



## **Madeline Monheit**

The NAMI Mercer Board of Directors has chosen Madeline Monheit to receive its prestigious Pillar Award for 2016. The award is given for a consistent and significant contribution to achieving the NAMI Mercer mission through volunteerism, leadership, advocacy and/or charitable giving over at least five years. Maddy will be the fifth recipient. The presentation will take place at the annual Night Out with NAMI fundraiser, on Sunday, November 6.

Maddy Monheit joined NAMI Mercer in December 2004, bringing with her a powerful background of experience at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, MD, as a senior writer and editor (both print and online) with training in technical documentation, administration and human resources. She spent 15 years in the field of computer technology, planning and managing complex automated information systems projects. Before that, she worked for seven years as a high school Spanish teacher and academic advisor.

It is hardly surprising that Maddy has made her mark on NAMI Mercer. In May 2006, she became a member of the board. She serves on six committees: Communications, Development, Programs and Services, Harvest of Hope, Night Out with NAMI, and the Walk. She is also secretary to the board.

Maddy leads by example, taking an active and creative role in any enterprise she joins. She themes and decorates the Walk kickoff event at Janssen Pharmaceutica and has worked on the silent auction, decorations and other details of NAMI Mercer's annual fundraiser at Stuart Country Day School. Her commitment extends to other organizations within the community, such as Lawrenceville Main Street and Heart to Hearts. It was Maddy who forged our connection with the Lawrenceville Presbyterian Church and found a home for our annual Harvest of Hope event.

During her service on the Development Committee, which included planning for the organization's future, Maddy came up with the apt title: "Fund for the Future." Always thinking of ways to develop new sources of income, she encouraged friends and family members to make memorial donations to honor their loved ones, thus widening the NAMI circle of commitment. Board member John Marsland said, "Maddy was at the core of this work."

NAMI Mercer's Director of Development Christine Bakter sees Maddy as a development director's dream, a board member who leads through action and example. To boost corporate sponsorship for the

Walk, Maddy went to her own bank, dentist and doctor. She constantly thinks of ways to leverage cash and in-kind commitments from new sources.

“Maddy is very creative,” says Bakter. “She enhances everything she undertakes. Once she starts a project, she will follow through to the end. She is driven by her belief in the importance of what she does.”

Operations Director Danita Saunders-Davis said, “Maddy exemplifies a spirit of grace. She has a can-do attitude and a high level of competency. She is a perfectionist, but you never see her feathers ruffled. She will stay cool, play the role of the referee and be willing to listen and find solutions to problems. She never dismisses anyone’s concerns as unimportant. When she says ‘How are you doing?’ it is out of genuine care and concern for the people who make NAMI work. She is a joy to work with.”

Former NAMI Mercer President Bill Hayes said, “If anyone is a pillar, Maddy is! Her hard work on so many major events, her artistic input, make me wonder whatever would happen to us without her. The Harvest of Hope is her brain child. Her financial contribution is very substantial, and she is a wonderful example to other board members.”

Former Executive Director (2007-2015) Sally Osmer noted that Maddy had been asked to serve as president, but Maddy believed that she could better serve the organization in other capacities. “She is an obvious and lovely choice, with so many different capabilities. Not only does she have great ideas, but she’s willing to carry them out.”

During Sally’s jurisdiction, Maddy initiated a series of Op-Ed articles in *The Times of Trenton*. She convinced publisher Brian Malone to publish 11 articles, from February to December 2009, on NAMI Mercer’s service to the families of people affected by mental illness. She has planned and edited every issue of NAMI Mercer’s newsletter for the past ten years. She is also responsible for public relations, sending out press releases and advertisements.

Maddy created the Harvest of Hope conference to mark NAMI Mercer’s 25<sup>th</sup> year and is justifiably proud of it. It has become an annual fall event, and about 180 participants enroll each year; the workshops are varied and well-attended. This October, for the first time, free tickets to the keynote address will be offered to local college students.

Carol Rickard of WellYOUiversity, LLC, a health education company, has been involved with NAMI for the past six years. She says, “I met Maddy at the first Walk in Mercer County Park. I have learned so much from her, especially about online and written communications and how to run a meeting. She’s creative and detail-oriented, but also caring and thorough. Harvest of Hope will always hold a spot in my schedule and time.”

“Maddy is open to other people’s ideas and versatile. Across the breadth of her ability, each area of commitment requires something different from her. I am lucky to have her be a part of my life and of NAMI Mercer.”

Maddy’s work for NAMI Mercer is helpful for her own recovery. She needs to give back, since she knows recovery is possible and life can be good. “It’s very important to be among positive people,” she says. “Talking about one’s experiences is the best way to fight stigma. It’s also important to have a purpose in life. Each night, I ask myself what I did today that was constructive and helpful.”