

March 18, 2008

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### **Don't miss NAMI's free screening of the movie *Canvas* on April 3**

SAN DIEGO—Grab some popcorn and take your seat at a **free** screening of a special movie on April 3, 2008 at the NAMI San Diego (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Education and Advocacy meeting.

This moving film is called *Canvas* and it features Joe Pantoliano (of *Soprano's* fame), Marcia Gay Harden and young up-and-coming actor Devon Gearhart. The movie is an intimate view inside the life of a family living with schizophrenia. The mother (Harden's character) has the brain disorder in the film and the story is loosely based on the life of director Joseph Greco, whose own mother had schizophrenia.

The portrayal of schizophrenia in the film has been praised by mental health experts as unusually accurate and sympathetic; the story of the boy and his dad is a portrait of love under enormous stress, according to Roger Ebert, film critic.

Not only was it Greco who had done soul searching of his own family history for the film, but also actor Joe Pantoliano. During the course of filming, Pantoliano recognized that his mother had likely suffered from bipolar illness and realized he needed to deal with his own bouts of depression. The actor founded a not-for-profit called 'No Kidding, Me Too!' focused on destigmatizing mental illness. In order to raise funds for his cause at a recent screening of *Canvas*, Pantoliano explained how he got the name for his organization: "When I talk about the movie, or depression, or knowing someone with a mental illness, people say, 'Wow, no kidding, me too.'"

To put the facts of mental illness in a local perspective, more than 244,000 people are living with brain disorders 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 San Diego (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, which, in reality, is all of us. This year marks 30 years of service to the community.

NAMI San Diego holds free Education and Advocacy meetings the first Thursday of every month and are open to the public. 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 the movie on April 3. "*Canvas* is a serious film about mental illness and a sentimental heart warmer, and succeeds in both ways...it is a touching story of these people for whom the only response to mental illness is love," writes Ebert.

Mark it on your calendar and if you need more information, contact NAMI San Diego at (800) 523-5933. Or visit [www.namisandiego.org](http://www.namisandiego.org)

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