



# High Country

## NAMIWalk

It was a beautiful day in Raleigh as over a thousand people gathered May 3<sup>rd</sup> for the 2014 NAMIWalk North Carolina. There were balloons, bouncy houses, and vendors, as well the unbeatable smells of Starbucks coffee and Dunkin Donuts! From face paint to family dogs, it was a vibrant and uplifting scene.

Many teams sported bright T-shirts, but High Country Hope (Jenn M. and her mom, Caroline and her bro Joseph, Sarah, Joe, Gray, Daris, Laura Anne and John) put them all to shame with our neon lime, orange, blue and purple "End the Mystery!" tees. The backs of our shirts read "Mental illnesses are not mysteries! They are neurological disorders" with the NAMI High Country logo. Although we didn't win the T-shirt contest, we felt we got our message across!



We were glad to see our friends Deby Dihoff, Jennifer Rothman (J-Roth!), Brenda Piper and former NAMIWalk Guru Susan King Cope from NAMI North Carolina, as well as to meet four new members of the state office staff. Their hot pink shirts complimented our Day-Glo colors nicely (see photos on Facebook.)

The spirit of progress, acceptance, research, recovery and hope was in abundance among this dynamic group of walkers. One member of NAMI Moore County dressed as the statue of liberty and spoke movingly about our right to freedom from stigma. I had a fascinating conversation with two researchers from the Duke University Lab for Psychiatric Neuroengineering about their exciting studies on deep brain stimulation.

Overall, the Walk raised more than \$109,000 for NAMI, and High Country Hope raised over \$1100 ourselves. Half of that will go to the state organization and half comes straight to NAMI High Country to support our programs. There is nothing like a NAMIWalk to make you optimistic about the future of mental health!

-Laura Anne Middlesteadt



L.A. is the vice pres. of NAMI High Country and a frequent In Our Own Voice presenter.

She is the author, under the pen name L.A. Nicholson, of the book *What Doesn't Kill Us: My Battle with Anxiety* (Createspace: Nov. 2011.)

## Next Meeting

Monday, June 2, 2014

Vanessa Brumfield

WRAP

Vanessa Brumfield works at Smoky Mountain LME-MCO as a liaison to Smoky Mountain LME-MCO's Consumer & Family Advisory Committee and Human Rights Committee. She is part of Smoky's Consumer Relations Team, which also includes Family Partners and Peer & Family Support Specialists. Vanessa is a certified WRAP® Facilitator. At the June 2 meeting, Vanessa will speak about Wellness Recovery Action Plan® (WRAP®) and how having a plan can help deal with health and life challenges.

She will also give an update on Smoky Mountain's efforts to offer WRAP classes throughout the 23 counties in its service area, and will share information about local resources for help with behavioral health crises. **This meeting will run from 7pm-8pm**

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.



## Peer to Peer Classes Offered



NAMI High Country will be offering two Peer to Peer classes in 2014.

Boone Class: June 23 – July 28. Mondays and Thursdays (except Thursday July 3) at Watauga Public Library from 4 – 6 pm. with Karen Gross and Tammy Sanabria.

Ashe Class: August 21 – September 25. Mondays and Thursdays (except Monday September 1) at Daymark Recovery Services in Ashe Co from 3 – 5 pm with Karen Gross and Glenda Smith.

To sign up for this free class, or if you have any questions, contact Karen Gross at [karengross@skybest.com](mailto:karengross@skybest.com) or 828-406-1421 (cell phone).

NAMI Peer-to-Peer is a recovery-focused educational program for adults who wish to establish and maintain wellness in response to mental health challenges. The course provides critical information and strategies related to living with mental illness.

Visit [www.namihighcountry.com](http://www.namihighcountry.com) for more information.

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!

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