

FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SHARON MCCARTHY

As everyone was preparing for our fourth Nor'easter of the winter, NAMI Westchester held its Sixth Annual NAMIWalks Kick-off Event. Over the past four years, Marie Considine, our Director of Development, has focused this event on engaging the community, especially team captains. Without team captains, we could not raise the necessary funds and have an amazing number of walkers each year.

Team captains received a NAMIWalks bag of items that will help them lead a successful fundraising team plus a tin of mints, NAMIWalks car magnet and a special NAMIWalks Westchester Team Captain coffee mug. Nine additional teams signed up, bringing our total teams to date to 42. Team captain Allison Corbie discussed the recent team event she hosted in conjunction with a performance by Alvin Ailey Dancers. We also heard from Joe Glazer, the new Deputy Commissioner for the Westchester County Dept. of Community Mental Health. Joe has a strong career in mental health and we are looking forward to working closely with him.

Kris Eschman, Manager of Fund Development & Events with NAMI, shared the national perspective and was impressed with the enthusiasm of all attendees and the ways in which we involve everyone in our mission and goals. We provided pertinent information for managing a successful team, while enjoying delicious refreshments from Taylored Menus and the Greenburgh Public Library's great space and lovely quilt exhibit. Littman Krooks, LLC was our Kick-off Sponsor. Marion Walsh, a partner with the firm and a NAMIWalks team captain, spoke about the company's commitment to our mission. Westchester County Deputy County Executive Ken Jenkins was able to join us as well, which shows the commitment of county government to NAMI Westchester and to mental health.

Blain Bradley, Metro Marketing Team Leader for Whole Foods Market Westchester County, accepted our 2018 Community Spirit Award. Blain assured us that Whole Foods Market and he personally will continue to support our endeavors. We are grateful in being able to establish this partnership and look forward to their continued involvement.

One of the highlights of the event was our staff fashion show. Jennifer, Karin, Fabiola and Patrice strutted the "runway" with the prizes that walkers can earn by raising funds from \$250 to \$1,500, including a choice of cap or stainless steel tumbler, long-sleeved wicking shirt, microfleece jacket, and rain slicker. Our small staff makes this event successful and fun. We are very lucky to have such dedicated individuals on our staff.

Thanks to great donations, five team captains won raffle prizes including pairs of tickets to Lucy's Laugh Lounge, \$50 gift card to Whole Foods Market, and \$200 dinner at Valbella Restaurant.

If you have not signed up your team, now is the time to do so via www.namiwalks.org/westchester and then call the office to pick up your NAMIWalks captain bag. Saturday, May 19 will be here in seven short weeks!



Sharon McCarthy with Blain Bradley from Whole Foods Market, this year's recipient of the Community Spirit Award

