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education, advocacy and support for people living with mental illness



# NAMI - Yolo Outlook

a chapter of NAMI, the Nation's Voice on Mental Illness

## NAMI-Yolo Winter Events

**Date:** Thursday, February 26, 2009, 6:30 p.m.

**Event:** Winter Mental Health Dinner

**Speaker:** Brian Wetzel

**Location:** Veteran's Memorial Center  
203 East 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Davis

**More Info:** Leave a message at (530) 756-8181 and someone will return your call. Go to [www.namiyolo.org](http://www.namiyolo.org)

**Date:** Wednesday, March 4, 2009, 6:30 p.m.

**Speaker:** To be announced

**Location:** Cesar Chavez Apartments Conference Room  
1220 Olive Drive, Davis (North of Lexington  
Apartments on EAST side of Olive Drive.  
Room in office building at end of parking lot)

**Potluck:** You needn't bring food to join in the potluck but if you can, please bring the following if your last name begins with:  
**A-H:** Salad    **I-P:** Dessert    **Q-Z:** Main Dish

**Date:** Wednesday, April 1, 2009, 6:30 p.m.

**Speaker:** To be announced

**Location:** Destiny Hall, 124 Lincoln Ave. Woodland

**Potluck:** You needn't bring food to join in the potluck but if you can, please bring the following if your last name begins with:  
**A-H:** Dessert    **I-P:** Main Dish    **Q-Z:** Salad

**Date:** Wednesday, May 6, 2009, 6:30 p.m.

**Speaker:** To be announced

**Location:** Cesar Chavez Apartments Conference Room  
1220 Olive Drive, Davis (North of Lexington  
Apartments on EAST side of Olive Drive.  
Room in office building at end of parking lot)

**Potluck:** You needn't bring food to join in the potluck but if you can, please bring the following if your last name begins with:  
**A-H:** Main Dish    **I-P:** Salad    **Q-Z:** Dessert

## Membership Drive

NAMI-Yolo needs to retain and extend our membership for those who are concerned about Mental Health issues in Yolo County and in need of services and support for themselves and their family and friends. The membership donations that we receive every year are the key support for our building and running the numerous programs of education advocacy and support for the affected community.

Memberships run for the calendar year starting in January, although, if you joined in the last three months of 2008, that will count through December 2009. There is a renewal form in this newsletter, please renew now so you do not forget and we do not have the expense of sending out numerous reminders. Also please spread the word about the benefits to the work that we do and encourage others to join and participate like yourself.

Perhaps you will consider extending your membership to the patron level (\$50) or higher? Also please continue to join in our activities, seek help, communicate your ideas to any one of the Board members, and tell us what activities in which you would like to volunteer your help, thank you.

# NAMI–Yolo

**Address:** P.O. Box 447  
Davis, CA 95617

**Phone:** (530) 756-8181

**Website:** [www.namiyolo.org](http://www.namiyolo.org)

**Email:** [friends@namiyolo.org](mailto:friends@namiyolo.org)

NAMI-Yolo is an affiliate of NAMI and NAMI California.

## **2008-09 Board of Directors**

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Vice President..... Nancy Temple

Secretary..... Joann Turner

Treasurer. Richard Bellows

Meetings. Roger. Pehlke

.Jim. Holverstatt...

..... Steve Thomas

..... Walter Shwe

..... Joan Weiss

.Carol. Shea.....

.Lill. Birdsall.....

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Steve Thomas

### **Davis Family Support**

Jan Garrison

### **Family to Family**

Dee Dee Levine

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### **NAMI Helpline**

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Leslie Carroll

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### **Phone Tree**

Donna Bousquet

### **Religious Outreach**

Joan Weiss

### **Seeds of Hope**

Leslie Carroll

### **Spanish Family Support**

MariaElena Vega

### **Walk for Mental Health**

Donna Bousquet

### **Woodland Meetings**

Al & Joan Weiss

# President's Note

## by Stuart Buchan, NAMI–Yolo President

These are difficult times at many levels, Federal, State and County finances are stretched thin so we can expect programs to be reviewed, curtailed and even eliminated. Mental Health will doubtless not be perceived as a priority unless we vigorously advocate for it. Please do that, add your individual voice of protest wherever you see or hear of services to the severely mentally ill being adversely impacted, advocacy for these very disadvantaged members of our community is a critical part of our mission. We can do much together.

We can also expect that the burden already on families and friends will increase. If you do need support in your care giving efforts for a fellow consumer or an ill friend or family member then engage the help of others in NAMI – Yolo who may have prior parallel experience that will be a road map for you. Attend our support groups or monthly meetings and make new friends in our community that may have a different but useful perspective. That is what standing together means being here for each other.

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## NAMI Connection

### New Support Group for People with Mental Illness

As most of you know, there are few support options for people with mental illness in Yolo County. All this is about to change. Beginning Friday, February 6, 2009, NAMI-Yolo is starting a weekly support group, NAMI-Connection, a nationwide NAMI-sponsored recovery support group for adults with serious mental illness.

**When:** Every Friday (Starting February 6<sup>th</sup>)

**Time:** 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

**Where:** Destiny Hall, 124 Lincoln Ave., Woodland

The support group is free of charge. Anyone with a mental illness is welcome to attend the group anytime they feel they need someone to talk to -- there is no need to register. The group is led by trained individuals who are in recovery themselves. They understand the daily challenges and can offer encouragement and support. All groups are confidential - people can share as much or as little personal information as they want.

Too often, mental illness can be an isolating experience accompanied by profound anxiety. For those diagnosed with a mental illness, talking with someone to share coping strategies and insights, as well as problems and concerns, can be an important link in the path to recovery. For more information, visit our website at [www.namiyolo.org/connections.html](http://www.namiyolo.org/connections.html) or phone the NAMI Helpline at (530) 756-8181.

## NAMI-Yolo Family Support

### Woodland Family Support in Spanish

**Day:** Call (530) 756-7001 **Time:** Call for time  
**Location:** 409 Lincoln Avenue, Woodland  
**Coordinators:** MariaElena Vega  
Amparo Hernandez at (530) 662-2274

### Davis Family Support in English

**Day:** 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays **Time:** 7:00- 8:30 p.m.  
**Location:** Cesar Chavez Housing Complex  
Conference Room, 1220 Olive Drive, Davis  
North of Lexington Apartments on east side of  
Olive Drive. Conference room in office building  
at end of the parking lot.

**Leader:** Jan Garrison

**Phone:** Leave message on NAMI-Yolo Helpline at  
(530) 756-8181 and someone will return your call

## Family Support and Prayer Group

### Not Affiliated with NAMI-Yolo

**Day:** 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays **Time:** 7:00- 8:30 p.m.  
**Location:** Call  
**Leader:** Noma Wilken  
**Phone:** (530) 753-6881

## Support for Parents / Caregivers of Transition-Age Youth (Ages 16-25)

### Sponsored by the Yolo County Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Family Partnership Program

**Day:** 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays **Time:** 6:30- 8:00 p.m.  
**Location:** Transition Age Youth Center  
825 East Street, Suite 123; Woodland  
Fairgrounds Plaza at East Street & E. Gum,  
near DMV

**Phone:** TAY Center Program Admin (530) 668-6765  
Topics include education, job skills, treatment decisions, housing,  
independent living, SSI benefits, healthy relationships, Medi-Cal  
vs. private insurance, medication issues, "breaking away,"  
advanced directives.

**Stanford University Medical Center is conducting two research studies using Mifepristone one for Psychotic Major Depression and one for Schizoaffective Disorder.** This treatment may result in rapid improvement of psychotic symptoms where other medications have previously failed. You can obtain further information as to eligibility and to discuss whether Mifepristone treatment might help by calling (650) 725-8203 or e-mail [lakshika@stanford.edu](mailto:lakshika@stanford.edu). Patients will receive a small compensation for their participation.

## Family to Family

The Spring Family to Family (Keys to Understanding) class is on Tuesdays 6:15-9 PM from February 17 through April 28, 2009.(with two classes the first week) The Fall class saw 12 people graduate. The 12 session class is now in its 13<sup>th</sup> year, pre-registration is required as numbers are limited to sixteen. The class is well attended and we seldom have drop-outs. Our success is bittersweet as it shows there is still a tremendous need for information and help in coping with those in our community who suffer from a serious brain disorder. For more information about the class call (530) 756-8181.

## Holiday Party

This year's Holiday Party was a great success, very well attended with nearly 50 consumers able to take part and enjoy the music and the food and take away a small gift card. Thanks so much to the Weisses for their hospitality and the decoration of Destiny Hall and to Nancy Temple and cohorts for organizing the food.

Notable this year was the great generosity of those who brought and donated gift cards amounting to over a thousand dollars in value. We were able to distribute these to agencies to get them to consumers who were unable to get to the party. NAMI – Yolo members you are very generous and it is greatly appreciated, thank you everyone

## **New Local Mental Health Board Members Needed**

The Yolo County Local Mental Health Board (LMHB) has vacancies in the districts of Supervisor Mike McGowan, Supervisor Jim Provenza, and possibly in Supervisor Matt Rexroad's district as well. This is a critical time for Yolo County mental health services. The current LMHB is working on setting new goals for 2009. It's a good time to join the board and learn more about what is needed to help residents of Yolo County who suffer from serious mental illness. **Mental health consumers and their family members who have experienced the mental health system are especially needed on the board.**

Application forms are available online at the Yolo County website, or you can call the office of the supervisor in your district for information. Most regularly scheduled meetings are the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month, except when holidays or public hearings require a change of meeting time. Informed board members are important contacts for residents in their district who need help; the LMHB also helps the county advocate for more money for mental health services and for effective legislation at the state level.

If you have questions about the role of LMHB members, meeting times, or need help getting an application, call

Marilyn Moyle at (530) 756-8475.

## **Client Support Resources**

### **NAMI Connection Meetings in Woodland**

Sponsored by NAMI–Yolo, the support group is free of charge. Any adult with a mental illness is welcome to attend the group anytime they feel they need someone to talk to – there is no need to register.

**Day:** Every Friday **Time:** 1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
**Location:** Destiny Hall, 124 Lincoln Ave, Woodland  
Two blocks east of West St., 2<sup>nd</sup> house down from McKinley Ave., across street from shopping center where you can park your car. White house that sits back from street behind chain link fence.  
**Phone:** Leave message on NAMI-Yolo Helpline at (530) 756-8181 and someone will return your call

### **Recovery, Inc., Self-Help Meetings in Woodland**

Phone: (916) 483-5616 for meeting locations in Woodland. Open to members or consumers 18 or older. *recovery-inc.com*

## **Yolo County Wellness Centers Pathways to Independence for Transition-Age Youth (People 16-25 Years Old)**

The Transition-Age Youth Center in Woodland (825 East Street, Suite 123) has active programs five days a week, including groups such as career/education, job readiness, life skills, healthy relationships, relaxation ... as well as time for arts and crafts, sports, games, etc. A youth council has started up along with a regular newsletter. The Center's phone number is (530) 668-6765.

### **Wellness Alternatives for Adult Consumers (People 18 - 59 Years Old)**

The Wellness Center in Woodland (825 East Street, Suite 302) offer activities, support and help developing individual Wellness Recovery Action Plans (WRAP). Additionally a variety of activities and groups are offered such as dual diagnosis, physical wellness, social skills, temper tamers, creative writing, cooking, movies, etc. Often services are shared by both centers and some clients participate in activities at both TAY and the Wellness Center. The Wellness Center phone number is (530) 668-6777.

## **YCCC Seeks Board Members**

YCCC (Yolo Community Care Continuum) is looking for new board members. YCCC operates the Safe Harbor crisis residential program in Woodland and the Farmhouse residential treatment program in rural Davis. Its supportive housing program includes New Dimensions in Woodland and Homestead in Davis. If you are interested please call Michele Kellogg, Executive Director, at (530) 758-2160 or email her at *main@y3c.org*. You can visit YCCC's website at *www.y3c.org*

## Free 9-Week Course for People with Psychiatric Disorders starts in March

NAMI-Yolo's Spring 2009 Peer-to-Peer course, a free 9-week Recovery Education course for people with a serious mental illness is now open for registration. This is the 5<sup>th</sup> year Peer to Peer classes have helped people with serious mental illness learn strategies to gain better control of their condition.

### What is Peer to Peer

The course is led by a team of trained mentors, who themselves have a mental illness and are now able to teach coping strategies to others. Following the model of NAMI's popular Family to Family course, the program's philosophy embraces individual empowerment and family and peer support. Information taught during the course includes: the biological basis of mental illness, personal and interpersonal awareness, coping skills, information on addictions, relapse prevention, basic self-care, and enhancement of personal activity and functioning.

### Good News

This year, NAMI-California has given us a \$1,700 grant to participate in a study on the effectiveness of peer mental health education. Part of our agreement is that class size is at its maximum.

### How You Can Help

Please help us get people enrolled in the Spring class by spreading the word about Peer to Peer to anyone who might be interested in taking the class or who has a family member or friend with a mental illness. There are flyers and brochures at all the Yolo County mental health clinics.

### Dates

An orientation meeting is scheduled for Wednesday March 11, 2009 at 2:00 p.m. Weekly meetings continue Wednesdays, March 18 – May 13 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Registration is required.

For information or to register, phone Chris at (530) 753-1629, leave a voicemail at (530) 756-8181, send email to [friends@namiyolo.org](mailto:friends@namiyolo.org) or visit NAMI-Yolo websites at [www.yolopeers.org](http://www.yolopeers.org) or [www.namiyolo.org/peers](http://www.namiyolo.org/peers)

### Buy anything at Amazon and support NAMI-Yolo!

Visit the NAMI-Yolo website at [namiyolo.org](http://namiyolo.org) and click on the link to Amazon.com. NAMI-Yolo receives 5.0-7.5% of any online purchase accessed through the NAMI-Yolo website. Your purchases help support NAMI-Yolo community programs.

**Photo at right:** Ranse Reynolds with his grandchildren, Vanessa Arroyave age 11, Natalia age 7 and Jimmy, age 3 with his sunflower winner

## 2008 Tallest Sunflower

Ranse Reynolds of Woodland is the winner of the 2008 Tallest Sunflower In Yolo County, having grown his giant sunflower to the staggering height of 15 feet 1 inch. Rance grew a sunflower even taller than this when he won the contest in 2006 with a 16 foot 4 inches giant. Reynolds efforts have earned him \$100 and bragging rights to growing this year's Tallest Sunflower. The contest, sponsored by NAMI-Yolo, is in its seventh year, and began as part of the Seeds of Hope program to increase the community's awareness of mental health issues. For more information about the Seeds of Hope program which includes the Spring Sunflower Art Contest, visit [www.namisanflowers.org](http://www.namisanflowers.org).

Stay tuned for 2009 Seeds of Hope programs, including the Annual Sunflower Art Competition and Art Show at the Davis Art Center. Reception is scheduled for June 12, 2009.



# **Crisis Intervention Team Training**

**by Joann Turner and  
Nancy Temple**

Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT) are well established on the East Coast and are gaining ground on the West Coast, including several California counties. These teams typically include specially-trained police officers, psychiatric social workers and others involved in crisis response in their communities. The core principles of CIT are:

- Recognizing mental illness
- Understand that the person is separate from their mental illness.
- Know when to shift one's approach and use tactical communication skills to achieve voluntary compliance.
- De-escalate by using strategic listening skills. Consumers that feel listened to had half the rate of violence.

An objective of CIT is to get people-in-crisis calmed, appropriately triaged, and into medical treatment when needed, while avoiding inadvertent entanglement with the criminal justice system. It is our hope and intention that over time a large number of local crisis services providers will receive CIT Training and that agencies will cooperate to implement multi-disciplinary Crisis Intervention Teams.

## **The CIT Training Workshop**

The four-day workshop was first offered locally in September 2008. The workshop organizer and certified trainer, Mike Summers, is a former Yolo County Local Mental Health Board member and is retired from the California Highway Patrol. The workshop was taught by a team comprised of Mr. Summers, law enforcement personnel, psychiatrists, mental health consumers and family members. All trainers had professional or personal experience involving the interface of mental illness and crisis response.

About thirty students attended the first session. Prospective students heard about the class at their place of employment. Employers included police departments, sheriff's department, probation offices, emergency medical responders, suicide prevention, homeless shelters, and supportive housing providers. The CIT Training Workshop was provided free to participants and continuing education credits were available through Yuba Community College.

Using a combination of lectures, video and interactive exercises the program illustrates appropriate ways of responding to real-life situations in which a crisis call involves a person who has a psychiatric illness. Examples involving people with other conditions which may impede communication such as cerebral palsy are included. The immediate goal is to train first-responders in techniques used to de-escalate potentially volatile situations, thereby guarding the safety of all involved and making it easier to carry out the needed intervention. Each trained participant leaves with knowledge, insight and skills which they can use on-the-job.

Visits to a community crisis residence, Woodland Memorial Hospital psychiatric ward, and a longer-term locked psychiatric facility in Sacramento are part of the course.

## **NAMI-Yolo's Role**

NAMI-Yolo vice-president Nancy Temple is our consultant on the organizing committee of the CIT Training Program. Nancy recruited our members to serve as panelists in the Mental Health Consumer & Parent section of the course, which received high marks on class evaluation sheets. NAMI-Yolo volunteers provided daily hospitality support during the workshop. We hope that the CIT Training Program will facilitate development of a cooperative network among local agencies and organizations that provide services to individuals suffering from mental health crises in our community.

## **The Local Need**

When a person is in crisis in Yolo County, mental health workers meet with them at the hospital emergency room. If family cannot bring the person to the hospital, then the police may be called about a person "acting out" in a public place.

Events can quickly escalate as happened earlier this year in a local

*CIT continued on page 7*

*CIT continued from page 6*

tragedy. A man who voluntarily sought treatment died the next day after staff asked police to check on his welfare following his departure from the mental health facility. Crisis Intervention Training is meant to save lives, avoid unnecessary arrests, avoid traumatizing, and stabilize people or get them into treatment.

In recent years, there has been a widely-acknowledged increase in the number of people in behavioral / mental health crisis, a national phenomenon. Yolo County provider organizations have reported an increase in the severity of symptoms in people receiving services from them. Government funding and societal changes result in people being returned to the community from long-term stays in locked psychiatric facilities. The expectation is that intensive services will be provided as needed by providers within our county. It is a challenge to our local provider organizations to get their employees sufficiently trained to meet the new and evolving circumstances. Yolo County law enforcement and other providers need Crisis Intervention Team Training now.

### **The Next Class**

The next class will be held March 3-6, 2009 in Woodland. Registration is now open-contact Michael Summers, Yolo CIT Coordinator at (916) 600-3742.

## **Mental Illness Awareness Week**

Mental Illness Awareness Week (MIAW) is an annual, nationwide event focused on our reaching out to the community. It is always the first full week in October. NAMI – Yolo organizes a rally on the steps of the County Administration building, this year it was addressed by County Supervisor Mariko Yamada, appealing to us to bind together to survive these challenging times.

Every year, at this rally NAMI – Yolo gives out recognition awards to selected providers, consumers and volunteers who have made a notable contribution to mental health in the past year. This year those recognized were:

**Mike Summers** for the culmination of several years of effort in promoting Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training. This year a CIT course was very successfully run for the first time in the county, as reported elsewhere in this newsletter.

**Marie Le Croix** for her leadership of the activity program at YCCC's Farmhouse a key element for those taking the first steps in their recovery from severe mental illness. She has also organized significant improvements to this very special residential recovery facility.

**Chris Guiterrez** for his encouragement and support of the education of fellow consumers in coping with their suffering.

*MIAW continued on upper right*

*MIAW continued from lower left*

He has steered people to the Peer to Peer consumer led training program.

Also for the 6<sup>th</sup> successive year the winner of the annual Tallest Sunflower competition, Ranse Reynolds, received his prize at the rally.

After the rally and the awards ceremony we retired to a potluck social and Mariko Yamada came long to talk with NAMI members. The event finished with a candlelit vigil run for us by Pastor Hank Scherer of St Paul's Lutheran Church in Woodland.

## **Sunflower Art On Its Way**

Preparations for NAMI-Yolo's Sunflower Art Show and Competition 2009 are in full swing. The opening reception is scheduled for Friday, June 12, 2009 at the Davis Art Center as part of the City of Davis Second Friday Art About.

New this year is the Mental Health Educational Award for teachers who use the Sunflower Art program to educate students about mental health. Awards will be funded by an art raffle from the previous year. This year's award amount is \$300.

Application details will be available at the NAMI Winter Dinner on February 26, 2009.

Also, planned as part of the Seeds of Hope program is an art workshop led by popular Davis artist, Sara Post. Details will be posted on the NAMI Seeds of Hope website at [www.namisunflowers.org](http://www.namisunflowers.org)

## Potluck Speakers Review

NAMI Yolo offers every year, between September and June, seven unique speakers on important mental health issues in the context of the NAMI Potluck Dinner Meeting. These are free to the public and frequently interactive.

The 2008-2009 program kicked off on September 3, 2008 with Dr. Jon Caldwell, Interim Medical Director, and Dr. George Graman, former Medical Director, both of Yolo County ADMH (Alcohol Drug and Mental Health Department) in the annual "Meet the Doctors" session. This was an interactive forum in which clients and family members heard about recent trends in Psychiatry; discussed challenges unique to Yolo County; and questioned the doctors on specific drug treatments and wellness strategies.

On November 5, 2008, Jonathan Porteus spoke on "Co-Occurring Mental Health and Substance Abuse Disorders." A clinical psychologist, Assistant Professor at CSUS and Director of Clinical Services at The Effort, Dr. Porteus provided research that supports treatment of the "whole person," that is, treatment that addresses mental health symptoms, substance use and/or dependence, and the interaction between the two; not separately and sequentially.

*Potluck Speakers continued on upper right*

*Potluck Speakers continued from lower left*

With a very participative audience, he also offered helpful "next steps" for clients battling addiction and mental illness.

On January 7, 2009, Andrea Hillerman of the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance, Sacramento, spoke on "The Personal Management of Mood Disorders." Her mother, Marilyn, opened by sharing stories of the early days of Andrea's struggle with bipolar disorder and the family's search for answers. Andrea then went on to share her personal journey, describing the impact on her life and her determination to do the right things to achieve recovery, including sustained adherence to prescribed medication.

"That Voice in the Wilderness is Laughing: A Funny Look at Surviving Depression" will be Brian Wetzel's keynote speech at NAMI Yolo's Annual Mental Health Dinner on Thursday, February 26, 2009. A successful stand-up comedian, his career and personal life became overwhelmed by depression in 2002. He chose at that point to actively manage to the depression and, as he puts it, make the clinical depression that plagues him "Get a Job!" by uniquely being the focus of his comedic performances.

Brian distinguishes between chronic depression with diagnosable features and the periodic depression we all experience when we have "a bad day." He respects the gripping power of clinical depression. Yet Brian emerges with humor and the hopeful message that people who suffer as he does can, with hard work, manage their lives.

## Cool Beans Coffee Cart & Catering

In addition to offering coffee, healthy drinks, snacks and sandwiches for sale in the Herbert Bauer Health and Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Building in Woodland, Cool Beans! can cater your meeting. Whether it's pastries or Morrison's sandwiches, coffee and beverages you need, think about calling Cool Beans first for your catering needs.

Cool Beans! coffee + eats is a training and employment program for adults with disabilities in Yolo County. Employment offers "a reason to get up, not give up," and is an important step in recovery.

Turning Point CEO John Buck said, "We're thrilled to open this new training program, because everyone benefits." Mental Health Services Act funds support the start up of this business which will eventually be self-sustaining. Learn more about Turning Point at [www.tpcp.org](http://www.tpcp.org).

For your catering needs contact Cool Beans! manager Jim Francis at (530) 204-9623.



# SSI Changes in 2009

by Baron L. Miller\*

In order to protect SSI (Supplemental Security Income) benefits, it is important for those of us who supplement them to be familiar with the rules and to stay informed of changes. Following are the limitations on a recipient's resources and income in effect on January 1, 2009.

## Resources

"Resources" is what the Social Security office calls assets owned by an SSI recipient, and in 2009 they continue to be limited to \$2,000.00. The limitation applies only to assets in the recipient's name or to which a recipient is deemed to have unfettered access. Regardless of their worth, a recipient's home, household goods, personal effects, and a vehicle for transportation are not included in this limitation, nor are any assets owned by a special needs trust.

## Income

Because SSI is based on financial need, money received by an SSI recipient can adversely affect both eligibility and the amount of benefits. A recipient may receive up to \$20.00 each month from any source, and an additional \$65.00 per month as wages, without an adverse effect. Once the limit is reached, ½ of the excess received each month will be deducted from the allowable SSI benefit for that month.

Significantly, there is no limitation at all on payments to providers of a recipient's living expenses if they are not deemed to be for food or shelter. Some of these things that can be paid for without limitation are clothing, telephone, household goods, computer, transportation, recreation, case management, helpers, companions, travel, medical and dental, most insurance, education, rehabilitation, and training.

The limitation rules do apply to payments for rent, mortgage, home insurance, real estate taxes, home utilities, and gift cards for food. However, unlike cash, payments for these things will not render a recipient ineligible for SSI; instead they will reduce monthly benefits by the actual amount of the payments, up to a maximum reduction of \$245.00. Therefore, depending on a recipient's needs and another's ability to pay for them, it can be wise to pay a provider directly for shelter and/or food.

Cash received by an SSI recipient as reimbursement for expenses already paid for by the recipient will count as income in the month received (and will also count toward the \$2,000.00 limitation). Receipt of food stamps will not affect benefits, nor will loans which the recipient is realistically expected to repay.

## MediCal considerations

A recipient of SSI will continue to automatically qualify for MediCal. Due to the exorbitant cost of treating mental illness, MediCal is often crucial. Again, while cash payments made directly to a recipient might result in ineligibility, payments made to a provider of shelter or food would at most reduce monthly benefits by \$245.00. If an SSI recipient's living expenses are going to be supplemented, this must be done in such a manner that it will not render the recipient ineligible for both SSI and MediCal.

## Staying diligent

SSI rules do periodically change, and family members, friends, and trustees of special needs trusts should consult with the Social Security office or with an attorney familiar with the rules to determine what payments the current rules will allow, and what the potential loss to an SSI recipient could be.


*\*Baron L. Miller is an attorney in private practice in San Francisco who specializes in estate planning for California families of the mentally ill. He is a long-time NAMI family member, and an advocate for the rights and interests of families of the mentally ill. He does not charge for telephone consultations on the propriety of making payments for the benefit of an SSI recipient. He can be reached at (415) 522-0500.*

**NAMI-Yolo**  
 PO Box 447  
 Davis, CA 95617  
 (530) 756-8181  
 friends@namiyolo.org

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**Sign up or renew your NAMI-Yolo membership today!** Your dues cover the cost of this newsletter mailing. Enclosed is a membership brochure and return envelope.

	<h2 style="margin: 0;">NAMI-Yolo</h2> <p style="margin: 0;">Membership / Donations</p>
<p>Date: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> New Member <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal</p> <p>Name _____ Phone (home) _____</p> <p>Street _____</p> <p>City _____ State ____ Zip _____ Email _____</p> <p><b>We are always in need of volunteers. Please take a moment to mark the activities that interest you.</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Potluck Help   <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising   <input type="checkbox"/> Religious Outreach   <input type="checkbox"/> Special Events</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Legislation   <input type="checkbox"/> Education &amp; Support Group Facilitating</p> <p><b>Throughout the year, we will notify you of upcoming events and important issues unless you tell us otherwise. In some instances, we will use an automated phoning system. Please indicate the following:</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Notify me only of Special Events.   <input type="checkbox"/> Send my newsletter electronically</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Please do <b>not</b> phone me.   <input type="checkbox"/> Please do <b>not</b> send newsletters or other literature.</p> <p>Special Instructions _____</p> <p>Your membership and donations to NAMI-Yolo are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Thank you for your support.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>I want to join NAMI-Yolo</b></p> <p><b>Annual Membership Dues</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Corporate      \$150</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor     \$100</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Patron            \$ 50</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Family *        \$ 40</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Individual       \$ 35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Professional    \$ 35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Low Income     \$ 15</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Consumer        \$ 3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Donation</b>        \$ _____</p> <p><b>Total Amount</b>    \$ _____</p> <p>Make checks payable to &amp; mail to:  <b>NAMI-Yolo</b>        PO Box 447        Davis, CA 95617        Phone (530) 756-8181</p> <p><small>* If you have family members residing at other addresses you want included on our mailing list, please list their names and address on a separate sheet.</small></p>