



## 2014 Annual Report

*Dear NAMI Chicago Supporter,*

*2014 was a year of growth for NAMI Chicago. The NAMI Chicago team has grown, our programming has expanded and increased, and our community engagement has amplified. We are so grateful for all our supporters and friends who have made that possible and have encouraged our progress.*

*NAMI Chicago's participation in the Moving On program continues and we are proud to report that 968 individuals have moved from the IMDs into the community. We believe that everyone should have the opportunity to live in the least restrictive environment and we know that much work remains. Fortunately, we are joined by other advocates who continue to make affordable housing expansion a priority in 2015. We believe housing is a human right and essential to recovery.*

*As we continue to expand and reach more people with the support and education we provide, we are reminded of the importance of collaboration. The admiration we have for our esteemed community partners for their efforts to eliminate stigma and increase accessibility to mental health services abounds. Without their commitment and advocacy, without the excellent services they deliver, we wouldn't have resources to provide our callers or members.*

*We are encouraged by the legislative effort this past year surrounding mental health. 2014 has been a year full of discussion around mental health care. Debate for better care and improved access to care has been conducted at all levels of government as well as in the private sector. NAMI Chicago closely followed the two bills that were introduced in the House of Representatives last year. Though neither bill moved forward, much debate was had. Discussion was lively outside of government as well. NAMI Chicago was a part of the Kennedy Forum Illinois, which at its inaugural event fostered many different conversations surrounding the various issues on mental health in our schools, communities, penal system, businesses, and healthcare delivery system.*

*NAMI Chicago's commitment to our mission is stronger than ever. We invite all to join with us in this vital work.*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Alexa James'.

Alexa James, MS, LCSW  
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Eddy Eisenberg'.

Eddy Eisenberg  
NAMI Chicago Board President

## Reducing stigma through education

NAMI Chicago hosted five **Family to Family** classes for a total of 60 weeks of family education. Fifty-nine committed family members and caregivers completed the course. Two additional Spanish Family to Family classes were completed graduating 16 Spanish speaking family members. Our own Latino Outreach Manager, Edlyn Rodriguez spent a weekend in Washington, DC getting trained last summer and is now one of Illinois' Spanish Family to Family teacher trainers. Edlyn has since trained twelve Spanish Family to Family teachers.

**Ending the Silence** is a program delivered in high schools to students with the mission to reduce stigma, encourage and educate young children about the signs and symptoms of mental illness. The training is delivered by a family member and individual with lived experience in hopes of providing young people direct contact with someone living in recovery. Contact is the most important component in combating stigma. We are overwhelmed with gratitude that so many young adults are willing to share their story and express how mental illness has impacted their journey. This program began late this year and has already reached over 300 students.

**Pathways in Living** (PIL) is the NAMI Chicago created recovery focused education program. Like all NAMI programs, PIL is peer led. Many of our teachers are Certified Recovery Support Specialists. PIL aims to reduce the self-stigma that discourages many from seeking employment, developing social support networks, and engaging in treatment. We are excited to be offering PIL in various locations this year including our first south side class.

**Bridges of Hope** is a training that we bring to clergy and their community members. So often families seek out support from their clergy members when a family is demonstrating symptoms of a mental illness; Bridges of Hope provides an overview on signs and symptoms of mental illness, how to respond in a crisis, and how to find help for a loved one. This past summer we presented to two churches reaching over 215 individuals. We are so grateful to have been invited into those communities and hope to bring this great training to other religious communities in 2015.

This year we accepted a grant from NAMI that enabled us to deliver **Compartiendo Esperanza**, an anti-stigma educational program delivered in Spanish to community members. Compartiendo Esperanza is an interactive 90-minute presentation in Spanish. It was developed in order to create awareness about mental health problems and assist Latinos in finding the help they need. During this presentation, a family member and person living with MI give an overview of mental health problems, treatment, and recovery and provide information about NAMI programs. NAMI Chicago has conducted five presentations, providing contact and education to 93 people!

2014 was the year of **public education**. Our team worked tirelessly along with many volunteers who shared their stories at public trainings. Collectively we presented to over 44 hospitals, schools, and community service agencies, engaging over 963 people. We realized education alone does not eliminate stigma, but the conversations and connections to resources that it provides is invaluable in fulfilling our mission.

NAMI Chicago is so grateful for its strong partnership with the Chicago Police Department. We provided training at all 15 **CIT** (Crisis Intervention Team) trainings this year to 330 officers. Seventy-six officers went through the additional 40 hour advanced CIT training and we hosted two refresher courses for 62 Advanced CIT officers last summer.

## **Reducing Stigma through support & advocacy**

In 2014 we hosted 58 **support groups** supporting 473 attendees! These groups focused on families, individuals, and individuals with lived experience in both Spanish and English. We are so grateful to the peer leaders that continue to guide these groups. In August we began hosting support groups at Cook County Jail for female detainees who have experienced trauma. We have hosted 27 groups connecting with 270 women.

## **Reducing stigma through policy and advocacy**

NAMI Chicago partners with several advocacy groups including the **Mental Health Summit** & the **Behavioral Health Advocates** group. 2014 was an active year for the creation and implementation of mental health policy on a local, state, and national level. NAMI Chicago worked alongside our fellow mental health community advocates to support and promote discussion for better understanding the various mental illnesses, as well as advocated for improved and better access to care. This year we were proud to be interviewed by The Chicago Tribune, WBEZ, Univision, Fox Chicago News, Reuters, the Chicago Sun-Times, The Atlantic, and Austin Talks and other local publications about the climate of mental health services, policies, and communities' needs.

On October 15<sup>th</sup>, NAMI Chicago gave **testimony** during the Cook County Board of Commissioners Committee on Legislation and Intergovernmental Relations on the status of Cook County Mental Health needs. NAMI Chicago's testimony discussed need for improved community support, as well as improved coordination between various levels of government. NAMI Chicago also voiced support and put our name on witness slips supporting State legislation that is now law. Two of those bills are the Custody Relinquishment Prevention Act, which addressed juvenile mental health; and a repeal of a section of the SMART Act of 2013 exempting antipsychotic medications from the four drug limit rule.

## **2014 Donors**

We thank our donors for your incredible generosity. The donations we received this year ranged from \$1 to \$20,000. We are in awe of your commitment and support of NAMI Chicago. You inspire us and allow us to continue our work.