

**Affiliated with NAMI
and NAMI Illinois**

The National Alliance on Mental Illness is a grassroots organization dedicated to improving the lives of persons and their families affected by mental illness through education, advocacy, support, and research

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November 18, 2016

Dear Friend of NAMI Cook County North Suburban,

In 2005, Joan and Dick DeCleene faced every parent's worst nightmare. Their son, Mark, took his own life. Mark had been dealing with bipolar disorder since 1998, when he started college. Sadly, love, support and treatment were not enough to help Mark live with his mental illness, and he became one of the many people with mental illness who commit suicide.

While one in five Americans lives with a mental health condition, few seem to pay attention until a tragedy. Even though most people who have a mental health condition live whole and healthy lives, the stigma against mental illness is pervasive, harmful and simply unfair.

Joan said that after losing Mark, she and Dick found support from organizations that helped people who had lost a child, or had lost someone they loved to suicide. "But I kept thinking about NAMI."

Thirty years ago, Joan and her mother turned to NAMI when her brother was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. He lived for years with her parents, in recovery. The binder Joan used in her first NAMI family education course was still on her shelf when Mark was diagnosed. "I turned to it again and again," she said.

Joan decided to volunteer for NAMI Cook County North Suburban. "I wanted to help people who cared for someone with a mental illness," she said. "Those were my people." She served on the NAMI CCNS Board, taught Family to Family, and today is the Volunteer Coordinator. Today, Dick serves on the Board.

Together, Joan and Dick decided to share the loss of their son with others to help change how people think about and live with mental illness. We admire their courage and are so grateful for all they do to help the families who turn to us.

NAMI CCNS makes the journey of living with mental illness easier through its education programs, support groups and advocacy.

Please give as generously as you can to NAMI Cook County North Suburban. We have made life better for thousands of people who have had the courage to seek our help and support. With your generous donation, we can do even more. Thank you.



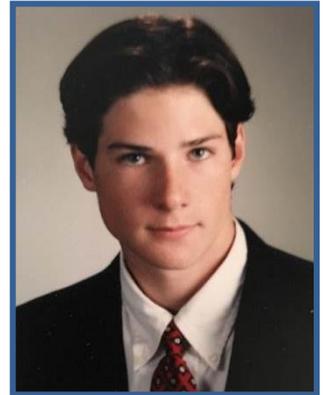
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Mark DeCleene

P.S. Please consider making a gift to our Tree of Life. Your larger gift will make a lasting difference. More information is on the enclosed envelope.