NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania answered the call to action in 2011-2012. The governor’s budget address on February 7, 2012 was the catalyst for focusing all the organization’s energy and resources on state budget advocacy. On March 14, 2012 NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania joined with the Disability Rights Network and six other organizations to take legal action against the Governor, the Department of Public Welfare and the PA Budget office. The lawsuit was focused on the proposed 20% funding cut to the state’s community mental health system as well as the proposed transfer of funds from state oversight to the Human Services Development (HSDF) Block Grant. At the grassroots level, NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania joined with the Mental Health Association of PA and the Pennsylvania Mental Health Consumers Association to mail over 5,000 postcards just from southwestern PA to the Harrisburg offices of our local and regional legislators. Other state budget education and advocacy activities included state budget analysis presentations and workshops, e-mail Action Alerts and a bus trip to Harrisburg for legislative visits and Capitol Day rally.

Our advocacy efforts made a significant impact. The proposed 20% funding cut was reduced to 10% and the HSDF block grant was removed from the final approved budget. The block grant pilot for only 20 counties was created separately. The power of consumer and family grassroots advocacy cannot be denied! NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania truly led the way for consumers and families in state budget advocacy in the region.

While state budget advocacy took center stage, there are many worthwhile successful support, education, public awareness and fundraising activities highlighted in this annual report.

Respectfully yours,

Christine Michaels, MSHSA
Executive Director
You can’t know what no one has ever told you...

Support
- Responded to over 2,000 telephone and email inquiries for information and support
- Received over 5,000 visits to our website – www.namiswpa.org – from over 2,000 unique visitors per month. Nearly 25% of those visitors returned more than once per month
- The site received nearly 30,000 hits per month or over 360,000 hits per year
- Managed social media activities including daily posts on Facebook with 860 followers, a Twitter account with 610 followers, and a NAMI Blog that featured over 100 posts in this fiscal year
- Over 1,950 individuals are actively served by NAMI Southwestern PA
- Offered technical assistance and support to 15 affiliate groups, 6 support groups and 5 peer support groups throughout the 10 county region

Education
- In partnership with the Allegheny County Dept of Human Services, Employment Transformation Committee and funded by a CMS Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (CFDA#93786) NAMI Southwestern PA presented The Win Win Workplace: Creating Opportunities for Meaningful Employment on December 20, 2011
- Developed and presented informative NAMI Education workshops for:
  - University of Pittsburgh, Chatham University, Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic
  - 2011 Annual Schizophrenia Conference
- Presented the 12th Annual Education Conference on April 21, 2012, Evidence for Hope: Why Research Should Matter to You, attracting over 200 attendees. Dr. David Lewis, Medical Director at Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic began the day and set the stage for our keynote speaker, Dr. David Baker, a neuroscientist and researcher at Marquette University
- Offered six Family-to-Family classes with 64 graduates
- NAMI Southwestern PA staff completed national training for Parents and Teachers as Allies and became certified Family-to-Family State Trainers
- In Our Own Voice (IOOV) recovery presentations were provided to over 180 high school, undergraduate and graduate students
- Twelve information sessions on Mental Health Advance Directives for 112 participants

Public Awareness
- Held the 5th Annual NAMI WALK on Sunday, October 2, 2011 and despite, miserable cold and rainy weather, over 1,000 people came out to walk, raising over $155,000 with media coverage reaching over 750,000 audience viewers

Public Policy and Advocacy
- Held a public policy breakfast on July 22, 2011, Current Challenges and Future Opportunities: A Breakfast Discussion on our Public Mental Health System. The national and federal perspective was offered by Ron Homberg, JD, National Director of Policy and Legal Affairs, NAMI National
- Consumer and Family Satisfaction Teams in Allegheny and Armstrong/Indiana counties completed a combined total of 3,389 consumer and family interviews
- State budget advocacy activities involved action alerts to over 2,000 NAMI Southwestern PA recipients. Provided preliminary budget analysis, sample letters to legislators, postcard campaign and participated in budget advocacy panel discussions and public hearings
- June 5, 2012 participated in the Pennsylvania Community Providers Association Capitol Day rally. Hosted a bus to Harrisburg where 40 legislative visits were made

Mission Statement
NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania is dedicated to improving the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness through recovery focused support, education and advocacy.

For me, the key to coping with adversity is education. I knew I needed to learn as much as possible about mental illness. The NAMI mission of support, education and advocacy is crucial for people with mental illness to enjoy their lives.

~ Cindy McHolme