



Dear NAMIWalk Captains and Supporters,

Congratulations. You put on the most successful NAMIWalk in NAMI Montana's history. The turnout was unbelievable with over 1,000 Walkers at the event. We also raised approximately \$88,000, which could potentially reach \$90,000 with the donations still coming in. The turnout and donations numbers are by far the best that we have ever had. Thank you for all of your hard work recruiting Walkers and pushing them to drum up donations. Your efforts will make a significant difference in the lives of Montanans living with mental illness and their family members.

Special Thanks to Cellular One

I want to especially thank Cellular One for their unbelievable commitment to this year's NAMIWalk. Cellular One registered 56 Walkers. While the final donation totals are still being calculated, they raised over \$10,905.00. On behalf of NAMI Montana, thank you Jon Foxman, Rosie Serna, and all of the Cellular One Walkers for your premier role in making our Walk a success.

Team Captain Prizes

Our final Team Captain prizes for this year go to Rosie Serna of Cellular One and Kim Jones of the Friendship Center. Rosie wins a weekend at a condo in Big Sky (date to be determined), because Cellular One collected the most donations from September 22nd to 26th. Congratulations Rosie. This generous prize was donated by Roby and Cathy Laughner.

Kim Jones of the Friendship Center will take home a free two-week pass to the Broadwater Athletic Club and several gift certificates due to the Friendship Center's last week registration charge. Congratulations Kim. Thanks to the Broadwater Athletic Club for this donation.

Thanks Again

Thank you all for your work during the past months to support NAMI Montana's critical mission to support, educate, and advocate for Montanans with mental illness and their families. We will make sure that your efforts make a difference in the live of the one in five Montana families affected by serious mental illness.

I'll keep you updated on our progress through our new quarterly newsletters. Thanks again for all of your help. I can't wait to see you all again next year.

Take care,
Matt

Matthew J. Kuntz
Executive Director
NAMI Montana



NAMI Walk a Community Effort

By [ALANA LISTOE](#) - Independent Record - 09/29/08



IR photo by [Alana Listoe](#) - Kip Smith and Jeannie Downs of Helena hand out balloons before the 5K NAMI Walk at Memorial Park Sunday.

As a young woman who struggles with mental illness, Samantha Cooley was happy to see more than 1,000 supporters attend the Montana NAMI Walk on Sunday.

Cooley, 22, of Helena said she hopes that bringing awareness to the issue will create more understanding for those facing mental illness.

Cooley said she's been diagnosed with bipolar disorder. And after difficulties with diagnoses, medicines, and psychiatrists, just knowing for sure what's going on comes as a comfort.

"It takes a long time to get stable," she said.

Working through mental illness to become stable is difficult, and Cooley hopes talking about it will lead to more awareness as well as understanding.

From the Carroll College cheerleaders serving free Starbucks coffee to the Capital High School football team, volunteers made the NAMI event come together.

"We just couldn't do it without the volunteers," Gale Anderson, volunteer coordinator for the Montana NAMI Walk, said.

Members of the CHS DECA (Distributive Education Club of America) challenged every school group to show the biggest support for the walk, with the winner earning a pizza party. The challenge was part of the marketing students' community-service project.

"Looks like we are going to have to buy a lot of pizza," DECA advisor Karey Conn said, laughing while looking over at the 55 football players standing near the band shell at Memorial Park.

Bruins quarterback Matt Reyant said getting the team out for the event gives support back to the community that shows so much support for them.

"It shows that our team cares about the community," Reyant said. "It shows them we get out not only for football, but for the community."

Local organizations and businesses formed teams to raise money and walk the 5K.

Sara Murgel is a case manager at Intermountain, an organization providing a home and services to children under severe emotional distress. She is captain for the Intermountain team and brought her family along to participate.

"We work with children who have been faced with mental illness all their lives — either with themselves or parents or loved one," Murgel said adding that efforts like these helps in many ways.

Lt. Gov. John Bohlinger spoke briefly before the walk began. He thanked the crowd for attending, and for having "sincere hearts."

Jon Foxman, CEO of Cellular One, the premier sponsor for the walk, admitted he knew nothing about mental illness until his daughter faced anorexia and obsessive compulsive disorder two years ago.

Foxman said there must be more talk about mental illness and more charitable giving to the cause.

"The need is significant," he said.

Former Detroit Lions quarterback Eric Hipple also spoke. Hipple is a nationally recognized advocate for suicide prevention at the University of Michigan who came to know about mental illness through the suicide of his son in 2000.

Hipple said education is the key.

"I knew nothing about mental illness when my son died," he said. "Now I understand what depression looks like and what can be done about it. This is what NAMI is about."

NAMI is a national advocacy organization giving a voice to individuals with mental illness and their families.

The \$100,000 raised at the local event funds efforts in Montana that work to reduce stigma and promote communities of recovery for individuals impacted by mental illness in the state.

Many people don't understand how much people with mental illness struggle, Cooley, captain for the Montana Community Foundation team, said.

"They don't realize how much we have to go through," she said.

Cooley is a daughter, a mother, a friend, a student and an employee who just wants to live a normal life.

"I feel fortunate to be on the right medications," she said. "I want a stabilized life so I can have a better life for me and (infant son) Jacob."

Reporter [Alana Listoe](mailto:alana.listoe@helenair.com): 447-4081 or alana.listoe@helenair.com



NAMI Walk a public statement

By [ALANA LISTOE](#) - Independent Record - 09/27/08

Warren Karmol says people are beginning to connect mental illness to people.

"They have faces," he said.

This is the first time Karmol, director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, will be participating in the annual Montana NAMI Walk. Events such as the one in Helena on Sunday are changing public perception about mental illness.

"For me, going and seeing people walking together in public, some with mental illness and some not, is kind of a public statement: I'm not ashamed anymore," Karmol said.

Funds raised at the event work to reduce stigma and promote communities of recovery for individuals impacted by mental illness in Montana.

The walk in Helena is one of 74 held throughout the country. Curt Chisholm, chair of the local walk, said more than 1,000 walkers are expected to participate.

This year the walk's major sponsor is CellularOne, and 56 Montana employees and family members have registered to participate. Their fundrasing efforts alone have raised \$10,000, according to CEO Jon Foxman.

"As a company it was compelling to learn how significant the need is," Foxman said. "Less than a tenth of a percent of all charitable giving (in the country) goes to mental health charities."

Foxman has been personally effected by mental illness through his daughter's struggle with mental illness.

"The eye-opening experience was being introduced to the community through my own experiences," he said. "The need is so apparent."

Also joining this year's walk is former Detroit Lions quarterback Eric Hipple, nationally recognized advocate for suicide prevention with the University of Michigan.

Other walk-day highlights include music, food vendors, face painting and free Starbucks coffee. Pre-walk festivities begin at 11 a.m. For more information contact Liz Moore at 461-4964.

Reporter [Alana Listoe](#): 447-4081 or alana.listoe@helenair.com