

Spreading hope for those with mental illness

Publisher's note: *This is one of several stories about mental health issues in the Lake Tahoe Basin that will be running through October.*

By Kathryn Reed

Recovery is possible. That is the overriding message from parents of a mentally ill son.

Jeanne Nelson cried in the shower every day for a year grieving for the loss of the life her son could have had, she struggled with guilt for not knowing sooner and therefore not getting him help sooner.



"I wonder if he had gotten help sooner, if his cognition would be higher," she said.

Nelson and her husband, Alan, are the NAMI – National Alliance on Mental Illness – representatives on the South Shore.

Their son is doing fine; lives on his own, has a job. He's on medication, with long lasting injectables his solution. It's just not the life he had dreamed about. Adjusting expectations – that's another thing everyone in the family has had to do.

The couple spoke April 13 at Temple Bat Yam in South Lake Tahoe about what they have learned and now what they have to offer others. There was a time when they didn't believe their son had any hope for a normal life. That is why they are quick

to share that things can get better – for everyone.

NAMI started in 1979 in New York with two moms with grown children who had mental issues. The grass-roots movement has expanded to every state.

One of the big issues with any mental condition is the stigma. NAMI is helping to break down those barriers. The hope is one day mental issues will be talked about the same way physical conditions are. After all, the brain is an organ just like the heart and no one winces at discussing heart issues.

“Telling someone to snap out of it is like telling someone who is deaf to listen harder,” Jeanne Nelson said.

Considering 20 percent of the population is living with a mental health condition, the topic is relevant. One problem, though, according to Jeanne Nelson, is that on average the delay in getting treatment is eight to 10 years after symptoms first arise.

Signs to look for include excessive worrying or fear, mood swings, a high-degree of sadness, confused thinking, avoiding social interaction, cutting and change in sleep patterns.

Types of brain disorders include depression, bipolar, schizophrenia, obsessive compulsive disorder, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder, and eating disorders.

It’s also good to know one’s family history because mental illness can be hereditary.



Jeanne Nelson on April 13
talks about mental illness.
Photo/LTN

Even after a diagnosis it can still be difficult to get help. Psychiatrists are in short supply throughout the country. In-patient treatment programs – especially in rural areas like Lake Tahoe – don't exist.

Many who are in jail are there with some sort of mental illness. Help for them varies from facility to facility. Substance abuse and mental health often go hand-in-hand.

Jeanne Nelson said there is a tremendous difference between what happens in California and Nevada.

"There's less oversight in Nevada. It has the worst mental health care in the nation," she said.

The *Reno Gazette-Journal* this year exposed some of the squalid conditions of clients in Northern Nevada that has gotten the state's attention.

The couple said it's important for the advocates of those with mental issues to be vocal, file grievances when necessary and document everything. And while health care officials cannot share information about a patient who is 18 or older without that person's permission, it is perfectly fine to provide doctors with insight about the patient that might help with a diagnosis or care.

Notes:

- NAMI support group meetings are the second Tuesday of the month from 6-7:30pm at the South Lake Tahoe Library.

Tahoe scrap wood transformed into ukuleles



Friends are turning old wood into much sought after musical instruments. Photo/TyDe Music

By Jenny Kane, Reno Gazette-Journal

When Devin Price and Tyler Joersz craft a ukulele, they don't

see it as just making an instrument.

They see it as breathing life back into nature.

On a warm spring morning in their company studio, they admire one of the ukuleles in the works. The front of it is made from wood collected from a weathered Lake Tahoe pier. The back, from a friend's cabin. The instrument bears signs of its past life, a pinch of lichen embedded in the wood, a faint bird poop stain and a rusty nail hole.

Price, 34, and Joersz, 31, are the co-founders of TyDe Music, a custom ukulele company that creates ukuleles inspired by the natural surroundings of their home base in Kings Beach.

Read the whole story

U.S. isn't teaching kids money management

By Jenny Che, Huffington Post

When it comes to understanding how to use a credit card responsibly, how to take out a loan or how to invest our money, Americans have a lot to catch up on.

A global survey published last year found that the U.S. ranked 14th in the world for financial literacy, behind the Scandinavian countries, Canada, the Czech Republic and others. A new report suggests that the classroom may be part of the problem.

A large majority of K-12 teachers don't bring financial education into their curriculum, according to a study by

PricewaterhouseCoopers. Just 12 percent teach personal finance, even though 92 percent think that the topic should be included in the curriculum.

Read the whole story

Valhalla releases summer festival schedule

The 37th season of the Valhalla Arts, Music & Theatre Festival, which runs June 22-Aug. 31 on the South Shore, includes a Tony Award-winning play, jazz orchestra, and immersive outdoor art camps for kids.

A special event this year is the Boathouse Theatre 20th Anniversary fête.

The season opens with the Earles of Newtown, a Dixie swing band with an Americana punch.

The big fundraiser for the Boathouse will be June 25. The Lucky Baldwin Poker Promenade and Concert featuring Radoslav Lorkovic will include various stations around the Tallac Historic Site, each offering food and drinks, interpretive history and historic figures along with playing cards for event participants.

Tahoe Improv Players return for four engagements.

“Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?” will be on the stage for 10 nights.

Free music on the lawn returns Sundays starting July 3 at 2pm. Other music offerings are scattered throughout the season,

with most being paid performances in the Boathouse.

Word Wave – a three-day festival of story at Lake Tahoe is returning in October.

The full schedule is online.

SNC to put on 2 months of art workshops

The Fine Arts department at Sierra Nevada College is preparing for its 32nd annual Summer Art Workshops, May 17-July 29.

Each summer, SNC offers a variety of summer workshops given by nationally known ceramists, glass artists, painters, sculptors, printmakers, digital artists, photographers, paper makers, jewelers, and more in which beginners and experienced artists alike can learn new techniques and expand their knowledge.

On Tuesday night at 7pm each week during the workshops free “meet the artist” lectures take place in the Prim Library, immediately followed by an informal reception in the Tahoe Gallery.

Students ages 16 and up, may take workshops for personal enrichment or college credit. **Click here** for the full schedule of offerings and registration.

Ex-USFS, TRPA leader to give talk

Bill Morgan, author of “Morgan’s Tale”, will be giving a talk April 19 at 7pm at Camp Richardson.

Morgan worked for the U.S. Forest Service as a civil engineer for 16 years before transferring to the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit where he served as the Forest Service supervisor for nine years. In 1985, after retiring from the Forest Service, he became the executive director of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

Morgan will share the stories behind the disasters, decisions, and controversies of these agencies in the 1970s and 1980s.

His book is available at the Lake Tahoe Historical Society’s Museum Bookstore and will be at the event.

The talk is free for historical society members, \$3 for others.

How the Great Recession increased domestic abuse

By Karen Weise, Bloomberg

Almost seven years have passed since the Great Recession was finally, technically, over, and only recently have social scientists had enough long-term data to calculate how the crisis affected American families beyond economics.

A paper published in the journal *Demography*, goes deep inside relationships to show that hardship and uncertainty increased rates of intimate partner violence, defined as abuse through violent or controlling means.

The paper is based in part on data from an ongoing longitudinal study that surveys thousands of mothers who first gave birth from 1998 to 2000. The survey asks the women questions that indicate “economic hardship,” such as whether they’ve been able to make rent or afford food. It also looks for controlling or violent behavior by their partners, asking about whether a woman’s partner prevents her from seeing friends and family, for example, or slap and kick her.

Read the whole story

LTCC to showcase staff, student artwork

There will be two artist receptions on April 14 from 5-7pm at Lake Tahoe Community College.

In the Haldan Gallery inside the library building works created by LTCC faculty and staff will be showcased. Each member of LTCC’s Art Department was invited to share two pieces of their artwork. It’s a chance to meet the artists, including faculty members Phyllis Shafer and Bryan Yerian, and learn about their techniques at a free talk.

In the Fine Arts Building’s Foyer Gallery, just outside the Duke Theatre, will be an exhibit of photographs taken by LTCC students enrolled in a once-a-year Death Valley landscape photography class taught by Pat Leonard-Heffner and Richard

Johnson. This photography class has been offered for more than a decade, providing students with an opportunity to explore the diverse and stark beauty of Death Valley over a two-day trip each spring. This exhibit will feature some of the best photos taken by students in this class over the years.

Both exhibits will be open to explore through mid-June. Haldan Art Gallery hours are Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 11am-5:30pm, and Fridays 11am-2:30pm. The Foyer Gallery can be accessed Monday through Friday 8am-8pm, and Saturdays 8am-4pm.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Spot

Spot is a 4 year old American Bulldog who was turned into the shelter because his family's new baby was allergic to him.

He is house trained, walks nicely on the leash and he loves car rides. He likes other dogs and has lived with children. Spot would do well in just about any household.

Spot is neutered, microchipped, tested for heart worm, and vaccinated. He is at the El Dorado County Animal Services

shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go **online**.

– Karen Kuentz

Truckee police officers recognized for work

Truckee Police Department, which was formed in 2001, recently had its inaugural awards ceremony.

The department completed a comprehensive study of incidents of the last 15 years that potentially warranted special recognition.

Awards included:

Employee of the year: Community Service Officer Martin Schneider – He has been employed by the town since 1995. His job duties have evolved from strictly animal services to also addressing parking issues townwide.

Volunteer of the year: Al Salas – He has more than 10 years of service with the Truckee Police Volunteer Program. During this time he has been a rock solid contributor to various aspects of the program.

Medal of Merit: Officers Daniel Baraz and Andrew Holbrook, and Jeremie Elliott. On Sept. 7, 2009, Truckee officers responded to reports of a plane crash on Martis Dam Road and Highway 267. The single engine plane occupied by four people had crashed in a field, coming to rest on its roof. Three occupants were trapped inside. All occupants were rescued due to the brave actions of the recipients.

Officer Ryan Moreau, retired Officer Daniel Baraz and Sgt. John Mon Pere: On April 30, 2012, officers received a call of an armed, suicidal subject in central Truckee. The subject was a Vietnam veteran and had told family members that he had started a one-hour countdown to end his life. Officers were given a vehicle description and began searching for it. At one point he approached the officers holding a gun to his head. After a volatile situation, the subject was taken into custody without incident due.

Officer Austin Harper: Oct. 28, 2014, Harper was on patrol when he was flagged down by a citizen who reported a suspect breaking car windows. Harper drove to the Beacon Station where he interrupted an assault in progress. The suspect had grabbed the victim around her neck and was choking her. Harper quickly engaged the suspect who had ignored his command to stop, punched him once in the face and pulled him off of the victim, placing the suspect under arrest without further incident.

Medal of Valor: Retired Officer Bryan Berry – On Aug. 18, 2009, Berry forced his way inside of a burning apartment and carried a mortally injured woman outside where she was treated by paramedics. Officer Berry's actions were performed under extreme and selfless bravery, risking his own life in an effort to save another.