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NAMI Santa Clara County

October 2020

**nami**

National Alliance on Mental Illness

NEWS

How Did You Find NAMI-SCC? (Part 2)

By Moryt Milo

NAMI operates as a beacon. A steady light for loved ones and consumers desperate for guidance when a mental health crisis strikes. That's how most NAMI relationships begin. And then, after the flashpoint, advocacy often follows.

Harold Brown understands this well. He grew up in a family with a history of depression and suicide. When his daughter—balancing motherhood and a top tech company workload—experienced treatment-resistant depression, he dove in to help. “I thought I knew everything about mental illness when a therapist at El Camino Hospital suggested NAMI’s Family-to-Family class.” Harold discovered the comradery of the NAMI family, sparking his advocacy. He now leads the nonprofit’s funding efforts on the NAMI-SCC Board.

Victor Ojakian arrived at NAMI’s doorstep after tragedy had already struck. Vic lost his son to suicide while at college. He turned his grief into advocacy. “My wife and I step-by-step asked each of the California public college/university systems to provide better mental health services.” When the couple continued their advocacy work locally, NAMI didn’t disappoint. The nonprofit supported Vic, and his relationship with the organization grew. He became a board member and now serves as co-president.

For **Juan Perez**, confusion reigned after his son became ill. Caught in the “revolving-door syndrome” of multiple hospitalizations, doctors, and diagnoses, Juan said, “The situation kept getting worse before it got better.” When his son turned 18, HIPAA kicked in and locked the parents out of their son’s care. At a breaking point, Juan learned about NAMI. The couple took Family-to-Family, which proved pivotal. As Juan’s understanding grew so did his son’s, who took the Peer-to-Peer class. Today not only is Juan an active NAMI board member, but his son is a Peer-to-Peer mentor.

NAMI’s mission has never wavered, and its reach has never been stronger. That porchlight stays aglow no matter how you find your way.

To read more about how others found their way to NAMI-SCC, go to www.namisanclara.org



A New Way to Walk the Walk!

NAMI Walks Your Way Silicon Valley will be going virtual on October 10th! The celebration of mental health that you love will be brought to your home or

mobile device! Instead of walking a 5k together at Guadalupe River Park, you can choose an activity of your choice—it’s YOUR way. You can walk a 5k around your neighborhood, on the treadmill, or do an activity at home. We are offering free, livestreamed entertainment with music, dance, cooking classes, inspiring words from mental health advocates, and so much more!

Are you interested in getting involved? Register as a walker or team captain at www.namiwalks.org/siliconvalley. We have a catalog of resources such as virtual fundraising ideas, team activities, and more!

We are almost halfway to our \$270,000 fundraising goal and we need your help. Now more than ever, we need your support! We

are reaching out to our community and dedicated NAMI family to reach our goal. Fundraising will be open for 60 calendar days after the Walk on October 10th. Mental health services are needed now more than ever because of the drastic changes caused by the pandemic, economic uncertainty, racial tragedies, and natural disasters. We are experiencing an increase in the need for our services and an increase in mental health awareness. We will commit our time and effort to our constituents because NAMI-Santa Clara County is here to help.

NAMI Walks Silicon Valley supports the 1 in 5 who experience mental health issues and the 5 in 5 who are impacted by it. You are not alone. From every corner of the country, for every age and every background, we walk, on the streets or in our hearts. In a time of challenge and change, we are united. Mental health is not for some. Mental health is for all.

For more questions, please contact our Assistant Walks Manager, **Kyle Galimba** at KGalimba@namisanclara.org

Mental Illness Awareness Week (MIAW): Oct. 4-10

Each year, millions of Americans face the reality of living with a mental health condition. However, mental illness affects *every-one* directly or indirectly through family, friends or coworkers. Despite mental illnesses' reach and prevalence, stigma and misunderstanding are also, sadly, widespread.

That is why each year during the first week of October, NAMI and participants across the country work to raise awareness of mental illness. We educate the public, fight stigma, and provide support. And each year, our movement grows stronger.

We believe that mental health conditions are important to discuss year-round, but highlighting them during Mental Illness Awareness Week provides a dedicated time for mental health advocates across the country to come together as one unified voice. Since 1990, when Congress established the first full week of October as Mental Illness Awareness Week (MIAW),

advocates have worked together to sponsor activities, large or small, to educate the public about mental illness.

This year, Mental Illness Awareness Week runs from Oct. 4–10 and the theme is “What People with Mental Illness Want You to Know.” Throughout the week, we will be raising the voices of those with lived experience to talk about some of the conditions and symptoms that are most misunderstood.

Here are important related events:

Tuesday, Oct. 6: National Day of Prayer for Mental Illness Recovery and Understanding

Thursday, Oct. 8: National Depression Screening Day

Saturday, Oct. 10: World Mental Health Day and NAMI-Walks National Day of Hope

NAMI CA Conference, October 12-13, 2020



NAMI California's *virtual* conference is right around the corner, on **Oct. 12-13**, with the theme of “Driving the Change.” It is free to all participants.

NAMI California hopes the virtual event reaches new members within the community and creates opportunities for engaging discussions within the platform.

NAMI California is excited to share that the **Whova** platform they are using for the conference has interactive features and a free app to download. Once you have

registered, you will receive periodic updates from Whova about the conference. (These messages are not spam! You can check your spam or junk folder to make sure you're not missing important updates from Whova about the conference.) There are opportunities to share your insights and stories, connect with other attendees, go to meet-ups, ask questions, take surveys, polls, and more. Download the Whova app from the **App Store (iOS)** or **Google Play Store (Android)** to get started!

All workshops will be recorded and available a few days after the Conference has ended, so you will be able to view any missed sessions.

Here is a link to registration and other information:

www.namica.org/conference

General Meeting Information

September 8 General Meeting Summary Santa Clara County Behavioral Health Services

We welcomed three guests via Zoom: **Sherri Terao** and **Todd Landreneau** with SCC Behavioral Health Services Dept. (SCCBHSD), and **Curtis Ohashi** at Valley Medical Center. They discussed the impact of COVID-19 on SCC's mental health system and its programs as well as how they are working together to improve systems of care.

Since the shelter-in-place order in March, Behavioral Health Services within the County Department and at Valley Med have collaborated a good deal especially regarding Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and the safety of patients, clients, and staff.

In partnership, they have consolidated services at Central Wellness and Mental Health Urgent Care, as well as other outpatient clinics. They have also transitioned services to telehealth (telephone & video); however, people can still come in person.

Some new systems initiated during COVID-19 have created more efficiencies. A social media person has enabled BHSD to live stream talks via Facebook and conduct town halls with different populations, thus increasing communication.

After the pandemic: The infrastructure for telehealth has been created, and telehealth services will continue. In addition, conducting so many meetings via Zoom has opened the door to increased communication between the executive and behavioral health staff. This will continue.

A video of the presentation is on our website under **General Mtg.**

October 13 General Meeting Personalized Treatments for Mood Disorders



Dr. Leanne Williams, Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University School of Medicine, will be presenting “Personalized Treatments for Mood Disorders.” Through the advancements in neuroscience, neuroimaging, technology and digital innovation, researchers have been able to better understand the brain, detect mental disorders, tailor interventions and promote wellness. Dr. Williams will discuss the first

taxonomy for depression and anxiety, which quantifies six brain circuits, helping pave the way for precision diagnostics, prediction and treatment. Through this approach, she is developing a standardized way to measure circuit dysfunction tailored to each individual.

Dr. Williams is the founding director of the Stanford Center for Precision Mental Health and Wellness and of the Stanford PanLab for Precision Psychiatry and Translational Neuroscience, associate chair of translational neuroscience in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, and director of education and dissemination at the Palo Alto VA Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Center. Prior to joining the Stanford community, Dr. Williams was the founding chair of cognitive neuropsychiatry and directed the brain dynamics center at Sydney Medical School. Dr. Williams completed her Ph.D at Oxford University.

VOTE4 Mental Health

The 2020 elections are fast approaching. While local races might be different, across the country, one issue is on every ballot—mental health. That's why NAMI National has a new campaign for everyone to join us and pledge to #Vote4MentalHealth this fall. Once elected, your policymakers make decisions on policies that directly impact mental health care in your community. Your vote can send a clear message that mental health matters.

Make a difference
in 2020 and beyond

Pledge to
#VOTE4MentalHealth

Will you pledge to #Vote4MentalHealth? Join us. Together, we can make a difference for the millions of people in this country affected by mental health conditions. We won't tell you how to vote—that decision is yours. But we'll provide information on how to ask candidates about their positions on important issues, updates on how you can cast your ballot, and reminders for key voting dates in your state.

Take the first step. Pledge to #vote4mentalhealth. Then increase your impact by forwarding this email to three friends.

For more information, go to <https://www.vote4mentalhealth.org/>

Mental Health Legislation Signed by Governor

On September 25, **Governor Newsom** signed a number of bills intended to expand access to quality mental health and substance use disorder services for all Californians.

Here are some of the bills he signed:

AB 1976 (Eggman), Mental health services: assisted outpatient treatment. It revises Laura's Law to make it permanent. It requires all counties to adopt Laura's Law and removes the sunset requirement from it. AB 1976 also expands county use of court-ordered outpatient treatment.

SB 803 (Beall), Mental health services: peer support specialists. This establishes professional standards and certification for Peer Support Specialists and adds these services as an option in Medi-Cal. Senator Beall has been working tirelessly for years to get this bill passed into law.

SB 855 (Wiener), Health coverage: mental health or substance use disorders. This expands existing law to encompass any treatable mental health or substance use disorder described in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of

Mental Disorders (DSM). SB 855 also closes a critical loophole: Under current law, insurance companies are essentially able to determine for themselves whether a recommended mental health treatment is "medically necessary." SB 855 creates clear standards with a uniform definition of medical necessity tied to generally accepted standards of care.

AB 2112 (Ramos), Suicide prevention. The Office of Suicide Prevention will be created in the State Department of Public Health to assess existing efforts, make recommendations, and build efforts to reduce suicide in California.

AB 2377 (Chiu), Adult residential facilities: closures and resident transfers. Requires public notice 180 days before board and care operators plan to close facilities.

Here is the news release about the bills: http://cert1.mail-west.com/joT/bGy/uzjanmc7rm/30282rf71bGgtmy/bG2irgrk/mgtf71bGqvnq/toqj/hynhdvss?_c=d%7Cze7pzanwmhlzgt%7C17sgtzwdbgqualu&_ce=1601063744.417a21293d2d56a9772d23b32f1fa2be

NAMI Program Spotlight: Peer Mentors



In our July-August newsletter, we featured NAMI-SCC's Peer Connectors, one major component of our Community Peer Program. This month we are highlighting Peer Mentors, the second component in the program. Peer Mentors work with

Participants referred by El Camino Hospital. These Participants have just come out of hospitalization or are participating in an Outpatient Program at the hospital. Mentors work with Participants in identifying coping skills and practicing them, helping them research resources, and are a friendly shoulder to lean on when they need someone to talk to.

Peer Mentors do not fix, save, advise, or set Participants straight; rather, they help Participants learn how to stop and think things through. Some Participants are trying to return to their studies or job. Mentors guide them to see if what they are attempting is really good for them or if there is another road they can take. Mentors and Participants work together for up to 4 months during which time they have twice-weekly calls (15-30 minutes per call) and one video call (1-3 hours) per week.

Participants are invited to take the Peer-to-Peer Education Class, join the Connections group, and even become a Peer themselves!

2020 Holiday Gift Drive



Happy Fall! NAMI-Santa Clara County's Holiday Drive team wants you to know how much we have appreciated the help of our volunteer elves over the years; however, we won't be able to invite you to our workshop this year due to Covid-19.

Our team is beginning to plan the Holiday Drive and we will keep you updated with

our plans as we have them. In the meantime, we are accepting donations to share the holiday spirit.

We will still offer gifts during the week of January 4, 2021.

What kind of gifts? It's a surprise! Send your sleigh to our office to pick up your gift bags and celebrate the new year with glad tidings and joy from NAMI Santa Clara County **Claus!**

Youth Mental Health First Aid

Youth Mental Health First Aid teaches you how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders. This 7-hour training gives adults who

work with youth the skills they need to reach out and provide initial support to adolescents (ages 12-18) who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem and help connect them to the appropriate care.

Who should take the course: teachers, school staff, coaches, parents, people who work with youth.

What does the course cover?

- ♦ Common signs and symptoms of mental illnesses in this age group, including anxiety, depression, eating disorders, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- ♦ Common signs and symptoms of substance abuse
- ♦ How to interact with an adolescent in crisis
- ♦ How to connect the adolescent with help

This *virtual* training requires completion of a prerequisite prior to participating in the 5-hour interactive instructor-led course via Zoom. The prerequisite coursework is foundational to the 5-hour instructor-led training.

Training will be held on the following days/times via Zoom:

Friday, Oct. 16 or Nov. 13 ~ 9:30-3:00 P.M.

Thursday, Oct. 22 or Nov. 19 ~ 9:30-3:00 P.M.

Please email LMena@MomentumMH.org with your name/email/phone number/training date you would like to attend. There is no charge for this training. To learn more about Mental Health First Aid, visit www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org

MEMBERSHIP/DONATION FORM

Join, renew, and/or donate to NAMI-SCC

I would like to join:

- ☐ Individual (\$40)
- ☐ Household (\$60)
- ☐ Open Door (\$5)
- ☐ Renewal Membership
- ☐ New Membership

☐ My company has a Matching Gift Program: _____
Name: _____

Address: _____

City/ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone: (____) _____ Email: _____

To pay online go to www.namisanclaara.org and click on "Join NAMI." Learn how to include NAMI-SCC in your estate plan. On our website go to: Get Involved/Planned Giving.

NAMI-SCC welcomes your membership. Memberships are valid for one year. Part of the membership dues enrolls you at NAMI State and NAMI National, which in turn automatically registers you as a member at all levels. Your additional donation helps ensure that we are able to maintain our office, as well as our educational programs. Your membership and donations are tax deductible. **Tax# 94-2430956**

I would like to donate:

☐ \$50 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250

Other: \$ _____

☐ In Honor of ☐ In Memory of _____

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

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To reach our Warmline, call

408-453-0400 Option 1;

after hours, press Option 4.

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