

Pushing back the darkness

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The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of Alabama will celebrate the 30th Annual Meeting August 25-27, at the Drury Inn & Suites Hotel, in Montgomery. Please visit www.namialabama for the agenda/program. Commissioner Jim Perdue will open the official meeting on August 26 with a proclamation, signed by Governor Robert Bentley, acknowledging NAMI Alabama for receiving the NAMI Outstanding State Organization of the Year Award.

On Aug. 25, a NAMIWalks Alabama Kickoff/Informational Meeting will be held at 6 p.m. Individuals will receive packets of materials to promote the Sept. 24 NAMIWalksAlabama fundraiser which will be held at the Wynton Blount Cultural Park, in Montgomery.

University of Alabama Head Football Coach Nick Saban, who is serving as the State Honorary Chairperson, said... "I am honored to serve as Honorary Chairperson for this year's NAMIWalks Alabama. Mental illness impacts so many families across our country and we appreciate all that NAMI does to help provide the support and education to those who suffer from mental health disorders.

Hopefully, NAMIWalks Alabama will create more awareness and generate the necessary funds vital to the health and well-being of our state.

The purpose of the 5K fundraiser is to support the education, advocacy, and support programs of NAMI Alabama. NAMIWalks is a joint effort of NAMI, NAMI Alabama, and NAMI Alabama Affiliates. "Our promise is to build better lives for Alabamians affected by mental illness," said executive director, Wanda Laird. Jane Nichols, who is serving as the NAMI Alabama Board Walk Chairperson, encourages everyone to join us in surpassing our goal of raising \$65,000.

Every year, regardless of race, age, religion, or economic status, mental illness impacts the lives of at least one in five individuals across the United States – that is nearly 60 million Americans. Mental illness drains our economy of more than \$80 billion every year. One-fourth of all social security disability payments are for individuals with mental illness.

For sponsorship opportunities, please call 334-396-4797. There is no registration fee for the Walk. Registration will begin at 8:00 a.m. and



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the Walk will begin at 9:00 a.m. (on September 24). “We need teams to walk as we promote our theme, “I Am Stigma Free,” said Jane Nichols. Please visit www.namiwalks.org or www.namialabama.org to serve as a sponsor or join a team.

NAMI is the largest grassroots mental health organization and is a life saver to many, offering help, hope, and information to the millions of people affected by mental illness. NAMI members and leaders are visible and formidable advocates, owning a well-earned reputation for taking on hard battles and winning them, ensuring a national commitment to research as well as access to services and treatment that promote recovery.