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**"HEARING VOICES" WORKSHOP GIVES PARTICIPANTS  
INSIGHT INTO LIVING WITH SCHIZOPHRENIA**

**KENSINGTON, MD (DECEMBER 28, 2007)** – Most people have no idea what it's like to live with a psychiatric disorder, but on January 10, 2008, the National Alliance on Mental Illness Montgomery County (NAMI MC) will provide an opportunity for a limited number of community members to experience life as a person living with a mental illness. NAMI MC will host a unique interactive program, "Hearing Voices", in which participants attempt to perform tasks and interact with others while listening to disturbing "voices" on a portable tape player. These "voices" are similar to those a person living with schizophrenia might hear. This event will be held at Cedar Lane Unitarian Church, 9601 Cedar Lane, Bethesda, MD and will begin at 7:00 PM.

While listening to the voices, participants are administered a mini cognitive evaluation (similar to one a patient might undergo at an emergency room), read an article and answer questions about it, and perform a manual task with toothpicks (similar to tasks they might do in a day treatment program). Most people who participate in this workshop find it difficult to concentrate while the voices are talking.

The voices are sometimes whispers and sometimes loud, but they are always upsetting. "As a parent of a son with schizophrenia, it really opened my eyes to what he lives with on a minute by minute basis with regard to hearing voices. The negativity of the voices was very disturbing to me," said Margy Lawrence, a NAMI MC member who participated in the workshop in 2002.

"Hearing Voices" has received international acclaim and is used to train psychiatrists, mental health workers, family members and police officers to work more compassionately with people diagnosed with mental illness.

**ABOUT NAMI MONTGOMERY COUNTY** – NAMI Montgomery County (NAMI MC) is a 501(c)(3) organization and the Montgomery County, Maryland affiliate of National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) which is headquartered in Arlington, Virginia. NAMI MC is a non-profit grassroots organization dedicated to improving the lives of children and adults living with mental illnesses in Montgomery County, Maryland. Since 1978, NAMI MC has provided self-help, support, education and advocacy for people with serious and persistent mental illnesses (often called "consumers"), their families, friends and caregivers.

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