

Harvest of Hope – A Day of Education, Inspiration, and Camaraderie

NAMI Mercer is excited to welcome Dr. Kenneth Duckworth as the keynote speaker at our 11th annual Harvest of Hope Wellness Conference on Saturday, October 5, at the Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville, 2688 Main Street. The theme of Dr. Duckworth's address will be "Dream Big. Act Now. Know the Science."

About Dr. Duckworth

Ken Duckworth's journey into psychiatry started when he was a boy growing up with a dad who experienced severe bipolar disorder. His father was loving and kind, but periodically quite ill, hospitalized for months at a time. Ken became a psychiatrist in part to help his father.

Dr. Duckworth has served as the medical director of NAMI National since 2003. With other members of the senior leadership team, he has set the strategic direction of the organization and supported its mission to improve the lives of the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. According to world-renowned psychiatrist Dr. Ned Hallowell, "Ken Duckworth is an American hero."

Triple board certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology in adult, child/adolescent, and forensic psychiatry, Dr. Duckworth is currently an assistant clinical professor at Harvard University Medical School, an adjunct clinical assistant professor at Boston University School of Public Health, and associate medical director for Behavioral Health at Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Massachusetts. Prior to joining NAMI in 2003, Dr. Duckworth served as Acting Commissioner of Mental Health and the Medical Director for the Department of Mental Health of Massachusetts, as a psychiatrist on a Program of Assertive Community Treatment (PACT) team, and Medical Director of the Massachusetts Mental Health Center.

More about the conference

Following Dr. Duckworth's keynote address, conference participants will have a choice of wellness workshops, with

one session in the morning and another during the afternoon. The \$20 registration fee includes breakfast and 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.

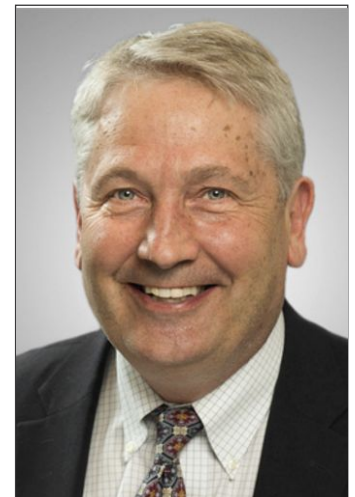
Workshops will offer information and strategies for mental wellness. Seek answers to your questions from an eminent psychiatrist; explore the therapeutic effects of art and movement; discover the impact of diet and aging on your brain; learn about the consequences of smoking/vaping, and marijuana; experience a support group. Throughout the day, representatives from local health and wellness non-profits will be available to provide information about their programs and services. The conference will conclude with an inspiring performance by the Core of Fire Dance Ministry.

Thank you to our sponsors

Harvest of Hope 2019 is made possible in part from generous donations from the Lawrence Township Community Foundation and from the Rowchowdhury Family in memory of Jyoti Agrawal. NAMI Mercer also thanks the Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville for hosting the conference for the past 11 years.

Since 2009, mental health professionals have volunteered their time to lead 97 different workshops.

More detailed information will be coming soon. Conference registration will begin in mid-August.



Dr. Kenneth Duckworth

"If you feel that you've been struck by lightning, or picked on by God, or some other larger force because you have a [loved one] who has an emotional problem or even a mental illness, you should know that there's a whole group of people that are there to worry with you, support you, and help make the world a better place . . ." (Dr. Duckworth, speaking about NAMI)

Executive Director's Message

Green Light for Stigma Free Mercer

Symbols carry meaning; they communicate who we are and what we value. Our efforts to promote a Stigma Free Mercer got a symbolic lift when the iconic “Trenton Makes Bridge” was lit green on Saturday, May 4th, the night before NAMIWalks Mercer NJ. It was a wonderful way to raise community awareness about mental health and celebrate the adoption of stigma-free resolutions by every municipality across the county.



Princeton Mayor Liz Lempert, Hopewell Township Mayor Kristin McLaughlin, Lawrence Mayor Christopher Bobbit, Myesha Price (singer), and NAMI Mercer President Dan Schuberth at the bridge-lighting ceremony on May 4.

Several mayors joined us for the bridge-lighting ceremony, held on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware River. The green light reflected in the rippling water was indeed compelling!

Color psychology suggests that green is related to balance and harmony, promoting equilibrium between the head and the heart. It is considered the color of growth, of renewal, and rebirth. As a combination of yellow and blue, green blends the mental clarity and optimism of yellow with the emotional calm and insight of blue, inspiring hope, gen-

erosity of spirit, and a sense of well-being. It is no wonder green is the color associated with mental health.

The fact that a bridge was illuminated, rather than a building or other single structure, only added to the symbolic impact of this event. The County and NAMI Mercer are working hand-in-hand to create a Stigma Free Mercer, bridging the gap between the public and private sectors, thereby delivering a stronger message to our local community. Additionally, NAMI Man from NAMI Bucks

County made an appearance at this event, linking our respective affiliates for a common cause.

In the months leading up to the bridge lighting and NAMIWalks, Mercer County representatives, approached every town council asking them to pass a stigma-free resolution. Simultaneously, members of NAMI Mercer's Community Awareness Committee met personally with every mayor, encouraging them to support this initiative and inviting them to be honorary chairs for the Walk. Five of the mayors showed up to walk with us in the pouring rain. The partnership between the County and NAMI Mercer has proved effective, and we look forward to continuing our work together to translate words into actions.

Through Stigma Free Mercer, we are committed to building bridges and shining a light on the very real challenges of those affected by mental illness in order to put hope and healing well within everyone's reach. In keeping with the spirit of the “Trenton Makes — The World Takes” sign, here in Mercer County — well, we are just getting started!



Janet Haag



NAMI Man and Christine Bakter at the ceremony.



President's Message

Farewell from Our Outgoing President

Dear Members of the NAMI Mercer Community, My time as a member of the Board of Directors ended in June at the conclusion of my second two-year term of service. I am extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to serve as president of an organization that has made a tremendous impact in the lives of so many in our community over the past 30+ years. The kindness and passion of the people who built this organization (many of whom remain involved to this day), as well as the Board members, staff, volunteers, and families who power the organization today are simply remarkable.

Reflecting back on my introduction to NAMI Mercer in 2013, I'm reminded of an important lesson in organizational development and sustainability. Simply put, key supporters of NAMI need to seek out and invite people who share our vision to get involved. Without a constant infusion of new people, bringing with them new perspectives, talents, and connections to the communities we serve, our organization will not reach its full potential.

My journey with NAMI began when former Board President Dr. William Hayes invited me and my wife, Dr. Natalie Schuberth, to join him and his wife Mary at Night Out with NAMI. In addition to enjoying one of Dr. Kogan's lovely piano concerts/mental health lectures, I learned a great deal about NAMI Mercer's genesis and growth over three decades as well as the current challenges within the mental health arena that the organization was seeking to tackle. I left the event energized and eager to get involved.

Early in 2014, Dr. Hayes invited me to help him build his Walk team for the annual NAMI Walks Mercer County at ETS in May. I'm pretty competitive by nature, so I worked hard to make sure that team Hayes Strong made a strong fi-

nancial impact on the event. The Walk became an annual tradition for me and my family, and I was able to gradually extend my base of supporters beyond my close friends and family members into the Robbinsville Community where I live. Over the years, I've enjoyed working with Christine Bakter to grow the Walk, as well as with an incredible team of Walk Committee volunteers, including this year's Walk Co-chair Jerilyn Angotti. All of these folks contributed to make 2019 a high-water mark for the Walk, bringing in more than \$180,000 in revenue for NAMI's programs and services.

One of my fondest memories of NAMI was actually from this year's Walk. The weather was just awful and the field where we met was a mud pit; yet hundreds of mental health advocates braved the weather with raincoats and umbrellas. This was a powerful reminder that our mission remains critical and that our NAMI Mercer family remains as committed as ever.

Thank you to my fellow Board members, our dedicated and hardworking executive director and staff members, our critical core of volunteers, and to the individuals and families who trust NAMI Mercer to provide support during some of their hardest and darkest times. It's been an honor serving with all of you.



Dan Schuberth



Tom Pyle

Greetings from Our Incoming President

Family Members, Loved Ones, and Friends of NAMI Mercer,

As NAMI Mercer's newly elected president, I extend warmest greetings and humble appreciation for the trust invested in me for helping guide this important organization. With its matchless local services to families, programs for loved ones, outreach to schools and communities, and collabora-

tion with local agencies, NAMI Mercer is addressing critical needs at a critical time.

The year ahead presents many opportunities. More people are coming to us for help, now more aware of our services and less deterred by stigma, thanks in part to our successful educational efforts. We must maintain the high quality of our programming while further extending our outreach and increasing our membership and advocacy. We must do these

things while adjusting to the ever-changing business model for community service non-profits like ours, the nature of philanthropy, and the needs and hopes of our society as a whole. Fortunately, our organization is well placed for the future. Our strategy is succeeding. Our mission is clear. There is so much to do!

I extend special thanks to President Dan Schuberth, my predecessor, for setting the table so well. I offer my gratitude to our staff members, Janet Haag, Danita Saunders-Davis, and Christine Bakter, for their enthusiasm, dedication, and professionalism. And I express my appreciation to all our members, donors, partners, and friends for their continuing support. I frequently say that NAMI Mercer is one of the best organizations I have ever had the pleasure to serve. In my new role, I look forward (as surely do we all) to helping NAMI Mercer do more for the so many who so need us more.

Yours in recovery,

July Is Minority Mental Health Awareness Month

In Memory of My Aunt Jyoti

By Elina Rowchowdhury

As an Indian American born in the United States, I am fortunate to say my mental health has always been a top concern for my family. When my parents ask me how I am feeling, they don't just mean physically but rather mentally and emotionally.

Even my grandparents, who were raised in traditional homes in India, are sensitive to mental health.

What makes my family different from other Indian families? Some say mental illness doesn't exist, but in our family we have all seen living proof that it not only exists but manifests differently in everyone.

As sensitive as we are to the subject, there is still a huge stigma in my family. Hasan Minhaj's idea of "log kya kahenge" or "what will people think" prevented my family from discussing the details of Jyoti Agrawal's mysterious illness throughout her life.

Jyoti was my aunt. She passed away this past Thanksgiving, after a difficult three-month battle with cancer. As we prepared for her memorial, discussions arose about whether to reveal she had suffered from bipolar disorder. We debated telling our broader community of friends and family what Jyoti had suffered through while in college and in her adult life.

Most people knew Jyoti as a kind-hearted, fun loving, spirited person, but most did not understand the battle going on in her mind. She was successful by every definition, but a difficult road is what led to that beautiful success.

Jyoti's accomplishments are many. She graduated from University of Michigan's accelerated medical school program. However, it took her 10 years

to finish due to absences caused by bipolar disorder. She took a different path than others, but her destination was the same.

She became a beloved psychiatrist who could relate to her patients as both a physician and a fellow patient, as she herself had been hospitalized fifteen times for bipolar disorder.

Jyoti faced many uphill battles and was in and out of hospitals the entirety of her psychiatry career. She was the strongest person I knew because she overcame these challenges, without people knowing how much strength it took for her to keep going. While bipolar disorder didn't define Jyoti, it did play an important part in her life.

As we discussed her memorial, I advocated for telling her full, unfiltered story. Other family members hesitated. Here we had a family that constantly put mental health first and yet we debated whether to talk about it.

Stopping stigma means starting a conversation and making people aware that mental health disorders do exist. It is showing people that individuals can lead happy and healthy lives while living with something like bipolar disorder.

Ultimately, we chose to tell Jyoti's story, and by doing so, we hoped it would inspire others to start a conversation and reduce the stigma.

It was not obvious that my aunt lived with a mental illness, but acknowledging her strength to get up every day and carry on was important. It let others see that living with a mental illness is a strength, not a weakness.



From left: Elina Rowchowdhury and her aunt, Jyoti Agrawal

NAMI New Jersey has a program called SAMHAJ New Jersey for South Asians that addresses mental illness in the community. I-AM SHAKTI is another organization that provides support for South Asians nationwide to share their stories. Both are a great way to start conversations about mental illness, and they provide a sense of community, showing us that it is possible to lead a rich and beautiful life with mental illness, just as Jyoti did.

Elina Rowchowdhury currently is a student at The College of New Jersey.

In 2015, when she was a student at Princeton High School, she donated \$1,848 to NAMI Mercer from the proceeds of her classical Indian dance performance at Rider University. Elina's solo graduation recital (called an Arangetram) culminated eleven years of intense study of the art of Bharathanatyam.

In 2017, she came up with an original idea for raising money to support NAMI Mercer programs and services. With the help of her family, Elina embellished socks with the NAMI logo for sale at Harvest of Hope.

July 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 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.

NAMI Mercer News and Activities



NAMI Mercer and Mercer County once again teamed up to promote “A Stigma-free Mercer” at the Trenton Thunder baseball game at Arm and Hammer Park on May 16. The Thunder achieved a 5-4 victory over the Binghamton Rumble Ponies.

At the game, we had information tables on the concourse and chatted with fans. NAMI Mercer’s logo was projected on the jumbotron as our own Board member Stephanee Kammer threw out the first pitch.

During the seventh-inning stretch, Stephanee was recognized as a “hometown hero” for her volunteerism for NAMI Mercer and her commitment to improving the quality of life for all those affected by mental health challenges.

On May 15, NAMI Mercer partnered with Notre Dame High School in Lawrenceville to host a screening of the documentary, *Resilience: The Biology of Stress & The Science of Hope*. The film delves into the science of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and the steps that must be taken to prevent trauma, treat toxic stress, and improve the health of future generations.

Following the screening, P.J. Wenger (counselor from Steinert High School in Hamilton and member of the Mercer County Traumatic Loss Coalition Team), Ryan Slaughter, (recent graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary whose Masters thesis focused on the effects of trauma), and Amanda Buchner, (a parent as well as an ETS and IOOV presenter for NAMI Mercer), offered their personal perspectives on the film and engaged attendees in a lively discussion.



Farewell to June Valley

It is with great sadness that we report the death of family member and volunteer June Valley, PhD, on May 9, 2019. NAMI Mercer honored June in 2005 as a “Volunteer of the Quarter” for her dedicated services to the Helpline. June became connected to NAMI Mercer after one of her former students recommended that June enroll in Family-to-Family. June’s son Galen had suffered with undiagnosed bipolar disorder since his youth. With treatment, Galen recovered and presented In Our Own Voice as a NAMI Mercer volunteer for many years.



June earned a PhD in English Literature from Howard University and taught for more than twenty-five years at The College of New Jersey, Howard University, and Mercer County Community College.



Exciting Development for The Parent Support Network

The Parent Support Network of Central New Jersey, a collaborative venture between NAMI Mercer and The Youth Mental Health Project, has been holding monthly meetings at The NAMI Mercer Center since last fall.

There is such a strong need for support among parents of those under age 24 who

are experiencing mental health challenges that we have been asked to launch meetings at a second location — iCare in East Windsor/Hightstown.

The training of the new PSN facilitators has been slated for early August. If you are interested, please call the NAMI office at 609.799.8994.

“Some people walk in the rain. Others just get wet.”

Roger Miller, American singer-songwriter



By Christine Bakter
Director of Development

Spirits were high despite the dismal weather as hundreds of Mercer County NAMIWalkers turned out to walk in the rain at our event on May 5. With team and walker registrations up an astonishing 30 percent over last year's record-breaking participation, NAMIWalks Mercer County 2019 was projected to have 1,200 people in attendance and is still on track to be our highest-grossing fundraiser ever, with an expected \$184,000 raised or committed to date.

But... wow. There was a LOT of rain.

The weather is among any walk manager's biggest concerns since the event is held "rain or shine." A little drizzle is one thing, but a steady drumbeat of rain for six hours is something very different with a unique set of challenges — challenges I had never encountered in my 15 years of planning and executing walk events. Following are some of the weather-related problems I faced:

- Our DJ determined that he couldn't risk water damage to his equipment and left, leaving us without a means to communicate with attendees until a substitute DJ arrived.
- We had a river of mud create a trip-and-slip hazard di-

rectly in front of the only access point to indoor bathrooms; other areas became increasingly slick as people walked around in the grass.

- We had to severely compress a planned 90-minute program with live performances, recognitions, and warm ups down to about twenty minutes due to delays caused by the first DJ's departure.

Add to the mix the fact that a construction project in Conant Hall limited our ability to use indoor space that is normally available.

I was at a loss. As the mud crept into my rainboots and up my legs, my perspective was narrowing. For someone who has coped with anxiety and depression since adolescence, I was familiar with this feeling of constriction. As the mother of a son on the autism spectrum, I was also well-versed in feeling like challenges were hitting me faster than I could handle. I didn't like these feelings I was having. **To me, NAMIWalks represents wellness over illness, community over isolation, and inclusion over stigma.** That the event was triggering the dark parts of my lived-experience — both as a peer and a family caregiver — was extremely discordant with my prior experiences with this event that I love. **I wasn't walking in the rain. I was getting wet, and I was aware of the difference.**



(l to r) Hopewell Borough Mayor Paul Anzano and NAMI Mercer Board Member Dr. George DeFerdinando.



Above: NAMI Shark aka Jay Redd.
Right: Team Monheits on a Mission.



Rain

continued from Page 6

I want to offer my thanks to all who showed understanding, compassion, humor, and grace in the face of a really *different* sort of NAMIWalks event. In the days that followed, so many people reached out to say that the event, while challenging, was full of good spirit. Laughs were shared, hugs were exchanged, community gathered with an air of hope and acceptance. While my perspective had narrowed, the photos of the event told me a different story; images that showed engagement, hope, and fellowship; messages written on mission banners, and “beads of hope” worn in solidarity conveyed the same impression. I cherish these images now, but in the midst of the challenges my committee and I faced that day, I couldn’t appreciate the good things that were happening.

As the days passed, I recovered, reflected and reframed the day. I realized that the pictures told the true story and revealed the essence of what we do at NAMI Mercer.

**WE SHOW UP. WE SUPPORT.
WE DON’T GET WET. WE WALK IN THE RAIN.**

I recognized that the problems were solved, creatively and with compassion. A new DJ was found. A bridge was built over the mud. Kids were smiling. So were the adults. Somebody even brought a duck (and, it was a great day to be a duck!)

I realized that this year’s NAMIWalks was so symbolic of what peers and families often face in their battles with mental illness: storms, deluge, frustration, constriction, and loss. NAMI provides help, hope, and support to those in need.

I found my peace and perspective with the mess and put the lessons of this event in my back pocket for next year. I think we will all remember NAMIWalks Mercer County 2019 for what it was, a muddy, messy success.

On behalf of NAMI Mercer, thank you!

Welcome to Our New Board Members

Jennifer Burroughs

Jennifer is the vice president of Technology Risk Management at Bank of America Merrill Lynch. She earned a BS in journalism from the University of Maryland and has extensive experience in leadership.

As the parent of a daughter living with mental illness, Jennifer understands the importance of NAMI's programs and services and its mission to end stigma.

Favorite quote: "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." (Maya Angelou)



Melissa Lynn Marchetti

Melissa is the assistant branch manager of Berkshire Bank in Robbinsville. She attended Rowan College, has significant experience in the banking industry, and recent training in leadership. Having faced her own mental health challenges, Melissa appreciates the supportive network that NAMI provides.

Favorite quote: "Your value doesn't decrease based on someone's inability to see your worth." (Unknown)



Jason A. LaViscount

Jason is an assistant vice president of Investors Bank as well as the manager of the Hamilton Branch. He earned a BA degree from Franklin and Marshall College and has a strong background in the financial sector as a business owner and banking professional.

With experience dealing with his own depression and that of family members and friends, Jason is passionate about educating the community about mental illness.

Favorite quote: "Well done is better than well said." (Benjamin Franklin)



NAMI Mercer's new executive committee: front row, from left: Madeline Monheit (vice president), Tom Pyle (president). Back row, from left: Karen Marquis (secretary) and Jerilyn Angotti (treasurer).

Betsy Kuhns honored for fundraising work for NAMI Mercer



Kudos to Betsy Kuhns, MA, (center) who received a Mass Mutual Tri-State Community Service Award for her fundraising efforts on behalf of NAMI Mercer. The award ceremony was held at Pleasantdale Chateau in West Orange on January 31.

Betsy, a Mass Mutual financial services representative, is a Retirement Income Certified Professional (RICP) and a Life Underwriter Training Council Fellow (LUTCF). Mass Mutual Tri-State President Belaria Jimenez (left) and CEO John Bucsek presented the award.



FIVE SESSIONS, FIVE FREE EXPERIENCES

Wednesday evenings at 7 pm at the NAMI Mercer Center

Card Making with Alicia Vincelette — June 26

Let Your Yoga Dance with Kate Denby – July 17

The FUNdamentals of Improv with David Lee White – July 24

A Few Kind Words with Tracey Gates – July 31

Sip & Paint with Diane Forer – August 7

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED

www.namimercer.org, 609.799.8994



Article on IEPs for students with anxiety or depression

Kudos to NAMI Mercer Board member Lauren Agoratus, MA, for her article on IEPs for students with anxiety or depression that appeared in the February 2019 issue of *Exceptional Parent Magazine*. Lauren, the parent of a child with multiple disabilities, serves as the coordinator for Family Voices-NJ and as the central/southern coordinator for NJ's Family-to-Family Health Information Center.

Excerpted from “Developing Appropriate IEPs for Students with Anxiety or Depression”

by Lauren Agoratus

Students with disabilities, including students with mental health disabilities, must have an appropriate Individualized Education Program (IEP) in order to be supported and successful in school. [Unfortunately,] children with challenging behaviors are often disproportionately segregated from their peers. They are often disciplined differently as well, sometimes not getting early intervening services for as long, or as much as, other children. Included in discipline may be the inappropriate use of restraints or seclusion, often resulting in injury or even death.

Teachers can help students with anxiety by:

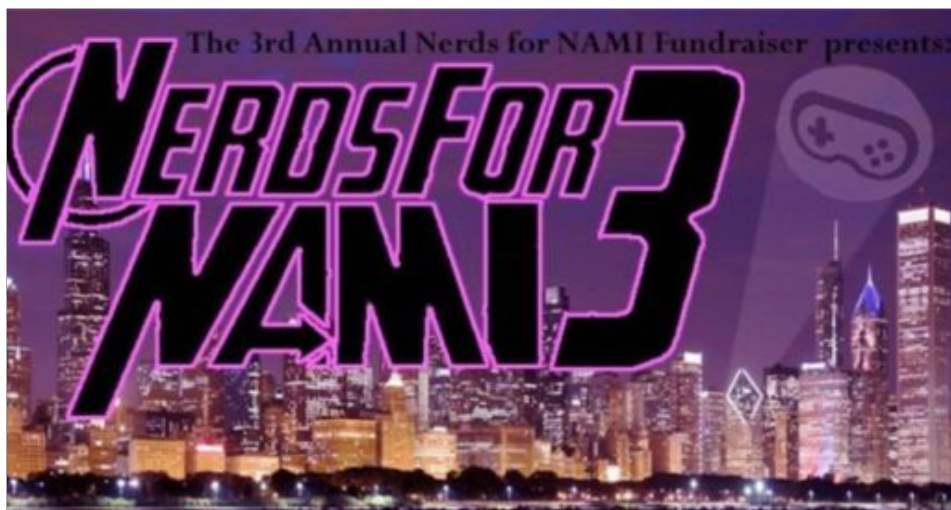
- *finding out which techniques work at home*
- *giving students extra time*
- *letting students know what to expect*
- *providing structure in the school day*
- *modifying assignments and reducing workloads when necessary*
- *giving the students breaks when needed*
- *possibly modifying the school day or shortening classes.*

Strategies for helping students with depression include:

- *offering positive reinforcement*
- *allowing more time*
- *breaking down assignments into smaller tasks*
- *offering extra help such as tutoring*
- *offering counseling at school.*

Children with special needs have the right to a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). This means that the student has the right to attend the school s/he would have attended if s/he didn't have a disability.

“According to NAMI, 1 in 5 students have a mental health condition. The most common is anxiety, followed by depression.”



For the third successive year, Andrew Agress organized a “Nerds for NAMI” telethon in memory of his mother Kathie Formoso, who was a NAMI Mercer volunteer for many years. Andrew’s three fundraisers have brought in a total of \$2,000. Nerds for NAMI 3, a video game and variety show, was livestreamed from the Crowd Theater in Chicago on April 28-29. Viewers watched Andrew and his friends do improvisation and sketch comedy, play games, eat weird food, read fan fiction, and engage in various other shenanigans as they tried to stay awake. Andrew conceived of the fundraising idea in when he was a senior at Brandeis University majoring in theater arts and history. The first fundraiser streamed from Brandeis; Nerds for NAMI 2 was broadcast from both Brandeis and from Chicago, where Andrew was interning at Windy City Playhouse. In September, Andrew heads to Columbia University in NYC to begin a graduate program in dramaturgy.



Presidential candidate, Senator Cory Booker, and our very own NAMI Mercer Board member, Jay Redd, at an event earlier this year. Jason has worked with the Senator on various issues throughout the years. An attorney with broad experience in state government and lobbying for marginalized populations, Jason served as deputy executive director and general counsel to the New Jersey Senate Majority Office before joining the Government Affairs Dept. of Gibbons PC. He is a former president of the Trenton School Board.

Congratulations to NAMI Mercer family member and volunteer Patricia Korsak, who was awarded 7th place in the Annual NAMI NJ Dara Axelrod Expressive Arts Mental Health Poetry Contest. The 2019 winners were announced in June.

NAMI NJ founded the Dara Axelrod Expressive Arts Network in 1993, spearheaded by the late Dara Axelrod, to encourage self-expression, personal growth, networking, advocacy and the understanding of how artists affected by mental illness have contributed to enriching society.

The annual poetry contest was introduced in April 2014 and received an enthusiastic response from the community. This year’s theme was “Moving or capable of moving in the air.”

This is Patricia’s second win. She also placed 7th in 2016.

A Need to Breathe

By Patricia Urban Korsak

Don’t go, he said
I’ll be too anxious while you’re in
the air, he said
I’m anxious about it now, he said.
Then he broke down and cried.
Making me second-guess myself.

I drove him to the hospital
Where he stayed for 3 days.
Not long enough.

Come get me, he said.
I don’t belong here, he said.
I’m not like these people, he said.
Then he lied
Saying that he wasn’t depressed,
Nor was he an alcoholic.

He convinced them
That he didn’t belong there.
He called me to pick him up. He
raced out the door, saying he

Had to leave before the doctor
stopped him.
Again, I questioned myself.

Was it me?
Was it him?
Was it his parents?
Was it the demands of society?

Don’t go, he said.
I have to, I said.
I need to, I said. What will I do
without you?
You will cope.

And I went.
I flew over the ocean
To the lands of my ancestors.
I explored. I climbed. I wrote.
I photographed. I learned.
I smiled. I laughed. I relaxed.
I breathed.

NAMI Mercer

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Pyle, MBA, MS, CPRP
President

Madeline Monheit, MS
Vice President

Karen L. Marquis, PhD
Secretary

Jerilyn Angotti, CPA
Treasurer

Lauren Agoratus, MA
Jennifer Burroughs, BS
Coleen Burrus, MA
George DiFerdinando, MD
Dave Doran, BS
Leslie Handler, BA
Robert Hedden, BS
Stephanee Kammer, BS
Jason A. LaViscount, BA
Jeremy Mann, MSHP
Melissa Lynn Marchetti
Catherine McTigue, JD, MBA
Jason Redd, JD, MCRP

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Janet Haag, MA

DIRECTOR of OPERATIONS
Danita L. Saunders-Davis, BS

DIRECTOR of DEVELOPMENT
Christine Bakter, BA

EDITORS
Madeline Monheit, MS
Elisabeth Hagen, BA

THE NAMI CENTER of Mercer County

Whitehorse Executive Center
1235 Whitehorse Mercerville Rd.
Building C, Suite 303
Hamilton NJ 08619
609.799.8994
namimercer.org

NAMI MERCER PROGRAMS

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Family-to-Family

12-session program for family members of adults living with mental illness. Thursdays, Sep. 19–Dec. 12, 6:30–9 pm (no class on Nov. 28). 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.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Chasing Away the Blues,
Doreen Miri, MA, NCC, LPC,
July 25, 6:30–8:00 pm, RWJ
Fitness and Wellness Center,
Hamilton. Conference Room A.

Step by Step: Overcoming Social Anxiety, Rachel Adkinson,
Nov. 14, 6:30–8 pm. RWJ Fitness
and Wellness Center, Hamilton.
Conference Room A.

*Check the website for additional
community education programs.*

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 at the NAMI Mercer Center. Walk-ins welcome.

IFSS/NAMI Support Groups

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

The Parent Support Network of Central New Jersey

For parents/caregivers of youth under age 24. Monthly, July 15, Aug. 19, Sep. 16. Offered in partnership with The Youth Mental Health Project.

Hearing Voices Support Group

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

Just Friends Social Support Group

Peer-led group that meets regularly for fun activities and good times. (NAMI Mercer membership is required along with attendance at a Meet and Greet, held the first Wednesday of the month, 3–4 pm). NAMI Mercer Center. Call in advance to confirm attendance.

Overcoming Social Anxiety Workshop

For adults who experience fear in social situations. Offered in partnership with Find Your Voice. TBD.

ASK THE SOCIAL WORKER TELECONFERENCE

First Mondays, 7:00–8:30 pm
Phone: 773.231.9226
Call ID: 148 068 8345 when
prompted.

VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION

First Wednesdays, 5:00–6:00 pm
NAMI Mercer Center. Call in advance to attend.

All NAMI Mercer support groups, workshops and classes are offered at no cost to participants. Registration is required for education classes, Family to Family, and the Overcoming Social Anxiety Workshop.

**The NAMI Center
of Mercer County**

1235 Whitehorse Mercerville Rd.

Bldg. C, Suite 303

Hamilton Township, NJ 08619

609.799.8994

<https://namimercer.org>



NON-PROFIT
U.S.
POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT #257
TRENTON NJ

ADDRESS LABEL
GOES HERE

Save the date...

Join us for an evening of country music, food and
fun!

**NIGHT OUT WITH
NAMI**

★ THE BOATHOUSE ★
AT MERCER LAKE

**NOVEMBER 1, 2019
6-10 PM**