



NAMI

Southern Arizona

National Alliance on Mental Illness

SINCE 1983



**FIND HELP
FIND HOPE**

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, April 6, 2024

November 2023

Volume 41: Issue 4



Join us for NAMIWalks Southern Arizona

April 6, 2024

NAMIWalks 2024 is now open!

Sign up to be a team captain, to walk, to be a sponsor, or to donate!



Once again, we are opening our walk registration early so all of us can get started on fundraising and team-building before the holidays. Sign up today by going to:

<https://www.namiwalks.org/southernarizona>

NAMIWalks is our premier fundraiser, enabling us to continue providing no-cost mental health programs and services to participants. The money raised supports mental health advocacy, education and support programs in our community.

Our 2023 walk raised over \$150,000, and we had over 1,500 participating walkers, exhibitors, and sponsors. We are looking forward to another outstanding walk in 2024!

For more information on the walk, forming a NAMIWalks team, volunteering, or sponsorship opportunities, contact Tara Turek at 520.622.5582 or email tturek@namisa.org.

Our Kick-Off event is coming in January. If you are interested in being a team captain, sponsorship, or would like to hear more about our future plans, and would like to attend, please email John Huerta at eventassist@namisa.org so we can send you an invitation.

If you have led a team before, and you have a change of address or email, or you are contemplating leading a team, please email John your changes and/or questions. NAMIWalks is great fun for everyone!

JOIN US TODAY...REGISTER AND DONATE!

Kennedy Park Fiesta Area
3359 S. La Cholla Blvd—just north of Ajo across from the lake, west of Mission Rd.

2024 Goals

\$150,000

100 teams



HIGHLIGHTS

- 2 - A message from our Executive Director
- 3 - NAMI SA's Accomplishments
- 4 - Power of Connection: Co-facilitating a NAMI Support Group
- 5 - Staff Changes
- 6 - Board of Directors, Volunteer Spotlight & Suggestions for a healthy holiday season
- 7 - Planned Giving

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Contact Us

namisa@namisa.org
namisa.org

Business Hours

Monday - Friday
9 AM to 5 PM

Dear NAMI SA,

I hope this letter finds you in good health and spirits. I am writing to introduce myself. I am the new Executive Director of NAMI SA.

It is my utmost desire to serve the community. I have a drive to work together towards a better tomorrow for people who have mental health diagnosis and their families. I am grateful for the opportunity to empower underrepresented people to have a voice and bring to light social issues that underrepresented people face through my diversified skill set.

I am honored to be in this role. I come to NAMI SA with over a decade of professional experience in community activism. I have had the privilege of working in diverse leadership roles that has equipped me with invaluable skills and expertise. In my most recent role at PPEP Inc., where I have been actively engaged since 2021, I have successfully managed CEO partnerships domestically and internationally. Before my tenure at PPEP Inc., as the CEO Partnership Liaison, I held an essential role overseeing 12 counties as part of the U.S. Department of Labor Grant in Arizona. In this capacity, I monitored and audited training contracts, designed policy and procedure, and oversaw operations.

In addition to my professional roles, I have invested in continuous learning and self-improvement through various certifications and educational pursuits. My education resume includes, a Bachelor of Political Science, a Master's in Legal Studies, and my current pursuit of an MBA from the University of Arizona. My education has endowed me with the theoretical and practical knowledge to excel as the new Executive Director of NAMI SA. I am also fluent in Spanish. Finally, I bring a strong background in social work, marketing, and program management.

I look forward to working with all of you.

Sincerely,

Briana Felix



NAMI SA's accomplishments for fiscal year 2022-2023:

Communications and Events- Tara Turek, Communication and Events Director, John Huerta, Communication and Events Assistant

- On October 4, 2022 we held our annual Candlelight Vigil in promotion of Mental Illness Awareness Week at Reid Park.
- Our Annual NAMI Walks fundraiser was held on April 1. We raised \$150,486, with 1,229 registered participants and 85 teams. We had over 1,500 in attendance.
- In April, to recognize NAMI Walks for Mental Health Awareness Day, we received a Proclamation from the Tucson Mayor and City Council.
- In September, to recognize Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, we received a Proclamation from the Tucson Mayor and City Council.
- On September 24, the 20-30 Active Men's Club hosted the 1st Annual Suicide Prevention Scramble, benefitting NAMI Southern Arizona. The total amount donated was \$12,225.

Social Media- Michelle (Chelle) Means, Social Media Coordinator

Instagram - 1,319 followers up from 1,204

Twitter – 431 followers down from 440

Facebook –1,994 up from 1,904

Memberships- Becky Nuffer, Membership Coordinator

Current membership is 331 up from 313 in 2022.

Ending the Silence (ETS) –April Barbosa, Program Manager, Becky Nuffer, Program Assistant

ETS is an early intervention program providing education about mental illness to middle and high school aged youth in Southern Arizona. Due to the pandemic we have continued to offer ETS both online and in person. A total of 93 presentations were given-88 student, 2 parent and 3 staff presentations in this fiscal year, up from 236. Youth and individuals reached: 4,519 total, a decrease of 2,199 from 2022.

Peer-to-Peer (P2P) - Yazmin Garcia Program Coordinator

- P2P: 31 participants;
- Peer Leader Training: 29 participants;
- 3 Peer Support Specialist (PSS) Training: 24 participants received their state PSS certification qualifying them to work as a PSS in the behavioral health field.
- Total graduates: 90 participants

Family-to-Family and Familia-a-Familia (FaF) – Rocio

Castellanos, Program Coordinator & State Trainer

Rocio took over the program after Judy Kowalick retired in November 2022, she completed the National Training of Trainers in February 15-16, 2023 to become a State Trainer.

Six classes were offered with a total of 43 participants graduating from the program.

Currently, the Spanish version, Familia-a-Familia is in the process of registering participants to get the program up and running again after being on pause due to the pandemic. In 2023, there were six Volunteer Class Facilitators/Leaders trained to facilitate F2F classes, two of which are bilingual and will be assisting in the startup of FaF program.

NAMI Basics and Bases y Fundamentos- Rocio Castellanos, Program Coordinator & State Trainer

Rocio took over the program after Anne Lettes retired in November 2022, she completed the National Training of Trainers in April 19-20, 2023 to become a State Trainer.

A total of 37 combined participants graduated from the English & Spanish programs with 5 classes given (2 Spanish, 3 English Classes).

In Our Own Voice - Judi Maikoff, Program Coordinator.

There were a total of 44 In Our Own Voice presentations and 510 participants. These presentations are given by individuals with mental illness providing their story of their challenges and how they moved into recovery. Six new presenters were trained for the program.

Faithnet – Judi Maikoff, Program Coordinator.

There was one presentation. The total number of participants was 10 adults. This presentation was given to St. Matthew's Catholic Church.

Suicide Prevention Presentations – Judi Maikoff, Program Coordinator.

There were ten Suicide Prevention Presentation given to a total of 41 adults. The Suicide Prevention power point was developed by Judi Maikoff and the presentations began in September 2022. One new Suicide Prevention Presenter was trained.

Advocacy - Resource Specialists –Lisa Cole and Erika Seekatz

Our Resource Specialists provided support and referral assistance to 975 individuals in crisis, with approximately 150 being in person visits.

Spanish Advocacy - Yazmin Garcia

We provided Spanish advocacy support and referral assistance to 35 people.

Power of Connection: Co-facilitating a NAMI Support Group

Written by Sarah Merritt Ryan

I have been in remission from symptoms of serious mental illness (SMI) for 11 years; however, there was a period of my life that was extremely difficult when my symptoms were severe, involving multiple psychotic breaks.

I was filled with heartache and despair, and recovery was uncertain. During the early days of my recovery, I would have benefitted in critical ways from NAMI's programs, but I didn't know about them. I wish I had.

Now that I have been in remission for over a decade, I am involved in NAMI's programming. In some ways, I needed to "close the door" on my mental illness and that chapter of my life before I could open it again by contacting NAMI and seeing how I could get involved. I have always said that the one thing I cannot bear is going through all this and not turning it into something meaningful.

So, one way I chose to channel my pain into purpose is by applying to become a NAMI group facilitator, training for my local county chapter and regularly co-facilitating a weekly support group.

I had attended a few sessions before training to become a facilitator, but I was still relatively new to the process. Even though I was new, I felt compelled to try and make a difference by taking a leadership position.

I have learned from being a facilitator that I am still on a recovery journey, and through NAMI support groups, I've gained a community, collective wisdom and a two-way learning environment. These qualities have improved my life and made me feel whole. I didn't know I needed all this until I received it.

COMMUNITY

I think the most profound impact that being part of a NAMI Connections support group (CSG) has had on me, whether as a facilitator or regular member, is finally meeting other people with the same diagnosis.

In my mind, I knew that there are other people out there with schizophrenia, but until you meet real people you identify with, it's easy to feel like you are an isolated case or an anomaly.

Because of this shared information, I can verbalize accounts of what happened to me that I have never verbalized before. Finding the words and sharing what happened to me helped me to heal and let go. Because of my CSG, I have a trusted group of people — a network — for which I am so thankful.

COLLECTIVE WISDOM

One of the most powerful features of the CSG group is how we pool our knowledge together in a session to help someone who may have had a difficult time in the past week.

Some weeks are always better than others for anybody. If one or two people are struggling on a given week, we marshal our collective experiences and wisdom in hindsight to comfort and inform the person in need.

Whether it is needing wisdom on vitamin usage, therapy type, Medicaid questions, dietary guidelines, exercise suggestions, talking to your psychiatrist, medication use, etc., people who come to our sessions are all informed by our collective experiences and are motivated to help anyone who is having difficulty.

TWO-WAY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

As a co-facilitator, I direct conversations, identify common themes to discuss, ensure everyone is included, stay on topic and follow NAMI guidelines. My position in the group helps me engage and be present. Even though I direct conversations, I feel like conversations can take on a life on their own, where I am just another active participant. Part of leading is letting go and allowing room for inspiring conversations that lead to full group participation. When everyone is fully engaged, I feel most successful and can learn the most from others.

I am still in the healing process, so even though my symptoms aren't what they once were, I still have so much to gain from being a part of a NAMI support group. I needed a sense of belonging with people with shared lived experiences. I needed my seemingly bizarre experiences to be normalized to feel authentically normal again. I needed to talk about things that you usually can't talk about, that I have never verbalized before, not even with my family.

So, even though I missed out on NAMI programming early in my recovery, I am here now, healing in a new way while also trying to make a difference.

Sarah Merritt Ryan is a writer covering mental illness topics like stigma, recovery and hope. She is a survivor of schizophrenia and is now a wife, mother and small business owner. She is a frequent contributor to the NAMI Blog, and she serves as both a NAMI Connection Support Group (CSG) facilitator and In Our Own Voice (IOOV) speaker in North Carolina

Meet Our New Ending the Silence Program Manager April Barbosa

Hello, I'm April Barbosa, and I wear many hats in my journey to make a difference in the world. I am the Ending the Silence Program Manager at NAMI SA, as well as the proud Founder and Executive Director of Rosaura's Legacy Foundation.

In my personal life, I've been happily married for 22 years and am blessed with three wonderful adult children. One is 25, another remains forever 18 in our hearts, and my youngest is now 20 years old. I'm also a dotting grandma to my 4-year-old grandson, who brings boundless joy to my life.

My educational journey includes a Bachelor of Science in Correctional Program Management, and I'm currently pursuing my Master's in Counseling. My ultimate life goal is to become a licensed therapist, specializing in helping both victims and perpetrators of violence find a path towards healing and a brighter future.



The work I do at NAMI SA holds a special place in my heart because I personally experienced the transformative power of peer support when I was at my lowest point in life. After the tragic loss of my daughter to violence, it was this support that helped me rebuild my life.

As the Ending the Silence Program Manager, I am honored to raise awareness and break the stigma surrounding mental illness among our youth. This cause is close to my heart, and I am committed to making a positive impact on the lives of young people.

My journey, both personal and professional, has shaped me into a dedicated advocate and mentor in the fields of mental health and violence prevention. I believe in the power of compassion, education, and support to create lasting change, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this important work.

Thank you for joining me on this journey of making a difference and breaking down the barriers to mental health awareness. Together, we can create a world where everyone has the opportunity to heal and thrive.

NAMI ENDING THE SILENCE

Ending the Silence is a free, evidence-based, 50-minute presentation designed for middle and high school students. Students learn about mental health conditions through a brief presentation, short videos, and personal testimony from a young adult who describes their journey to recovery.

NAMI Ending the Silence presentations include two leaders: one who shares an informative presentation and a young adult with a mental health condition who shares their journey of recovery. Audience members can ask questions and gain understanding of an often-misunderstood topic. Through dialogue, we can help grow the movement to end stigma.

Board of Directors

Becca King, *President*

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Angel Rivers

Faith T. Smith

Elizabeth Stromm

David Zynda II

Executive Director

Briana Felix

Volunteer Spotlight



My mental health journey began when I was 12 years old and since then I have been searching for help by working with therapists and psychiatrists, attending groups, learning skills, and immersing myself in anything that could potentially solve my problems.

I was really inspired 10 years ago when I heard a NAMI presentation in a class I was taking at the University of Arizona. I knew then that I wanted to volunteer for NAMI SA. I finally contacted them, and have been volunteering with them since September 2022.

I really enjoy my time at NAMI SA, not only because it is a very supportive environment for me, but because in a small way I give my time to help the community. I hope to one day be able to give back even more. One thing I learned over the years and find helpful is remembering that all feelings change and that the troublesome situation will pass.

Holidays and our Mental Health

The holidays are fast approaching. While some are filled with *Tidings of Joy*, not everyone feels merry and bright.

For a variety of reasons, this time of year can result in depression and anxiety. Here are some suggestions for reducing stress and maintaining good mental health during the holiday season:

- **Accept your needs.** Be kind to your self. Put your mental and physical needs first. Recognize your triggers to help you prepare for stressful situations.
- **Write a gratitude list and offer thanks.** The end of the year is a good time to reflect back on what you are grateful for, and thank those you have supported you. Gratitude has been shown to improve mental health.
- **Manage your time and don't try to do too much.** Prioritize your time and activities to help ensure that you don't feel overwhelmed. Remember, it's okay to say no to plans that don't fit your schedule or make you feel good.
- **Be realistic.** Families in holiday commercials and movies are fictional. We all have struggles from time to time. It's not always possible to find the "perfect" gift or to have a peaceful time with family.
- **Set boundaries.** Family dynamics can be complex. Acknowledge them and accept that you can only control your role. If necessary, find ways to limit your exposure.
- **Practice relaxation.** Deep breathing and meditation are good ways to calm yourself. Take a break to refocus.
- **Set aside time for yourself and prioritize self-care.** Schedule time for activities that make you feel good.
- **Eat well.** Our eating habits are challenged during the holidays. Try to maintain a healthy diet by eating unprocessed foods such as whole grains, vegetables, and fresh fruit. Eating well can help stabilize your mood.
- **Get enough sleep.** Symptoms of some mental health conditions, like mania in bipolar disorder, can be triggered by getting too little sleep.
- **Spend time in nature.** Studies show that time in nature reduces stress. Take a walk in your local park.
- **Find support.** Whether it's friends, family, a counselor, or support group, talking can help.

If you or someone you know is having a mental health crisis, please call 988 to speak with someone immediately.

Planned Giving

Leave a Legacy of Hope with your Planned Gift to NAMI Southern Arizona



Many individuals and families have a very personal connection with NAMI Southern Arizona because of the ways that mental illness has affected our own lives and the lives of people who are important to us. NAMI provides a wealth of knowledge,

training, skills, support and friendship through both formal programs and information networks.

Planned giving through a will, a beneficiary designation on a financial asset, a charitable trust or a charitable gift annuity provides an additional source of funds so that the programs and services that NAMI provides here in Southern Arizona will continue to be available in the future. A planned gift is one that you make by way of a will, beneficiary designation, charitable trust or charitable gift annuity.

There may be tax benefits to you now or to your estate in the future depending on the type of gift that you make.

You may direct your planned gift to “NAMI Southern Arizona” (current operating account) or to the “NAMI Southern Arizona Endowment Fund” (permanent investment account managed by the community Foundation of Southern Arizona).

WHAT TO GIVE

Examples of the best type of planned gifts:

Cash: It is simple and always a great way to give to NAMI Southern Arizona.

Stocks/Bonds/Mutual Funds: Gifting these assets avoids capital gains taxes for your survivors.

Retirement Assets: If you designate a charity as the beneficiary of all or part of your IRA, 401(k), 403 (b), pension or other tax deferred plan *using a beneficiary designation form provided by your custodian), the full value of the gift is transferred tax-free at your death and your estate may receive

an estate tax charitable deduction.

Insurance: Consider a gift of an insurance policy that is no longer needed or will no longer benefit your survivors. You may also name NAMI Southern Arizona as a beneficiary on an insurance policy.

Land/Real Estate: A gift of real property (home, vacation property, vacant land, farmland/ranch or commercial property) can be valuable to NAMI Southern Arizona.

HOW TO GIVE

Beneficial Designation: Place a beneficial designation on any financial asset. You can obtain a form to designate NAMI Southern Arizona from your financial institution.

Bequest: Bequeath a specific asset, a dollar amount, a percentage of your estate or the remainder of your estate after all other gifts have been distributed. An advisor such as your attorney can help you include language in your will or trust specifying a gift to NAMI Southern Arizona as part of your estate plan.

Charitable Trusts: May provide a charitable tax deduction, reduction of income/estate tax, and income to the donor (or a beneficiary) over his/her lifetime. Consult your attorney and tax advisor to discuss a charitable trust.

Charitable Gift Annuities: Allows you to make a gift of cash or property to NAMI Southern Arizona, get immediate tax benefits and ensure that you or another beneficiary receives fixed quarterly or annual income payments for life. Charitable gift annuities can be structured through the Community Foundation of Southern Arizona.

For more information:

Please visit our website at namisa.org/planned-giving or email us at namisa@namisa.org.

100% of all gifts and donations made to NAMI Southern Arizona remain right here in our community to fund no-cost advocacy, education and support programs for individuals with mental illness and their loved ones.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

November 11: Veteran's Day

NAMISA offices closed

November 13: National Kindness Day

November 20: Trans Day of Remembrance

November 23: Thanksgiving Day

NAMISA offices closed

November 25: Small Business Saturday

November 28: Giving Tuesday

November 30: National Personal Space Day

December 3: Members Potluck

5 - 7 PM make sure your membership is up to date!

December 25: Christmas Day

NAMISA offices closed

January 1: New Year's Day

NAMISA offices closed

January 15: Martin Luther King Jr. Day

NAMISA offices closed

January 27: National Fun at Work Day

NAMI Southern Arizona **DEPENDS** on you.

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP: **BECOME A MEMBER, VOLUNTEER OR DONATE.**

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