

## March E-News

Welcome to NAMI Metro Suburban's Monthly E-News, a place to see upcoming events, read the words of other NAMI members and learn about the latest research and legislation in the field of mental health.

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## March Events

### Member Meeting

Culture, Bias & The Body  
March 4 at 1:30pm  
Oak Park Library

### Mental Health First Aid

March 6&13, 8am-12pm  
Community Wellness  
Center in LaGrange

### Beginners Yoga

March 6 at 7:00pm  
Community Wellness  
Center in LaGrange

### The Practice of Mindfulness

March 7 at 7:00 pm  
Community Wellness  
Center in LaGrange

### Open Mic Night

March 9 at 4:00pm  
NAMI Drop-in Center  
in Oak Park

## Just Announced!

NAMI Metro Suburban is partnering with the  
Erikson Institute to host

### **Building a Strong Foundation: a series on mental wellness in early childhood**

Community Wellness Center, [4731 Willow  
Springs Rd., LaGrange](#)

Register for classes at [www.namimetsub.org](http://www.namimetsub.org) or  
call [\(708\) 524-2582, x. 101](tel:7085242582)

#### **Session 1: Social Emotional Development in the First 5 Years**

Tuesday, March 13, 1-2:30 pm

*During the first five years, children develop a sense of being loved, of trusting others, and of positive self-esteem that is the foundation for a life-long sense of well-being. We will cover basic milestones of social-emotional development from birth to age 5 based on our knowledge of attachment. We will learn how young children's understanding of people around them grows and develops, and about the delicate balance between dependence on others and becoming their own little person. At each step, we will discuss the many ways caregivers can support and guide the child's growth through play, providing interactions with other children, age-appropriate discipline strategies, and helping the child learn to cope with separations, limits, and rules.*

#### **Session 2: Managing Separation Anxiety**

Thursday, April 12, 1-2:30 pm

*The first day of preschool is approaching, and you wonder how to help a child manage separating from*

**Building a Strong Foundation Session 1**

March 13 at 1:00pm  
Community Wellness Center in LaGrange

**The Practice of Mindfulness**

March 14 at 7:00 pm  
Community Wellness Center in LaGrange

**Youth Mental Health First Aid**

March 24 at 8:00am  
Community Wellness Center in LaGrange

**Beginners Yoga**

March 27 at 7:00pm  
Community Wellness Center in LaGrange

**April Events**

**Beginners Yoga**

April 3 at 7:00pm  
Community Wellness Center in LaGrange

**Mental Health First Aid**

April 10 at 8:00 am  
Community Wellness Center in LaGrange

**Building a Strong Foundation Session 2**

April 12 at 1:00 pm  
Community Wellness Center in LaGrange

*their parent and getting comfortable in the new classroom. "How can we prepare children for this big step?" What should parents and caregivers do when children cry and cling? These are all understandable worries and questions that go through parents' and caregivers minds when they think about preschool, especially when a child is clingy or shy to begin with. While new developmental steps always bring some challenges, there are many ways parents and caregivers can support children and help them reach a new level of competence, learning, and growth.*

**Session 3: Understanding Early Childhood Trauma**

Tuesday, May 15, 1-2:30 pm

*Many of the children we work with have experienced or witnessed scary things. We will lay a solid foundation to understanding childhood trauma. I will talk about the impact of trauma on development and behavior in child care and educational settings, how it manifests in educational settings, provide examples of symptoms and behaviors associated with trauma, and what can be done to help a traumatized child. We will begin to use a trauma lens when looking at children's behavior and development and learn important strategies to increase children's safety and resilience, the importance of collaborating with parents, as well as ensuring that they are taking care of themselves.*

**Registration is Open for Improv Summer Camps!**

**Are you looking for something fun AND healthy for the kids this summer?**

Led by Second City Faculty, NAMI's Improv Camps help 12 to 16 year old teens reduce anxiety and build self-confidence while learning performance skills and having a great time!

**Oak Park Area Camp:** June 4-15, 1pm-4pm weekdays

**LaGrange Area Camp:** June 18-29, 1pm-4pm weekdays

**Returning to College  
after a Mental Health  
Crisis**

April 12 at 7:00pm  
Community Wellness  
Center in LaGrange

**Special Needs Trusts**

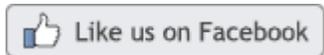
April 15 at 1:30pm  
Oak Park Library

**Keeping Children Safe**

April 19 at 7:00pm  
Community Wellness  
Center in LaGrange

**To register for any of  
these programs visit  
our website**

**[www.namimetsub.org](http://www.namimetsub.org)  
or call [\(708\) 524-2582](tel:7085242582).**



Call Angela to register [\(708\) 524-2582, x. 101](tel:7085242582)

**Mental Health First Aid is  
coming to the Community  
Wellness Center**

**Why Take Mental Health First Aid?**

- Recognize if a friend, family member or colleague is struggling
- Learn how to talk to someone who is in need
- Make a positive change by helping someone onto the right road
- Respond with the same empathy and respect to mental illness as you would with cancer

Because everyone deserves to be able to live, laugh, and love.

Four classes to choose from:

March 6 AND March 13, 8am - 12pm  
March 24, 8am-5pm (Youth Mental Health First Aid)  
April 10, 8am-5pm  
May 19, 9am-5pm

**FREE CEUs ARE AVAILABLE**

**[REGISTER HERE](#)**

**NAMI Member Meeting is this Sunday!**  
**This event is open to Members and the Public.**

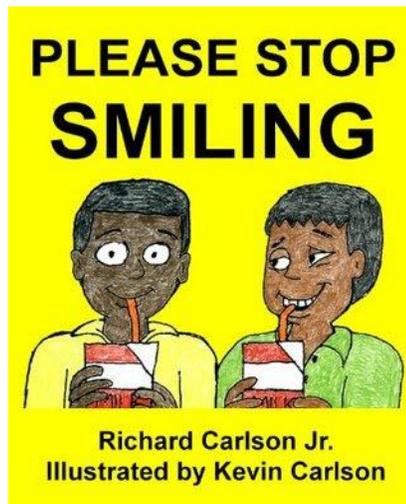
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**Words of Wisdom From NAMI Members, Staff and Friends**

**Just Be Nice for Once**

By: Jackie Aumann

The stigma and



misunderstanding of mental illness affects adults, teenagers and children alike. *Please Stop Smiling* by Richard Carlson, Jr. is a story geared toward children who have no idea when a loved one is affected by a mental illness.

Jose's brother, Alejandro, had a mental illness. Jose's friend, Sebastian, makes fun of Alejandro and laughs at him and that makes Jose angry. Jose's dad sees his distress and asks him what is wrong. "What's so funny about Alejandro" he asks his dad. With a tight-lipped grimace his dad replies, "Nothing".

Paranoid Schizophrenia had only just started to affect Alejandro when he was 20 years old and

attending school to become a veterinarian. He talked to himself. He laughed inappropriately. He heard voices and was seeing things. These things made him feel afraid and angry at times. He scared Jose.

Alejandro's parents were worried because he could no longer attend school. They finally brought him to a psychiatrist. He was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. Alejandro did not believe he had this disease but told the doctor he did believe it. In his head though, he believed his mind controlled the world and that he could control other people's minds and make them do certain things. The voices in his head told him things he didn't like to hear which made him feel confused and angry. Because he was not truthful to the doctor, the doctor thought he was getting better. If only he had known to be honest with his doctor, recovery would have come sooner. It wasn't until many years later that he accepted his diagnosis and embraced the help he needed.

Jose once again told his dad about Sebastian teasing him about Alejandro. They were sitting with Alejandro who was laughing and smiling to himself, lost in his own world. He didn't even look over to Jose and his dad as they talked about Jose being teased! Didn't Alejandro even care? "Sebastian said mean things!" "About Alejandro!" Finally, Alejandro stopped smiling and looked over at Jose.

The doorbell rang and they walked to the door and saw Sebastian who was quite upset and wanted help because he had discovered a small bird stuck in a piece of cactus. They all watched as Alejandro managed, with gentleness and great care to free the bird from its agony. They were all happy to have helped the bird, but Sebastian was the most grateful. "Thanks" he said to Alejandro and invited him to play with him and Jose. Sebastian had seen Alejandro being a hero, and Jose hoped he would accept his brother from now on.

Alejandro eventually recovered many years later, although he wasn't cured, he felt a lot better. He took his medication and saw his doctor every few

months to stay well. Jose and his family felt better too.

Alejandro was able to go back to veterinarian school. Jose was so impressed seeing his brother's recovery, he decided to become a psychiatrist, to help people like his brother. And Sebastian learned that people with mental illness can be heroes.

The author of this children's book, Richard Carlson, has paranoid schizophrenia and obsessive-compulsive disorder. His mission is to educate youngsters about this widely misunderstood and wrongfully feared illness. His path to recovery has been long and arduous and yet he perseveres. Writing books, blog posts and his memoirs has been instrumental in his recovery.

People with mental illness are struggling. Their loved ones are struggling. Confusion is common. Help is available but often difficult to find. Truth is the key to gaining understanding and compassion. Be honest with yourself, your children, those who have relationships with people suffering from mental illness and most of all to those living with mental illness.

There is hope.

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