Message From Executive Director

Let freedom ring for people affected by schizophrenia-related brain illnesses! Millions of individuals deserve appropriate treatment and the research to determine the causes and what those treatments are. It is time for everyone to recognize the BRAIN is the most important organ of our body and people living with a brain illness deserve the same opportunities for treatment as other organ illnesses. People deserve a bed in a hospital not a prison if their brain is causing symptoms.

Congratulations on your hard work, calls and messages to your representatives urging the passage of HR 2646 The Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act passed 422 – 4 in The House of Representatives, NOW on to the Senate - Contact your Senators for their vote to start fixing the system.

If you have not yet joined the BRAIN Campaign, join the hundreds of others who have and change the way people are treated. Everyone visiting our exhibit at the NAMI conference enthusiastically support the BRAIN Campaign.

Volunteers are working every day to help answer questions, provide support, find resources and prepare for the upcoming event in Houston. November
19th will be a special day to learn how to start and maintain a Schizophrenia Alliance (SA) group and have an evening of celebration. Mark your calendars.

SARDAA will have a Public Service Announcement in the Southwest Airlines in flight media during the months of October and November. Look for it.

Thank you to all who spend many hours providing support for those who need it most.

Linda Stalters, MSN
Executive Director
Schizophrenia And Related Disorders Alliance of America

Become a Brain Advocate!
Click Here to View the Video

The House of Representatives passed the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act (HR 2646)!

The Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act (HR 2646) was passed with an overwhelming majority (422-2).

“Comprehensive mental health reform is urgently needed in our country, and this bipartisan legislation helps address this critical need,” said APA President Maria A. Oquendo, M.D. Today's vote sends a message that America needs change in the mental health system.
SARDAA would like to thank Rep. Tim Murphy and all of you who have worked many hours, educating others and urging your representatives!

“What has made this work are…the thousands and thousands and thousands of letters and phone calls to members of Congress saying that we’ve got to do something about mental health.” Rep. Tim Murphy (R-PA).

Your voice makes a difference.
Your voice could be a life saver!

A vote will now take place in the Senate, please contact your Senator today. Let them know the mental health system is broken and needs to be fixed!

Click here for Contact information for your local Senator

Brain Campaign:

Take the Pledge

I will change my language from Behavioral or Mental disorder to Brain disorder.
I will educate others to change their language from mental illnesses to brain illness.
I will not use stigmatizing, discriminatory or derogatory language related to brain disorders.
I will encourage my peers, family members, and colleagues to advocate when they see discriminatory language or practices in the media or in public.
I will advocate that people with brain disorders have equal and comprehensive health care.
I will treat all people with brain disorders with respect and compassion.
On July 4TH, we celebrated America’s 240TH birthday. 240 years seems old to us in America, but consider that China can trace its civilization back 4000 years or more. What does China have in common with America? One thing is that there is a SA group forming in China.

As SA Administrator, I have been sending and receiving emails with a woman in China who wants to start a SA group in a psychiatric hospital there. She has the same cares and concerns as others in the United States who want to start SA groups. We have SA groups forming in Kentucky, 2 in Florida, one in Portsmouth, Virginia and another in Westland, Michigan. Today I have received an email from a man in India, who wants to start a group there!

As America celebrates its birthday, we should be thankful that we have the freedom to form SA groups by and for persons with brain disorders. Also we should remember all the men and women who fought and died to protect our freedom to assemble peaceably. Freedom is not free! Happy birthday America!!!

We are now accepting messages from SA Members to include in the newsletter. Please submit your message to: info@sardaa.org or mail to SARDAA PO Box 941222, Houston, TX 77094-8222 for consideration for next month’s newsletter.

Your story might be included in a SARDAA newsletter and might be published in a future edition of the SA Blue Book.

Message From Family & Friends Coordinator
SARDAA FFS, Families and Friends, serves as a supportive group for those living in a support role of one challenged with Schizophrenia or related disorders. We are foremost concerned about being there for our loved ones, but also, very importantly, we must be there for ourselves. A couple of comments which I've come across which resonate with me are to 'take care of your body...where else will you live'? And also, 'I am my lifelong partner...others may come and go in life, but I'll be there throughout', hence it is of utmost importance to treat oneself with the care we readily give to others.

I am a nonprofessional 'health aficionado', devoting possibly an inordinate amount of time to this in my life, but given fairly good health in my retirement, it seems I have chosen well. Ideas I've come across from valued health professionals, and through my own natural and holistic search of a healthy lifestyle, include efforts of transitioning to a whole foods way of eating in place of commercially prepared foods; participation, ideally 5 times weekly for approx 30 minutes in 'FPA' a.k.a. 'fun physical activity' as opposed to struggling with the need to 'exercise'; another option in this realm is the fairly new idea of aerobic 'interval training' which is shorter in time than 30 min for those of us who are time challenged but likely more effective in preserving health. Practicing Qigong and/or Tai Chi are health supportive in many ways. Committing to get 7 to 8 hours of uninterrupted sleep, which serves as our repair and regenerative time, is very important. Striving to reduce stress in our lives is crucial through practices of mindfulness, meditation which reduces stress at a cellular level, yoga, etc. I find that listening to some classical music can be uplifting during a stressful or down mood. Time spent in nature can be renewing. And last but not least, being sure to set aside time EVERY day to do something enjoyable for oneself, whatever that may be. A favorite of mine includes sitting in my yard with coffee, a book in hand and dog at my side. These practices, which if we incorporate into our every day, will support us and may bring well deserved peace into our lives. Taking care of ourselves is not selfish, rather strengthening for us to meet the challenges in our lives. I wish you well.

With heart,
Mary Ross, FFS Coordinator
Editorial

Mental Illness Doesn't Kill, Hate Does
by Dustin DeMoss

Writer, Veteran, SARDAA Board Member and Individual Focused on Brain Health Reform

The recent tragedy in Dallas, Texas illustrates a point I've wanted to make for a long time; it's unfortunate and totally tragic that this happened, but it is hate that kills rather than mental illness. Hate for society or academia, hate for either side of ethnic diversity, hate for a group, hate for colonial sympathizers (as evidenced by the Tutu’s and Hutu’s in Rwanda). It is categorically and without denial that hate is what kills; not mental illness.

In fact, there are numerous studies that have been done to show the position I'm
You can find those studies using Google but since linking to it and educating the public does not work to reduce the stigma of mental illness, nor does writing about, making a movie about it, or advancing this position in any logical, contemporary, innovative way amounts to anything. This is because nobody wants to hear the truth when the truth about mental illness is suppressed by greedy, illogical, contemptuous, and shady characters who do work to dehumanize and stigmatize the population from making historically inaccurate depictions of those with mental illness, or advancing their own agenda for organizations and themselves in the sphere of advocacy.

The deception of mental illness being the result of mass murders and shootings across America is inaccurate. Yes, people have mental illness. But certainly, mental illness alone is not the reason for the spread of mass shootings. Hate is. That is what I want you to learn from this.

For instance, myself, I suffer from schizoaffective disorder. I have military training. But have I committed a mass shooting due to my mental illness? No, I have not. Why is this? Because I do not have hate in my heart. I do not hate society even though at times it is almost as if I am a pariah in it due to the perceptions society has of mental illness. I do not hate my fellow man or woman. I do not have hate in my heart. I have not killed anyone because of my mental illness.

My opinion, which may differ from yours, is that I believe essentially hate is the reason people kill. I'd encourage you to think about how mental illness is portrayed and challenge the perceptions that are fed to you on a daily basis.

Emmett Biffle speaks out about Brain Advocacy at the Detroit Schizophrenia Alliance (SA) Workshop View here

Federal Grant Funds Now Available to Launch New AOT Programs!
They said it couldn't happen! As a result of our dedicated advocacy and your support, the federal government has - for the first time ever - allocated $15 million for assisted outpatient treatment (AOT).
SAMHSA posted a grant announcement earlier this week inviting state and local authorities to apply for up to four years of federal support of NEW AOT PROGRAMS.

Applications are due July 16, 2016.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention released a new report, Increase in Suicide in the United States, 1999-2014. This profound study tragically shows a 24 percent increase in suicide rates in the U.S. over the past 15 years. The vast majority of people who die as a result of suicide have a brain illness such as schizophrenia, depression, bipolar disorder, and post-traumatic stress.

If there was a study revealing deaths for any other medical condition there would be an immediate declaration of a medical emergency. This study is an urgent call to action for improved access to care, elimination of stigma and improved treatment.

Women Veterans
Erika Castle

This month’s veteran’s geared section will focus on female veterans and mental health. According to womenshealth.gov approximately 30% of veterans who were deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan have reported symptoms of mental disorder. These disorders include Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, and mood disorder. Their research has also shown that women are more likely than men to develop chronic, or long-lasting, PTSD after experiencing a traumatic event. More information can be found directly on their website www.Womenshealth.gov.

The Veterans Affairs have found that women veterans are less likely to utilize their VA care which is mostly due to lack of knowledge regarding their VA benefits available. They offer a full range of health care for women such as
primary care, specialty care, mental health, disease prevention, emergency care, and women’s health specialty care which includes advanced breast and gynecological care, maternal care, and some infertility treatments.

Each VA Medical Center has a Women Veterans Program Manager who assists with coordinating needed services, advising and advocating for women. Resources are not only limited to mental disorder but also homelessness, maternity care, Military Sexual Trauma, and drug or alcohol abuse. If you are interested in this program, please contact your nearest VA facility. You can also call the Women Veterans Call Center (WVCC) Monday through Saturday by calling 1-855-VA-WOMEN (1-855-82-6636). Over 58,000 women veterans have been serviced with this call center. You can also learn more online by visiting their website, click here.

(6-29-16) An Open Letter to Fairfax Board of Supervisor Pat Herrity

The Washington Post recently quoted you voicing your objection to quickly releasing the names of police officers involved in shootings because: “There are a lot of crazy people out there.”

I realize you were expressing your concern about protecting officers from retribution and will assume that your choice of words was not ill intended. Sadly, they were.

My adult son is one of those “crazy people out there.” When he was in college, he was diagnosed with bipolar disorder, a mental illness. He did not do anything to bring this illness upon himself anymore than someone who has a heart attack or cancer. Yet for the next seven years, he was repeatedly hospitalized, arrested after breaking into an unoccupied house to take a bubble bath while delusional, and shot twice with a taser by the Fairfax County police. Part of the reason why he couldn’t get help is because of significant budget cuts in Fairfax for crucial community mental health services.
Today, my son has been stable seven years. He works as a peer to peer specialist on a diversion team that helps Fairfax residents with mental illnesses avoid jail and get help for their illnesses. He pays taxes, is enrolled in graduate school, and is doing great. Your reference about “crazy people out there” promotes stigma. It unfairly links persons with mental illness with violence. It warns the public that “crazy” people are dangerous and you need to be careful to avoid them. This language reminds those with mental disorders that they are different and not valued by society. Stigma has been shown as a reason why many of the 57.7 million Americans with a diagnosable mental illness do not seek help.

The Fairfax residents who concerned you are persons with anger management problems, criminals, residents with anti-social personalities or persons bearing grudges seeking revenge. They are the ones who you need to be wary of — not the “crazy people out there” – who numerous studies have shown are no more likely than anyone else to be violent and, in fact, are victims of violence more than they are perpetrators.

_The post Pat Herrity: Your Words About “Crazy People” Were Stigmatizing appeared first on Pete Earley._

*** HOW TO START AND GROW A SA GROUP ***
By Margery Wakefield

Welcome to SA (Schizophrenics Alliance)! I understand that you want to start an SA group, and that is great! [READ MORE](#)

_The Lewis Family's Review about SARDAA:_

“We feel so sincerely blessed to have the opportunity to know such an organization as SARDAA. Over the past year of our experiences with SARDAA, we have learned so much about brain illness that we never really knew before. The expression “Knowledge is power” certainly applies in our opinion to SARDAA’s Brain Campaign – to educate society and bring awareness to an illness that is real, which affects many people around the world. Thank you SARDAA for such tremendous efforts!”

Please leave your reviews about SARDAA on our Facebook page [HERE](#). Your opinions are very important to us!

"Behind the Wall is where families harbor untold stories. They start when a loved one’s mental illness begins to manifest, changing the lives of everyone..."
"Although nearly 20 million Americans suffer from a serious mental illness, there remains a stigma against brain disorders, discouraging honesty and understanding. Often conflated with violence, mental illness remains hidden behind misconceptions."

READ MORE ON THEIR WEBSITE AT
WWW.BEHINDTHEWALLSTORIES.COM

Phone Support Groups

SA Conference Call Groups
Only for individuals diagnosed
Sundays - 7 pm Eastern Time
Mondays - 4 pm Eastern Time
Thursdays - 7 pm Eastern Time
Fridays - 7 pm Eastern Time

Spirit of SA Conference Call
For SA Leaders and Potential Leaders
First Wednesday of Each Month - 7 pm Eastern Time

Family and Friends Support Group
Not for individuals diagnosed
Every Tuesday - 7 pm Eastern Time

Toll-free Calls
Call-in information (855) 640-8271
Entry Code 88286491#
International Number (720) 362-6499
The Legal Action Center released Health Insurance for Addiction and Mental Health Care: A Guide to the Federal Parity Law. This guide explains rights to insurance coverage for substance use and mental disorders. Answers to questions such as:

- My health insurer denied me inpatient addiction treatment. Now what?
- My health insurer will only approve 2 days of residential addiction treatment at a time. What can I do?
- My health insurer’s network has no doctors who prescribe Suboxone. What are my rights?
- My health insurer says my psychologist visits are not medically necessary. Is there anything I can do? READ MORE

Bringing Faith and Spirituality into Mental Health Care A person's faith and spirituality can be comforting in hard times. Yet this important aspect is often overlooked by health and mental health care providers. READ MORE

What is Schizophrenia? Read the National Institute of Mental Health's flyer with more information about Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia’s Strongest Known Genetic Risk Deconstructed Suspect gene may trigger runaway synaptic pruning during adolescence READ MORE

Mental Health and Civil Liberties: Unwell and Untouchable Last November, Washington political scientist Norman Ornstein reminded us of the flip side of mental illness: those who still suffer silently and either refuse or are unable to acknowledge their illness. READ MORE
The town of Kingsport, TN trains first responders to detect signs of mental health problems. Did you know if there is a de-escalation unit or a crisis intervention team as part of the police force in your town? If police are called to a situation it is important to alert them and 911 that this is someone with a mental illness and request a de-escalation unit or crisis intervention team. READ MORE

Families Abandoned. A new investigative series by the Boston Globe examines the consequences of the psychiatric bed shortage in Massachusetts and across the nation. READ MORE

Can a Blood Test Diagnose Mental Illness? READ MORE

Insights into genetic variation driving schizophrenia View Webinar
Speaker: Steven McCarroll, PhD
Associate Professor of Genetics
Harvard University

Watch Steven McCarroll as he discusses his team's work trying to find the underlying causes of schizophrenia.

This webinar covers:
The complex genomic interactions implicated in the development of schizophrenia
How cellular pruning affects adolescent brain development
How variation in the major histocompatibility complex (MHC) may drive pathogenic mechanisms in neural function

Donate to SARDAA

Help for people with schizophrenia and related disorders.

SARDAA Health Storylines is developed in partnership with the Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America, and is powered by the Health Storylines™ platform from Self Care Catalysts Inc.

Now it is easy to record details and specifics about symptoms, medication, moods, and more. Choose what you want to track, and see all the information you need to help you or your loved one who is living with schizophrenia and related disorders.
How to Access SARDAA Health Storylines:
The mobile app is FREE for all users on iOS and Android devices. There is also a web version available, accessible through the browser of any desktop computer or mobile device.

Schizophrenia Health Storylines™

Please take a moment to find out how you can help support SARDAA, not only today but every day - at no extra cost to you!!

When you do your shopping at AmazonSmile, Amazon donates 0.5% of the purchase price to Schizophrenia And Related Disorders Alliance Of America.

IT'S SO SIMPLE: just bookmark this link http://smile.amazon.com/ch/33-1213657, start shopping and support us every time you shop.

Texas and Louisiana Friends:
Re-Enroll Your Kroger Plus Cards Beginning August 1st

You can support SARDAA without spending a penny! Register Schizophrenia and Related Disorders on your Kroger Plus Card and they will donate a percentage to SARDAA each time you use your card.

Please register online at www.krogercommunityrewards.com
Link to: Schizophrenia and Related Disorders–Kroger Plus Card 90425

Help Change Lives -- Donate Now

Thank you to those who already made a donation - Every contribution makes a difference.
Sincerely,
Linda Stalters, SARDA Executive Director