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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Record number of walkers make NAMI San Diego Walk a success**

SAN DIEGO – More than 2,000 walkers pounded the pavement for mental health on April 18, 2009 at the annual National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) San Diego County Walk for the Mind of America.

“This is a record number of walkers and it shows how many people are interested in breaking the stigma of mental illness and making a difference with their presence in this event,” said NAMI San Diego County Walk Manager Shannon Jaccard.

The NAMI San Diego 2/5K walk/run helps raise money and awareness about our city’s and our country’s need for a world-class treatment and recovery system for people with mental illness. So far, \$112,000 has been raised from the 2009 walk.

To put it in perspective, more than 244,000 people are living with mental illness in San Diego alone. In the state of California, 600,000 children, adults and elderly are in need of mental health services that aren’t readily available. In our nation, one in five people will suffer from a serious mental illness in their lifetime.

NAMI is a non-profit organization that provides education, support services and advocacy to improve the lives of everyone affected by mental illnesses. The walk is their biggest fundraiser and is what enables NAMI to provide their variety of outreach services at no charge. With the downturn in the economy, symptoms of mental illness are on the rise. Now is the time that NAMI services are needed more than ever before.

Sheriff Bill Kolender was the Honorary Chair of the walk and spoke at the event. Over the years, the Sheriff has set a precedent for mental health advocacy throughout the department and is a proponent of a mental health court in our community. The walk also featured a health resource fair with over 50 booths and an area for kids’ activities.

While April 17, 2010 seems far away, the planning committee for the next NAMI San Diego walk will start meeting in June, 2009. If you are interested in participating contact Shannon Jaccard at [shannonjaccard@namisd.org](mailto:shannonjaccard@namisd.org) or call (619) 584-5564.

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