this point in her life as extremely traumatizing. It was hard for Jessie to admit to herself and to others that she had a mental illness because of the stigma that surrounds these illnesses. She found herself over the next few years doing nothing to aid in her recovery which resulted in her guardianship being appointed to the State of Missouri and being placed in a residential care facility (RCF) in her early 20s.

Jessie had accepted the fact that she would be living the rest of her life in the RCF but staff members saw something more in her and were willing to help her with recovery. After a year and a half, Jessie was ready to take her life back. At this point she took over her own guardianship, began setting goals and making plans for a future outside of the RCF.

While living at the RCF, Jessie met her future husband and after two and half years they both moved out and began making their life together. They were married the following year and through this relationship, Jessie gained a beautiful step son.

At this point Jessie felt she was ready to start another phase in her life and started college. Over the past several years while still attending school, Jessie would experience periods when her mental illness “got the better of” her but she persevered and continued with her studies.

Through treatment and progressive therapy, Jessie’s mental illness has been more accurately diagnosed as schizoaffective disorder. Through all this, Jessie’s family was very supportive. It was her mother, who was familiar with NAMI, who convinced her to come to the Hope Center. When she arrived, it felt like home and that she was accepted for who she was and not stigmatized for her mental illness. Being the over achiever she is, Jessie was not content to just attend groups, she wanted to be involved and to help others. She became a support group facilitator, Warm line responder and helps at the front desk. Jessie also recently completed the Peer Specialist class and will be taking her certification test soon. It is people like Jessie who are not ashamed of their illness that truly emerge as helpers. Shame is toxic to the human spirit. We have got to let it go and replace it with pride and acceptance. The more people who “come out” about their mental illness and are met with acceptance, the more others feel it’s safe to do the same. We are proud to have Jessie and so many others as a part of our NAMI Southwest Missouri family. Together we can make a positive difference and STOP the stigma surrounding mental health issues. Thank you Jessie for sharing your story!
The 2016 Illuminating the Darkness 5K for Suicide Prevention was a huge success. This year’s event featured many new additions including participation by the Missouri National Guard, Bolivar High School ROTC Color Guard, vendors, cyclists representing various cycling organizations, and volunteers from Kickapoo High School HOSA (Health Occupation Students of America). Participants were dazzled by the glow in the dark arches, glow zone and luminary memorial garden. The Casey Hough-Johnson & Scott Altic Award was presented to Cammy Stahlin in memory of her son Isaac Justin who died by suicide in February of this year.

Thank you to our Vendors
Parleme Law Firm , P.C.               Mercy Marian Center
Cox Psychiatric Services               Suicide Coalition
GLO Center

Special Thank you to our Sponsors
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NAMI Southwest Missouri
Illuminating the Darkness

Thank you to our veteran’s and all military personnel.

Veteran’s Day
November 11
Annual Thanksgiving Potluck
We are Thankful for You!
Come celebrate with your NAMI SWMO Family
Tuesday November 22, 2016 at noon.
The Hope Center will provide the meat, beverages, and utensils.
Please bring a side dish or dessert to share.

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Holiday Celebration
Friday December 16, 2016
4:00-6:30 pm

The Hope Center will provide Hot Chocolate and marshmallows. Please bring a snack or cookies. If you would like to participate in the gift exchange, bring a wrapped gift (maximum $5.00) suitable for a man or woman.
What is the NAMI Family-to-Family Education Program?
NAMI Family-to-Family is a free, 12-session education program for family, partners, friends and significant others of adults living with mental illness. The course is designed to help all family members understand and support their loved one living with mental illness, while maintaining their own well-being. The course includes information on illnesses such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression and other mental health conditions. Thousands of families describe the program as life-changing. The program is taught by trained teachers who are also family members and know what it is like to have a loved one living with mental illness.

NAMI Southwest Missouri, the local organization of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, will offer its NAMI Family-to-Family Education Program in the spring of 2017, beginning January 16. It will be held on Monday evenings at 6:30 PM at Marian Center.

Participant
“This course overall was the single most, without a doubt, helpful and informative thing ever offered in all my years searching for answers... It has helped me to understand better and communicate more effectively with my brother.”

“The course has helped me to realize that my son is still inside the body that is often times hidden by the mental illness and that I am not alone in this.”

Contact us to register for this NAMI Family-to-Family class!

Leslie Joslyn
NAMI Southwest Missouri
(417) 839-4682
ljoslyn@sbcglobal.net

About NAMI
NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, is the nation’s largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. NAMI Southwest Missouri is an affiliate of NAMI Missouri. NAMI Southwest Missouri and dedicated volunteers, members and leaders work tirelessly to raise awareness and provide essential education, advocacy and support group programs for people in our community living with mental illness and their loved ones.
Everyone dreads going into work sometimes. But for those with a mental health disorder, that feeling is more than just a run-of-the-mill case of “the Mondays.” Mental illness affects nearly one in five American adults in a given year. It brings about physical and emotional symptoms, none of which just disappear as soon as an individual steps through that office front door. But having a mental health issue doesn’t make a person inept at his or her job. In fact, work may even help them manage their illness. Yet the stigma that mental illness is some sort of flaw still exists — and that misconception (or the fear of it) could carry over into the workplace. Below are just a few things those with mental health conditions wish their employers understood.

Here’s what it’s really like to work with a mental health disorder:

1. **Even just coming into the office is a giant:** Mental health conditions can completely wreck a person’s sense of motivation. The conditions also bring about lethargy or sleep disturbances which can mess with a person’s energy. Often getting out of bed is tough — but making it to work? That’s monumental.

2. **Productivity can suffer if they’re not supported.** That lack of motivation can also extend into a person’s ability to complete tasks once they arrive at the office. Mental health issues like depression cost 200 million lost workdays per year in the United States at and $17 to $44 billion dollars in lost productivity. That’s why encouragement, understanding and support are vital. It doesn’t just help the employee, but the employer as well.

3. **They’re afraid of being held back if they reveal their illness.** Of course, it’s up to the individual whether or not they want to disclose any health condition. However, there’s a lot of hesitation with mental illness. Because of the stigma attached to mental health issues, people often stay silent about their condition for fear of being punished professionally.

4. **There should be mental health resources at work.** Employee assistance programs are effective in helping employees manage psychological wellbeing in the workplace, according to the CDC. But that’s just the beginning: Experts agree that more needs to be done, such as seminars and manager trainings on mental health, to promote a healthy mind and create a more accepting atmosphere at the office.

5. **Sometimes therapy will conflict with work schedules.** Therapy is one of the most effective ways to manage a mental health disorder and it’s crucial that an individuals follow their treatment plan outlined by a medical professional. Unfortunately, that sometimes means that therapy appointments may conflict with work engagements or even may need to happen during lunch breaks. That’s yet again why more accepting work atmospheres can be critical.

6. **Sick days take on a different meaning:** Common colds aren’t the only catalysts for sick days. Sometimes people with mental health conditions experience physical symptoms (think panic attacks, headaches, stomach pain) that can feel debilitating. Couple that with emotional symptoms and it’s no wonder someone with a mental health challenge might need a day off.

7. **Mental health terms are not a joke.** The way we collectively talk about mental health matters. Using mental illness expressions as a casual, colloquial phrases can be stigmatizing: Stress at work does not necessarily mean someone is “having a panic attack.” Someone’s sad mood or reaction to an upsetting event is not an indication of “depression.”

8. **Mental illness is just as important as physical illness.** Companies or managers wouldn’t fire, punish or even silently judge an employee for being diagnosed with cancer and receiving treatment. Experts argue that more workplaces need to view the body as inclusive of the brain when it comes to prioritizing the health of their employees. That means mental illness should be extended the same sensitivity and support as physical illness.

9. **Your support means the world.** Recognizing and validating an employee’s psychological condition or wellbeing can do wonders, according to Matthew Shaw, a former journalist and a visiting fellow at the University of Michigan Depression Center. It sounds really obvious, but senior employees being invested in someone’s mental health is really beneficial,” Shaw previously told HuffPost, “Top level visibility on these issues, like emails and conversations from managers, is a transformative thing.”
Dear friends,

As much as I have enjoyed my time at the Hope Center, I have resigned my position as Director. I will be staying on staff until December 2nd to help our new director, Addie Blankenship, settle into her new job. Ra’Mon Stiles has accepted the position of Hope Center Assistant Director. I know that I can count on you to make them both feel welcome.

Some details:

Addie Blankenship start date: Monday, October 31
Ra’Mon Stiles start date: Saturday, November 12
Jennifer Hungerford last day: Friday, December 2

I will miss you all dearly, and I thank you for making my time at the Hope Center special!

Jennifer Hungerford

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**NAMI Southwest Missouri Membership**

**Join!**

Membership with NAMI Southwest Missouri includes NAMI and NAMI Missouri. Members stay informed about research breakthroughs and recovery with the NAMI Advocate Magazine and the NAMI Missouri and Southwest Missouri newsletters.

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**Annual Membership Dues**

_____Individual/Family $35
_____Limited Income $3 $ _______ Tax deductible donation to
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