

2013 NAMIWALKS TEAM CAPTAIN KICK-OFF LUNCHEON
By Karen Zarsadiaz-Ige, LACDMH Public Information Officer II



On Thursday, August 8, 2013, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) hosted its annual NAMIWalks Los Angeles County team captain kick-Off luncheon at the California Endowment.

This year marked the 10th anniversary of the event that signifies walking to end stigma, raise awareness and grow NAMI's programs throughout the county. Over the ten years, NAMIWalks in Los Angeles have raised over \$2.6 million. The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) is a presenting sponsor of NAMIWalks and also has a few teams involved this year.



The annual luncheon gets teams registered and in place for the annual NAMIWalks event that takes place this year on Saturday, October 5th at the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica. At the kick-off luncheon, team captains get the resources and information they need to successfully build their own teams, fundraise and increase community awareness about NAMI's services.

One of the team captains, who shared her ideas about fundraising and getting the word out, joined NAMI in honor of her 16-year-old son who died by suicide in November. Lydia Alvidrez formed the team known as “Do it for Nick” in memory of her son. As a survivor relative of someone who took their life, she wanted to do something meaningful and make a change. So, she joined NAMI.



“I’m walking in honor of my son,” Alvidrez told the audience. “Unity can bring others healing and hoping... I see that I can help others. I’m here to share my strength and to continue to bring awareness. Together we can make a difference.”

Participants at this year’s luncheon included NAMI members, LACDMH employees, mental health-related agencies, faith-based groups and businesses throughout the county.

