

NAMI Grand Rapids

Board of Directors Meeting 11/11/19

Present: Judy Benham Mark Hager Patty Laingen Holycross
Peggy Muir Marshall Holly Downing Lorna Mix
Marian Barcus

Absent with Notice: Craig Pierce Ann Carlson
 Deb Hogenson Ryan Louden

Mark Hager, Vice President, called the meeting to order at 5:36 PM. Absences were acknowledged. Holly Downing and Peggy Marshall moved approval of the minutes of the August Board Meeting; motion carried.

In absence of Deb Hogenson, Treasurer, there is no report at this time; we'll communicate by email before year end.

In absence of Craig Pierce, Secretary, Marian Barcus and Peggy Marshall took minutes.

Old Business

1. NAMI Walks – Mark reported (for Jeff Olds) there were 32 walkers from NAMI-GR joining 3,563 walkers at Minnehaha Falls in Minneapolis on Sept. 28. The Tremolos raised a total of \$8132, (116% of our goal.) NAMI-GR and NAMI-MN split that 50/50. The Tremolos were ranked 3rd in all the teams. Total NAMI Walks 2019 funds raised to date: \$497,710 (94% of goal.)

2. Local Finances – Now that we bank locally and manage our finances independently from NAMI-MN, there will be some additional requirements such as a request form for expenditures/reimbursements, mini-audit every 3 years, 2 signatures on expense approvals. Lorna has the Affinity debit card for NAMI-GR account.

3. Annual NAMI Conference Nov. 2nd – Judy Benham and Patty Holycross attended the conference and had a “fabulous” time! Both were impressed with Dr. Amit Sood, keynote speaker on clinical research about learning resilience. Judy gave an impressive report on 3 breakout sessions. Key takeaways: Substance abuse/mental illness treatment should occur longitudinally and combined, not segregated. Court competency evaluations are rushed and timed poorly for proper treatment and legal defense. MN Court ruling found it illegal for medication to be removed from jailed persons with mental illness. People of color face challenges seeking treatment, sometimes including delays resulting from first turning to religious ritual.

Patty brought back resources on employers hiring persons with mental illness that will help the Outreach Committee; the MN Health Action group is focusing on mental illnesses, and

Walgreens and Best Buy have exemplary inclusion practices. At the Affiliate Meet-Up, Patty learned that other NAMI groups are engaging RSVP volunteers, and conducting 'listening sessions' at agencies and organizations. Patty met Sara Carothers, the new Affiliate Liaison for NAMI-MN. The cannabis use session was revealing; use under age 26 changes and damages the brain, and research has shown that use among persons with mental illness increases psychotic episodes. NAMI-MN is collaborating on a white paper to submit to the Legislature discouraging legalizing recreational cannabis.

4. Cross Committee Communication – All committees reported benefit from sharing minutes, so this practice will continue.

5. Thank You Cards – Patty had 100 cards printed for use thanking speakers, hosts, and funders, and they will be available in the NAMI-GR locker at Kiesler Wellness Center.

6. 2019-2020 Goals and Budget – Committees are encouraged to specify goals for the coming year and share with others. Mark will follow up with Deb on 2020 budget.

New Business

1. Education Committee Report – Lorna and Holly reported that the Education Sessions hosted Renee Bymark of ElderCircle on mental illnesses among the elderly, and a panel discussion on housing options. This month, they will host a presentation from NorthHomes about their anticipated children's psychiatric residential treatment facility. In January, Sam Smith of NAMI-MN will conduct a session here on legislative issues. Webinars may be useful in the future.

2. Member Services – Mark handed out an updated report. NAMI-GR has 48 active members, 16 are Open Door. There are still some inconsistencies between NAMI-MN and member renewal activities. Board members are encouraged to contact previous members who have not renewed yet and remind those who are due to renew in the next several weeks.

3. Outreach Committee – Patty reported that the committee advertised Mental Illness Awareness Week, staffed a table at the MACV Stand Down and Community Connect, printed family support group business cards and thank you cards, attended workforce training in Hermantown, attended the Make It OK meeting in Bigfork, and conducted employer training on hiring and retaining employees with mental illnesses. In addition, Patty developed a provider/agency email list and used it to distribute the flyer for Family to Family in January.

4. Holiday Gift Drive/NAMI-GR Members Social – After short discussion it was agreed that we should hold an event like last year. Peggy will oversee the arrangements with Kiesler House, recruit helpers to pack gift bags for psychiatric patients, and confirm with MacRostie and Kiesler House their willingness to be donation drop off locations. Dates to be determined. Members agreed to recognize the longstanding members of NAMI-GR at the social. Each board members will donate one dozen cookies or other treats. Peggy will also contact last year's pianist to request a return engagement.

5. Local Advisory Committee (LAC) Update – Lorna reported on a Sept 3 presentation on “Uniform Service Standards” by Molly Binger and Benjamin Wurtman of MN Dept of Human Services. DHS has launched a reform initiative of regulatory standards across mental health service sectors. State regulations have become complex, confusing, inefficient, inconsistent, and outdated. The goal of the USS initiative is to simplify and clarify regulatory requirements of state-funded mental services and create a unified licensing structure. This should improve accountability and ease program compliance for both DHS and provider agencies.

On Oct 1 the LAC meeting agenda included a dialogue with county commissioners about Itasca County mental health services, but unfortunately none of the commissioners attended, so the meeting adjourned early.

6. Board Member Openings – Members discussed possible board candidates to replace recent resignations from Mary Schnell and Teresa Lambert. Three names were presented, and they will be contacted by either Patty or Mark.

7. May Mental Health Month – Lorna and Holly suggested a conversation with Kelly Chandler, Public Health Director, about collaborating on education initiatives, especially in the areas of mental illness and substance abuse. Another possible topic is suicide intervention. There is interest in working together with Itasca Community College; Professor Jenny Wettersten is eager to work with NAMI and enlist her students in community education projects. Lorna and Holly encourage the entire board to engage in planning for Mental Health Month.

8. Utilizing NAMI-GR Funding – Members discussed possibilities on how to spend some of our affiliate’s funding, including a program on mental illness and chemical abuse, and a workshop provided by NAMI-MN entitled “Children’s Challenging Behaviors.” Target date is mid-April or May.

There was also lengthy discussion on how to inform people from all sectors of the community on who to contact when looking for initial help finding information on services available for those in crisis or for families of persons exhibiting signs of mental illness. Online resources are available through NAMI or “findtreatment.gov” but the challenge remains getting those links/phone numbers out to people who have no idea where to start.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM. Next meeting Feb. 10th, 5:30 PM at Central Square Mall meeting room.

Respectfully submitted,

Marian Barcus/Peggy Marshall

Substitute Secretaries