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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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NAMI San Diego gets a new Executive Director in 2010

SAN DIEGO—After almost two decades, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), San Diego affiliate, is saying goodbye to Executive Director Bettie Reinhardt and welcoming Shannon Jaccard as their new leader.

Bettie will be retiring January 10, 2010. She started in 1993 as a consultant for NAMI San Diego and set up their Project Payee program as well as the County's Crisis Line. From there she quickly advanced to executive director and has been at the helm of NAMI ever since.

During her tenure, NAMI San Diego has grown from a small group of volunteers to a staff of 19 and a volunteer base of over 60. They now offer dozens of free educational classes each year for family members and those who have mental illness themselves. These classes are offered in English, Spanish, Vietnamese and Arabic. Support groups, the helpline and resource center, the In Our Own Voice Speakers Bureau program, outreach presentations, and many more programs have thrived under Bettie's guidance. She has received numerous awards over the years, with the latest being 2009's Mental Health Person of the Year. Bettie will be sorely missed.

The NAMI San Diego Board of Directors is proud to announce the promotion of now Communications Director Shannon Jaccard to the Executive Director position in January.

Shannon has long been a mental health activist in the community. After her brother was diagnosed with schizophrenia Shannon started the San Diego affiliate of Compeer Inc. This is an international, non-profit organization that helps adults and children overcome the devastating effects of mental illness, such as loneliness, isolation and low self-esteem through the power of friendship.

After starting Compeer, Shannon joined NAMI as their Volunteer Coordinator in 2005 and became Communications Director in 2007. She has successfully managed the NAMI San Diego County Walk for the Mind of America in Balboa Park for the past three years. This year over 2,000 people participated in the walk and raised more than \$120,000. Shannon also serves on the Board of Directors for the state affiliate—NAMI California.

Shannon holds a M.B.A. and recently graduated from the LEAD San Diego program. LEAD provides intense issue-oriented programming, leadership skill building and community volunteerism opportunities to a growing set of regional leaders who understand and can respond to the quality of life challenges facing the greater San Diego region.

“Shannon’s vast experience has given her a unique familiarity with NAMI, which coupled with her education, commitment and intelligence, will help her propel the organization to the next level,” said NAMI San Diego Board President Louise Groszkruger.

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. For more information, contact NAMI San Diego at (800) 523-5933. Or visit www.namisandiego.org

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