

Remembering Shawna

Shawna Lynn Howard Saline (January 27th, 1982 - March 4, 2012) lived with a serious mental illness that eventually took her life. We do not think of mental illnesses as fatal, yet the depression that results from losing hope that one will ever recover is toxic to one's spirit and will to live. We must make every effort to prevent the despair that affects those who suffer from these cruel illnesses that affect the brain chemistry and daily functioning.

Although we (friends, family, and community) can never totally prevent suicide, we must make every effort to speak up and acknowledge the relationship of suicide to mental illness. My brother Wally died at age 22, because he had lost hope that he would ever recover from Schizophrenia and took his own life. We must continue to support and educate the mentally ill and their families by talking and teaching about recovery. Yes, it is possible! It often takes so much longer than one expects but, given enough time, social support, education, better medications, and treatment, recovery can be a reality. NAMI Flagstaff's mission is to educate, support, and provide our hope, strength, and wisdom to those whose lives have been affected by mental illness. We are an organization of peers and volunteers who have a common lived experience of mental illness in our family members or ourselves. We are all very saddened to hear about the death of this beautiful young lady from Snowflake with the million-dollar smile.

Shawna is survived by many loving friends and family members. Her spirit and her memory have been honored by the families' request for financial gifts to NAMI Flagstaff, assisting our efforts to provide programs to help the mentally ill and their family members. Her life will be remembered and treasured with the hope that others like her will believe they deserve healing and support. Your gifts will support efforts to educate the community that mental illness is a "no fault brain disorder."

We are eagerly waiting for the day when more corporations have the courage to sponsor donations for research on the causes and treatments of mental illnesses. They are very real and invisible disabilities that truly can be fatal but don't have to be.

We are deeply grateful for support from families like Shawna's who care about this special group of people and want desperately to share the kind of hope and support that can keep people affected by mental illness going when they don't want to.

Barb Bartell May 14th 2012

Shawna Lynn Howard Saline



1982-2012

NAMI Flagstaff 928-214-2218

Book of the Month By Barb Bartell

Food Choices

For Optimal Mental
Health-Happiness

And

Well Being

The Amen Solution: The Brain Healthy Way to get Thinner, Smarter, Happier. By Daniel G. Amen, M.D. (2011). New York: Three Rivers Press. ****

Dr. Daniel Amen is a clinical neuroscientist, psychiatrist, and brain-imaging expert who has done clinical research on natural ways to heal the brain by healthful diet, exercise, and nutritional supplements. These methods can be used as adjuncts to treatment with medication or as stand-alone treatments if the person is unwilling or unable to take psychiatric medications. Dr. Amen addresses the fact that many people with psychiatric diagnoses are overweight because medications can stimulate weight gain by increasing appetite and decreasing metabolic rate **However, this is not inevitable.** We can change this picture by modifying diet, getting adequate sleep (at least 7 hours per night), and gradually increasing exercise to boost metabolism.

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Many people who suffer from depression or anxiety disorders often eat for emotional reasons and become addicted to foods loaded with sugar and fat. This is true of the general population as well as those who suffer from a diagnosed mental illness. This book will be helpful to anyone who has excess body fat, especially around the waist area. Dr. Amen tells you how to determine if this is true of you. He explains the health risks of belly fat and he tells you how to lose fat in this difficult area.

People who have packaged and prepared foods readily available tend to eat without thinking. We eat what is easiest and quickest without evaluating the quality of the food. (Dr. Amen likes to point out that we would never knowingly put inferior fuel into our cars yet we feel free to pollute our bodies with low quality food.) In order to lose weight and keep it off permanently, we need to change our eating habits every day, one day at a time. Dr. Amen explains the yo-yo diet effect in which dieting makes you fatter. This happens to so many people that it is important for us to understand how extreme calorie restriction automatically slows our metabolism. Our basic biological drive is to prevent starvation by slowing the metabolic rate when food is scarce to store fat reserves more efficiently. Our brains are designed to produce hormones that trigger intense food cravings when starvation is detected. Dr. Amen shows us how to modify our eating habits so that we can minimize and manage the effect of food cravings. This must become a conscious practice similar to controlling our emotions. Food and emotion are very much connected from infancy onward. Food is equal to nurturance, safety, and freedom from discomfort and pain in the infant. This connection is very strong and it persists into adult life. We must become more aware of the emotional needs that trigger eating rather than denying them. Dr. Amen recommends keeping a daily journal to aid with the process of identifying when you are using food to cope with your emotions.

The choices we make about the foods we eat have profound effects on our health, mentally and physically. Fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains should be our main source of carbohydrates. Foods with added sugar or high fructose corn syrup should be eliminated from your diet as much as possible. Sugar is highly addictive. The more sugar you

eat, the more you crave it. Sugar activates the same neurochemical pleasure and pain relief pathways as alcohol, heroin, and cocaine. Sugar has the same destructive effect of over activating our nervous system and setting up mood instability that triggers cravings for the substance. According to Dr. Amen, unadulterated whole foods contain enough sweetness if we are able to taste it. We can only experience the natural sweetness of our food if we do not eat processed foods with sugar additives. Dr. Amen describes how and why to do this in detail, illustrated by case histories and SPECT (single photon emission computed tomography) scans of the brain. SPECT scan is the nuclear medicine technique that Amen uses to study blood flow and activity level in the brain in response to dietary and life style prescriptions that he gives to his patients. Dr. Amen reports that he became a patient at his own clinic because he wanted to experience the same changes in himself as he saw in his patients. He shows us before and after pictures of his own brain and describes how his own health improved. I have more trust in a doctor brave enough to take his own advice.

Dr. Amen cites research that demonstrates that one diet does not fit all: diets must be individually tailored. The journal *Genetics* (2010) reported on research findings that how our genes interact with various diets has the greatest effect on our body weight. Neither the foods we eat nor our genes cause weight gain by themselves: these two factors interact continuously and both must be taken into account. This explains why some folks respond better to low-carb diets and others respond better to low-fat diets and why some are more sensitive to sugar, salt, or other food additives than others. The diet that works for your friend may not work for you. Do some experimentation with different diets if you are not getting the results you would like to see.

Dr. Amen describes different brain and behavioral patterns of overeaters and divides them into five rough categories: impulsive, compulsive, impulsive-compulsive, anxious, and sad or emotional. The usefulness of these categories is a bit hard to determine as I found that I fit into all of them at one time or another. Dr. Amen recommends certain dietary interventions specific to each eating pattern in his appendix. H. His last chapter entitled "Bust Your Barriers" and the appendices that follow it will give you a very good feeling for this book and give you the most information in the least amount of time.

M.J.'s miracle: A NAMI Recovery Story

This is a true story about a woman who is a trained Peer Mentor in the Northern Arizona Region. She has been given the fictitious name of Mary Jane Smith (we'll call her M.J.). She agreed to a personal interview for our newsletter on condition that all identifying information would be changed to protect her anonymity. When I interviewed M.J, she said I would not recognize the person she was when she was 25 years old, approximately half her present age, as the person she is today. She says that even her recent treatment providers believe that they have accidentally picked up the wrong person's records when they examine the thick file of notes that were taken about a woman who was grimly determined to end her own life at a young age. M.J. has made eight to ten suicide attempts (so many she cannot remember the exact number), has been treated in various psychiatric hospitals around the state, with three involuntary commitments to Arizona State Hospital (ASH). ASH, is the most secure state psychiatric facility, used only for those diagnosed with the severest cases of mental illness. After MJ's last suicide attempt, the staff at A.S.H, due to no available beds, transferred her to a rural hospital in a beautiful small community in the Northern Region. NARBHA now became her Regional Behavioral Health Authority, funding her treatment in Northern Arizona. For M.J., this change of location was a God-sent gift.

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Recovery

She loved the warm and friendly staff at this small-town inpatient psychiatric unit. She soon relocated to Flagstaff where she received intensive inpatient and outpatient care at The Guidance Center. MJ was given a caring and reliable Case Manager who focused on her strengths rather than her weaknesses and guided her on the journey of finding a purpose in life. M.J. learned that life could be easier and safer in a smaller city. She finally obtained affordable housing in an apartment of her own and bought herself a car. She recovered a new sense of hope that treatment and social support could give her a future worth having. She made friends, continued her participation in AA -based groups that helped her recover from alcohol abuse and eating disorders. This helped M.J. find her spiritual path to emotional stability and her faith in a higher power that gave her the courage to heal the wounds of childhood sexual abuse. M.J. was validated and supported every step of the way by peers who had been through their own recovery. She is now getting help at the Azpire Recovery Center and continues her services at T.G.C.-The Guidance Center. She is currently healthy enough to mentor her peers in recovery. She has maintained a steady part-time job for almost nine years. She can control her emotions at work and is extremely helpful to customers. She is very good at her job! This is a wonderful surprise because, before recovery, MJ felt stupid and worthless due to the stigma of mental illness. MJ is grateful to NAMI for giving her the tools and support she needed to rid herself of shame about having a mental illness.

All the services provided by NAMI Flagstaff are free to those who need them. Please help us train our volunteers to provide free services by joining NAMI, making a donation, or volunteering to help write, teach, or do office

A Great Big Thank You to All of Our \$100.00 Plus Donors



Behavioral Health Center, Knights of Columbus, Tracie Bliss, Dana Downs-Heimes, Lynette Fridley, Leo & Juanita Gervias, Molly Parrot, Nancy Pennekamp, Marshal & Carol Scholing and Laura Hartgroves.

How You Can Help Us Help Them

We continually strive for excellence in our support groups, educational programs, and advocacy throughout the year in an effort to break down the barriers that continue to prevent the mentally ill and their family members from getting the care that they need. This all takes generous contributions of volunteer time and money to support our programs. We hope that you will find it in your heart to remember those forgotten ones suffering from brain disorders, through your contributions and continued NAMI Membership.

To renew your NAMI Membership and support our efforts please check your contribution box and use this tear off box to mail your tax-deductible contribution to:

___ \$35.00 Individual/Family (One Vote)

NAMI Flagstaff

P.O Box 30673

___ \$60.00 Family (Two Votes)

Flagstaff, AZ 86003-0673

928-214-2218

___ \$3.00 Mental Health Consumer

___ Contribution in Memory of _____



Northern Arizona's Voice on Mental Illness

PO Box 30673, Flagstaff, AZ 86003

www.nami-flagstaff.org

928-214-2218

May	June	July
Azpire Recovery House	Azpire Recovery House	Azpire Recovery House
Monday - Friday 10am-4pm	Monday - Friday 10am-4pm	Monday - Friday 10am-4pm
Family Support Group	Family Support Group	Family Support Group
1st & 3rd Wednesday 6:30-8:30pm	1st & 3rd Wednesday 6:30-8:30pm	1st & 3rd Wednesday 6:30-8:30pm
NAMI Connections Peer Support	NAMI Connections Peer Support	NAMI Connections Peer Support
Every Thursday 5:30-7:00pm	Every Thursday 5:30-7:00pm	Every Thursday 5:30-7:00pm

Family and Peer Support Groups meet at St. Pius Church , 2257 East Cedar Avenue Flagstaff, AZ 86004-1918

Board of Directors: Carrie Beaver President, Ken Werner Vice President, Carol Scholing Secretary, Deanna Prida Treasurer, Kay Brown, Carolyn Christianer, Shannon Marcus, Sherry Matheson, Grace Miles, Barb Bartell Past President, Jeffrey Brown State Board Representative.

Save The Date:

October 6th- Buffalo Park- “Overcoming Obstacles”- NAMI Fundraiser

NAMI FLAGSTAFF –admin@nami-flagstaff.org

NAHRBA (Northern Arizona Regional Behavioral Health Authority)-www.narbha.org/