

December 1, 2016

We are once again at that time of year when we come together with family, friends, and colleagues to celebrate our relationships and express our gratitude for all that has value in our lives. It is a time to reflect on our personal journeys, where we have been and where we are going—and what has made a difference along the way. **For me, NAMI Mercer comes to mind.**

I was diagnosed with Generalized Anxiety Disorder when I was little, but I never really knew what that meant. **Growing up, I just knew I was different from everyone else.** I always called it “unique”. At the age of 14, I met my best friend, Christian, who lived with Bipolar Disorder and Depression. He opened my eyes to the reality of mental health conditions, and this is when I started researching mental health and figuring out who I was within it. Almost ten years later I lost Christian to his underlying addiction disorder. No one knew about this part of his struggle. This is when I found NAMI Mercer.

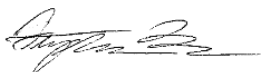
NAMI Mercer is not just a place to go to when you need someone with whom to talk. The NAMI Mercer community becomes your second family. The staff, volunteers, and community welcomed me with open arms. They did not judge me or see me as someone different. They saw me as a girl with full potential and a beautiful life ahead of her. **Volunteering with NAMI Mercer has been the best thing in my life because I am supporting others just like me who live with mental illness.** I don't think of this as an illness from which we can't recover, but an obstacle thrown our way because we are capable of tackling it head on. I am forever grateful for NAMI Mercer for helping me do just that!

Those who engage with NAMI Mercer learn the experience can be “life changing”—and this is a powerful endorsement for why NAMI Mercer matters. **Your contribution helps further our mission and fund wellness resources so individuals and families can access the supports they need to address the impact mental illness has in their lives.**

Please give generously to help NAMI Mercer flourish. To make your contribution, you can complete the enclosed form and return it to us in the self-addressed envelope or go to www.namimercer.org and click on the blue Give to the Annual Appeal button to access our secure online portal.

Thank you for helping us change the narrative about mental illness and create a community of hope and recovery. Best wishes for a happy holiday season!

Sincerely,



Stephanee Brown
NAMI Mercer Volunteer

PS All of NAMI Mercer's Programs and Services are offered at no charge to participants. Your generosity makes this possible.