



Happy Holidays 1



Officer Election 2



Holiday Drive 2



NAMI Auction 3



Legislation 3



2024 Walk Pix 4

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Dec '24 / Jan '25



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National Alliance on Mental Illness

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## November 12 General Meeting Recap: SCC Implements CARE Act

By Moryt Milo

It's been more than two years since Gov. Newsom signed the Community Assistance Recovery and Empowerment (CARE) Act. Now, after watching and learning from eight other counties over the past year, Santa Clara County is ready to implement **CARE Act** on December 2.

Egle Narevic, a member of the Behavioral Health Services Department (BHSD) management team overseeing the County's launch, told a large NAMI audience that this is a new civil court process supported and served by existing programs. She also clarified that the goals may not be what families envisioned. CARE aims to avert institutionalization, incarceration, and conservatorship.

The legislation opens a new pathway for individuals who don't fit into the County's voluntary treatment model and those going through CARE Court will be prioritized in the BHSD system.

Not everyone is eligible for CARE. The individual must be 18 or older, on the schizophrenia spectrum, or have other psychotic disorders. Other criteria include: the person is not clinically stable in voluntary treatment, has been on two 5250s, and is unlikely to survive safely without supervision. The objective of CARE is to help these individuals before they deteriorate further. The CARE process will

be available to all residents whether they have private insurance or Medi-Cal.

Those who have a mood disorder like bipolar disorder or severe depression would not be eligible for CARE.

The CARE Court process begins with filling out a petition. The petitioner can be a family member, behavioral health provider, or even a first responder with a history of engaging the individual.

The petition can be filed through Santa Clara County Court's forms portal, although it's complicated. Narevic suggests (reaching out to BHSD) at 800-704-0900 option 3 or emailing [CARE-outreach@hhs.sccgov.org](mailto:CARE-outreach@hhs.sccgov.org). The staff can assist with the form.

When the BHSD receives a CARE outreach referral, the staff will first try to interact with the individual. If the person doesn't respond, the qualified petitioner or BHSD will move the petition forward.

Once the court receives the petition, it will ask the BHSD to investigate the situation and report its findings back within 14 days. Narevic acknowledged that two weeks is a very short time to work with someone, especially a person with a severe mental illness. During that time an individual may or may not show a willingness to receive treatment. If they don't and the court rules the person meets

the criteria, the individual has a right to legal counsel, to actively participate in the development and plan process, and appoint a voluntary supporter like a family member, friend, or someone with lived experience.

The CARE Court plan is developed in partnership with legal counsel, a clinical team, and the voluntary supporter. The goal is behavioral health treatment, stabilization with medication, and a housing plan.

If the plan is reviewed and adopted by the individual and BHSD, the department and participant will work together for 12 months. But the entire process is viewed as voluntary treatment, and the individual can decline the plan and walk away.

Once an individual graduates from CARE Court, the person is not abandoned. They're still eligible for services, ongoing treatment, and housing.

"Graduating from CARE Court means the individual has reached a level of insight and stability and can now engage with treatment and services without court support," she said.

To watch the complete video about the CARE Act, [click here](#).

To read the complete story, [click here](#).

To reach out via email to BHSD about Care Court petitions, go to the [website](#).



Best Wishes for a Very Happy and Safe Holiday Season!

The NAMI office will be closed on Wednesday, Dec. 25, 2024 & Jan. 1, 2025

## Giving Tuesday

NAMI-SCC is excited to participate in this year's Giving Tuesday campaign on December 3, a global movement of generosity that brings communities together to support causes that make a difference. For 49 years, NAMI-SCC has been providing critical mental health services, advocacy, and education to individuals and families in our community. Our programs—from support groups to mental health education and helpline services—help empower those affected by mental illness and create a more compassionate, informed society.

Giving Tuesday offers a unique opportunity for our community to contribute to this vital mission, ensuring that our life-changing programs continue to be accessible free of cost to all who need them. By supporting NAMI-SCC on Giving Tuesday, you help sustain and expand programs that directly address the growing need for mental health services in our community. Mental health challenges affect people from all walks of life. Your donation helps provide no-cost services, promote advocacy efforts, and strengthen outreach to underserved populations. Together, we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness.

## NAMI-SCC Board Officer Election for 2025-2026

In accordance with our bylaws, our annual election of officers will take place at the March 2025 General Meeting. We need candidates for: President, 4 Vice Presidents, Treasurer, and Secretary. If you are interested in joining our Board of Directors or wish to suggest someone, contact NAMI-SCC Board Vice President Beverly Lozoff at [blozoff@namisantaclara.org](mailto:blozoff@namisantaclara.org). Nominations will be accepted from the floor at the February and March 2025 General Meetings.

## Planned Giving

Year-End Charitable Giving Ideas—There's still time to donate to NAMI and save on your 2024 taxes. While we can't endorse a specific brokerage, here are some options: [Year-end strategies for charitable giving | Fidelity](#)



## 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.

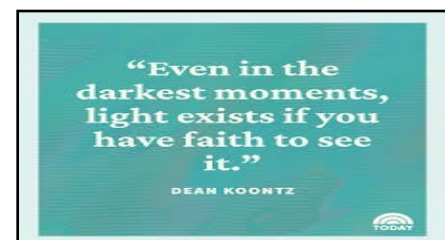
If you would like to donate or sponsor the Holiday Drive, please send a check to NAMI-SCC, 1150 S Bascom Av, #24, San Jose 95128. Or donate through our website, [www.namisantaclara.org](http://www.namisantaclara.org).



## Volunteers Make a Big Impact in Preparing End-of-Year Letter



A big thank you to some awesome volunteers from NAMI-SCC who visited our office in November! With their help, we were able to prepare and send out our End-of-Year (EOY) letter. This letter highlights a personal story from a NAMI-SCC member and reflects on the organization's accomplishments over the past year. Volunteers worked hard to place the EOY letters into several thousand envelopes and label them for mailing. Afterward, everyone gathered for a pizza party to celebrate the teamwork. We truly appreciate your hard work and ongoing commitment to mental health care! If you're interested in volunteering with NAMI-SCC, please reach out to our Helpline or visit our website at [namisantaclara.org](http://namisantaclara.org).



**NOTE: Our general meeting schedule has changed: Our general meetings will take place from 7-8:30 P.M. on the second Tuesday of the following months: September, November, February, April, and June.** Past General Meeting presentations can be viewed by going to our website, [www.namisantaclara.org](http://www.namisantaclara.org), under News & Events and clicking "General Meetings."

**Final Push for the Goal! NAMI Walks Silicon Valley’s Fundraising Effort Closes with a Silent Auction.** With this year’s Walk season coming to a close, the season of giving is just beginning. Why not kick off your holiday shopping by giving back? NAMI-Santa Clara County is hosting an online silent auction until December 4, featuring unique experiences, items from local artisans, as well as pieces from the SF Giants, Adidas, Eyvind Earle’s Disney art, and Rex Naden photography.

All proceeds from the auction will help us reach our \$300,000 fundraising goal, and each bid brings us one step closer. The auction ends on December 4 at 11:59 P.M. PST, so don’t miss out on your chance to make a difference this holiday season.

To start bidding or make a direct donation to NAMI Walks Silicon Valley, visit the auction site [here](#).

**\*\*Important\*\*** All auction items will be available for pickup at our office. For any questions, please contact Kristina Alaniz at [kalaniz@namisantaclara.org](mailto:kalaniz@namisantaclara.org).

Thank you for your continued support—and happy bidding!

## Staff Spotlight: Rachel Cucchiara



Rachel has been living in recovery from depression and anxiety for the last 15 years. She developed a passion for mental health awareness and a passion for letting others know they’re not alone in their struggles, by being open and vulnerable on social media. She began public speaking in 2021 when local gyms started asking her to speak to people who were

struggling during the pandemic. Rachel is an Ending the Silence presenter as well as an In Our Own Voice presenter. She is very passionate about sharing her story and letting people know there is hope and recovery is possible! She is excited about her new role at NAMI!

Currently, Rachel is attending Jessup University to complete her Bachelor’s degree in Psychology. In her free time, she loves to write and hike in the redwoods. Rachel is also a U-Jam fitness instructor at 24-Hour Fitness.

## Legislative Update

By Frank Alioto

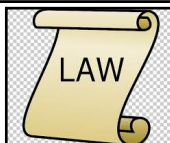
The California legislative new year has begun. Before we get too deep into it, let’s take a look back at 2024 and a few pieces of legislation and events in the state that will affect us today and in the future.

### 1. Care Court

Governor Newsom signed this into law on September, 22, 2022. The quality and speed of rollout has ranged from “very good” to “nonexistent”! Recently, the Governor mandated that all counties must begin rollout by December 1 of this year or risk financial penalties. This decision is certainly forced compliance, but the action assures that all California citizens who suffer from mental illness will have equal, timely access to the program’s benefits.

### 2. California Prop 1

This proposition passed by a very slim margin and gave the state the right to raise billions for mental health and mental health housing. This sounds good on the surface, but the bill is very



poorly written and where the dollars will really go is uncertain.

### 3. SB 1300

This bill was passed by the legislature and signed into law by the governor during the last week of September. This bill extends the length of time a hospital must give when it chooses to shut down an essential service such as a mental health specialty as Good Samaritan Hospital did a year ago in SCC.

SB 1300 is important for many reasons beyond time extension. It is a fine example of what can be accomplished by our local NAMI-SCC affiliate! We organized the outcry and demonstrations over the loss of mental health services that led to the media coverage that led to the support of our cause by county supervisors and state legislators.

I point this out not just because the legislation as well as the cause are important, but it is also a good example of what NAMI-SCC members can do.

## TRUST has a NEW Dedicated Phone Line

Santa Clara County has launched a direct, 24/7 hotline to reach the **Trusted Response Urgent Support Team (TRUST)**, a non-law enforcement mental health crisis program, that rolls out vans across the county to de-escalate emergencies and provide resources and assistance to individuals and their family members. Those in mental health crisis can now call the direct line at 408-596-7290 instead of 988.

**Note About NAMI-Santa Clara County Board Meetings:** NAMI-Santa Clara County’s Board of Directors meets ten times per year (except July and December) on the first 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.





**Ongoing NAMI-SCC Classes!**  
(All Classes are Free)

Please contact the NAMI Helpline to find out about our ongoing classes. Call 408-453-0400, option 1.

The following classes begin in late January for the winter session: Family to Family, Familia a Familia, Peer-to-Peer, and Persona a Persona.

The Provider course will start in mid January.

To learn more, visit <https://namisantaclara.org/classes/classes-2/>

**Directing Change Contest**



The 13th Annual Directing Change Film Contest has launched. Students and young adults are invited to create films

to start conversations about mental health and advocate for change. Films are due by March 1, 2025. Read more about submission categories, including the new Hope and Justice category, and contest rules by going to [www.directingchange.org](http://www.directingchange.org)

**14<sup>th</sup> Annual Behavioral Health Community Heroes Awards**

The County of Santa Clara Behavioral Health Board is seeking nominations for the 14th Annual Behavioral Health Community Heroes Awards May 2025. These awards recognize local community members who have made an extraordinary difference in the lives of people with behavioral health challenges. Nominations will be accepted through January 17, 2025.

The Behavioral Health Board will recognize heroes in the following categories: Agency, Consumers/Clients, Educator, Elected Official, Faith-Based, Family Member, Mover and Shaker, Media, Program, Volunteer, and Young Mover and Shaker.

To submit a Heroes nomination, please use the QR code or click on the [Nomination Form](#)



**NAMI-Santa Clara County Community Resource & Support Center**  
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San Jose, CA 95128  
Phone: 408-453-0400  
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[www.namisantaclara.org](http://www.namisantaclara.org)  
[info@namisantaclara.org](mailto:info@namisantaclara.org)  
Office Hours: 10 A.M.-6 P.M. M-F  
Walk-ins: 10 A.M.-2 P.M.

To reach our Helpline, call **408-453-0400 option 1**; after hours, leave a message

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**NAMIWalks Silicon Valley 2024**

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