



National Alliance on Mental Illness, Stanislaus
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NAMI Stanislaus promotes mental health services in the Stanislaus County areas. Operating since 1990 as a non-profit organization NAMI Stanislaus helps people with mental illness, their families and the community by providing emotional support, education and advocacy.

Mark Your Calendars:

Board Meeting – Wednesday January 13th at 3:00 p.m.

General Meeting – Wednesday January 20th at 2016 at 6:30 PM with Guest Speaker and author Dr. Golden.

Come join us on January 20th, 6:30 p.m., at Jana Lynn Plaza, 500 N. 9th Street, Modesto for our monthly meeting. After refreshments we'll hear from author Dr. Golden. We are fortunate to have Dr. Golden scheduled to speak on living with bipolar disease at our next general NAMI Stanislaus meeting. We have several copies of his book available to borrow from our library and copies will be available to purchase at the meeting.

Family to Family classes coming this Spring.

Please check our [calendar](#) or call the office at (209) 558-4555.

Thank You to Stanislaus County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services

NAMI Stanislaus would like to start our new year by thanking Madelyn Schlaepfer (Mental Health Director of BHRS), Family Advocates Melissa Farris, Tim White, Denise Dillon, and all the employees of Stanislaus County who have been so supportive of our program leaders and volunteers. It has been a tremendous benefit to us in our important mission of educating the public and providing support to members of our organization. **You are appreciated!**

NAMI Family To Family Article Becky Slaughter

Why can't she try harder? Why can't he just calm down and listen to what I'm trying to say? Can't she see that the medications make her life and everyone else around her so much better? Why does he just stop taking his meds? Can the medications cure her so we can go back to how we once lived? He doesn't seem to care about anyone but himself. She never hears what I say, she only hears what she wants to. What happened to that loving and carefree kid I used to know? Am I doing too much for him? Is there something more that I should be doing? Why can't the doctors see what is going on here? It breaks my heart to see her in such pain. How long did they say it will take before the medications start to work? Can I take it much longer? What if I can't take it any longer?

If we are really honest with ourselves, these thoughts are not that far from the questions, frustrations and fears we face when we love a person with a mental illness. If we face the frustrations and fears, we may learn that this illness has turned our lives upside down. That sometimes we seem to be so busy trying to keep our balance, we lose our sense of vision and hope for our futures, not to mention those we once had for our loved one.

I do not pretend to have all of the answers but I can tell you that I found most of them by attending the NAMI Family to Family Class recently. Never-ending gratitude goes out to Joyce Burland, Ph.D. and Teri Brister, Ph.D. as well all of the NAMI teachers, staff and volunteers that have made sure this class is available to family members of individuals living with mental illness – Your efforts have saved many lives and families folks, thank you.

In this class I learned so much more that I could have dreamed; the characteristics and diagnosis of various mental illnesses, how the brain functions with and without mental illness. I learned how medications are used, how they work in the body, how long they take to begin working and the side effects our loved ones experience. I learned through various modalities what individuals with brain disorders; face day- in and day-out; from the way their brain is processing information to their inability to control the brain and its functioning. I learned how mental illness interferes with a person's ability to communicate and why and how changes in my communication style can make a tremendous difference in the outcome of a conversation. I learned how different mental illnesses impact the logic and understanding of individuals coping with brain disorders. I learned how deeply individuals with mental illness struggle against their symptoms just to maintain acceptable behavior as our mainstream culture defines it. I learned how great the need is for each of us to advocate for our family member and dispel the ignorance and stigma attached to mental illness. I learned how with education and understanding, I can provide the type of support my loved one needs. I learned how important it is for me to take care of myself as I support my loved one.

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In this class I came to respect and admire the courage and tenacity that goes unrecognized in individuals who suffer from mental illness as they attempt to contribute to this world. I now understand and appreciate the fact that my family member is one of the bravest, strongest and most misunderstood people I have ever known.

Lastly, I walked away with hope; for myself and my family member. When I first heard the word “recovery”, I didn’t have a clue that there are many, many individuals affected by mental illness that live productive and fulfilled lives. I have now met some of them and have heard the stories of how each have identified and now manage factors that impact their recovery. If my family member struggles, I now have a tool chest full of practical equipment for tinkering with the various challenges that this type of illness can pose. This class has been by far, the most important time investment I have ever made, for myself and my family. To those who have not attended yet: I encourage you to make the commitment- It will change your life.



Darlene Thomas, Family-to-Family Coordinator, and recent graduates of Family-to-Family. If you are interested in registering for a class in Modesto, Turlock or Oakdale, please call Darlene at (209) 656-8855.

I WISH YOU A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR AND BLESSINGS

Our annual potluck was a great success. We had many old friends and new friends as well, thanks to the relationships that our members have formed in the many programs in which they have participated: Family to Family, Family support group, Peer to Peer, Connection, Ending the Silence, In Our Own Voice and Parents and Teachers as Allies. Also, thanks to our new office assistant, Eileen, for making new relationships for us and continuing to respond to families who call the NAMI office. I also want to thank the board, and especially *Rhonda Allen, Nicki Allen, and Chris Brady* for going the extra mile in decorating!! Wow! Also to *Joyce Plis* and *Judy Kropp* for providing the main dish and punch. Our new board at large member, *Jack Jacques*, also came early to help us set up and prepare the food. THANKS TO ALL. To make our event complete, *Ron Brasuell* brought his guitar and helped us sing the holiday music with the help of *Mike Moran*, too. Many of you brought items for the gift bags we are giving to the Wellness Center. I have worked in the NAMI office for over 7 years, and have seen that center develop. They have provided a welcoming, safe place for many individuals these past years when they have taken it as a project.

Indicative of the support the county gives us, *Judi and Donna* from MRS came to our potluck and even helped provide more tables and chairs since we were overflowing!! Thanks to BHRS and *Madelyn* for their continuing support of families in our county.

Now, we have a challenge ahead in the New Year to continue to fight for stigma reduction of the mentally ill and for more awareness of the fact that it is a disease and people can recover with early treatment. Our many education programs help to reach this goal, but we still have a lot to do.

Keep in mind some upcoming NAMI events: NAMI WALK, May 7th in Sacramento; MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH in May, NATIONAL NAMI CONFERENCE in July in Denver, CO, CALIFORNIA NAMI CONFERENCE in August in San Francisco (Burlingame) and our many wonderful local NAMI Stanislaus speaker nights that Judy Kropp so efficiently arranges. Next month, Paul Golden, a nephrologist, who has dealt with Bipolar himself, and has written a book called **An Insider's View of Bipolar Disease**, will be our speaker. This will be on Wednesday, January 20th in the Jana Lynn room on North 9th Street.

Remember; Family is the foundation of our life and hope you all will have a safe, happy holiday and New Year.

Lynn Padlo, Executive Director

Holiday Potluck

Our NAMI Holiday potluck was a great success with 62 people signing in and over 70 in attendance. Although crowded we had a pleasant visit with friends and new acquaintances, and lots of delicious food.



Christmas carols were led by Ron Brasuell, Lynn Padlo and Mike Moran.



Spring Cleaning? Save some good stuff for our NAMI BIG YARD Sale coming up in March to raise funds for NAMIWalk teams, 2016.

Thank You's

Donations

Daniel Byrne (in Memory of Annan Byrne)
Lucinda Chiszar
CTR Board (Wellness Center Volunteer Appreciation)
Jamie Fabela (Monthly Donation)
Manjit & Harinder Nagi
Lynn Padlo (in Memory of Beth Kropp)
Joyce Plis-Hickman (in Memory of Beth Kropp)
Rebecca Slaughter
Thomas & Krista Smith
Stone Environmental, Inc. (in Memory of Annan Byrne)
Cyndy Vieira
Helen Vitorino (in Memory of Helena & Serafim Aguiar)

Memberships

Robert & Darlene Crawford
Tammy Gutierrez
Kusum Johnson
Rebecca Slaughter
Thomas & Krista Smith
Cyndy Vieira
Paula Williams

Volunteer Appreciation

On Tuesday, December 15th our local affiliate had a holiday party and gifts for the Wellness Recovery Drop-in Center volunteers and staff. The party was made possible by a generous donation from the Community Transitional Resources Board – our sincere thank you to board members Greg Spiering, Bob Moran, Joe Duran and Joyce Plis-Hickman. Thanks also to the many members who brought donated toiletries and gifts to our holiday party to be distributed to members of the Wellness Recovery Drop-in Center.



Attendees (not in order): Nicole Albro, Jason Myer, Antoinette Brooks, Randy Brooks, Sue Moseley, Anita Say, Ameo, Bunreth (Sok), Lynda, Monica Silva, Darlene Thomas, Lynn Padlo