



PO Box 974, Schenectady, New York 12301

NAMI Schenectady E-News

January 2023 issue

Acting Editor*: Cynthia Seacord Send address changes, requests to discontinue and comments to: namischenectady@gmail.com
or leave a brief message at #518-986-9114 Visit our website at: namischenectady.org

Please offer to write and/or edit our newsletter!

NAMI Schenectady's 2022 in Review

As we begin a new year, it's time to take a look at what our affiliate accomplished this past year. We'll do our year in review topically.

We held **monthly board meetings** throughout the year, usually the second Thursday of each month, at the Swanker Room of the central Schenectady County Public Library, Clinton & Liberty Streets, from 6:15-7:45. During nice weather we held several meetings in Central Park near the Pavilion. We welcome your suggestions and offers of sites within Schenectady County, in addition to the Library, where we might hold future meetings.

Future meeting dates will be posted on our calendar, to be found in the newsletter, and on our website calendar. Unless otherwise indicated, all are welcome!

Advocacy: Last winter, affiliate members talked with their state assembly and senate members about important mental health legislation. These NAMI advocates explained the need for specific legislation by sharing their relevant personal stories that illustrated how parts of the "system" work, or don't work well or at all, and require improvement, if not total change. NAMI will continue to follow the "tell our stories" approach in the upcoming 2023's legislative session. While there were a number of successes realized last year, there is more to be done to improve the lives of those living with mental illness; sharing stories with our legislators has been found to be an effective tool.

We are happy that our advocacy efforts resulted in the return this past fall of the Wednesday evening **Family Education and Support Group at Ellis Hospital**, held weekly in the C-3 Conference room beginning at 6 p.m., facilitated by Kevin Moran. Attendees should check in for a visitor's pass before going to the meeting, and follow COVID rules.

Community Outreach: We participated in a Ribbon Campaign for Mental Health Awareness Month in May. In addition, we did tabling at community events, providing NAMI pamphlets on mental illness, recovery, NAMI programs and affiliate information. The events included Niska-Day, the Spina Bifida Walk and Roll, Schenectady Unity Day and the Out of the Darkness Walk at Central Park in early October, where we also raised funds for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention by having our Schenectady Wellness Walkers team take part in the Walk.

Phone line outreach: June marked the first anniversary of our "warm" cell phone line. We use it to help answer questions that people have about getting help for themselves or their loved ones.

Outreach at Ellis' PROS: This fall several of us visited a class at Ellis Hospital PROS (Personalized Recovery Oriented Services) to share with clients there what NAMI is and what our affiliate does.

Education: Our affiliate sponsored a presentation by Mohawk Opportunities to learn more about what this organization does to help persons in recovery. *We encourage our members to assist us by suggesting topics and guest organizations that would be helpful for our members to learning about. Your suggestions will form a working list for future "topic meetings."*

Social activities for peers was high on our list of accomplishments for 2022. We held a summer social at the Central Park Pavilion that included eats, music, games and door prizes. Other activities included Union College hockey games, nature hikes, art opportunities at Schenectady C.R.E.A.T.E. Studios, Mabee Farm Howlin' at the Moon concerts and Earth Day clean-up and planting projects.

Affiliate Organization: Prior to our fall annual meeting, the board reviewed our **by-laws**, and recommended that we change a section that

allowed for re-election for all board members after two terms with the *exception of the president*. A proposed amendment to remove this exception was voted upon at the annual meeting (and passed!) Going forward a board president can be elected for more than two successive terms.

Last year our board looked into revamping our nearly 20-year-old NAMI Schenectady **website**. As originally constructed, maintenance of this website required the services of a “webmaster” familiar with HTML coding. The original webmaster passed away several years ago, so we secured a member familiar with HTML to step in temporarily until some others with more spare time came forth to take on this responsibility. We secured one volunteer with background in WordPress, but sought a partner to be co-webmaster. We were overjoyed when board member Art Collins introduced us to a friend of his experienced in helping non-profits with website design. He worked with our “acting” webmaster to produce an example of what a new website might look like, while behind the scenes, work was undertaken to update the site’s service directory (always a work in progress). After testing the site, our board was happy to roll it out prior to our annual meeting in December. We are looking for at least one more person to volunteer so that we have “co-webmasters” keeping our site up to date and user-friendly.

Annual Meeting December 8, 2022

Having exceeded our required quorum, between mailed-in ballots and those of attending members voting at our annual meeting, the amendment to our by-laws explained above under Affiliate Organization was passed unanimously. Our slate of candidates to fill our 7 board member seats was elected unanimously. Board members Cindy Sood, Amy Kahn, Cynthia Seacord, Anne Marie Heim, Ann Ashley, Glenn Raymus and Art Collins will elect officers at the January board meeting. In addition to hearing from President Cindy Sood about what 2022 looked like, and her sharing goals for 2023, two peer members from NAMI Capital Region gave us an excellent “In Our Own Voice” presentation to round out our evening.

Looking Ahead to 2023

There are a number of things that NAMI Schenectady wants to accomplish in 2023. We certainly want to build upon what we were able to do in 2022. If you have ideas, please feel free to contact us at our g-mail address, or better yet, attend our board meetings, and get involved.

Some of our plans include:

- Bringing in different service providers to the Ellis Support Group at least once every 2 months to talk about what they do.
- Partner with NAMI Capital Region on sponsoring a NAMI Walk for fund-raising and exposure of our organization’s work to improve the quality of life for those touched by mental health challenges
- Partner with NAMI Capital Region to provide tabling at five NAMI “Ending the Silence” programs at Schenectady City Public Schools
- Continue Advocacy and Outreach efforts begun previously
- Improve attendance at sponsored events, especially social activities
- Provide at least one NAMI Family to Family class (a minimum # of participants is needed)
- Continue to improve our website.
- Build membership and participation

NAMI Schenectady Calendar



- **Board Meeting:** Thursday 1/19/2023 at the Swanker Room, Hon. Karen B. Johnson Schenectady Co. Public Library, Liberty at Clinton, arrive at 6 pm 6:15-7:45pm. All are welcome. Masks desired. Agenda: Elect Officers; Planning for 2023
- **Ellis Family Education & Support Group,** Every Wednesday 6 p.m. Conference Room C-3 Ellis Hospital, 1101 Nott Street

988: MORE THAN A NUMBER

988, the new, three-digit number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL), became available nation-wide on **July 16, 2022**. 988 is more than just an easy-to-remember number. It is a direct connection to caring support for anyone in mental health distress. This may include:

- thoughts of suicide
- substance use crisis
- emotional distress

988 is a free service available to everyone. You can contact 988 by chat, text, or phone. Get support in Spanish by pressing 2. Interpretation services are available in over 150 languages.

NAMI-NYS HELPLINE

Call or Text
518-245-9160
M-F 8am-3pm



About NAMI Schenectady's Warm Line

Our phone is a "warm" line that operates **weekdays from 9-5**. We hope it will help persons NOT on the Internet to contact us. Grass-roots volunteers take turns each month answering the phone. Our phone is mobile, and we can return voice mail messages. "Robo-calls" will be screened out. **Callers, be sure to speak clearly and leave us a call-back name and number.**

518-986-9114 Monday-Friday 9am – 5 pm

We will try to return phone calls as soon as possible.

Let us emphasize that someone experiencing an **emergency** should contact a true hotline phone number. Now that it is active, 988 is preferred if yours is a mental health emergency.

9-8-8 MENTAL HEALTH
CRISIS LINE

MORE THAN A NUMBER

A GATEWAY TO HELP, HOPE & HEALING

Starting July 16, 2022 Call 9-8-8 Instead of 9-1-1
During Mental Health Crisis Situations and Receive a
Mental Health Response to a Mental Health Crisis

NAMI New York State Small Affiliate Grant Awarded to NAMI Schenectady

News just in - our affiliate was awarded a \$,3200 grant from NAMI NYS. A sizable chunk of our annual budget goes towards liability insurance, required by NAMI and most meeting and event venues. The funding will help us cover expenses directly related to our outreach and advocacy efforts.



NAMI Family Support Group is a support group for family members, caregivers and loved ones of individuals living with mental illness. Gain insight from the challenges and successes of others facing similar circumstances. No pre-registration is required. Walk-ins are welcome. The groups listed below are run under the auspices of our friends at NAMI Capital Region NY.

Family Support Group, IN-PERSON: Saratoga

At Healing Springs, 125 High Rock Avenue 105A (entrance off back parking lot @ blue awning) Saratoga Springs, NY 12866, every first Monday of the month, 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm

Family Support Group, IN-PERSON: Albany:

At the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 420 New Scotland Ave. Albany NY 12208, every 1st and 3rd Wednesday, from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm

Family Support Group, ONLINE (Zoom):

Go to website www.namicapitalregionny.org some 10-15 minutes before the 5:30 p.m. Thursday night meeting you wish to attend which is listed on their Upcoming Events calendar. Click as directed to enter meeting. To use your phone to join, 929-205-6099 Meeting ID: 830 6082 3068.



A NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group: is a recovery support group for adults living with mental illness. People learn from each other's lived experience, share coping strategies, and offer each other encouragement and understanding. Groups are confidential, open, and free of charge. Walk-ins are welcome; no pre-registration is required.

Check the webpage of NAMI Capital Region at namicapitalregionny.org and you will see their calendar and spots to link to the Connections meeting you want to join. These meetings are generally on Mondays at 11:00 a.m.

For other virtual NAMI support groups running throughout the state, visit naminys.org, NAMI New York State's website.



NAMI Schenectady works only with your volunteer help.

- Want to see more issues of our E-News? We need people to write, edit, and lay it out.
- Website assistance – Expertise in WordPress preferred.
- We need others to serve on our committees (these include planning, finance, membership, education, topic meetings, peer social events)

We need you!

Congratulations to C.R.E.A.T.E. Studios

On December 1st our friends at C.R.E.A.T.E. Studios celebrated their organization's fifth anniversary. We have sponsored peer art experiences at the Schenectady studio over the past year or two and are happy to report they are also celebrating the relocation of their Schenectady studio to 140 Erie Boulevard.

JOIN NAMI SCHENECTADY

Membership in NAMI Schenectady also makes you a member in NAMI New York State and national NAMI

To join choose your annual membership dues type(x) below and complete form to accompany your check: ___ individual \$40 ___ Household \$60 ___ Open Door \$5 (limited income)

___ Additional Donation Total enclosed _____

Name(s)

Street Address or PO Box

City, State & Zip

Cell # _____ landline# _____

e-mail address _____

NAMI Schenectady is a 501(c)3 organization.

**Make your check payable to:
NAMI Schenectady,
PO Box 974, Schenectady, New York 12301**

We're Eager to Run a NAMI Family to Family Class

We have leaders ready and willing to teach this special NAMI Signature Course to members of our community who have loved ones with mental illness. You do not have to be a NAMI member to attend, and the course is free. Family to Family is taught in 8 class sessions that run 2-1/2 to 3 hours. NAMI Schenectady will offer the course in person once we have the minimum number of persons willing to commit to taking the course. Family to Family is designed to help family members understand and support their loved one living with mental illness, while maintaining their own well-being. The course includes information on illnesses such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, PTSD, major depression, and other mental health conditions. Thousands of families describe the program as life-changing. Family to Family classes are led by trained NAMI members who are also family members and know what it is like to have a loved living with mental illness. E-mail or leave us a detailed warm-line phone message if interested in registering or obtaining more information about Family to Family.