



# High Country

## NAMIWalks

My name is Jennifer Retarides and I am a student at Appalachian State University. I have been dealing with depression since I was twelve. Notice I said *dealing* with depression rather than saying I have been *suffering* from it. My reason for this is simple: I don't suffer. Just because I have a mental illness doesn't mean I have to live my life as a victim. I have been able to take advantage of some great resources in my life thus far that have helped me cope with my depression and live as a fully functional and (generally) happy young woman.

Through counseling and psychotherapy, I have discovered my strengths and weaknesses and learned how to be proud of who I am and what I *can* do rather than ashamed of what I *think* I cannot. Since counseling was so helpful for me, I have decided to pursue a graduate degree in clinical mental health counseling so that I can provide for others the kind of life-changing help that I was so fortunate to receive. Then I got to thinking; why should I wait until I finish graduate school to start helping others? When I heard of NAMI I decided that I wanted to show my support for the mental health community by fundraising along with members of NAMI High Country for the 2014 North Carolina NAMI Walk.

The North Carolina NAMI walk takes place at 9:00 AM on the Dorothea Dix Campus in Raleigh. It is a gentle two mile walk where caring individuals will join together in support of positive mental health and an end to stigma. NAMI uses the money raised for the event to provide support groups, outreach programs, and education to those in need. Some

examples of these programs include the toll-free NAMI HelpLine which is available for information, support, and referrals as well as NAMI on Campus programs which provide similar resources catered to college students. NAMI and affiliates work hard to make sure folks from all strata of society have access to multiple forms of mental health care and support. I believe that NAMI is supplying vital life-saving information and materials throughout the community and is a driving force for positivity and growth in an ever-changing world that needs care and support now more than ever.

NAMI Walks are great events because they are fun, community-centered events that spread awareness of mental health issues to the greater community. The NAMI Walks boast the largest and most successful mental health awareness events across the nation with walks in multiple cities in almost every state! Since mental illness effects one in four Americans, it is really important that mental health groups reach the largest audience possible and by either participating in the 2014 North Carolina NAMI Walk or donating to NAMI High Country's Walk team "High Country Hope", you can contribute to this great spread of awareness and of support. I hope to see you there in your best blue and orange clothes!



-Jennifer Retarides

Jennifer is a Junior Psychology major at Appalachian State University who enjoys helping others and is committed to spend her life doing so. She hopes to become a licensed clinical mental health counselor and specialize in substance abuse counseling

## Next Meeting

**Monday, April 7, 2014**

### **Screening of “Call Me Crazy.”**

In April, Lifetime Television premiered *Call Me Crazy*, a series of interconnected short films that deal with the subject of mental illness. Through five short stories named after each title character—Lucy, Eddie, Allison, Grace and Maggie—powerful relationships built on hope and triumph give viewers a new understanding of what happens when a loved one struggles with mental illness. This TV movie was co-produced with NAMI. *\*This meeting will run from 7pm-9pm*

**Our meetings are in the Watauga County Public Library conference room. Watauga County Public Library in downtown Boone is located at 140 Queen Street, behind Mast General Store. If you get there before 7pm you will be able to go in the main door. After that we will enter and exit through the side door.**



## A little word from your High Country Hope Team Captain Jenn Matthews!



NAMI High Country and friends will be participating in the 2014 NAMIWalks in Raleigh, NC. The walk is on May 3<sup>rd</sup> at 10 am at the Dorothea Dix Campus. The bigger our team the better! We would love for Appalachian students and the Boone and surrounding community to join us in this walk to fight against mental illness stigma. NAMIWalks is celebrating its 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and is the most successful mental health awareness and fundraising event in America! Don't miss out on this wonderful opportunity of advocacy. Register soon with team High Country Hope to receive a custom team t-shirt.

Come join the fun by going to the link below:

<http://namiwalks.nami.org/highcountryhope>

From our Team Page, click on the “Join My Team” button to register and help us fundraise. If you can't join us, you can also support our team by making a donation online.

Welcome to NAMI High Country. NAMI, which stands for National Alliance on Mental Illness, is a National Organization. We are a local chapter that serves Watauga, NC and surrounding counties. If you are a person living with a mental illness, a friend or family member of someone living with a mental illness, a student interested in mental health issues, or a professional working in the mental health field – we hope you'll be involved!

If you would like to receive this newsletter by mail or be added to our email list please call or email us. Our contact info is below. Professionals, feel free to make copies of our newsletter and give to clients or place in your office.

If Watauga County Schools are out the day of a monthly meeting we will not meet.