



# nami

# Mercer

National Alliance on Mental Illness

June 2016

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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

**September 21** (Wednesday)  
7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

**“Nutrition and Mental Wellness”**

*Theresa Tucker, RN  
President, Heart to Hearts  
at Project Freedom  
1 Freedom Boulevard  
Lawrence NJ 08648*

**October 6** (Thursday)  
7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

**“Medication-Resistant Depression”**

*Steven P. Levine, MD  
Place to be determined.*

#### **Volunteer Orientation**

First Wednesdays, 5:00 – 6:00 p.m.  
*The NAMI Mercer Center.  
Please confirm your attendance.*

## Save the date!

### NAMI Mercer Annual Membership Meeting

**Monday, June 27, 2016**

**6:00 – 8:00 pm**

**Conant Hall, ETS**

**660 Rosedale Road, Princeton**



**Walkers step out in light rain at NAMIWalks Mercer County, May 7. Photos on Page 5.**

## July is National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month

**J**uly is National Minority Mental Health Awareness (MMHA) Month, our yearly reminder to come together to increase awareness about mental illness while embracing the diversity of our community.

In pursuit of these goals, NAMI Mercer is partnering with Kingdom Church in Ewing to host an interfaith clergy breakfast on Thursday, July 21. Clergy from around the county will assemble to discuss how they can more effectively create a culture of openness within their congregations to address mental health issues.

“The gathering on July 21 will help us build bridges across faith traditions, ethnic groups, and urban-suburban communities,” explains NAMI Mercer Executive Director Janet Haag. She and Program and Services Committee Chair Joyce Campbell look forward to collaborating with Pastor Dharius Daniels and Verily Harris-Harper of Kingdom Church.

NAMI Mercer is in the midst of planning other MMHA activities. Liliana

Attar, NAMI Mercer Board member, will present “Sharing Hope” (Compartiendo Esperanza), a 90-minute presentation in Spanish at El Centro, a Catholic Charities program in Trenton, NJ, that helps meet the needs of immigrants and refugees.

A poetry slam at a coffee house in Princeton also is being planned. Detailed information will be available at [www.namimercer.org](http://www.namimercer.org).

This July marks the 8th annual MMHA commemoration. In 2008, the U.S. House of Representatives established the awareness month in honor of Bebe Moore Campbell, an accomplished author, advocate, co-founder of NAMI Urban Los Angeles, and national spokesperson who advocated for mental health education and support for individuals and families of diverse communities.

She is the author of “72-Hour Hold,” a best-selling novel about a family experiencing the adult-onset mental illness of their daughter.

## Executive Director's Message

# Reach Out to Someone This Month

I recently watched an interesting PBS documentary called *Ride the Tiger* which recounted the stories of highly accomplished individuals living with bipolar disorder. The film highlighted the importance of tasking the brightest and best scientists in our country to work together to explore inner space with the same laser focus and commitment that once enabled us to launch into outer space and land a man on the moon. This time the goal is to create the brain maps that will chart a course from mental illness back to mental health. The experts acknowledge we still have a long way to go.

As fascinating as the science is and as significant the hope it generates, I was really captivated by the people in the film who shared their stories, their courage and compassion in the face of adversity. Among them was Melody Moezzi, whom you may remember as our keynote speaker at Harvest of Hope in 2014.

And this brings me back to our NAMI Mercer community and all those among us whose courage and compassion provide inspiration on a daily basis. By the time you read this, NAMI Walks 2016 will be a memory, but the real-life superheroes for whom we walked remain right by our sides, proving again and again

what it means to come out of the shadows and be "stronger than stigma."

I'd like to challenge each of us, as we mark National Mental Health Awareness Month this May, to reach out to at least one of the individuals within our NAMI Mercer circle to tell them they are admired, to thank them personally for being who they are, to encourage them on their journey of recovery.

Being appreciated and affirmed reminds a person that he/she is not invisible or alone. This kind of powerful personal connection fosters yet more courage and compassion, qualities that are essential to maintaining the wellness that is possible and strengthening our network, while we wait for the next generation of scientific discoveries and treatment options.



Janet Haag

*Janet Haag*  
Executive Director

*Presidential Proclamation 9433, signed April 28, 2016 by President Barack Obama, Paragraph 1*

## NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH, MAY 2016

Nearly 44 million American adults, and millions of children experience mental health conditions each year, including depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and post-traumatic stress.

Although we have made progress expanding mental health coverage and elevating the conversation about mental health, too many people still do not get the help they need. Our Nation is founded on the belief that we must look out for one another — and whether it affects our family members, friends, co-workers, or those unknown to us — we do a service for each other when we reach out and help those struggling with mental health issues.

This month, we renew our commitment to ridding our society of the stigma associated with mental illness, encourage those living with mental health conditions to get the help they need, and reaffirm our pledge to ensure those who need help have access to the support, acceptance, and resources they deserve.

## Leadership Training Updates

### In Our Own Voice (IOOV)

Robert Hedden and Lynne Foley, long-time NAMI Mercer In Our Own Voice (IOOV) presenters, have been certified by NAMI National to train new IOOV presenters. Robert and Lynne attended classes at the Renaissance Capital View Hotel in Arlington, VA in late April.

"The ability to train our own presenters will help NAMI Mercer satisfy the growing demand for presentations and to reach out to a wider audience," commented Executive Director Janet Haag.

IOOV is an interactive, multimedia presentation by consumers that offers hope and combats stigma. Each IOOV presentation follows the journey to recovery through its five major stages:

Dark Days; Acceptance; Treatment; Coping Skills; and Successes, Hopes and Dreams. The presenter introduces each stage with a brief video and then relates his personal experience.

NAMI Mercer began offering IOOV presentations in 2003. The first presenter was Robin Cunningham, a retired senior corporate officer with several international industry-leading corporations, who has lived with schizophrenia since the age of thirteen. Since then, NAMI Mercer's IOOV presenters have inspired thousands of people in our community.

### NAMI Connections

Jay Yudof, NAMI New Jersey Recovery Programs Coordinator, recently trained nine new NAMI Mercer



Robert Hedden and Lynne Foley

Connections facilitators.

NAMI Connections is a peer-led recovery support group for people with mental illness. Attendees learn from one another's experiences, share coping strategies, and offer encouragement and understanding in a safe, confidential setting. Meetings are held at the NAMI Mercer Center on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month.

## President's Message

# The More We Get Together

**D**o you remember the children's song "The More We Get Together"? Like most nursery rhymes, it has a cheerful, sing-song rhythm and repetitive lyrics.

The more we get together,  
together, together  
The more we get together,  
the happier we'll be.  
Cause your friends are my friends  
and my friends are your friends.  
The more we get together,  
the happier we'll be.

What a wonderful reminder that we are a part of the very special NAMI Mercer community, built by like-minded individuals who choose to come together to be present with one another and to share their lived experience of the challenges of maintaining mental wellness. We give each other a precious gift — the gift of sympathetic listening.

Recently, I heard a talk about the characteristics of communities, and NAMI Mercer immediately came to mind. It was an "ah-hah" moment for me regarding the true value of being a member of NAMI Mercer.

During my time on the Board, we've had several discussions about the benefits of membership. Yes, we enjoy the

advantage of receiving this newsletter. Yes, we benefit from the information and resources on the NAMI National website. Yes, we understand that there is power in numbers and that our membership helps influence corporations and foundations to award grants to NAMI Mercer. But are these the most compelling reasons to join? Are these benefits the most valuable?

I truly think that the benefit of membership is that it provides us with opportunities to be present, to share, and to listen. Each time we gather and have the chance to interact, we are planting seeds — seeds that have the potential to impact other lives in a positive way.

As members, we are able to show social sensitivity; we can be present with one another without having to wear a mask disguising our pain and pretending that everything is fine when it's not. I believe that the real benefit of membership is that we can come together to listen to one another non-judgmentally. Even if we don't agree, we can still respect each other's values, beliefs and ideas with acceptance and open hearts. I believe that the benefit of membership is that we can come together to connect and inspire one another.

In February, we reached out to our current and recently lapsed members to remind them to renew their membership. We also had a Mix and Mingle event, where the members gathered to share their thoughts and aspirations for our

organization. If you are not yet a member or your membership has expired, I urge you to contact us to renew.

Please attend our events, like the NAMI Walk, the Annual Meeting, the Harvest of Hope Wellness Conference, Night Out with NAMI, and future Mix and Mingles. Come and experience the true benefits of a NAMI Mercer membership — because the more we get together, the happier we'll be!



**Karen  
Marquis**

*Karen Marquis*

*President*

## NJPAC Reading of SANISM

**O**n Friday, April 29, the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) in Newark hosted a stage reading and audience discussion of SANISM, a new "docu-play" about mental illness written by David Lee White. NAMI Mercer was the beneficiary of all proceeds from the event.

SANISM is one of three plays commissioned by NJPAC's Stage Exchange (NJStage X), a program to support the production of original theatrical works about social issues in NJ.

Following the staged readings this spring, the plays will be performed by a co-commissioning theater during its 2016-2017 season. SANISM will premiere at the Passage Theatre in Trenton, where Mr. White is associate artistic director and resident playwright.

SANISM is a fictional story, based on and inspired by interviews with mental health practitioners, patients, and loved ones of people affected by mental ill-

ness. The reading featured actors Maria Konstantinidis, Newton Buchanan, Deena Jiles, and Dara Lewis, under the direction of Charlotte Northeast.

Following the reading was an symposium to explore the play and its theme of discrimination against people with mental illness. NJStageX symposia are funded by a grant from the NJ Council for the Humanities.

During the symposium, the playwright discussed his work with a panel of distinguished guests, including Tom Pyle, NAMI Mercer Board member, founder of PsychOdyssey, and mental health educator, executive, and advocate with experi-



**(l to r) Suzanne McConnell, Tom Pyle, Nancy Gross, and David Lee White discuss SANISM, an original play about mental illness.**

ence in social services, banking, business, education, and non-profit management. Also on the panel were Suzanne McConnell, a New York-based fiction writer and editor, and Nancy Gross, formerly a writing instructor at the City University of New York and now a Community Liaison consultant for Palliative Care at Overlook Medical Center in Summit, NJ.

# Ayesha Karim: poet and volunteer

**C**ongratulations to NAMI Mercer volunteer Ayesha Karim, whose poem "My Enemy" recently was named a winner of the Very Special Arts (VSA) of New Jersey's 22nd Annual Joyce Indik Wordsmith Competition. Each year, the contest accepts submissions of poems, plays, short stories and essays by state residents with disabilities.

Ayesha's poem will be performed on June 18 at 2:00 pm at the South Brunswick Public Library in Monmouth Junction.

VSA is an international organization on arts, education and disability, which was conceived by former U.S. Ambassador to Ireland Jean Kennedy Smith. Founded in 1978, VSA New Jersey is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the creative power of people with disabilities. The NJ chapter, an affiliate of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Middlesex County Cultural & Heritage Commission, NJ Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, Mercer County Office for the Disabled, United Way of Central Jersey, and additional foundations and donors.



## My Enemy

All day I'm in a silent but no less real fight  
with whom I cannot know or see.  
Flashing sudden recollections  
of my childhood and teenage years.  
(There I was at the age of eight or nine  
being bullied and called names.)

Then I remember sitting at the dining room table  
back in primary school  
Typing a paper on a typewriter for science class  
that I later got a 90 on.  
Now I've upgraded to using a PC or laptop  
to type my poems and my college papers.

Passing a bus stop to go to an appointment  
I see a sign.  
It reads "Psychic, Call xxx-xxx-xxxx."  
If you ask me  
all psychics are phony and of the devil.

Even in churches people can be downright shady  
and secretly against you  
just like people in the world.  
In this world who can you trust?

## NAMI Mercer Selected for Princeton TV Community Partners Project

**N**AMI Mercer is one of two nonprofit organizations selected by Princeton TV to participate in the 2016 Community Partners Project (CPP). The station's Executive Director George McCollough notified NAMI Mercer on May 6.

As part of the CPP program, Andrea Odezynska, an award-winning filmmaker, will mentor the NAMI Mercer team comprising: Board members Tom Pyle, Robert Hedden and Madeline Monheit; volunteers Julie Maddocks, Carol Rickard and Will Leavey, and interns Brian Boni and Beth Koenig.

Princeton TV will provide all the instruction, technical assistance, and equipment and cover other expenses that go into the production of the 10 to

20-minute NAMI Mercer documentary video.

The CPP project is expected to take about ten months to complete and requires a substantial commitment of time from NAMI Mercer. First, the production team meets to brainstorm, design, and script the project. Then, during the subsequent two to three months, the team shoots the film and later spends about 30 hours editing and assembling the footage.

When NAMI Mercer completes the video, we can use it for marketing, education, and outreach. Princeton TV will broadcast the finished project as well as post it to its online video archive. The station airs on Comcast Cable Channel 30 and Verizon FIOS Channel 45.

## The Walk — a big success

**The weather may have been damp and gloomy, but spirits were not! More than 850 supporters on 50 teams walked on Saturday, May 7 to fight stigma and raise \$113,000.**

**This total is expected to rise as we receive corporate matching gifts and additional donations through the end of June.**

**Special thanks to Director of Development Christine Bakter, Director of Operations Danita Saunders-Davis and Walk chairs Dr. Bill Hayes and Dan Schuberth.**

# NAMIWalks Mercer County, May 7



Top left: Superheroes Batman, Superman and Spiderman from the Sunshine Foundation.

Top right: Janet Haag, Christine Bakter, Charles Ebbie Alfree and Danita Saunders-Davis.

Above left: Debbie Grauer. Above center, Girl Scout Troop 71071 with leaders Carrie Vinch (at left) and Christine Tarby (at right).

Immediately above: Junior walkers blowing soap bubbles.

Bottom left: Kris Hanson, Isabella Verge and Madeline Monheit

# NAMI Mercer Volunteer Carol Rickard Appears on The Dr. Oz Show

Carol Rickard, a dedicated NAMI Mercer volunteer for many years and former member of the Board, appeared as a guest on The Dr. Oz Show, which aired on February 25. With more than 20 years of experience as a social worker in the mental health field, Carol also has lived with mental illness. The producers of the show invited Carol because of her unique perspective as a professional and a consumer.

“The executive producer liked my story and my energy,” explained Carol. She traveled to New York City on February 12 for the taping that she describes as an amazing experience. It was especially exciting for her to meet Maurice Benard, the featured guest on the same show. Benard has been playing “Sonny” on the ABC soap opera “General Hospital” since 1993.

Carol had first seen Maurice on a show Oprah did in 2004 along with Linda Hamilton and Shawn Colvin, who all talked about their mental health conditions. Dr. Oz surprised Maurice by playing a clip of the young man who portrays his son on General Hospital. Maurice had asked the writers to incorporate bipolar disorder into the script for both his character Sonny and his TV son.

“Dr. Oz’s discussion with Maurice resulted in the BEST mental health show I have ever seen,” comments Carol. Unfortunately, her own interview was cut down to three sentences, but she was able to present a gift to Maurice — a framed, inspirational saying that she created from the letters of his name (**Magnifies Awareness & Understanding Routinely Inspiring Courage Every day.**)

Carol has had a long career in the mental health field as a social worker, trainer and facilitator in hospital-based settings, including 12 years at Capital Health Systems in Trenton. She feels fortunate to have landed a job in a psychiatric hospital. “It enabled me to be correctly diagnosed with major depression after two years



**Carol Rickard with Dr. Oz and Maurice Benard. Carol appeared as a guest on the Dr. Oz Show, February 25, 2016.**

of struggling with worsening symptoms. I like to say my recovery happened ‘inside out,’ being hospitalized to work and learning recovery from the insider’s perspective!”

Carol’s expertise is in stress management and coping skills, and she has written more than a dozen publications on these topics. Carol’s latest books include: *Moving Beyond Depression*, *LifeTools*, *Emotional Eating*, and *Putting Your Weight Loss on Auto*, which are available at BarnesandNoble.com and Amazon.com, including versions for the Kindle. Her newest book, *Stretched*

*but Not Broken*, will be out soon.

In 2008, she founded WellYOUiversity, LLC, a health education company dedicated to empowering individuals in achieving lifelong wellness. She now dedicates herself full time to her business and to writing a weekly blog for *Esperanza Magazine*, which can be viewed at [HopetoCope.com/blog](http://HopetoCope.com/blog).

See the tape of Maurice Benard and Carol’s appearance on The Dr. Oz Show at [http://www.doctoroz.com/episode/what-really-happened-tamar-braxton-s-near-fatal-blood-clots-soap-star-maurice-benard-s?video\\_id=4772048847001](http://www.doctoroz.com/episode/what-really-happened-tamar-braxton-s-near-fatal-blood-clots-soap-star-maurice-benard-s?video_id=4772048847001).

**Save the date!**

**15th Annual Night Out with  
NAMI Benefit Concert**

**Sunday, November 6, 2016**

**The Stuart Country Day School**

**Cor Unum Center**

**1200 Stuart Road, Princeton**



**Dr. Richard Kogan will perform  
the music of Scott Joplin**

## NAMI Mercer

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## THE NAMI CENTER

*of Mercer County*

Lawrence Commons,  
3371 Brunswick Pike, Suite 124  
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648

**609-799-8994**

home@namimercer.org  
www.namimercer.org

## WRAP® for Kids

After more than 12 years of offering Wellness Action Recovery Plan (WRAP®) workshops to adults, NAMI Mercer is planning to introduce WRAP® for Kids as a pilot on the fall. This program will be led by Anastasia Lambros and Laurie Townsend.

Anastasia, who was certified to facilitate WRAP® by the Copeland Center for Wellness and Recovery in 2014, has been a NAMI Mercer volunteer since 1999. Laurie works for the Mercer County Family Support Organization (FSO).

Mary Ellen Copeland developed WRAP® in 1997 to help persons with mental health problems create personal, practical strategies for managing their illness and their lives.

In 2010, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) recognized WRAP® as an evidence-based practice. This means that WRAP® was analyzed through a rigorous study and was shown to have significant and positive effects on individuals who participated in peer-led WRAP® groups.

According to Michelle Lewis, who has trained/mentored 75 WRAP® facilitators, WRAP® is applicable to everyone; no one is too young or too old to reap its benefits. "Not unlike adults, children and youth can incorporate this in their lives," says Lewis.

## NAMI Mercer and Robbinsville Schools Collaborate on Film Screening

NAMI Mercer and the Robbinsville Schools are planning a screening of the 2015 film "No Letting Go" during the fall semester. The drama is adapted from the award-winning short film, "Illness" and based on the true story of a family's journey to understand and cope with the mental illness of their middle son, Tim.

Noah Silverman, who plays Tim as a teenager, is screenwriter Randi Silverman's son and the brother of the film's real-life inspiration. The

"WRAP® nurtures hope for the future, promotes the ability to choose healthy responses . . . empowers [children and youth] to advocate for themselves effectively . . . as they build a network of supporters."

With the publication of A WRAP Workbook for Kids in 2007, Copeland adapted her program for children ages 7-12. With the help of supportive parents and a WRAP® facilitator, kids learn about things they can do to feel good, stay well, and cope better when the going gets hard. Once they have completed their personal WRAP, kids will have a useful personal guide to daily living. As they get older, they may want to revise or update their plans or develop new ones.

Copeland also developed Youth WRAP® (2002) for teenagers and young adults. This program presents a system that helps young people make their lives more the way they want them to be, to choose and enjoy more of the things they want to do, and to get through the hard times that can come with graduating from school, finding work, and facing other new situations.

If you are interested in learning more or enrolling your child in the upcoming NAMI Mercer WRAP® for Kids Program, contact Executive Director Janet Haag at 609-799-8994 or [jhaag@namimercer.org](mailto:jhaag@namimercer.org).

movie was written and directed by Jonathan Bucari.

In a review for the Huffington Post last March, Psychiatrist and Medical Editor Lloyd Sederer wrote: "My colleagues and I, as well as countless families, now have a terrific resource. 'No Letting Go' is an alternative, a master class, to many fine books for parents, families and friends facing mental illness in a child . . . Its message of not letting go, never giving up, is one we all need to hear and see."

# Save the date!

## 8th Annual Harvest of Hope Wellness Conference

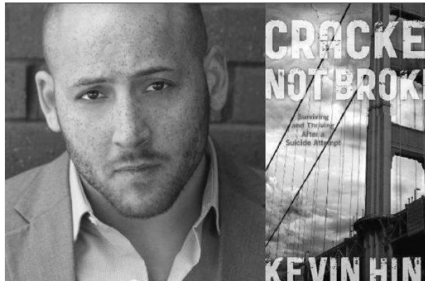
“Living with Purpose”

Saturday, October 1, 2016

8:30 am – 3:15 pm

Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville

2688 Main Street, Lawrenceville



Keynote Speaker Kevin Hines.

## NAMI Mercer Groups

### Support

**NAMI Connection:** Recovery support group for adults living with mental illness. Second and fourth Tuesdays, 7:00–8:30 p.m. No registration required.

**IFSS/NAMI:** Support group for families of adults living with mental illness. Mondays, 5:15–6:45 p.m., at Lawrence Rd. Presbyterian Church. Tuesdays, 5:15–6:45 p.m. at the NAMI Mercer Center. Thursdays, 11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m. at Kingsbury Towers, 1 Kingsbury Sq., Trenton (facilitated in English and Spanish).

### Education

(Free. Offered in fall and spring. Registration is required.)

**Family-to-Family:** A 12-session

class for family members of adults living with mental illness.

**NAMI Basics:** A six-session class for parents/ caregivers of children and adolescents with behavioral or emotional challenges.

**WRAP®:** An eight-session Wellness and Recovery Action Plan program for people living with mental illness. A one-day special Holiday WRAP is offered in November.

### Social

**Just Friends Meet and Greet (Age 30+).** First Wednesdays, 3:00–4:00 p.m., at the NAMI Mercer Center. Call to confirm attendance.

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