

## NAMI Queens/Nassau

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Photo & Caption below

### LET'S TALK MENTAL ILLNESS

**Long Island, N.Y. – October 2013-** *Let's Talk Mental Illness* (LTMI), a classroom presentation that creates greater awareness about mental illness and promotes seeking help for self and others, has reached over 3,000 LI middle and high school students. Hakeem Rahim, LTMI presenter, is a role model living with bipolar disorder. A Uniondale graduate and first African-American male valedictorian, graduate of both Harvard and Columbia Universities, and owner of a consultative company Live Breathe, LLC, Hakeem shares his personal story of mental illness, recovery and wellness. In addition to his message of resilience, LTMI decreases the stigma around mental illness.

A Lynbrook student speaks to the impact of LTMI, "I have a friend that suffers from a mental disorder and this helped me realize that I should support them. Also that I think I suffer from some symptoms of a mental illness and should get help myself. Thank you."

"This is a topic that needs to be discussed with our students on a more regular basis, and since your visit here students have been opening up and speaking on this topic more than ever before," shared Kevin O'Hagan, Health Educator, W.T. Clarke High School, Westbury.

"It is my goal to reach as many students as I can. I believe my own journey with bipolar disorder would have been easier if I was taught about mental illness; if I knew more about what was happening to me when it was happening," explains Hakeem. Current grants from the Ann Allen Cetrino Family Fund and the Greentree Foundation "Good Neighbor" Fund are supporting LTMI classroom presentations in 22 LI schools.

LTMI was developed by the National Alliance on Mental illness (NAMI) Queens/Nassau with funding from the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock's Large Grants Fund.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is a nationwide, grassroots, non-profit organization dedicated to making a better life for all those affected by mental illness through support, education and advocacy. For more information about NAMI Queens/Nassau visit [www.namiqn.org](http://www.namiqn.org). For more information about *Let's Talk Mental Illness* and to schedule a presentation, visit [www.btslessonplans.org](http://www.btslessonplans.org).

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Photo:

Hakeem with Jennifer Soper, Health teacher and students at Garden City High School

