



November 23, 2009

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### **Marti Emerald to Chair NAMI San Diego Walk next spring**

SAN DIEGO – San Diego City Councilmember Marti Emerald will be the Honorary Chair for the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI San Diego) 5K WALK in Balboa Park on April 17, 2010.

Marti Emerald is the Councilmember for District 7 in San Diego. Ms. Emerald excelled as a broadcast journalist for 30 years before taking the oath of office for the San Diego City Council in 2008. Most notably, Marti was the Consumer Advocate (The Troubleshooter) at San Diego's ABC television affiliate for 22 years, earning more than 100 awards for community service and journalistic excellence.

During her many years as the Troubleshooter, Marti resolved thousands of consumer and community problems, helped to put criminals behind bars and influenced public policy to level the playing field for taxpayers and consumers.

Marti Emerald has deep roots in the San Diego community. She served on the Boards of Directors of Catholic Charities, the Better Business Bureau, the Glenner Alzheimer's Family Centers, and has helped to raise millions of dollars for local charities.

"We are thrilled to have Marti Emerald as our NAMI WALK Chair next year," said NAMI San Diego Communications Director, Shannon Jaccard. "Her many years of work within the community both as a Consumer Advocate and council member make her a perfect choice to chair an event that represents, and ultimately, benefits so many San Diegans."

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. "It is a disease that isn't readily talked about and is, therefore, often overlooked. But we cannot afford to ignore it any longer, not when our people are losing their jobs, homes and insurance benefits resulting in rising depression and other stress-related mental situations," said Jaccard.

NAMI walkers in 2009 helped raise financial support to augment NAMI San Diego County's family, teen and corporate outreach services and programs. These include support groups, educational classes, newsletters, and the helpline. With the recession deepening, mental illness symptoms are on the rise and the no-cost services of NAMI San Diego are needed more than ever before. The NAMI WALK is the organization's biggest fundraiser and the goal for the 2010 walk is 3,000 walkers, 100 teams and \$250,000 raised for programs geared towards servicing the San Diego community.

You can walk as an individual, join an existing team or form your own team (highly recommended for groups like families, co-workers, schoolmates) and show your NAMI spirit by raising money as a group and even creating team T-shirts.

NAMI is also proud to announce that the Goddard Brothers Band will be providing entertainment at the 2010 walk. There will be food vendors, children's activities and a health resource fair at the event as well.

Although the walk will not be held until Saturday, April 17, 2010, the time to register is now. There is no fee to register for the walk. NAMI in San Diego County simply asks that you raise money for it through sponsorships and donations. To register online, please visit [www.namiwalksandiego.org](http://www.namiwalksandiego.org). For offline help, call NAMI San Diego at (619) 584-5564.

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