



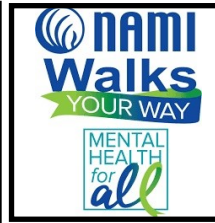
Peers Needed 1



Paper Spiders 2



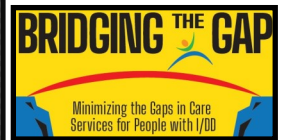
General Meeting 2



NAMI Walks 3



Legislation 3



I/DD Symposium 4

NAMI Santa Clara County

September 2021



**nami**  
National Alliance on Mental Illness

**NEWS**

## Lean on a Peer, You're Not Alone

By Moryt Milo

A pal, a peer, a mentor—everyone needs someone to lean on. For those diagnosed with a mental illness, having anyone in their corner when leaving a hospital, outpatient program, or jail can be the first step toward healing—especially when that individual has been down the same path.

No one understands that better than Ray, a Peer Mentor with NAMI-SCC County, whose path toward recovery was brutal.

Ray hadn't spoken to his mother in ten years. Then she became terminally ill and Ray came home. "We became best friends, and I took care of her," he said.

When she died in 2004, Ray had a psychotic break. He thought Jesus was talking to him through his mother's dead body. Delusional, terrified, and alone, Ray's world completely collapsed when the police knocked on the door and saw his mother's decaying body. Ray was booked into the SCC Jail, placed on the eighth floor, and put in restraints. Eventually, he was moved into a padded cell.

After three weeks, he was sent to El Camino Hospital. He also spent time in Fremont Hospital. Ray lost his job and his

mother's home because of missed house payments.

He was ordered into SCC Judge Stephen Manley's Behavioral Health Court. Three years later, he completed the program requirements, and Judge Manley gave Ray the opportunity to move into Julian Street Inn, a homeless shelter that addresses mental illness and substance abuse.

After struggling for years with mental illness and drugs, Ray found the support he needed to get his life back on track. At Julian Street Inn, he learned about NAMI and its Peer-to-Peer program. He became actively involved with NAMI and started doing NAMI presentations at hospitals, eventually becoming a Peer Mentor.

NAMI has various peer-support programs designed for individuals diagnosed with a mental illness including Peer-to-Peer and Community Peers (Peer Connectors and Peer Mentors). These programs help individuals understand the challenges of a mental health diagnosis and the tools needed to navigate toward wellness.

All programs are free and vary in degree depending on where individuals are in

recovery. Peer-to-Peer is a 9-week course that meets two hours a week. The Community Peer Program is a 4-month program that matches an individual with a Peer Connector or Mentor. Peer Connectors provide emotional and resources support, while working on goals. Peer Mentors have the same parameters as Peer Connectors, except individuals must come through a referral.

"When I [visit patients] in the hospital, I shared how lonely I felt," Ray said. "That no one in the world was thinking or feeling like me. I wanted that person to know you were not alone. I will stand by you and give you a hug if you need it."

To read the full story about peer programs, go to <https://namisantaclaracounty.org/nami-santa-clara-blogs/>

To learn more about Peer-to-Peer Education, click here: [Peer-to-Peer](#)

To learn more about the Community Peer Program, click here: [Community Peer](#)

For additional information, contact the Warmline at 408-453-0400 Option 1.

## NAMI California Conference October 14-15, 2021



activities in mental health, and ways to work together to improve care and services. There will be workshops in five areas:

The theme of NAMI California's 2021 conference is **Embracing Change and Transformation**. Each year NAMI California hosts a conference to examine important trends, best practices, new treatments,

Advocacy, Consumers & Families, Criminal Justice, Early Intervention/ Prevention, and Engaging Diverse Communities.

Very low registration fee: \$10 for young adults and peers, \$15 for NAMI members, \$25 for nonmembers.

All workshops will be recorded and available after the Conference has ended.

For more information about the conference and registration, go to [NAMICalifornia.org/registration](https://NAMICalifornia.org/registration)

# Paper Spiders: A Screenplay Turns into a Cathartic Journey

By Moryt Milo



The family dynamics created by mental illness are as diverse as the diseases that shape them.

When Natalie Shampianier, a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, tried to help her mother who began to exhibit symptoms of severe paranoia and psychosis in her 50s, Natalie's family life became complicated.

"I am a therapist trying to help a family member and that doesn't

really work," she said. "I knew not to tell her head-on she had a problem. I tried to work with her."

Her mother, Jean, had become increasingly suspicious and paranoid about her neighbor. She was convinced he had it in for her. This was not true. Yet this was her reality and it was fixed and unshakable.

"For a year, we tried to tackle it and it wasn't working," Inon Shampianier, Natalie's husband, said. "After a year, we told her we love you and want to help you, but I think you have a problem and could use some help. After that, everything took a nosedive."

For close to eight years, the Shampianiers, with two young children, tried to manage their family and Jean's erratic behavior. It affected every part of their daily lives. "We were helpless and couldn't do anything about it. She was helpless and everything just snowballed," Natalie said.

Eventually, Jean became convinced her home was unsafe and abandoned her house to live in her car. At that point, Jean's mental illness consumed Natalie's life.

Then in 2016, Jean died from a heart attack. She was just 59 years old. The loss of their beloved mother/mother-in-law was devastating, compounded by the couple's exhaustion from hiding their secret from friends and family.

After Jean's death, Natalie started writing about her experience. The process turned cathartic as the words flowed, and evolved into the screenplay, with Inon's collaboration, titled *Paper Spiders*. The couple, who weren't strangers to the film industry, were amazed how the project took on a life of its own.

As the production progressed, people began to approach them and say, this is like my cousin or my friend's mom. Natalie and Inon realized they weren't alone in their struggles, and they decided to open up about their guarded truth.

The film helped them understand mental illness, and defined what it meant. Natalie and Inon began to accept they did nothing wrong. They began to allow the helplessness that surrounded them for eight years to peel away.

The film has garnered numerous awards and the couple said, "We hope we can contribute just a little to the public and private conversations about the need to support people with mental health issues and those who support them. Then maybe we will have done something that has value beyond the movie."

To read the full story about Paper Spiders, go to <https://namisantaclara.org/nami-santa-clara-blogs/>

Paper Spiders is available on various Video-on-Demand platforms. Click [Paper Spiders](#) to watch the movie trailer.



## General Meeting — September 14, 2021

### Mental Illness and Substance Abuse in the Time of Covid



We are living in extraordinary times, in the middle of a prolonged pandemic, which has taken its toll on our mental wellness. As we are caught in this whirlpool of collective trauma, we have each also been spinning with our individual traumas, be it losing our loved ones or other losses such as employment and relationships. In the continuum of mental health, on one end of the wide spectrum is flourishing, while on the other end is having a mental disorder,

and in the middle is languishing, a place of stagnation, a term first introduced in 2002.

The stressors of the pandemic with isolation and restricted social interactions have contributed to worsening mental health, as well as increased substance use in our communities. The challenge we are faced with today is to figure out how to reconnect with ourselves and our community by supporting one another, and how to renew our sense of purpose and vitality. Dr. Nathan will speak to these and related issues.

**Dr. Kalpana Nathan** is Chief Medical Director at El Camino Hospital's Scrivner Center, Mental Health and Addiction Services (MHAS). She is board certified in general adult psychiatry, addiction psychiatry, and forensic psychiatry. She is also an adjunct clinical professor in the department of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Stanford University. Her interests include meditation, global mental health, and promoting wellness for all.

**NOTE:** Past General Meeting presentations can be viewed by going to our website [www.namisantaclara.org](http://www.namisantaclara.org) under News & Events and clicking on "General Meetings."

# NAMIWalks Silicon Valley 2021 — October 9, 2021

By Sarah Merrick

The clock is ticking. NAMIWalks Silicon Valley takes place in less than 50 days. NAMI-Santa Clara County, along with other NAMI affiliates across the country, will hold a hybrid event this year, meaning that some activities will be virtual, like last year, while other activities will be live. A virtual event does not mean the significance of the fight for raising awareness for mental health is any less important. No matter where each of us will be on Walk Day, October 9—whether it's in our backyard, on the treadmill, walking with a team, our families, or our dog—we will still be impactful towards ending the stigma of mental health. The Walk committee and NAMI staff have created another incredible Day of Unity.

**Keynote Speaker:** NAMI-Santa Clara County is honored to have San Francisco 49ers Offensive Lineman **Laken Tomlinson** as our keynote speaker for this year's Walk. Tomlinson has been a prominent supporter of NAMI-SCC over the years by representing our organization through the NFL's My Cause My Cleats campaign to help raise awareness for mental health.

**Honorary Chairs:** NAMI-Santa Clara County is proud to have three Honorary Chairs: **US Congressman Ro Khanna**, **Senator Dave Cortese**, and **Dr. Sara Cody**, who have each shown their support for mental health.

**Calling All Artists:** We invite you to show off your talent! Whether you are a performing Artist or Fine Artist, Poet, Dog Trickster, Magician—whatever your talent—we want to see what you got! If you or someone you know would like to be featured during the entertainment segment on walk day, please send a 2–5 minute video file (ex: .mp4), or JPEG, PNG or GIF file to [jforward@namisantaclara.org](mailto:jforward@namisantaclara.org). (Please note that we will not be able to feature all submissions. Also, by sharing your video you are giving us permission to present it during the event.)

**Registration:** If you haven't done so, now is the perfect time to register for NAMIWalks Silicon Valley 2021 by going to [www.namiwalks.org/events/siliconvalley](http://www.namiwalks.org/events/siliconvalley)

Join us on **Saturday, October 9** and Walk for mental health.



## Staff Spotlight: Sarah Merrick

In July, **Sarah Merrick** became a part of NAMI-Santa Clara County as our new Social Media & Assistant Events Coordinator. She's excited and passionate about advocating for mental health awareness and hopes to use her experiences not only in her job but to help others. Sarah hopes to help NAMI-SCC become more visible on social media by using engagement techniques and SEO. And she is excited to be part of the process of creating an event, NAMIWalks Silicon Valley, that has such importance.

Before coming to NAMI, Sarah was a speaker for mental health and was involved in awareness programs. A few years ago, Sarah founded LETS (Let's Erase the Stigma), a club designed for high school students to spread mental health awareness; it eventually spread nationally.

In her free time, Sarah loves to read psychology books, jog, and put outfits together. Sarah loves history, relationship psychology, and fashion.

Sarah can be reached at [smerrick@namisantaclara.org](mailto:smerrick@namisantaclara.org)

## NAMI-SCC Legislative Update

By Frank Alioto

### California's Summer Budget Revision

In the last few months, we have followed specific pieces of legislation working their way through the California State Senate or State Assembly. This month, we'll look at the June budget revision, signed by Governor Newsom, and what it means for mental health in California, given a statewide as well as a national mental health crisis due to COVID-19.

California's annual budget revision contains an unprecedented amount of spending. Here are some of the significant behavioral health spending/investment highlights.

**Twelve billion dollars allocated to end homelessness in California.** This massive project will include the creation of 65,000 new beds to house the homeless. That number includes 28,000 beds for homeless with mental health challenges. The latter will come with health and living services structured especially for homeless with mental health challenges.

**Four billion dollars in behavioral health services for children and youth.** The new budget will widen the use of telehealth (video conferencing) technology in the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness in California.



**Increased funding for diagnosis and treatment of substance abuse patients.**

**Expansion of Medi-Cal coverage for all adults over 50 regardless of immigration status and including coverage for mental health patients.**

**Increases in funding for treatment of children with behavioral health challenges in foster care.**

**Four billion dollar investment in children's behavioral health services that include infrastructure and partnerships to increase access to ongoing behavioral health services near schools.**

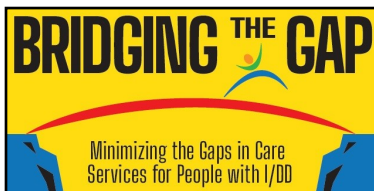
**Expansion of grants to support and expand age-appropriate, evidence-based behavioral health programs for children and youth.**

**Over two billion dollars to acquire and rehabilitate real estate assets to expand community-based behavioral health treatment resources.**

In future articles, we will keep you informed about specific expenditures that will affect California and Santa Clara County just as we keep you up-to-date on various bills that pass through our state legislature.



## I/DD Symposium



A symposium exploring and minimizing the gaps in care services for people with intellectual & developmental disabilities will take place on **Thursday, September 23, 2021, 8:30 A.M.–1:00 P.M.**

Join other professionals throughout the Bay Area for this half-day symposium focused on the specific needs of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities co-occurring with behavioral health disorders. Expert panelists will offer overviews of County Behavioral Health and Regional Centers systems, the service gaps encountered, strategies to address these challenges, and models of care coordination to assure effective treatment and begin the process of Bridging the Gap! To register and find out more, go to <https://www.hopeservices.org/symposium/>

## Schizophrenia Study

The Inspire Clinic at the Stanford School of Medicine Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences is studying the immune system in the disease process of schizophrenia.

**Recruiting now!** Healthy volunteers *and* people with a schizophrenia diagnosis (ages 18-40). Participation includes video interview, urine toxicology screen, and blood draw.

Anticipated time commitment is 3 hours. \$30 for participation.

Call **650-721-4412** or email [lanker@stanford.edu](mailto:lanker@stanford.edu) for more details.



NAMI-Santa Clara is grateful to supporters generosity.

August 2021, we received the following grants. These grants allow us to continue providing a wide range of programs to the public free of charge.

If you know of any foundations or organizations that might be interested in funding our programs, please email our Executive Director, **Rovina Nimbalkar**, at [rnimbalkar@namisantaclar.org](mailto:rnimbalkar@namisantaclar.org)

Anthem Blue Cross Foundation \$25,000

Silicon Valley Community Foundation \$40,000

Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation \$25,000

Los Gatos Rotary \$1,500

Albertsons Companies Foundation \$10,923

Supervisor Otto Lee (Inventory Item) \$40,000

Supervisor Cindy Chavez (Inventory Item) \$10,000

Supervisor Susan Ellenberg (Inventory Item) \$10,000

Clara County our many for their From June to

### MEMBERSHIP/DONATION FORM

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

I would like to join:

- ☐ Individual (\$40)
- ☐ Household (\$60)
- ☐ Open Door (\$5)
- ☐ New Membership
- ☐ Renewal Membership
- ☐ My company has a Matching Gift Program: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to donate:

☐ \$50 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250

Other \_\_\_\_\_

☐ In Honor of: ☐ In Memory of

Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

To pay online, go to [www.namisantaclar.org](http://www.namisantaclar.org) and click on "Join NAMI." Learn how to include NAMI-SCC in your estate plan by going to "Get Involved/Planned Giving" on our website.

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 ID #94-2430956**

### NAMI-Santa Clara County Community Resource & Support Center

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San Jose, CA 95128  
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Fax: 408-453-2100

[www.namisantaclar.org](http://www.namisantaclar.org)  
[office@namisantaclar.org](mailto:office@namisantaclar.org)

**Office Hours: 10 A.M.-6 P.M. M-F**  
To reach our Warmline, call **408-453-0400 Option 1;** after hours, press **Option 4.**

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