



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Marjorie Antus

SCHIZOPHRENIA, SELF-RESPECT, AND THE 7-ELEVEN

My husband John tells this story: three times over the past few months when he's gone into a certain 7-Eleven for coffee, Walter has appeared. Walter is a middle-aged former patient of John's who has schizophrenia and dangerously high blood pressure.

At the first 7-Eleven encounter, Walter asked John for spare change without knowing who he was asking. They hadn't seen each other for years, but John did recognize Walter under his graying beard and loose-fitting jacket: "Hi there. How've you been?" Thinking that Walter was likely ill and homeless, John gave him money.

The second time they ran into each other at the 7-Eleven, John gave Walter a few dollars while asking, "How's your blood pressure these days? Are you taking your medication?" Seemingly embarrassed, Walter accepted the bills and left.

By the third meeting, something had changed. Instead of asking for money, Walter just stood before John and said, "I want you to know I'm taking my medication. I do go to the doctor." Then he squared his shoulders, turned, and walked away. "That was self-respect," John told me. "I found it moving."

It happens that our son, John Paul, frequents the same 7-Eleven for his early-morning Big Gulp. He's been going there for years, I think because those trips yield more than caffeine. Not only does the store manager know our son's name, he also engages John Paul in conversation—an antidote to

the isolation of schizoaffective disorder that our son has lived with for the past twenty-five years.

It's still sometimes hard to accept that in 1994, John Paul was a dean's list student of marine biology at the University of Miami and that today, he makes peace with Big Gulps and 7-Eleven banter.

It couldn't be clearer that having a severe, persistent mental illness has been for John Paul "like being trapped on a runaway train going in the wrong life direction. . ." At least, that's how the NAMI Family-to-Family Education course describes serious mental illness.

The course also speaks of just how "deeply wounding these illnesses are to self-concept, self-esteem, self-confidence, self-reliance, self-control, and self-determination." That recital of self-collapse is offered by way of helping family members appreciate how fragile the "core self" is of those with mental illness and to recognize as coping behavior the negative ways they sometimes protect their "self": the irritability, the anger, the blaming, the refusals, the running away.

But like John, I am moved by what I've heard takes place daily at the local 7-Eleven—the small courtesies, the attempts at being sociable, the efforts at being responsible. According to Family-to-Family, those positive coping strategies demand "more fortitude than we can possibly imagine."

(NAMI Family-to-Family, 2014, "Inside Mental Illness: Empathy Workshop," p.5)



Prince
William

ANNUAL MEETING

And Complimentary Dinner

MARCH 28, 2019, 6:30-8:30 pm

FROM JAIL TO JOY

MY LIFE WITH BIPOLAR



Carol Ray, PhD, is the author of *PhD's Have Bipolar Too: My Story*. She has contributed articles on mental health to state and county publications and has served on the NAMI Prince William board of directors since 2017.

Reservations are required for this Annual Dinner Meeting at Novant Health UVA Health System Prince William Medical Center, 8700 Sudley Road, Manassas, 20110, fourth floor conference room. **Please call 703-659-9983 by March 21 to reserve.**

Sponsored in part by:



FROM JAIL TO JOY—MY LIFE WITH BIPOLAR

By Carol Ray, Ph.D

“She has forgotten who she was.” This is what I recall hearing in the fog of my mind as I sat at a conference table with staff members of Western State Hospital where I had been admitted after falling into a mental health crisis in June 2011.

You see, I listened to the bad advice of an individual who said that she previously had depression. She told me, “You never know, God could prevent you from getting your medicine, thereby getting you off of your medication.”

I immediately responded, “I need to take my medicine.” Yet, her statement lingered in my mind. A few days later, while visiting with my parents in DC, I went to the pharmacy to refill my prescription. The pharmacist said, “I cannot refill your prescription. You have a glitch in the membership portion of your insurance.”

I didn't get angry because I immediately thought that God must be getting me off my medicine. This occurred on a Saturday, so I had to wait until Monday to call my insurance agency to clear up the matter.

I went back to the hotel where I was living. A few days later, I fell into a mental health crisis and was arrested. I stayed in jail for six days before being transported to Western State Hospital in Staunton, Virginia, about two hours away from where I had been living.

Upon admission to the hospital, I could not walk, talk, or feed myself. It took six weeks for me to recover. After my recovery, I was sent back to jail to spend the night in order to face my charges the following day.

After my recovery, I wrote a book entitled, “Ph.D.'s Have Bipolar Too: My Story.” This book tells about my lived experience with bipolar disorder.

Please come to the NAMI-PW Annual Meeting on March 28th at the Novant UVA Health System Prince William Medical Center. There you can hear more about my contact with the criminal justice system and the good that has followed.

Dr. Ray holds a doctorate in Interdisciplinary Nutrition and has served as a Director on the NAMI Prince William Board since 2017.

NAMI PRINCE WILLIAM FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS

The challenges of mental illness do not only affect an individual's family members but also friends, teachers, neighbors, coworkers and others in the community. "Family member" and "caregiver" refer to anyone giving emotional, financial or practical support to a person with a mental health condition. Whether you're providing a lot of assistance or very little, the information and support you receive from a NAMI Family Support Group can help you better understand the issues that you might face. (Excerpt from: <http://www.nami.org/Find-Support/Family-Members-and-Caregivers>.)

The most important thing to know is YOU ARE NOT ALONE. Below are the two NAMI Family Support Groups currently being held in Prince William County:

WOODBRIIDGE

Second Tuesday of the Month, 7:00 pm to 9:00pm

Sentara Potomac Hospital

Room "C" in the HyLton Education Center

2300 Opitz Boulevard, Woodbridge, VA

Contact: Donna Fortunato, 571-437-4579



Most family members attend the groups when their loved one is in crisis. When the crisis is over, they stop coming. Get in the habit of attending every month, whether things are going well or not. That way, if a crisis does hit, you know where you need to be. And remember, there are others who are new to this journey, and they need the support you can



HAYMARKET:

Third Tuesday of the Month, 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm

Haymarket Gainesville Community Library

Community Room

14870 Lightner Road, Haymarket, VA

Contact:

Bonnie Cuppett, 703-659-9983



What is Brain Awareness Week?

Brain Awareness Week (BAW) is the global campaign to increase public awareness of the progress and benefits of brain research. BAW unites the efforts of partner organizations from around the world in a week-long celebration of the brain every March.

Do you know that the United States is home to two premiere brain research foundations? Scripps Research (www.Scripps.edu) (a division of The Scripps Institute in CA), and Max Planck Florida Institute for Neuroscience (www.maxplanckflorida.org), both residing on the campus of Florida Atlantic University in Jupiter, FL. Check out their websites so that you can stay up-to-date with the latest developments in brain research.



MAY YOUR TROUBLES
☘ BE LESS ☘
and your
Blessings
.....be MORE.....
AND NOTHING BUT
HAPPINESS
come through your
☘>>> door



Prince William

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T 703-659-9983 Email: info@nami-pw.org Website: nami-pw.org

MEMBERSHIPS: Household \$60 Regular \$40 Open Door \$5

***SPONSORSHIPS:** Professional \$75 Corporate \$250

I want to donate _____

*Sponsorships are separate from membership and are considered donations to NAMI Prince William.

Please complete the form below and mail your membership/donation to the P.O. Box noted above, or pay online through our secure website at: nami-pw.org

Members are NAMI-PW's lifeblood; your membership helps us continue to provide free outreach, support & education. In bringing mental health issues to wider attention, we advocate for better treatment. As our membership base grows, our voice becomes stronger.

Respect, Compassion & Hope ... NAMI Works!

Check here for renewal: Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/St: _____

Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

I'd like to volunteer for NAMI-PW's 2019 Go Green for Mental Health Walk/Run.

I wish to receive NAMI National's solicitations.

NAMI Membership exists at 3 levels: Affiliate, State & National. **NAMI Prince William (NAMI-PW)** is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit, charitable organization—contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. Together, we can continue to fight for all those affected by mental illness. **PLEASE NOTE: If making a donation, in order for NAMI-PW to receive your full donation, please send your donation to the NAMI-PW office.** Thank you!

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