NAMI Greater Cleveland

Got to Know NAMI Greater Cleveland
Founded in the 1980s, NAMI Greater Cleveland (NAMI GC) currently has four full-time staff and five part-time staff. While originating as two separate affiliates, the two organizations consolidated operations and programs in February 2005 to form NAMI Greater Cleveland, serving all of Cuyahoga County. In addition to a variety of NAMI signature programs, NAMI Greater Cleveland offers seminars and mental health workshops.

What makes your Affiliate unique?
We have a hospital visitation program that's led by our peer-support specialists. Our volunteers go to local psychiatric facilities to share their own hospitalization stories and to prepare others for life outside the hospital, including providing resource networks such as NAMI GC. One hundred and forty visits to local inpatient psychiatry units at local hospitals were made in 2014, serving approximately 900 individuals.

What's been the highlight for NAMI Greater Cleveland in 2014?
We received the NAMI National Award for “Outstanding Affiliate of 2014.” We have also successfully installed faith-based initiatives and started a monthly volunteer training/orientation program for support group leaders. We also completed our NAMI GC Walks on Sept. 20.

What are some future plans and/or programs that NAMI Greater Cleveland has in the works?
We are rolling out a three-year strategic plan to our donors. In addition, we're applying to host the 2017 NAMI National Convention. We are focusing on community education programs and expanding our faith-based initiatives.

What do you like the most about the work you do for NAMI?
Working on the front lines with peers and family members. We love watching their growth and development as leaders and people, and witnessing their recoveries. We learn a lot from them and from our volunteers.

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Members of the NAMI board of directors and NAMI Executive Director Mary Gilliberti award NAMI Greater Cleveland with the NAMI Outstanding Affiliate Award at this year’s NAMI National Convention in Washington, D.C. Pictured, starting from the third in on the left: Mary Spada, Executive Director Michael Baskin, Ann McCabe, Tom McCabe, Peer Support Specialist Betsy Fela, Nancy Fitch & Community Education Coordinator Ellen Richm.

NAMI Greater Cleveland Education Programs
NAMI Greater Cleveland offers the NAMI Peer-to-Peer program, NAMI Family Support Group and NAMI In Our Own Voice presentations, as well as a faith-based education program, staff presentations and speakers’ bureaus. NAMI Greater Cleveland also offers:

• Understanding Mental Illness:
  A five-session series for families and friends of individuals diagnosed with mental illness. Each session is a one-hour education and support program. This program helps family members and friends understand the different diagnoses, how the illness affects the family and how to access resources in the community. Four courses will be provided in community locations in 2014 serving approximately 48 individuals.

• Community Education Nights:
  Presented to members of NAMI Greater Cleveland and the community, these nights host speakers who cover the mental health system and its treatment providers, as well as related topics of interest, such as updates on medication, “Ask the Doctor,” housing, employment and others. Nine programs will be presented in community locations in 2014, serving approximately 400 people.