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Victor Vosen

P.O. Box 2415  
Sandpoint, ID 83864  
208-597-2047

[namifarnorth@yahoo.com](mailto:namifarnorth@yahoo.com)

[www.nami.org/sites/namifarnorth](http://www.nami.org/sites/namifarnorth)

## 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

**“Let’s celebrate hope and progress in the treatment of serious brain disorders; be respectful, and reject stigma”**

NAMI Far North was founded in Sandpoint in February 2007 with only 5 members, and it gratefully closed out the year 2014 with 71 individual members, represented by 53 paid-up memberships in the NAMI national organization. The difference between the number of individual NAMI Far North members and NAMI members is attributable to NAMI family memberships, each including several individuals.

During 2014, NAMI Far North conducted Family-to-Family classes in Bonners Ferry providing information, encouragement and hope to families with loved ones living with mental illness. Ruth McKnight conducted a F2F train the teacher workshop in Coeur d’Alene, attended by Amber Snoddy, Gini Woodward, and Candi Kelly. The support group for individuals with mental illness, NAMI Connection, continued to meet twice monthly each month except December, and the Family Support Group met monthly, following the Regular Monthly meetings. Monthly support meetings also were held in Bonners Ferry, facilitated by Gini Woodward and Candi Kelly, maintaining a NAMI presence in the very far north and providing encouragement to those unable to travel regularly to Sandpoint.

Publication of the NAMI Far North ‘Advocate’ newsletter continued in 2014, changing to a bi-monthly schedule. 160 copies of each issue are printed, mailed to members, and distributed to doctors’ offices, clinics, therapists’ offices and other places where information about NAMI resources and meetings would be welcomed. In addition, approximately 200 email versions are sent to our growing contact list. NAMI Far North continues to cooperate with Sandpoint Community Resource Center to create a directory of services and to disseminate information about mental health recovery to a wider audience.

### Advocacy Projects in 2014:

- NAMI Far North challenged the Idaho legislature as well as the Orofino community to discontinue using the mascot “Maniacs” in their school, their billboards, and on license plates.
- We wrote letters of support for the proposed Crisis Center in Coeur d’Alene.
- We spoke out about the loss of the precious life of Jeanetta Riley, a community member who was living with mental illness. Her death was the result of many tragic circumstances:
  - (a) A national culture that stigmatizes mental illness, considers it shameful rather than a disease like any other, discourages treatment, leads to misunderstanding and the assumption that all people with mental illness are dangerous;
  - (b) Lack of local treatment facilities for someone in psychiatric crisis to de-escalate, receive care and be referred for treatment;
  - (c) An Emergency Department unable to deal with a psychiatric crisis;
  - (d) Law enforcement first responders who were never intended to be mental health professionals
- We sent a Bonner County Sheriff’s officer to Crisis Intervention Training International, CITI Convention in Monterey Bay California to bring back to our community the progress made CIT nationally.
- We attended Health Fairs in both Bonner and Boundary County, successfully opening the dialog with many people about mental illness and the advocacy and education available through NAMI Far North.
- NAMI Far North board member, Gini Woodward, is our voice in the newly created Region 1 Behavioral Health board. She keeps us current with all regional trends and speaks out for our members’ interests.
- When NAMI Far North learned of the needs and lack of personal support for people hospitalized in State Hospital North, we initiated a new program, *Conduit of Care*, which provides gifts of hope and comfort to people in crisis and during their transition back to the communities. We published a limited edition calendar with Victor Vosen’s watercolor paintings to support the project.
- Our new Facebook page provides a daily link to mental health resources in the social media.

### Programs at the general meetings in 2014

January: Carl Hougan, spoke on Spiritual Resiliency in Mental Health

February: Sharon McCahon, Mindfulness

March: Pete Earley video from NAMI Idaho conference.

April: Dennis Thibault at Vocational Rehabilitation services.

May: Corporal Leslie Lehman, Crisis Intervention International Conference.

June: Catherine Perusse presented on Idaho Lives Project.

July: Leslie Villelli, Happy on Purpose

August: Terry Johnson, MD spoke on our community Mental Health issues

September: Joyce Broadsword presented on the scope of the Regional Behavioral Health Board and proposed legislation

November: Amber Snoddy reported on attending the NAMI national convention in Washington DC and on Borderline Personality Disorder.

Respectfully submitted,

**Amber Snoddy**

Amber Snoddy, President NAMI Far North

March 15, 2015