



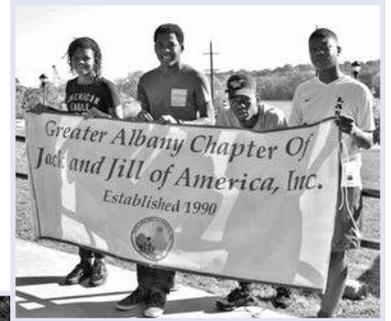
# New York State

# NEWS

Winter 2018

## 2017 NAMIWalks NYS

September 23, 2017 at Jennings Landing, Albany



## 2017 Education Conference

November 10-12, 2017 at the Desmond Hotel & Conference Center



## CONTENTS

- 2** Executive Director Message
- 3** NAMI-NYS Board of Directors
- 4-6** NAMI-NYS News
- 7-9** NAMIWalks
- 10-11** National Convention
- 12** Outreach
- 13** Advocacy
- 14-17** Education Conference
- 18** Donations
- 19** Re-Affiliation
- 20-25** Affiliate News
- 26** Training
- 27** NIMH Update



### Wendy Burch

Executive Director

### Sharon Clairmont

Associate Director –  
Finance and Administration

### Matthew Shapiro

Associate Director – Public Affairs

### Vacant

Community Education  
and Outreach Manager

### Tammie Paradis

Affiliate Support Coordinator

### Christine Rickeman

Information and Resource  
Helpline Coordinator

### Bill Wallace

Public Affairs Assistant

### Jeanne Ryan

Office Assistant

## Executive Director's Message By Wendy Burch



The NAMI affiliates in New York have accomplished so much this year, and we love to be able to highlight their activities throughout the state. We've set aside several pages of the newsletter to feature their achievements and contributions to the community.

The NAMI-NYS Strategic Planning Committee is working with the Board to update the current strategic plan, with a lot of focus on promoting NAMI programs, engaging the community, and identifying ways to improve the lives of those living with mental illness and their families. Stay tuned.

The re-affiliation process is winding down after going on for the last five years. The NAMI national headquarters set an overall deadline of December 31st, 2018, but any affiliates who have not completed the process by the end of 2017 are not eligible for grants and training from NAMI until they have been re-affiliated. NAMI-NYS required affiliates in New York to submit all documentation by the 31st of July of 2017 to provide us time to review the submittals and recommend endorsement by the NAMI-NYS Board in preparation for final approval by the NAMI Board. Although it involved some work to complete the process, the requirements protect our affiliates and put them in compliance with not for profit laws. Affiliates are required to maintain documentation in the NAMI Profile center, including by-laws, meeting minutes, financial documents, and policies and procedures. In this way, affiliates will have access to all the administrative information crucial to the running of an organization, which is not always available, particularly in the case of a change of affiliate leadership. The process also ensures that affiliates, including affiliate members and their leaders, are covered by insurance and that their by-laws meet existing laws. We still have several affiliates yet to complete the entire process, but they are making progress.

NAMI-NYS continues to focus on outreach and awareness, and we had a successful NAMIWalks event in September that saw over 300 participants walk to stomp out stigma along the Hudson River in Albany. This fall we also hosted the annual Education Conference, which again presented several focus tracks and introduced a dinner honoring leaders of mental health awareness. We have a lot planned for 2018, with the Legislative Conference scheduled for March 7th here in Albany and the Ribbon Awareness Campaign during May, which is Mental Health Awareness Month.

If you want to get more involved with NAMI, consider serving on a NAMI-NYS Committee. There is a lot more work out there to do, and we could use people with energy and passion to keep the momentum going at the state level.

Have a happy and healthy 2018 and best wishes for your and your loved ones' futures. ■

## New Office Assistant – Jeanne Ryan



Jeanne comes to NAMI as our part-time office assistant. Jeanne has many years of HR and Finance background which will be put to good use as she does Accounts Receivable for NAMI. She will be assisting Sharon Clairmont in the Finance Office, helping out with the NAMIWalks donations, and other office duties as needed.

Jeanne is the wife of a pastor and does her own worship ministries at the Capital City Rescue Mission as well as many other area churches. She grew up with a family member who was bipolar so is very supportive of the NAMI mission.

We welcome Jeanne to our team. ■

## Social Media



Website: [www.naminy.org](http://www.naminy.org)



[NAMINewYorkState](https://www.facebook.com/NAMINewYorkState)



[@NAMINewYork](https://twitter.com/NAMINewYork)

## President's Message By Evelyne Tropper, PhD



I am honored to be the new president of NAMI-NYS. In our family's 20 years journey with neurobiological disorders (NBD) we have experienced the horrors of these diseases as well as the horrors of the dysfunctional mental health system over two countries and three states.

When long term hospital beds get closed down, Medicaid will only pay for 10 days in acute care units. There are not enough community services and housing. What do we do? We advocate, advocate and advocate. We advocate for better treatments, better housing, equity, a saner criminal justice system for our loved ones, and for more research. We also work towards educating the educators about the necessity of incorporating NBD into the school health curriculum so that early diagnosis and treatment can arrest further deterioration. We work towards educating the children to recognize early signs in themselves and their schoolmates so that treatment can start early and stigma can be erased in their generation. Hopefully, they will then educate their parents and erase stigma even earlier. We educate relatives who are hopeless, helpless and in the dark when NBD strikes. We certainly were. NAMI family support groups, Family-to-Family (F2F) classes, and many others brought us out of the darkness we were in and made us feel we were not alone in a desert.

Our personal journey continued by advocating. I co-founded a NAMI affiliate, became a F2F class instructor and a support group facilitator. I made presentations to local police, local courts, colleges, schools and community centers. I served on panels which discussed films about NBD and spoke to local legislators. On legislative days, we advocated in Albany and spoke to as many legislators as time permitted.

You can all contribute to this fight. As with many other illnesses, when enough people fight for justice, equality and research, things start changing. We saw it with cancer, with AIDS, with autism, and with developmental disabilities. When people become aware of the problems we encounter, their empathy is awakened. People are now beginning to be aware of the injustice when our loved ones are discriminated against, when they end up in jails, prisons or on the streets, homeless. Our repeating the demands for justice moved the cause forward. Continuous drops of water erode rocks. We are thousands strong and together we can move mountains and people's emotional responses to the plight of our loved ones.

I hope that all of you will join us in this fight to control the devastating consequences of these illnesses and get fulfillment in knowing that down the road we might spare others the pain we have encountered in this journey. May you all have a peaceful and happy holiday season and may you all have hope that there is a solution to these problems when we all work together towards that goal. ■

## New Board Members Elected and Appointed

In November, the NAMI-NYS membership voted to re-elect Rina Riba and Sue Gagne for a second term to the NAMI-NYS Board of Directors and welcomed Erin T. Clancy to his first term on the Board. In December, the Board appointed NAMI Syracuse member Ann Canastra, NAMI Rochester member Mary Jo Muscolino, and NAMI Delaware member Colleen Casey Johnson to fill the remaining Board vacancies.

Welcome to our new Board members and welcome back to those returning to the Board! ■

## 2017-2018 Board of Directors

### NAMI-NYS News is published by:

National Alliance on  
Mental Illness-New York State  
99 Pine Street, Suite 105  
Albany, New York 12207

Phone: 518-462-2000

Fax: 518-462-3811

Web site: [www.naminys.org](http://www.naminys.org)

### Officers

PRESIDENT

Evelyne Tropper, PhD

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

Judith Watt, MSRN

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

Dhanu Sannesy

SECRETARY

Ariel Coffman, LMSW

TREASURER

Susan Gagne

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Irene Turski

Colleen Casey Johnson

(Consumer Seat)

### Directors

Ann Canastra

Erin T. Clancy

Robert Laitman, MD

Jayette Lansbury

Mary Jo Muscolino

Stamatia Pappas

Rina Riba

Lynda Regan

Ellen Ritz, RN



## INTERNS, VOLUNTEERS AND COLLEGE STUDENTS



Mary Beth Honsinger

**Mary Beth Honsinger** continues to be a wonderful asset to the NAMI-NYS staff. She was responsible for obtaining vendors for the NAMIWalks and procuring all the donated food. She was a tremendous help with registration at the Education Conference

and helped buy and wrap presents for the Adopt-a-family. We look forward to her continued commitment to NAMI-NYS and the NAMI mission. She is a true NAMI angel.

**Kara Michelson**, LMSW, is volunteering her time at NAMI-NYS. She comes to us with many years of experience as a social worker. Kara will be taking Helpline calls when Christine is not in the office. We are so blessed to have someone with her experience join our team.



Kara Michelson



Abbie Myrie

**Abbie Myrie** spent the Fall semester with us. Abbie is a senior at SUNY Albany majoring in psychology. Her main project was researching points of contact for area schools in preparation for implementation of the Mental Health in schools

legislation. She also was a tremendous help getting ready for the Education Conference.

We were grateful to have four SUNY Albany students with us from the Community and Public Service Program. Thanks go out to Atalya Copeland, Xenia Joseph, Walki Perez, and Guadalupe Bravo. **Atalya Copeland** is a sophomore at the University at Albany currently studying Sociology. She has learned a lot by assisting the staff and had a great time helping prepare and volunteer at the 2017 NAMIWalks and Education Conference.

**Guadalupe Bravo** is a sophomore at the University at Albany majoring in Public Health with a minor in Economics. She worked with Nicole with advertisement for the NAMIWalks. She also assisted in various tasks such as picking out news articles for the monthly e-newsletter which gives updates on the progress in the mental health community.

**Xenia Joseph**, a sophomore majoring in Human Biology, and Walki Perez, also a sophomore at SUNY Albany, were a great help with the election mailing and Education Conference.

**Rainell Pitt** will be interning with us in the Spring Semester. He is a Psychology student at SUNY Albany. He spent a little time with us in December and will be working mostly with Christine on the Helpline when he returns from the Christmas break. ■



Rainell Pitt

### Nicole Bulanchuk

Our NAMIWalks Manager, Nicole Bulanchuk, has been offered a position as an Intern at the New York State Assembly and so will be leaving the NAMI-NYS staff. The NYS Assembly Internship program is a comprehensive and highly selective academic program where students, like Nicole, are given the opportunity to be involved in state government and gain firsthand knowledge of the legislative process. Nicole aspires to have a future in government and policy development, and the internship is the next chapter of her career aspirations. Nicole stepped into the breach this past summer to take over the walk and in the limited time available put together an outstanding awareness event. NAMI-NYS is grateful for all her efforts and we send our best wishes to her upon this exciting new opportunity. ■



### Lauren Prosper

This fall, NAMI-NYS contracted with Lauren Prosper to work on grants to support programming and advocacy. Her most recent contribution was putting together the graphics for the Education Conference journal. She also did the videotaping of several speakers at the conference.

She is currently working on the annual report, which will be used as information for the NAMI-NYS membership as well as a promotional document for potential funders.

Lauren is involved with several community organizations and is a sophomore at SUNY Albany with a major in Sociology and minor in Anthropology.

We look forward to working with Lauren in the future on several projects. ■



NAMI Rensselaer and NAMI-NYS staff members serving their community through a holiday gift buying for Adopt-a-Family for St. Paul's Center in Rensselaer. ■



Mary Beth Honsinger and Christine Rickeman sorting gifts

## NAMI Mid-Hudson Holds Annual Gala



On September 13th, NAMI Mid-Hudson hosted their 3rd Annual Gala. The event featured keynote speaker Kevin Hines, author of *Cracked Not Broken*. Kevin told his inspiring story of being one of only 36 people to make a suicide attempt by jumping off the Golden Gate Bridge and surviving. More significant than the attempt itself is how he has embraced recovery and uses his story to help others.

The evening also saw award presentations to Margaret Hirst, LCSW-R, Deputy Commissioner DBDBCH Director of Community Health, Jeremy Wilber, Woodstock Town Supervisor and volunteers of the year, Mary Evans, Suzanne Thing, & Marjorie Tortorella. NAMI-NYS Board member Rob Laitman, MD, and Associate Director of Public Affairs Matthew Shapiro attended the event. ■

## Outstanding Student Award

Nicole Bulanchuk, NAMIWalks Manager, won the Outstanding Student Award at the 2017 BACCHUS Initiatives of NASPA General Assembly in Denver, Colorado. Nicole was recognized for her tremendous achievements and dedication at University at Albany, NY and within her organization that she proudly serves as President, Middle Earth Peer-Assistance Program. Nicole has worked tirelessly to improve health and wellness on her campus and in her community through her work with Middle Earth, NAMI-NYS and other organizations. ■



## NAMI New York City Metro Holds Seeds of Hope Gala

On October 11th, NAMI NYC-Metro held their annual Seeds of Hope gala. The event honored New York City First Lady Chirlane McCray and her NYC Thrive initiative and hip-hop pioneer and Rock and Roll Hall of Famer Darryl "DMC"

McDaniels (of Run DMC) who was recognized for increasing mental health awareness in multicultural communities. The inspiring evening included McDaniels detailing the tremendous impact mental health issues

have in multicultural and underserved communities and explained why addressing the unmet need is so important to him. First Lady McCray also discussed how NYC Thrive is working towards bringing mental health programs to the city's underserved populations. NAMI NYC Metro also screened several short films detailing their work. The evening ended on a rousing note when McDaniels performed his hits *Walk This Way* and *Tricky*. ■



NAMI-NYS's Matthew Shapiro, NAMI-NYC Executive Director Matt Kudish, New York City First Lady Chirlane McCray, Nathan Romano, NAMI-NYC President, Barbara Ricci, NAMI board member and Darryl "DMC" McDaniels

## NAMI Putnam's Ed Murphy Receives Voluntary Service Award

NAMI Putnam's Ed Murphy received the Ruth Dain Voluntary Service Award from the Putnam Community Service Network. Ed was one of seven of Putnam's residents who were honored last week when the Putnam Community Service Network hosted its 32nd annual Awards Breakfast. Fifteen individuals and organizations were nominated for awards and the winners were selected following a rigorous screening process. NAMI-NYS congratulates Ed on his much deserved award and thanks him for all his contributions to his community. ■



Putnam's first Deputy County Executive, Regina Morini, presents the Ruth Dain Voluntary Service Award to Edward Murphy

## NAMI-NYS Continues to Advance CIT

NAMI-NYS continues to dedicate itself to advancing Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT), both in the Capital Region and throughout New York State. CIT is a model for community policing that brings together law enforcement, mental health providers, hospital emergency departments and individuals with mental illness and their families to improve responses to people in crisis. CIT programs enhance communication, identify mental health resources for assisting people in crisis and ensure that officers get the training and support that they need.

NAMI-NYS participates in the CIT trainings held by Albany County twice a year to help provide the family/consumer perspective. The most recent training took place in October. Almost 40 officers attended the training from more than five different departments.

The trainings are co-led by Lt. Willie Flack of the Albany Police Department. Lt. Flack has also had NAMI-NYS participate in the annual training conducted in the Albany Police Academy. Lt. Flack received our 2017 Criminal Justice Award. Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan attended this year's Education Conference present the award to Lt. Flack. Mayor Sheehan stated, "As a city that is committed to 21st century policing strategies, it is important that we continue to improve the interactions between our police officers and individuals with mental health and substance abuse illnesses."

The work of Lt. Flack helps us to ensure we are achieving that goal, and we are extremely proud of him for receiving this much deserved recognition." ■



Lt. Willie Flack receives the NAMI-NYS Criminal Justice Award from NAMI-NYS Criminal Justice Chair, Jayette Lansbury and Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan.



Trainees at the Albany County CIT Training



Katie Flanagan, LCSW of the Albany County Department of Mental Health, Lt. Willie Flack of the Albany Police Department and Matthew Shapiro at the Albany County CIT Training

## Mental Health Now

*Mental Health Now* continues to explore the leading issues impacting mental health and the delivery of psychiatric services. The show features both people living with a mental illness along with those on the front lines working to increase access to care, educate the community and improve the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness.



Recent installments of the half-hour episodes produced in conjunction with the Town of Colonie have included: An in-depth look at housing issues, featuring Toni Lasicki, Executive Director of the Association for Community Living, and Tiffany Monti, who detailed how housing has helped advance her



recovery from bi-polar disorder. Dr. Perry Hoffman, President of the National Education Alliance for Borderline Personality Disorder, joined us for an episode examining both the disorder and strategies for suicide prevention. The final episode of 2017 focused on CIT and features Lt. Willie Flack and Don Kamin, PhD, Director of the Institute for Police, Mental Health & Community Collaboration.

All episodes of the show can be found at <http://www.naminys.org/nys/media/> ■



**MENTAL HEALTH NOW**  
PRESENTED BY  **NAMI** | **NYS**  
National Alliance on Mental Illness



**“Help Us As We Erase Stigma  
One Step At A Time!”**

### NAMIWalks Rochester

Date: Saturday, May 5th, 2018

Location: Village Gate

Contact: Kristina

585-423-1593

[kristina.mossgraber@namirochester.org](mailto:kristina.mossgraber@namirochester.org)

### NAMIWalks Long Island/Queens

Date: Saturday, May 5th, 2018

Location: Jones Beach

Contact: Natasha

516-325-0428

[namiwalksliqn@gmail.com](mailto:namiwalksliqn@gmail.com)

### NAMIWalks NYC Metro

Date: Saturday, May 12th, 2018

Location: South Street Seaport

Promenade

Contact: Sarah

212-684-3365

[ssheahan@naminyc.org](mailto:ssheahan@naminyc.org)

### NAMIWalks Westchester

Date: Saturday, May 19th, 2018

Location: Rye Town Park

Contact: Marie

914-596-5458

[namiwalks@namiwestchester.org](mailto:namiwalks@namiwestchester.org)



## JOIN US FOR OUR SPRING NAMIWALKS EVENTS

NAMI Affiliates across New York State will also be organizing walks in 2018 to erase the stigma that surrounds mental illness. We encourage you to join these NAMI Affiliates in the spring and walk for a great cause. All proceeds go towards funding NAMI programs that help to improve the lives of all who are impacted by mental illness. Please contact one of the affiliates and join the NAMIWalks near you! ■



## #JOINTHEMOVEMENT

NAMI-NYS wants to thank everyone who came out and supported our second annual NAMIWalks in Albany, New York, this past September.

There were almost 400 registered participants and 51 teams altogether on Walk Day!



This year, the NAMIWalks NYS event hosted many exciting activities for all ages! There was a live band, free food, face-painting, therapy dogs, lemonade, balloons, raffles, giveaways, and an unlimited photo booth! We had inspirational recovery stories featuring Jase Paden and his Quirkz. There were also speeches from multiple public officials, including County Executive Daniel McCoy, Congressman Paul Tonko, and Assemblyman John McDonald III.

**Thank you to all walkers, volunteers, vendors, fundraisers, sponsors and NAMI-NYS supporters!**



It was a beautiful Saturday morning to take a stand against the stigma that is associated with mental illness.

### NAMIWalks NYS 2017 raised 90% of our goal this year.

All proceeds went directly towards improving the lives of individuals and families impacted by mental illness.

By joining the movement and fundraising with NAMIWalks NYS, you are supporting all the programs we provide to New York State.



**SAVE THE DATE**  
for the  
**3rd NAMIWalks NYS in 2018**  
Help us reach 100% of our goal!!  
**September 29th, 2018**  
Jennings Landing in Albany, NY





# NATIONAL CONVENTION

## NAMI-NYS Plays Active Role in 2017 National Convention

NAMI held their 2017 National Convention: *Educate, Empower, Engage* from June 28-July 1st in Washington D.C. With the convention being held in the nation's capital, NAMI-NYS and our members had the opportunity to flex our advocacy muscle, which we did in an impactful way. On Wednesday, June 28th, NAMI-NYS was invited by Congressman Paul Tonko to participate in a rally against the Senate's Health Care Bill. At the rally, Associate Director Public Affairs Matthew Shapiro spoke with Senator Chuck Schumer and gave him a NAMI advocacy packet. Following the rally, NAMI held their Reception for Legislative Champions at the Hart Senate Building which gave NAMI-NYS board and staff the chance to interact with several leaders from the House and Senate including Rep. Joe Kennedy, III, (D-MA-4), who has distinguished himself as a national leader for true mental health care.

On NAMI's Hill Day the following day, NAMI-NYS projected our advocacy voice loud and clear. More than thirty members of NAMI-NYS met with Senator Schumer's staff to tell our



stories and thank him for fighting against the Senate's Health Care bill. So many advocates showed up that the meeting had to be held in the hallway. To his credit,

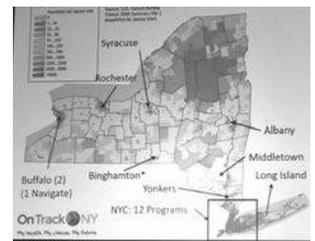
Senator Schumer's staff member, Matthew Fuentes, took the time to listen to all who wished to explain how mental illness has impacted them and their family.



We will also met with the offices of Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, Rep. Eliot Engel (D-NY-16), Rep. Brian Higgins (D-NY-26), Rep.

Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY-8), Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY-17), Carolyn Maloney (D-NY-12), Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney (D-NY-18) and Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-NY-25).

The convention highlighted how New York State is leading the way in psychiatric research. New NIMH Director, Dr. Joshua Gordon (formally of New York State Psychiatric Institute and Columbia University) spoke at the Congressional Reception and at the Convention and explained how New York State





Psychiatric Institute is a model of public psychiatric care. The convention featured a presentation on NIMH’s Recovery After Initial Schizophrenic Episode Study (RAISE) led by New York researchers Dr. Lisa Dixon, Director of New York State Psychiatric Institute’s Center for Practice Innovations, which implements the OnTrackNY program, and Dr. John Kane of Zucker Hillside Hospital.

The convention also featured a session on NAMI NYC Metro’s Young Professional Advisory Board (YPAB). The session was led by NAMI NYC Metro and NAMI board member Barbara Ricci. As part of the session Barbara and YPAB selected six NAMI organizations to receive a \$1,000 contribution to help create YPAB and young adult initiatives. The awards were based on tweets made during the session. NAMI-NYS was thrilled to be selected as one of the

recipients. We thank Barbara for the generous contribution and look forward to engaging many new young professionals and young adults in the NAMI-NYS family.

Members of the NAMI-NYS board and staff had the opportunity to chat with NAMI’s CEO Mary Giliberti. During her convention speech, Mary discussed how she enjoys taking helpline calls. Our own Helpline Coordinator Christine Rickeman spoke with Mary about her experience on the NAMI-NYS Helpline. Mary also told us how much she enjoys reading the NAMI-NYS E-News. She praised our weekly publication for the wide range of information it presents and the outstanding job it does in disseminating the NAMI mission.

One sad part of the convention was saying goodbye to NAMI’s longtime Director, Policy & State Outreach Advocacy & Public Policy Sita Diehl, who retired at the end of July. Many of our readers will remember Sita’s presentation from our 2011 Advocacy Day. Sita has been a constant source of information and support and we are all better advocates because of her dedication. We wish her all the best and look forward to working with Hannah Wesolowski who will be assuming that role in NAMI’s advocacy team. ■



## NAMI-NYS Holds Second Bowling Fundraiser

On Friday July 21st, NAMI-NYS held a bowling fundraiser in support of the upcoming NAMIWalks event on September 23rd. Attendees had a great time and prizes were awarded to the high scorers. All proceeds from the walk go towards supporting NAMI-NYS education, support and advocacy efforts all over the state of New York. ■



Volunteer and NAMI Rensselaer member Mary Beth Honsinger, NAMI Orange president and NAMI-NYS Board member Dhanu Sannesy and Information and Resource Helpline Coordinator Christine Rickeman at NAMI-NYS Bowling fundraiser.

## NAMI-NYS Participates in Nopiates Overdose Awareness Day Event

NAMI -New York State Information and Helpline Coordinator Christine Rickeman and NAMI Rensselaer's Mary Beth Honsinger attended the Nopiates Overdose Awareness Day on August 31st in West Sand Lake. Assemblyman John McDonald was in attendance to support and speak at the event. ■



## NAMI-NYS Participates in Smoking Cessation Event



On July 11th, Information and Resource Helpline Coordinator Christine Rickeman and office volunteer Mary Beth Honsinger staffed an information booth at the Albany County Department of Mental Health Smoking

Cessation BBQ. The BBQ was held to celebrate the cessation efforts of the department's patients and to promote and encourage future cessation for overall healthy living. ■



NAMI-NYS supports the Suicide Prevention Walk in Saratoga

## June 11th – NAMI-NYS Participates in Albany Pride

NAMI-NYS once again participated in Albany Pride Day in Washington Park. NAMI-NYS is proud to support the LGBTQI community. Outreach Coordinator Bill Wallace, Helpline Coordinator Christine Rickeman and office volunteer Mary Beth Honsinger staffed a table with NAMI-NYS information and mental



health resources. Participating in the event also provided Bill and Christine an opportunity to network with other community leaders, and we look forward to developing these relationships and new community partnerships. ■

## Ribbon Campaign

It's not too early to start thinking about hanging ribbons for Mental Health Awareness Month in May. The Ribbon Awareness Campaign, now entering its third year statewide, is an outstanding opportunity to build partnerships in the community while working to end the stigma surrounding mental illness. The NAMI-NYS office was so gratified by the response we received from last year's campaign. Community members reached out to the NAMI-NYS Information and Resource Helpline to locate assistance for themselves or a loved one, and we also received several calls from individuals looking to volunteer with NAMI as a result of seeing the ribbons hanging in their communities.

The Ribbon Awareness Campaign is a simple way to create outreach opportunities. NAMI-NYS has resources on its website, including brochures and sample letters describing the campaign, which involves reaching out to potential community partners to ask them to hang an awareness ribbon during the month of May. NAMI affiliates have contacted schools, businesses, municipalities and other organizations to display the ribbons, which are designed to provide contact information to NAMI-NYS or the local NAMI affiliate. Affiliates and individuals can contact the NAMI-NYS office to acquire the ribbon. We charge a small fee to cover the cost of the rolls of ribbon.

We urge you to use this simple way to interact with community members, educating them about NAMI and connecting them with resources. The ribbons themselves facilitate the opening of dialogue about mental illness, bringing it into the open and helping to eradicate the stigma. ■

## NAMI-NYS Exhibits at Walk for Rita Suicide Prevention Event



Along with our walk the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention also had a walk this past weekend. NAMI-NYS Outreach Coordinator Bill Wallace was present as NAMI-NYS had exhibit space at the Walk for Rita event in Saratoga Springs. Bill was joined by NAMI-NYS volunteer Dawn Balak. ■

## Legislative Advocacy Update

2017 has been one of the most active years for NAMI-NYS's legislative advocacy. Since the publication of our 2017 Summer Newsletter which summarized the New York State legislative session, NAMI-NYS has remained busy projecting our advocacy voice on both the state and federal level.

This past summer was dominated by the debate around the efforts to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA). NAMI-NYS opposed the proposals by both the House and the Senate and was on the front lines of letting our opinions be known. In this issue in the summary of the NAMI National Convention, you can read about the impact NAMI-NYS members made during NAMI Hill Day. NAMI-NYS's Associate Director of Public Affairs Matthew Shapiro returned to Washington D.C. two weeks later, immediately ahead of the Senate's vote on their health care, to participate in the *We Work for Health* summit. The highlight of his visit was filming an advocacy video with Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY-20), which explained how the Senate's proposal could negatively impact people living with a mental illness and their families. The video has been viewed thousands of times on social media and Rep Tonko's website.

During the summer, NAMI-NYS also attended a town-hall meeting with Senator Kirsten Gillibrand at Hudson Valley Community College. After the event, we spoke with the Senator and her staff and gave them one of the NAMI federal

advocacy packets. NAMI-NYS also responded in large numbers whenever NAMI sent out an advocacy alert. While it is gratifying to know that



our advocacy voice contributed to the defeat of the proposed health care legislation, we cannot relent as health care could still be negatively impacted by upcoming legislative actions.

Here in New York we have already been active ahead of the 2018 legislative session. NAMI-NYS is proud to be a part of the Bring it Home campaign. Bring it Home is a coalition of community-based supportive housing providers, mental health advocates, faith leaders, and consumers and their families, urging New York State to adequately fund community-based housing programs for individuals with psychiatric disabilities. Housing has long been a top

advocacy priority for NAMI-NYS and we are playing an important part in this effort. NAMI-NYS Government Affairs Chair Irene Turski spoke at the press conference to launch the campaign in October and in December, Irene provided testimony to the Assembly Mental Health Committee's hearing on housing. A recent



episode of the NAMI-NYS produced television show *Mental Health Now* focused on the housing issue.

All forecasts indicate that

2018 will be a very challenging budget cycle for New York State. We encourage all our readers to join us in projecting our advocacy voice at our 2018 Legislative Advocacy Day, taking place Wednesday, March 7th in Meeting Room 5 of the Empire State Plaza Concourse in Albany. Along with housing we will be focusing on continued reinvestment in community services, improving the criminal justice-mental illness interface, continued investments in research and programs to enhance veteran's mental health. ■

### What's NOT on our holiday list?

- Higher health insurance costs
- Less affordable housing
- No more tax deductions for mental health expenses



Tell Congress that #TaxReform shouldn't hurt people with mental illness.



# New York State

## NAMI 2018 Legislative Advocacy Day

### TAKE ACTION! Make Your Voice Heard!

Create a More Mentally Healthy New York State

Wednesday, March 7th ■ 9am - 3pm  
Meeting Room 5, Empire State Plaza Concourse



## The 2017 NAMI-NYS Education Conference A Tremendous Success

The 2017 NAMI-NYS Education Conference—*Intervention, Engagement, Implementation: Three Pronged Approach to Sustainable Mental Health Recovery*—took place on



### Three Pronged Approach to Sustainable Mental Health Recovery

November 10-12 at the Desmond Hotel in Albany. More than 450 people attended the inspiring and educational event to learn about the latest in research, treatment, advocacy and suicide prevention. Throughout the weekend the conference celebrated recovery in all its various forms while also presenting realistic depictions of how the systems that deliver mental health services need to be improved. Presenters included national leaders in research and treatment from psychiatric disorders as well as people living with serious and persistent mental illnesses, detailing their recovery and how they are using their experiences to help others.

For many, the highlight of the conference was the inaugural **NAMI-NYS Honors Leaders in Mental Health Awareness** celebrations on Friday night. The celebrations began on an emotional

note as honoree musician **Matt Butler** presented his award to his mother who was in the audience. Matt discussed how his mother was integral in his recovery and how he hopes he has made her proud. His acknowledgement was indicative of the crucial role families plays in recovery. Matt then went on to play several songs from his album *Reckless Son* as well as a couple of new ones. He discussed his experience playing psychiatric and rehab facilities as well as correction institutions and closed his performance with a rousing version of *Johnny Cash's Folsom Prison Blues*.

The evening's second honoree **Keith O'Neil** told his story, which is detailed in his new book, *Under My Helmet*. Keith explained the determination that led him from being an undrafted NFL free agent to a Captain on a Super Bowl championship team and how that determination was needed in his struggle with bipolar disorder. He chronicled how he first noticed symptoms as a child, including the inability to sleep and his later difficulties in finding appropriate medications to manage his disease. He also explained how taking the NAMI Family-to-Family class helped his wife support him and his recovery.



The evening's final honoree, **Ron Powers**, the Pulitzer Prize winning journalist and author of *No One Cares About Crazy People*, delivered a true call to

arms presentation. While he praised Matt and Keith's recovery, he made sure the audience knew that not everyone can establish the advanced recovery of his fellow honorees. He gave a true and honest account of how too many people living with a serious mental illness are in jails or prisons, living in the streets or pass away at a far too early an age. His words rang true from a perspective that only a family member of a loved one who failed to receive the proper services can truly understand. It served as a reminder that while we have a lot to celebrate we still have more work to do to ensure that all people receive the proper services. He also thanked NAMI-NYS members for all they do to support other families and for their advocacy voice.



The emotional evening concluded with **Matt Butler** performing his inspiring song *Just One*. The song captured the theme of the night as while NAMI-NYS

honored three individuals who are bringing attention to mental health, we also honored our NAMI-NYS members as they are leaders of awareness in their communities.

The conference began with special presentation by **Dr. Anand Pandya**, the co-founder of Disaster Psychiatry Outreach and former President of NAMI. Dr. Pandya detailed proper culturally component disaster response and the need to eliminate stigma in order to provide the best





VA to address veteran's mental health needs.

The Friday afternoon plenary session concluded with the **Zero Suicide** panel. Suicide is always a challenging discussion to have and NAMI-NYS was grateful

psychiatric services following a crisis and how that contributes to reducing suicide.

Following Dr. Pandya's remarks NAMI-NYS celebrated military families with a presentation of colors and beautiful rendition of the Star Spangled Banner sung by NAMI-NYS's Jeanne Ryan. Then Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan joined NAMI-NYS in presenting the **2017 Criminal Justice award** to **Lt. Willie Flack** of the Albany Police Department. Lt. Flack has been a leader in spreading Crisis Intervention Teams throughout the Capital Region. The **2017 Max Gabriel Award** was presented to **Sean Tuckey** to acknowledge the work he does at the Stratton

for both the information and sensitivity offered by moderator, **Garra Lloyd Lester**, Associate Director of The Suicide Prevention Center of New York and panelists Rosa Cifre, LCSW, Chief Program Officer at Communitlife, Inc., **Brett Scudder**, Executive Director of Scudder Intervention Services Foundation, Abuse and Suicide First Aid Response and Wellness Centers, and **CH LTC Scott Ehler** of the US Army. Acknowledging the difficulty of talking about suicide, the conference also featured a healing session led by Mr. Scudder and Sigfrido Benitez, the co-chair of the NAMI-NYS Zero Suicide Committee.



Saturday began with a session on self-care and wellness strategies led by **Paul Margolies, PhD**, Associate Director of New York State Psychiatric Institute's Center for Practice Innovations. Dr. Margolies detailed important strategies that

are beneficial for both individuals living with a mental illness and families. The session on novel clinical approaches featured **Alan Fruzzetti, PhD**, Program Director of the 3East Boys Intensive Program and the director of Family Services for 3East Continuum at Harvard Medical School's McLean Hospital. Dr. Fruzzetti co-created the National Education Alliance for Borderline Personality Disorder's Family Connections program and discussed the value of including families in the recovery process. He also explained how dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) and de-escalation strategies can be used not just for borderline personality disorder, but for many psychiatric disorders.



As is a proud tradition at the conference, Saturday morning also featured an update on the work conducted by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). **Kathleen R Merikangas, PhD**, Chief of NIMH's Genetic Epidemiology Research Branch, presented on her landmark community-based family study of affective spectrum disorders and their overlap with other mental disorders and medical disorders. Dr. Merikangas also graciously spend a good deal of time at the NIMH table talking to participants.



# EDUCATION CONFERENCE

NAMI-NYS serves at the NIMH Outreach Partner and we are fortunate to have NIMH play such a featured in the conference each year, you can learn more about our role as a NIMH Outreach partner on page 27.

The morning session concluded with the presentation of the **NAMI-NYS Excellence in Research Award**, presented to **Kristen Brennand, PhD**, Director of Brennand Laboratory at the Ichahn Medical Institution. Dr. Brennand presented on her work developing in vitro models for schizophrenia in order to identify novel insights into the molecular and cellular phenotypes of mental illness.

The lunch session featured the panel discussion **Recovery is Possible** which was moderated by **John Allen**, the New York State Office of Mental Health's Special Advisor to the Commissioner. John detailed how prognoses for recovery have changed since he was diagnosed with schizophrenia as a young man. He also explained how at any given time he can have up to twelve voices talking to him. All panelists have overcome severe and persistent mental illness and provided their insights, stories, struggles, hopes and recovery strategies.

Past NAMI President and current Director for the Office of Consumer Affairs and Center for Mental Health Services at SAMHSA, **Keris Jan Myrick**, detailed her successes but also the issues she continues to face while living with schizophrenia. These included not being taken seriously by doctors about a physical issue because they saw a psychiatric diagnosis and how when she was hospitalized she did not receive enough support from friends and family.

**Hakeem Rahim**, one of NAMI-NYS's leading faces of recovery told his story which has taken him from developing severe delusions caused by



bi-polar disorder while at Harvard University to traveling the globe informing students about mental health, testifying before the U.S. Senate and being one of the featured faces of recovery in the New York City Thrive campaign.

NAMI Board member **Amanda Lipp** chronicled her experience of a psychiatric hospitalization during her freshman year of college and how creativity, determination and support of friends and family have helped her recovery. Amanda is a filmmaker who is in the process of producing films for the NYS Office of Mental Health's OnTrackNY program. She debuted the film "**Sebastian**," which tells the story of a student at Syracuse University who has schizophrenia.

After an afternoon of workshop sessions, Saturday evening featured a special

screening of **Beyond Silence**. The documentary follows the efforts of **Jeff Fink, Lauren Burke** and **Lloyd Hale** to live well and break through the silence often associated with mental illness. The film, provides a glimpse into their lives and their diagnoses—which include bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, depression and anxiety—ultimately weaving together a cohesive





narrative about how speaking up is key to living well with a mental health condition. Following the screening Jeff, Lauren and Lloyd participated in a panel discussion. The audience enjoyed the opportunity to interact with these remarkable individuals and topics in the discussion included the importance of forgiveness, the role of exercise and wellness, the importance of



making the criminal justice system more understanding of psychiatric issues and the need to be able to ask family and friends for support.

Sunday began with a presentation on Able Accounts, Medicaid managed care, the NYS Justice Center and Paid Family Leave. That was followed by a Town Hall session with **Lloyd Sederer, MD**, Chief Medical Officer of the NYS Office of Mental Health. As part of his talk, Dr. Sederer showed new film vignettes based on his book *Improving Mental Health: Four Secrets Hidden in Plain Sight*. After a lively discussion, Dr. Sederer graciously met with many attendees in the hotel's courtyard to answer more questions and address concerns.

The conference concluded with an **Ask the Doctor** with **Lew Opler, MD**. This marked the 30th year Dr. Opler has led such a session. NAMI-NYS was the first to hold such a session at a NAMI conference and we are extremely grateful to be able to continue this relationship with Dr. Opler.

NAMI-NYS wants to express our deepest gratitude to all the presenters, exhibitors, sponsors, volunteers and of course our

wonderful attendees who made the weekend such a memorable experience. We also want to acknowledge the hard work of our 2017 conference committee, chaired by Ceceile McIntosh Green and comprised of Dhanu Sannesy, Rina Riba and Stamatia Pappas. We look forward to seeing all of you at our 2018 Education Conference taking place October 26-28th at the Marriot on Wolf Road in Albany. ■



# DONATIONS

## We are Most Grateful to Those Who Made Financial Donations To NAMI-NYS during The 3rd and 4th Quarter 2017

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>\$4,000</b>      | Team Daniel  |
| <b>\$1500</b>       | Joel Bernstein   |
| <b>\$1,000</b>      | Lynne Mahoney  |
| <b>\$500-\$1000</b> | Martin Fareri, Hard Core, Inc., Yvonne Obuaya, Michelle Teramo   |
| <b>\$200-\$300</b>  | Joel Bernstein, Barry Brover, NYS HOSA, Abraham and Cynthia Ofer, Susan Ungerer, Paul Zawilinski   |
| <b>\$100-\$200</b>  | Melissa Bolz, Elizabeth Collier, Patricia Howell, HudsonWebWorks LLC Stewart Hughes, Jacqueline Kayata, Gertrud Lieberman, Timothy McCarthy, Gregg Model, Jennifer O'Sullivan, Margot Razziano, Brian Zachariah, Gilbert Yablon  |
| <b>Up to \$100</b>  | Caitlin Andreone, Carolyn Bartlow, Amy Blumenthal, Melisa Boodie, Capital Pride Day, Kiran Chaudhary, Amara Clark, Cynthia Clo, Penelope Clute, Donna Cobb, Rose Mary Colorafi, Margaret Connors, Marcia Cox, Kiersten Davis, Kathy Deyo, Karen Dorr, Lauren Dorsch, Maggie Dunsford, Alexis Edwards, Esther W. Ekanem, Sandra E. Eno, Facial Pilates, Cherie Gold, Jane Johnston, Sara Kate Kanter, Laura Kaufman, Gail Leech-Sims, Michael & Jenny Lessner, Ruth Magied, Jerome Marton, Christopher Miceli, Ilene Mirenberg, Kelly Ann Mullen, Tom Ott, Michael Anthony Premus, Stephen N. Price MD, Sylvia Raymond, Donna Rosnek, Jennifer Schultz, Harriet & Arnold Schwartz, Joanne Siegel, Randi Silverman, Joan Spielhotz, Holly Talisman, Ellen Touhey, Lucie Voza, Brent Wheat, Kristine Wisner-Hahn, Ashley Wood, Barbara Zuch ■ |



## Mental Health Education Advisory Group

As most of our members know, as of July 2018, public schools in New York will be required to include mental health instruction as part of the standard curriculum. Organized by our colleagues at MHANYS, the Mental Health Advisory Group includes representatives from both the world of education and mental health, including the New York State Department of Education and Office of Mental Health. NAMI-NYS is also fortunate enough to have a voice on the Council. The purpose of the group is to prepare the schools to implement the initiative by developing curricula and identifying outside resources for faculty and administration use.

We recognize that it is crucial to educate young people about mental health and mental illness. Statistics show that half of all chronic mental illness begins by age 14, yet several years can elapse between the onset of symptoms and when people actually get help. School staff members are not aware of where to refer students and what resources are available in the community; they, and their students, would benefit from instruction on what to look for and who to contact in the event of a mental health issue.

NAMI is one of many organizations who have developed effective programs for students, faculty and parents. NAMI Ending the Silence, a classroom presentation conducted by young adults in recovery, and NAMI Basics, a program for parents of children with mental health issues, are both excellent resources, and it is important to make school administrators aware of them, as well as other outside resources and programs that are available in the community.

NAMI-NYS welcomes your input to take back to the Council so that we can ensure that the most effective curricula and outside resources are adopted. ■

## NAMI as an HCBS Provider?

NAMI-NYS has been exploring the opportunity for the NAMI Family to Family program to serve as a home and community based service (HCBS). This initiative would allow individuals enrolled in a Health and Recovery Plan (HARP) to refer their family members to Family to Family, where they would learn to improve communication with and advocate for their loved ones living with mental illness. Instead of the cost of Family to Family being charged to NAMI-NYS's current state grant or other funding source, the class time for these individuals would be billed to Medicaid.

NAMI-NYS received a planning grant to understand how the process might work and hired a consultant from Coordinated Care Services, Inc to assist us with determining the necessary steps. A subsequent grant is being used to contract with another company to design and maintain electronic health records, so that NAMI-NYS would be set up to bill for the service.

Anyone who has taken a Family to Family class can attest to its value, and the opportunity to promote family involvement and to reach a group of people who would benefit from having family members as a part of their recovery team was something that NAMI-NYS agreed was worth exploring.

We will continue to keep you updated as we determine whether pursuing NAMI Family to Family as an HCBS service is viable. We are working with the NYS Office of Mental Health to ensure we identify any and all barriers to making this a reality. Our hope is that if we do move forward with this that we will identify additional individuals and families who will ultimately benefit by taking part in NAMI programs, furthering our mission to improve the lives of those living with mental illness and their families. ■

# REAFFILIATION

## Re-Affiliation Update By Tammie Paradis

I would like to start by reminding all of our affiliates that the deadline for re-affiliation was July 31, 2017. Contact NAMI-NYS to find out what this means for your affiliate.

We are here to answer any questions and to help in any way that we can. Please contact us either by phone (518) 462-200 or by email, [tammie@naminys.org](mailto:tammie@naminys.org). NAMI-NYS would like to remind everyone how important each and every one of our affiliates are. NAMI-NYS remains concerned about the future of all of our affiliates and will continue to work with everyone to ensure we are able to allow everyone to be successful and continue supporting the NAMI mission.

Here is another overview of the changes the affiliates have made since the re-affiliation process has started. NAMI Albany Relatives, NAMI April of Brooklyn, NAMI Boro Park, NAMI Bronx, NAMI Broome, NAMI Chautauqua County, NAMI Cortland, NAMI East Flatbush, NAMI Hope Chapter, NAMI Lamp SW Nassau, NAMI Long Island Regional Council, NAMI Ontario, Seneca & Yates, and NAMI St. Lawrence have dissolved. NAMI Manhattan (formerly known as NAMI GLBT) has merged with NAMI NYC Staten Island. NAMI Nassau University Medical Center has

merged with NAMI LAMP SW Nassau. NAMI North Country has merged with NAMI Saratoga. At this time there are a total of 29 NAMI affiliates in New York State.

NAMI-NYS would like to again congratulate the following seven affiliates that have completed the re-affiliation process: NAMI Delaware County, NAMI Orange County, NAMI Queens/Nassau, NAMI Rochester, NAMI Rockland, NAMI Saratoga and NAMI Westchester County.

Some of the reasons NAMI initiated the re-affiliation process are:

- To ensure consistency throughout the country.
- NAMI Signature programs must be delivered the same way by all teachers/facilitators/presenters to maintain consistency; an individual attending a support group in California or Alabama should receive the same experience in how the group is conducted in New York or Pennsylvania.
- SAMSHA (Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration) has designated

Family-to-Family as evidence-based and is evaluating NAMI's other programs for designation. Therefore, all trainers should be trained in the same way and deliver the programs in adherence to that training. Oversight of these programs is essential to ensuring consistency.

- Establishing a national identity, like the Salvation Army or the NAACP, enables NAMI to reach a wider audience. It does not prohibit affiliates from operating in their communities on a grass roots level.
- Certain aspects of re-affiliation, such as ensuring insurance coverage, are necessary to protect the affiliates and its members. Without the protection of Directors and Officers insurance, for example, legal action against the affiliate subjects the Board members' own personal assets to legal judgement.
- To be eligible for most grants, affiliates must be incorporated and have a 501 (c) 3 non-profit status designated by the IRS.

Please contact me with any questions or concerns that you may have regarding re-affiliation. ■

## Saratoga County Stakeholders Meeting

NAMI-NYS Outreach is fortunate to participate with the Saratoga County Stakeholders Meeting which brings together addiction and mental



health resource providers, law enforcement representatives, corrections officials, and a myriad of state, county and city officials. The common goal of the Saratoga County Stakeholder meeting members is to facilitate sharing of information each organization may not naturally communicate between one another. Also the meeting provides a platform for presentations of information specific to topics of common interest to its members and to allow further detailing of each organization's

mission. By becoming familiar with a wide range of service organizations and governmental agencies, the group is able to better utilize one another's resources in service to our community. The group consists of a mix of representatives from The Prevention Council, Transition Services, The Salvation Army, Saratoga County Sheriff's

office, and a large group of addiction recovery centers, hospitals and public health officials. NAMI-NYS would like to thank all the members of the Saratoga County Stakeholders Meeting for their time and hard work making the group a success. ■



## NAMI Syracuse Holds Annual Meeting

At our annual meeting and holiday party held on December 5th, Diane LaFrance of Bersani Gallery and Accents of Armory Square received our first "Friends of NAMI" award for her support of our Harvest Hopela Fundraiser and silent auction. Karen Winters Schwartz received a plaque for recognition of her 4 exemplary years as president of NAMI Syracuse. Marla Byrnes is the newly elected president and replacing Marla as board secretary is Patricia Moore. Joining the board of directors in 2018 - Mary Bartowski, Joe Ridgway and Susan Zdanowicz. Great time at Francesca's Cucina for our annual meeting and holiday party. ■



Diane LaFrance



Karen Winters Schwartz

## NAMI Staten Island Participates in New York State Nurses Association Event

NAMI Staten Island President Peter Shiffman, along with Board members Rachid Ottley and Joan Rowley, participated in the New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA) dinner event in Staten Island. Local candidates for offices such as district council leader and borough president were in attendance and answered questions. It was a lively exchange as mental health issues were often referenced. NAMI Staten Island currently has three nurses on their board. Joan Rowley (critical care, now works for NYSNA representing behavioral health nurses), Joanne Pietro, Associate Director of psychiatric services for Staten Island University hospital and Peter (who is hitting his 30 year anniversary of being an RN) ■



(pictured left to right) Joan Rowley, New York City Councilwoman Debi Rose (49th District), Rachid Ottley and Peter Shiffman

## Run for NAMI NYC in the 2018 United Airlines NYC Half!

Are you a runner? Would you like a chance to run for NAMI NYC? If you already have your own entry into the 2018 NYC Half Marathon, and would like to raise funds for the NAMI NYC Runs Team program in New York City, we'd love to hear from you!

We're pleased to announce that NAMI NYC was named an Official Charity Partner of the 2018 United Airlines NYC Half. The race, which will take place on Sunday, March 18, 2018, will have an expected 22,500 runners and the course will take runners on a 13.1 mile tour of iconic city landmarks beginning in Brooklyn and finishing in Central Park.

As a member of the NAMI NYC Runs Team, the benefits you will receive include:

- Kick-off event to get to know your NAMI NYC Runs Team-mates
- NAMI NYC Runs Team training program
- NAMI NYC Runs Team race-day shirt
- Weekly emails from NAMI NYC Runs, including fundraising ideas
- NAMI NYC Runs Team Facebook group to stay connected to your teammates

And you can always join us to cheer on the team on March 18!

Interested in running for NAMI NYC?

Please e-mail [events@naminyc.org](mailto:events@naminyc.org).

at New York Presbyterian Hospital - Westchester Division, Second Chance Program. ■



## NAMI Rensselaer Holds Recognition Dinner

On October 14th, NAMI Rensselaer held their annual recognition dinner and consumer art show. This year's honoree was Elizabeth Donovan of the Stratton VA. Congressman Paul Tonko attended and presented a certificate to Elizabeth as well. As part of the program, Jason Paden debuted his newest multi-media project Jase and his Quirkz. ■



NAMI Schenectady had a fundraising event, Tree of Hope, at the Schenectady Festival of Trees that ran Dec 2-17, 2017.

The Tree of Hope was at the Schenectady County Historical Society and the YWCA of Schenectady County on Washington Avenue in the Stockade Historic District of Schenectady.



NAMI Rensselaer President, Sandy Dinoto, Congressman Paul Tonko and Elizabeth Donovan

## NAMI Westchester on the Move, Educating our Community

Our NAMI signature presentation programs continue to share stories of recovery. Our *In Our Own Voice* averages three to five presentations each month at hospitals, colleges and community organizations. Our Ending the Silence program reached a milestone the end of March – since launching this program in 2015; we have educated more than 8,000 students on mental health. We are presently providing this program in more than 20 schools on a yearly basis.

In addition to bringing *Ending the Silence* to schools, we have been able to bring it to many youth groups at churches, synagogues and teen organizations. These presentation programs have opened doors to many other opportunities, including participating in health fairs and other awareness programs.

This year we initiated a film series as a way to engage and educate the larger community in a different way. In February, we featured the film, *People Say I'm Crazy*. The documentary is the story of John Cadigan, a person living with Schizophrenia, and the struggles he faces every day. Following the film was a panel discussion with Dr. Robert Laitman, Psychiatric Internist with special expertise in Clozapine management; Dr. Sally Ricketts, Psychiatrist, Montefiore Medical Center; Michaele Rizzuto, LCSW, Family Specialist, ACT Team, Montefiore Mt. Vernon Hospital; Kimrita Hill, Film Event co-Chairperson and

Senior Care Coordinator, CHOICE of New Rochelle; and Louise Ellis, LCSW-R, Film Event co-Chairperson and Director, Assertive Community Treatment Program, St. Vincent's Hospital Westchester.

Our September featured film was *Man of the House* by John Palomino, a New Rochelle resident, which documents the story of his father who suffered from a mental illness and took his life. This is a beautiful short film of how a young boy and his family overcame trauma to build a new life. Following the film there was a panel discussion with John Palomino who wrote and directed the film; Jonathan Weinstein, PhD, Clinical Psychologist and Suicide Prevention Coordinator for the VA Hudson Valley Health Care System; Joseph Fusaro, suicide survivor; and Sharon McCarthy, parent of a suicide survivor.



On October 12th, we held our Third Annual Educational Event in collaboration with Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health and New York Presbyterian Hospital - Westchester Division. The topic was, "Your Brain and Mental Health: The Impact of Trauma, Physical Illness, Past Injuries and Life Experiences in Diagnosis and Treatment." Michael Orth, Acting Commissioner of Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health, moderated the presentations and panel discussion that included Mark Herceg, PhD, Director of the Center for Brain Health and Center for Concussion Care and Director of Psychology, Gaylord Specialty Healthcare; Nikhil Palekar, MD, Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychiatry, Weill Cornell Medical College and Unit Chief, Second Chance Program, New York Presbyterian Hospital - Westchester Division; and Jennifer Amar, LCSW, Social Worker at New York Presbyterian Hospital - Westchester Division, Second Chance Program. ■

## NAMI Westchester Donations:

Whole Foods Market chose NAMI Westchester as its fourth-quarter beneficiary for its community giving day, when five percent of the day's sales are donated to a local nonprofit partner. As a result of our participation in this event Whole Food Market generously donated \$16,295. "Whole Foods Market recognizes NAMI Westchester as an important organization in the local community and commends them for their effort to create awareness for mental health," says Blain Bradley, Metro Marketing Team Leader for Whole Foods Market Westchester. With the help of NAMI Westchester staff and volunteers we were able to have tables at all three Westchester stores, Port Chester, Yonkers and White Plains, over the course of 14 hours that day.



Women's Club - left to right: Claudia Melo (Women's Club), Sharon McCarthy (NAMI Westchester), Kristen Larkin (NAMI Westchester) and Elizabeth Buonamici (Women's Club)

The Woman's Club of White Plains Foundation hosted their annual fall fundraiser, the 2017 Corks & Forks event, on September 15. The evening included a wine tasting, specialty cocktail bar and tastings of fabulous dishes donated, prepared, and served by local restaurants as well as a raffle and silent auction. Partial proceeds from the evening in the amount of \$5,000 were donated to NAMI Westchester.

Maryann Martin, President of the Woman's Club Foundation remarked, "Mental illness is at the root of many issues in society today. NAMI removes the stigma and provides information on awareness and treatment as well as advocates national public policy for millions of people and their families – we are excited to support their efforts." ■



Whole Foods - left to right: Brian Bradley (Whole Foods), Sharon McCarthy (NAMI Westchester) and Marie Considine (NAMI Westchester)

## Ending the Silence and starting the conversation on Social Emotional Learning

By Tina Lee, Executive Director, NAMI Mid-Hudson

One of the most poignant comments NAMI Mid-Hudson has received after presenting **Ending the Silence (ETS)** was: *“Ending the Silence allowed me to see that life is beautiful and you have to be more positive.”*

NAMI Mid-Hudson along with our school partners are recognizing that ETS is not just a mental health literacy program for students with mental illness but a program that instills Social Emotional Learning.

**Social Emotional Learning (SEL)** is increasingly a buzz word among school based educators across the country. Through SEL, children and youth acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions. Youth learn how to set and achieve positive goals, increase prosocial behaviors such as kindness, sharing and empathy for others, establish and maintain healthy relationships, and make responsible decisions. SEL can be the most proactive initiative for mental health illness prevention.

And ETS is a program that embodies just that.

ETS highlights mental wellness and invests in a student’s social-emotional competence which is essential for youth to succeed in school, work, and civic life. ETS is a program for ALL students because it provides resiliency and acts as a protective factor for students that are well or starting to exhibit mental illness by helping students recognize the early warning signs and empowering students with in-school, community based mental health resources and suicide prevention information. ETS also offers an empathetic and hopeful message that recovery is possible with positive coping strategies and acts as a catalyst for those students that are moving towards illness or have relapsed to seek help and move towards recovery.

When students develop emotional literacy, they can begin to talk about their feelings, frustrations and anger without acting out. Research shows that students engaged in SEL are less aggressive and disruptive in schools with long terms effects such as 10% fewer psychological, behavioral or substance abuse problems when they reach the age of 25. ETS addresses Bullying and Substance and Alcohol Abuse: topics that continue to affect a student’s mental wellness and ability to recover.

SEL also reduces depression, anxiety, stress, and social withdraw among students (Durlak et al., 2011). Essentially, as students learn positive coping skills and practice new behaviors; they learn how to develop stronger self-regulation skills.

Mentions of positive coping skills are highlighted in the experiences shared by the ETS presenters. Hearing the Young Adult’s story can help students self-identify with their own struggles and encourage them to seek help or help others. Evidence shows that providing the use of a peer role model, individuals show significant gains in expanding social networks and reducing isolation (Chinman, 2001), increasing physical activity, and promoting positive, health-enhancing behaviors (Cook, 2009, Druss, 2010). These are qualities that are essential in maintaining one’s mental wellness and in turn, an individual can set and achieve positive goals, have healthy relationship and be productive in one’s community.

*“It was really brave for them to share their stories. It made me think more about myself and the things I’ve been feeling.”*

An important component in SEL is building a critical emotional skill called empathy. Empathy helps build trusting relationships. As a community begins to support each other, individuals recognize emotions in each other. ETS creates opportunities for students to build trust among each other. ETS’s message of empathy and hope motivates students to actively care for themselves and for their peers, whether by reaching out for help, encouraging a friend or family member to seek help. ETS also addresses how to respond if they see these symptoms in themselves, their friends and family.

*“I’m so grateful for you speaking. Thank you for understanding some of my pain. ETS really did help me.”*

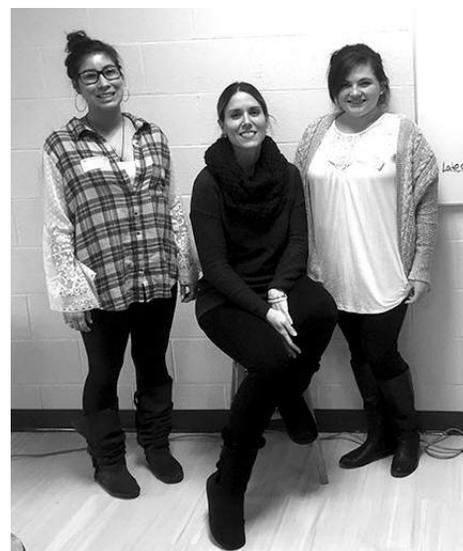
ETS encourages schools to include students as stakeholders in creating a caring and competent community by instilling good citizenship skills to actively advocate and empower themselves and make positive changes and prioritize mental wellness in their lives throughout adulthood. The message of being a good citizen: “If you see something, please say something” is emphasized throughout the program.

*“The best part of this presentation was that I will help someone or maybe myself.”*

And for a growing number of schools and districts, SEL has become a coordinating framework for how educators, families, and communities partner to promote students’ social, emotional, and academic learning. SEL shapes partnerships with families and community members and organizations highlighting engagement, trust, and collaboration.

NAMI Mid-Hudson has experienced such a positive response to ETS that NAMI Mid-Hudson will also be offering **ETS for Parents** and **ETS for Educators** to increase SEL and mental health literacy across all catchment. NAMI Mid-Hudson has also successfully held several **NAMI Basics** class for the parents and caregivers at the schools that have supported ETS to strengthen our partnerships with families.

Schools provide the optimal environment and conditions that support mental wellness to increase emotional resiliency in their students and families/caregivers. This landscape gives NAMI the opportunity to support, sustain, and become an important stakeholder both in schools and in the community. NAMI can help provide a foundation for safe and positive learning, and enhance students’ ability to excel in school, careers, and lifelong success. When school districts invest in NAMI, it is also an invaluable investment for their students, families and educators. ■



## NAMI Operating in OMH Facilities

The New York State Office of Mental Health has extended the offer of space in its facilities to NAMI affiliates. Those affiliates interested in taking advantage of this would have the opportunity to provide much needed support, particularly for family members of those requiring hospitalization. As so many of our NAMI families have experienced, entering a psychiatric facility can be traumatic for both the individual and the family member. While the person receiving treatment is hopefully receiving the necessary care, the family member often has no one to turn to for support and guidance. All the family members have to focus on is their own worry about their loved ones and the prospect of the unknown.

Should a NAMI affiliate choose to base its operations out of an OMH facility, that affiliate would be on hand to meet family members at their most vulnerable time and offer them help and hope. They would be informed of NAMI programs at the outset and they could receive guidance from those with lived experience on how best to advocate for their loved ones. When the hospitalized individuals became ready, they would have peer support and access to NAMI programs, in addition to the resources provided by the facility.

NAMI Rockland is one NAMI affiliate that operates out of an OMH facility. Family members are eager to interact with NAMI Rockland staff and volunteers, and the affiliate is present on select weekend days when family members are most apt to visit their loved ones. They provide coffee in the lobby and offer advice to families with concerns or questions about treatment, discharge plans, dietary issues, how to speak with treatment teams, and other issues affecting families. In addition to being on hand to assist those in need, there is also the added benefit of not having to meet the expense of paying rent.

As NAMI Rockland's Program Coordinator Anne Arias says, "It's been a life saver for us having the office space at no cost and has really helped us expand! They (hospital staff and administration) get to know us and that makes it easier to assist families when their loved one is in the hospital and has a concern. We also represent the family perspective on several committees, ethics, incident review, governing board, family advisory committee, so we can bring the family voice to RPC and Children's (RCPC) on another level. They have really been great and seem to genuinely want our input. It also helps RPC become more of an Open Campus, where people from the community come in and residents come out, when they are able to. It allows for a flow of activity, energy and support which the Executive Director of RPC believes, and we agree, makes the center feel less 'institutional' and creates a more open, therapeutic environment."

If any affiliates are interested in pursuing this opportunity, NAMI Rockland Board president Sandy Wolf and the dedicated NAMI Rockland staff are available to discuss their own experiences operating out of Rockland Psychiatric Center, and the NAMI-NYS office is able to assist the affiliates with connecting with OMH to determine if the opportunity exists in their area. ■

## NAMI Delaware County Stays Busy

This Fall, NAMI Delaware County's calendar has involved more community outreach and interaction with community agencies and institutions, in addition to our ongoing participation in the county's suicide prevention network, community service board, and mental health subcommittee.

In September, our monthly meeting was joined by a new local school principal who expressed concerns about mental health resources for his students. Also present at the meeting were representatives from a regional organization, Family Resource Network, and the director of the county Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council, who provided additional resource information to our guest.

October's meeting was held at a local church that is very active in the community. We had presentations from the program director and the assistant behavioral health director of our regional Mobile Crisis Assessment Team, out of the Neighborhood Center in Utica, who explained their agency's services in the county and took audience questions about them. We were pleased to have in the audience the nurse from the county correctional facility and the attorney from our regional branch of Mental Hygiene Legal Services, as well as several other newcomers to our meetings.

November brought our Regional Advocacy Specialist from OMH in Syracuse, Garrett Smith, who advised us on the NYAPRS Choices in Recovery presentation regarding health homes, HARPS, and HCBS for Medicaid recipients, the upcoming OMH training on Social Security benefits, and an interesting training called Hearing Distressing Voices. We are interested in participating in all of these, and Garrett will be following up with us at our December meeting. At the November meeting, we were also joined by two members of a service fraternity at SUNY Delhi, who have been working with us on community outreach programs, and exploring future work with a local school.

Finally, we're excited that one of our members recently completed training to lead Family to Family, which will enable us to offer a class in the spring, and that another one has just become a member of the NAMI New York State Board of Directors. ■

Rina Riba  
Affiliate Leader

## Support to Kirby Forensic Psychiatric Center

NAMI Huntington is delighted to have proudly donated 400 pairs of socks, 400 Holiday cards, and 400 candy canes to Kirby Forensic Psychiatric Center to be given to the patients on Christmas morning. These donations are from the NAMI members of NAMI Huntington. This is the 4th year in a row we have done this, and the patients are happy to know that there is somebody outside thinking of them. Many of the patients do not have family or friends that can be there for them. We plan to keep doing this as long as we can! We receive satisfaction knowing we were able to brighten the patient's day.

We also donated 20 tubes of toothpaste and 20 bars of soap to be given to those patients that are in need. We plan to do this at least 3 times a year! We will continue to do this as an ongoing effort to let people inside know that someone cares!

If you would like to help with this great cause, please contact Jayette Lansbury at lansburyhunt@aol.com or (631)988-7619. ■

## NAMI Buffalo & Erie County and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Gamma Phi Omega Chapter Host Successful First Youth Conference at Medaille College

Nearly 80 attendees and volunteers brought mental health awareness to Western New York youth and their adult parents, caregivers, and leaders on Saturday, October 28th, at Buffalo's Medaille College campus. Co-hosts Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA) Sorority Gamma Phi Omega Chapter and NAMI Buffalo & Erie County reached out to local schools, churches, and media across the community to publicize the event.



Some of the youth and leaders of a WNY-area Boys & Girls Club who attended the first Healthy Minds Empowerment Conference, October 2017, co-hosted at Medaille College by Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Gamma Phi Omega Chapter and NAMI Buffalo & Erie County.

The *Healthy Minds Empowerment Conference* featured keynote Keith O'Neil, former NFL champion, who candidly shared his struggles and successes in coping with a mental illness. A series of workshops and panel discussions addressed many current topics in meeting youth needs today. Youth topics included: "Let's Talk About Social Media," "Drug Chat," and "Words Have Wings." Adult sessions included lively panel presentations and discussions on "What Does Mental Illness Look Like?," "Effects of Substance Abuse on the Lives of Teenagers," and "Suicide Prevention." The conference concluded with a

hands-on, shared adult and youth team building exercise.

The convenient venue, light breakfast and lunch were provided by AKA Gamma Phi Omega Chapter, and gift card prizes were awarded for workshop attendees. All youth attendees received journals and printed personal affirmations to take home, as well as information on youth services and how to seek help for themselves or others. Adults received NAMI and other high-demand information on youth-related mental health and mental illness topics they can use at home or in their work. Feedback was very positive from attendees and workshop facilitators, and the evaluations indicated a desire for future topics and similar conferences.

The conference specifically addressed our area concerns about access to mental health services and care in diverse, underserved communities. All in all, it was an energizing, rewarding day and we appreciate all the volunteers who gave time to make it a smooth, engaging event, as well as the support Erie County, Erie County Legislator Barbara Miller-Williams, and the African-American Cultural Center. ■



Healthy Minds Empowerment Conference, October 2017, hosted at Medaille College by NAMI Buffalo & Erie County and partners of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Gamma Phi Omega Chapter. Also pictured, conference keynote speaker Keith O'Neil, former NFL champion, and Founder/CEO of 4th and Forever, a foundation that fights stigma in mental illness and funds research for better treatment and care of those who live with mental illness.



Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Gamma Phi Omega Chapter and NAMI Buffalo & Erie County members, presenters and volunteers at the first Healthy Minds Empowerment Conference for youth and their caregivers and leaders at Medaille College, 10-28-17. Also pictured is Erie County Legislator Barbara Miller-Williams who was one of the event sponsors.

## Community Service In Mental Health Awareness Project Involving Local Student Practical Nurses from Cayuga-Onondaga B.O.C.E.S.

Student practical nurses from Cayuga-Onondaga B.O.C.E.S. chose the local NAMI affiliate in Auburn as a way to collaborate in obtaining their community service hours toward their nursing degree. They will disseminate information concerning NAMI's signature programs and NAMI CAYUGA Co.'s role in Cayuga County in upstate NY. Affiliate co-presidents Terri and Bart

Wasilenko devised a plan for the student nurses to act as NAMI "ambassadors" and visit each department within the Auburn Community Hospital as well as other agencies in the county. At each place, nurses will hand out the NAMI CAYUGA Co. brochure which is a trifold that contains contact numbers, family support meeting times, NAMI signature programs, as well

as our mission statement. Also included are the availability of showing our "Nothing to Hide" photo-text pictures, and the need for training in Mental Health First Aid. Bart and Terri are state trainers for Mental Health First Aid and gladly present the 8hr. training within Cayuga Co. to any agency or group of individuals who would like to be certified. ■

## 16th Annual Jessica Henderson Memorial Event

NAMI Rochester held their 16th Annual Jessica Henderson Memorial Event on October 17, 2017. More than 300 people attended the event which honors Jessica Henderson, a young woman who lost her life to mental illness. The evening's keynote speaker was Mike Veny, who gave an inspiring presentation. Ginny Ryan, newscaster for Channel 13, presented the annual Henderson Spirit awards to Maeve Reed and the Wiktorski Family, who have both done tremendous work raising mental illness and suicide awareness in local high schools and in the community. Maeve has lost a close friend to suicide and the Wiktorski family lost a son, who was a student at Penfield High School.

Mike himself started having difficulties with mental illness at a very young age and he tells the story of his depression which led to angry outbursts and fits of rage during his youth. It was ultimately his passion for playing the drums and the opportunities to perform as a musician that enabled him to channel his feelings into his music. He has delivered educational, engaging and entertaining presentations to audiences throughout the world. He is recognized as one of the 100 most influential people in the healthcare industry. What sets Mike apart from other speakers is his authenticity and his straightforward, easy to understand tools that audiences can apply immediately.



NAMI Rochester wishes to acknowledge and thank their sponsors and donors and all those who attended and purchased items from the Silent Auction. In addition, many thanks to Kim Van Camp and Kristina Mossgraber, Chair and



Coordinator of the event. Other members of the committee: Laureniglia, Sandra Mitzner, MD, Jim Mossgraber, Bob Riley and Pat Sine. Volunteers that evening: Judy Messenger, Donna Leigh-Estes, Sarah Mossgraber, Jodie & Jonna Terhune, Cam Mossgraber, Beth Winslow-D'Amico and Betsy Powell.

Two NAMI Family-to-Family classes graduated at the end of November. The classes were taught by Susan Belair, Konrad Emmert, Claire Perlman, and Rosemarie Jaouen.

A total of 22 participants completed the education program, offered on Wednesday and Thursday evenings, over the course of 12 weeks. The next Family-to-Family class, taught by Brenda Steffon and Jim Mossgraber, will run from Wednesday, January 10th through Wednesday, March 28th. Registration is available at <http://namiroc.org/family-to-family/>.



Ending the Silence continues to be NAMI Rochester's most requested program. So far in 2017, presenters have reached nearly 3,400 students with the ETS education program. Kristine Penrose, a Health Educator with Greece Arcadia High School had this to say about ETS presenters Kristina Mossgraber and David Makepeace:

*"Breaking down the stigma associated with mental illness is a difficult task, but necessary in order for young people to seek treatment. Kristina and Dave presented this sensitive material in a way that was engaging and powerful. The students were able to relate to their stories, see the impact that proper treatment can have, and gain a great deal of information about how to seek treatment, identify signs of illness and suicide, and maintain a healthy lifestyle."*

With over 30 presentations scheduled through the end of the year, 2017 will prove to be NAMI Rochester's biggest year for Ending the Silence to date. If you are interested in learning more about Ending the Silence, or any of NAMI Rochester's programs, please contact NAMI Rochester's Program Coordinator, Beth Winslow-D'Amico at (585) 423-1593 or by email at [beth@namirochester.org](mailto:beth@namirochester.org). ■

## NAMI Cayuga Co. Represents at the NYSMICJ Conference at Cayuga Community College

NAMI CAYUGA participated in the annual NYSMICJ, (New York State Minorities in Criminal Justice) symposium on Friday, November 17, 2017, at the Cayuga Community College in Auburn, NY. Bart Wasilenko, NAMI CAYUGA's co-president participated as a vendor of free information and advocacy concerning mental health wellness. Brochures, business cards and Cayuga Co. contact numbers were handed out as a way to make the public aware of the stigma related to those who live their lives with mental illness and how it affects their loved ones. The affiliate handed out materials related to the destructive isolation in the segregation units for the incarcerated who are sentenced to 23 hours lock up/one hour recreation each day

The day was filled from 8AM to 3:30PM with workshops, vendor items and raffles. Next year's regional symposium will be held at the new conference center at Destiny USA in Syracuse, NY. Conference leaders approached NAMI CAYUGA's co-president about the possibility of speaking at next year's conference. Bart Wasilenko is a retired bilingual, Spanish teacher from the department of corrections with 32.5 years working in the prison system. ■

## Trainings

In addition to several regional trainings around the state, NAMI-NYS sponsored three trainings for signature programs this fall at the NAMI-NYS office in Albany. In September, 6 teachers were certified to teach NAMI Homefront and 11 teachers were certified to be support group facilitators. In October, NAMI-NYS hosted a Family to Family Teacher training, certifying 12 to be NAMI Family to Family teachers. NAMI-NYS would like to express our appreciation to those willing to teach and facilitate these vital programs in their local communities, as well as our gratitude to our dedicated state trainers, Geraldine Burton, Mary Beth Honsinger, Pam Solomon and Almarie Tulloch and all of those who conducted the regional trainings. ■



Family Support Group Training, September 2017



Homefront Training, September 2017



Family to Family Training, October 2017

## NAMI-NYS Hosts Family-to-Family Training

NAMI-NYS congratulates all those who attended and completed the 3-day F2F teachers training June 16-18. This training was held at the NAMI-NYS office in Albany, NY, with participants from NAMI-NYC Metro, NAMI Queens/Nassau, NAMI Orange County & NAMI Columbia County. We would also like to thank the state trainers, Patti Sacher & Bonnie Goldberg for their dedication and willingness to train such a wonderful group of volunteers. We at NAMI-NYS are looking forward to the future classes all our graduates will lead in the months and years to come. ■



## Upcoming Trainings in 2018

As NAMI-NYS transitions from the departure of the Programs Coordinator Shaniqua Jackson Dowdy to the incoming Community Education Manager position, we are in the process of planning state trainings for 2018. Scheduled trainings will be announced early in the year, at which point we will be soliciting applications from the affiliates for the various trainings. If you are interested in becoming a teacher, presenter or facilitator for NAMI signature programs, contact your local affiliate and let them know. ■

## In Our Own Voice Trainings

On September 15-18 Cynthia Scott and Michael Andersson trained eight new In Our Own Voice presenters at a training in Westchester.

On June 24th and 25th NAMI-NYS held a statewide In Our Own Voice training. The training was led by Cynthia Scott and Lady Charmaine Day. Seven people were certified.

Thank you to Lady Charmaine, Cynthia, and Michael and congratulations to our newest presenters. ■



## Summary of the 2017 NIMH Outreach Partner Meeting

The 2017 NIMH Outreach Partner Meeting took place on July 12-14 at the National Institute of Health campus in Bethesda, MD. An overlaying theme for the meeting was the hope that research provides for understanding both physical and mental health. The meeting, which brings the NIMH Outreach Partners from each state and Puerto Rico together to learn the latest developments from the institute, took place during an exciting time. The NIMH has a new director, Dr. Joshua Gordon, who has a bold and ambitious vision for psychiatric research.

For many, therefore, the presentation by Dr. Gordon which began the conference was a highlight. Dr. Gordon, who came to NIMH from Columbia University and New

York State Psychiatric Institute (NYSPI), began his talk explaining how his experience going to Columbia and witnessing the mental health disparities in Harlem directed him towards the importance of public mental health care. He credited NYSPI as a model of public psychiatric care. Dr. Gordon also stressed the need to fund “excellent science” with an eye on diversity to lead the way in improving how psychiatric care is delivered. Dr. Gordon then detailed his research priorities and the importance of having timeframes for these priorities.

Dr. Gordon laid out his short-term, medium-term and long-term goals for research. His short-term goals focused on suicide prevention and

identifying implementable evidence-based practices and knowledge gaps. He also stressed that information from NIMH suicide studies make it into clinics. Dr. Gordon’s medium-term goals focus around neural circuits and developing technologies to integrate neural circuits with the ultimate goal being, improving the understanding and treatment of mental health disorders. Finally the long-term goal is computational psychiatry and developing computational perspectives and approaches to improve the understanding and treatment of mental health disorders.

Dr. Gordon also provided an interesting perspective on racial and ethnic differences in psychiatric diagnosis and treatment. Among the examples he gave were that blacks were nearly twice as likely as

whites to receive a diagnosis of schizophrenia and how depression and anxiety diagnoses were lower among racial-ethnic minorities compared to non-Hispanic whites. He also detailed how Hispanic youth were more willing to get mental health services when they receive them in school and how there are low rates of referrals among Hispanics to community services.

Dr. Gordon also addressed the somewhat controversial view that the NIMH Research Domain Criteria (RDoC) project was at odds with the Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM). Dr. Gordon disagreed with this assertion and explained that RDoC and the DSM must be looked at together.

The meeting’s second day highlight was hearing from Eric Dishman, Director of the NIH’s groundbreaking



All of Us study. The All of Us Research Program is a historic effort to gather data from one million or more people living in the United States to accelerate research and improve health. By taking into account individual differences in lifestyle, environment, and biology, researchers will uncover paths toward delivering precision medicine.



Eric not only captured the imagination of the audience with the possibilities that All of Us aims to achieve but inspired us by telling his own story facing serious health issues and the importance of patient advocacy. Eric was diagnosed with cancer in college and was told he had less than a year to live. He credits both medical advances as well as his own commitment in directing his care and treatment as the two main factors to his long-term survival.

The All of Us initiative will begin signing up participants shortly, and you can visit [allofus.nih.gov](http://allofus.nih.gov) to learn more. ■



**NAMI-New York State**

99 Pine Street, Suite 105  
Albany, NY 12207

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
ALBANY, NY  
PERMIT NO. 0010



|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Feb 28        | Early Bird Deadline for National Convention |
| March 6       | Board Meeting                               |
| March 7       | Legislative Conference                      |
| April TBD     | Brighter Day Event                          |
| April 27-28   | Board Meeting                               |
| May           | Mental Health Month and Ribbon Campaign     |
| May 8         | What Great in the State                     |
| June 27-30    | National Convention in New Orleans          |
| September 29  | NAMIWalks 2018                              |
| October 26-28 | Education Conference 2018                   |