

**NAMI Mercer 2019 Pillar Award Winner**  
**The Honorable Dan Schubert**

At “Night Out with NAMI” on November 1 at the Boathouse at Mercer Lake, NAMI Mercer will pay tribute to the Honorable Dan Schubert. He will receive the organization’s highest honor — the NAMI Mercer 2019 Pillar Award — in recognition of his extraordinary 5-year contribution to NAMI’s mission through volunteerism, leadership, advocacy, and charitable giving.

Dan became involved with NAMI Mercer six years ago through his wife, Dr. Natalie Schubert, a psychologist practicing with Alexander Road Associates in Princeton and a passionate advocate for mental health. Her colleague, former NAMI Mercer Board President Dr. William Hayes, invited the Schuberts to attend Night Out with NAMI featuring a piano concert by Dr. Richard Kogan. “In addition to learning about the life and music of Rachmaninoff, 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,” reflects Dan. “I left the event energized and eager to get involved in the work of the organization.”

Early in 2014, Dr. Hayes invited Dan to help him build his Hayes Strong Walk Team for the annual NAMI Walks Mercer County on the campus of Educational Testing Service (ETS). “I’m pretty competitive by nature,” admits Dan, “so I worked hard to make sure that our team made a significant contribution to the financial success of the event.”

Dan also has a personal connection to NAMI’s mission. When he was younger, a family member who was a powerful figure in his life was diagnosed with clinical depression. The crippling symptoms of this illness had a devastating impact on his relative’s ability to make it through each day. “On the outside, this person was the same confident leader I sought to emulate; on the inside, this person was engaged in a struggle that was personal, invisible, and lonely. I saw firsthand how painful mental illness can be to individuals and to the family and friends who care deeply about their well-being,” remembers Dan.

Supporting the NAMI Walks Mercer County became an annual tradition for Dan and his family, and he was gradually able to extend his base of supporters to include the Robbinsville Community where he lives. “All of these folks contributed to making 2019 a high-water mark for the Walk, which brought in more than \$180,000 to fund NAMI Mercer’s programs and services. Over five years, under Dan’s leadership, his teams (with an average of 50 members per Walk) raised a total of \$80,000.

Dan has contributed to NAMI Mercer in many other capacities over the past five years, most recently as Board president from 2018-2019. He has chaired the Walk Committee and served on the Development and Community Awareness Committees. He and Natalie have been Patron Society members since 2016.

In addition to his full time position as Regional Human Resource Manager for McMaster-Carr, a Robbinsville-based industrial supply company, and his volunteer work for NAMI Mercer, Dan holds a public office in Robbinsville. He was elected to his first term on the Township Council in November, 2015, having previously served as Chairman of the Economic Development

Advisory Committee (EDAC) from 2012 to 2015. He became the Mayor's representative on the Township Planning Board in 2015 and as the Council representative in 2016. In 2017, he served as Council President and became a federally appointed member of the NJ State Advisory Committee (SAC) to the US Commission on Civil Rights. At the present time, Dan is running for re-election to the Town Council.

Dan also serves on the Boards of two local non-profits: Thea's Star of Hope, a Robbinsville-based organization that funds pediatric brain tumor research; and the NJ Leadership Program (NJLP), a non-partisan group dedicated to promoting South Asian [American](#) youth participation and education at the local level of government. In addition, Dan is assisting his wife Natalie with Ability Tree NJ, a non-profit affiliate that she founded with the mission of supporting individuals and families affected by disability through Recreation, Education, Support, and Training (REST).

Dan's educational background has prepared him well for his roles in the public, private, and non-profit sectors. A graduate of Bowdoin College (B.A. in Political Science), he earned an M.S. in Organizational Dynamics and an M.P.A. in Public Administration from the Fels School of Government at the University of Pennsylvania.

In all aspects of his service to NAMI Mercer, Dan has integrated a Community Organizational Model, a participatory process that empowers the entire community to focus their strengths and collectively mobilize to improve health. In promoting the Walk, Dan actively engaged all of Robbinsville—its elected officials, communities of faith, schools, police and fire departments, scout troops, businesses, and citizens. Through his influence on the Town Council, Robbinsville became the first municipality in Mercer County to pass a stigma-free resolution. He also encouraged his constituency to reach out to him with their questions and concerns about mental health.

Dan has derived much personal satisfaction from volunteering for NAMI Mercer. "NAMI provided me with an outlet to share my story and with an opportunity to support others with loved ones who suffer in silence." He believes deeply in NAMI's mission of ending the stigma associated with mental illness so that individuals and family members can step forward and seek the support they need to live healthy, productive lives. He urges the community to renew its commitment to NAMI through both volunteer service and financial contributions. "Only through a focused and collective team effort will the organization we love be able to continue its critical work."