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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Man from Idaho will run in San Diego to Raise Money for Mental Health

SAN DIEGO—June 6, 2010 is the date of San Diego's Rock-n-Roll Marathon and Michael Runningwolf of Boise, Idaho will be there, pounding the pavement not just for exercise but to raise money for mental health.

The reason is personal. Michael himself was diagnosed with Schizophrenia and Bipolar Disorder in 2009. He had been struggling with the brain disorders for three years prior to his diagnosis and in that time he lost his teaching career, his home, his car, and most importantly, his wife. Due to stress on the marriage from Michael's illness, his wife filed for divorce last year.

This, along with losing his self-respect and dignity, hit Michael hard as his wife was the love of his life. Since that time, he found an organization called the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) in his hometown of Boise, Idaho. His involvement with NAMI, as well as working with his mental health professionals, has helped him rebuild his life and learn how to deal with his illness through support, therapy and medications.

NAMI is a non-profit organization that provides education, support services and advocacy to improve the lives of everyone affected by mental illnesses. There are NAMI affiliates located in every state. The local affiliate is here in San Diego in the North Park area. NAMI services include support groups, educational classes, newsletters, and a helpline.

To put it in perspective, more than 240,000 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. NAMI works to increase the public and professional understanding of mental illness by eliminating stigma and advocating for positive changes in mental health services.

For Michael, who now lives in Arizona, running is a coping mechanism that propelled him towards wellness. "I find that the only time I have real peace from my hallucinations is when I run," said Michael. "Except now when I run I am running for my life and my mental health."

On June 6th, the date of his wedding anniversary, Michael will be running in San Diego's Rock-n-Roll Marathon to raise donations and bring awareness about NAMI and mental illness. "I am just one man, but I will do whatever I can to battle this disease and hopefully, someday, keep others from going through this same thing. I am dedicating my training and the marathon in honor of my wife who is an example of the toll mental illness takes on the family as a whole." All funds Michael raises will go to NAMI Boise.

For more information on Michael's fundraising, contact him at (208) 484-4889 or email: chmike@live.com

For more information on NAMI San Diego's services, call (800) 523-5933. Or visit www.namisandiego.org

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