



# nami

National Alliance on Mental Illness

# Mercer MESSENGER

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## Harvest of Hope Gets a Refresh for 2022

**N**AMI Mercer will introduce exciting enhancements at its 14th annual Harvest of Hope Wellness Conference on Saturday, October 1. We will have a new venue, a new format, and a new anti-stigma program. Nevertheless, the mission for the conference remains unchanged—to provide our community with a day of camaraderie, education, and hope for recovery and for an empathetic society free of discrimination.

### New Venue

After two years of virtual conferences, we will meet in person at the Conference Center at Mercer County Community College (MCCC) in West Windsor. Surrounded by 292 acres of woodland on the grounds of MCCC, the Center offers 38,000-square-feet of comfortable, media-rich, high-tech space. Attendees will enjoy a buffet breakfast and hot buffet lunch prepared by the Center's culinary staff. Parking is plentiful and convenient.

### New Plenary Session Format

NAMI Mercer is excited to feature Ginger Zee as our special guest for 2022. Instead of a traditional keynote address, Ginger will engage in a "fire-side chat" with David Lee White, local playwright and actor whose original musical *Aliens8* was performed at the Bucks County Playhouse earlier this month. Ginger and David's informal conversation will offer an intimate view into the challenges Ginger faces as a celebrity with mental illness.

### About Ginger Zee

Ginger is known to millions of "Good Morning, America" viewers as ABC News' chief meteorologist and as the third-place finalist in the 2016 season of "Dancing with the Stars." She also is the author of two *New York Times* best-sellers, "A Little Closer to Home" and "Natural Disaster: I Cover Them, I Am One."

In these memoirs, Ginger describes her difficult mental health journey to recovery from anorexia and depression. She motivates readers with her resilience and shares her self-care tools to maintain healing. Our conference theme "Weathering the Storm" was inspired by Ginger's life story.

### Introducing Compelling Conversations

Conference attendees also will have the experience of engaging in "Compelling Conversations," a new anti-stigma program developed by NAMI Mercer to normalize conversations on mental health.

The program connects persons who have lived experience with mental health challenges (called "communicators") with very small groups of participants who will have an opportunity to learn through open dialogue. These conversations will be personal and confidential.

### More About the Conference

As in the past, conference goers will get to choose from a variety of workshops. Seek answers to your questions



Ginger Zee

from an eminent psychiatrist; explore the therapeutic effects of yoga and meditation; learn practical ways to reduce stress in everyday life; explore the benefits of Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT); and increase your understanding of mood disorders.

### Conference Registration

Look for our Harvest of Hope brochure in the mail and on our website. Registration is required, but there is no registration fee. NAMI Mercer will be making a substantial investment to provide this day of wellness for each attendee, so please register thoughtfully. Donations will be gratefully accepted.

## Executive Director's Message



Janet Haag

### Getting It Straight on 988

The new code for accessing the crisis lifeline – 988 – became available nationwide in July. It is a huge, hope-filled step in the right direction, BUT it is still a work in progress as crisis response is being reimaged.

The new three-digit number is designed to be memorable and quick, just like 911; however, the response will be different. When 911 is called in a crisis,

the typical response is to dispatch law enforcement, and this can cause trauma and/or the criminalization of a mental health crisis, sometimes with tragic results. Calling or texting 988 connects people to **trained crisis counselors**. Whether the caller expresses thoughts of suicide, emotional distress, a mental health, or substance-use crisis, these counselors offer compassionate care and support, often reducing the need for an in-person response.

When people need more help than can be delivered in a phone call or text message, the plan is to assemble and dispatch 988 mobile crisis response teams (comprising medical personnel, social workers, mental health professionals, as well as peer support specialists) instead of the police.

It is also important to know that 988 is completely confidential, does not capture the caller's geographic location,

and cannot dispatch emergency services at this time. The 988-lifeline network is made up of more than 200 call centers across the country with national back-up centers so there is access to trained crisis counselors 24/7.

Here in New Jersey, funds have been allocated to 988, but it will take time to build out the system to support the vision. Long-term, the concept is "someone to call" (trained crisis counselors), "someone to respond" (the proposed mobile crisis teams), and "somewhere to go" (crisis stabilization options other than hospital emergency rooms or police stations).

In the meantime, walk-in and mobile crisis services/mental health screenings for adults continue to be accessible through Capital Health and for children through PerformCare. If a situation is life-threatening, call 911 and say you are calling about a psychiatric emergency. Ask if an officer trained in crisis intervention is available. Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) is happening in Mercer County so we should have more of these officers available as time goes on.

I hope this helps us to get it straight on 988 as we work toward a more effective crisis response system.

### NAMI Mercer to Host Book Signing for Dr. Duckworth on October 13

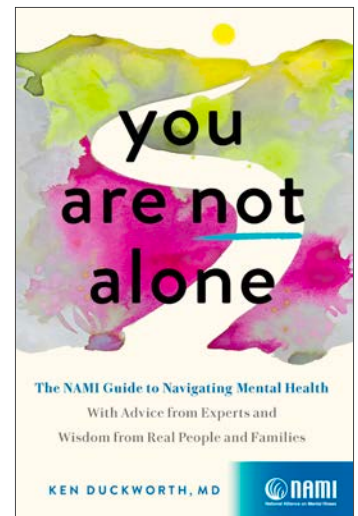
Those of you who attended Harvest of Hope 2019 may remember our keynote speaker, Dr. Ken Duckworth, psychiatrist and chief medical officer of NAMI National, who captivated us with his wisdom, warmth, honesty, and accessibility. NAMI Mercer is pleased to welcome Dr. Duckworth back to NJ on October 13 for a book-signing/educational event.

Dr. Duckworth recently added "author" to his list of remarkable accomplishments with the publication of *You Are*

*Not Alone. The NAMI Guide to Navigating Mental Health with Advice from Experts and Wisdom from Real People and Families*. This book features inspiring, first-person stories and medical guidance on diagnosis, treatment, and recovery.

Ken Duckworth's journey into psychiatry started when he was a boy growing up with a dad who experienced severe bipolar disorder. Ken became a psychiatrist in part to help his father. Dr. Duckworth has served as the chief medical officer of NAMI National since 2003. He is double board certified in adult and child/adolescent psychiatry and has completed a forensic psychiatry fellowship.

*You Are Not Alone* is NAMI National's first book. Published by Zando Books, it will be released on September 20. All proceeds will be used in support of NAMI's mission. Details about NAMI Mercer's book-signing/educational event will be announced soon.



Left: Dr. Duckworth and Tom Pyle



## President's Message

### After a personal tragedy



Tom Pyle

First, on a personal note, my wife Molly and I are doing much better, thank you. On May 5, tragedy befell our family when our beloved son Adam, in the 15th year of his psychodyssey with schizophrenia, refused to live tormented by his symptoms and chose instead to offer himself up to God.

Since Adam's sad and untimely passing, we have been moved by much love and support from all quarters, especially from the dear members of our NAMI Mercer family. Your heartfelt expressions have helped assuage the ache of losing Adam with the comfort that his legacy will live on. We are so very grateful. Anyone wishing to know more about Adam can visit <https://matherhodge.com/tribute/details/2402/Adam-Pyle/obituary.html#tribute-start>.

As we now know personally, many families navigating the maelstrom of mental illness have suffered tragic losses. How can we, who banked so much on medical treatment, devoted support, and the promise of recovery, not be embittered?

Our answer is simple. Family members of loved ones with mental illness bear a special burden; we are dealt a set of cards that we have to play. We have no choice. We all must do all we can to help our loved ones and to cherish them certainly and steadily amid all the vagaries, vicissitudes, and even violence of their illness. We also must appreciate every minute we have together, both exquisite and exasperating, because we never know how much time we will have together. From our family experience, Molly and I have resolved to steward Adam's memory and legacy with renewed commitment to our common cause: to listen, lead, educate, and advocate, empowering families and individuals affected by mental illness to build lives of quality and respect, free of stigma and discrimination.

Meanwhile, I recently read an interesting article called

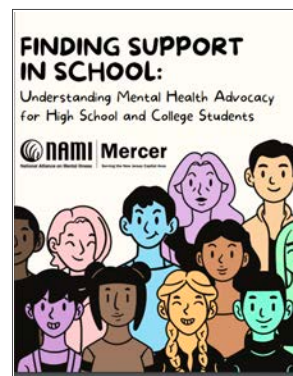
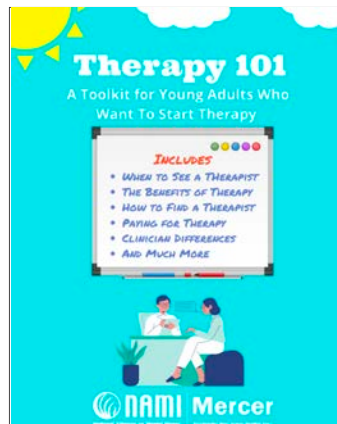
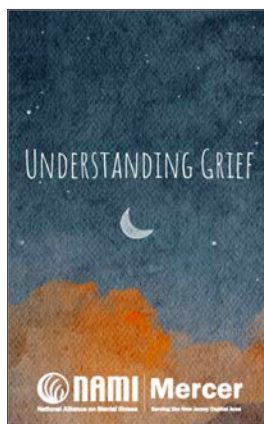
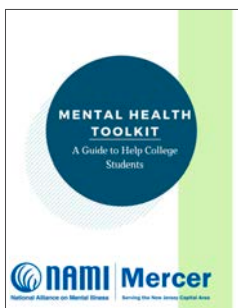
*COVID 19 lockdown—who cares? The first lockdown from the perspective of relatives of people with severe mental illness.* Under normal circumstances, we know that family care is vital to the wellbeing of those with severe mental illness. What happens to this care—and to us family caregivers—in extraordinary circumstances? Scientists in Norway examined this question in the aftermath of their country's first COVID 19 lockdown (March 12 to April 6, 2020). During this time, all schools were closed, and people were encouraged to work from home if possible. Most mental health outpatient services were also closed.

Family members (279 in study) were invited to complete an online survey that collected both quantitative and qualitative data on the effects of the first COVID lockdown upon loved ones with mental illness. The study's results were stunning, but not surprising. Some 71 percent reported that their loved ones' mental health deteriorated during the lockdown. Eighty-five percent worried about not getting help from mental health services. Descriptions of increased symptomology—worry, loneliness, and cravings for social contact—arose from the isolation. Several family members reported increases in suicidal behavior of their loved ones. Caregivers also reported severe impact on their own health, with 83 percent indicating that the pandemic lockdown increased their responsibility of care and had negative effects on their sleep, concentration, and care-giving ability. Feelings of exhaustion, distemper, and impatience were widely reported. Interestingly, family members who were engaged with social services worried less, indicating the benefits of such connections in extraordinary times.

More study of this important subject is needed, especially in the US, if only to confirm what many of us know already from our own experience. COVID lockdowns have been devastating to the mental health of millions of Americans with effects likely to be long-lasting. Remediating this situation demands the kind of work NAMI Mercer does. With your continuing attention and support, we will rise to the occasion. If you are suffering from COVID-related mental health challenges, please let us help you connect with one of our outstanding support groups.

Call our Helpline at 609-799-8994.

## Toolkits Coming Soon





# Remembering NAMIWalks 2022

By Elizabeth Kepniss, Director of Development

Saturday, May 21, 2022, was a day to remember. Not only was it one of the hottest days on record, but it also was the 15th annual NAMIWalks Your Way Mercer County! More than 400 people braved the weather to gather at West Lake Park in Robbinsville to advocate for mental health for all.

Together we walked, danced, and celebrated NAMI Mercer, our program participants, volunteers, and supporters. Thanks to the generosity of so many, the event raised more than \$126,000. Since many donations were submitted for corporate matching gifts, our revenue continues to grow.

The event was not limited to just those who walked in the park. Our hybrid format allowed for people to register as virtual participants and to walk wherever, whenever, and with whomever they could.

Adding to the fun were our longtime friends and supporters in the Janssen Neuroscience Division. On Monday, June 20, they hosted their own in-house walk and auction to raise funds for NAMI Mercer.

Special thanks to our Walk Chairs Stephanie McCarthy and Emily Antenucci-Struss. Thank you to everyone who participated, and we look forward to walking with you in 2023!



Betsy (Otsuka representative) provides information.

## Top 5 Fundraisers

1. Jay Redd	\$4,206.25
2. Carole and John Marsland	\$4,061.00
3. Patricia Demers	\$3,375.00
4. Michelle Santoro	\$3,330.00
5. Lulu Huber	\$3,040.00

## Top 5 Teams

1. Mental Wellness Warriors	\$7,656.25
2. Janssen Neuroscience	\$6,846.00
3. Angels In the Outfield and Studio Hillier	\$5,050.00
4. Team Chela	\$4,876.00
5. Compassion For ALL Our Neighbors	\$4,818.00

419 Registered Walkers, 60 Teams, 41 Sponsors  
**\$126,000+ raised (matches are still coming in)**



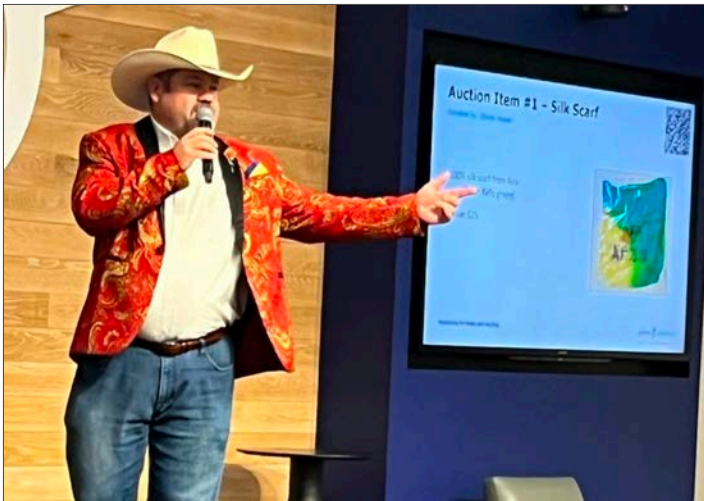




Members of the Rotary Club of Robbinsville-Hamilton Walk Team. The Rotary Club was a Walk sponsor.



Members of the Compassion for ALL Our Neighbors Team from the First Presbyterian Church of Dutch Neck.



Auctioneer Brett at the Janssen Neuroscience Team auction.



Boomer and The Movement Fitness Instructor Scott.

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# NAMI Mercer Outreach at Community Wellness Events

## Mercer County Community College (MCCC) Fresh Check Days

Trenton Campus – March 21 (22 participants)

West Windsor Campus – March 28 (120 participants)

Fresh Check Day is an uplifting mental health promotion and suicide prevention event that includes interactive expo booths, peer-to-peer messaging, support from multiple campus departments/groups, free food, entertainment, and exciting prizes and giveaways. It aims to create an approachable and hopeful atmosphere where students are encouraged to engage in dialogue about mental health. The event helps to build a bridge between students and the mental health resources available on campus, in the community, and nationally.



NAMI Intern Ryan Coleman at MCCC Fresh Check Days



## The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) Thrive Wellness Expo

Ewing Campus – April 20 (91 participants)

Wellness Expo is an annual educational event, hosted by TCNJ's Counseling and Prevention Services (CAPS) Department. Wellness activities are held in the Brower Student Center, the Recreation Center, and the Spiritual Center.

Left: Intern Joe Pellegrino at TCNJ

## The Lawrence Township Health Department Senior Health Fair

The Lawrence Senior Center – May 3 (150 participants)

The LTWP Office on Aging Health Fair offered a wide range of activities for seniors (ages 60+). Included were free health screenings, demonstrations, giveaways, and the second COVID booster.

Right: Volunteers Sue Ream and Karen Jones  
at the LTWP Senior Health Fair





## Pemberton Township High School First Mental Health Awareness Day

Pemberton High School – May 13 (500 participants)

Pemberton Township High School had an event to open dialogue about mental illness, raise awareness and encourage students to seek support.

Right: Pemberton Awareness Day Participants



Volunteers Frances Lochen and Sue Ream at Pemberton High School



## Crunch Fitness Recognition Mental Health Awareness Month

East Windsor – May 16 to May 20 (300 participants)

Crunch Fitness invited NAMI Mercer to staff a table at their gymnasium in East Windsor to promote mental health.

Left: Rob Dolnick at Crunch Fitness

## Mercer County Ruff Ryders Ride for Mental Health

Trenton – June 4 (60 participants)

The Ruff Ryders rode their motorcycles from Walmart in Deptford to the 1911 Smokehouse BBQ in Trenton. They donated 70 percent of the event's proceeds (\$300) to NAMI Mercer.

Right: Ruff Ryders



# Laurie Goldman Leads New NAMI Mercer Depression Support Group

The Empathy Network is a new NAMI Mercer support group for individuals living with depression and similar challenges. The group was launched on June 21 but has suspended sessions for the summer. In September, meetings will resume on the first and third Tuesday of each month from 2:00 to 3:00 pm. Participants will gather in person at the NAMI Mercer Center in Hamilton. Facilitator Laurie Goldman will lead the group in a supportive, safe, and confidential setting.

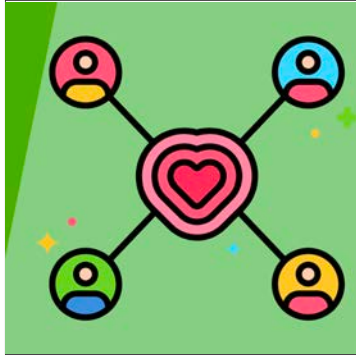
Each session will be formatted as an open discussion where members will share their experiences and gain support from one another. Laurie's role as facilitator is to provide coping skills, strategies to foster wellbeing, and additional resources.

Ms. Goldman has a long history of volunteering for NAMI. At present, she facilitates NAMI Mercer's Hearing Voices Support Group and, for the past decade, has been an active board member of NAMI Middlesex, where she spent several years managing the office and helpline.

Laurie holds Recovery Support Practitioner and Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) certifications and has undergone specialized training from the Hearing Voices Network and the Mental Health Association to work with those experiencing auditory/visual hallucinations, depression, and anxiety disorders. In addition, Laurie earned a Certified Recovery Practitioner License (CRSP) as well as a bachelor's degree.

NAMI's tagline, "You are not alone," reflects Laurie's personal motivation for running groups. "I want people to know that there is a bounty of support out there, and I have personally made it my life's mission to help others."

You must register to participate in the Empathy Network. In addition, members are required to confirm their attendance for each session by calling NAMI Mercer at



609.799.8994 by 10:00 am on meeting day.

## Sentinel Article About Laurie

### *Never without a pen or piano, poetry contest winner shares her struggles*

"Playing the piano keeps me breathing. Because of that, I play open mics on a fairly regular basis . . . About three months ago, I was having a particularly hard time dealing with some things in my life, and I was struggling with some depression . . . I knew I needed to play," recalled Laurie.

[She spent] more than an hour searching the internet for an open mic before she found one. "I usually prepare ahead of time, but since this was last minute, I just got in the car, turned on the GPS and drove," the East Brunswick resident said.

"A solid hour-and-a-half passed before my name was called, and I sat down at the piano. Because I was not using sheet music, I was able to close my eyes. Instead of seeing black, I saw red, and immediately thought of the lyric, 'I see a red door and I want to paint it black.' I instantly knew what I needed to play," she said.

Tickling the ivories to "Paint It Black" by the Rolling Stones, Goldman let the music guide her. "As I began to play, my fingers flew across the keys, and I could feel the tension release from my body. When I was done, a guy in the audience came up to me and said, 'You made the piano scream.'"

Goldman is also a writer, composing poetry and prose on a daily basis. "Both art forms are as equally cathartic for me. I do them as a means of survival. I never want to be without a pen or a piano," she said.

*Jennifer Amato[Excerpted from centraljersey.com/news/sentinel\_east\_brunswick/stories, June 21, 2018]*

## More Than Words

A Poem by Laurie Goldman

Second Place, NAMI NJ Dara Axelrod Expressive Arts 2018 Mental Health Poetry Contest

I tried to make the piano scream last night.  
I struck the keys so hard,  
that I could feel my fingers bruising more and more,  
with each passing measure.  
In that moment,  
I don't think I cared if they broke,  
because,  
I needed my song to be heard.

Ironical thing was,  
It wasn't even "my song."  
It was a cover of "Paint It Black" by The Rolling  
Stones,  
and,

at this particular open mic,  
I had decided,  
last minute,  
that Mick Jagger's lyrics needed to be heard,  
because,  
I needed to hear them.

So,  
there I am,  
pounding the keys,  
stirring up a symphony of sound,  
when I realized,  
the piano didn't need to scream,  
I did.



# NAMI Mercer Pilots “Working on Wellness”

## — A Community Employee Resource Group

By Karen Marquis

One of the strengths of NAMI is the high quality of programming available to local affiliates. Nevertheless, from time to time, we identify a need in our community for which the national organization has yet to provide a solution. One of these needs, which has been exacerbated by the pandemic, is supporting mental health in the workplace.

Addressing the mental well-being of their employees has become a focus of several large corporations as a component of their employee diversity and inclusion programs. Smaller employers, however, often lack the critical mass to provide this resource to their workforce. Enter NAMI Mercer. In partnership with the New Jersey branch of a national marketing company, NAMI Mercer has been piloting a community-based employee resource group that we've named “Working on Wellness,” or WOW for short.

The forward-looking leadership of this business understands the importance of such an endeavor and the value of partnering with NAMI Mercer in bringing this resource to their workforce. Moreover, they recognize the benefit of offering support group meeting time during the workday.

Co-facilitated by Carol Kivler and Karen Marquis, the

current group is meeting virtually on a weekly basis for six weeks to discuss topics as diverse as combatting negative self-talk, getting through the day, imposter syndrome, maintaining energy during work hours, and preventing burnout, among others.

Carol is the owner of Kivler Communications and a speaker, international executive coach, motivator, training consultant, and author. As an individual with lived experience, she is passionate about helping others on their mental health journey. Karen worked in the pharmaceutical industry for 20 years and retired from Pfizer as director of the Schizophrenia and Bipolar Discovery Group. In retirement, she has continued to support those affected by mental illness as a member of the Board for NAMI Mercer and as a volunteer answering calls on their information/referral Helpline.

Our goal in Working on Wellness is to promote self-care and reduce stigma by normalizing conversations around mental health. Based on experience and feedback from this pilot program, we hope to expand this resource to other local businesses as well as encourage more employers to establish and support employee resource groups for their organizations.



A colorful poster for a picnic and annual meeting. The background is a red and white checkered pattern. In the center, there's an illustration of a picnic table with a red and white checkered tablecloth. On the table are a hamburger, a hot dog, a bowl of chips, a bowl of dip, and a watermelon slice. To the left of the table, the text 'Join Us!' is written in a large, white, cursive font. Below it, it says 'Please RSVP online at weblink.donorperfect.com/NAMI\_Mercer\_Picnic'. To the right of the table, there's a list of event details: WHO: NAMI Mercer members, your families, special guests; WHAT: Picnic and Annual Meeting; WHEN: Saturday, August, 27, 2022, 1:00- 4:00 PM; WHERE: Tall Cedars Picnic Grove, 245 Sawmill Road, Hamilton, NJ 08620; WHY: Because we CAN... Connect in person once again! Celebrate our accomplishments! Create great memories! At the bottom right, there's a QR code and a button that says 'RSVP Today'.

# Interview with Mary Beth Wright

by Alexis Lovallo

NAMI Mercer Intern

Mary Beth Wright has been a NAMI Mercer volunteer since the spring of 2018. Earlier this year, Recovery Advocates of America dedicated a bench in Hamilton's Veteran's Park to her son Michael Calcagni and to others who lost their lives to a drug overdose.

I spoke to Mary about her time as a NAMI Mercer volunteer as well as about her son's journey of addiction and her own mental health. Michael was well-loved by everyone who knew him. Even in the throes of his addiction, he tried to help others as much as possible. For this, Mary is very proud. At the bench dedication service, a man who had been in rehab with Michael came up to Mary and told her how Michael had talked him out of suicide.

One piece of advice that Mary would like to offer is that it's okay to ask persons who have lost a loved one how they are doing and to share stories to keep their memories alive.

## 1. How did you find out about NAMI Mercer?

Several years ago, we did an intervention with Michael through Nar-Anon and City of Angels. Since he didn't have insurance, we paid to send him to a detox center in PA to be followed by an outpatient program. After I brought him home, he had a breakdown, and I didn't know where to turn for assistance. I googled "free mental health help," and one of the first links that came up was NAMI. When I called asking for help for my son, a Helpline volunteer advised me that NAMI Mercer was there to help me cope as well. This is how I got involved.

## 2. What made you want to become a NAMI volunteer?

I wanted to give back. NAMI helped me learn how to deal with my difficult situation and how to help my son without enabling his addiction. NAMI Mercer's guidance was free-of-charge, which I really appreciated. After I retired, I started volunteering.

## 3. What is your favorite thing you've done as a volunteer?

My favorite thing has been talking to people and telling them about all the NAMI Mercer programs and how they helped me. It feels good to do something positive, whether it's calming someone who's really upset on the phone or just listening to someone who needs an empathetic ear—anything I can do to lift someone up and make them feel understood. I also am gratified by seeing how many people come through the other side of dealing with emotional and mental health challenges.

I like to support the good work NAMI does. I've participated in a couple of the fundraisers, including the Walk. I see how hard Danita, Janet, and everyone else works. I think helping others is what we are here for. We aren't meant to be solitary creatures, and it's hard to navigate the world on your own.



Mary Beth Wright and Grandson Cameron Calcagni  
(Michael Calcagni's son)

## 4. I hear that you have been working remotely. What's that been like?

I stopped going into the NAMI Mercer office when Covid started. I was able to work productively from home since I do a lot of spreadsheets, make telephone calls, set up appointments and things of that nature. I especially like reaching out to new recruits to invite them to volunteer orientations and tours of the office with Danita. I like working from home since my husband is older, and I also assist an elderly woman with her errands and appointments.

## 5. I've heard about a bench that recently was dedicated to your son by Recovery Advocates of America. Please tell us about the memorial.

After Michael's second overdose, I was at the hospital with support from Recovery Advocates. My son was given Narcan and then a gentleman from Recovery Advocates spoke to him about rehab. This organization was very helpful and got my son a scholarship to go to Princeton House for detox. I later found out that one of Michael's friends was very active in Recovery Advocates, and she reached out to me about plans for the memorial bench. I thought it was a really nice thing to do, so I gave my approval for my son's name to be included.

The dedication of the bench was supposed to take place in 2021 but was delayed until this June because of Covid. There are 14 names on it. The service was lovely. Recovery Advocates did a butterfly release and gave all the parents/loved ones roses to put on the bench. I am honored since my son doesn't have a gravestone that we can visit.



# NAMI Mercer

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Hamilton NJ 08619

**609.799.8994**  
namimercer.org

## NAMI Mercer NJ Programs & Services

Up-to-date information can be found on the NAMI Mercer website at [namimercer.org](http://namimercer.org). Program sliders on the homepage are hyperlinked to meeting platforms and/or registration.

The **NAMI Mercer Helpline** (our warmline for compassionate listening, information, and resources) is open for inquiries, staffed both in-office and remotely. Call **609.799.8994 x17** or email [helpline@namimercer.org](mailto:helpline@namimercer.org)

**Family Support Groups** for caregivers of adults (over age 18), offered in partnership with IFSS (Intensive Family Support Services) of Oaks Integrated Care, are meeting on Mondays via Zoom and on Tuesdays, in-person and online, 5:15–6:30 pm.

The **Mental Illness and Addiction Family Support Group** (offered in conjunction with IFSS) is being held once a month on the 2nd Wednesday at 5:15 pm in hybrid format.

The **Families Coping with Personality Disorder Support Group** (offered in conjunction with IFSS) is being held once a month on the 4th Wednesday at 5:15 pm in hybrid format.

The **Parent Support Network** for parents/caregivers of youth (under age 24), offered in partnership with the Youth Mental Health Project is meeting in-person and online. Visit our webpage for the link to register for **PSN Central NJ**.

**Family to Family**, a multi-session course to educate and support caregivers, will be held in person at the NAMI Mercer Center, beginning in

September (limited registration). **Family and Friends**, an abridged version, will be offered periodically.

**Connection Recovery Support Group Meetings** for individuals living with mental health conditions are being held via video or audio conferencing on 1st and 3rd Mondays at 2:00 pm and 2nd and 4th Thursdays at 7:00 pm.

The **Hearing Voices Support Group** is meeting in-person at the NAMI Mercer Center on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month, 1:00–2:00 pm. Attendance must be confirmed by phone before 10:00 am the day of the meeting.

The **Empathy Network**, a new depression support group, is meeting in-person on 1st and 3rd Tuesdays, 2:00–3:00 pm at the NAMI Mercer Center. Attendance must be confirmed by phone before 10:00 am the day of the meeting.

**Just Friends**, a social support group for adults (ages 18+) to engage in fun activities that reduce social isolation. Members are once again gathering for in-person activities.

**Harvest of Hope**, our annual wellness conference, is slated for Saturday, October 1, 2022, at The Conference Center at Mercer County Community College, 8:30 am – 3:00 pm.

**Community Education** – check the NAMI Mercer website for details or to request Ending the Silence, In Our Own Voice, or customized presentations.

**All NAMI Mercer support groups, workshops, and classes are offered at no cost to participants. Registration is required for Family to Family, Family & Friends, the Parent Support Network, and the Empathy Network Depression Support Group.**

**The NAMI Center  
of Mercer County**

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Hamilton Township, NJ 08619

**(609) 799-8994**

<https://namimercer.org>



*Sunday, November 6, 2022  
The Boathouse at Mercer Lake*

*Save the  
Date*



*Midnight at the Masquerade*

*An interactive murder mystery event.*

