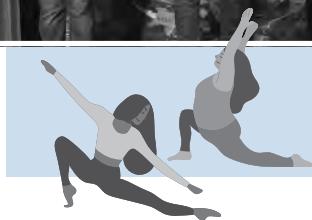
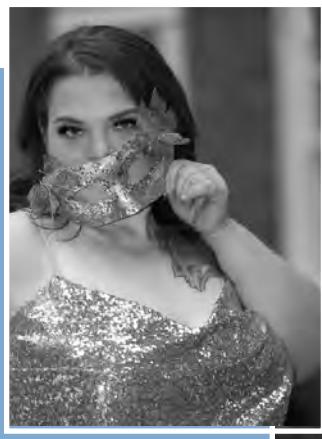




New York State NEWS

Winter 2021



2020 NAMI-NYS Education Conference

Building Momentum:



Coming Together to Create Our Future.

2020 NAMI-NYS LEADERS OF MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS HONOREES



Lily Cornell-Silver



AJ Mendez



Metta World Peace

NAMI-NYS LEGISLATIVE ACTION WEEKS

JAN 25-29 - MARCH 8-12

A Publication of the National Alliance on Mental Illness | New York State

CONTENTS

2-5 NAMI News

- 2 Message from NAMI-NYS Board President
- 2 Message from Executive Director
- 3 NAMI-NYS Board of Directors
- 3 NAMI-NYS Committees
- 3 Meet the NAMI-NYS Staff

4-7 NAMI-NYS Supports

- 4-7 NAMI Affiliates
 - 4 Online Programs
 - 4 In Our Own Voice
 - 4 Online Trainings
(beginning on page 4)
 - 5 Virtual Yoga
 - 6 Journaling Block
 - 19 Stress Management
 - 19 Therapeutic Knitting
 - 6-7 NAMI Affiliates
 - 7 Hotline Number and Online Resources
- ### 8-10 NAMI-NYS Educates
- 8-9 NAMI-NYS 2020 Education Conference
 - 10 NAMI-NYS Youth Development
 - 10 NAMI-NYS Breakthroughs

11-14 NAMI-NYS Advocates

- 11-12 Advocacy Update
- 12 NAMI-NYS Legislative Action Weeks
- 13 STARR Coalition
- 14 NAMI Finger Lakes

15-17 NAMI-NYS Spreads Awareness

- 15 NAMIWalks
- 15 May is Mental Health Awareness Month
- 16-17 NAMI-NYS Off the Mask

18-19 NAMI-NYS Expresses Gratitude

- 18 A Message to Our Donors
- 19 NAMI-NYS Receives Donation from GDS Group
- 19 Giving Tuesday

Message from NAMI-NYS Board President

By Lynda M. Regan

As we move into 2021, I'd like to acknowledge the effects of the pandemic on us throughout 2020 and the toll it has taken on everyone's mental health. NAMI-NYS has received an increase in calls to our Helpline, as well as requests for presentations from various businesses and organizations who are concerned about the mental health of their employees. It has been a difficult road, but if we stay connected and continue to support each other, we can get through this together.



The pandemic has led us to rethink current mainstream approaches to mental health care in order to adequately address the mental health aspects of social distancing, anxiety around the virus and civil and political unrest. The expansion of innovations such as telehealth have provided additional tools to treatment, yet we still hear stories of how inadequate the mental health system is for people and families to access care.

I am working with the NAMI-NYS Board of Directors to develop a solid action plan to advocate for best practices around access and treatment. Each of the NAMI-NYS committees is identifying where we can effect change to improve the system and will use that at every level of our advocacy. I look forward to working with the NAMI-NYS membership to keep moving forward in this area and fully intend to engage NAMI at the national level to partner with them and the NAMI affiliates beyond New York State.

I know that many of you have come forward with your own personal stories. As mental health advocates, you are the true heroes. The NAMI-NYS Board is eager to continue working with you all as we advocate for the best possible mental health system, where no one falls through the cracks and we all receive the care and support we need. ■

Message from Executive Director, Wendy Burch

I want to take a moment to acknowledge the outstanding work of the local New York State affiliates throughout 2020. NAMI has always been an organization that thrived on close contact—I had never been hugged so much until I came to NAMI. Then last March our world changed and we found ourselves stuck at home and wondering exactly how to proceed. When it became clear that things would not be going back to "normal" any time soon, NAMI-NYS affiliates sprang into action. They recognized how NAMI support would be even more vital, and the affiliates then transitioned their groups to virtual platforms, many also offering telephonic support groups. They worked to offer NAMI classes virtually, as well as other activities to keep people engaged and connected. They continued to advocate and raise awareness while working remotely, and I think we all found ourselves busier than ever before. The local affiliates discovered a way to offer "virtual hugs" to those in need. While we still have a long road to travel, and a lot of work still ahead, I just wanted to pause and send my own hug to all of you who have worked to stay connected and supportive. You make a difference every day. Hope starts with you! ■



NAMI-NYS BOARD 2020-2021

OFFICERS

Lynda M. Regan, President
Mary Jo Muscolino, RN, CASAC, CCM, 1st Vice President
Ellen Dresdale Ritz, RN, 2nd Vice President
Ann Canastrra, MS, LMHC Treasurer
Ceceile McIntosh Green, Secretary
Pooja Mehta, Peer Seat

DIRECTORS

Mary Bartlett
Margaret Bristol, Ed.D.
Abraham Goldring
Robert S. Laitman, MD
Jayette Lansbury
Martin A. Gromulat, Esq
Julie LeClair Neches, PhD
Dhanu Sannesy
Evelyne Tropper, PhD
Judith Watt, MSRN

NAMI-NYS Committees

In December, the NAMI-NYS Board of Directors approved the chairpersons of the organization's committees. After some discussion, the Board created two new committees after consolidating committees that have lain dormant the last few years.

One of the new committees is the ***Development, Membership and Outreach Committee***. The purpose of this committee is to create awareness around mental health issues, including NAMI's programs and advocacy work in that area. Part of the committee's focus will be NAMI-NYS's annual fundraiser, *Off the Mask*, which in addition to raising awareness also raises much needed funds for NAMI-NYS and local affiliate activities, including the Legislative Conference, Education Conference, programs and community outreach.

The other newly created committee is the ***Peer and Caregiver Committee***, which is currently identifying hurdles that are preventing people from seeking and accessing mental health care and support. The committee will be working on strategies to overcome those hurdles and coordinating with the other NAMI-NYS committees, as well as outside partners, to improve the delivery of care.

The vision of the current Board of Directors is to work with the committees to identify those areas of advocacy most in need of attention and effect real change to a broken health care system. While much of this is being led through committee work, NAMI-NYS is always interested in receiving feedback from the local affiliates and NAMI membership.

Current active NAMI-NYS committees of the corporation:

| | | |
|---|---------------------|------------------------|
| Education Conference | Criminal Justice | Zero Suicide |
| Government Affairs | Veterans Affairs | Multicultural |
| Development, Membership and Outreach Programs | Peer and Caregiver | Reintegration |
| | Health and Wellness | Youth Advisory Council |
| | Research | |

Meet the NAMI-NYS Staff

Wendy Burch

Executive Director

Contact

Wendy Burch at Wendy@naminys.org



Matthew Shapiro

Associate Director of Public Affairs

Contact

Matthew Shapiro at Matthew@naminys.org



Kate Tortora

Community Education and Outreach Coordinator

Contact

Kate Tortora at Kate@naminys.org



Tammie Paradis

Affiliate Development Coordinator

Contact

Tammie Paradis at Tammie@naminys.org



Christine Rickeman

Resource and Information Helpline Coordinator

Contact

Christine Rickeman at Christine@naminys.org



Cassandra Farrugia

Communications & Youth Engagement Specialist

Contact

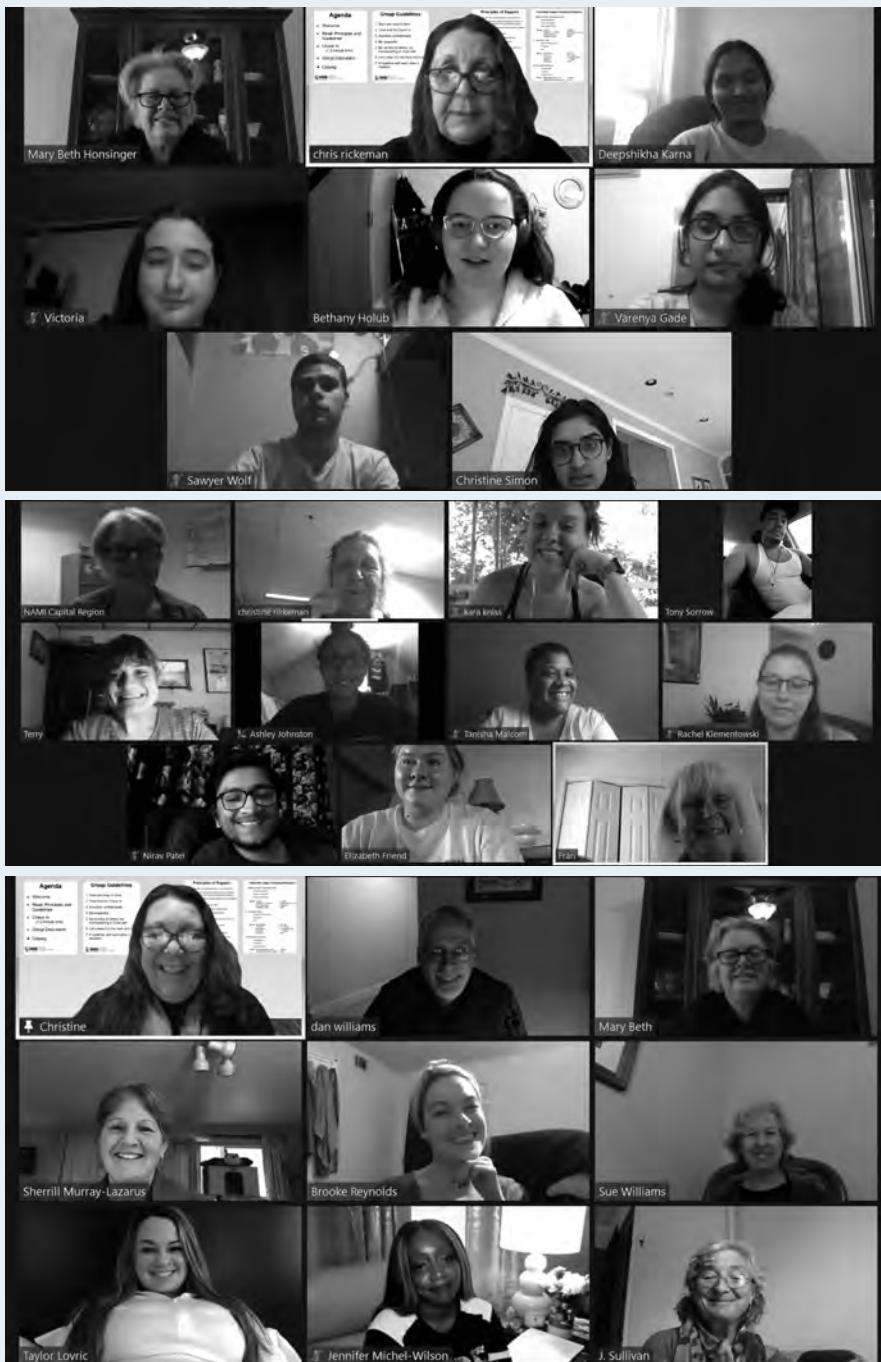
Cassandra Farrugia at Cassandra@naminys.org



Online Programs

Virtual programs continue to be the norm, and NAMI-NYS is so inspired with how the local affiliates have stepped up to continue to deliver NAMI classes, support groups and presentations.

NAMI-NYS was also able to schedule several trainings throughout the fall. Following the first virtual Family to Family training held last summer, NAMI-NYS coordinated 4 support group trainings and another Family to Family training. Peer to Peer and Homefront trainings, as well as additional support group trainings, are on the schedule for later winter. We appreciate the flexibility of the state trainers, who have been so giving of their time. ■



MaryBeth Honsinger, NAMI Capital Region President, and Christine Rickeman, NAMI-NYS Information and Resource Helpline Coordinator and NAMI Capital Region Board Member, held NAMI Connections and NAMI Family Support Group trainings.

NAMI Westchester Holds Mental Health Awareness Speakers Forum: Once A Warrior, Always A Warrior Presentation & Panel Discussion

NAMI Westchester is directing focus to improving its service to the veteran community through partnership and outreach. One of its initiatives is to hold a Speakers Forum at the end of February that will bring together partners who are working with veterans, service members and families who are making a difference.

The forum will feature Charles W. Hoge, MD, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.) nationally-known expert on PTSD, mTBI and other physiological reactions, along with a series of community panelists. NAMI Westchester views this as one of the first steps to supporting the affiliate's veteran community. ■

In Our Own Voice

Last fall, NAMI-NYS participated in a pilot for In Our Own Voice training, which is now being conducted at the affiliate level under the supervision of the local affiliate program coordinators. NAMI Westchester and NAMI Mid-Hudson worked with NAMI and NAMI-NYS to plan and execute the trainings at the affiliate level and were able to train several new In Our Own Voice presenters. As we move forward, we will begin to implement the new way of training presenters but will continue to work with the affiliates who may not yet be comfortable with this innovation.

In addition, NAMI-NYS has coordinated several programs to keep our community members statewide connected and combat social isolation and seasonal depression. We kicked off our series on Tuesday, January 5th. There is still time to register, visit naminys.org and learn more in the "NAMI-NYS Supports" section and throughout this newsletter.

NAMI Queens/Nassau

As with all of us in NAMI New York State, Queens/Nassau remained up and active since the onset of COVID 19.

Like many local NAMI affiliates, as soon as they realized that many of their members would be isolated during the lockdown, the affiliate established a Wellness Check. People who would be alone were told to request Wellness Checks. Board members have called them regularly to check on their well-being and offer assistance and guidance. Many people have taken advantage of this and continue to have warm and helpful relationships with their "callers."

In addition, programs have become virtual. The affiliate has significantly increased the numbers of its classes and support groups. NAMI Q/N has also added new support groups for survivors of suicide and for people with chronic pain.

The affiliate was honored to be able to have the Director and Assistant Director of Psychiatry at North Shore University Hospital (Northwell) address a membership meeting about COVID and mental health concerns. The informative presentations and discussions were very well received.



Other initiatives include a weekly Writing Through Lived Experiences program, where feedback has been very positive, and their Unites socialization program for peers hasn't skipped a beat. They continue to meet weekly.

Board members and peers have presented to school districts, colleges, SEPTAs, health plans and others.

The affiliate's FaithNet Committee meets twice a month and offers inspiring, thoughtful presentations to the membership and others.

In addition, NAMI Queens/Nassau has developed a partnership with the largest housing project in the United States, located in Queens. Our coordinator of the project is meeting with members of the community to ascertain the mental health needs of the

community. He will then set up classes and groups to meet the community's needs.

Two of NAMI Q/N's Board members found out about a program directed by Funds2Org, an Orlando based organization. They collect shoes to help organizations such as NAMI affiliates. The shoes are directed to poverty-stricken areas. NAMI Queens/Nassau will also benefit by a donation from the organization. As of the first week of January, two thousand pairs of shoes have been donated. The collection ends on January 27.

COVID closed the office, but it hasn't stopped NAMI Queens/Nassau! ■

NAMI-NYS Live Virtual Yoga Sessions

On Wednesday, January 6th, we restarted our Live Virtual Yoga Program with Mandee Guzzo. The purpose of this program is to continue promoting mental and physical wellbeing.



About Our Instructor – Mandee Guzzo

Mandee has been practicing yoga both asana and meditation for 6 years. Yoga has helped her achieve a healthy mind body connection. She earned her 200hr Therapeutic Teacher training at Phoenix Rising school of yoga therapy. In sharing her practice she hopes it will deepen others' understanding of themselves inside and out. She offers therapeutic classes with dynamic flows, a focus on self care, and mind body connection.

NAMI-NYS is so excited to continue providing this wonderful program. We would like to thank Mandee Guzzo, our talented yoga instructor, for hosting the program and facilitating reflections. This program meets Wednesdays and Fridays at 12 pm on zoom until April 2nd. ■

VIRTUAL YOGA FOR MENTAL & PHYSICAL WELLNESS



Enjoy the healing powers of yoga with NAMI-NYS



Information:

Wednesdays & Fridays
12:00 PM to 1:00 PM on ZOOM
January 6th - April 2nd
Be sure to Register now,
Spots are limited!



Learn about NAMI-NYS's mission to committed to providing free mental health support, Education, and advocacy at naminys.org

The NAMI-NYS/ Queensbridge Partnership

Approximately a year and a half ago, NAMI-NYS was approached by Showtime and Artest University to address mental health support in the Queensbridge housing community. Metta World Peace, former NBA star and current mental health advocate, had grown up in the neighborhood and had experienced trauma that he attributes to many of his mental health issues. Metta was interested in bringing mental health support to the community and thought that NAMI would be a great fit.

NAMI-NYS worked with local affiliates NAMI NYC Metro and NAMI Queens/Nassau to coordinate NAMI programs in the Queensbridge Community. Prior to the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, NAMI joined Metta World Peace and his organization Artest University at an event at Queensbridge to interact with the community and introduce NAMI. NAMI representatives had the opportunity to meet several community leaders, who later participated in the NAMI-NYS Education Conference in the fall of 2019.

In the spring and summer of 2020, NAMI-NYS worked with technical experts from SAMHSA to develop a model that would fit the needs of the Queensbridge community. This led to the creation of a needs assessment survey and a kickoff event to connect with the community members. NAMI's goal was to determine the needs of the community based on feedback from the community members themselves.

As of January 2021, NAMI has a community engagement specialist working with Queensbridge residents to continue to gain feedback and establish needed NAMI programs and support within the community. John Johnson, a member of the NAMI Queens/Nassau affiliate, has agreed to assume the role of engagement specialist and is actively working with the Queensbridge community leaders and stakeholders to bring NAMI support to Queensbridge. ■

NAMI Cayuga Achieves Holiday Goal

This year, with the help of generous knitters, crocheters and donors in the community, NAMI Cayuga was again able to reach their goal of having all the beds in the Behavioral Health Unit at Auburn Community Hospital covered in colorful quilts and blankets.

The affiliate is so grateful to the online groups of men who are fiber artists, friends and family!

These blankets go with their new owners upon discharge from the unit to remind them that there are people in the community who send warm wishes for recovery and continued good mental health!



The affiliate extends a special thanks to two NAMI Cayuga Holiday Elves, John and Karen Quinn, who have been making special gift bags for the residents of Auburn's BHU for many years. In each gift bag there are socks, toiletries, pastime workbooks of puzzles and coloring designs, and many other things for residents. It is heartwarming to know that there are unselfish individuals such as the Quinns who maintain the spirit of giving not only during the holidays, but throughout the year!

NAMI Cayuga would also like to acknowledge Carol Davis McNeil, who administers a FB page called "Buy Nothing Skaneateles." Among her many missions is to serve community members with finding good homes for unwanted items; she sets aside any donated blankets for NAMI Cayuga.

As part of another NAMI Cayuga initiative to reach out to those in need, they have prepared 10 backpack donations for the Chapel House for Homeless Men in Cayuga County.

Within each backpack residents at the homeless shelter will receive body wash, deodorant, disposable razors, Kleenex packages, protein bars, hand sanitizer, COVID-19 masks, hats, gloves, wash cloths, toothpaste and toothbrushes, combs, band aids, body soap and other toiletries. The backpacks also include educational resources such as "Asking for Help", "PTSD", and "Mental Health Guidelines." This is just one of many new initiatives NAMI Cayuga has organized. ■

NAMI-NYS Journaling Block

On Tuesday, January 6th, NAMI-NYS relaunched our Journaling Block program to provide our community with a space for acceptance, growth and mental wellness. We created two voluntary journaling projects for our participants with new prompts every session:

1. A self-care journal for positive journaling, filled with uplifting experiences and moments that have brought hope, joy, and gratitude. These entries were meant to form a happy memory bank to look back on.
2. A cathartic expression practice to write about challenging experiences to better articulate and process emotions.

After the group completes their chosen journaling prompt, we open up the floor for anyone who would like to share with the group. We are so grateful to all our participants for their willingness to share. ■

Take your break with NAMI-NYS

Join our Journaling Block!

Learn how to create your own self-care journal for coping through these uncertain times.

Let's stay connected and encourage acceptance, growth and mental wellness!

Thursdays @ 12 pm. on Zoom, Register Now!

NAMI Columbia County Partners to Promote Mental Health Awareness Through Artistic Expression

NAMI Columbia County is collaborating with a local art gallery, The Mental Health Awareness Gallery, a partnership that encourages self expression through art.

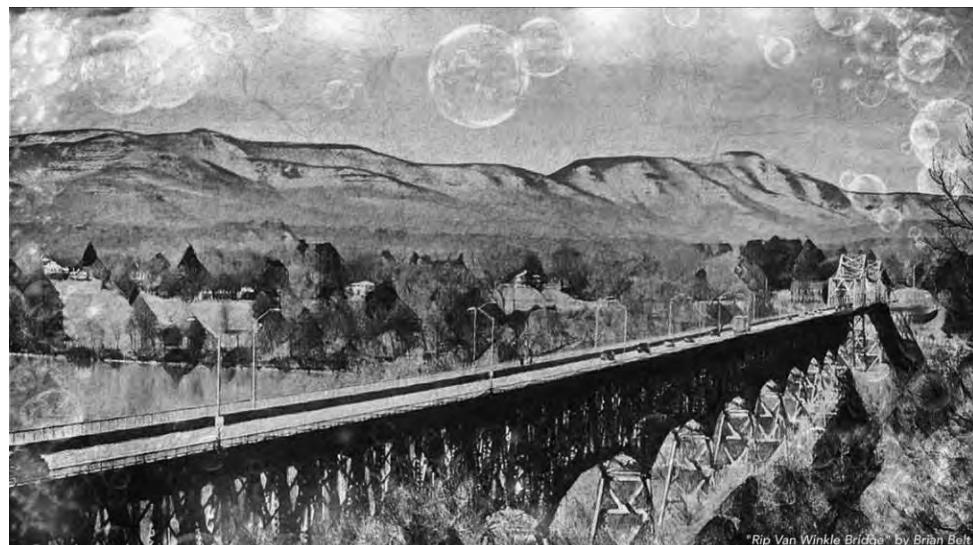
Fifteen years ago, when Brian Belt was diagnosed with schizophrenia and substance abuse disorder, his mother reached out to NAMI CC for support. The community

and resources she found there gave her strength as she and her son navigated a long, hard road.

Today, Belt's journey of recovery has brought him full circle. As a certified peer specialist, he teaches mental health education classes and facilitates support groups and has partnered with NAMI CC to bring to life his vision of a Mental Health Awareness and Creative Arts Gallery in Hudson.

This opportunity allows artists to not only share their creative work, including paintings, sculpture, collage, photography, metalwork, poetry and music, but also their personal stories.

Belt continues to work to bring awareness to mental health issues by creating an aesthetically beautiful environment and sharing a message that relays hope to the community and to everyone who's going through rough times. ■



NAMI-NYS Temporary Helpline Number and Online Resource Page

To continue providing our communities with support and resources, NAMI-NYS established a **Temporary Helpline Number**:

(518)-248-7634.

The Helpline is monitored by Christine Rickeman, NAMI-NYS Helpline Coordinator, who is available weekdays from 8 am to 4 pm.

NAMI NYC Metro's Helpline continues to be available as a source of information and support. Contact NAMI NYC Metro at

212-684-3264

(10 am to 6 pm) or email them at helpline@naminy.org.

NAMI Westchester Helpline calls continued to be answered by a live, trained person, and the affiliate expanded the Helpline hours to provide resources and support to people in need.

In addition, NAMI-NYS created a **COVID-19 Resource Page** with information from NAMI, CDC, NIMH, NYDOH and other relevant sources. The page also features relevant updates and changes to our NAMI Affiliates' current operations.

New Yorkers can also access support through the New York State Office of Mental Health's **COVID-19 Emotional Support Helpline** at

1-844-863-9314.

This call in line is operational 7 days a week from 8 am to 10 pm. ■

NAMI-NYS provides **free mental health** support, education, advocacy, and public awareness.

NAMI Helpline:
1-800-950-NAMI (6264)
Open M-F from 10 am - 6pm ET
Text: "NAMI" to 741-741
Open 24/7

NAMI-NYS 2020 Education Conference Brings More Than 600 People Together To Create Our Future

The 2020 NAMI-NYS Education Conference – *Building Momentum: Coming Together to Create Our Future* took place October 23-25th. The online event brought our community together and instilled the importance of resiliency and addressed many of the critical issues we are currently facing including:

2020 NAMI-NYS Education Conference

Building Momentum:



Coming Together to Create Our Future.

- How to recover from the trauma and grief generated by COVID-19, the economy and racial injustice
- Understanding and addressing social-determinants of mental health
- How to take our education and turn it into action, including how we can make our voices heard in supporting mental health services in the upcoming elections.
- How to partner in advancing research
- Addressing suicide
- How to take the next steps in supporting multicultural communities
- The importance of early-intervention
- Issues impacting young adults

Through the online event, NAMI-NYS refused to allow physical distance to cause social distance. The more than 600 attendees relished the opportunity to interact, learn from one another, help each other heal and most importantly begin to collaborate on creating the future we want to see. While we were not

physically together this year, the fact that so many members of NAMI-NYS were all learning together on how to move forward from the events of 2020 was something that was very meaningful for all involved.

As we begin to take the first steps towards recovery from the traumatic events of 2020, the conference aimed to examine the factors contributing to negative mental health as well as provide the tools to address them.

The conference kicked off with the session *First Steps Towards Healing: Addressing and Overcoming the Grief and Trauma of COVID-19, the Economy and Racial Injustice*. The session began with a stirring conversation with NAMI's Associate Medical Director, Dr. Christine Crawford and Dr. Wilford Farquharson, who co-chairs the NYS-OMH Multicultural Advisory Committee. The discussion explored the impact of COVID-19 on our collective mental health, racial injustice, the consequences of mental health disparities and how NAMI can be part of the solution. Both also specialize in pediatric psychiatry and explained the psychological impact 2020 is having on children. Finally they detailed ways to overcome trauma and tools to help cope with the upcoming winter months.

Their discussion was followed by a presentation from Sydney Faith Rose, LMSW, CHHC, ERYT, Founder of *Relational Thriving*, who explained how to address the grief we are all experiencing from the loss of our sense of normalcy (and for some the loss of a loved one or a job) and detail how to overcome these stressors and

start healing. Sydney concluded the session by leading a meditation exercise.

This was followed by *Our Path Forward: Understanding and Prevailing Over Our Current Social Determinants of Mental Health*, where Dr. Merrill

Rotter, Special Assistant to the New York State Office of Mental Health Commissioner, explained how the COVID-19 outbreak both exposed long-existing negative

social determinants of mental health as well as created a series of new ones. He detailed how the New York State Office of Mental Health aims to address these and how NAMI is involved in these efforts. Dr. Rotter also spoke about criminal justice reforms that are necessary to make a more mentally healthy and just New York State.



The afternoon featured workshop sessions focusing on *Education to Action Creating Our Future* designed to empower participants so they can help shape a future where mental wellness initiatives and access to mental health services are available in every community in New York State.

The evening's *Coming Together to Celebrate Resiliency and Hope – Honoring our 2020 Leaders of Mental Health Awareness Honorees and the Spirit NAMI-NYS Members* celebrated the resiliency of our 2020 Leaders of Mental Health Awareness honorees and NAMI-NYS members as well the hope generated by the unique ways they are telling their stories.

Interspersed with presenting Leaders of Mental Health Awareness Awards to and discussions with Lily Cornell Silver, host of Mind Wide Open, AJ Mendez, former WWE Women's Champion, author and NAMI Ambassador and former NBA all-star, champion and 2004 Defensive Player of



Friday Night's Talent



Highlighting the Latest in Research and How Research = Hope



the year Metta Sandiford-Arest (AKA Metta World Peace), were performances from some of the most talented members of the NAMI-NYS family, Will Foley, Megan Moran and Caity Gallagher. There was also a reflection of hope from Lashawn "Suga Ray" Marston. The event was emceed by award-winning actor Greg Aidala and NAMI-NYS's Matthew Shapiro. We also want to thank Bobby Chase at Next Evolution Media for editing the program and Overt Studios for giving us space to record the musical performances.

Saturday's agenda focused on the latest in the research and treatments for psychiatric disorders. The day began by exploring the importance of partnering on research and by presenting the 2020 NAMI-NYS Excellence in Research Award to Dr. Barbara Cornblatt, Dr. Cornblatt is a professor of psychiatry and molecular medicine at the Donald and Barbara Zucker School of Medicine at the Hofstra/Northwell. For more than 20 years, she has focused her research on the causes and treatment of serious mental illness.

She also directs the Recognition and Prevention (RAP) program, which she founded in 1998, at Zucker Hillside Hospital. RAP is dedicated to treating early warning signs of mental illness in adolescents and young adults and is one of the longest running centers of its kind in North America.

Dr Cornblatt detailed RAP's work including how more than 500 young people have participated in both the research and treatment components of this program. Dr. Cornblatt also explained that early treatment in the RAP Clinic has been consistently associated with a high rate of clinical improvement.

This was followed by the Partnering in Research Session, which aimed to accomplish two things. First, NAMI-NYS's Matthew Shapiro and Luke Kramer, Executive Director of the STARR



Coalition explored the crucial question that if research is such a vital conduit to our better future, then why is it not discussed in a more urgent way by most mental health advocates? In answering that question Matthew and Luke debunked many common misconceptions about those who conduct research and myths about participating in clinical trials. They also pondered what the effect would be if the mental health movement fully incorporated the importance of research into their work and how NAMI-NYS and our affiliates can include research in our programs. Luke also highlighted several key STARR Coalition initiatives including Project Rock STARR, where people participating in research can designate a charity (including NAMIs) and STARR 911 which aims to reform how people with a history of suicidality are treated when they don't qualify for research trial (NAMI-NYS included the ideas of STARR 911 into our Nicole's Law Legislation).

The second half of the landmark session featured updates from a distinguished group of the world's pre-eminent researchers including Dr. Jeffrey Borenstein, CEO of the Brain and Behavioral Research Foundation, Dr. Dwight Dickinson of NIMH, Dr. Don Goff, Director of the Nathan Kline Institute and Dr. Jeffrey Lieberman, Director of the New York State Psychiatric Institute.

As is tradition Saturday afternoon featured workshops on specific mental illnesses. The conference concluded with sessions on increasing mental wellness and included breakout sessions on *Expanding Mental*



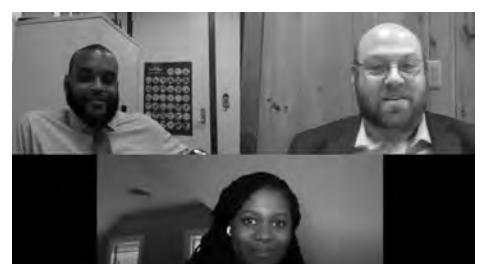
Wellness in the LGBTQI Community, Zero Suicide: Recognizing and Addressing Warning signs of Suicide During COVID and Social Isolation and Using Communication to Cut Through Cultural Divides and Address Mental Health Disparities.

The conference also featured a young adult focus track which was curated by the NAMI-NYS Youth Advisory Council under the leadership of NAMI-NYS Communication & Youth Engagement Specialist Cassandra Farrugia and Board Member Pooja Mehta. The young adult sessions were *Managing Our New Back to School Stress, How to Curate a Healthy Social Media Feed, Addressing Anxiety (Turning Negative "What Ifs" to Positives) and Act and Vote for Mental Health*.

We hope the conference provided attendees with the tools to navigate these difficult times and address their own mental wellness. We also hope they were inspired and understand the role they play in creating a better future and explaining how we cannot recover without addressing mental health. Finally, we aim to have the attendees embrace the promise of research after learning about the tremendous work being done in New York State.



We want our members to continue to be able to learn from this year's conference, which is why we are working on building a page on our website to house all the recorded sessions so more people will be able to educate themselves and move forward. We will be announcing when that page is up and running. ■



NAMI-NYS Breakthroughs

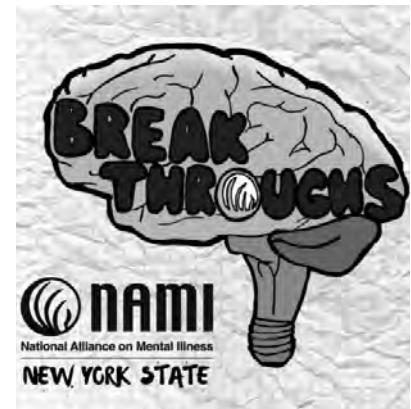
Together the NAMI-NYS Breakthroughs video series' produced a collection of insightful episodes featuring special guests, discussing breakthroughs in mental health support, education, advocacy, and stigma.

This past year, NAMI-NYS Breakthroughs teams were joined by Off The Mask Models **Cara Davis, Leslye Benson, Don Tallman, Gigi Ackert, Gina Schwarz, and Lisa O'Donnell Wolfe**, who shared their breakthroughs and connections with mental health.

The members of the band FogDog, **Carlos Larrauri and Matthew Racher**, also joined us and shared their experience living with schizophrenia and the role creativity and music has played in coping with mental health challenges.

We also discussed the OnTrackNY program and why it is important to address psychosis early on with **Dr. Lisa Dixon**, who directs the Center for Practice Innovations (CPI) at the New York State Psychiatric Institute, what occupational therapy is and how it relates to mental health with **Dr. Elizabeth Lannigan**, the chairperson of the Mental Health Special Interest Section of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), and explored the benefits of therapeutic yoga with **Mandee Guzzo**, a 200-hour certified yoga instructor who instructs the NAMI-NYS Virtual Yoga program, and more!

Contact NAMI-NYS at info@naminys.org to learn how you can be involved in our video series initiatives. ■



NAMI-NYS Youth Development

NAMI-NYS Youth Advisory Council

We are excited to announce that NAMI-NYS Communications and Youth Engagement Specialist Cassandra Farrugia and Board member Pooja Mehta have begun holding NAMI-NYS Youth Advisory Council meetings. The council is currently working on organizing some great spring initiatives, please stay tuned!

The purpose of the NAMI-NYS Youth Advisory council is to create a space for young adults to contribute their unique perspectives to NAMI-NYS mission and initiatives. If you or someone you know is between the ages 18 and 29 and interested in making a difference around how we address mental health and mental health issues, we encourage you to become a part of the advisory council.

Contact Cassandra@naminys.org to learn more.

We are also interested in receiving input from high school and middle school age students about their mental health needs and recommendations for NAMI-NYS's activities in that direction. ■

The graphic features the NAMI New York State logo and the text "Youth Advisory Council". It includes a call to action for young leaders (18-29) to join, a description of the council's purpose to expand mental health systems, and a "Why Get Involved?" section with bullet points. It also shows a digital interface with people interacting and social media links.

Why Get Involved?

- Improve and expand mental health resources for you, loved ones, peers and your community
- Connect with likeminded Peers Direct NAMI-NYS Youth Development initiatives and the Youth Track at the NAMI-NYS Education Conference
- Gain experience, explore leadership opportunities and receive mentoring from the NAMI-NYS Board and staff
- Share NAMI-NYS Social Media to promote its mission, messages of hope, and your work
- Because Mental Health Matter

What is NAMI on Campus?

NoC are student-led, student-run mental health organizations for college campuses

NoC Purpose:

- Raise Mental Health awareness with events, programs & campaigns
- Educate campus community with presentations, guest speakers and student panels
- Advocate for improved mental health services and policies on campus
- Support peers with signature NAMI programs and training

To start the NoC process contact your local NAMI Affiliate or Cassandra Farrugia, NAMI-NYS Communication Specialist, at Cassandra@naminys.org. ■

NAMI-NYS and NAMI Capital Region Partner with RPI

NAMI-NYS, NAMI Capital Region, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's Counseling Center and a group of dedicated students and alumni have established multiple virtual Student Peer to Peer Support Groups for the greater RPI community.

RPI students and alumni have been trained as peer facilitators for NAMI Connection and are working to provide more mental health supports on their campus. Support groups run regularly in the RPI community and NAMI continues to work closely with RPI to identify any needed additional resources and support. ■

ADVOCACY UPDATE: Your Voice is Needed to Save our Systems and Explain How There is No Recovery Without Mental Health

NAMI-NYS has been continually updating our members about our advocacy concerns as COVID-19 has increased the need for mental health services while wreaking havoc and threatening providers who deliver mental health services. NAMI-NYS is very concerned about the threats to mental health services based in both the community and hospital settings.

COVID-19 has led to a revenue shortfall and a budget deficit and because of this non-profit mental health and substance use providers who have contracts with the state are now having 20% of their support withheld. Without a significant influx of revenue, these withholdings could become permanent cuts. These vital programs were underfunded to begin with and it's impossible for them to operate on 80% of their budget long-term.

A state mandate asked hospitals to have 30% of their beds available in case of another COVID surge. Many hospitals have disproportionately targeted psychiatric and detox beds to meet the mandate. Some hospitals have totally eliminated their psychiatric beds; in many cases NAMI-NYS fears that the beds will be lost for good, as hospitals have long aimed to abolish behavioral health beds due to their lack of profitability.

New York cannot begin to recover from the impact of COVID-19 without addressing the mental health trauma caused by the outbreak, social distancing, economic concerns and racism. As the need for psychiatric services increases, NAMI-NYS and our members must ensure that we have a system in place to meet that need.

NAMI-NYS has been active on both fronts. We have been working closely with the New York State Nurses Association to fight the elimination of behavioral health beds. NAMI-NYS produced an episode of Perspectives on the need to "save our psych beds," which chronicled two different stories on how the lack of beds which existed prior to the pandemic has impacted families as well as a report from a psychiatric nurse who advocated for his patients. NAMI-NYS members have participated in rallies in front

of hospitals and have told their stories to several media outlets including the Wall Street Journal and the New York Post.

NAMI-NYS has also been a part of a coalition of advocates for New Yorkers with ever growing mental health and addiction related needs and the service providers who support them that is fighting to restore the withholdings to behavioral health providers. The coalition has met with New York State legislators as well as key members of the New York State Congressional delegation to explain how we cannot recover without mental health and why it is necessary to restore the funding to providers.

While NAMI-NYS has remained active fighting to ensure access to all forms of mental health and substance use services we now need to add your voice to the fight as the 2021 Legislative Session begins.

As with most things of late, our legislative advocacy efforts will be a bit different, but no less impactful in 2021. Instead of having our traditional Legislative Advocacy Day, this year, we will be holding regional Legislative Action Weeks where members will be meeting their legislators via zoom.

During these weeks our members will be meeting with their Members of Assembly and Senators to explain the importance of our 2021 Action Agenda.

This year the Action Agenda is focused on four areas:

- Restoring Funding to Behavioral Health Providers:** The 20% withholdings to community providers are having a devastating impact on the ability to deliver services at a time when these life-saving programs are needed more than ever.
- Ensuring Access to Appropriate Services and Medication:** Access to mental health services and appropriate medications is more important than ever. As the demand for mental health services is at an all-time high, we must be able to meet the demand by expanding telehealth services and allowing Licensed Mental Health Counselors (LMHCs) and Licensed

Counselors (LCs) to diagnose and have their services reimbursed by Medicaid. We also need to ensure that people receive the medications their doctors believe is most appropriate for their recovery.

- Improving the Criminal Justice – Mental Illness Interface:** While there has been increased attention on the need for police and criminal justice reform, what is not being discussed is that more than 60% of those incarcerated have a diagnosable mental illness. We must do better to divert people with mental illness from jails and into treatment as well as improve interactions between police and people with mental illness. It is also time for New York State to pass the HALT bill to reform the use of solitary confinement.
- Address Suicide by Passing Nicole's Law:** The impact of COVID-19 has increased the necessity for the reforms contained in Nicole's Law. The outbreak, social-distance practice and the economic ramifications have had a tremendous impact on our collective mental health. A recent CDC report found that: 40.9% of respondents reported an adverse mental or behavioral health condition. 30.9% of those reported having started or increased substance use to cope with stress or emotions related to COVID-19. 10.7% reported having seriously considered suicide in the preceding 30 days. The same report states that 25% of young adults have considered suicide during COVID-19. The decrease in psychiatric hospital beds makes it all the more important that hospitals are held accountable in how they handle their most vulnerable patients.

Along with our legislative meetings NAMI-NYS has also produced information on other ways our members can communicate the importance of our issues in their local communities.

On January 11th, Governor Cuomo gave his State of the State address. NAMI-NYS was very encouraged to hear that increasing telehealth (including mental health) services to all New Yorkers was a priority for the governor.

NAMI-NYS LEGISLATIVE ACTION WEEKS

JAN 25-29 - MARCH 8-12

The schedule of the regional advocacy weeks will be:

Week 1

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Date: | January 25-29 |
| Region: | Long Island/Queens |
| NAMI Affiliates to Engage: | Queens/Nassau, Huntington, NYC-Metro |

Week 2

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Date: | February 1-5 |
| Region: | New York City |
| NAMI Affiliates to Engage: | NYC-Metro, Staten Island |

Week 3

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Date: | February 8-12 |
| Region: | Lower Hudson Valley |
| NAMI Affiliates to Engage: | Westchester, Putnam and Rockland |

Week 4

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Date: | February 22-26 |
| Region: | Mid and Upper Hudson Valley |
| NAMI Affiliates to Engage: | Mid-Hudson, Sullivan, Columbia, Capital Region, Schenectady, Saratoga, Delaware/Otsego |

Week 5

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Date: | February 29-March 5 |
| Region: | Central NY |
| NAMI Affiliates to Engage: | Syracuse, Finger Lakes, Cayuga, Delaware/Otsego |

Week 6

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Date: | March 8-12 |
| Region: | Western NY |
| NAMI Affiliates to Engage: | Buffalo, Rochester |

“While New York State has been on the cutting edge of promoting telehealth for its residents, the adoption of telehealth by both patients and providers has been slow,” Governor Cuomo said. “COVID-19 has changed not only the way we live, but the way healthcare providers support their patients, especially in regard to mental health. New Yorkers have adapted throughout 2020, but it is time to push telehealth to the next level in New York State and fully integrate it into our existing healthcare system. These proposals will better allocate our healthcare and technological resources for the 21st century.”



In responding to the Governor’s announcement NAMI-NYS Executive Director, Wendy Burch said, “NAMI-NYS applauds Governor Cuomo for his efforts to expand telehealth services to all New Yorkers. Too many New Yorkers struggle to access quality services to support them and advance their recovery. Access to mental health therapies is always crucial, but it is all the more important as New Yorkers navigate through the negative psychological impacts of COVID-19, social-isolation, the economy, racial injustice and the political tension we are currently facing. There is no recovery without addressing mental health and we thank Governor Cuomo for including this initiative as part of New York’s recovery efforts.”

The 2021 session also comes with some changes to legislative leadership on our issues. In January it was announced that the newly elected Senator from Rochester, Samra Brouk, was appointed chair of the Mental Health Committee.

NAMI-NYS looks forward to working alongside and building a relationship with Senator Brouk in order to advance our mission of improving the lives of individuals and families impacted by mental illness. Senator Brouk was a psychology major at Williams College, and she has vast experience working in the non-profit field. Among the other committees Senator Brouk serves on include Health and Alcohol and Substance Abuse.

As we welcome Senator Brouk, we want to once again acknowledge the contributions of her predecessor Senator David Carlucci, who we worked closely with and was a fierce ally on many of our critical issues as well as being instrumental in introducing Nicole’s Law.

On the federal level, NAMI-NYS is working with NAMI to implement a 988 helpline number throughout the country. In too many communities, people experiencing a mental health crisis are often more likely to encounter law enforcement

than mental health care – often with tragic results. Nearly 1 in 4 people shot and killed by police since 2015 had a mental illness; in addition, about 2 million times each year people with serious mental illness are booked into jails.

NAMI has a long history of working to shape our communities’ response to people experiencing a mental health crisis, going back to playing a pivotal role in the founding of Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT). We now have the opportunity to build on that history by advocating for innovative 988 crisis response systems.

Last year, NAMI fought for – and Congress and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) acted to establish – a nationwide three-digit number (988) for mental health crisis and suicide prevention, operating through the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. By July 2022, all telecommunications companies will be required to route 988 calls to the Lifeline, which has a nationwide network of call centers.

To make sure the Lifeline/988 can effectively respond to people in crisis with not only 24/7 crisis call centers, but also mobile crisis teams and crisis stabilization programs, more federal and state action is needed. NAMI-NYS will continue to update you on this important initiative.

We look forward to working with our grassroots advocates in our mission to create a more mentally healthy and just New York State. ■

NAMI-NYS Continues to Play an Active Role as Part of the STARR Coalition

Matthew Shapiro Presented With the 2020 STARR of Excellence Lew Yagodnik Award

Research promotion continues to be a top priority for NAMI-NYS, which is why we are proud to play a leading role in the **Stakeholders on Treatment Advocacy Research and Recovery (STARR) Coalition**. The STARR Coalition is a non-profit, independent organization committed to supporting mental health clinical research by cultivating community engagement, promoting trust, and fostering partnerships and goodwill among stakeholders in mental health advocacy and clinical research.

Along with serving on the STARR Coalition Advocacy Steering Committee, NAMI-NYS has collaborated with the STARR Coalition in several ways in 2020. In January, NAMI-NYS Associate Director, Public Affairs, Matthew Shapiro was featured in a STARR Coalition Podcast.

In July, NAMI-NYS produced an in-depth episode of **Perspectives** on the STARR Coalition and the importance of research. The hour long episode featured STARR Coalition Executive Director, Luke Kramer, NAMI board member Carlos Larrauri, MSN, Dr. Sarah Atkinson, Director of Finger Lakes Clinical Research (located in Rochester) and Adam Simmons, MPH, Director, Clinical Program Management at Alkermes, Inc.

The episode explored the crucial question that if research is such a vital conduit to our better future, then why is it not discussed in a more urgent way by most mental health advocates? In answering that question our panel debunked many common misconceptions about those who conduct research and myths about participating in clinical trials. It also looked at how research is embraced by many medical specialties and has been a central part of other social justice movements. The panel also pondered what the effect would be if the mental health movement fully incorporated the importance of research into our work. Our aim was that the episode would inspire viewers to embrace the hope that research holds and how that hope starts with you.

The episode can be viewed at <https://www.naminy.org/nys/media/>.

The STARR Coalition also played a vital role in the featured session *Partnering on Research* at this year's education conference. The session began with a



discussion between Luke and Matthew where they highlighted programs such as Project Rock STARR where people participating in research can designate a charity (including NAMIs) and STARR 911 which aims to reform how people with a history of suicidality are treated when they don't qualify for a research trial (NAMI-NYS included the ideas of STARR 911 into our Nicole's Law Legislation). The second half of the landmark session featured updates from leading researchers including Dr. Jeffrey Borenstein, CEO of the Brain and Behavioral Research Foundation, Dr. Dwight Dickinson of NIMH, Dr. Don Goff, Director of the Nathan Kline Institute and Dr. Jeffrey Lieberman, Director of the New York State Psychiatric Institute.

On December 10th, the STARR Coalition presented their sixth-annual STARR of Excellence Awards, recognizing outstanding service to mental health clinical research and advocacy.

Congratulations to the 2020 Star of Excellence Awards

Sponsor of the Year: Alkermes

CRO of the Year: Syneos Health

Site of the Year: Neuro-Behavioral Clinical Research

Advocate of the Year: DBSA

Lew Yagodnik Award: Matthew Shapiro

The STARR 2020 Lew Yagodnik Award, recognizing an outstanding individual advocate, was presented to Matthew Shapiro, Associate Director of Public Affairs for NAMI New York State, "in grateful recognition of his tremendous compassion for and unrelenting dedication to serving those living with brain disorders."

On receiving the award Matthew said, "I am honored and humbled by this award. I am very proud to be a part of the STARR Coalition and of the work we have done together this year to promote partnering in research. Our mission is more important than ever as we cannot recover from the events of 2020 without addressing psychiatric issues and research is a critical component of this goal. We need to keep advocating that we can't recover without research."



Our readers may remember that last year NAMI-NYS received the STARR of Excellence Advocacy Award and during the award ceremony Executive Director Wendy Burch presented this year's Advocacy Award to the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA).

NAMI-NYS looks forward to continuing our collaboration with the STARR Coalition and communicating how research is our hope for a more mentally healthy future. ■

NAMI Finger Lakes

In 2020, Governor Cuomo issued Executive Order 203 requiring municipalities in NYS to develop public safety reforms, or face funding challenges for their operations. Evident in this order and the accompanying guidance is the recognition that law enforcement response often has dangerous outcomes for families in crisis and new approaches must be implemented.

NAMI Finger Lakes has been very active in our county on Community Services boards as well as providing educational programming around the development and implementation of local initiatives such as our Wellness and Recovery (Mental Health) Court.

NAMI families have a unique perspective to share with local legislators and law enforcement agencies, as we are often the ones who make the decision to call for help when our loved ones are in crisis, and live with the consequences of making that call. To engage the community in this discussion from our perspective, we focused our Fall 2020 Family Forums on the exploration of our local mental health crisis response. We invited stakeholders such as the 911

Manager, Crisis Negotiation Commander, Mental Health Clinic Director, District Attorney, Wellness Court Justices, and Mental Hygiene Legal Services representative to share how we're accomplishing crisis response currently.

In January, we will direct our focus toward successful alternative approaches to police response with guests from CAHOOTS, a community based public safety system in Eugene, Oregon in operation for over thirty years. They provide compassionate, appropriate responses to crises similar to those our families often face. We look forward to learning from them what changes might be possible in our own community. To view our forum recordings, search YouTube for NAMI Finger Lakes.

Local legislatures will face election season soon. There is no better time to begin engaging your local representatives in discussions about the initiatives that are important to us and our loved ones. Does your community have the necessary level of investment in human services that support the wellness of our loved ones living with

mental health conditions? Does your local government support a mental health court to provide compassionate, appropriate response to the legal challenges our loved ones often face? Does your community invest in training for CIT, Mental Health First Aid, and other opportunities to provide safe and informed response when our families are in crisis? These are just a few questions you can ask to jump start these conversations.

Your local legislatures are the place to ask these questions with not only those who are seated representatives, but also those who intend to run for office in 2021. Beginning this Spring, your local Board of Elections can inform you of who is seeking local office in the coming year so you can engage them as well.

Our representatives cannot know what no one has told them. NAMI is an excellent resource for educating them. NAMI NYS shares tools to help you make an impact in this way. Be sure to visit the NAMI and NAMI NYS websites for current Advocacy information throughout January. You are not alone! ■



FOLLOW US:

@NAMI_NYS

@NAMINEWYORK

@NAMINEWYORKSTATE

#NOTALONE

New York State

14

Winter 2021 ■ NAMI | NYS News

NAMI-NYS SPREADS AWARENESS



NAMIWalks – You're Invited!

Three local NAMI affiliates in New York hold a NAMIWalk event to help raise awareness around mental health and to raise funds in support of their programs and advocacy. We hope you have the opportunity to get involved with one of the walks taking place here in New York!

NAMIWalks NYC Metro

It's time for NAMIWalks Your Way NYC! Register at NAMIWalks.org/NYC.

We're still virtual, and we're still together. Join NAMI-NYC Metro Saturday, May 22 and Walk Your Way NYC! The need to fund our vital programs and services remains as urgent as ever.

Register on your own or form a team. After you register, make a meaningful donation to yourself, and then start reaching out to your network for support.

Because #MentalHealthMatters more than ever before.

NAMIWalks Rochester

1 in 3 adults have reported experiencing symptoms of anxiety or depression since the beginning of the pandemic. That statistic is staggering. Now – more than ever before – mental health awareness is crucial.

This year's NAMIWalks will take place virtually on May 22, 2021. It will be an all-day event to raise awareness and funds for mental health. And it's completely open to interpretation – NAMIWalks YOUR way. So, you can walk. Run. Skip. Hop. Jump rope. Dance. Break dance. Bake. Build something. Play music. Create art. Basically, any activity that fits your pandemic lifestyle works for us!

All folks have to do is register at NAMIWalks.org/rochester as a team or an individual fundraiser, and then post photos and/or videos of whatever they're doing on May 22nd to social media using the hashtag #NotAlone and tagging @NAMIrochester (so NAMI Rochester can share!). It'll be different this year, but everything is different. And different can be good.

NAMIWalks Westchester

The countdown is on for May 22nd, sign up at NAMIWalks.org/Westchester to make sure you get all the updates!

Walkday will be an interactive fun day where you can walk on your own or with your friends and family! Small groups, walking together outside, are a great way to connect socially, physically and emotionally – NAMIWalks Westchester is hosting a watch party for our walkers the morning of the 22nd; including our program and will enable walkers and teams an opportunity to share photos and video to be part of the watch party as well as posted on our social media. All roads, paths and trails lead to NAMIWalks Westchester Your Way: A United Day of Hope!

NAMIWALKS Westchester is holding a kickoff event on March 24th.

Visit namiwestchester.org to learn more. ■

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Each year millions of Americans face the reality of living with a mental illness. During May, NAMI-NYS joins the national movement to raise awareness about mental health. Each year we fight stigma, provide support, educate the public and advocate for policies that support people with mental illness and their families.

NAMI-NYS is excited to announce we have many great programs, events and much more in the works for this May. If you would like to get involved with our 2021 Mental Health Awareness Month planning, please contact info@naminys.org.

NAMI-NYS Ribbon Campaign 2021

As part of Mental Health Awareness Month, NAMI-NYS is preparing for this year's Ribbon Campaign. The Ribbon Campaign is a statewide campaign that allows NAMI-NYS and our local affiliates to partner with businesses, local governments, schools and much more in spreading mental health awareness and letting people know that NAMI is a place to find help and find hope. This year's Ribbon Campaign will go virtual and hopefully viral! ■



NAMI-NYS SPREADS AWARENESS

NAMI-NYS Off The Mask

Off The Mask 2020 was a huge success! Despite this year being very unique and throwing so many challenges our way, we were still able to hold Off The Mask, just in a different and innovative way. Off The Mask 2020 took place on Friday November 6th



virtually through our NAMI-NYS Facebook page and was streamed live. Prior to the live stream of the event, we spent two days pre-recording the fashion show portion, in which 26 model ambassadors

participated. During the pre-recording we had very supportive local clothing vendors, make up artists and hair stylists who styled each model. Each model ambassador was still encouraged to raise \$2,500 which went towards NAMI-NYS and our education, advocacy and support that

we provide to those living with mental illness. Several of our models were very quick to think creatively and share their talents virtually to help raise awareness as well as to help meet their \$2,500 goal. Examples of these creative ideas include, virtual trivia, life coaching, fitness bootcamp and tarot card readings.

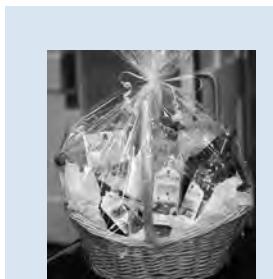
In addition to the fashion show, we still were able to incorporate the art exhibit/auction virtually. Several artists near and far were generous in donating pieces of their art work as well as sharing their personal connections to mental health.

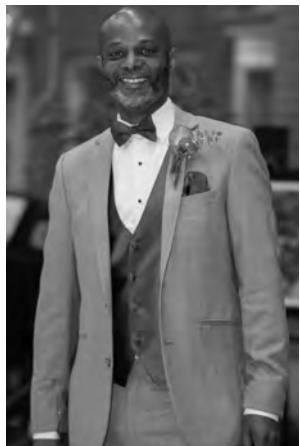
Although Off The Mask was a little different this year, we had the luxury of reaching a larger audience, and raising more awareness with the event being streamed live through Facebook. For the live stream, we had local celebrity Greg Aidala and our very own Matthew Shapiro hosting the evening. The overall virtual event included our pre-recorded fashion show featuring looks from local designers, a virtual art exhibit & auction as well as a virtual



silent auction. On the evening of the event we encouraged our viewers to host their own virtual watch parties and to use the Facebook comment section to interact with our hosts live!

We greatly appreciate and thank all of our supporters and participants of Off The Mask 2020 in helping raise awareness and ending the stigma. If you were unable to attend the Facebook Live, you can still watch the event through our NAMI-NYS Facebook Page. To learn more about the overall event, please feel free to visit offthemask.org ■





Off The Mask 2020 NAMI-NYS Affiliate Watch Party Winner

A huge congratulations to NAMI Syracuse for winning our Off The Mask 2020 watch party contest! Prior to our Off The Mask Facebook Live we encouraged all of our NAMI-NYS affiliates to host their own watch parties virtually with their friends and families. Each person that attended that affiliate's watch party counted as an entry for the contest to win \$500. The lucky winner that was pulled on December 2nd; NAMI Syracuse won \$500 which will go directly to their needs as an affiliate. ■



NAMI-NYS EXPRESSES GRATITUDE

A Message to Our Donors

Mental health support has never been more crucial, and the support, education and advocacy NAMI-NYS affiliates provide has been vital as we navigate the serious issues affecting our community. Your donations are more important than ever. NAMI-NYS truly appreciates the contributions made by our generous donors.

Donations to NAMI-NYS support NAMI program delivery by the local affiliates, including the cost of materials and the training of program leaders. They also support NAMI-NYS's advocacy and outreach efforts both in the community and with elected leaders at the federal, state and local levels. Contributions also make it possible to offer events like the

annual Education Conference and Legislative Advocacy activities. The NAMI-NYS Information and Resource Helpline, media outreach and the production of mental health literature and pamphlets that are distributed statewide all rely on contributions from our supporters. ■

We are Most Grateful to Those Who Made Financial Donations To NAMI-NYS During The 3rd and 4th Quarter 2020

Up to \$99

Marsha Beyda, Elaine Droz, Mark Giordano, Barbara Hartman, Carlyle Katz, Hildi, Kaufmann, Neil Lyon, Gregg Modell, Lillian Randazzo, Glenn Raymus, Jacquelineint Saives, Steve Scaduto, Elizabeth Whiston, Margaret Sutton, Patricia Maher-Brison, Lucia Roberts, Karin Thorne, Valerie Tibbs, Karyn Losocco, Tegan Lee, Britany Kilcher, Michaela Radoo, Johnathan Hornig, Jean M. Jamate, Ann Venuto, Lynda Regan, Marie Considine, Bethany McGee, Adam Barshak, Brenda Beach, Therese Wasilenko, Mary Bartlett, Ravedean Sacco, Susan Perkins, Linda Sanchez, Margaret Grot, Susan Lense, Mary E. Oyer, Tanisha Malcom, Jessica Chiera, Hope Corenzwit, Margaret Callagy, Fern Fleckman, Joann Lotterhos, Brian Park, Jill Ryan, Patrick McGuire, Amy Chew Hairston, Carol A. Allison



\$100 to \$199

Michelle Pennella, Cynthia Seacord, Rita Welz, Lucille Ettere, Nadine Macaluso, Lynette Whaley, Lisbeth Saracene, Judith Teller, Kristin Housler, Patricia Mangini, Janet Reilly, Stephanie Shepard, Eve Mendoza, Paula Tusiani-Eng

\$200-\$299

Lorraine DePrisco, Journey United Church of Christ, Audrey McInerney, Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers, James Zima, Margaret Dolson, Mary Speed Perri, Amara Clark, Garo Gumasyan

\$500 to \$999

Gina Castelli, William F. Harnisch Foundation

\$1,000 to \$1,499

\$1,500 to \$1,999

Dustin Mele Memorial Fund

NAMI-NYS and Harness



NAMI-NYS has collaborated with Harness, a recurring giving platform. We thank everyone who has generously signed up! If you haven't we invite you to participate in this wonderful giving opportunity.

About Harness:

Harness allows participants to shop at all of their favorite places and will round up all purchases to the nearest dollar. At the end of each month, participants' change will then be donated directly to NAMI-NYS. Harness also allows participants to set up a recurring monthly donation or even a one-time donation.

NAMI-NYS would like to remind you that donations will go towards the efforts of providing support, education and advocacy for families and individuals impacted by mental health challenges. ■

NAMI-NYS Receives Donation From GDS Group

On Monday, November 16th, NAMI-NYS Executive Director Wendy Burch accepted a generous donation from GDS Group, a global events, research and technology services company dedicated to helping clients meet the challenges posed by a fast-moving, disruptive business environment.

Throughout 2019, the employees at GDS Group raised funds through various activities to support the NAMI mission. As Wendy pointed out when expressing NAMI-NYS's appreciation for the contribution, the challenges of 2020 have made mental health support and resources more crucial than ever before. NAMI-NYS is so grateful to the GDS Group team for selecting NAMI to support through their philanthropic efforts and for their ongoing support of mental health and mental health awareness. ■



Giving Tuesday 2020

2020 was a difficult year for all of us, and NAMI-NYS wants to take a moment to acknowledge the generosity of those who have donated throughout the year. Giving Tuesday was a great success thanks to all of the contributions we received from our supporters. In fact, we continued to receive donations beyond Giving Tuesday. We are so grateful to you all for being so generous, particularly when we know that we are living through a period of uncertainty where it is difficult to always know what we can truly afford to give. Thank you! ■



NAMI-NYS Therapeutic Knitting

On Monday, January 11th, NAMI-NYS held our first Therapeutic Knitting session. The purpose of this program is to share the many wonderful benefits of knitting. Recent research shows that knitting has a measurable effect on calming anxiety and relieving stress.

The group currently consists of experienced knitters and beginner knitters. If you don't know how to knit, learn with us! This program meets Mondays at 12 pm on zoom.



Stress Management Sessions with Lisa O'Donnell Wolfe

On Wednesday, January 20th, NAMI-NYS began a new program, Stress Management Sessions, with Lisa O'Donnell Wolfe.

You may recognize Lisa from other classes that she has generously put together for the NAMI community, such as her fitness bootcamp classes and Life Coaching Session, and she is back again to share more of her knowledge!



Lisa O'Donnell Wolfe is a Certified Mastery Level Health & Life Coach. She has made it her mission to help women become more self-confident and to understand that self-care should be non-negotiable. With over 23 years of experience in the wellness industry, and as a certified TCM Mastery Coach (Health Coach Institute), Lisa provides the tools and accountability needed to bring focus and happiness back into women's lives.

Lisa has created 3 sessions to share her expertise on how to manage stress and the role nutrition plays in our overall well-being. Session 1 was held on Wednesday, January 20th and focused on the different types of stress and the effects it has on our bodies. Session 2 was held on Wednesday, February 3rd, and focused on how proper nutrition can improve biological stress.

Session 3 will be held on Wednesday, February 24th at 3pm on zoom and will focus on how slowing down and honoring your hunger/fullness can impact your stress levels. ■



January 25th - March 12th
NAMI-NYS Legislative Advocacy Weeks

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

May 22nd ■ NAMIWalks NYC Metro, Rochester,
and Westchester

July is Black, Indigenous and People of Color
Mental Health Awareness Month

July 27th - 28th ■ NAMICON 2021