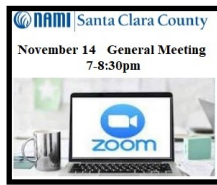




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NAMI-Santa Clara County

Helpline (408) 453-0400 Opt.1

November '23



**nami**

National Alliance on Mental Illness

**NEWS**

## 49er President Talks About the Loss of His Sister to Mental Health

By Moryt Milo



Paraag Marathe, the keynote speaker at NAMIWalks Silicon Valley 2023, is President of 49ers Enterprises and Executive Vice President of Football Operations, negotiates football contracts, maintains a competitive salary cap for the organization, and was charged with figuring out where to put a new stadium. But when it came to his sister's battle

with mental illness, he was confronted with a situation that left him in the dark.

His parents immigrated to the U.S. in the late 1960s. His father was an engineer. His mother was a homemaker. They had two children, Marathe and his older sister Shilpa. He said life was good. He played sports, excelled in school, and family dinners were an evening tradition.

Shilpa began to struggle with her mental health from an early age. She had depression which led to anorexia. Over time, Shilpa's mental and physical health declined and no one in the family knew how to deal with the illness. The subject didn't exist in their culture.

Marathe said, "There was no acceptance or understanding of mental illness being a barrier. None of us understood it."

The family denied that it stemmed from mental illness. They simply thought if she just ate, everything would be OK. But her health only became worse. The family went from hosting and attending parties to closing ranks and isolating from friends and family.

"I am able to say it now after many years of reflecting, but my mom and dad and [I], we were embarrassed. My sister was so emaciated we didn't want to go out in public," Marathe said. "We would argue and convince ourselves it's because we cared so much, but the truth is we saw it as a reflection on us."

The family struggled trying to find help. Whenever they took Shilpa to the hospital or a care facility, she was kicked out, deemed too much of a risk due to her emaciated condition, he said.

"It wasn't that we loved her any less. We didn't have the tools, knowledge, or resources to help her," Marathe added.

Unable to deal with the pain of seeing his sister and accepting that she had a severe mental illness, Marathe blocked out his home life and chased his career.

In 2005, Shilpa died at age 31.

Even after her death, Marathe said he kept moving at full throttle, until one day years later, the bubble burst.

"I said what am I doing. I was so focused on compensating and achieving my career that I was neglecting everything else," he said. "It just hit me one day. It was just freeing and empowering. I just didn't care about what happened in my career. I cared about who I loved and who loves me. Who I want to help and who helps me. That's who I am."

In the process, four realizations rose to the top. Marathe now finds himself talking about it with whomever will listen. The realizations are sympathy and love, hearing and listening, helping someone, and vulnerability. Lessons he plans to pass on to his young daughters.

"It's OK to feel weak. To feel vulnerable," he said. "It's OK to feel hurt and maybe more people will listen and maybe there is someone out there that takes my advice and helps someone they love."

To read Paraag Marathe's complete story, click [here](#).



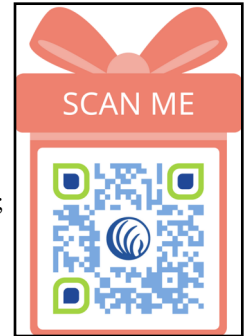
**Office will be closed  
Nov. 10 for Veterans Day  
and Nov. 23 & 24 for Thanksgiving**

## Giving Tuesday

As we approach this year's Giving Tuesday, a global generosity movement, on November 28, NAMI-SCC is once again gearing up to continue the vital work we have been doing for over 48 years. In light of the challenges posed by the global pandemic, NAMI-SCC has remained unwavering in our commitment to supporting mental health, never closing our doors. Our unyielding passion to combat the stigma surrounding mental health issues has grown even stronger. Now more than ever, the importance of mental health support is evident, and NAMI-SCC invites you to join our cause on Giving Tuesday. Whether it's a small or large contribution, your donation will play a crucial role in bolstering the mental health services we provide to the community, and together we can work to eliminate the stigma that still surrounds mental health.

## Holiday Drive

This holiday season, NAMI-SCC will distribute gifts to patients in hospitals, mental health residential facilities, and homeless shelters, as well as participants at self-help and veterans centers. Each year, we distribute gift bags to over 700 individuals, which costs us over \$8,000. Please help us bring a smile to their faces; often these individuals aren't able to spend the holidays with their loved ones nor do they receive gifts. If you would like to donate or sponsor the Holiday Drive, please send a check to NAMI-SCC, 1150 S Bascom Av, #24, San Jose 95128. Or donate through our website, [www.namisanclaara.org](http://www.namisanclaara.org).



## María José Hummel, Nutritionist, Talks About Food for the Brain

By Moryt Milo



The familiar adage “you are what you eat” doesn’t just affect a person’s physical health, it also affects one’s mental health, and one plant-based nutritionist provided eye-opening insight.

At the October General Meeting, Dr. María José Hummel, who holds multiple degrees including a masters in nutrition

and a Ph.D. in naturopathy, talked about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and how the food people put into their bodies can help with mood disorders like anxiety and depression and neurodegenerative illnesses like Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s. She provided numerous studies to explain various outcomes.

She wants to motivate people to eat a healthy diet and help them understand how what is ingested changes the way the brain might behave. It’s about reducing inflammation in the brain and body. It’s about having a solid sleep routine and exercising, which studies show is medicine for the body.

She discussed the importance of reducing saturated fats and how some fatty acids like Omega 6 and Omega 3 need to come from

the food we eat. But we need less of Omega 6 and more of Omega 3. She talked about eating more antioxidants from colorful foods and more folic acid through leafy green vegetables. She emphasized that over-the-counter supplements are not the best approach.

“We don’t understand enough about nutrition yet to imitate what nature does,” Hummel said. “I definitely recommend that people eat a better diet because taking supplements is never as good a substitute for eating healthy.”

She discussed the importance of amino acids and the role of Tryptophan and how it converts to serotonin in the brain, pointing out that specific medications, SSRIs, help increase serotonin to reduce depression and anxiety. Foods like tofu, pumpkin and sesame seeds, and almonds could help provide a higher ratio of Tryptophan. But it is also dependent on its relationship to other foods.

The brain is an incredible organ, she said, it’s the most complex structure in the universe. It has about one billion neurons and these cells make trillions of connections.

To watch the complete presentation on YouTube, [click here](#).

## Upcoming November 14 General Meeting Mark Gilfix: Special Needs Trusts



Mark Gilfix, a special needs planning expert and partner at Gilfix & La Poll Associates, will discuss how to set up a Special Needs Trust for loved ones with a mental illness. He will explain how establishing such a trust prevents individuals from losing their public benefits—SSI and SSDI.

Gilfix is a nationally published author and emerging leader in his field. He has

worked with hundreds of California families to set up powerful and protective estate plans. He has co-authored two books: *Special Needs Trust: Creation and Management Guide* and *Facing the Reality of Long Term Care*. Gilfix has spoken at numerous national legal conferences and reaches thousands through television and his YouTube webinars on various estate planning topics. He earned a degree in Management Science and Engineering from Stanford and his law degree from Loyola Law School.

**Note:** Past General Meeting presentations can be viewed by going to our website, [www.namisanclaara.org](http://www.namisanclaara.org), under News & Events and clicking “General Meetings.”

# NAMIWalks Silicon Valley 2023

By Llecenia Solorio



October 7 was a phenomenal day! Under the radiant hot sun, we came together as a community with a strong message of unity at History Park in San Jose, joining hands and hearts for NAMI-Walks Silicon Valley 2023. We want to extend our deepest gratitude to each and every one of

We encourage you to reach out to your friends and family, inviting them to stand with us in support of NAMI-SCC. You can create a Facebook fundraiser, send out emails, or engage with NAMI-SCC in any way you find meaningful. For more information, please visit our walk website: [www.namiwalks.org/siliconvalley](http://www.namiwalks.org/siliconvalley).

NAMIWalks has an excellent Recognition Program. All your fundraising counts until December 7. Get ready to sport your NAMI-Walks swag!

If you participated in NAMIWalks Silicon Valley, we'd love to hear about your unique experience! Share your photos or videos using the #NAMIWalksSV. Visit our NAMIWalks Silicon Valley photo page at: <https://www.probonophoto.org/2023/7Oct23NAMISV>



you who participated at NAMIWalks Silicon Valley. Your presence made a significant impact, filling us with hope and dedication for the future of mental health.

The outpouring of support has been extraordinary, and we're excited to share that together we've raised over **\$266,920!** But the journey doesn't end here—fundraising on our NAMIWalks website continues until December 7, 2023. Our collective goal is to reach **\$280,000**, with every cent devoted to NAMI-SCC's invaluable free programs, consistently providing the best tools for Mental Health to our community.

A special thank you goes out to all the dedicated staff, volunteers, team captains, participants, donors, and sponsors. Your contributions made this event a resounding success.

Our work is far from over! Together, we will champion mental health for all. The more we spread awareness and provide mental health services and resources, the stronger our fight against stigma becomes!

..... TO ALL OUR SPONSORS • THANK YOU .....



**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. Currently, our board meetings are virtual; check our website for log-in information.



# The 5 Pillars of Recovery to Mental Wellness

By Jared Bendifallah



Let's face it. Recovery from one or more mental health conditions isn't easy. My name is Jared Bendifallah and I've been in recovery from a serious mental health diagnosis since the summer of 2015. I have developed these 5 Pillars of Recovery to Mental Wellness by observing what has worked for me along my recovery journey and what has worked for others through my involvement as a peer support group facilitator, peer support specialist, and speaker for NAMI Westside Los Angeles.

The 5 Pillars of Recovery are:

- Basic stability
- Having a self-care plan
- Trusting the process of recovery
- Finding your community
- Expanded self-awareness and intuition

The first pillar is basic stability. This includes having clinical support, such as a psychiatrist and a therapist, and non-clinical support such as friends and family. It also includes having some kind of structure in your life to keep you grounded.

The second pillar is having a self-care plan. This includes having self-care tools that you can use when needed. It also includes having one non-negotiable self-care tool that you can use every day.

The third pillar is trusting the process of recovery. Recovery is a process with bad days and setbacks, but it is important to never give up and to keep moving forward.

The fourth pillar is finding your community. You know you've found your community when you feel like you belong and you feel seen, heard, and supported.

The fifth pillar is expanded self-awareness and intuition. Becoming more self-aware can help you to grow as a person. Following your intuition will lead you towards your deepest dreams and your soul's purpose.

Implementing these 5 Pillars of Recovery can lead to profound growth and healing over time. Keep pushing forward and never, ever give up hope.

Jared Bendifallah [Jared Bendifallah | LinkedIn](#)

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## SVILC People's Thanksgiving

Come enjoy a free, hot Thanksgiving meal, visit with other SVILC consumers, staff, board members and donors, hear SVILC's 2022 Annual Report, and share blessings.

**WHEN:** Thursday, November 16 ~ 12:00-1:30 P.M.

**WHERE:** John Burns Gardens, 820 Agnews Road, Santa Clara

**RSVP by Nov.3:** [Info@svilc.org](mailto:Info@svilc.org) or 408-894-9041

## Tax-Efficient Gifts

Looking for helpful tax benefits? No capital gains tax is due on a gift of appreciated stock or real estate held for over one year. And if you are 70½ or older, you can make a tax-free charitable distribution from an IRA and the gift amount counts toward your annual RMD. Learn how here: [Tax-Efficient Charitable Giving Strategies | Morgan Stanley](#)

### 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.namisanataclara.org](http://www.namisanataclara.org)

Email: [office@namisanataclara.org](mailto:office@namisanataclara.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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**JOIN AND BECOME A NAMI MEMBER NOW!**

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!**

