

NAMI – ASHTABULA NEWSLETTER

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Our Silent Support System

David R. Odell

The loss of a dog or cat may not seem like much to a lot of people. Others think it is the end of the world they can never have another animal it hurts too much to lose them. I have to say that I find it hard to lose my dog. Usually I am alone when I bury them and I cry like a baby.

The thought of not having my dog barking at me to let her out first thing in the morning bothered me. Coming home at the end of the day and not having her there to greet me upset me. Each time I come home I look for her I expect her to be there even though I know she is gone. Sounds like I am a bit off center I know. This is however what most people who really love their animals go through.

We may know they are gone and we know they are not going to come back but we hope we are wrong. We look for them when we get home because as long as they were there to greet us we knew that we were

loved. Our animals are more than just friends or members of the family.

Animals keep us going in bad times they give us someone to celebrate the good times with. Our animals give us hope they help us when it seems no one can. Animals know when we are hurting they are there for us even when we want to be alone. As we sit alone we are petting the dog or the cat.

When we lose our animals we lose our most loyal supporters. In these times we feel we are truly alone. We go down to the local shelter because we want to give some poor animal a good home. We go because our lost dog or cat would want us too. We do not go for ourselves after all we are fine just the way we are.

As a member of a NAMI support group I thought the twelve week course we took covered just about everything I needed to know. Now I know better. We are just the beginning there is so much more to learn about ourselves and those we are trying to help. Our animals are a support system too.

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The Cows Are Grazing

David R. Odell

The cows are grazing in the field
They are all grazing except the one by
the fence

The one by the fence is watching me
She is chewing her cud looking at me
I wonder what she wants

The cows graze in the pasture
They don't even know I am here
Grass is their concern they are eating
The one by the fence is still watching
me
I wonder what she is thinking

The cows are grazing in the field
I don't think they even know I am
here
Cows don't care about me
Cows like apples and grass mostly
grass
I wonder why the one by the fence is
watching me

The cows are grazing in the field
I was sure they didn't know I was
here
They eat all day as they move around
the pasture
There is one by the fence that doesn't
move
I wonder what she wants from me

The cows are grazing in the field
Why did they tell the one by the
fence to watch me
What do they all want from me
What do they want to do to me
Why is she afraid of me

The cows are grazing in the pasture
They do not trust me
They are having me watched
Why don't they like me
What do they want from me

About this Poem

I am sure you think this is a bit on
the crazy side. What would you say if
the cows were people at a party?
What if this was how one person
really felt? If I had written it that way
would you have read it?

The days of hiding ill family
members are over. There is nowhere
for them to go if we are not there for
them. How do we do that? Where do
we find them help? Where do we find
help for ourselves? How in the world
can we help them with their lives and
still have time for our own?

These are the questions NAMI
will help you with. We will share what
we know in hopes that you will find
what you need. There are no
guarantees there is support as well as
help. We work together in an effort to
help us all.

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Living With My Brother

David R. Odell

As adults we have to help our children no matter what their illness. What would we do if it was a brother or sister? How do the children deal with their sibling's illness? This was a question I had been thinking about as I thought of my own childhood.

To answer my question I went in search of children. I found a couple who had a brother with a problem. We sat down and talked about what life in as well as out of their home.

When I talked with the two boys I asked if they were asked to help with their brother from time to time. They said they were and didn't really mind helping out. It wasn't that hard so it was not a problem.

With this first question I noticed a difference right away. While they both said they were asked to help one was upbeat about it. The other paused to think before he answered. It was plain he was holding something back.

I next asked how they felt about that. As with the first question they seemed to be saying it was okay. One said it was not that hard at all. The

other simply said it was okay though he said it in a tense voice.

I next asked if their brother was hard to live with. Once again they seemed to agree but there was a difference. One said sometimes but not really that much. The other doesn't like traveling in a car with him.

When I asked about having friends over to the house with their brother there they agreed on this answer. Their friends do not go over to the house. They really do not want them to.

For my last question I asked them if they liked their brother. Once again their answer was split one said yes while the other said not really. They cared about him each in their own way. Each would help their brother but not equally.

If we want to help our family members with mental illness it is clear we need to educate the entire family. A family needs to support one another as well as other people. After all shouldn't we be one family? Watch for NAMI- Ashtabula classes starting in September.

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Living with a special needs child

A Teen Wrote

Living with a special needs child may be hard at some times but, there are rewards to it. I am living with a special needs child right now. If you think it's extremely hard, you're wrong! Living with a special needs child may be tough at times but the majority of the times, it's not! They may make useless noises which may be annoying but you can just tell them to stop and they usually will.

Living with a special needs child could be embarrassing at some times such as, at a restaurant they may be extremely messy at sometimes but, that's part of being a special needs child. Another way it may be embarrassing is if you're on a walk, with the special needs child, and you see a friend walking by and they have no idea what the child is and his/her problem and he/she may think the child is stupid or mental and you may get embarrassed from walking with

that child but, you really shouldn't be embarrassed.

Living with a special needs child can be fun! All kids have a talent, whether you know what it is or not. The special needs child I'm living with right now has a talent of repairing and building things, it is very fun watching and/or helping him build! He has actually fixed things that I couldn't have fixed and built things that I couldn't have! All special needs children are smart, fun to be with and, at sometimes hard to live with.

Up Coming Events

August 10th Bake Sale at the Ashtabula Wal-Mart

Monday afternoon 5:00 pm til sunset Saybrook Park Antique car show.

September 17th 6:00-8:30 pm Basic Class starts

September 27th – 28th Grape Jamberry

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Working The Issues

David R. Odell

I have been working with NAMI for about two years now and I find I have more questions now than when I started. There is nothing easy about dealing with mental illness in this day and age. The more we try to understand the more we find ourselves asking where it all ends. It seems that every day someone comes up with some new form of mental illness to explain why they do what they do.

So many different things that are wrong with the mind causing us to do things we normally would not do. Each new problem requires a long name that attempts to describe itself. We nod our heads and agree even if we don't understand it. The question of what is real and what is not is not addressed by those who are trying to help the people who are ill that is for doctors to do.

We are here to help people who are suffering we are not here to judge them. The more we learn the more we feel we have so much more to learn. I have a hard time dealing with

it all at times because it seems everything is different though it is the same. We have many different names all with the same symptoms. One or two things do not line up then it must be something else.

Yet as we read on we find that you do not have to have all the symptoms to have the problem. Once again the more you read the less you seem to understand. All you are sure of now is that when you started the class you were doing your best to help a friend or family member with an illness. Now you are convinced you have an illness of your own that you never knew you had.

It might sound funny but there is nothing funny about it. People are collecting money for things they don't have because they can act the part. While ill people go untreated other people are being treated for things they really don't have. How do we trust people with all of this going on?

Sick people don't want to be sick they want to be normal they want to work and have a family as well as friends. They want to go on vacation to see the country just like everyone else does and they would if they were not afraid to leave the house. Even with the voices in their heads they

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would go if they had any money. They get money every month to pay their bills and to buy their food but they don't spend it all. Twelve hundred a month they can't spend it all they never leave the house. Rent, food, medications, utilities, cigarettes as well as money given to best friends that they just met.

In the end we find that all we can do is our best and we deal with one thing at a time take comfort in the fact that we are not alone. We do it all one day at a time learning to laugh when we can and cry when we have to. We except the fact that there is no magic fix just our willingness to go on from day to day. We know we can't fix things but we can except the need for help. Our loved ones have a need as do we. As they reach out to us we must reach out to others for support.

Do you want to do your best?
Learn to laugh even at yourself. You were upset because he couldn't find the pencil on the desk. Now you have searched for ten minutes for the glasses on your head. We are not perfect we are just human after all.

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The Animals Are Talking

David R. Odell

The elephants stand looking at the people as they pass
These are not people they see each day they are special
The elephants are surprised to see them all so happy
It is early in the morning too early for so many people
They are walking and smiling but it is too early in the morning
This is what the elephants have to say

The tigers are stretching as they are getting up
There are people walking in the zoo it is too early for them
The tigers know there is something special going on
It is too early for people the tigers haven't eaten yet
They are pacing back and forth this just isn't right
The tiger's talk it over there are special people here today

The lions hear the tigers roar what is all the noise for
The lions see the people going by it is too early for them
They are special people that is clear why else would they be there

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The lions wonder why these people
are all there

The lions are amazed so many people
coming their way

The lions are talk about the very
special day

The monkeys are at the window there
are people out there

The monkeys chatter what is wrong
the people are too early

The monkeys are excited some of the
people have chairs with wheels

The monkeys are jumping all over
they are so excited

This is the first people parade they
have ever seen

The monkeys are excited this is a very
special day

The animals were all very surprised it
was so early in the day

A parade of very special people had
marched past them today

It was early in the morning but the
people didn't mind

All the animals were talking they had
something good to say

People helping people was something
new for animals to see

The animals were excited it was a
very special day

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A Visit To Camp Mohaven

David R. Odell



For the last week my daughter was at Camp Mohaven which for her was something very special. She loves horses and this week she spent most of her time learning how to care for and ride a horse. Along with all the other activities at the camp she was kept very busy. The one thing she did not want to do was come home.

This year was the first time that I have visited the camp. At first I was not surprised by what I saw. It is a camp and if you have seen one you have seen them all. This was just another camp, a nice camp but as I said camp is camp. Then I got out of the van and began to walk around a little.

The first thing I noticed was the music. It was Christian music not the

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music that you would expect to hear at most camps. The children here had manners. They were friendly, as well as polite and they were very happy. As I walked around it was clear that my daughter was not the only camper that was in no hurry to go home.

I was brought up in the country on a three hundred acre farm. If I wanted to camp we slept in an old car or in a homemade tent in the field. It was fun but it was not a real camp. What I saw today was something very special for everyone involved. I could tell as I listened to my daughter. Even the people she had not gotten to know were special. They were all fellow campers.

As my daughter gave me a tour of her favorite places around camp she told me about her plans for her return to camp next year. It was clear to me that I had very little to say about her returning to camp. Everything had already been decided.

She told me about the weekly worship services at camp, which were as important to her as everything else about camp. The camp had everything it seemed I began to see something that I had truly missed as a child. This was something very special because God was as much fun as

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everything else at the camp. There was the music as well as everything else that was part of their Sabbath. We sometimes think that God can be a once a week thing like grocery shopping. Camp Mohaven teaches our children that is not the case.