PRESS RELEASE

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Super Bowl Champion Keith O'Neil NAMINYS to Serve as Grand Marshal of Inaugural NAMIWalks NYS September 24th at Jennings Landing in Albany

ALBANY, NY - On Saturday, September 24, 2016, the National Alliance on Mental Illness-New York State (NAMI-NYS) will be holding its inaugural NAMIWalks event at Jennings Landing in Albany. NAMIWalks is designed to raise awareness about mental illness and destigmatize issues around mental health issues.

NAMI-NYS is honored to be joined by Keith O'Neil, who served as the Special Teams Captain of the 2007 Super Bowl Champion Indianapolis Colts. O'Neil was also a member of the Dallas Cowboys and New York Giants during his 6-year NFL career. During his playing career he developed the symptoms of severe anxiety and after retiring he was diagnosed with bi-polar disorder. He subsequently founded the 4th and Forever foundation dedicated to raising mental health awareness. O'Neil will lead the walk as Grand Marshall and will tell his story during the program preceding the walk that morning.

Of his involvement in the NAMIWalks NYS O'Neil said, "I am proud to be a part of NAMIWalks. When I was experiencing the worst symptoms of Bi-Polar, my wife and family turned to NAMI and their education and support programs. NAMI gave my family the tools to understand my illness and support my recovery and I want to make sure that all individuals and families experiencing mental health issues know that NAMI-NYS is there to support them."

NAMI-NYS is the state chapter of NAMI, the nation's largest grassroots family and consumer movement dedicated to improving the lives of those with mental illness. Founded in 1979, NAMI has affiliates in every state and in more than 1,100 local communities across the country. NAMIWalks is one of NAMI's main tool to raise awareness and fundraise in communities across the country. This year, NAMIWalks is celebrating their 14th anniversary as the most successful mental health awareness and fundraising events in America. Tens of thousands join together annually for NAMIWalks events in more than 84 communities across the nation to raise money and awareness regarding the needs for treatment and recovery systems for people affected by, or living with, mental illness.

All the funds generated by NAMIWalks NYS will support NAMI-NYS's offering of NAMI Signature Programs which provide education and support for individuals and families affected by mental illness. All of the NAMI Signature Programs such as Family-to-Family, Peer-to-Peer, In Our Own Voice are offered to members of the public free of charge.

Along with the walk which will take place along the Hudson River at the Corning Preserve, the event will feature remarks by O'Neil, dignitaries and others who have been helped by NAMI-NYS. There will be information about the programs NAMI-NYS offers in the Capital Region and the opportunity for participants to meet NAMI state leaders as well as local affiliate leaders. There will also be a mental health fair featuring venders and service organizations disseminating information about mental illness and available services. NAMI-NYS is expecting more than 200 participants to join the walk. The event will be emceed by Jamie of WTRY-Radio 98.3.

One in four families will be impacted by a mental illness and the stigma surrounding psychiatric disorders prevents many from seeking the help and support they need. Participating in a NAMIWalks event signifies people taking a stand and letting their community know that they are stigma-free.

Check-in for the event starts at 9:00 am. The formal program begins at 9:30. The walk itself will begin at 10:00 am.

Mr. O'Neil and members of the NAMI-NYS staff will be available for interviews prior to the event and on the day of the event.

For more information about this event, contact
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