

May marks Mental Health Month

By ALICE REGINA LAPOINT

May is National Mental Health month, an important observance for the mentally ill and their families because not much is commonly known about mental illness.

One of the organizations working towards better understanding of the mentally ill is the National Association of the Mentally Ill (NAMI), a support and advocacy group for the mentally ill and their families.

Wayne County NAMI is an affiliate of North Carolina NAMI and the national NAMI organization.

Wayne County NAMI meets every third Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in Wayne Learning Center on campus.

The causes of mental illnesses are still not definite. Many research teams around the world are still exploring mental illness to gain greater understanding of the condition.

Sometimes the media portray the mentally ill negatively, seeing them as knife-wielding murderers or mindless drones.

Though it is true that a mental illness may cause a person to lose control of thoughts and actions, very few mentally ill are ever violent, and most mentally ill have average or above intelligence.

The three most common mental illnesses today are schizophrenia, manic depression, (or bi polar) and major depression.



Students in the Horticulture class and visitor to the Open House hold samples of the students' work: (l to r) Anthony, Shari, Carolyn Walston with Continuing Education, Shalone, Thomas, and David Hawk, instructor. PHOTO: VOICE STAFF

Program gives students skills in horticulture

On April 19, students in the Horticulture course of Continuing Education held an Open House at the Greenhouse where they gave away chrysanthemums and ferns they have been growing since January.

David Hawk, coordinator and instructor in the course, said the 9 students from vocational rehabilitation and the Stepping Stones mental health program have been gaining skills so that they can find employment in garden centers or with landscaping companies.

Hawk, a 1997 graduate of WCC's Turfgrass Management Technology program, said the students started the plants from seed or cuttings, transferred them to flats, and then potted them.

One group of zinnias will be planted in the circle in the courtyard behind A&M and the Wayne Learning Center.

"The students' hands-on greenhouse experience will make them valuable employees," Hawk said.

In December, the students will be awarded a certificate in horticulture.

Thanks to a fine staff for a job well done on this issue in the 12th year of the VOICE. Especially to my right-hand women--Valerie, Nova, Tennilya, and Brandy-- a salute!

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