

# *Connections*



# Thoughts from the Executive Director



**Janet Haag**

*A deep sense of love and belonging is an irreducible need of all people. We are biologically, cognitively, physically, and spiritually wired to love, to be loved, and to belong.*

~ Brené Brown

**Connections for Community** is the theme for our annual report. This is especially relevant considering 2022 saw us emerging from the pandemic, eager to reconnect with one another in person and regain our sense of belonging. Community is really at the heart of who we are and everything we do at NAMI Mercer.

To help people deepen their connections and find support for specific issues and concerns, we launched several new affinity support groups, *Empathy Network* (for those with depression), *Mending Mindsets* (for those with anxiety), and *Weight ≠ Worth* (for those with an unhealthy preoccupation with food, weight or appearance). We also launched *WOW (Working on Wellness)* to help working professionals connect with their colleagues to promote personal and professional wellbeing. *Compelling Conversations*, a new NAMI Mercer program, developed to normalize conversations about mental health creates safe space for those with "lived experience" (called "communicators") to engage in open, honest dialogue with those who are interested in learning and understanding "more." At NAMI Mercer, we are fully committed to fostering the healthy relationships so important to wellbeing for everyone. And we are utilizing every opportunity at our disposal to do so, including digital technology.

Motivated by a desire to engage members of vulnerable and underserved communities, to promote access to mental health resources and address the cultural stigmas associated with help-seeking behaviors, we were awarded grant funding to embark on a process of listening to, learning from, and building trust with influencers from within these communities. Our goal is to develop participatory collaborative partnerships, break down barriers, and design education/support/outreach strategies that will work. You will be hearing more about *Collaboration for Caring Communities* in the months ahead.

We all crave real human connection and here at NAMI Mercer there is a place for everyone. Here -- YOU belong!

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*Thank you to our Board of Directors for your service, your leadership, your loyalty and your guidance!*

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# Families Helping Families

*IMPACT (in our own words): My thinking about recovery and what it means for my loved one has changed considerably. We are now communicating more productively and I am speaking more openly with others about my experience to break the silence that for too long has caused people to feel isolated and alone. ~ Jean*

**Family to Family**—Two 8-session Family to Family classes were held in the Spring, 7 of the initial 7 registrants completed the Wednesday class and 8 of 9 completed the Thursday class. One Family to Family class was offered in the Fall with 10 completing this class. Participants reported greater feelings of empowerment, reduced anxiety, and improved coping and problem-solving skills.

**IFSS Family Support Groups** – Through our partnership with Intensive Family Support Services under Oaks Integrated Care, 116 Family Support Group Meetings were held online or in a hybrid format. Helping hundreds of family members/friends experience less stress and improve family functioning through the development of better coping skills.  
Average participation: 12  
Individual consultations were also held.

**The Parent Support Network** (for parents/caregivers of youth, under age 24) 12 meetings were held (in person) at which parents shared their experiences and resources and worked through difficult feelings, leading to a sense of belonging and better role modeling for their children.  
Average participation: 5  
PSN Meetings scheduled across the country and held online were made available.

IFSS Family  
Support  
Groups



Parent  
Support  
Network

Family to  
Family



# Peers Supporting Peers

*IMPACT (in our own words): Through listening and talking with others about our shared experiences and how we individually cope, I get to know myself better. My depression is lessened; my self-esteem increased. I've become the best version of me! ~ Rebecca*



**Just Friends Social Support Group** 3 chats were held in January and February then ended in favor of in-person gatherings since COVID restrictions were eased. 28 people attended 11 Meet and Greets and 23 people attended 3 Planning Meetings. Fifteen events were held: St. Patrick's Day Party, Mini-Golf Outing, Trenton Thunder Game, Ice Cream Social, Olive Garden, 2 Bowling and Pizza events, Movies, Membership Picnic, Tehrune Orchards, CSPNJ Fall Festival, Halloween Party, Holiday Party and New Year's Eve Party. Total participation: 372

**Connection Recovery Support Group** Peer-led online meetings were held 4x per month for participant to share their challenges and accomplishments, offering one another encouragement and inspiring hope to sustain recovery.

Average participants per session: 4. One new facilitator and 3 assistants were trained.

**Hearing Voices** (a safe haven for those who hear voices or have other unusual sensory perceptions to better understand and grow from their experiences) met twice monthly for a total of 21 meetings. Average attendance: 6.

**The Empathy Network** (a support group for those coping with depression was launched in September). Eight meetings were held with steady growth in attendance. Average attendance: 7.

**Mending Mindsets** (a support group for those coping with anxiety) Launched as a virtual group in Nov. 2022. Four meetings were held. Average attendance: 4.

**Weight ≠ Worth** (a support group for those who have an unhealthy preoccupation with food or body image) was launched as a virtual group in February. 6 meetings were held. Average attendance: 5

# Collaborations Building Community

**IMPACT (in our own words):** *The guidance I received from the Helpline specialist was just what I was looking for. I needed someone who knows the system to listen to my unique situation and advise. ~ Dan*

**Helpline** - 468 inquiries (64% first-time contacts) were fielded by 5 Helpline specialists (working both remotely and in-person), supported by staff. They listen with compassion and provide valuable information and resources.

**Helpline Plus** - provided those with more complex needs a special advocate to help them navigate systems and resolve problems

**Youth/School-Based Initiatives:** Helping students recognize early warning signs of mental illness, learn when, how, and where to seek help, and develop greater understanding and acceptance of those coping with mental health challenges.

**Ending the Silence (ETS)** at Branchburg Middle School  
Attendance: 172 8th graders

**On Point for Wellbeing** (Janssen's Bridge to Employment series for inner city youth) Attendance: 60

**Mentoring for Mental Health:** "Gear-Up" State of NJ Department of Education Attendance: 40

**Diversity, Inclusion and Mental Health** at West Windsor Plainsboro HS. Attendance: 700

**Workplace Mental Health: WOW (Working On Wellness)** – Our new workplace mental health initiative. Four six-week sessions were held for McCann/IPG Health. Attendance: 60



**Harvest of Hope Annual Wellness Conference:** Special guest, Ginger Zee, along with a slate of 5 talented workshop presenters and 12 communicators from our new *Compelling Conversations* program made the conference a rousing success. We hosted the event in a new venue at Mercer County Community College with a new format for our plenary session - using high tech to live stream our special guest for a fireside chat, moderated in-person by local playwright, David Lee White. The event concluded with an uplifting performance by *The Universal African Dance and Drum Ensemble*.



## Community Education

**Faithnet** presentation at Rehoboth Pentecostal Church - 50 attendees.

**Easing Anxiety** workshop - 15 attendees

**You Are Not Alone** book signing with Dr. Ken Duckworth (in partnership with RWJ) - 30 attendees

**Adverse Childhood Experiences** (in partnership with RWJ) - 20 attendees

**The Value of Support Groups for Mental Health** (TCNJ Public Health) - 22 attendees

**Mental Health and Its Effect on the African American Community** for the Association of Black Women Lawyers - 17 attendees

### In Our Own Voice (IOOV)

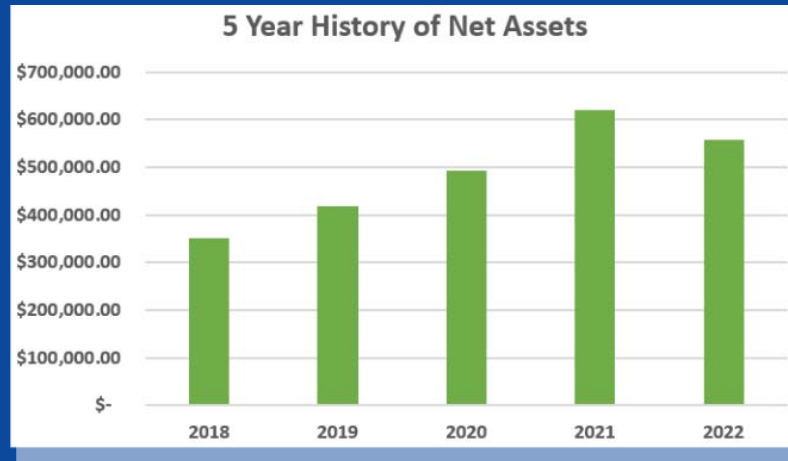
5 presentations were made, using personal storytelling to reduce stereotypes about mental illness and share a compelling message of hope - 44 attendees

Created/finalized **mental health toolkits** on a variety of topics: *Finding Support in School Self-Advocacy*, *Healing After Trauma*, *Understanding Grief* and *Hablando Con Sus Hijos Sobre La Salud Mental*.

**Outreach Events:** NAMI Mercer participated in 19 community outreach events such as wellness fairs (in-person & virtual), reaching more than 3500 people. In partnership with Otsuka, we delivered 60 care packages to youth at Hackensack Meridian Health Carrier Clinic.

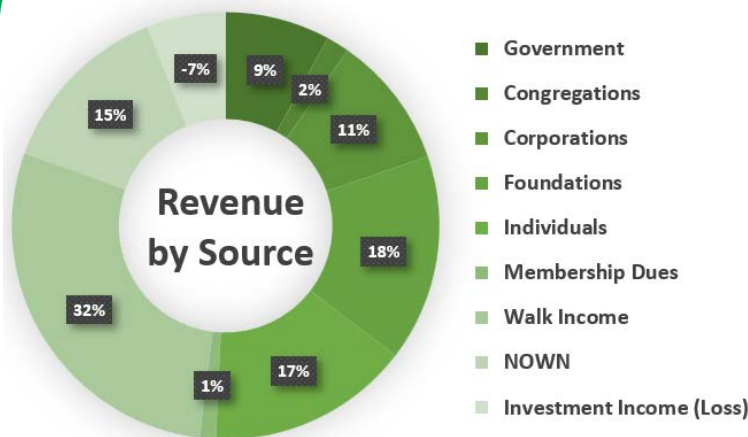
# Financing Stability & Growth

Coming off a strong financial position in 2021 with total revenue far exceeding our expectations, 2022 experienced a slight decline in momentum, but still finished out the year well. Our annual Walk raised over \$132,000 and our first in-person Night Out event since the pandemic raised over \$60,000! We also operated under-budget for all of our expenses, even with more in-person programs and fundraising events during the year. Due to the negative shift in the market which resulted in investment losses, our Fund for the Future account decreased slightly from the year before, with an ending balance in 2022 being \$220,932.



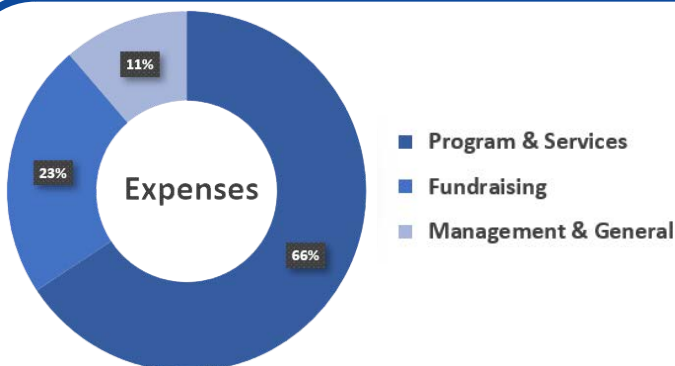
Even with this difficult year in terms of the market and our fundraising efforts, we are still in a strong financial position with total net assets of \$556,716 at the end of 2022. Thanks in large part to the strong position from the year before, we are confident that our financial position will not hinder the continued success of NAMI Mercer.

*Courtney Davis, Chair of the NAMI Mercer Finance Committee*  
*Jason LaViscount, Treasurer*



## 2022 Audited Financial Statement Revenue

Government	36,667	9%
Congregations	8,090	2%
Corporations	46,510	11%
Foundations	72,475	18%
Individuals	70,917	17%
Membership Dues	5,606	1%
Walk Income	132,148	32%
NOWN	62,469	15%
Investment Income (Loss)	(27,711)	-7%
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>407,171</b>	<b>100%</b>



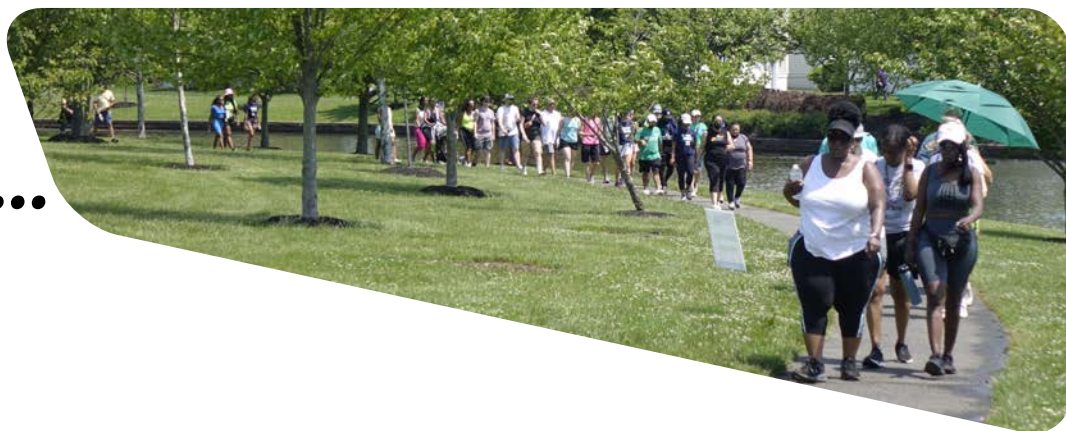
## Expenses:

Program & Services	308,875	66%
Fundraising	107,951	23%
Management & General	53,143	11%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>469,970</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Increase in Net Assets**      \$    (62,799)

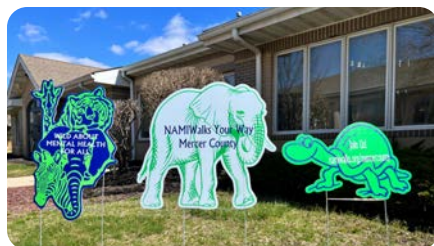


# from a WALK in the park...



- 419 Registered Walkers
- 60 Teams
- 41 Sponsors
- 19 Star Walkers

NAMIWalks Mercer County 2022 - *Wild About Mental Health for All*, held at West Lake Park in Robbinsville, brought together 500+ people to raise awareness, build community, raise funds, and demonstrate the resiliency of spirit that enables people with mental health challenges to seek treatment, pursue recovery, and lead full, meaningful lives. Through peer-to-peer fundraising, over \$132,000 was raised to support our programs and services. The iconic *Trenton Makes The World Takes* bridge was once again lit green the weekend of the WALK.



## ...to a Night in Venice

Night Out With NAMI (NOWN) – During *Midnight at the Masquerade*, we honored Jay Redd with NAMI Mercer's Pillar Award and Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson with our Visionary Award. We ate, drank, and solved a mystery all while raising \$62,000 from our first in-person gala post COVID.



# ***Volunteers ~ paying it forward ...***

Brett Adams  
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Mahi Aneja  
Jerilyn Angotti  
Janine Bauman  
Brenda Blanc  
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Ian Bussman  
Elaine Carlevaro  
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Nedeir Cartmill  
Jacki Chadwick  
Gargi Chanda  
Nandy Chaudhary  
Angela Clack  
Andrea Crea  
Caryn Cullen  
Dawn Dannenbrink  
Jacob Dannenbrink  
Tom Dannenbrink  
Aneira Davis  
Ayesha Davis  
Courtney Davis  
Lucretia Davis  
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Lianna DePinto  
George DiFerdinando

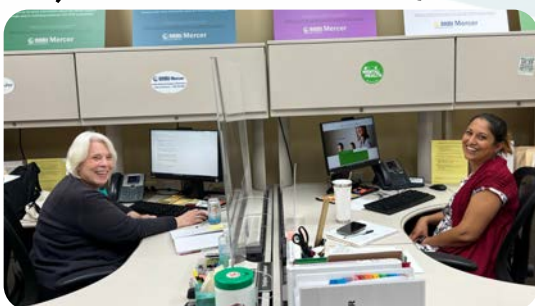
Rob Dolnick  
Lillian Domenico  
Tom Domenico  
Juliette Dresdner  
Barbara Eget  
Pearl Elias  
Andrew Fan  
Joe Fosco  
Bill Foster  
Olive Giles  
Laurie Goldman  
Shravani Gote  
Charlene Green  
Ahmed Grier  
Deidre Grier  
Elisabeth Hagen  
Robert Hedden  
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Craig Hoppe  
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Jerome Kidd  
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Advia Knightfoster  
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Lisa Lawson  
Will Leavey

Sanjana Lekkala  
Frances Lochen  
Lynn Lyon  
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Medha Mahesh  
Karen Marquis  
John Marsland  
Stephanie McCarthy  
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Quarcoopome  
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Suzanne Ream  
Jay Redd  
Julie Reyes  
Carol Rickard

William Rivers  
Stefani Rodriguez  
William Romanoff  
Jesse Rosenberg  
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Evanjaline Sahaya  
Michelle Santoro  
Dina Sattispiel  
Adam Satzman  
Janice Schroeder  
Denise Scott  
Naiya Shah  
Neil Shainwald  
Swati Sharma-Hrusko  
Jeffrey Slabado  
Bette Sorrento  
Mariam Sprawl  
Nikki Spruill  
Vivienne Stewart  
Renay Stover  
Lona Stranieri  
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***with 9,000+ hours of service***





# *Interns ~making an impact while building career competencies*



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Frank E. Casieri -   
Archie Leon Davis -   
Marguerite "Peg" Heath -   
Maggie Hill -   
Brian Maine -   
Adam Apgar Pyle -   
Ann "Nancy" Stewart - 



# ~powering innovation

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- ◆ Benefactor
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- ★ Star Walker
- ❖ Team Captain \$2500+

# *from festive events to everyday activities*



## ***NAMI Mercer brings people together***

# What Sets Us Apart

- ✓ *Lived experience leadership model*
- ✓ *Community of shared experience*
- ✓ *Extraordinary resilience and support*
- ✓ *Radical inclusivity*
- ✓ *Programs at no charge so cost will not be a barrier to participation*

The logo for NAMI Mercer, featuring the text "NAMI Mercer" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. The text is set against a white background that is partially enclosed by a blue circular shape. The blue shape has a stylized, wavy design that suggests a globe or a network of connections.

## Mission Statement

*NAMI Mercer listens, leads, educates, and advocates, empowering families and individuals to build lives of quality and respect, free of stigma and discrimination.*

## Engage with us!

**VISIT US** Stop by the NAMI Mercer Office to say Hello and see what we are up to.

**VOLUNTEER OR INTERN** Make a positive difference in the lives of others and your own.

**DONATE** Help advance our mission and strengthen our community.

**PARTNER WITH US** Join us to co-present or become a corporate sponsor.



# Community



To learn more about the mental health movement, to share your personal story, or to make a gift in support of our mission, reach out to us today!  
[jhaag@namimercer.org](mailto:jhaag@namimercer.org) | 609.799.8994



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609.799.8994 | [namimercer.org](http://namimercer.org)