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**BLOGGER BEHIND “I AM ADAM LANZA’S MOTHER” SPEAKS ABOUT  
PARENTING A CHILD WITH MENTAL ILLNESS**

***Writer Liza Long delivers talk in San Antonio  
as part of local “1 in 5 Minds” campaign***

SAN ANTONIO – The day of the tragic shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn. that left 20 children and seven adults murdered, Liza Long felt compelled to write about her struggles with her own son, who has mental illness.

The result was the blog “I am Adam Lanza’s Mother,” which quickly went viral, generating media coverage across the country and sparking a national discussion about the challenges facing children with mental health disorders and their families.

Long, an author and educator who writes on parenting a child with mental illness, will share her experiences in a presentation on Monday Oct. 14 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Oblate School of Theology’s Whitley Conference Center, 285 Oblate Drive, San Antonio. The event is free and open to the public, but space is limited and registration is required.

Robert Rivard, publisher of the Rivard Report and former editor of the San Antonio Express-News, will interview Long and serve as moderator taking audience questions after Long speaks. For more information or to register visit online at [www.1in5minds.org/events](http://www.1in5minds.org/events) or call (210) 616-0300.

Since “I am Adam Lanza’s Mother” was published online in Dec. 2012, Long has become known as a voice for parents of children with mental disorders. In the essay, she describes the unpredictable and sometimes violent episodes of her 13-year-old son, who is academically gifted, but lives with a mental disorder that causes seemingly random, small matters to send him into a rage.

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Long describes incidents in which her son screams insults, hits, bites and even threatens her with knives, leading to encounters with police officers, paramedics, emergency room personnel and mental hospitals.

She also recounts the challenges of getting treatment for her son, and how often, the most direct route to care for people with mental illness is through a jail sentence. In her essay Long writes: "No one wants to send a 13-year old genius who loves Harry Potter and his snuggle animal collection to jail. But our society, with its stigma on mental illness and its broken healthcare system, does not provide us with other options."

"In the wake of another horrific national tragedy, it's easy to talk about guns. But it's time to talk about mental illness," she writes.

Long is a writer and educator in Boise, Idaho. She is a member of the Idaho Region IV Children's Mental Health Subcommittee and a founding member of TeachIdaho. She is currently working on a forthcoming book for Hudson Street Press and writes for regional publications and her own blog, [www.anarchistsoccermom.blogspot.com](http://www.anarchistsoccermom.blogspot.com). She works as the Student Services Consultant at Carrington College.

Long's presentation is co-sponsored by 1in5Minds.org, Clarity Child Guidance Center and the Oblate School of Theology.

The event is part of **1 in 5 Minds**, a city-wide campaign to inform the public about children's mental health issues. Clarity Child Guidance Center, the city's only non-profit treatment center specializing in children ages 3 to 17 with serious mental and emotional problems, launched the **1 in 5 Minds** campaign in 2012 to reduce the stigma surrounding children's mental health disorders and increase access to treatment.

One in five young people in the U.S. experience a mental, emotional or behavioral health disorder such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic disorders, ADHD, bipolar and other serious problems. In Bexar County alone, there are an estimated 80,000 children affected by mental health disorders.

While there is an 80 percent success rate for treating such disorders, too few children are being treated because of lack of insurance, lack of access to care, or in many cases, the stigma associated with having a mental health disorder.

"As Ms. Long describes in her essay, a lot of families are suffering in silence because as a community we are not talking about children's mental illness," says Rebecca Helterbrand, Vice President of Marketing and Resource Development for Clarity CGC. "With 1 in 5 Minds, our goal is to eradicate the stigma, bring the problem out into the open and get families the help they need."

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The One in Five Minds campaign aims to help educate the community by recruiting 10,000 community advocates in South Texas to pledge their support for children with mental disorders and take steps to help eliminate the stigma of receiving mental health treatment.

For information on becoming an advocate, visit the campaign online at [www.1in5minds.org](http://www.1in5minds.org). Supporters can sign the pledge by providing their name and email address. By signing the pledge, advocates resolve to learn more about the stigma and challenges involving children's mental health issues, to encourage others to speak openly and speak up about children's mental health disorders and to share information with their network of family and friends.

Advocates who have pledged their support include Bexar County Judge Nelson Wolff, State Sen. Leticia Van De Putte, U.S. Representative Joaquin Castro, media personality Amparo Ortiz and Jackie Van de Walle, Assistant Vice President of the San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo.

#### **ABOUT CLARITY CHILD GUIDANCE CENTER**

Clarity Child Guidance Center (CGC) is the only nonprofit in South Texas providing a full continuum of mental health care to children 17 and under, including services for acute cases for children as young as three.

Clarity CGC offers the region's largest concentration of child and adolescent psychiatrists, with its onsite affiliation with Southwest Psychiatric Physicians. In addition, the center serves as a teaching hospital for The University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio. Clarity CGC provides outpatient therapy for children and families, day treatment (where the child is returned home each evening) and acute inpatient hospitalization at its 52-bed hospital.

As a nonprofit, Clarity CGC serves children in need, regardless of their ability to pay, while bringing a multitude of services to children and families through its case managers as a United Way agency.

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