



nami

National Alliance on Mental Illness

Mercer

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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

February 2 (Tuesday)

7:30 – 9 p.m.

“Eating Disorders 101”

Cathy Lane,

Clinical Outreach Coordinator

Center for Eating Disorders

University Medical Center of Princeton at Plainsboro. At the NAMI Center.

March 8 (Tuesday)

7:30 – 9 p.m.

“Introducing Parents and Teachers As Allies”

A new program to educate school professionals and parents to identify signs of mental illness in students and to find services. Team presentation.

At the NAMI Center.

April 19 (Tuesday)

7:30 – 9 p.m.

“Special Needs Law, Guardianship, and Estate Planning”

Alex Hilsen, Esq.

Sussan, Greenwald and Wesler

At the NAMI Center.

May 19 (Thursday)

7:30 – 9 p.m.

“The Psychology of Clutter — Letting Go.”

Dr. Marla Deibler, Director

The Center for Emotional Health of Greater Philadelphia

At the RWJ Hamilton Center for Health and Wellness, 3100

Quakerbridge Road, Hamilton.



5K Walkathon – Saturday, May 7

Planning for the ninth annual NAMI Mercer Walk is well underway, and with your assistance, we will make this another great event! We will return to Educational Testing Service (ETS) in Princeton for the 5K Walkathon on Saturday, May 7, hoping to raise \$150,000 to support our programs and services offered at no cost to people with mental health issues and their supportive friends and family members.

This year’s theme — Stronger than Stigma — was suggested by NAMI Mercer members. The committee chose this theme in direct response to the negative stereotypes surrounding mental illness. Achieving mental wellness requires commitment, determination, and courage; our Walk is a celebration of the strength needed to live with and overcome mental illness. Along with our annual team T-shirt contest, the committee is working on a theme-related contest that will be announced at the kickoff dinner on March 10.

Councilman Dan Schuberth and Dr. Bill Hayes are leading the 2016

Walk Committee as co-chairs. Dan Schuberth was elected to the NAMI Mercer Board in 2015 and serves as a newly elected councilman in Robbinsville Township. In partnership with his wife Natalie, Dan earned the distinction of top individual fundraiser for the 2015 Walk, using a strategy of personalized asks supported by employer-matched contributions and a fundraising event in Robbinsville, at Maggie Moo’s.

A former president of the NAMI Mercer Board, Dr. Bill Hayes, who returns in his role as Walk chair, is a vocal advocate for the NAMI Mercer Walk effort. Consistently using a “Main Street” approach to reaching out to friends, family, colleagues and vendors for corporate sponsorship and donations, his team, Hayes STOMP, raises thousands of dollars each year.

NAMI Mercer is fortunate to have two chairs who lead by example, and we can’t wait to see where they take the Walk this year.

The corporate sponsorship drive is *continued on Page 2*

God Put a Song in My Heart

By Ayesha Karim

God put a song in this heart of mine.
I sing songs of redemption and songs of praise to God alone.
To the God that brought me here and to the God who saw this day coming and all of the days before that.
I was born in January, in winter.
January is the first month of the year.
New Year's Day usually comes with a bunch of resolutions for most people.
I have had the same goal weight for a decade.
Isn't that funny!
My goal weight is still the same.
I accept Ayesha. I accept myself and I like who I am.
Some people don't like me but it never stopped me from being confident in who I was created to be.
When I pass the mirror I smile because I like me.
Self acceptance was my 30th birthday gift from God, you see.
It mended the shattered mirror of my teenage years and my 20s.
It's good to be Ayesha now!
It's good to be me!
God put a song in my heart, song of myself!

WALK *continued from Page 1*

underway, and everyone can help with this effort. Please consider your business contacts — your bank, attorney, insurance agent, doctor or contractor — as potential walk sponsors. Most of the organizations that support our Walk have done so because they serve NAMI Mercer members in a professional capacity, and they were asked!

Twenty-five percent of Americans will be diagnosed with a mental illness at some point in their lives. We at NAMI Mercer say that "Everyone Knows Someone" because mental illness is so prevalent.

Your contacts may not be aware of NAMI Mercer and what we have to offer them in the form of education and support. In this regard, the Walk serves as an outreach event to help to start the dialogue on the "Main Streets" of every Mercer county community. Please reach out to Walk Manager Christine Bakter for more information on sponsorship or how to form a team.

Executive Director's Message

Possibilities and uncertainties

Life is filled with "beginnings again." Circumstances often demand that we "start over" or "change course," presenting both exciting possibilities and scary uncertainties. To move forward, we have to open ourselves to new ways of thinking and acting. This receptivity to change is necessary not only for individual growth and wellbeing but also for that of an organization.

The NAMI Mercer Tech Workgroup was already developing a disaster recovery plan and exploring upgrades to our computer system when a small fire in our office made it clear that we needed to implement this plan sooner rather than later.

In order to keep our Helpline operational while we did not have access to our traditional telephone setup, we moved to a VoIP (voice over IP) system whereby voice travels over the Internet or private data network lines instead of conventional, commercial telecommunication lines. This system makes it possible for staff or volunteers to answer or place calls from wherever they are via NAMI Mercer's number.

To provide services for the new phone system, we contracted with RingCentral, a company that offers both flexibility and media rich integration, supporting secure voice, text, audio conferencing, and video meetings. Slowly but surely, we are learning to use these advanced features. We are very fortunate to have received a grant from the Lawrence Township Community Foundation to help offset the costs of this upgrade.

On another "digital note," NAMI Mercer is moving to the Cloud! It sounds esoteric but each time you check your Facebook status or look at your bank balance on your phone, you are engaged in cloud computing. Cloud Technology provides access through the Internet to the same data, programs and applications that have traditionally been stored on servers and computers. Cloud-based services are remarkably secure (HIPPA compliant), cost effective, environmentally friendly, and enable files to be updated and shared anytime from anywhere. Additionally, the supplier maintains the system by installing regular software.

So, instead of replacing our outdated server, we are purchasing new laptops and desktops with subscription to Microsoft Office 365 (at the low-cost, nonprofit rate). In addition to helping us work more efficiently, it will limit our vulnerability to disasters such as our recent fire.

In 2016, we will introduce DonorPerfect (new donor management software) into the mix—and we are grateful to the Princeton Area Community Foundation for grant-funding this part of the project. DonorPerfect will help us streamline certain aspects of our fundraising efforts and facilitate online registration for events.

We continue to look for ways to increase our reach through social media platforms. You can help by "liking" our Facebook posts and sharing them with your friends. Socks the Monkey has become quite the media star "socking it to stigma!"

And finally, our Communications Committee and webmaster are at the beginning stages of re-visioning our website to make it even more interactive, integrate it with DonorPerfect, and incorporate the best of current web design trends. More about this to come...

A huge thank you to our volunteer Tech Workgroup members Akavar, Martha-Lisa, Alex, Nancy, and our staff and volunteers who helped shape this plan. We are especially grateful to Nancy for administering our Access database.

Most assuredly, we will be on a steep learning curve as we "begin again" with all this new technology, so your patience and support are greatly appreciated.



Janet Haag

Janet Haag
Executive Director

President's Message

Why volunteer?

NAMI Mercer has a rich history of a large number of very dedicated volunteers. Last year, our volunteers contributed an astonishing 11,784 hours valued at more than \$300,000.

In truth, there would be no NAMI Mercer were it not for our volunteers—teachers, speakers, workshop and support group leaders, office workers, event coordinators, Helpline responders, outreach representatives, board members—to name just a few of their roles. We are extremely grateful to each and every one of these generous individuals who give so much of their time and talent to serve the mission of NAMI Mercer. It would be easy to sit back and think we've got it all covered, right? Far from it.

In all the years I've been volunteering with NAMI Mercer, I've learned that it takes many hands to serve our mission. We are a grass-roots organization, always in need of new volunteers and volunteer leaders to help sustain our programs and provide essential professional services that we would otherwise have to purchase. I am also aware that in our modern society, we experience extreme "time poverty." There's so much on our own plate; it's hard to find the time to do for someone else.

If you've been contemplating

whether or not you would like to get more involved and volunteer some of your time and/or expertise to NAMI Mercer, I would like to take a few moments to point out some of the benefits of volunteering.

It might surprise you, but volunteering can actually make you feel like you have more time, according to Wharton Professor Cassie Mogilner. She wrote in the Harvard Business Review, "Giving your time to others can make you feel more 'time affluent' and less time-constrained than wasting your time, spending it on yourself, or even getting a windfall of free time."

Volunteering can also help you discover new talents and develop new skills, leading to personal growth and self-esteem. It can help you to strengthen your ability to influence others, because in contrast to many for-profit workplace settings, small non-profit environments tend to be more collaborative. As such, leadership is more by permission than by position, meaning those who can persuade effectively and create vision are more successful.

Contributing your time can also help expand both your perspective and your network. The work we do for NAMI Mercer brings together men and women of different ages, socioeconomic levels, diagnoses, experiences, and eth-

nicities who have a common passion for our mission. The shared lived experience of a life affected by mental illness helps to reduce stigma and underscores our message of "You are not alone." It's a chance to give back, make a difference, and strengthen the community.

Lastly, volunteering can make you healthier in mind and in body. By building empathy towards others and strengthening our social bonds, we smile. As the author Gordon B. Hinckley writes, "One of the great ironies of life is this: He or she who serves almost always benefits more than he or she who is served."

I know that my time as a volunteer with NAMI Mercer has benefitted me in many of these ways. I hope that you will consider joining me in serving others, and by so doing so, improve your own life.



**Karen
Marquis**

Karen Marquis

President

Have You Considered Volunteering for NAMI?

Have you considered volunteering for NAMI Mercer? We have many volunteer positions. Here are some specific needs:

EVENT PLANNING

Volunteers are needed for the NAMI Mercer Walk and Night Out with NAMI planning committees. We invite people with event or fundraising experience as well as people who are willing to ask for donations and sponsorships.

PROGRAM LEADERS

We are seeking volunteers to work with the Program and Services Committee to coordinate our education, support, and outreach programs.

JUST KIDS SOCIAL GROUP LEADERS

If you have experience with children, help us plan and lead the monthly event for our kids' social group.

GRAPHIC DESIGN or COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

Help to design print or electronic communications for NAMI Mercer using Adobe Creative Suite.

NEXT VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION SESSION

Wednesday, February 3 at 5 p.m.
Email us to inquire and sign up at home@namimercer.org.

Judge Joseph Irenas, 1940 – 2015

Say not in grief: “He is no more,” but live in the thankfulness that he was.

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Judge Joseph E. Irenas on Oct. 16, 2015. Judge Irenas, who served on the Board from 2007 to 2015, received the 2012 Pillar Award, NAMI Mercer’s highest honor.

Joseph E. Irenas, born in Newark in 1940, graduated from Princeton University in 1962 with a major in political science and married Nancy the same year. Joe earned his Juris Doctor degree cum laude at Harvard in 1965.

After graduating from law school, Joe clerked for NJ Supreme Court Justice Haydn Proctor for one year. He then worked for McCarter and English (M&E) from 1966 to 1992, becoming a partner in 1972.

While working for M&E, Joe did lots of pro bono work for the community. He tutored minority law school graduates who had flunked the bar exam multiple times. After the Newark riots of 1969, he represented some of the people who were arrested. In 1982 he was elected chairman of the board of United Hospital in Newark. Joe also served as director and treasurer of the Newark Area United Way.

Joe was nominated to the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey by President George Bush on November 14, 1991, and was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on April 8, 1992. He assumed senior status on July 1, 2002 and continued in this capacity until his death at age 75. Although he had dialysis treatments several times a week, Judge Irenas continued to arrive at the Camden courthouse from his Princeton home by 7 a.m. every day.

Throughout his long career on the bench, Judge Irenas presided over many famous (and infamous) trials, including the longest criminal case in the country which resulted in the conviction of Daniel Enright and Demetrios Karamanos for their role in one of the nation’s largest fuel excise tax schemes. In 1997, he upheld the constitutionality of

Megan’s Law, which requires sex offenders to register with police.

Judge Irenas also presided over the appeal of Robert O. Marshall, whose story is the subject of Joe McGinniss’ best-selling book, *Blind Faith*, and an Emmy-nominated TV miniseries.

In addition to his judgeship, Joe taught at Rutgers Camden Law School for 17 years. He

was active in his class at Princeton, served on the Advisory Board of Opera NJ, and was a devoted supporter of Cathedral Kitchen, a soup kitchen in Camden.

And, in 2007, the Irenas’s joined the NAMI Mercer family. Joe was most impressed by the organization’s “valiant effort to challenge the myths of mental illness, especially the misconception that people affected by mental illness do not want to interact with others.” According to Joe, “keeping a social life is very, very difficult. With its Just Friends program, NAMI provides the superstructure to assist people in making friends and practicing the social skills they need for life.”

Joe leaves his wife Nancy, a retired social worker; his son Teddy, a talented musician; his daughter Amy, an attorney and board-certified neurologist; his son-in-law Bob; and grandchildren Joe, Shayne, Jenna and Zoey.



February is Membership Month

During 2015, NAMI Mercer welcomed a new executive director and successfully navigated several months of displacement due to a small office fire. We discovered we are a resilient community with a great deal of creativity.

We are who we are because you are who you are! And when we join together, we exert a collective influence that makes the quality of life in Mercer County and beyond significantly better for the many individuals and families living with mental illness.

As we launch our 2016 membership campaign, can we count on you to renew your membership or join us for the first time, making NAMI Mercer and our community “stronger than stigma” and an undeniable force for good?

As a member, you:

- Have access to programs and services that promote recovery and mental wellbeing.
- Obtain up-to-date information on policy, research, and news affecting all those who are impacted by mental illness.
- Build relationships and enhance your capacity to handle difficult situations through the NAMI Connection.
- Receive the following publications: *The NAMI National Advocate*; *The NAMI New Jersey Alliance*; and *The NAMI Mercer Messenger*.
- Vote to elect the NAMI Mercer Board of Directors, as well as repre-

sentatives on the state and national boards.

Joining or renewing your membership online is quick and easy at namimercer.org/support/join.shtml, or you can call 609-799-8994 for a registration form.

The cost of annual membership for an individual/family is \$35 or if you have limited income, only \$3. Every membership counts!

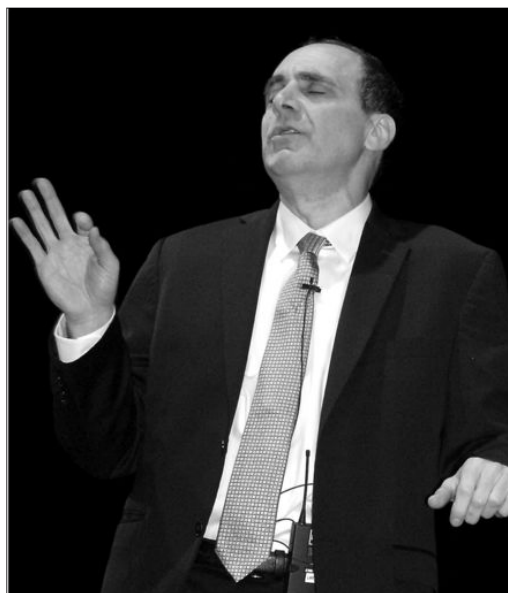
At NAMI Mercer we are all about community, emphasizing caring relationships. Our members add their voices to hundreds of others in advocating for better policies and services for individuals and families affected by mental illness.

Help us tip the balance in favor of a more compassionate society that promotes mental health. Do your part and become a member of NAMI Mercer today!

Night Out with NAMI, Nov. 8



Above: Phyllis, Elise and Bill Wilmot.



Left: pianist Dr. Richard Kogan, performing "Music and Melancholy," a lecture/recital about the life and work of Russian composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky.



Above left: NAMI board members, back row l-r, Tom Nied, Maddy Monheit, John Marsland, Deborah Bachelor, David Ludgin. Seated: Janet Haag and Karen Marquis. Left: Pillar Award winner Carol Kivler with Donna Varnum.

NAMI Mercer's Harvest of Hope, Oct. 3

Below left: keynote speaker Hakeem Rahim and Francilia Wilkins. Below: Christine Bakter and Donna Robinson.



Introduction to Our Interns

KIA ANDERSON

I am a senior psychology major at Rider University who hopes to pursue a Master's degree in mental health counseling.

My interest in this field began when I became an RA (Residential Advisor) and worked with students who were battling

mental illness; some of them told me about their suicidal thoughts. My dream job/career would be to counsel children and families affected by mental illness or developmental disabilities. My experience at NAMI has been the highlight of my senior year thus far. I am glad to be a part of such a wonderful organization and after my internship ends in December, I plan on continuing to volunteer and support the organization.

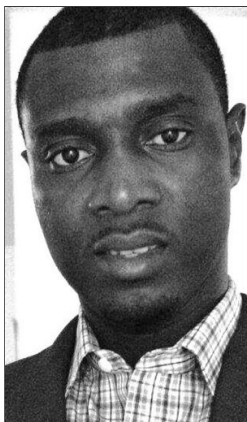


TOE GRIFFITH

I am an ambitious and compassionate young man, interested in helping everyone with whom I come in contact. I migrated from

Liberia to the United States in order to further my education. I obtained my Bachelor's degree in psychology and am currently enrolled at Rutgers

University for a Master's degree in social work. As a NAMI Mercer intern, I assist with outreach events and lend a helping hand wherever and whenever I am needed. I have learned a great deal about reducing the stigma associated with mental illness and how many people are living full and productive lives. My passion for helping



others motivates me to be actively engaged with NAMI Mercer.

ANDERS EDSTROM

My name is Anders Edstrom, and I'm originally from the northern suburbs of Chicago. My wife, Heather, and I moved to New Jersey in August 2014 so I could attend Princeton Theological Seminary, where I am in my second year of study for my Master of Divinity Degree.

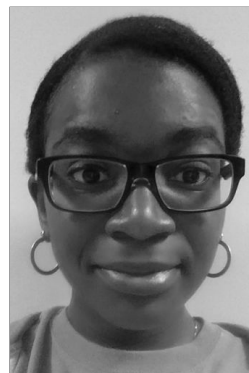
I am currently in the ordination process with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Some of my interests include playing basketball, reading, traveling, watching movies, kayaking, and watching sports (Chicago teams, of course). At NAMI Mercer, I am working as a Walk associate, helping to prepare for this important event.



JUANICA BUCHANAN

I am a 21-year-old senior at Rider University who will earn my BA in psychology at the end of this month. I am planning to pursue my education further and would like to go for a Master's Degree in clinical psychology. I have learned so much from my time

interning with NAMI Mercer. This experience has shown me the great need for more organizations like it--dedicated to eliminating the stigma of mental illness and providing necessary services to the community. I am very grateful I had the opportunity to intern with such an amazing organization.



Donation to NAMI



"Going Fishing," a watercolor by Garden State Watercolor Society President Tess Fields.

NAMI Mercer greatly appreciates the Garden State Watercolor Society's generous donation of \$950, representing 10 percent of the income from its art sale in November. The "Shop for a Cause" event was held in Palmer Square in Princeton.

"We were pleased to partner with NAMI Mercer," said Tess Fields, president of the society. "We all face personal struggles in our lives. For some of us, art plays a vital role. Painting and creating can provide a constructive outlet and a safe place to retreat. Works of art that 'speak to us' bring us enjoyment and a feeling of wellbeing. I know they do for me."

The Garden State Watercolor Society (GSWS), founded in 1970, is dedicated to providing artists opportunities and venues to create and show their art in a supportive atmosphere. It also strives to bring the public art exhibits, demonstrations and workshops to educate and inspire.

We are especially grateful to Tess Fields, who donated one of her own paintings, as well as a "Sip and Paint" watercolor class to the Night Out with NAMI auction. When asked about her generosity to our cause, she replied: "Having an organization like NAMI Mercer can be a life-saver."

NAMI Mercer

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609-799-8994

home@namimercer.org
www.namimercer.org

Carol Kivler — 2015 Pillar Award Winner



From left: at Night Out with NAMI, NAMI Mercer Executive Director Janet Haag presents the 2015 Pillar Award to Carol Kivler.

About 250 persons, including many members of her family, were in attendance at Night Out with NAMI on November 8 to honor Carol and hear her acceptance speech at the Cor Unum Center, Stuart County Day School in Princeton.

Carol spoke about her amazing journey from a person paralyzed by clinical depression to a dedicated spokesperson for recovery.

With a history of four hospitalizations and more than 50 ECT treatments, Carol today runs Kivler Communications, her own executive coaching business, and Courageous Recovery, a non-profit that educates the healthcare community and dispels the myths and stigma surrounding mental illness.

The accomplished author of four

self-help books, Carol generously contributes 15 percent of the revenue from her sales to NAMI Mercer.

In her moving acceptance address, Carol thanked her three children — Kimberly, Russell, and Brandon — for supporting her through her struggles and for encouraging her to tell her personal story to change public opinion about mental illness.

Carol also acknowledged her two sisters, Beverly and Alexis, for coming to her aid during her hospitalizations and for believing in her ability to recover.

“When I found NAMI, I found my ‘peeps,’ said Carol with gratitude. “I wasn’t judged or looked down on. I was accepted warmly and encouraged to share my story. Little did I know that my life would be changed forever.”

SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, May 7, 2016

*Planning for
the ninth annual NAMI Mercer Walk —
an invigorating 5K walkathon —
is well underway.*

Help us to make this another great event!

**Educational Testing Service (ETS)
Rosedale Road, Princeton**

**Contact: home@namimercer.org
or 609-799-8994
www.namimercer.org**

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. Contact NAMI Mercer 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 the NAMI Mercer Center. Thursdays, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Kingsbury Towers, 1 Kingsbury Sq., Trenton, in English and Spanish.

Education Classes:

WRAP®: An eight-session Wellness and Recovery Action Plan program for people living with mental illness. Contact NAMI Mercer to join the next session.

FAMILY-TO-FAMILY: Family-to-Family classes run 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. Classes will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on dates to be determined. Call 609-799-8994 for more information.

All NAMI Mercer support groups and classes are free, but registration is required for classes.

ADDRESS LABEL GOES HERE

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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