

reClaiming Children

National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health

May 2010

Special Edition

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This artwork, entitled *Me and My Dad*, was created by AJ (age 5), one of the winners of the 2010 Awareness Week Poster Contest.

Children's Mental Health Awareness Week a Success!

Once again, the National Federation declared the first full week in May (May 2-8, 2010) *National Children's Mental Health Awareness Week*. The week has evolved into one of our most important awareness and education campaigns. This national campaign not only brings attention to the triumphs, challenges and celebrations in children's mental health, but also works to combat the stigma associated with mental illness and promote awareness around mental health issues.

This year's theme for Awareness Week was **Promoting Positive Mental Health from Birth to Adulthood**. The National Federation invited all our chapters and statewide organizations to use the week to promote positive mental health, well-being and social development for all children and youth. Inside this issue, you will find some of the events that took place. We are very pleased at what our chapters, partners, and supporters are doing to help raise awareness and we hope that you will find their Awareness Week events inspirational too.



Executive Address

From the Desk of Sandra Spencer



Why is it so important to have an annual Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week? There is still a general perception in America and throughout the world that children and youth don’t really have mental health issues - just bad behaviors. Among those who know mental illness is real, there still exist very negative notions about what that means. According to the Ad Council, only 26% of the population is generally caring and sympathetic towards individuals with mental illness. This lack of sympathy leads to many issues our children must face such as being victims of bullying and discrimination. This discrimination leads to isolation, social distancing and the lack of availability of services and supports. This attitude keeps children and youth with mental health challenges and their families from seeking the help they need.

I have realized that when people don’t know enough about an issue, they choose to either ignore it or fear it. We don’t want all of what people know about mental health to come from mainstream media. We need to educate the public. If our message of promoting positive mental health can change one person’s mind and then that one person can share it with one other person, we can make a huge difference in public perception. So let’s deal with the fear factor. According to the New England Journal of Medicine, only about 3-5% of people diagnosed with a serious mental illness commit violent crimes. In spite of what people think, we cannot continue to isolate and discriminate against people with mental illness because of the picture painted by the media. What about the other segment of the population who just doesn’t want to talk about mental illness? Ignoring it and keeping silent is not the answer. So why not talk about promoting positive mental health for all? Everyone can understand and agree with the concept of good social and emotional wellbeing. We also can agree that sometimes we all struggle in this area. Some children and young people may struggle more than others and need additional supports and services. When these supports and services are readily available and can be accessed without fear and shame, children and young people get better and reach their potential.

“If our message of promoting positive mental health can change one person’s mind and then that one person can share it with one other person, we can make a huge difference in public perception.”

This year the National Federation distributed over 150,000 green ribbon and lapel pens with the words “Children’s Mental Health Matters.” The message is simple, yet critical. The mental health of our children should be a national priority. The National Federation also took the lead in planning the Mental Health Awareness Day Legislative Briefing on Capitol Hill in hope of making this a national priority. Several National Federation statewide and local chapters held state level and local events to help us spread the word. We are doing important work, and we need support, but more importantly we need to start educating others about our children. It is my hope that we all continue to talk about this 365 days a year.

Policy Room



National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day

By Andrea Barnes

Washington, DC (May 6, 2010) – In honor of National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day, the National Federation, in partnership with Mental Health America, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), and the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, hosted a Congressional briefing to campaign for programs that address the early mental health needs of children and adolescents.

According to an Institute of Medicine (IOM) report on mental health prevention and promotion released in February 2009, 50 % of individuals with a mental health diagnosis have onset by age 14, and 75% by age 24. The IOM also reported that mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders cost the nation about \$247 billion annually in treatment and lost productivity. Therefore, our message to Congress was clear: given the early onset of these disorders and their subsequent costs, investments in early intervention programs, especially those that better connect health and education systems, should be a national priority.

Speakers addressed the importance and tremendous value of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant programs, with a particular focus on the Systems of Care, Safe Schools/Healthy Students and Project LAUNCH programs, and the benefits of early childhood programs.

They also highlighted the need for congressional support for the *Mental Health in Schools Act*, legislation that recognizes the partnership that must be established between schools and communities to ensure that children with mental health needs are identified and linked with effective services and supports.

Janice Cooper, director of the National Center for Children in Poverty and author of *Unclaimed Children Revisited*, noted that “preschool children face expulsion rates three times higher than children in kindergarten through 12th grade, due in part to lack of attention to social-emotional needs.”

Avniel Serkin-Ahmed, a youth advocate, spoke of his experience. “When I was a toddler I received my first mental health diagnosis. Determined to make sure that I would have the best and most ‘normal’ life possible, my mother fought hard to make sure that I received the supports, services and tests that I needed. My mother faced many unnecessary roadblocks throughout the years in order to ensure that I could get the services that I needed at a very early age. Receiving these services at an early stage in my life set a great foundation and provided me with the tools that I would need to be successful in my future.”

Dr. Joy Kaufman, lead evaluator of the Building Blocks system of care site in Connecticut, and Kathryn Power, director of the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), presented positive outcomes data from CMHS grant sites across the country. For example, “behavioral and emotional problems in young children ages eight and younger are reduced after receiving services in systems of care.”

(Continued on page 4)

Did you know...?

More than 700, 000 youth are served by child welfare each year. This is about equal to the number of people living in Ft. Worth, Texas. The majority (80%) of these youth have developmental, emotional, or behavioral problems, but fewer than 1/3 receive mental health services.

Did the National Federation visit with your legislator?

To promote the legislative briefing and to urge legislators to support SAMHSA programs for children, youth and families as well as National Federation representatives Andrea Barnes and Eric Lulow met with Congressional staff members of the Senate and House Appropriations Committees. The Appropriations Committees are responsible for determining how much funding all government agencies receive each fiscal year. Fortunately, these past few years Congress has been very supportive of the programs we care about, and from what we heard from both Democratic and Republican staff, this support will continue this year. Funding levels are likely to be at the level of the President’s request, or slightly lower, due to the government’s tight budget this year. Listed below are the offices that we visited.

Chairman Harkin (D-IA)	Chairman David Obey (D-WI)
Senator Herb Kohl (D-WI)	Representative Nita Lowey (D-NY)
Senator Patty Murray (D-WA)	Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-CT)
Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL)	Representative Patrick Kennedy (D-RI)
Senator Arlen Specter (D-PA)	Representative Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA)
Ranking Member Thad Cochran (R-MS)	Representative Barbara Lee (D-CA)
Senator Richard Shelby (R-AL)	Representative Betty McCollum (D-MN)
Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN)	Representative Joe Bonner (R-AL)
	Representative Tom Cole (R-OK)
	Representative Jerry Lewis (R-CA)

Policy at a Glance



What else is the National Federation’s Policy Department doing?

- ⇒ We are closely following the implementation process of health care reform, to ensure that provisions in the law relating to children’s mental health and health care disparities get timely action in the form of regulations.
- ⇒ We are working on a youth advocacy guide, which brings together in written format the training materials from our Youth Advocacy Academy webinar series.
- ⇒ We continue to advocate for federal funding of programs that help children and youth with mental health challenges and their families, which is critical in the face of state budget cuts to mental health services.



This artwork, entitled *Our Problems Do Matter*, was created by Amber (age 16), one of the winners of the 2010 Awareness Week Poster Contest.

Children's Mental Health Awareness Week Timeline

1949

In 1949, The National Mental Health Association declared May as Mental Health Month. Although this nationally recognized observance began as Mental Health Week, with an increase in public interest and a broadening scope of issues, it grew into a month-long awareness campaign.

**1950's
& 60's**


Through the next two decades, special emphasis was placed on educating the public around mental illness and inviting them to state hospitals and other locations to learn more. In the late 1960s, this national observance was expanded to become May is Mental Health Month to bring greater awareness to the importance of mental health

1970's

In the 1970s, observances shifted to community based events as state hospital "patients" were moved to community settings.

1991

In 1991, a group of parents in Missouri got together and decided that one of the most important projects they could undertake was to raise awareness and reduce the stigma surrounding children's mental health. They formed a coalition of parents, professionals and other stakeholders and created Children's Mental Health Awareness Week. Over the next five years three more states; Kansas, Illinois and Ohio began their own celebrations of Children's Mental Health Week. The National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health later joined the coalition and promoted the mission.

Check out the next page for more of the timeline! 

Did you know...

That 15,000 children with psychiatric disorders were improperly incarcerated last year because no mental health services were available.

2004

In 2004, the National Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health officially declared the first full week of May as Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week nationally. National Federation partners and all 120 Federation chapters and state organizations were invited and encouraged to participate in a week long celebration of advocacy and awareness efforts.

2006

In 2006, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) Center for Mental Health Services launched an annual national initiative called “National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day,” which occurs during Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week.

2007

In 2007, the National Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health launched the Annual Green Ribbon Campaign, one of the their most important awareness and education campaigns. The green ribbon is a key symbol in social marketing and awareness efforts. It is an uplifting campaign and serving to spread awareness through positive public health promotion effort and to begin dialogue throughout communities nationally and internationally.

2010

This year’s theme for Children’s Mental Health Week was “Growing Together: Promoting Positive Mental Health from Birth to Adulthood.”

T/F

Today and for the future, the goal of this nationally recognized event continues to be to increase public awareness and educate communities to expand the understanding of children’s mental health needs and their resulting impact on families.

Timeline provided by the Parent/Professional Advocacy League (www.ppal.net).

To learn more about Children’s Mental Health and Awareness Day, check out the National Federation’s website at www.ffcmh.org or your local chapter!

Did you know...

Nearly 5 million American children and adolescents suffer from a serious mental illness (one that significantly interferes with their day-to-day life).

Voices from the Field

This article was contributed by [Dawn Friedman](#) of [SupportforSpecialNeeds.com](#).

This week is [National Children's Mental Health Week](#), a week devoted to raising awareness about children's mental health and the need for our families and communities to work together to help our children. As part of our observance here at Support for Special Needs, we wanted to share a terrific organization that you may not know about. [The National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health](#) is a grassroots organization dedicated to giving parents and professionals the support and information they need to better serve the children in their care who may be facing mental health challenges.

The Federation consists of the national group and [state-supported groups across the country, in two US territories and Canada](#). Dedicated to helping parents and practitioners learn from each other, the Federation was founded by parents to create community-based support systems for families struggling to find appropriate resources for their children.

"Most people think children don't have mental health problems, that they're just bad kids with bad parents," says Sandra Spencer, Executive Director of The Federation. "We are sending the message that mental health problems are treatable, that children are resilient and that recovery is a goal. The other thing that we do is advocate for systems that support these children within the context of their family and their community."

The local support groups allow parents to share resources and information, host trainings and conferences, and teach parents to be advocates for their families and their children. Several of the groups now offer mental health services as well. The national and many of the state organizations also offer training programs that bring parents together with mental health professionals to break down barriers and

encourage mutual respect and encouragement.

"One of the biggest pieces of our work is creating community-based systems of care," says Spencer. "We advocate for having family voice in the planning, implementation and delivery of services because we know that you need to have professionals and parents and caregivers in professional collaboration." Spencer says that because their organization is run by parents who have been there, they know that families know what they need and what their children need adding that there is no substitute for "the authentic parent voice."

We encourage you to check them out and learn more about the important work they're doing at the national level and your local community. Their message of family strength and empowerment resonates with our hope to support YOU, the community members here at our site.



Did you know...

Currently, 8.5 million youth age 18 and under are uninsured. And among those with private or public insurance, mental health coverage frequently is minimal or non-existent. As long as this fact remains true, children and youth who are affected by mental illness and other emotional disorders are vulnerable.

2010 Children's Mental Health Awareness Week Chapter Highlights



Here are some of the events our chapters hosted this year!

- ◆ Worked with local schools to have classroom discussions on mental health challenges facing youth.
- ◆ Supported SAMHSA's "My feelings Are A Work of Art" activity locally by having volunteer art therapists and specialists on site.
- ◆ Launched artwork contests and put the winning pictures on postcards
- ◆ Held a barn dance
- ◆ Hosted talent shows
- ◆ Created an Awareness Kit which included a window cling, magnets, resource kits, green wristbands and green ribbons!
- ◆ Partnered with the Youth Advisory Council to educate students about the important of Awareness Week
- ◆ Participated in an Expo Booth
- ◆ Mobile Art Show with over 500 youth participating
- ◆ Hosted a Webinar on Early Childhood Mental Health with a guest speaker from the University of Maryland School of Medicine
- ◆ Held a Pancake breakfast sponsored by Applebee's
- ◆ Held a panel with local radio and television media.
- ◆ Developed a Public Service Announcement

Special thanks to all chapters who submitted Awareness Week event details and photographs.

Children's Mental Health Awareness Day

SAMHSA's annual Children's Mental Health Awareness Day was a huge success! The National Federation was there to support SAMHSA as they celebrated their fifth annual national awareness event. Take a look at the pictures to see some of the exciting things that took place!



Left: Pam Hyde, SAMHSA Administrator; with Dr. T. Berry Brazelton MD, recipient of the SAMHSA Special Recognition Award.



Above: Children dance at the afternoon CMHAD event, "Awareness Day Turns 5"

Right: Youth Avniel Serkin-Ahmed speaks at the Legislative Briefing



To learn more about what SAMHSA did for 2010 Children's Mental Health Day check out their website at

www.samhsa.gov/children/

Did you know...

More than 1,000 sites throughout the country marked the day with community events, youth rallies, social media campaigns, and activities with children to raise awareness about the importance of children's mental health.

When I Grow Up

On May 6 the Youth Action "When I Grow Up" event was hosted in communities across the nation at 1:00 p.m. EDT/12:00 p.m. CDT/11:00 a.m. MDT/10:00 a.m. PDT. Children and youth held up "When I Grow Up" signs that featured what each want to be when they grow up. This activity engaged children and youth of all ages. Youth groups that committed to participate in the Youth Action were provided with customizable art files to create signs that feature the saying "When I Grow Up" with room to write or draw what they want to be when they grow up. The back of the signs included facts and statistics about youth with behavioral and emotional challenges who have overcome them and achieved success in their lives, along with facts about youth who do not receive the support they need. The event was a major success!

Youth Focus

Welcome to the Youth Focus portion of the National Federation of Families Newsletter! This section is designed to help inform youth and the adults they work with about new things that are happening here at the National Federation. It also provides youth with the opportunity to provide their input and have their voices heard.

Being an advocate often means that you will be asked to give a speech or a presentation on a particular issue at some point in time. Being prepared for such an occasion is critical to the advocacy work that you are doing; in other words **DON'T WING IT!** People can always tell when you haven't prepared to speak to them. A prepared speech will show your audience that you know what you're talking about and that they should take you seriously. It also shows that you are a reliable advocate who will give your best at each and every occasion; and make it more likely that you will be asked to speak at other events. The guide below is a good tool to use when preparing a speech.



Introduction:

The introduction of any speech should accomplish three things:

- Catch the audience's attention
 - Try opening your speech with a joke, interesting fact, or metaphor.
 - You can also use drama to set the tone and gain your audience's attention.
 - Ask your audience a question or two and have them respond in order to get them engaged.
 - Use a quotation that is relevant to your speech and that is something interesting.
- Establish your credibility
 - Very briefly state your credentials or life experiences that relate to the topic of your speech.
 - Credentials can be any education, personal or work experience you have had that is relevant to your topic.
 - Remember that your personal experience(s) do make you an expert. Utilize your experiences to obtain the audience's respect and to show them why it's important to listen to you.
- State the purpose of your speech or presentation.
 - Give a brief summary of the topic that you're going to be discussing.
 - List out the main points of your speech (these main points will be the subjects of your body). A good speech will contain at least three main points.

Body:

The body of a speech contains the information around the main points that you pointed out in the introduction. As you write out your main points remember to include pauses, ask questions, and continue to incorporate humor or drama to keep your audience's attention. Also, break your body up into different sections. Remember, you want to have a least three main points:

- The first section should contain the first main point that you want to make.
 - Use statistics, facts, quotes, and expert testimony to support the point you're trying to make or the information you are presenting.
 - Continue to use appropriate culturally sensitive humor throughout your speech to keep the audience engaged and interested in what you have to say.
 - Use transition sentences that hint to or allude to your next point.
- The second section will contain the next major point that you want to make, as included in your.
 - Again, use the same tactics that you did in the first section.
- Any additional points you wanted to make would follow the same format outlined above.
 - It's also important to remember how much time you have during your speech to make your points. If you have too many points you could begin to lose your focus and the audience's interest or attention.

Conclusion:

The conclusion is just as important as the opening. The conclusion should accomplish three things:

- Restate your purpose
 - Simply explain to the audience the purpose of your speech or presentation like you did in the introduction.
- Summarize your main points
 - Briefly summarize the major points that you made in the body of your speech in a new or original way so it doesn't sound like you're repeating the same words as before.
 - If necessary, state a couple of the facts that you used to prove or support your key points that you wanted to make, but keep them brief.
- Give your audience something to do - an assignment or a next step
 - At the very least, encourage your audience to think about what you had to say. This tactic is usually used in an informative speech.
 - Make a call for action. Ask that your audience takes the information that you have given them and use it to do something. The most specific the action you request, the better.



If you follow this guideline you will have a great start on giving an effective speech. However, don't forget that your delivery is just as important so make sure to practice! Good luck on your next speaking engagement. I'm sure you're going to do great!

The Board Room

New Faces on The Board!!!

Two new board members have recently joined the Board of Directors. Please join the National Federation in welcoming **Sheila Pires** and **Anna McLaughlin** to the board! Congratulations Sheila and Anna. The National Federation is happy to have you helping to guide our organization!

Heading to the Alamo



The Texas Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health has been chosen to host the 2010 National Federation Board of Directors Meeting in **San Antonio, Texas!** We hope we can continue having National Federation board meetings hosted by our chapters and state organizations. This offers board members the opportunity to visit at least one Federation chapter each year and learn more about the work you all are doing.

Support the National Federation Silent Auction

The Board President and Board of Directors, encourage you to support National Federation **On-line Auction**. The auction closes on **Friday, May 28th..** We need you! We can only do this work with the support of all of our friends and partners. Your support impacts the collective power of our voice in our national policy work. Start bidding at <http://gpsn.auctionanything.com!>



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Moving Forward

Resources, Reminders, and Resolutions

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For more information

Visit us at www.ffcmh.org

Upcoming Topics

New Developments in the Parent Support Provider Initiative

National Federation Goes Abroad

Youth Perspectives from the Field



This artwork, entitled *What Isis Cares About*, was created by Isis (age 10), one of the winners of the 2010 Awareness Week

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We can't do this without you.

Please visit the website and make a donation.

www.ffcmh.org



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FAMILIES

For Children's Mental Health