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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



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**Remarkable and inspirational author Elyn Saks speaks at
NAMI San Diego Education and Advocacy meeting March 6**

SAN DIEGO—She went to Harvard, to Yale and now is a professor of law and psychology at USC and did it all while living with a serious mental illness. Now the inspirational Elyn Saks will tell her story of hope on Thursday, March 6 for the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI San Diego). The meeting begins at 6:30 pm at the University Christian Church Friendship Hall at 3900 Cleveland Avenue, San Diego 92103.

Saks has written a number of books and articles on her personal journey with schizophrenia including The center cannot hold: my journey through madness. Her memoir describes her often frightening experiences that have led to her advocacy of mental patients' civil rights as they confront compulsory medication, civil commitment, the abuse of restraints and the absurdities of the mental care system.

As expressed in Saks' work, those with mental illness are not inherently different from any of us. Schizophrenia favors no intellectual or social class; it can strike anyone regardless of age, race, religion or income. As a book reviewer put it. "Saks sheds light on the ways in which schizophrenia afflicts young men and women, robbing them of everything that they need to take their place in society: an education, normal relationships, and a profession. Unfortunately, most schizophrenics do not have Elyn Saks's intellectual, emotional, and financial resources, nor do they have her strong support system. However, with ongoing research and more effective drug treatments being devised every year, there is hope that this heartening success story will someday be the norm, not the exception."

To put it in a more local perspective, more than 244,000 people are living with mental illnesses 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.

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. They hold Education and Advocacy meetings the first Thursday of every month. These feature expert speakers on timely topics. The meetings start at 6:30 pm and are held at the University Christian Church Friendship Hall at 3900 Cleveland Ave in San Diego, 92103 (across from the Post Office).

Please don't miss Elyn Saks' presentation on March 6. Mark it on your calendar and if you need more information, contact NAMI San Diego at (800) 523-5933. Or visit www.namisandiego.org

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