April 3rd, NAMI Board Meeting, Suite A 6:30pm
Open to the public
Family to Family Education Modesto and Turlock classes to begin in May

APRIL IS VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION MONTH

Congratulations Puja on Your New Job.
Puja has been an integral part of NAMI Stanislaus during her time with us. We first met Puja in 2017 when she began volunteering for us at outreach events, helping with the newsletter monthly mailing and helping with numerous other events. July 2018 she became our Preventative Early Intervention through Education Coordinator which is responsible for our In Our Own Voice presentations that we give to colleges and other community organizations.

We have seen NAMI’s Ending the Silence Presentations grow in the high schools this school year. The students have welcomed getting the awareness and education about mental health conditions and suicide warning signs. After the presentations many students have approached the presenters sharing their personal situation and saying that they now have the courage to seek help.

Puja created a power point presentation that she and Dar Thomas presented to several of the county offices and community organizations. Two of the Kaiser Psychiatric offices in Modesto invited us to present at their staff meetings as well. NAMI Stanislaus was warmly received and very appreciative of the presentations.

When Puja came on board as PEI Program Coordinator it was a time when our speakers needed to be updated in order to continue speaking. Puja was very instrumental in working with the speakers to accomplish this task. She not only was trained to be an Ending the Silence Presenter but she trained two Lead Presenters.

During this time, she continued helping with outreach events, our yearly NAMI BBQ/Potluck, Holiday Potluck and wherever help was needed.
Puja is moving on to a position with another nonprofit.

Family to Family Classes
NAMI Family-to-Family is a free, 12-week education program for family, partners, friends and significant others of adults living with mental health condition. The course is designed to help all family members understand and support their loved one living with a mental health condition, while maintaining their own well-being. The course includes information on illnesses such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression and other mental health conditions. Thousands of families describe the program as life-changing. The program is taught by trained teachers who are also family members and know what it is like to have a loved one living with mental health condition.

Turlock class will begin May 13th. Modesto class day TBA.
Please call Dar to register, (209) 656-8855
Student Coalition Health Fair

Events this year are beginning earlier than usual, and we were pleased to have our first invitation from MJC. We were joined in the rotunda by a dozen organizations with the focus being on "suicide prevention", a hot topic in our county right now. The event ran from 10:00 am until noon with a constant flow of students and staff interested in our literature, trinkets and information.

Jana Thomas, Dave Bartlett and Allison Clark were pleased with the interaction and being able to share NAMI pride to all that stopped at our table.

Allison Clark

APRIL EVENTS... SPRING HAS SPRUNG!

Wednesday April 10, 2019
Mental Health Spring Advocacy Day
Sacramento on the Capital Lawn
9:00am - 2:00pm

Saturday April 20, 2019
EARTH DAY
Graceada Park
10:00am - 4:00pm

Come Visit NAMI at these upcoming events:
Thursday April 4, 2019
"Send Silence Packing"
Modesto Junior College, east campus
Outside on the Quad
9:00am - 4:00pm

Sunday April 7, 2019
National Crime Victim's Rights Week
Victim's Rights Rally & Family Safety Fair
Stanislaus County Courthouse Lawn
1100 "I" Street, Modesto
11:00am - 1:30pm

Tuesday April 9, 2019
Transition Fair
Valley Mountain Regional Center
1820 Blue Gum, Modesto
Across from Modesto Junior College, west campus
9:30am - 1:00pm

Allison Clark

Circle of Care

NAMI has partnered with the National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC) to create the Circle of Care: A Guidebook for Mental Health Caregivers. This toolkit provides resources and information to help friends, family and others who care for an adult with a mental health condition. The guidebook is made up of fact sheets to assist caregivers with finding help for the specific challenges that were identified by mental health caregivers from across the US who participated in the first national study on mental health caregiving, the On Pins and Needles study.

Circle of Care includes fact sheets that cover:
- Finding the Right Provider
- Communicating with Health Professionals
- Getting an Accurate Diagnosis
- Discharge Planning
- Health Insurance
- Community Services
- Dealing with the Criminal Justice System
- Planning for the Future
- Confidentiality and Family Involvement
- Taking care of yourself

How Stigma Can Lead to Isolation
By Ashley Virnan | Feb. 21, 2019

Isolation acts as both a cause and an effect on a person's level of distress. When a person feels distressed, they are more likely to isolate, and the loneliness can lead to even more distress. This cruel cycle relegates many people with mental illness to a life of isolation. But what is the leading cause of isolation? Is it purely symptomatic? Or is it something else? While many assume that isolation comes from symptoms, I believe that stigma also plays a big role.

I've seen, first hand, what stigma does to a person. I've experienced it with my 25-year-old, big brother, who—because of stigma—refuses to receive help. He does not want to be seen as "crazy" or "unfit."

Imagine a person you know who could light up a room with their witty jokes and contagious laugh. A warmhearted and loyal individual who always puts others first. A smart, courageous, goal-oriented person that people looked up to and adored. Well, that was how my brother used to be.

Now, he refuses to leave the three dimensions of the dark basement, he dropped out of school, does not work, walks around with his head down in hopelessness and rarely eats or goes out. At this point, I feel lucky if I can get a “hello” out of him.

Although I don’t have a medical degree, and he hasn’t been officially diagnosed, it’s clear that he is suffering from mental illness. As his sister, it breaks my heart to see how the internalization of public and cultural stigmatization led to my brother’s untreated disorder, belief that he is less worthy than others and social isolation.

It is my thought that when someone is going through mental illness, especially one that involves depressive episodes, support is critical. My brother has pushed me and my family away over and over again. But we never stop loving, caring, and trying for him. We have tried speaking with him about getting help and guiding him back on the path to finding himself. But, as a response, he would say “this is me.”

How are we supposed to support those who don’t accept the fact that they have mental illness? Or the ones that socially isolate themselves so much that support is merely impossible? One study even accounted that social isolation increases mortality rates by 22%. So, what are we going to do to help this population of people with mental illness who face ostracization, and in turn, social isolation?

As a sister who has already lost a brother to a tragic motorcycle accident, I won’t stand to lose another sibling to stigma. I’ve read books, researched articles and even spoken to psychologists in search of an answer. What I found is the answer is within people like you and me.

It is our duty to give hope for the hopeless and to fight for those that can’t defend themselves. The mere truth is that it’s not going to be easy and it’s going to take a village. Together, we can fight. Together, we can end social injustices that lead to the detrimental effects of stigma. Together, we can make the impossible, possible.

It is my hope that one day I can wake up and see social isolation and stigma eradicated. But, until then, it is our responsibility to fight against it. Not only for my brother, but for the millions of Americans who experience mental illness and stigma every year. Not just for right now, but for the future to be a better and more accepting world.

Ashley Virnan is currently attending The University of Southern California, Mastering in Social Work. As a member of NAMI, she is incredibly supportive in all the work that NAMI does, as it is very dear to her. Her hopes as an aspiring social worker are to help change the views that people have on mental health, to help those affected by the stigma associated with it and to change our world, day by day.

Help in a Crisis
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255
Crisis Text Line. Text NAMI to 741-741 to connect with a trained crisis counselor to receive free, 24/7 crisis support via text message.
NAMI HelpLine. Call 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) M-F, 7 a.m.-3 p.m., PT for free mental health information, referrals and support.
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
Wendy Knowles
Chris Brady
Sharyn Brown

Donations
Richard and Melissa Feemster

Together We Support Our Community
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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
500 N. 9th St.
2nd and 4th Mondays
6:30-8 p.m.
Call Dar (209) 656-8855