

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

** Please NOTE: We need one or two members to take on the editorship of this newsletter!*

NAMI Schenectady Happenings

As the New Year begins, it's time to take a look back at 2021.

We held a **virtual annual meeting** early in January, and elected a new board for 2021-22. Cindy Sood returned as our president, Anne Marie Heim became our Vice President, Amy Kahn was chosen as Secretary and Cynthia Seacord stayed on as Treasurer. In addition, Art Collins, Ann Ashley and Kevin McCormick returned to serve on the board.

Initially our **2021 board meetings** were held virtually via Zoom, but as the COVID vaccines became available, and the surges subsided, we began to meet face to face and masked, outdoors. At first, we met at a picnic table outside the Central Park pavilion area. Eventually, when the public library re-opened, we secured meeting space in the Central Library's Swanker Room. This is where we hope to continue to meet regularly as a board on the second Thursdays of the month from 6:15 to 7:45.

For May, **Mental Health Awareness Month**, several of us got together to make NAMI bows out of special wide ribbon and put them up in prominent places (signs, bulletin boards, poles, etc.) throughout our community. We are hoping to repeat this activity and add to the observance of Mental Health Awareness month by carefully planning ahead in the weeks leading up to May. **(We are looking for those of you interested in planning for this year's Mental Health Awareness Month. Contact us asap via phone or e-mail us to volunteer!)**



An example of a NAMI bow and poster about NAMI on display on the bike path in Niskayuna last year.

Social Activities for Peers in Recovery: Art Collins led peers on several hiking experiences during the summer. In addition to outdoor activities, we invited peers to attend several of the Howlin' at the Moon concerts held during the warmer months at the Mabee Farm. (In 2022 the summer Freedom Park Concert Series in Scotia will also provide more opportunities for peers to gather to enjoy music!) In early December we sponsored a Saturday afternoon session at the C.R.E.A.T.E. Studios where participants designed winter-themed canvases. We will do more at C.R.E.A.T.E. this winter, as well as provide at least one opportunity for peers to attend a Union College hockey game. **(For our calendar see page 2.)** Peer input as to other social activities they'd like to see NAMI Schenectady sponsor is encouraged! We welcome your ideas!

In early October NAMI Schenectady's **"Wellness Walkers"** team proudly raised over \$750 to support the mission of the American Foundation on Suicide Prevention when it participated in AFSP's Out of the Darkness Walk held in Schenectady's Central Park. (NAMI Schenectady Happenings continued page 2)

NAMI Schenectady Happenings

(continued)

Last year, using part of a generous donation it received from the Hannaford supermarket chain, NAMI Schenectady purchased and put into service its own dedicated cell phone number. Our phone is a “warm” line that operates **weekdays from 9-5** with volunteers taking turns to answer. The telephone is mobile, so in addition to live calls, someone from our affiliate should also be able to respond to texts and 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, but emphasize that someone experiencing an emergency, especially anything that is life-threatening, should contact a hotline number, several of which are posted in this newsletter.

In mid-November, we held our **annual meeting** in the spacious comfortable Poling Chapel at the First Reformed Church of Schenectady. Over twenty people attended. We listened to a brief talk by Kevin Moran on navigating the holidays, honored retiring Mohawk Opportunities Executive Director Joe Gallagher with a certificate of appreciation, and gave Mohawk Opportunities’ new director, Steve Klein a warm welcome and a chance to get acquainted with us. In addition, President Cindy Sood shared our affiliate’s plans for the coming year. These plans include:

- Re-establishment of a series of topic meetings (suggested topics welcomed; meeting places being sought)
- Getting the Ellis family support group re-started.
- Planning a calendar of peer social activities
- Participation in activities in support of NAMI’s Legislative Agenda for 2022.
- Family to Family – providing a class once a good meeting place is found.
- Working with local police on mobile crisis Development including on-going training

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NAMI Schenectady Winter Calendar



January board meeting: Thursday, January 13th at the Schenectady County Public Library, corner of Liberty and Clinton, 6:15-7:45 p.m sharp, Swanker Room. Masks are required. Guests are welcome. The board requests that **if you are not vaccinated**, please refrain from attending until you are.

January Peer Activity: Saturday, January 22nd Union College Hockey Game, Union vs. Yale at Union. Contact Art Collins at 518-372-0960 or email us **asap (by Jan.17)** at namischenectady@gmail.com if interested. Reservations are required (limited # tickets). You must be masked and fully vaccinated to participate.

February board meeting: Planned from 6:15-7:45 p.m. at the Swanker Room, Central Schenectady County Public Library, on Thursday, February 10th.

February Peer Activities: Plans are being finalized for a February hockey game and a Valentine’s Day themed C.R.E.A.T.E. Studio origami art opportunity on Saturday February 5, limited to 15 participants.



NY Project Hope
Coping with COVID

New York's free and confidential COVID-19
Emotional Support Helpline

8am - 10pm / 7 Days

1-844-863-9314

www.NYProjectHope.org

A program of the NYS Office of Mental Health | Funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency

Support Group Meetings

We recommend you give virtual support meetings via NAMI Capital Region a try:

Virtual Support Through NAMI Capital Region: Our friends at NAMI Capital Region are running on-line family and peer support groups. You can take part in these groups that meet “virtually” using ZOOM. To attend, log on their website <https://namicapitalregionny.org>. In the upper right hand corner of their home page look for a block containing the words “ONLINE SUPPORT GROUPS”. Underneath, you’ll see:

[Click here for online Support Groups](#)

Put your cursor on the “Click here...” and click, to get to the Support Group page. Pick the support group you want to attend. NOTE: You will need to link up to the meeting **on the day and time listed**, at about 10-15 minutes prior to the start times noted. Follow Zoom prompts to connect to either Peer or Family Support.

For a listing of other virtual NAMI support groups running throughout the state, visit naminys.org (NAMI New York State’s website) for a listing.



The graphic features a smartphone on the left displaying the NAMI logo and contact information. To the right, three white boxes provide additional details:

- Top Box:** NAMI-NYS provides **free mental health** support, education, advocacy, and public awareness.
- Middle Box:** Social media handles: Instagram @NAMI_NYS, Facebook @NAMINEWYORKSTATE, and Twitter @NAMINEWYORK #NOTALONE.
- Bottom Box:** NAMI Helpline: 1-800-950-NAMI (6264), Open M-F from 10 am - 6pm ET, Text: "NAMI" to 741-741, Open 24/7.

NOTE: NAMI New York State was in the process of moving its office at the end of December and hoped to be up and running in its new Albany location by 1/3/2022.



The logo features the text "NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE" in green and black, with the phone number "1-800-273-TALK (8255)" below it. A message reads: "If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline."



NAMI Schenectady works only with the help of our committed volunteers. Here are some ways you can help:

- Want to see more issues of our E-News? We need people to step up and produce it...writers, editors, etc. Writers can review a book or movie, advocate, share recovery and wellness-related tips, report on relevant news in our community, etc. Will train.
- We need someone willing to work on namischenectady.org, our website. Put your technology know-how to work today; help us redesign our site and maintain it!
- Offer to serve on one or more of our committees (these include planning, finance, membership, education, topic meetings, marketing, peer social events)

Volunteer opportunities abound....read the E-News to see where you might give us a hand!

We need you!

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**