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NAMI-Santa Clara County

 Helpline (408) 453-0400 Opt.1

May '23



**nami**

National Alliance on Mental Illness

**NEWS**

## April 11 General Meeting Recap Independent Living Project Aimed at Those with Mental Illness

By Moryt Milo

For individuals living with mental illness, proper treatment and safe housing top the list of necessities. The right treatment can enable some individuals with mental illness to live independently. But finding affordable housing on a fixed income in the Bay Area is challenging.

The county is trying to change that for low-income individuals and those with mental illness. Last April, the Independent Living Empowerment Project (ILEP) received about \$2 million to help launch a program that promotes quality independent living through stable housing. The program uses a specific quality of standards template that was originally developed by the San Diego-based nonprofit Independent Living Association (ILA).

ILEP is actively recruiting operators in SCC who want to provide shared housing to adults on a fixed income like SSI or SSDI. Renters must be stable and able to manage their daily needs. If tenants have case managers, social workers, doctors, or therapists, it is their responsibility to maintain those relationships. These homes do not provide supportive services—medication management, transportation, medical appointment management, or other

direct services for those with mental health conditions.

The home operators within the ILEP group are required to meet eight high-quality standards that include a clean, safe, well-maintained home and property with specific amenities for all tenants.

“This is for the respect of the tenants. We don’t want them to feel like they are in a facility or in a science camp,” ILA program manager Hana Brett said. “This is a family living shared environment.”

The house must have a fully equipped kitchen. There needs to be a communal dining area, adequate heating & electricity. The home environment must respect the privacy of the tenants.

Although these homes are unlicensed, the operators participating in the independent living program go through an education and training program so they understand the requirements needed to meet the standards. All ILEP homes are inspected and peer reviewed annually.

The program, which is only a year old, is eager to add qualifying properties to its SCC list. Those searching for a home can navigate the list by city, preferred

population, and types of rooms. The properties list their rent range and other specifics. Some homes offer meals.

Rhonda Brown, founder of ILA, said “This is the lowest barrier to housing. People can walk in that same day. It is highly useful for getting folks off the streets.” She added that rent is month to month which makes the living situation highly flexible and is often used as transitional housing.

One of the ILA members, Matt Jacobsen, has 11 independent living homes in SCC. He is an advocate of the program. He said being part of the association has provided much needed support.

“Working with ILA has helped us with our operator/tenant experience and it creates a team atmosphere,” he said. “The tenants see we are working to create a quality home.”

*For more information about housing options, [click here](#). For information about becoming an operator, [click here](#).*

*NAMI-Santa Clara County can also provide info about housing. Reach out to the Helpline at 408-453-0400 opt.1.*

## May Is Mental Health Awareness Month

Mental Health Awareness Month has been observed in the U.S. since 1949. Every year during May, NAMI joins the national movement to raise awareness about mental health. Together, we fight stigma, provide support, educate the public, and advocate for policies that support the millions of people affected by mental illness.

This year, NAMI is celebrating Mental Health Awareness Month with the *More Than Enough* campaign. It’s an opportunity for all of us to come together and remember the inherent value we each hold—no matter our diagnosis, appearance, socioeconomic status, background, or ability. We want every person to know that if all you did was wake up today, that’s *more than enough*.

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Registration is open for NAMICON 2023, NAMI's National Convention. This year, there are two formats. The in-person event takes place **Wed, May 24–Sat, May 27** in Minneapolis; the online, Zoom format takes place **Tue, June 6–Thu, June 8**. In Minneapolis, there will be 50+ sessions to choose from and opportunities to meet people from across the country. For the online event, you'll choose from the best recorded sessions from Minneapolis with live Q&A.

Go to [convention.nami.org](https://convention.nami.org) for more details, the agenda, and registration information.

## Upcoming May 9 General Mtg Dr. Po Wang on Bipolar Disorders



Bipolar disorders is the focus of our May 9 general meeting. **Dr. Po Wang** will cover the course of illness for bipolar disorders (emphasizing the depressive component) and will discuss the newest medication options, and how they differ from earlier treatment options. Bipolar disorders treatment has come a long way since the discovery of lithium in 1949. Treatment options

and outcomes for bipolar disorders were limited and similar to schizophrenia prior to the 1990s' "decade of the brain." Surprisingly, the atypical antipsychotic medications that were developed primarily for schizophrenia treatment turned out to have important effects for bipolar disorders, including benefits for mania, mixed, and depressive episodes. Although mania is the characteristic feature of bipolar disorder, it is the depressive episodes that cause the most chronic disability.

Dr. Wang has expertise in the biology and treatment of bipolar and depressive disorders. Dr. Wang graduated from Washington University School of Medicine (St. Louis), then attended Stanford Psychiatry Residency, where he also served as Chief Resident, then National Institutes of Mental Health T32-Fellow in bipolar disorders research. After completing training, Dr. Wang joined the faculty of Stanford. Drs. Ketter and Wang collaborated on establishing the Stanford Bipolar Disorders Clinic, and Dr. Wang continues an academic practice at Stanford.

## NAMI California Conference August 25-26, 2023

The 2023 NAMI CA Annual State Conference is scheduled to take place on **Thu & Fri, August 24-25**, at the Grand Sheraton Sacramento Hotel, 1230 J Street in Sacramento, California.

To register, click here: <https://41339.thankyou4caring.org/2023-nami-california-annual-conference>

For information on booking a reservation at the Grand Sheraton Sacramento Hotel, [click here](#).

## Life-Income Gifts

If you want to support NAMI-SCC and create lifetime income for yourself and/or someone else, consider a charitable gift annuity. Now is a great time for this unique planning option since gift annuity rates just increased.

## Santa Clara County Jail Investigation

Last year, the California Attorney General's Office launched a civil pattern or practice investigation into the SCC Sheriff's Office, looking specifically at conditions within the jails and the Office's resistance to oversight. For additional information, please see the Attorney General's announcement here: <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-bonta-opens-civil-rights-investigation-santa-clara-county>

The Attorney General's Office is interested in speaking with people who have been incarcerated in the SCC jails or have family members who have been incarcerated and have insight into conditions or issues within the jails. Among other things, they are interested in hearing about issues related to medical and mental health care, housing and classification, programming, use of force, the grievance system, retaliation, discrimination, physical accessibility, and language access. And they are, of course, interested in hearing about any other systemic or persistent issues that may exist.

If you know of anybody who may be interested in speaking with them, please have them reach out to Jazmine at [Jazmine.Cortez@doj.ca.gov](mailto:Jazmine.Cortez@doj.ca.gov) or 213-269-6216. They are eager to hear from community members.



Join in and participate in this year's **NAMI Walks Silicon Valley** on **Saturday, October 7, 2023**. Together, we walk to spread awareness and end the stigma, and to advocate for change in areas that support policies, which reduces negative impacts and improves the lives of those in our community. Together, as teams, participants, volunteers, supporters, and sponsors, we get involved to make a difference and empower the lives of those affected by mental health conditions.

To commence our NAMI Walks Silicon Valley event, we welcome you to join us on **Sat, July 22, 2023** for our annual **NAMI Walks Silicon Valley Kick-off** at **The Pavilion, Central Park** in Santa Clara. Please keep a watch for your invite via email very soon.

The spirit of inclusion is what makes this event so special. Your story and your involvement are truly what makes a difference as we all come together for mental health. A wonderful festive gathering filled with smiles, celebrations, and meaningful moments! Join us, you deserve it!

## Mental Health in Faith Communities

By Anh Nguyen



**NAMI-SCC  
FaithNet**  
Creating Mental Health Friendly, Stigma-Free  
Congregations in Santa Clara County

Faith communities are often the first place people with symptoms of mental illness reach out to for support. It is

imperative that faith leaders have an understanding of mental illness and know where to refer community members when they require support. At NAMI-Santa Clara County, we have FaithNet, a program dedicated to educating clergy and faith communities on mental health, helping faith leaders distinguish between issues of spirituality and symptoms of mental illness, and promoting advocacy of the faith community to bring about hope and help for all who are affected by mental illness.

Our upcoming events are as follows:

- ♦ Sunday, May 7th, 11:00 A.M.-12:30 P.M. (First Congregational Church of Palo Alto, 1985 Louis Rd., PA)
- ♦ Thursday, May 11th, 7:00-9:00 A.M. (Catholic Professionals, 1547 Meridian Av., San Jose)
- ♦ Thursday, May 18th, 11:30 A.M.-1:00 P.M. (Mental Health 101 via Zoom: <http://bit.ly/nami101>)
- ♦ Saturday, May 20th, 10:00 A.M.-12:00 P.M. (SF Bay Fellowship Church, 1150 S Bascom Av. #24, SJ)
- ♦ Saturday, May 20th, 2:30 P.M. (New Community Baptist Korean Church, 1250 W. Middlefield Rd, Mtn. View)

FaithNet is available for free presentations for your faith community. To schedule a presentation or touch base with our team, please reach out to [yliu@namisantaclara.org](mailto:yliu@namisantaclara.org)

## Community Advisory Council Spring Luncheon

By Anh Nguyen



On April 1, 2023, NAMI-Santa Clara County's Community Advisory Council convened for a luncheon to share updates concerning mental health at the local and statewide levels. Notable speakers were former State Senator Jim Beall and Michael Fitzgerald. Our advisory council is comprised of people possessing unique experiences from different industries—law, healthcare, education, and even religious institutions. Mental health is a public health issue and requires a concerted effort in order to improve mental health for all. NAMI-SCC is fortunate to have the advisory council to support us in providing the necessary mental health resources, education, and support to those in need in Santa Clara County.

## Legislative Updates

By Frank Alioto

### State Senator Dave Cortese Wants to Know...

Santa Clara County's own State Senator Dave Cortese has long been a strong mental health advocate. His support has been essential in securing needed funding for the care, treatment, housing, and recovery of those suffering from mental health conditions in Santa Clara County, as well as in all of California.

In late March, the Senator asked some straightforward questions about state funding for mental health in SCC: Where is our state money going? How is it being used? Despite money being spent, the homeless population continues to grow. Has the money improved the housing situation? Has it improved mental health services? Has it enabled larger numbers of people suffering from mental health, substance abuse, and homelessness to be served?

To find the answers, Senator Cortese has requested that the State of California conduct an audit of Santa Clara County's use of its state funds designated for mental health, homelessness, and substance abuse. As part of his request, he has asked that state auditors choose a second county to use for comparisons.

The goal for the Senator is not to utilize the audit information to "clamp down" on how funding is used or not used, but rather to provide more transparency in use of funds. Perhaps, just maybe, the audit will find more efficient, more effective ways to use our mental health funds in Santa Clara County. We hope so.



### The Reentry Act in Congress

The Reentry Act, an important bill NAMI supports to help people get access to mental health care when leaving jail and prison, was recently reintroduced in Congress.

When a person with mental illness is released from jail or prison, they face additional challenges as they re-enter the community, including increased risk for overdose and death by suicide in the weeks following release and—without access to mental health care—a higher risk of cycling in and out of the criminal justice system.

The Reentry Act (H.R. 2400 / S. 1165) would change that. This bipartisan legislation would provide Medicaid coverage for health care, including substance use and mental health treatment, for people who are incarcerated starting 30 days before their release. That means people would better be able to connect to and access community mental health services.

Please urge your members of Congress to support the Reentry Act.

### Note About NAMI-Santa Clara County Board Meetings

SCC's Board of Directors meets ten times per year (except August & December) on the 1st Tuesday of the month at 5:30 P.M. The board meetings are open to the public and we welcome your attendance. Please check our website for location.



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No matter what, you are inherently worthy of *more than enough* life, love, and healing. Showing up, just as you are, for yourself and the people around you is *more than enough*.

Follow us on social media @namisantaclara to see how we are promoting #MentalHealthAwarenessMonth!



## 6th Annual Older Adult Mental Health Symposium

Register for this year's 6th Annual Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day Symposium, a free, all-day virtual event featuring engaging plenaries, informative sessions, and a diverse array of topics addressing the most pressing needs in older adult mental health.

Keynote Q&A with **Montel Williams**.

Register now for the symposium on May 11:

<https://connect.ncoa.org/products/6th-annual-older-adult-mental-health-awareness-day>

When you register, you will automatically be signed up for all of the day's sessions.

## Mental Health in the Tech Industry

By Anh Nguyen

Silicon Valley is home to some of the largest tech companies in the world. With May being Mental Health Awareness Month, NAMI-Santa Clara County is emphasizing outreach to tech companies in order to promote better mental health for tech workers. According to a recent survey, 80% of tech employees have experienced a mental health crisis, yet 71% of tech employees report their employers have not formally discussed mental health. These numbers indicate that raising mental health awareness is of the utmost importance to protect tech employees' mental health and help them live happier, healthier lives.

NAMI provides companies the opportunity to be a Stigma-Free Company. These companies are equipped with the resources, assets, and information they need to promote mental health awareness in the workplace and to encourage acceptance and understanding. In addition, NAMI-Santa Clara County offers *free* mental health presentations for you and your company. We will be kick starting these presentations in May for Mental Health Awareness Month and continuing them throughout the rest of the year. If you are interested in a presentation, please contact our Community and Media Relations Liaison, Anh Nguyen, at [tnguyen@namisantaclara.org](mailto:tnguyen@namisantaclara.org).



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

1150 S Bascom Av #24, San Jose, CA 95128

Ph: 408-453-0400 Fax: 408-453-2100

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

Email: [office@namisantaclara.org](mailto:office@namisantaclara.org)

Office Hours: 10 A.M.–6 P.M. M–F

Walk-in Hours: 10 A.M.–2 P.M. M–F

To reach our Helpline, call 408-453-0400, Opt 1;

After hours, press Opt 4.

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NAMI membership enables you to subscribe to the latest mental health updates, participate in online discussion groups, learn how to advocate in your community and add your voice to the mental health movement.

JOIN NAMI NOW!

