

SAVAGE Pacer



NAMIWalks: Greg Lind walks to bring about awareness

by Nancy Huddleston on September 23, 2010

Greg Lind didn't find out about his son Landon's bipolar disorder until it was too late.

After his son took his own life two years ago, Lind looked for help in a variety of ways and has found solace in NAMIWalks, a 5K organized by the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

Lind and family and friends have formed "Landon's Light," one of many teams participating in "NAMIWalks, Changing Minds One Step at a Time," which is a 5K walk to increase public awareness of mental illness.

The walk takes place today (Saturday, Sept. 25) at Minnehaha Park in Minneapolis. Last year Lind's team consisted of 45 people and they raised \$2,600. Some 150 teams drawing in 2,500 people are expected this year.



Forty-five people were on Landon's Light team at the 2009 NAMIWalks. The team was formed by Savage resident Greg Lind in memory of his son, Landon.

"I walk to bring about awareness to others," Lind said about his participation in the walk. "I want to bring attention to mental illness to help parents somehow identify potential problems in their children."

Landon was 18 years old when he died and his dad said he was a typical teenager, who wanted to sleep in late, didn't want to do chores and sometimes argued with his parents. But now that he looks back,

Lind said there were a few instances where Landon acted oddly and he wishes he'd known that those were potential signs that he should have paid more attention to at the time.

"I didn't find out about all of these things until Landon died," Lind said. "So if participating in the NAMI walk brings about attention, then that's good."

When Lind first formed Landon's team, he didn't know what to expect. Much to his surprise, Landon's mother and her family joined in, as did many of his son's friends from Bloomington.

Lind and Landon's mother were not married and his son spent weekends at his dad's home for many years. The summer before he died, Landon was a full-time member of the Lind household in Savage, living with his dad, step-mom Sharon and step-brother Darby and step-sister Anika.

I do this walk in memory of my son, Landon, who passed away in September of 2008. There were so many things I didn't know about depression and bipolar disorder, and I felt helpless. There needs to be more awareness about NAMI. I see this as the silent killer of our children and young adults, and if we can recognize the signs, maybe we can help another family.

- Excerpt from Greg Lind's NAMIWalks page

Lind said his son's death came as a shock to family and friends because Landon was a very likable guy who was friends with everyone. "No one saw this coming ... no one," he said.

After Landon's death, Lind learned that his son must have hidden his troubles well from his family and friends. But he found that talking with his son's friends enabled him to learn more about his son's life and to make a connection with others who were grieving.

Through research Lind has not only learned about bipolar disorder, but also about other forms of mental illnesses, which is when he decided NAMI was the place to focus his energy.

"I want to help shine a bright light on this, because even a mild form of mental illness can be treated and be corrected," he said.

"For the longest time I was oblivious to depression and mental illness. Now I know that there are clearly obvious signs that I should have been paying attention to ... but I had no awareness or knowledge of depression."

So Lind has gone through what he calls a "horribly enlightening time" to learn all he can about mental illness.

During that journey he has come in contact with "some amazing kids" who have told him their stories about Landon. And those stories from those kids are helping Lind heal.

"Landon was an amazing kid with a bigger than life personality," Lind said. "He was friends with everyone."

For information about Lind's team or to donate, go to: <http://www.nami.org/namiwalks10/MIN/Greg>. Or donations can be mailed directly to Lind to: 14916 Overlook Drive, Savage, MN 55378.

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What is NAMI?

The national Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) provides education, support and advocacy for children and adults with mental illness and their families. NAMI Minnesota offers about 150 free classes and 50 free support groups each year for families and people recovering from mental illness. There is a local Scott County group that meets twice a month. For more information on meeting times and special classes, contact Janet at (952) 890-19-669. For information about NAMI, go to www.nami.org.