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**SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST**

- We are accepting applications for officer and director positions on our Board of Directors.
- Please call Dar at (209) 656-8855 if you are interested in volunteering.

**REMINDERS**

December 5th, NAMI Board Meeting, Suite A 6:30pm
Open to the public

December 8th, NAMI Holiday Potluck 6:00pm

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**Holiday Celebration & Potluck**

Please join us for NAMI’s Annual Holiday Potluck

**December 8th, 2018**
**6 p.m.**
**Jana Lynn Room**
**500 N. 9th St., Modesto, Ca.**

Ham, beverages, & tableware will be provided. Please bring a side dish or dessert & join us. Please RSVP by December 3rd to receive a free ticket for a $25.00 Gasoline Gift Card drawing. Call Dar @ (209) 656-8855

For the first time we will be having a White Elephant Gift Exchange. If you wish to participate, and we hope that you will, please bring a regifted, wrapped item and join us.
VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are just ordinary people with extraordinary hearts.
They offer the gift of time to teach, to listen, to help, to inspire, to build, to grow, to learn.
They expect no pay, yet the value of their work knows no limit.
They've known the unexpected joy of a simple hug.
They've planted tiny seeds of love in countless lives.
Volunteers are just ordinary people who reach out and take a hand and together make a difference that lasts a lifetime.

Family to Family Classes Graduate

We had two Family to Family classes graduate in November with a total of 17 graduates.
As a Family to Family teacher for many years now, it never ceases to amaze me how the students come away with a new understanding of mental health conditions.
Most people come into class on the first night feeling overwhelmed, hopeless, powerless, devastated, helpless, etc. As each week progresses, I slowly watch them begin to smile and have some hope. By the end of the class which is on the 12th week, it’s like watching a rose bud slowly develop into a flower.
As a Family to Family teacher I cannot express how fulfilling, encouraging and gratifying it is to have the opportunity to meet the numerous individuals that attend these classes each year. I find it a privilege to be a part of their journey in educating themselves about mental health conditions.
I would like to encourage everyone that has a loved one living with a mental health condition to take this class.
We will be offering the class again in Modesto and Turlock, in the spring.
If you have any questions regarding the Family to Family class, please call me at (209) 656-8855 Dar

NAMI Stanislaus Presentations

Puja Mehta, our Preventative Early Intervention Program Coordinator, has recently created a power point presentation. We use this tool as a way to bring the awareness of NAMI programs, classes and support groups to the numerous organizations that work in the mental health field. We have found that most organizations are not aware of what NAMI offers to the community and are quite surprised when they learn of these opportunities.
We have been warmly received by the organizations that we have contacted and they are eager to hear our presentation.
So far we have several presentations already scheduled for late November, December and January.
Dar Thomas

Do a little more each day than you think you possibly can. Lowell Thomas

Thank You

I want to thank our Teachers, Facilitators and Speakers for being an important part of NAMI Stanislaus,
I also want to express a Special Thank You to our VOLUNTEERS, who give so freely and generously of their time to NAMI Stanislaus.
And I want to acknowledge our Board Members who have been committed to serve so diligently.
Dar Thomas

Turlock Family Resource Center Presentation

On November 15th, Puja Mehta and I had the pleasure of presenting NAMI Stanislaus during their Staff Meeting.
The staff was very interested in the programs, classes and support groups that we provide to people living with a mental health condition as well as their loved ones.
Again, Family to Family class, and Provider class were of particular interest to the staff. Dar Thomas
**ELECTION UPDATE!!!**

Unfortunately, NAMI Stanislaus’ election has been delayed due to circumstances beyond our control. The election was pushed back several times, because current bylaws needed to be in place before the election proceeded. The first affiliate bylaws sent to us by NAMI CA were rejected by our members. We experienced another delay waiting for NAMI CA to update, and rewrite their affiliate member voting bylaws. Next, they were reviewed by NAMI Stanislaus bylaw committee which consisted of Diane Domeier, Linda Mayo, Darlene Thomas and Tammy Reynolds; thank you ladies. From there the bylaws had to be reviewed by legal counsel; as well as back to NAMI CA for their approval before our membership could vote on the new bylaws.

To honor our new affiliate bylaws, passed by the membership, the election will be held the third Wednesday, of May, each year. (Pg. 4, Sec. 3.2) We encourage all those interested in serving on the board of directors to submit their application early. A submission dead-line will be published in the January newsletter. For information and application contact Darlene Thomas, President at 209-656-8855.

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**Kimberly D. Holmes Story**

My life was pretty up and down before I experienced mental health symptoms. I had a lot of mood swings and what I now know of manic behavior. However, I did manage to graduate from high school and I obtained a good job with the federal government as a civil service employee. I am a 49 year old African American woman and I have lived in San Diego California most of my life. I experienced a lot of depression from the time I was 12 years old. I experienced mania that made me impulsive and sometime reckless with my behavior. I quit my job of 13 years in a bout of mania and tried to take my life or self-harm on several occasions. I divorced twice and my life was in a state of chaos. When I finally went to the doctor, I was 28 years old. Initially, I was diagnosed with clinical depression and two years later I was diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder I. I was quite happy to get the diagnoses, but I was confused and didn’t know what to expect in my life going forward. I took my medication as prescribed and managed to live for a few years symptom free. It took me many years to find my acceptance. Not until I spent five months in jail and one month in a state mental institution did I begin to accept my illness. However, in an intensive outpatient behavioral health program I learned that I could find peace and a sense of normalcy in my life.

Recovery today is beautiful. I live a lifestyle that embraces recovery. I practice coping skills everyday through lots of things. I like to read and write and I use a lot of pet therapy with my two year old puppy Emma. I practice good eating and sleeping habits and I am an author today. Initially, my family was afraid of me and did not want anything to do with me because of my challenges. Fortunately, I had some good friends that only wanted to know how they could help. I embraced them and found a good support group.

It’s hard still for my community to accept a mental health diagnoses. Some of them don’t believe that it is legitimate. Most believe that I just need more of God and that he can heal me if I wanted him to. Despite this, I have worked diligently to educate my peers though community work. I currently speak for NAMI’s In Our Own Voice program and I am a recent Author. The name of my book is It’s My Life and I’ll Cry If I Want Too: The Diary of a Bipolar Woman. I hope to inspire others to tell their stories and not to be ashamed of some of the things that come along with Mental Illness.

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*NAMI California website*
NAMI Stanislaus Household Membership dues are $60, Individual dues are $40. The monies that Nami Stanislaus Affiliate receives from each category is to pay for the training of our teachers, programs, purchases of educational material, including the brochures we give for free to the public, office supplies, and postage, as well as publication and mailing of our newsletter. We offer our Open Door dues of $5 if you have limited income. Membership is important, so please join at whatever level you can afford. If you have any questions about your membership, please call the NAMI Office at (209) 558-4555.

Checks are to be made to NAMI Stanislaus. Please mail to:

**NAMI Stanislaus, P.O. Box 4120, Modesto, CA 95352-4120**

Name ____________________________________$5 Open Door (Limited Income)
Address ________________________________ $40 Individual
______________________________________$60 Household
Home Telephone _________________________ No membership, Donation
Work Telephone _________________________ $_____ Other
Email _________________________________ Newsletter only
In Memory of __________________________

**Thank You For Your Contribution**

**Membership**
Sharon Smith
Shirley Moran
Lynn Padlo
Aysha N. Valdivia

**Donations**
Jamie Fabela
Richard & Melissa Feemster
Shirley Moran
# December 2018

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**Modesto Connection Support Group**  
Jana Lynn Plaza  
500 N. 9th St.  
**2nd and 4th Mondays**  
6:30-8:00 p.m. Jana Lynn Room  
Call Dar (209) 656-8855

**Modesto Family Support Group**  
Jana Lynn Plaza  
6:30-8:00 p.m.  
**2nd & 4th Mondays**  
500 N. 9th St. Modesto  
Call Dar (209) 656-8855

**Turlock Connection Support Group**  
1123 Cooper Ave.  
**2nd & 4th Tuesdays**  
6:30-8 p.m.  
Call Dar (209) 656-8855