

I hope this brings you welcome information and uplifting news! Please share this newsletter with other parents and friends along your path. The national conference in Austin is just a few weeks away...and networking is a big part of the conference for so many families. It's where we get to meet face-to-face and heart to heart! Hope to see you there.

Laurie Vanderboom

Director of Programs, NEDA

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A Special Invitation from NEDA Board Chair, Don Nielsen

Before you know it, September will be upon us and we'll be off to Austin for the NEDA Conference. I would like to personally invite you, as a member of NEDA's PFN, to attend the conference, if at all possible. The conference is the one place where you can feel the power of NEDA – the power to educate, the power to advocate and the power to rebuild lives shattered by eating disorders.

This year's conference--**Break the Silence: Tools for Help, Hope and Healing**--promises to be a really important one. Gathered under one roof will be more than 400 individuals and families affected by eating disorders and many of the world's leading treatment experts. The general sessions and workshops were designed to offer tools – real, tangible, nuts-and-bolts strategies and tactics you can use to help yourself or a loved one battle an eating disorder. There will be something for everyone – from



Don & Melissa Nielsen

those who are new to the illnesses, to those who have lived far too long with the illness. My wife, Melissa, and I have been to the past several conferences. We have left each one feeling stronger, more hopeful and, most importantly, determined to continue the battle until eating disorders are history.

I know I am asking you to make a commitment of both time and money and given the enormity of our challenges, it will take all of us to make a difference with these diseases.

See y'all in Austin!

Warmly,
Don

P.S. I understand if it is not feasible for you to join us this year. Please know we offer a limited number of scholarships to help defray the costs for your consideration one of these years. All the sessions will be taped and available for purchase at a later date as another option.

2008 NEDA Conference Information

For the quickest way to access all the information you need, head to the NEDA website [conference page](#).

PFN News

From the Editor

The PFN steering committee hopes to see you in Austin. We plan on meeting & greeting with you at 5 P.M. Thursday, September 18th at the Welcome Social in the registration area. If you're not in that early, we will see you at breakfast! Anyone who would like to be paired initially with a "veteran" conference attendee just needs to ask! Feel free to join the committee members for breakfast/lunch/breaks/dinner each day. We will make ourselves known to all newcomers ... please let us know what you need! We will also be available in the PFN Family room.

This conference is very useful for family and friends who:

- * need help finding services,
- * are seeking basic or advanced information about eating disorders,
- * would like to meet and network with others going through a similar experience,
- * would like to meet and network with experts in the field,
- * are ready to advocate for improved/expanded services, AND who want to "*Break the Silence*"!

I'm looking forward to meeting many of you in Austin.

Keep networking,

Mary Beth Krohel, e-news Editor

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to other parents, family and friends and invite them to join the network by signing up on NEDA's [PFN page](#).

Mission Story

From Molly, NEDA Office Manager

So here's the story... I went to Bend, OR last weekend with a bunch of friends for a quick weekend vacation. On Saturday morning, we got up early and went out to get some coffee at a local coffee shop. As soon as you walk in this place, you see hundreds of small pieces of wood hanging from the ceiling, each one decorated with a wish by the person who made it. Some were funny or witty, and some wishes were very real and very emotional.

Turns out they are made by whoever comes into the coffee shop and feels like doing something while they're waiting. Simon and I felt like doing something while waiting for our coffee drinks, so we sat down by the blank pieces of wood and markers to write down our own wishes. A few finished pieces were sitting on the counter and hadn't been hung up yet, and Simon came across this one sitting right in front of us! I couldn't wait to share this photo with everyone:



Parents' Perspective

The Academy for Eating Disorders (AED) Conference Overview MB Krohel

This year's conference was titled "Bridging Science and Practices: Prospects and Challenges". As suggested by the title, the primary focus was on how to quickly get current research information to the professionals specializing in Eating Disorders. Unfortunately, as in all medical/educational fields, the turn around from research to practice is painfully slow (years). Much of the conference focus was on evidence based and individualized treatment, inclusion of families in treatment, biological and genetic influences, medical

management, co-morbid conditions, quality assurance, cultural influence, level of care, and developing treatment teams.

It is quite evident that there is a strong core of research & clinical professionals extremely dedicated to the field of Eating Disorders. These professionals are working as hard and as fast as they can to improve and increase quality care for individuals struggling with this disease. They know how difficult it is to get research data from the lab to the eating disorder clinicians on the front line and even more difficult to get that information from the eating disorder specialists to the general practitioners we, as families, friends and suffers, usually meet first.

I frequently praised these dedicated individuals and encouraged them to further extend their efforts to establish AED guidelines in all of the related professional fields AND to communicate this type of information to the larger population of related professionals who do not specialize in eating disorders. We, as parents, families & friends, need to help them distribute this information by supporting the national and local organizations dedicated to this cause.

Of course, NEDA and the PFN are a good place to start. Through this newsletter, the PFN will keep you informed of any initiatives dedicated to this endeavor.

NEDA Program News

STAR Program: Worldwide Charter for Action on Eating Disorders



Don't miss the chance to meet Lara Gregorio, STAR Program Manager at the NEDA conference. She'll be providing a hands-on training for PFN members who will be an important group to get the word out about the Worldwide Charter for Action On Eating Disorders. Lara says, "Because treatment for eating disorders is limited, and in some states in the US, unavailable, it's our hope, through the Charter launch campaign, to raise awareness about the impact of eating disorders on individuals, their

families, and the community, and to formally present, as a united front, an internationally composed framework for standards of care. Due to the breadth of this project, the PFN is going to be a crucial component. I believe that you have the passion, the dedication, and the drive, and as a group, we have enormous numbers and capacity for change. So, let's mobilize our army!" Contact Lara at lgregorio@nationaleatingdisorders.org Visit STAR Program website [here](#).

Austin Special Event: Benefit to Support NEDA's STAR Program



Please join us for an

“Evening Under The Texas Stars”

Saturday September 20th, 6:30-8:30 pm,
Umlauf Sculpture Garden, Austin TX
PFN members, \$100; General Public \$200;

For more information click [here](#).



Media Watchdog Program

So far, over half of our volunteer Watchdogs' letters have led to changes in advertisements and programming! While we know the role media plays is only one piece of the puzzle, we also know the images promoted are harmful to anyone who flips open a magazine or turns on the television, especially to someone who may be susceptible to an eating disorder. In a culture where the beauty ideal is becoming a thinner, more airbrushed representation of reality, the ideal is now more impossible to achieve than ever.



That is why the National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA) has created the Media Watchdog program. We're training new Watchdogs and you can join the pack if you're interested in making a difference in the way body image is portrayed in the media. By writing letters to those who circulate both positive *and* negative images, you can be a positive force to help the media landscape become aware of how their images impact eating disorders. Sign up to be a Media Watchdog [here](#).

A Special Invitation: We appreciate your participation in the Parent, Family and Friends Network. There is no cost to belong to this incredible resource. Please also consider becoming a paid member of NEDA. Your membership contribution helps to make all of our programs and services possible. Additionally, your membership provides you with access to our Outlook Newsletter (published three times a year), as well as other special offers. If you join now through September 30, we'll extend your membership and you will not have to renew until April 2010! Our next Outlook newsletter will come out in October - don't miss it!