



NAMI
National Alliance on Mental Illness

Huntsville

STATE COMBINED
CAMPAIGN #031495



Grassroots- Official Newsletter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness - Huntsville, Alabama

July/Aug 2018

NAMI Huntsville Executive Director's Corner

Hello NAMI Huntsville Family!

It is summer time and living in our great state we have rain, allergies, and heat for everyone. You would think traveling further south that you can handle any type of heat but not the New Orleans' humid weather. Thankfully the NAMI Convention kept plenty of water available and the A.C. was going! There is so much to share about this 4-day convention but one thing I would like to share right off the top is that the next convention will be in Atlanta, Georgia!! Let's all go and represent who we are and what we stand for! Never been to a NAMI Convention?



This is my second year along with my long time friend and NAMI Huntsville's own Nick Snead. The Convention is open to all supporters of NAMI and the registration fee is discounted if you are a NAMI member. There are workshops, presentations, meetings, and activities for everyone from a donor, volunteer, staff, and board member. Of course what is a convention that doesn't end with a great dinner for all?

The whole convention is geared to makes us all, no matter what we do in NAMI, more efficient in helping our community AND getting our voice heard as an organization. We are a powerhouse making



people evolve in their views about mental illness. To get a better understanding of the structure of NAMI it goes like this. There are three tiers. NAMI National, NAMI States, and local NAMI Affiliates. NAMI ensures that programs are established, policies are in place and followed, and are the head of fighting for fair treatment in mental health. State affiliates do the same but at a state level and provide training for program instructors, facilitators, and presenters. Local affiliates, NAMI Huntsville is one, ensure that programs are being offered to the community and that we do outreach events. In a round about way, we each run our own house but we are connected. This structure allows us to do more for our country as a whole. This is just a nutshell of how we are structured. Keep in mind that each tier has board of directors and depending on affiliates they may or may not have an executive director. Which leads me to my next sharing moment. Seeing the NAMI National Board of Directors always makes me proud because I know what work is put in as a local affiliate and can't imagine what is like on that level. For example for the NAMI Huntsville Board, it takes an immense amount of work and dedication. All board members are employed professionals and balance out their volunteer time to us. I am sure the National Board probably



has the same layout but their workload is on a larger scale! Dear board members across the country thank you for all your dedicated work no matter how small or large your affiliate is I applaud you...we applaud you! You are the oil that keeps the engine running!

Rebecca Lamar

Calendar of Events

All meetings are held in the United Way Building
Unless Otherwise Announced

July

Tuesday 1st

7p - Family Support Group
Facilitators: Elizabeth Springfield & Rebecca Lamar

Tuesday 15th

7p - Education Meeting - Postpartum Depression

Every 1st & 3rd Tuesday

6p Connection Support Group at Windscape Apts Community Room
2220 Windscape Drive in Athens
Facilitators: Mark Prescott & Steve Pendergrass

Every 1st & 3rd Tuesday

6p Connection Support Group at 600 Governors Dr SW 35801 Rm 252
Facilitators: Teresa Hardin & John Boulton

Every 2nd & 4th Tuesday

6p Connection Support Group at 446 Jeff Rd NW 35806 The Hub Meeting Rm
Facilitators: Teresa Hardin & John Boulton

Every Wednesday

530p Connection Support Group
Facilitator: Nick Snead

August 23rd -25th

NAMI Alabama Annual Meeting

Support NAMI-HUNTSVILLE by making a donation

No matter how big or small your donation is we need your financial support to keep support groups and programs available and free to the public. There's three ways to send your donation either by mailing your check/ money order to the NAMI Huntsville office, at our website at www.namihuntsville.org, and on our Facebook page!



No More Dirty, Inc. in partnership with Productions by Danita Jones present: The live preview of "THE COLOR OF GREEN"

"THE COLOR OF GREEN" (written and directed by Danita Jones) specifically deals with Mental Health in the minority community and the stigma and silence that surrounds it. This production aims to educate and inform individuals in a unique way. Through dance, spoken word, and poignant scenes, "THE COLOR OF GREEN" spotlights depression, schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder, borderline personality disorder, and PTSD as it relates to American veterans, and postpartum depression/psychosis. All subjects are carefully and tastefully presented to the backdrop of beautiful music, hauntingly accurate metaphors, and brilliant acting.

And Yep, and that's how the play went too! Danita Jones has done a spectacular job with this play. Keep in mind that this was just a preview of what's to come in the fall. The funds raised from the preview ticket sells was for No More Dirty's Camp Smart for children that took place in June and one in July (for more info go to info@nomoredirty.org). In the years of being North Alabama's mental health organization, one thing we pride ourselves on is reaching out to the community. So when we got the invite to have a table set up at the entrance of the play we jumped at the opportunity!



And to watch this play unfold I have to say those days of shaming mental illness are starting to be erased. This play not only had committed actors but they told the story just as Danita envisioned it. The play touched on several aspect of mental illness and told in different settings. If you missed the preview, please don't miss out on it in Fall. There is nothing like a story being told through art and from the mind of respected play writer/producer, Danita Jones. So stay tuned for more information! We hope to see you there and trust you will be impressed with the way she chose to erase the stigma on mental illness.



NAMI Homefront

NAMI Homefront is a free, 6-session educational program for families, caregivers and friends of military service members and vets with mental health conditions.

Based on the nationally recognized [NAMI Family-to-Family](#) program, NAMI Homefront is designed to address the unique needs of family, caregivers and friends of those who have served or are currently serving our country. The program is taught by trained family members of service members/veterans living with mental health conditions.

Classes are offered online! For more information go to www.nami.org and sign up!

Volunteer of the Month May 2018

Nikita Turner started as a NAMI Huntsville Office Volunteer and is now a member of the board of directors. Although she continues to volunteer in the office her work ethics and dedication to the organization have increased. She has participated in several health fairs and events, helped with coordinating events, and is currently on a 5 person team that is working on social media video grant for NAMI Huntsville. Nikita, we thank you for your drive and dependability in helping us in the NAMI Huntsville mission!



2016 Non Profit University: From left to right, Joe Moody, Rebecca Lamar, and Juli Langford

Juli Langford, LPC came to NAMI Huntsville in 2016 and began volunteering on the board of directors. She was and is an integral part of how we were able to come as far as we have with community outreach. Sadly, she recently resigned. Although she is leaving as a NAMI Huntsville Board of Director she has offered to continue helping with the remaining projects we have lined up for the rest of 2018.

Juli, you are going to be truly missed. Your attendance at board meetings provided a sound platform with your pleasant personality. When someone was going through hardship you provided support straight from your heart and now you are going through some life's events and we are happy to say we will be here for you and provided the same support you gave others. There's nothing like building a friendship out of connecting for a common goal for the community.

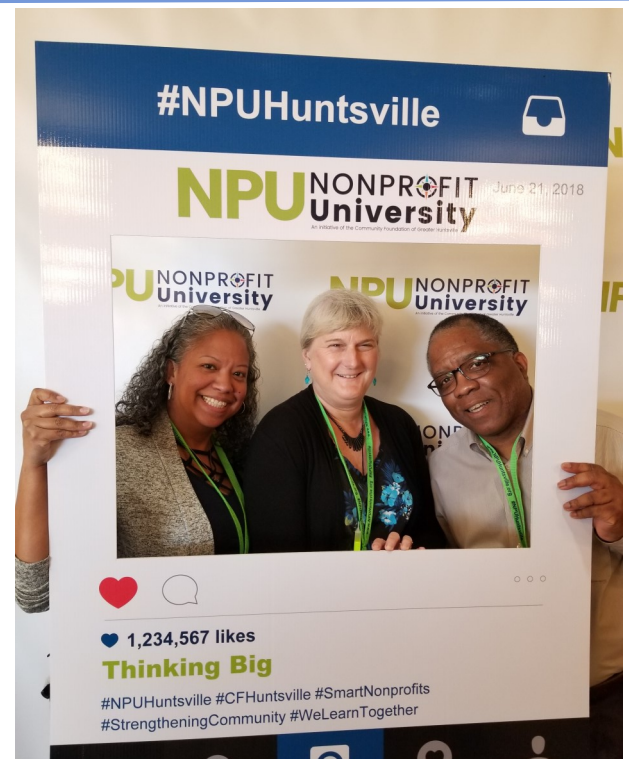
Our friend, our drive, our buddy...things will be different without you but we will always honor all you have done for NAMI Huntsville. By the way, you are the Volunteer of the Month for June 2018!

2018 Non Profit University

We continued are new ritual of enrolling in the Non Profit University and this is our 3rd year! We are so dedicated in learning how we can further our mission for our community that as a board we ensure that we enroll in nonprofit training throughout the year. It seem like this one is the one we tend to have the most fun in (pictured left from right: Rebecca Lamar, Lisa Philippart, LPC, and Joe Moody). We truly thank NPU for giving us an annual event where we can take workshops to better our organization and those behind the scene.



Mayor Tommy Battle giving a speech at the introduction of the 2018 Non Profit University



Basics Instructors Needed:

NAMI Basics is a free, 6-week education program for parents and family caregivers of children and teens who are experiencing symptoms of a mental illness or whom have already been diagnosed. NAMI Basics is offered in a group setting so you can connect with other people face-to-face.

You'll learn the facts about mental health conditions and how best to support your child at home, at school and when they're getting medical care. Last year, 99% of participants told us they would recommend the program to other parents.

The course is taught by a trained team with lived experience—they know what you're going through because they've been there. The 6-session program provides critical strategies for taking care of your child and learning the ropes of recovery.

Ending the Silence Presenters Needed:

NAMI Ending the Silence is an engaging presentation that helps audience members learn about the warning signs of mental health conditions and what steps to take if you or a loved one are showing symptoms of a mental illness.

NAMI Ending the Silence presentations include a lead presenter who shares an informative presentation and a young adult with a mental health condition who shares their journey of recovery. Audience members can ask questions and gain understanding of an often-misunderstood topic. Through dialogue, we can help grow the movement to end stigma.

WHAT YOUR AUDIENCE WILL GET

- **NAMI Ending the Silence for Students:** 50-minute presentation designed for middle and high school students that includes warning signs, facts and statistics and how to get help for themselves or a friend. [Research](#) has shown that NAMI Ending the Silence for Students is effective in changing middle and high school students' knowledge and attitudes toward mental health conditions and toward seeking help
- **NAMI Ending the Silence for School Staff:** 1-hour presentation for school staff members that includes information about warning signs, facts and statistics, how to approach students and how to work with families
- **NAMI Ending the Silence for Families:** 1-hour presentation for parents and primary caregivers that includes warning signs, facts and statistics, how to talk with your child and how to work with school staff



Family Support Group Facilitators Needed:

NAMI Family Support Group is a **peer-led support group** for family members, caregivers and loved ones of individuals living with mental illness. Gain insight from the challenges and successes of others facing similar circumstances.

NAMI's Support Groups are unique because they follow a structured model, ensuring everyone has an opportunity to be heard and to get what they need.

- Designed for adult loved ones (18+) of individuals living with mental illness
- Led by family members of individuals living with mental illness
- Meets weekly or monthly
- No specific medical therapy or medication is endorsed or recommended
- Confidential

Family to Family Instructors Needed:

NAMI Family-to-Family is a 12-week course for family, significant others and friends of people living with mental illness. It is a designated evidenced-based program. The instructors will teach students:

- How to manage crises, solve problems and communicate effectively
- How to take care of yourself and manage your stress
- How to develop the confidence and stamina to provide support with compassion
- How to find and use local support and services
- Up-to-date information on mental health conditions and how they affect the brain
- Current treatments, including evidence-based therapies, medications and side effects
- The impact of mental illness on the entire family

Tea with Tiffany Presents:

Mindset Shift

This event is for anyone who has feelings or had feelings of depression, or someone who was directly impacted by the depression from another person or a loved one. Join us and hear the Founder/Creator of Tea With Tiffany, Tiffany Draper, share her story first hand about her challenges with this illness. Hear what inspired Tea With Tiffany and the new initiative to help spread Mental Health Awareness in our community.

If you would like to share your story please inbox Tea With Tiffany (on Facebook). You can overcome anything if you change your Mindset.

The event is July 21st from 1030a -130p at Belk Hudson Lofts 110 Washington Street NE 35801. Light Brunch will be provided. Tickets are \$10 and can be purchase through Eventbrite, Paypal, or Cash App. For more info, you can find Tea with Tiffany on Facebook!



All area middle and high schoolers are invited to speak up and unite at From Me to We: A Day of Unity, Tuesday, July 24, 6-8 p.m. at AM Booth's Lumberyard! This FREE outdoor event will feature live music from local band *Free Range*, activities, guest speakers and a free T-shirt for the first 30 people!

Free soft drinks and water will be provided, and food will be available to purchase.

Bring a friend and help promote unity and suicide prevention in the Huntsville community.

NAMI Huntsville Education Meeting for July 2018

Teresa Fleischmann is the president of the **Alabama Chapter of Postpartum Support International**, and the **founder** and **facilitator** of the **Huntsville Postpartum Support Network**. As a postpartum anxiety and OCD survivor, she focuses on peer support in the Huntsville community, and bridges the gap between families experiencing postpartum mental illnesses and providers/services. She is a stay at home mom to her three children ages 7, 5 and 2 years. Teresa's presentation will be a basic overview of the different types of Pregnancy Related Mood and Anxiety Disorders and the type of support PSI offers. Join us July 17th at 7p at the United Way of Madison County!



Thanks goes out to Brittany for June's Education Meeting topic on Anxiety Management Skills!



Tipper Gore, Former Second Lady of the United States, receiving the 2018 NAMI Distinguished Service Award Honoree for her part in helping The Ending the Silence program to be further utilized throughout our country. She made a \$1 million dollar donation to ensure that this can be a reality. We greatly appreciate you, Tipper!

NAMI Alabama is opening training for Ending the Silence!

NAMI Ending the Silence (ETS) is a 50-minute presentation designed for middle and high school students. There is also a version of ETS for staff and parents. This program is devoted to giving students/staff/and parents the opportunity to learn about mental illness through an interactive presentation and personal testimony. In the presentation, participants learn symptoms and indicators of mental illness and how to help themselves, friends, students or family members who may be in need of support.

NAMI Alabama is now taking applications for NAMI Ending the Silence Presentation training.

Training consists of:

- Part One: Online training (work at your own pace)
- Part Two: In person presentation training.

For each group, we need at least 2 persons:

1. One person living with a mental health condition and in recovery (ages between 18-33)
2. An adult 33 and over who is a family member (Family-to-Family, Connection, or Basics trained) or a person living with mental illness and in recovery (Peer to Peer or Connection trained).

If you are an active member of NAMI and are interested in taking this training, please contact Joan Elder (jellder4158@gmail.com) or the NAMI Alabama Office (kemerson@namialabama.org).

Doing For Yourself

"Ask yourself if what you're doing today is getting you closer to where you want to be tomorrow." Unknown

Welcome to a new feature of our NAMI Huntsville newsletter, the Counselor's Corner. My name is Lisa Philippart and I am a Licensed Professional Counselor and a member-at-large serving on the NAMI Huntsville Board of Directors. My purpose for each article is to provide you with positive and relevant information that you can use to improve your daily life. These suggestions are specifically designed for those living with mental illnesses and their families and friends.

Recently the deaths of celebrities by suicide have become a focus of the media. At NAMI, suicide prevention is always on the front burner. So with that in mind, I'd like to share with you some key points from a blog written by Angel Chernoff earlier this year, entitled "5 Hard Things You Need to Start Doing for Yourself on Really Hard Days."

Start shifting your focus. No matter what happens in your life, you can choose your response, which determines pretty much everything that happens next. The greatest weapon you have against anxiety, negativity, and stress is your ability to choose one present thought over another. You can train your brain to make the best of what you've got in front of you, even when it's far less than you expected.

Start questioning the stories you are telling yourself. Whenever you feel tension and drama building up inside you, ask yourself, what am I thinking right now, and can I be absolutely certain that it's true? The stories we tell ourselves change what we see in life. Take a moment to detach from the story you are telling yourself. Go deeper and observe without presuming. This is about thinking better right now to live better right now.

Start watching your tendency to create negative meanings and conclusions. The goal is to reframe your negative thoughts so they are based in reality and focused on the next positive step forward. This also includes the thought patterns governing your expectations. Beginning to distinguish between the negativity you image or expect and what is actually happening in your life, is an important step towards living a happier life.

Start letting go of what can't be changed. When you are no longer able to change a situation or someone else, you are challenged to change yourself. When we are struggling or fearful it's easy to assume that tomorrow will be the same. It doesn't matter what's been done, what truly matters is what you do from here. Realize, let go, and accept that the only thing you really have control over is yourself.

Start being consistent with the right daily rituals. Just like every muscle in the body, the mind needs to be exercised to gain strength. And this requires making challenging choices. Choose to create or question or any of the hundreds of daily activities that require more than just quitting or sleeping in, or being mediocre. It's your positive daily rituals that prove your mental strength and move you in the direction of your dreams.

Many thanks to Angel at www.marcandangel.com



National Alliance on Mental Illness

NAMIWalks Alabama 2018! NAMI Huntsville's local event will be October 6th at Morris Elementary from 9a to 12p. Get your team ready and raise funds for your local NAMI Chapter. Our goal this year is \$8,000! For more info go to our website at www.namihuntsville.org. Together we can make a difference in our community! #StigmaFree

Almost Mrs. Parker

Submitted by Michele Louthan (NAMI Huntsville Supporter)

April 20, 2018 was to be the happiest days of both our lives! Sometimes I think Jeff may have even been a tad more excited than me, but I dismissed those thoughts blaming the MS that robs my energy, cognitive functions and much more. There's just NO WAY he could ever be MORE excited than I was. I just didn't show as much outward emotion. It was usually too exhausting. I remember when our rings were delivered, he even beat me to posting pics of them on Facebook!

Many mornings I'd wake to his same question: Do you know what today is?

Well, of course I didn't. I never know what the day or date is when I first wake, then usually have to double check by looking at my phone. He knew my weaknesses and took gleeful advantage of that knowledge. When I'd finally reply, "No. NO, Baby, I'm sorry....what day is it?"

His giddy reply always made me laugh while at the same time I was scolding myself for not remembering this scenario every few days. His reply? *"In 21 more days (or whatever the correct number was) you'll OFFICIALLY be Mrs. Parker!"* I smile now at those memories that were such a short time ago. It's a better alternative than the tears that will likely flow before the end of why I was unable to become Mrs. Parker.

Jeff and I had reconnected about a year ago. We had attended the same high school back in the 80s and shared a class, but that was about it. He was in band and very extroverted while I did my best to be as invisible as possible to as many people as possible; the perfect introvert for the opposite extrovert.

Thirty something years later, we meet again and just click and become inseparable fairly quickly. We knew early on that we had found "the one" in each other. If Yin and Yang can be felt, then we felt it, experienced the essence of completing one another. We understood more every day that we were simply meant to be...forever. He not only made me feel like a Queen, but he managed to somehow convince me it was okay to be a Queen and I was *his*. I had never been loved so completely, so unconditionally, so purely. He was sacrificial in his love. I did my best to tell him how much he was appreciated and loved when I wasn't able to do anything other than stay in bed, often days at a time. He protected my sleep. He complained never, not once. My brother describes him as one of the most selfless human beings he's ever met. And *that* guy loved **ME**! And I loved and adored that guy. I knew I was going to be with that man for the rest of my life. And I was. For about 11 months total.

April 3, 2018, Tuesday. I felt like I was finally coming out of a two and a half day slumber-mess. I had done way too much that previous Saturday and had been paying for it ever since. I woke once sometime that morning to use the bathroom. I thought I heard Jeff down in the garage working on the dryer that had just started making a hideous noise over the weekend. I fell asleep again. As I tossed, rolled, tossed and turned during in my sleep, I'd sometimes be aware enough to listen to see if Jeff was home or out. Most of the time I heard him in the garage. Later I noticed there wasn't much noise going on, but was still too exhausted to see if he was home.

That afternoon, I go for my second bathroom break and realize I might actually feel a *little* less exhausted than the previous days. As I start back to the bed, I hear Jeff's footsteps on the stairs. I was painfully maneuvering myself into the bed. As I was in the midst of getting settled I caught a glimpse of him reaching out over his nightstand and pulling his arm back, as if swiping up his car keys. That's what it looked like. I was trying to find words to say hi, but my cognitive skills weren't cooperating that soon after waking. He quickly turned and as he walked to the bedroom door, he says simply, "I love you, Bye" and he was gone. I glanced at the time 4:16 PM.

Since I assumed he was on his way to the store and he was usually gone only about twenty minutes, I decided to see if sleeping til he returned might improve my brain forming correct words. I knew he'd wake me when he returned, so I hid my eyes under the sleep mask. I was just leaving real time and stepping into the worlds of dreams when I was jolted wide awake by the entire house shaking, immediately it sounded as if numerous people were stomping in the living room downstairs. The stampede was almost instantly overpowered by a multitude of voices yelling, shouting, no words were distinguishable only that one female voice was Louder than all the others together, but I still didn't understand any words, I was out of bed and before I took two steps a loud "POW!" echoed through the house.

I'm trying to ration all these things and my brain doesn't want to think. By the time I reach our bedroom door I've reasoned a group of people have broke into our house and shot the pitbull. In daylight? I yank the bedroom door open. It sticks in the summer, so I had to yank hard. I look down the hallway and see a black woman standing at the bottom of the stairs. She had her attention to our den, but likely heard the door open, so as I was trying to process everything, she was in the process of turning her attention towards me with a pistol aimed right at me. It was about that time I could recognize her as a police officer. She began yelling at me, "Drop your weapon"! I yelled back, somewhat annoyed, "I don't have a weapon"! And then realizing I still had my right hand on the door knob on the inside of the door.

I slowly brought it into view and with both hands raised, tried to ask what was going on. She ordered me down the hallway and down the seven stairs which brought me face to face with her. She was asking what was going on, who else was upstairs, my name, etc. As soon as I reached floor level with her, I felt another officer come from our den, behind me and frisk me. It was then I could lower my arms. She talks into her shoulder radio, confirming "Shots Fired". I knew my son's dog was dead.

I'm dazed, confused and REALLY wishing Jeff would hurry back from the store. I just knew they had entered the wrong house, especially as she finally starts providing me with some info. They were responding to a 911 call of someone "wishing to harm themselves". I told her it wasn't me and my fiancé was at the store, they must have the wrong house (remembering several months earlier when HPD knocked on our door one evening after unscrewing the porch light. They said they received a distress call from "the area". Once we assured them everyone was fine, Jeff gave them bits of info on the neighbors in case one of our older neighbors had made the call, but they next went to the house where Jeff told them a young couple lived. I was certain this was a similar case). While I'm explaining it couldn't have come from here and I'm taking in all the HPD officers coming in and out, one passes me holding a shotgun as he takes it outside, my gaze follows to the yard and more HPD officers are coming, I noticed Jeff's car in the driveway. I quickly turn back to the house and move my head around the female officer who has never stopped standing face to face with me as she gradually moved me sideways towards the front door. I finally caught a glimpse of Jeff in the dining room turned TV room. All I could see was his left shoulder and part of that arm. He appeared to be sitting upright on the far end of the sofa, motionless, but I saw no blood. However, I knew something was wrong. If Jeff had known I was downstairs, he'd be saying something. She finally has me on the front porch and I'm feeling the panic rise as I start begging her, "Tell me he's OK! Tell me he's OK! PLEASE! Why is no one helping him"?! She asks who he was to me. I told her, "He's my fiancé. We're getting married April 20". She asks, "This month"! "Yes", I reply, "in about 2 weeks". Tears are already threatening to spill, she takes a deep breath, looks upwards towards the sky and then back at me. "I'm sorry, Ms. Michele, he's deceased".

It's hard to describe all the physical emotions and feelings that suddenly bombarded me. I felt like the earth had just been yanked from under me and I was alone, darkness around me and I was spiraling out of control while feeling like someone had thrown a cinder block to my gut. I heard myself screaming, "NOOOOOOO!!!! That's not possible. He's not dead! Why is he dead"?! I looked around from my porch seeing various neighbors out in their yards watching as I turned the other direction I saw an officer with yellow crime scene tape roping off our yard. I felt lost, hopeless and helpless and then our neighbor from across the street was making her way to me. I remember next being on the sidewalk, sitting with my neighbor helping support me as the female officer started asking me if Jeff had any guns. I shook my head as I told her, "only a flare gun". She repeated incredulously, "A flare gun? Can you describe it"? I explained it was originally orange, but had been painted black though it had various scratches on it where you could see the original orange paint. The female officer left me with my neighbor and I never saw her again.

In fact, except for an officer asking my neighbor if I could sit on her porch, all officers stayed away from me. I had a female HEMS responder "assigned" to me before my son arrived on scene and convinced me to go to the ER to be stabilized. My blood pressure was high, anxiety even higher and the events that actually occurred left me sick to my stomach.

My beloved fiancé had told me he suffered from PTSD from a home invasion where he and several friends were shot back in the early 2000s. I had never seen him have an episode, but for him to willingly reach out and call 911 tells me something wasn't right in his head. The lead investigator would eventually tell us that he claimed he wanted to blow his brains out. The fact that he called 911 tells me that he had enough rationale to understand killing himself wasn't right and I suspect he was intending for medical responders to come help him. Instead, three officers entered the house (he had told 911 the door was unlocked and confirmed he did have a gun). HPD claims there was a brief conversation before one of the officers sent to help a suicidal man ultimately shot him in the face with a shotgun.

Many reading will assume Jeff wanted to die and couldn't bring himself to do it. That's not Jeff. If he had truly wanted to die, he would have done it himself. He called for HELP while likely experiencing a PTSD episode and within 60 seconds or so from when I realized something was going on, they had killed him.

This is how HPD responded to a call dealing with mental health issues. This is totally unacceptable at every level. As Huntsville continues to grow, every demographic will grow as well, including good people that have mental health issues. Jeff needed some type of treatment, but was killed instead. He did absolutely nothing that warranted the response HPD provided. Since his death, all three officers have been cleared of any wrongdoing. The review board listened to the officers testimony and reviewed the body cam footage. They did not request nor hear any testimony from any other witnesses that may have been able to provide a more even sided explanation of the events.

Since they were cleared and found to have followed HPD protocol and training, this tells me there are more serious changes that should be made immediately in the way officers respond to calls dealing with mental health issues. Memphis, TN realized some 25 years ago that their response to mentally ill people was terribly flawed and needed changing.

With the help of NAMI, they have made successful changes, so successful that over 3000 other departments nationwide have a similar program.

Crisis Intervention Teams or CITs have been extremely successful by large and far and Huntsville residents, Madison County residents should demand that our local law enforcement departments IMMEDIATELY begin taking steps to implement CITs. Had a CIT officer responded April 3 to Jeff's 911 call, I have no doubt that he would be alive today, we would be married and he likely would have had some treatment regarding that episode and I would have more information on how to help him should he experience another episode. However, that was all stolen from both of us by unsatisfactory guidelines, ignorance on mental health and, in my opinion, a lack of patience on the officers that responded. I have so many questions that don't have answers. We are refused access to the body cam footage, we never heard the 911 call he made, only told what was said.

Changes must be made, awareness on mental health is critical, awareness on how HPD handled this particular case needs to get out and we need to get angry and demand that policy changes and training in this area be immediate. Jeff's life meant something to so many people, it's my job to make his death mean something as well.

So, please call, email or contact in some way, the mayor, the police chief, the sheriff and anyone that has the power or authority to demand these changes occur sooner than later as Huntsville is long, long overdue for their own CIT. We must not let another innocent person be killed because of fear and ignorance.

CAFY 2018

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In collaboration with: Madison City & Madison County

THE 4 PILLARS OF SUCCESS
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SATURDAY, JULY 28
10AM - 2PM

NEW LOCATION!
Calhoun Community College Campus
102 Wynn Drive NW, Huntsville, AL 35805

CONTACT: KENNY ANDERSON
EMAIL: kenny.anderson@huntsvilleal.gov
PHONE: (256) 883-3993

www.facebook.com/HuntsvilleCAFY



Growing up, Lauren was a curious, happy, and energetic little girl. However, her mother Kari (pictured on the left) noticed early on that she

also had an extensively anxious, stubborn, and strong-willed side.

As Lauren grew into her teen years, much bigger problems developed. She was having trouble in school and would easily lose control of her emotions. Kari was starting to see the walls of mental illness close in on her daughter, who at age 13 had multiple diagnoses. But Lauren wasn't the only one living through this nightmare. Her family--especially her mother--were too.

A Kingdom Far Away tells the story of Kari's battle to raise her daughter and keep her safe despite uncaring institutions, untenable circumstances, and unbearable choices. Lauren's afflictions were the cause of heartbreak, stress, and countless sleepless nights, but through it all she never lost the love of her mother, who fought time and again to provide her daughter with a brighter future.

Recounted with vivid emotional honesty, Kari's story of her struggle to help Lauren live the best life possible is a powerful testament to the bonds of family even in the direst of circumstances.

This book can be purchased from Amazon.com

NAMI-Huntsville Membership/Donation Form



NAMI Huntsville dues are paid annually. You may pay by cash or check to NAMI Huntsville. If you prefer to join or to donate online go to www.namihuntsville.org.

Please provide your email address in order to receive the newsletter by email.

NAME _____ ADDITIONAL HOUSEHOLD MEMBER _____

ADDRESS: _____ CITY/STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

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