

# 2016 NAMI-NYS AWARD RECIPIENTS

NAMI-NYS wants to thank all of the 2016 award recipients for their work and dedication to advancing the NAMI-NYS mission of improving the lives of individuals and families impacted by mental illness through providing education, support and awareness as well as engaging in unique projects. We are grateful for all you do...

## HOPE STARTS WITH YOU!

**Muriel Shepherd Award-Rena Finkelstein:** This award named after our Founding President Muriel Shepherd, is the highest honor NAMI-NYS can present to one of our members. This year's recipient, Rena Finkelstein, has spent more than thirty years dedicated to raising awareness and helping countless people in Rockland County. We are honored to recognize her tremendous legacy which is the embodiment of the NAMI spirit. We also congratulate Rena on her "retirement" as President of NAMI Rockland.

This award will be presented during Saturday's dinner.

**Affiliate of the Year-NAMI Mid-Hudson:** For 35 years, NAMI Mid-Hudson has provided consistent and exceptional ability to offer signature programs, raise awareness and increase mental health literacy in their community. NAMI Mid-Hudson has also engaged in unique communication activities and formed key partnerships to ensure that they are no longer the "best kept secret in the Mid-Hudson Valley."

NAMI Mid-Hudson continues to change attitudes and saves lives regardless of race, gender, and or socioeconomic barriers. Mid-Hudson has increasingly become a stakeholder in the community and provides services to two counties: Dutchess and Ulster. NAMI Mid-Hudson has acknowledged and very successfully addressed the needs of two very different mental health systems with two very different populations with different needs. NAMI Mid-Hudson has acknowledged the critical role of support and education services and integrating advocacy opportunities to best serve our community in Dutchess and Ulster counties. NAMI Mid-Hudson is dedicated to their mission statement to preserve the dignity and improve the quality of life for people, families, and caregivers living with mental illness, and to eliminate the stigma of discrimination and prejudice.

This award will be presented during Saturday's dinner.

**Small Affiliate of the Year-NAMI Cayuga:** NAMI Cayuga continues to be a visible and vibrant presence throughout Cayuga County. The affiliate was active in the NAMI-NYS Ribbon Campaign and helped get the ribbons hung in Auburn City Hall, among other locations. In a community outreach effort, NAMI Cayuga County has partnered with the Auburn City School District and Partnership for Results, a community-based agency promoting safe schools and communities, to facilitate free adult Depression Screenings in the evenings at five Auburn

schools for the 2016-2017 school year. The Nothing to Hide: Mental Illness in the Family photo-text exhibit, owned by NAMI Cayuga County, will be displayed at Cayuga Counseling Services in their client waiting rooms from November 2016-February 2017. NAMI Cayuga is very active with the crisis intervention trainings in their county and regularly presents at local CIT trainings. NAMI Cayuga also proudly participated in the inaugural NAMIWalks NYS.

This award will be presented during Saturday's lunch.

**Program Award-Mary Beth Honsinger:** Mary Beth Honsinger has been a consistent provider of NAMI Signature Programs in the Capital Region. She has taught Family-to-Family and NAMI Homefront, as well as leading NAMI Family Support Groups and serving as a state trainer for NAMI-NYS Family Support Group trainings. Her program offerings have led to developing partnerships with the SUNY School of Public Health, the Stratton VA, and several local churches, all of whom have hosted NAMI Programs led by Mary Beth.

This award will be presented during Saturday's lunch.

**Young Leader Award-Torie Keeton:** Torie Keeton is a junior at SUNY Potsdam who is doing tremendous work encouraging her young adult peers to be engaged in mental health activities and demonstrating how to project their advocacy voices. Torie volunteered for NAMI-NYS this past summer, where she worked on formalizing the NAMI-NYS Young Adult Network and worked with active young adults to curate this year's Young Adult Focus Track at the conference. Torie is also dedicated to working on legislative issues, including those to incorporate mental health education in schools and advance early-intervention programs.

This award will be presented during Saturday's dinner.

**Media Award-Randi Silverman:** As the mother of a child who was diagnosed with anxiety, depression and bipolar disorder at a very young age, Randi has experienced firsthand what it is like to raise a child with a mental health disorder. Together with her producing partners, Carina Rush and Jonathan Bucari, Randi was determined to create a feature film that would honestly tell a story of the struggle families face when their child suffers from mental illness. She used her real life experiences to write the screenplay for *NO LETTING GO* and was instrumental in generating its powerful message. Randi and her co-writer, Jonathan, have won two awards for Best Screenplay at independent film festivals. Randi is dedicated to using the film to bring a voice to the millions of families who struggle when a child suffers from mental illness. Her goal has always been to use the film for education and awareness.

This award will be presented during Friday's dinner.

**Max Gabriel Memorial Award-Zach Iscol,**

**Veterans Mental Health Awards-Ann Beeder, MD and Gerard Llaria:** NAMI-NYS is thrilled to recognize the work of The Headstrong Project and their Executive Director Zach Iscol, Medical Director Ann Beeder, MD, and Director of Operations Gerard Llaria. Founded in 2012,

in partnership with Weill Cornell Medical College, one of the nation's leading mental health care centers, the Headstrong Project has developed a first of its kind, comprehensive treatment program for veterans in need. Some of the mental health problems they address are:

- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Anxiety and Depression
- Anger Management
- Trauma, Grief, and Loss
- Addiction Treatment

This award will be presented during Friday's lunch.

**Criminal Justice Award-Gary Horton:** Gary Horton is the director of the Veterans Defense Program of the New York State Public Defenders Association. The Veterans Defense Program (VDP) provides training, support, and legal assistance to promote zealous representation of veterans and service members in the state's criminal and family court systems. The VDP assists public defense attorneys to take a treatment-oriented approach when representing veterans suffering from the invisible wounds of war, such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), and/or depression.

This award will be presented during Friday's lunch.