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Mercer

National Alliance on Mental Illness

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Our Mission

NAMI Mercer is a nonprofit organization of individuals and families working to improve the lives of those affected by mental illness through education, advocacy and mutual support.

NAMI Mercer Calendar

For regular support meetings, see Page 8

PUBLIC EDUCATION MEETINGS

NOTE NEW LOCATIONS

February 11 (Wednesday)
7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

“Early Intervention for Children’s Mental Health”
*Dr. William P. Hayes, MD
Psychiatrist in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry,
Alexander Road Associates*

Lawrence Library, 2751 Brunswick Pike, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648

March 2015 (date and time to be announced)

“Alternatives to Psychiatric Hospitalization: Presentation on Involuntary Outpatient Commitment and Early Intervention Support Services in Mercer County”

St. Francis Hospital, Trenton

April 23 (Thursday)
6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

“Stress and Anxiety Management”
*Dr. Allen Weg
Founder and Executive Director of Stress and Anxiety Services of New Jersey*

*RWJ Hamilton Center for Health and Wellness,
3100 Quakerbridge Road,
Hamilton, NJ 08690*

NAMI Mercer Walk — May 2, 2015



(L to r) Assemblywoman (now Congresswoman) Bonnie Watson Coleman (LD15), Assemblyman Reed Gusciora (LD15), Lawrence Councilman Stephen Brame, Assemblyman Dan Benson (LD14), Assemblywoman Donna Simon (LD16), and Lawrence Mayor Cathleen Lewis at the start of the 2014 NAMI Mercer Walk.

The NAMI Mercer Walk Committee is busy planning the 2015 Walk, and with your help, we can make it our best event ever! The Walk is scheduled for May 2 on the grounds of Educational Testing Service (ETS) in Princeton. We hope to raise \$150,000 this year.

Dr. Bill Hayes, a member of the NAMI Mercer Board, is serving as Walk chair, and we are welcoming back many of our veteran committee members. This year’s theme—Sock It to Stigma—came to us via the Perez family, winners of the 2014 Walk T-shirt contest, who are graciously allowing us to use their team theme. We also will be promoting wellness by expanding our Wellness Fair and related activities. Check our website and e-blasts for more details about this year’s wellness initiatives.

Our corporate sponsorship campaign is underway; now is the time to offer this unique partnership opportunity to your business contacts. The NAMI Mercer Walk is not only a fundraiser; it is our largest community outreach event. Asking for the support of area businesses helps us to begin a dialogue about mental health and recovery with the wider community, expanding

NAMI Mercer’s reach in the fight for mental wellness.

Today, one in four adults experiences a mental illness during his/her lifetime. It is very likely that your doctor, dentist, investment manager, attorney, and work colleagues also have a personal connection to our cause.

They may not be aware of NAMI’s presence in Mercer County — what we have to offer to their families, friends, or employees in the form of education and support. If you are interested in approaching an area business or your employer about sponsoring the NAMI Mercer Walk, please contact Walk Manager Christine Bakter, who will be happy to assist you.

The Walk Committee is also planning team captain kickoff events for early March. Kickoffs are designed to provide tools to anyone interested in forming a team to raise money and awareness. Invitations will be sent shortly. You can register your team now by going to www.namiwalks.org/mercercounty.

For more information about the Walk, including volunteer and sponsorship opportunities, please contact Walk Manager Christine Bakter at cbakter@namimercer.org.

Partnerships Increase Impact

We have just completed a very active and successful year. More than 5,000 people were involved or touched by the work of our organization. The community participated in a variety of NAMI Mercer activities: support group meetings; calls to our helpline; social group outings; classes for family members and individuals living with mental illness; our wellness conference; NAMIWalk; event planning meetings; and more.

Although it is easy to report the number of participants, measuring the success of our activities is a bit more complicated. How have NAMI Mercer programs impacted the lives of individuals and families? How are participants handling the next onset of symptoms or family crisis? The goal of our programs is to improve the lives of people affected by mental illness. Are we improving lives? If so, in what ways?

At the end of each class or program, we ask all participants to offer feedback on their satisfaction with the activity. More importantly, we want to know if their lives and their behaviors have been affected. Are they coping better with their symptoms? Have they used the information to improve their relationships? Favorable outcomes tell us that our programs are making a difference.

Here are some comments from our evaluations during the past year:

- ☐ Thank you for offering this program in our school. I will definitely seek help for my son and for myself in developing better coping mechanisms to deal with his illness.
- ☐ I have changed my way of relating to my brother since taking Family to Family. I want to help him to become all that HE wants to be. I will use everything I learned to help him achieve his goals and have hope.
- ☐ Now I am working to stay informed about mental health treatment, and I am seeking help rather than feeling alone and ashamed.
- ☐ The moment I realized I had the freedom to speak openly about my son was an "AHA!" moment for me. I

do not need to feel the shame and the embarrassment again.

- ☐ I was alone before Just Friends. I needed a community of peers. Only my peers can truly understand what I am going through.

With a mental illness, making friends is a tremendous challenge. Now I have positive, healthy relationships with people like me!

- ☐ I love volunteering with NAMI Mercer. It's great to come to the office and be helpful to others rather than be isolated. I enjoy learning new skills and getting to know others.

We are pleased to hear such words of encouragement and stories of change. However, since one in four families is affected by mental illness, there are thousands of people whom we could potentially help.

How can we extend our reach? One way is through PARTNERSHIPS.

During 2015, we will be expanding our collaborations with other organizations to help more people in all parts of the county. Through partnerships, we increase our impact by working together to achieve our mutual goals.

Here are some examples of activities we co-sponsored in 2014: NAMI Basics in partnership with the Mercer Family Support Organization; public education meetings with speakers from a wide range of organizations; support and counseling in collaboration with Greater Trenton Behavioral HealthCare's Intensive Family Support Service Program; mental health fairs and programs teaming with Trenton Housing Authority, Catholic Charities, Princeton Public Library, schools, and congregations of all faiths.



Sally Osmer

We need YOUR HELP in 2015! Please suggest other organizations that may benefit from partnering with us. Are you a member of a company, social group, congregation, school or university that needs to know more about mental illness and recovery? Can you help us to connect with them so that we can touch more people with help and hope throughout the county?

Please say yes by contacting me directly. Here's to fostering partnerships in 2015!

Sally Osmer

Executive Director

Dancer Donates Recital Proceeds to NAMI

NAMI Mercer congratulates Princeton High School student volunteer Elina Roychowdhury on her outstanding classical Indian dance performance and sincerely thanks her for donating \$1,848 of the proceeds to our organization. The event was held on August 2 at Rider University.

Elina's solo graduation recital (called an *Arangetram*) culminates eleven years of intense study of the art of *Bharathanatyam*. This dance form dates back more than 2,000 years and can be traced to ancient Sanskrit literature. Elina studied under guru Sukanya Mahadevan to master the rhythmic movements, expression, and story-telling components of *Bharathanatyam*.

"Elina worked so hard to prepare for her solo," commented NAMI Mercer Director of Operations Danita Saunders-Davis, (photo on Page 3). "Her performance was remarkable, and I was so honored to accept her very generous donation on behalf of NAMI."

Elina first found out about NAMI Mercer through a community service group at her high school called "Stomp Out Stigma." *Continued on Page 3*

What's in Your Pocket?

Perhaps you have seen Prudential's latest TV commercial where Harvard professor Dan Gilbert asks a group of people to write the amount of money in their pockets on a small domino. He then sets a small domino against a long row of larger dominoes arranged by size. When he tips over the small domino, it starts a chain reaction that ultimately knocks down a thirty-foot domino tower, setting a new Guinness world record.

The domino metaphor is intended to illustrate the power of consistent, long-term investment. Like individuals, organizations need to plan for their future. As we mature, NAMI Mercer must ensure that we have the funds to take care of ourselves when we have an unanticipated requirement or do not have the income we enjoyed previously. We must be resilient, able to deal with the unexpected without adversely impacting our daily operations.

Furthermore, as a strong and mature organization, NAMI Mercer should be responsive and effective in meeting the ever-increasing needs of our community and able to act quickly to take advantage of special opportunities.

With these goals in mind, the NAMI Mercer Board of Directors, in partnership with the Princeton Area Community Foundation (PACF), agreed to establish a non-profit investment fund. We have named this fund the NAMI Mercer Fund for the Future and given it the tag line of "Ensuring Help — Sustaining Hope."

Over time, we will grow this fund through major gifts, undesignated bequests, and other unexpected donations. These contributions to the fund will be over and above the income specified for the annual operating budget, which we currently support through fundraising events, corporate and foundation grants, and individual giving to our Patron Society and Annual Appeal.

It is very exciting that a number of NAMI Mercer leaders already have banded together to donate to the NAMI Mercer Fund for the Future. This inaugural donor group sees the need and benefit of having a managed, strategic opportunity fund whose assets will remain accessible to the organization.

In future years, our investment will enable us to strengthen our operations by hiring staff, expanding facilities, and deepening the critical partner-

ships that amplify our work.

Conversations about the NAMI Mercer Fund for the Future will continue in the coming months, and it is my sincere hope that you too will join the inaugural donors who will be recognized at the 2015 annual meeting in June. For more information about how you can participate, please contact Director of Development Christine Bakter, at 609-799-8994 or cbakter@namimercer.org.

Thank you so very much for all you do to ensure that NAMI Mercer will be here to meet the needs of those living with mental illness for the near and long-term future.



Karen Marquis

Karen Marquis

President

Dancer, continued from Page 2

"I joined for two reasons, explained Elina. "I knew people in my community living with mental illnesses, and I had an interest in psychology. Stomp Out Stigma exposed me to the struggles of a person with a mental illness, and it sparked a larger interest in the cause."

After her school year was over, Elina began to involve herself in NAMI events. She also decided that she wanted people who attended her *Arangetram* to donate to the organization.

In addition to volunteering for NAMI, Elina has continued her study of *Bharatanatyam*. She also plays field hockey and is a leader in TAG, a Cor-



ner House program in which teenagers teach elementary and middle-school students about alcohol and drug abuse.

"I hope that I am further able to contribute to NAMI through volunteering with Just Kids and other events, said Elina.

Bob and Pat Demers, 2014 Pillar Award Winners

Former NAMI Mercer president (2005—2008) Pat Demers and her husband Bob, both long-time volunteers, leaders, and supporters, were honored with NAMI Mercer's 2014 Pillar Award for outstanding service. More than 250 persons were in attendance at Night Out with NAMI on November 9 to honor the Demers and hear their acceptance speeches.

Pat spoke nostalgically about the first Night Out with NAMI event, a special showing of the film "A Beautiful Mind" at the Garden Theater in Princeton, at which author Sylvia Nasar and mathematician John Nash addressed the audience. Pat also reflected on the second gala fundraiser, when Dr. Richard Kogan made his debut appearance on the Night Out stage.

"I could tell you many stories of successes and struggles to get where we are now," said Pat, "but the most important factor has always been the people and their passion to serve those families living with mental illness."



Bob and Pat Demers in their lakeside home in Cranbury, NJ.

In his moving acceptance address, Bob reflected on his ten years as leader of the Family Partnership, a group of volunteers that monitored conditions at Trenton Psychiatric Hospital (TPH), including the physical environment, the quality of programs, and how staff treated patients and

interacted with families.

Bob expressed his satisfaction in knowing that the Family Partnership improved the lives of TPH residents and that his efforts have laid the groundwork for a new monitoring initiative by the NJ Division of Mental Health Services.

NAMI Mercer Accomplishments in 2014

Thank you to the many generous people who offered gifts of time, talent, and financial support to enable us to achieve so much in 2014. Following is a brief summary:

- ❑ Established several new partnerships and co-sponsored events with Trenton Housing Authority, Catholic Charities, Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance, Trinity United Methodist Church, and Princeton Public Library. More than 300 people throughout the county attended these events.

- ❑ Continued to provide mental health classes for educators in Trenton, Hamilton, and Hopewell Valley schools through the Parents and Teachers as Allies Program.

- ❑ Staffed a Helpline five days a

week, available to anyone needing help. Offered a supportive and empathetic ear, as well as information to help resolve callers' problems.

- ❑ Provided two adult social groups with more than 120 different activities to promote wellness and reduce the social isolation of individuals living with mental illness.

- ❑ Sponsored our sixth annual Harvest of Hope Wellness Conference for more than 180 people.

- ❑ Offered three Family to Family classes, educating 42 family members about serious mental illness and how to best support their loved ones.

- ❑ Connected with more than 700 attendees at 35 In Our Own Voice

presentations, conveying the hope of recovery and an anti-stigma message.

- ❑ Offered NAMI Basics to 12 families with children with behavioral health challenges; supported 25 families through our monthly Just Kids program, where kids can just be kids.

- ❑ Gathered over 850 people at the May 2014 NAMI Mercer Walk, which raised about \$130,000 to support the free programs that NAMI Mercer provides for the Mercer County community.

- ❑ Engaged more than 250 people who served a record 11,000 hours as volunteers for NAMI Mercer's education, support, outreach, and advocacy programs.

Night Out with NAMI 2014



Top left: past presidents of NAMI Mercer, back row left to right: Bill Wilmot, Chomy Garces, Karen Marquis (current president), Bill Hayes. Front row: Ellen Heath and Pat Demers.

Top right: Pillar Award winners Bob and Pat Demers, with Karen Marquis.

Middle left: Danita Saunders-Davis and her mother Carol Day.

Middle right: Mary and Bill Hayes.

Left: Erica Silver and her mother Maddy Monheit.

More than 250 guests attended our 13th annual Night Out with NAMI gala on November 9, 2014. The fundraiser brought in a net profit of approximately \$66,000. A special thank you to the 42 Patron Society families that contributed nearly \$42,000.

Talented Interns Working at NAMI

JACOB ROGERS-MARTIN is working towards dual master's degrees at the Princeton Theological Seminary and Rutgers University respectively, in theology and social work. He found NAMI through CAN (Community Action Network) of Mercer County and has had some experience with people affected by mental illness.

Jacob was born in Atlanta, Georgia, and lives in Princeton. He has two older brothers; his father is a Presbyterian minister, and his mother an inner city teacher, social worker and Christian educator.

His work with NAMI has included some Helpline training, but basically, he does "any job that comes up!"

Jacob enjoys working at NAMI and has made a lot of friends. He works in the office for about nine and a half hours per week.

He has done some counseling work with kids in his home town and his long-range goal is to work in juvenile detention centers as a mental health coach with special emphasis on spirituality.



Jacob Rogers-Martin

CHRISTABEL FOSTER is working towards a bachelor's degree in social work at the Rutgers School of Social Work. She will graduate in May 2015 and hopes to become a clinical social worker.

She and her husband, Jack, live on a 127-acre farm outside of Lambertville. Jack is the minister of a small United Methodist church in Florence. The couple has five grown children.

Christabel was assigned to NAMI by Rutgers, without ever having

you give them really matters. It's important to be really present, practice deep listening and try to connect," she said.

The Helpline resources are also intimidating and the names of agencies and their programs can change without warning.



Christabel Foster

"Good management is one reason why the NAMI Mercer affiliate is so successful."

heard of the organization. A year of field education is required for her degree, and she has found the benefits of being at NAMI

work both ways. She loves NAMI for its support for people with mental illness, its advocacy and especially for its stigma-busting mission. Mental illness has been an area she feels passionate about.

"It's nice to know a life worth living is possible for people with mental illness," she says.

At first, Christabel found the Helpline training intimidating. "People are upset. The quality of help

Christabel feels she is getting much better at managing this part of her work.

She spends about 15 hours per week in the NAMI office and has become aware of NAMI's special skill at handling its volunteer workforce. Having worked as a corporate trainer and in both service and retail businesses, she understands what's involved in managing a workforce you cannot threaten to fire!

"Good management is one reason why the NAMI Mercer affiliate is so successful," she says.

Walk 2014 T-shirts inspire theme for Walk 2015



"Sock It to Stigma," the theme for our 2015 Walk, came to us from the Perez team, winners of last year's T-shirt contest. Stigma is a major barrier to treatment and prevents many people from seeking help that is available. The best way for us to overcome stigma is to raise awareness and educate. We need to fight inaccurate and hurtful representations of mental illness. Form your team now at www.namiwalks.org/mercercounty.

NAMI Mercer

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NAMI Volunteers Honored With Molina Awards

NAMI Mercer volunteers Mark Goldman and Lisa Tusay were honored at the 2014 Molina Healthcare Community Champions Award ceremony on Oct. 2 at the Nottingham Volunteer Fire Company Hall in Hamilton.

Mark has been an active, full-time volunteer for NAMI Mercer for approximately six years. In many respects, he is the “face” of our organization, for he staffs the reception desk and is the first voice callers hear when they contact us by phone.

Prior to volunteering with NAMI, Mark worked as an adjunct professor of English and proof reader. He now uses these skills to ensure the quality of NAMI Mercer’s written materials. Mark also serves on our Communications, Walk, and Night Out with NAMI committees and recently trained to become a volunteer on the Helpline.

Lisa has been an active volunteer with NAMI Mercer for two years. Employing her talents in graphic design, she has been an invaluable member of the Communications Committee, creating an attractive and professional look for our marketing and fundraising materials.

We have received positive feedback from our supporters about her design work that has resulted in

noticeable increases in donations for our Night Out with NAMI event.

Molina Healthcare’s recognition program was created in 2006 to honor selfless individuals whose civic and faith-based leadership, volunteerism, and public advocacy embody Dr. C. David Molina’s spirit of service, family and community.

Molina Medicaid Solutions in Trenton, a subsidiary of Molina Healthcare, provides business processing and information technology administrative services to Medicaid agencies.

“We are proud to honor these individuals as our 2014 Community Champions,” said Susan Baird, the executive account manager of Molina Medicaid Solutions in

New Jersey.

“This group of people is a great example of volunteers who go above and beyond to help others in their communities, and we are pleased to be able to support their causes.”

The company has supported NAMI Mercer and other local non-profits including HomeFront, Autism Family Services of NJ, and Womanspace. Under the leadership of Vanessa Phillips, Molina Medicaid Solutions “Helping Hands” volunteers formed a team for the NAMI Mercer walk last May and raised \$1,002.



**Mark Goldman
on the phone**

Have you considered volunteering for NAMI Mercer?

We have many volunteer positions. Here are some specific current needs:

EVENT PLANNING: Committee members are needed for the NAMI Mercer Walk and Night Out with NAMI planning committees. People who have event or fundraising experience are needed as well as people who are willing to ask for donations and sponsorships.

PROGRAM LEADERS: Work with the Program and Services Committee to coordinate our education, support and outreach programs.

JUST KIDS SOCIAL GROUP LEADERS: Help to plan and staff the monthly event for our children’s social group. People who have experience with children are needed.

GRAPHIC DESIGN or COMMUNICATIONS expertise needed: Help to design print or electronic communications for NAMI Mercer, using Adobe Creative Suite.

NEXT VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION SESSION is Wednesday February 4 at 5 p.m. Email us to inquire and sign up: home@namimercer.org.

NAMI Mercer is on the MOVE!

We will hold events in locations throughout Mercer County in order to inform more people.

Beginning in February, many of our public education meetings will take place in libraries, wellness facilities, schools, and churches. Watch your mailbox for details.

NAMI Mercer Groups

Support Groups:

NAMI Connection Support Group: Recovery support group program for people living with mental illness. Second and fourth Tuesdays, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. This group is open to anyone with a mental illness, no registration required. NAMI Center. Call us for more information.

IFSS/NAMI: Support for families of adults with mental illness. Mondays, 5:15 to 6:45 p.m., at Lawrence Rd. Presbyterian Church. Tuesdays, 5:15 to 6:45 p.m. at NAMI Mercer, and Thursdays, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Kingsbury Towers, 1 Kingsbury Sq., Trenton.

Education Classes:

WRAP®: An eight-session Wellness and Recovery Action Plan program for people living with mental illness. New classes start Wednesday March 4 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. at the NAMI Mercer Center. Call NAMI Mercer about the next session.

FAMILY-TO-FAMILY: A Family-to-Family class starts late February and runs for 12 consecutive Thursdays from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. This class is for family members of adults who have mental illness. Contact NAMI Mercer to join the next session.

NAMI Basics, a six-week class for parents or caregivers of children and adolescents with behavioral or emotional challenges. The spring semester will be co-sponsored by the Mercer Family Support organization: dates to be determined, running from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

All NAMI Mercer support groups and classes are free, but registration is required for classes. Contact us by phone or email to inquire about the classes.

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