

NEWS BY YOU

NAMI Valley Walk aids mental-health services

Submitted by Gloria Abril, vice president of NAMI Greater Phoenix, a non-profit group dedicated to improve the lives of people with severe mental illnesses.

The National Alliance for Mental Illness, or NAMI, is dedicated to breaking down stigma and making mental illness a topic no one is afraid to discuss. .

NAMI's Maricopa Affiliates partnered with Magellan Health Services of Arizona when it began managing central Arizona's public behavioral-health system more than six years ago. We developed several ways to break down stigma and raise awareness about how people can recover from mental illness.

Our partnership has resulted in incredible growth for our annual NAMI Valley Walk.

This year's 2.9-kilometer walk begins with registration at 8:30 a.m. Sat-

urday, Oct. 19, at the state Capitol grounds, 1700 W. Washington St. in Phoenix.

The funds raised support NAMI programs and services to raise awareness about mental illness and reduce stigma.

It's surprising to think how stigma can be such a big part of coping with mental illness, especially when you consider that people with mental illnesses occupy more hospital beds than those with heart disease and cancer combined, according to statistics from the national NAMI office. One in four people is impacted by mental illness.

The joint organization also has launched "Extraordinary People," an informational campaign that showcases the stories of people in recovery who are leading productive lives. Find the stories at www.oneinfour.info.

Details: www.namivalleywalk.org.