



NAMI
National Alliance on Mental Illness

Mercer *Messenger*

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Our Mission

NAMI Mercer listens, leads, educates, and advocates, helping families and individuals affected by mental illness to build better lives, free of stigma and discrimination.

Get Ready to Disco on November 17

The Night Out with NAMI (NOWN) Committee, under the leadership of Coleen Burrus and Cathy McTigue, is busy planning our 2018 gala dinner dance. Please mark your calendars for Saturday night, November 17, 2018, and spread the word to your friends and family.



John Travolta in disco attire

In 2016, our theme was Ragtime; in 2017, it was 50s and 60s Rock & Roll. Continuing our theme of dance eras, this year, we move to the 1970s for an evening of Disco Fever.

Night Out will be held at The Windsor Athletic Club (WAC) on Clarksville Road in Princeton. Join us for a trip down memory lane by dressing in the fashions of the era, such as colorful jumpsuits, hip huggers, bell bottoms and leisure suits. Sparkle under the lights in spandex and sequins in your knee-high boots and platform shoes. There will be music, dancing and games.

Celebrating Harvest of Hope's Tenth Anniversary on October 6

NAMI Mercer is excited to welcome Dr. Xavier Amador as the keynote speaker at our 10th annual Harvest of Hope Wellness Conference on Saturday, October 6, at the Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville, 2688 Main Street. This year's theme is "Partnering for Prevention and Recovery."

Dr. Amador, a renowned clinical psychologist, is the founder of the LEAP Institute and author of eight books, including the international best-seller, "I'm Not Sick, I Don't Need Help" (available in 15 languages). Dr. Amador has been a regular contributor to the Today Show and a featured guest on *Good Morning America*, *CBS This Morning*, *NBC Nightly News*, *60 Minutes*, *CNN*, *ABC's World News Tonight*, and many others. He was a featured psychologist on the PBS series, "This Emotional Life."

Also a well-known forensic psychologist, Dr. Amador has worked on numerous high-profile cases, including the Unabomber, the Elizabeth Smart Kidnapping, and 9/11 conspirator cases. He was interviewed in February by CNN host Don Lemon about the tragic school shooting in Parkland, Florida.

Dr. Amador's connection to NAMI runs long and deep. He served as the director of NAMI National's Center for Research Education and Practice, where he founded the Scientific Council. After his tenure on staff, during which he was also deputy executive director, he resigned in order to

serve on the board of directors. His many presentations at NAMI National conventions have been standing room only.

Following the keynote address, conference participants will have a choice of wellness workshops, with one session in the morning and another during the afternoon. The \$15 registration fee includes lunch. Although membership in NAMI Mercer is not required, we are offering an incentive price of \$40 to join as an individual AND attend the conference.

Workshops will offer information and strategies for partnering for prevention and recovery. Learn to be purposeful about seeking answers to your questions, connecting to others, improving communications skills, and helping those who reject treatment. Discover ways to connect to yourself and others through creativity.

Representatives from local health and wellness non-profits will provide information about their programs and services. The conference concludes with an energizing, fun-filled, line-dancing experience. More detailed information will be coming soon. Registration starts in August.



Dr. Xavier Amador

We are looking for volunteers to serve on the NOWN Committee. Please contact Christine Bakter (cbakter@namimercer.org) if you would like to be involved.

Annual Membership Meeting and Board Elections

Monday, June 18, 6:00-8:00 pm

Educational Testing Service (ETS)

RSVP to 609.799.8994

Executive Director's Message

The Art of Good Mental Health

A growing body of research suggests engaging in the arts, either as an observer of the creative efforts of others or as an initiator of one's own creative efforts, has a positive effect on health and wellbeing and can amplify emotional healing. Such activities include visual arts, music, movement-based creative expression, expressive writing, and acting. With this in mind, NAMI Mercer invites our community to participate in an Expressive Arts Summer Program. The goal quite simply is to bring us together, tap our creativity, and have fun.

When we exercise our imaginations, we experience creative freedom. We disconnect from the stresses and problems of daily life and open ourselves to possibility. Often, we discover talents, skills, resources, values, dreams, and desires we didn't know we had. As the great theologian and social activist Thomas Merton noted, "Art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time."

How exactly does this happen? Creative projects offer safe spaces to generate meaning, explore different roles, and nurture self-acceptance. Creative people teach us to be comfortable with ambiguity and open-endedness. They bring a different set of questions to the fore and recognize that different states of mind are sources of creativity. Art promotes positive change through self-exploration and communication.

We are offering five workshops during the summer. Participants can choose to attend only one session or all five. No art experience is necessary.

Registration is required, and attendance is capped, so register early by calling 609.799.8994 or emailing home@namimercer.org and identifying which classes you would like to attend.

We typically associate the summer season with a more laid back approach to our daily lives, marked by more time spent having fun. So treat yourself this summer and come to the NAMI Mercer Center to paint, sing, move, write, play – and engage in the art of nurturing good mental health!



Janet Haag

Best regards,

Janet



The NAMI Mercer Expressive Arts Summer Program at the NAMI Mercer Center includes:

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|---|
| June 26 | 7–9 pm | Sip 'N Paint (sparkling grape juice provided) |
| July 10 | 7–8:30 pm | Wit and Writing |
| July 23 | 6:30–8 pm | Good Vibes: Music on Your Mind |
| August 13 | 7–9 pm | Dancing on Paper – Painting on Scarves |
| August 27 | 7–9 pm | The FUN-damentals of Improv |

Take It to the Next Level



Jay Redd in his orange tuxedo.

Thank you for your continued support of NAMI Mercer. We are an incredible organization because of each one of you. As I look back on this year, I am grateful for the work of our fantastic staff and the contributions of the volunteers who help us with our mission. Without you, we would not be able to continue to serve our community in the manner that we currently do.

As we look forward to the upcoming year, I am requesting each of you, board members included, to look at your involvement in NAMI and see if there are things we can do better. We want to know.

Share your ideas by sending me an email to jay@jayredd.com or give me a call at 732. 991.2516. By providing this feedback, you tell us what we need to know to make the organization better.

Additionally, I am challenging you to take your involvement to the next level. Only you know what this means. For me, it meant challenging my social network to support NAMI-Walks by pledging to wear a bright orange tuxedo to the walk and the New Jersey Senate. As a result of this challenge, I more than doubled

NAMI Mercer Launches Parent Support Network in Partnership with The Youth Mental Health Project

Behind every great partnership is a story, and the one behind The Parent Support Network speaks to the wonderful way in which some things just organically unfold. It began when NAMI Mercer member Barbara Eget brought the film "No Letting Go" to our attention more than two years ago. Janet Haag subsequently met Randi Silverman, the film's producer, at the NAMI National Convention in Denver. The story continues with NAMI Mercer screening "No Letting Go" at Robbinsville High School in 2016 and Randi leading the Q & A with attendees. Her message resonated with our community, and we hoped to find additional ways to collaborate.

Meanwhile, Randi and her friend, Wendy Ward, co-founded The Youth Mental Health Project, an organization that believes that mental health lies on a continuum that changes and evolves over the course of one's life. They focus on youth in the context of this continuum.

"We empower young people, parents, and caring adults with the practical knowledge, support, and resources they need to nurture their children's mental health and intervene when they recognize warning signs" is The Youth Mental Health Project's mission statement. Among their initiatives, Randi and Wendy developed The Parent Support Network specifically to address the isolation parents experience as they try to find and access proper resources for their children.

The Youth Mental Health Project was looking for partners to launch Parent Support Network groups. NAMI Mercer was looking for a new way to meet the



Wendy Ward and Randi Silverman, co-founders of The Youth Mental Health Project.

needs of this demographic. Ours was a "match made in heaven," but the challenge we faced was start-up funding.

Several weeks ago, we received an exciting phone call from Wendy saying The Youth Mental Health Project had been awarded a substantial grant to help them launch Parent Support Networks across the country, and they had selected NAMI Mercer as one of their trusted partners. As such, we will receive \$10,000 in materials and training to start a Parent Support Network here in our community. Thus far, we have recommended two candidates to train as Parent Support Network facilitators.

This fall, we hope to host our first group for parents of children (up to age 18) who are struggling with mental health conditions. Wendy will present a workshop at Harvest of Hope on October 6. Through this strategic partnership, both organizations look forward to enhancing our programmatic impact, increasing early intervention to reduce the incidence and severity of youth mental health challenges.

my previous walk fundraising total. You may choose to invite a friend to an upcoming event or inquire about joining a committee. Your increased participation will make NAMI Mercer stronger.

The future for NAMI Mercer is bright. We have a new home, a great staff, and we have you. Never forget how much the Board and I appreciate your contributions and look forward to working

with you in the future. See you at the annual meeting and have an amazing summer!

Best regards,

Jay

Portrait of a Volunteer: Leslie Handler

By Liz Hagen

Leslie Handler, NAMI volunteer par excellence, was born in Dallas, TX and spent much of her childhood in the Cayman islands, where her father had a lucrative practice as a plastic surgeon. His wealthy patients appreciated being able to disappear for a heavenly Caribbean vacation and come back transformed!

Leslie earned her bachelor's degree in journalism and public relations from the University of Texas. Later, she worked in hotel management until, about seven years ago, a battle with oral cancer forced her to retire on disability. She started to focus on writing, and four years ago, sent a story to WHYY which earned her a contract.

Leslie has published a collection of her works entitled "Rats, Mice and Other Things You Can't Take to the Bank," available from Amazon. She will donate the proceeds to NAMI Mercer. Copies are also available from the NAMI Mercer office.

She is a nationally syndicated columnist with Senior Wire News Service and freelances for several publications, including *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. In 2015, she won an award from the Society of Newspaper Columnists.

Several members of the Handler family have been affected by mental illness, as is the case with most of our volunteers. Leslie describes NAMI as "a great resource," and when she found herself with time on her hands, she volunteered to help out at the office.

"At first, I was doing menial tasks," she said. She learned the ropes and began to contribute in areas that matched her interests. "I enjoy teaching and public speaking," she said.

Leslie is now serving on the Community and Public

Awareness Committee.

She has trained to be a lead presenter for Ending the Silence, was part of a panel of presenters at the Lawrenceville School on "Minding the American Dream," and has led several workshops on Expressive Writing. She will present a workshop at the 2018 Harvest of Hope and is up for election to the Board.

She enjoys arts and crafts and has drawn on her creativity to make buttons for NOWN guests and centerpieces for the Just Friends Holiday Party.

The only exception to her willingness to pitch in is the Helpline. Leslie considers advising other people on such crucial matters to be too much of a responsibility. "I'm better at educating and encouraging," she said.

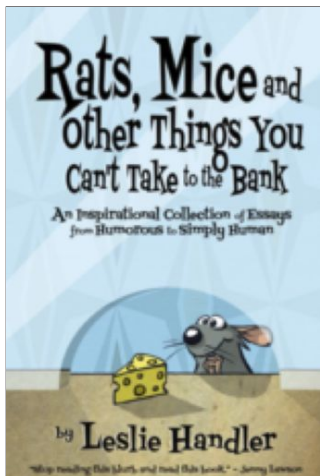
According to Executive Director Janet Haag, "In addition to sharing generously of her talents and skills, Leslie has a delightful sense of humor, which makes her a pleasure to be around."

Leslie and her husband, Marty, are the sixth owners of a 55-year-old home in the Glen Afton section of Trenton. "Everything is original except the kitchen, which is contemporary but matches the tone of the home," Leslie said. Changes and repairs were faithfully documented over the years, so the home came with its own pedigree.

In addition to their three dogs, Leslie and Marty live with a 33 year-old, eight inch-tall cockatoo which is not her favorite member of the family. "We got married very young," she said. "My husband brought home a little white cockatiel which, unfortunately, died. He went out and got this bird, which could easily outlive us both. He's basically a large parrot and my husband loves him!"



Leslie Handler with her parrot



As part of Mental Health Awareness Month, Executive Director Janet Haag (center) and volunteer Mindy Hoffman (left) presented to a group of employees at Bank of America (BoFA) Merrill Lynch in Pennington on May 30. The luncheon gathering was dubbed "A Personal Journey Event: Courage Is Talking." Employees from the company's Jersey City office were able to attend via teleconference. In the photo, Managing Director Don Gallagher is introducing the NAMI presenters.

Screening of the Kevin Hines movie “Suicide: The Ripple Effect”



L to r: Jill Dick, Barbara Eget, Kurt Baker, Madeline Monheit, Tricia Baker, Janet Haag, and Shauna Moses.

By AIR Co-Chair Tricia Baker

On April 12, Attitudes in Reverse (AIR) had the honor of partnering with NAMI Mercer in the screening of the Kevin Hines movie, “Suicide: The Ripple Effect” at the AMC 24, Hamilton.

It was amazing to see more than 200 volunteers and supporters from both organizations join together and work in solidarity to provide hope for those who struggle. In uniting in our cause, we will all save lives!

I am personally grateful to Maddy

Monheit and Janet Haag, who approached me about teaming with AIR for this movie event.

They too understand that there is strength in numbers and the importance of partnering to realize our common mission.

No One Left Behind: Mental Health and First Responders



“No one left behind” has long been a motto for the brave men and women who serve our communities as First Responders. It is critical for us and them to remember that for all their bravery and selfless service, they are also human, and in their times of emotional and psychological vulnerability, they should not be “left behind.”

In response to an invitation from Devangi Patel, Health Educator for the

Montgomery Township Health Department, on April 10th, Janet Haag made a presentation to the Pennington Rescue Squad at their facilities on Mental Health and First Responders. Highlighted were specific risk factors, symptoms, warning signs, and prevention strategies for the most common mental health conditions experienced by emergency personnel.

A good conversation followed and par-

ticipants received a Wellness Checklist for First Responders, a short list of Mental Health Resources for EMS, and a post card outlining some simple de-escalation techniques.

At NAMI Mercer, we welcome all such opportunities to bring our mission and message of healing and hope to the community.



Peace, Love and NAMI Walks a Huge Success!



Star Walkers (l to r) Robbinsville Council President Dan Schuberth, Janssen Team Captain Keith Moran, Board Secretary Stephanie Kammer, Board President Jay Redd, Assemblywoman (15th Legislative District) Verlina Reynolds-Jackson, Director of Development Christine Bakter, Executive Director Janet Haag, Board member Madeline Monheit.

by Kathi Barringer

On Sunday, May 6, more than 900 people gathered at the Educational Testing Service (ETS) Campus in Princeton, NJ, to fight the stigma of mental illness at the 11th Annual NAMI Walks Mercer County – Peace, Love and NAMI Walks. Despite the dreary weather forecast, the rain held off, spirits were high, and the event became NAMI Mercer’s most successful fundraiser of all time.

More than 80 volunteers helped to stage the area. The vendor tent was full of information about wellness, the kids’ area had fun activities (including face painting, bubbles, NAMI tattoos and a peace sign craft project) and a “Sock it to

Stigma” sock monkey sale.

Generous donors provided refreshments. Our thanks to Pennington Bagel, Bagels and Cream, Wegmans of Princeton, Frito Lay, Starbucks of Robbinsville, and the Burrus-Skrodzki Family for their contributions. Talented performers entertained us before the start of the 5K walk. Thanks to Jim Gaven, the Rider Dance Troupe, Colleen Ryan and Tom Livecchi, and to Samantha Feinen. MARCo Technologies, winner of The College of New Jersey Mayo Business Competition, demonstrated its mental health robot. We were also joined by Zero Gravity 2180, the Hamilton East – Steinert High School Robotics Team, and volunteer support from a number of area school programs.

Board President Jay Redd honored his pledge to donors and donned a bright orange tuxedo for

the event. He promised to wear the tux on the floor of the NJ State Senate, where he works.

Star Walkers were honored during opening ceremonies. Please join us in congratulating these exceptional fundraisers, who each raised at least \$1,000 by walk day: Dan and Natalie Schuberth, Jason Redd, Meena Bakhshi, Pat Demers, John and Carol Marsland, Cathy McTigue, Janet Haag, Coleen Burrus, Madeline Monheit, Lynne Leckie, Jerilyn Angotti, Tom Pyle, Margaret Redman, Elise Wilmot, and Kathi Barringer. As of this writing, the top five fundraising

teams are Janssen Neuroscience Walkstars (\$37,000), Team Robbinsville (\$17,000), Jay’s Amazing Team (\$5,000), Compassion for ALL our Neighbors (\$5,000), and the NAMI Mercer Can Do Office Crew (\$5,000).

This is NAMI Mercer’s highest grossing walk. In 2017, the event raised a total of \$137,000. This year, \$152,374 has been earned thus far, and the official donation period doesn’t end until July 6. According to Director of Development Christine Bakter, when all matching and post-walk donations are officially tallied, we will surpass \$158,000, exceeding our goal of \$142,500 by at least \$15,500.

NAMI Mercer extends heartfelt thanks to major sponsors Alkermes, Takeda & Lunbeck, ETS, UBS, Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Otsuka, Summit Oaks Hospital, Alexander Road Associates, PRIDE Industries and JCL Financial Group.

We appreciate the support of our honorary chairs, superintendents Tom Smith (Hopewell Valley Regional Schools) and Scott Rocco (Hamilton Schools), and Dr. Jason Briggs (Principal of St. Gregory the Great Academy), and everyone who donated, volunteered and/or attended this fantastic event.

We couldn’t have done it without you.



Above: Samantha Feinen singing stigma. At right: Stephanie Kammer.



Not Just Any WRAP

By Akavar Dylutra

WRAP at NAMI Mercer has come a long way since February 17, 2004, when 17 members of our community were introduced to the program by two leaders from Collaborative Support Programs of NJ (CSPNJ). That summer, several of our members attended CSPNJ workshops in preparation for starting our own WRAP program. In January 2006, NAMI Mercer held its first WRAP workshop, led by facilitators Erika Reading and Elise Wilmot. The program comprised eight monthly sessions for creating personal “toolboxes” for living well and coping with mental illness.

What is WRAP?

Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) was developed by Mary Ellen Copeland, Ph.D, to help persons with chronic mental or physical illness stay on the path to wellness. It grew out of a series of discussions in the late 1990s with groups of individuals who had experienced chronic and debilitating mental illness requiring multiple hospitalizations. These individuals were asked what they did for themselves to help them get better and stay better for long stretches of time.

WRAP teaches individuals to focus on approaches that offer supportive and effective ways to help them make positive changes in their lives while also helping them to recognize the triggers and symptoms of illness. WRAP is a series of eight workshops during which the individual develops his/her own WRAP addressing positive supports, relapse prevention, and crisis planning.

WRAP® as an evidence-based practice

In April 2012, WRAP® earned the distinction of being an evidence-based practice, that is, a program or therapy that has been proven by a controlled scientific study to have positive, repeatable results. WRAP is registered in the SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices.

The scientific studies that established WRAP’s effectiveness were based on workshops with a specific set of criteria regarding participation, facilitation, administration, training materials, and follow-up. To be considered evidence-based, WRAP® workshops must conform to these criteria. Naturally, NAMI Mercer wanted to adhere to these requirements to ensure that our participants get the maximum value for the time that they invest in attending workshops.

NAMI Mercer’s WRAP® as an evidence-based practice

Implementing WRAP® as an evidence-based practice is a major undertaking. As of this writing, the only other organization in the state that is making this attempt is Mental Health Association (MHANJ) Ocean County.

Required Characteristics of WRAP® to Qualify as an Evidence-Based Practice

- **Participation in WRAP groups and services must be completely voluntary.**

Before registering an individual for WRAP, one of the facilitators usually has a short conversation with the candidate to determine if the individual is registering for his/her own reasons or because someone else expects him/her to do so. Sometimes, we have parents who want to help their adult children by signing them up for a WRAP workshop. Although their intentions are good, individuals who do not take part in WRAP voluntarily frequently do not do well. We also discuss if the individual wants to take part in discussions and how he/she intends to use the personal WRAP after the course ends.

- **Individuals are trained to use WRAP® through a peer-group process.**

Our peer-group process begins with intake. We ask if the individual has been diagnosed with a serious mental illness. (We do not need to know what the diagnosis is since WRAP works independently of diagnosis.)

We conduct our workshops by consensus. The very first activity of each new workshop series is to create our own group guidelines for the next eight sessions. These guidelines are reread at the beginning of each workshop, and everyone must re-agree to each item. Guidelines can be added or changed by consensus.

- **WRAP® groups are facilitated by peers.**

WRAP® workshops at NAMI Mercer are always facilitated by peers, who are of equal standing with the other participants. The only difference is that facilitators have been trained in the tools and skills that help participants to get and stay well.

The facilitators are not “teachers,” since this term implies a power relationship above the “students.” When everyone feels equal, it is much easier to learn from one another. There are no formal tests in WRAP except for the test of using our newly learned skills in our daily life.

Facilitators are not behavioral health professionals because of the implied power dynamic. If professionals want to participate in a WRAP® group, they must disclose their diagnosis and take part as peers.

- **WRAP groups are facilitated by two trained and certified peer facilitators.**

Proper facilitation of a WRAP® group requires a collaborative effort and mutual support. This cooperation between the two facilitators serves as a model for the group. A “trained” facilitator must complete a 5-day course conducted by Copeland Center Certified Advanced Level WRAP.



Akavar Dylutra and Anastasia Lambros facilitating a WRAP® workshop.

- **Peer facilitators must complete a Copeland Center WRAP® refresher course every two years.**

WRAP® groups should have facilitators who refresh and expand their skills and understanding. WRAP® is not static; new and improved techniques are emerging. NAMI Mercer facilitators were re-certified in 2016, and we intend to take the refresher course again this year.

- **WRAP® peer group participants and facilitators must receive appropriate mentoring.**

WRAP® is a group of life skills that we are constantly learning and improving. In this sense, we are never “done” with WRAP. Here are a few ways NAMI Mercer offers ongoing support to those interested in continuing to work with WRAP® after completing the workshops:

1. We publish a newsletter twice a month.
2. We offer an online support group every Thursday evening.
3. NAMI Mercer offers a voice mail box, a phone extension, and an email address so that individuals can contact the WRAP® program directly.
4. People can enroll in the WRAP® workshop series as many times as they choose
5. NAMI Mercer offers WRAP as a service at no cost to the public.

- **WRAP groups must adhere to the core ethics/values of the Copeland Center.**

Many participants may have had success with various treatments and therapies. Although they are encour-

aged to share what has helped them, they are not permitted to urge others in the WRAP® workshop to seek the same solutions. The facilitators do not alter the pre-defined course material to include other strategies.

- **WRAP® groups must use the copyrighted curriculum developed by Mary Ellen Copeland.**

All the slides and handouts used by NAMI Mercer when presenting WRAP® carry the proper copyright and trademark symbols. These materials have been field-tested and recognized as effective by SAMHSA.

- **Behavioral health organizations that offer WRAP® must support a grassroots recovery movement in their community.**

This requirement matches NAMI Mercer’s core mission. We are a grassroots organization dedicated to helping individuals and their families to cope with the challenges of mental illness within the family. We are just people helping other people. Everyone needs help at one time or another; at some point, we will be strong enough to give back by helping others.

When all is said and done, it is just people who have the lived experience of mental illness helping others who are learning to understand and manage their illness.

For more information about NAMI Mercer’s WRAP® program, visit <https://namimercer.org/learn-more/wellness-recovery-action-plan-wrap/>, email wrap@namimercer.org, or call 609.799.8994 Ext. 19.

NAMI Mercer Takes a Leadership Role in Second Superintendents' Call to Action Meeting

On Thursday evening, May 10, NAMI Mercer and Effective School Solutions (ESS) partnered in presenting a workshop to an estimated 150 parents and school personnel under the umbrella of the Second Call to Action Meeting sponsored by the School Superintendents of Mercer County. The event was held at The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) Brower Student Center.

Executive Director Janet Haag, along with Emily McClain, one of our student interns from TCNJ, represented NAMI Mercer at this event. Janet gave a slide presentation, "Minding Youth Mental Health: A Caregiver's Guide," while Emily shared the story of her own mental health journey.

Melissa Callen, Regional Director of Effective School Solutions, an organization that provides mental health services within the schools, talked further about suicide prevention. The evening concluded with a lively Q & A. Dr. Tom Smith,

Superintendent of the Hopewell Valley School District, told parents the conversation will continue next school year with smaller groups and a focus on actionable steps to improve mental health in our schools and communities.

By developing a strong, positive relationship with our school superintendents, NAMI Mercer hopes to be well positioned to bring our Ending the Silence (ETS) program to students, their families, and school personnel, beginning in fall of 2018. We believe ETS will prompt meaningful conversation about mental health challenges, reducing stigma and making it more likely that young people will obtain treatment sooner and receive the support they need to achieve their full potential.

NAMI Mercer is fortunate to be



Executive Director Janet Haag at the podium

among the first round of NAMI affiliates to benefit from the ETS Expansion grant, generously provided by Tipper Gore. We have already utilized the ETS online training modules to prepare three lead presenters and five young adults. Our teams are looking forward to taking this program into our schools.

NAMI Mercer Invited to Partner in the "Stigma Free Mercer" Campaign

Mercer County Executive Brian Hughes has announced a yearlong, countywide campaign to combat the stigma associated with mental illness and addiction and to support all those who are impacted. Given our longstanding commitment to this goal, NAMI Mercer has been invited to partner with the County on this initiative. Our logo is slated to appear alongside that of the Division of Mental Health on all of the campaign posters and printed materials, with the exception of the stigma-free pledge, since NAMI has one of its own.

The 12 municipalities across Mercer County have been encouraged to adopt resolutions to increase awareness and understanding of mental illness and reduce stigma and discrimination. Robbinsville has already blazed the trail under the leadership of Dan Schuberth. NAMI Mercer Board member, Walk chair, and Robbinsville Council member, Dan introduced a resolution in 2017 to recognize May as

Mental Health Month and "shine a light on mental illness, fight stigma, provide support, educate the public, and advocate for equal care." The resolution was unanimously adopted, and the Robbinsville Community Team came out in force at the last two NAMIWalks, demonstrating just how effective grassroots organizing can be. Mercer County will be joining several other counties in New Jersey as we work toward ending the stigma across our entire state.

As part of this initiative, at the Trenton Thunder game on July 12 at



(l to r) Robbinsville Mayor Dave Fried, Robbinsville Councilwoman Christine Ciaccio, Councilman and NAMI Mercer Board Member Dan Schuberth, Alex Bakter, NAMI Mercer Director of Development Christine Bakter, Councilman Ronald Witt, Kristian Stout and Councilman Mike Cipriano.

Arm and Hammer Park, NAMI Mercer will join the Mercer County Division of Mental Health in staffing a resource table. We will be the charitable beneficiary of proceeds from the game that evening so we hope as many of you as possible will purchase tickets and publicly show your support for a Stigma Free Mercer.

NAMI Mercer

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NAMI MERCER PROGRAMS

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

*Family-to-Family

12-session program for family members of adults living with mental illness. Sept. 20 – Dec. 13, 6:30–9 pm (no class Nov. 22)
NAMI Mercer Center.

In Our Own Voice and Ending the Silence

Presentations to promote awareness and instill a message of hope through personal stories of recovery. Call to book a presentation.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

June 14, 6:30–8 pm
This Is Your Body on Stress,
RWJ Fitness and Wellness
Center, Hamilton.

*Expressive Arts Summer Program at NAMI Mercer:

Sip 'N Paint, June 26, 7–9:00 pm

Wit & Writing, July 10, 7–8:30 pm

Good Vibes: Music on Your Mind,
July 23, 6:30–8:00 pm

Dancing on Paper ~ Painting on Scarves, Aug. 13, 7–9:00 pm

The FUNDamentals of Improv,
Aug. 27, 7–9:00 pm

SUPPORT GROUPS

NAMI Connection

Recovery support group for adults living with mental illness. First and third Wednesdays, 2–3:30 pm. Second and fourth Thursdays, 7–8:30 pm. NAMI Mercer Center. Walk-ins welcome.

IFSS/NAMI Support Groups

For families of adults living with mental illness. First and third Mondays, 5:15–6:45 pm at Lawrence Road Presbyterian Church. Tuesdays, 5:15–6:45 pm at the NAMI Mercer Center.

Parent Support Network

For parents/caregivers of children and adolescents, TBD.

Hearing Voices Support Group

For adults who hear voices or have other unusual sensory experiences. Mondays, 2–3 pm
NAMI Mercer Center.

*Wellness and Recovery Action Plan (WRAP®) Workshops

8-session program for individuals living with mental illness. Wednesdays, 6–8:30 pm, Sept. 26–Nov. 14, NAMI Mercer Center.

WRAP®Online Support

Thursdays, 7–8 pm.
Call 605.562.3185. Enter the meeting ID 149 245 4791 when prompted or access a video conference at <https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1492454791>.

Just Friends Social Support Group

Peer-led group that meets regularly for fun activities and good times. Meet & Greet (required for first-time attendees). First Wednesdays, 3–4 pm
NAMI Mercer Center.
Call in advance to attend.

*Overcoming Social Anxiety Workshop

For adults who experience fear of interacting with others in social situations. Wednesdays, Apr. 25–Jul. 18, 7–9 pm. NAMI Mercer Center. Offered in partnership with Find Your Voice.

ASK THE SOCIAL WORKER

TELECONFERENCE

First Mondays, 7–8:30 pm
Phone: 773.231.9226
Call ID: 149 914 8712 when prompted.

VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION

First Wednesdays, 5–6 pm
NAMI Mercer Center.
Call in advance to attend.

All NAMI Mercer support groups, workshops, and classes are provided at no cost to participants. *Indicates registration is required.



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Mercer County
1235 Whitehorse
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