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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**It's never too early to take a step forward for mental health;
Sign up for the NAMI Walk today**

SAN DIEGO – No, it's not 2008 yet, but it's not too early to sign up for the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) *Walk* for the Mind of America taking place on April 19, 2008 at Balboa Park.

The 2007 2/5K NAMI *Walk* in San Diego was a huge success as hundreds pounded the pavement and thousands of dollars were raised for an often overlooked disease—mental illness. The walk is actually held nationwide to raise money and awareness about our country's need for a world-class treatment and recovery system for people with mental illnesses.

While mental illness is a world-wide concern, locally it is having a large impact as well. To put it in perspective, more than 244,000 people are living with mental illness in San Diego alone. In the state of California, 600,000 children, adults and elderly are in need of mental health services that aren't readily available. In our nation, one in five people will suffer from a serious mental illness in their lifetime.

Your participation in the walk can help the many who are in desperate need of diagnosis and care. NAMI San Diego is our city's own voice on mental illness. Your support of this organization shines a light on the stigma attached to mental illness — a stigma that comes from fear due to lack of knowledge. NAMI San Diego is at the center of education, support and advocacy regarding these brain disorders.

In 2008, San Diego County NAMI *WALK* is proud to have Channel 10's Geni Cavitt as the Honorary Chair. Geni does the weather and other special reports on KGTV and is known throughout the city as the one who presents the prestigious Channel 10 Leadership Award.

Walk Manager and Communications Director at NAMI San Diego, Shannon Jaccard—who also received the 10 Leadership Award in September—is excited about the 2008 walk. “The 2008 walk will be another day where concerned San Diegans will come together to care, to share, and to raise awareness about mental illness.”

The walk will include music, entertainment, a health/resource fair and a chance to make a difference one step at a time. For more information on how to sign up for the walk and form or join a walk team, go to www.namiwalksandiego.org or call NAMI San Diego at (619) 584-5564.

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NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) is a non-profit organization that provides education, support services and advocacy to improve the lives of everyone affected by mental illnesses. Visit www.namisaniego.org or call 619-543-1434 or 1-800-523-5933.