

2024 in Review

- What did our Board members and volunteers accomplish this year?

From our President Cindy Sood

- Proposed changes to our Operating Model

Exciting plans for 2025

- We have several events and activities already planned for 2025.

2024 In Review

Dear Members,

Happy New Year! NAMI Schenectady had a very successful year of events and activities in 2024. When we sat down to discuss our plans for 2025, we were surprised and encouraged at all we were able to accomplish last year.

- We held 6 gatherings for all members, including an open floor session; our annual picnic and social gathering; and education programs on Schenectady's Crisis Intervention Team and Crisis Response, Suicide Prevention, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Telling Our Stories for Legislative Action Day.
- We offered our free 8-week Family-to-Family course TWICE!
- We held several free Peer-focused social activities, including concerts at Proctors and Mabee Farm, Union Hockey Games, hikes and Earth Day planting and clean-ups.

- Members lobbied for improvements to mental health care with NYS Legislative representatives and participated in a video conference with Assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara.
- We gave out information and represented NAMI Schenectady at several local events: Niskaday, Union College Health Fairs, Unity Day, MVP fitness Challenge, To Life Conference and the Ellis Clinic ribbon cutting.
- We collaborated on Project Breathe with the nccPA Health Foundation.
- We raised funds for NAMI in the annual NAMIWalks event.
- We operated the NAMI Schenectady Helpline, our phone service for mental health information and inquiries.

Many thanks to our Board members and volunteers who work very hard to offer these services free of charge to the Schenectady and surrounding areas.

Special thanks to member Hwal Lee, PA, a practitioner in the field who offered two education programs for us this year!



From Our President , Proposed Changes to our Operating Model

We mentioned in our recent communications that NAMI Schenectady has not received any new nominations for our Board. As a result, the Board dedicated much of our recent meeting time to weighing the different NAMI affiliate models available to us.

Specifically:

- Model A, our current model;
- Model B, where we would operate under the NAMI NYS organization; and
- A merger with the NAMI Capital Region affiliate.

After considering these different models and talking to representatives who operate under these models, the Board voted to pursue transitioning to a Model B Affiliate.

Model B would allow us to keep our name, (although we will give up our incorporation) and allow us to keep offering programs in Schenectady and surrounding areas.

Model B would also reduce or eliminate many of the Model A administrative burdens. For example, NAMI NYS would handle our finances and pay for our liability insurance. Model B would also eliminate the requirement to maintain separate by-laws and various operating committees, many of which we have been unable to sustain.

We will begin planning for this transition at our monthly meetings with the hope to complete the process by mid-year. We will send more information and an official ballot to approve the transition once we have approval from NAMI NYS to move forward.



Exciting Plans for 2025

Our Board has already begun planning 2025 activities. So far, we have the following on the calendar:

Exciting Plans for 2025 Continued

February 22 – For peers: Join Art Therapist Heather Hutchison at CREATE for a mixed media art project focused on gratitude, mindfulness and self-care. To reserve a seat, call the NAMI line at 518-986-9114.

February 28 – For peers: Join Art Collins for Union College Men’s Hockey vs. Cornell University Men’s Hockey. To reserve a ticket, Contact Art Collins at 518-372-0960.

February, March and April – Family to Family class

March – Legislative Action Day

April 13 – For peers: The Schenectady-Saratoga symphony closes out their 24-25 season with Verdi's great "Requiem!"

April 23 – Earth day clean up and planting

May – For peers: gemstone and jewelry making class

June, July and August – For peers: Howling at the Moon concerts at Mabee farm and local nature hikes

August - Family picnic and social gathering

September, October - NAMIWalks

We are scheduling three more workshops with CREATE Studios, a Peer to Peer class offering, a Mineral Club outing and additional local concerts. Check out our webpage at NAMISchenectady.org and our [NAMISchenectady Facebook page](#) for more updates and additional events as the year progresses, or call our NAMI Schenectady

Helpline at 518-986-9114 for more information.

WHAT IS NAMI?

NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness.

NAMI Schenectady **
PO Box 974 **
Schenectady, NY **
12301-0974
(518) 986-9114 **

namischenectady@gmail.com **

www.namischenectady.org