

NAMI Butler OUTREACH

May 2021
Volume 1, Issue 2



Your local NAMI News...



Looking for a fun and healthy way to show your support for NAMI Butler and its efforts to help those with mental health conditions? Join NAMI Butler for its inaugural **Scramble for Mental Health** golf outing on Saturday, May 22, at Bonniebrook Golf Course, 104 Serene Lane, Butler.

Golf teams tee off at 10 a.m., following registration and a continental breakfast. Also included in the golf registration fee—\$50 per person or \$200 per four-some—are the greens fee and cart as well as a hotdog at the turn and dinner after the Scramble.

Not a golfer? Come and enjoy the day and take a chance on winning the 50/50 raffle or one of the many bountiful baskets being given away. They're filled with goodies ranging from Pittsburgh Pirate paraphernalia to lottery tickets, from Italian dinners to craft beers and teas & chocolates. Summer is almost here, so there's even an ice cream basket, sans ice cream! There will be a silent auction for a complete set of gently used women's golf clubs.

The Scramble is being planned as a way to relax and have fun, so winners will be selected randomly and given to players in attendance following the Scramble. The real winners, though, will be the Butler County residents who benefit from NAMI Butler's support groups and educational programs. Please join NAMI Butler in helping them.

Join us for a day of fun and support at the Golf Scramble by contacting info@namibutler.org or registering at <https://namibutler.org/golfouting/>

MISSION STATEMENT

NAMI Butler County PA works to increase public awareness about mental illness and provides education and support for all people affected by mental illness so they can build better lives. NAMI Butler also advocates for better mental health services in the community.

NAMI Butler County PA

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Meet NAMI Butler's Board Member, Mary Lindsay



Mary in her flower garden with her Boston Terrier, Buzzy

A retired elementary school teacher with twenty-one years of service, Mary Lindsay joined NAMI Butler County in 2004 and became a member of the Board of Directors in 2008.

Mary has been an enthusiastic NAMI Butler volunteer for many years, serving as a trained support group facilitator in Saxonburg and Evans City and for NAMI's Family-to-Family free educational classes.

In 2007, she attended the NAMI National Convention in Washington, D.C., where she learned about the Crisis Intervention Program (CIT), an educational course developed by the Memphis, Tennessee, police department to help train law enforcement on how to respond to mental health crises. Mary was instrumental in helping to develop Butler County's CIT program.

Mary lives in Sarver with her husband Jim; they have four adult children and seven grandchildren. When not volunteering for NAMI Butler, Mary enjoys working in her serenity flower garden and enjoys sitting in the spring on a bench below the branches of an apple tree her son planted thirty years ago.

She also likes reading non-fiction books, listening to classical music, and hearing inspirational quotes. One of her favorites is from a poem by William Blake: "To see... heaven in a wildflower."

Mary graduated from Vandergrift High School in Indiana, Pa., and earned her bachelor's degree in education from Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Why did you become a member of NAMI Butler County?

I knew nothing about disorders of the brain. When my family member was first in crisis, I had to find out what to do so I could help him.

How has NAMI Butler been able to support you in dealing with your family member's mental health condition?

NAMI Butler helped me learn how to navigate the mental health system by providing me with information on available services. Through NAMI's programs, I learned how to communicate with my family member and get him the help he needed.

You are one of NAMI Butler's more active volunteers. How has your volunteer work enriched your life?

I have a great deal of lived experience. Even though I have made mistakes along the way, my experience can be invaluable to the people who are beginning this frustrating journey. Because I have

Continued on page 3...

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experienced the challenges of helping an ill family member, I can help others and perhaps lessen their pain. Being a volunteer also has made me a more caring and compassionate human being.

From your years of experience as a volunteer supporting people with mental health issues, what is the best advice you've heard about caring for your mental health?

If all else fails, lower your expectations. It's from the title of a book by Susan Murphy. A NAMI Butler friend once told me I'd have less stress in my life if I did this, and she was right.

What is your favorite Butler County destination? Why do you like being there?

My home is my favorite place to be. I can see my serenity garden from my kitchen window. We live on a hill with a beautiful view, and I enjoy watching the farm animals across the road. At the top of our hill is an oak forest where my husband and I and our daughter and her husband were married. There is the most fantastic view from the top of the hill!



AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021

Many mental health organizations have applauded the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, which includes approximately \$4.25 billion in funding for programs that support the prevention of and treatment for mental health and substance-use disorders.

Below are some of the highlights of the Rescue Act that support those living with a mental health condition.

- Nearly \$4 billion for state and local mental health and substance-use services, school-based mental health programs, and workforce training;
- \$140 million in funding to promote mental health among health care professionals and first responders;
- Incentives to expand Medicaid coverage, which helps people with mental illness who lack insurance, for the 12 remaining states who have not yet done so;
- More than \$26 billion to help people maintain or get housing, including people with serious mental illness experiencing homelessness;
- Additional federal Medicaid funding to expand Mobile Crisis Teams, which help people experiencing mental health crises; and \$420 million for mental health services in the Indian Health Service.

NAMI Butler News

NAMI Butler County is on the move. Literally. Beginning August 1, NAMI Butler's office will be located in Suite 203 of the Holly Pointe Building, 220 S. Main St., Butler. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. We also can be reached at info@namibutler.org, 724-431-0069, or via NAMI Butler's website, <https://namibutler.org>.

The NAMI Butler County Board of Director's will hold its Annual Meeting from 6 to 8 p.m. July 6 at the Lions Shelter in Alameda Park, Butler. All are welcome.



NAMI Butler Welcomes New Board Member

Gloria Winters of Saxonburg, Pa., is the newest member of NAMI Butler's Board of Directors. A certified NAMI Support Group facilitator and member of the board's Publicity Committee, she joined NAMI Butler in 2020 and the board in January 2021.

"I have a passion for helping people and serving the community where I live," said Gloria, who became interested in NAMI because her late mother suffered from a severe mental illness. She regrets only learning about the importance of treatment and support for those affected by mental illness as an adult.

Gloria has volunteered for a number of nonprofit organizations, including Junior Achievement and the Saxonburg Area Business Association.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

The following Guest Opinion Column is written by NAMI Butler board member Linda Schmitmeyer and was published May 4, 2021 in the Butler Eagle.

My five-year-old grandson wants to take part in a kiddie-tractor pull this summer, where children test their mettle pulling a wheelless sled that becomes incrementally heavier the longer they pedal. When our kids were young—several decades ago—they loved tractor pulls, and for many summers our family attended the Portersville Tractor Show so they could pull.

My grandson, who likes pedaling his toy John Deere tractor and trailer around his Cleveland, Ohio, neighborhood, is anxious to test his pulling power. When he learned recently that a local tractor show his family planned to attend was canceled because of the pandemic, he looked plaintively at his father and asked, “Daddy, is COVID going to last the rest of my life?”

The pandemic has taken a toll on each of us in different ways. For my husband and me, it’s in the social isolation, especially from family, and not being able to see our grandson and his new baby sister for long stretches of time. For many, it’s caused tremendous hardship: the loss of a job, the death of a loved one, work burnout, canceled or scaled-back celebrations, anxiety, hunger, depression, anger... the list goes on and on.

If there are silver linings to this past year, one would be in our enhanced understanding of what is meant when talking about mental health, because many of us have experienced a downturn in our sense of well-being. In a survey taken just four months into the pandemic, the Center for Disease Control reported that symptoms of anxiety and depression, serious thoughts of suicide, and substance use had nearly doubled. Imagine those stats a year later!

Leading mental health organizations like Mental Health America (MHA) and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) work to raise awareness about brain disorders, especially in May, Mental Health Awareness month. It’s a time to focus on our own mental well-being but also to work to reduce the stigma around mental illness and mental health struggles that block people from seeking help.

According to NAMI, 1 in 5 adults in the U.S. experiences a mental health condition each year and 1 in 25 has a serious mental illness, and this

was prior to the pandemic! With Butler County’s population nearing 190,000, that means an estimated 38,000 of our fami-

ly, friends, and neighbors have had a mental health condition this past year and 7,600 suffer from severe mental illness. In practical terms, it means that most Butler Countians know someone dealing with mental health issues. Although we may not know who they are, we still must care about and for them.



The MHA, a community-based nonprofit that promotes early identification and intervention of mental health problems, is encouraging people to participate in online screenings in May, especially if they’ve noticed changes in mood, emotions, behaviors, and thinking. The screenings can be helpful in determining if the symptoms they’re experiencing are signs of a mental health condition, such as OCD, depression, or anxiety. The screening is available at www.MHAscreening.org.

MHA’s website also offers strategies that help those dealing with mental health issues. Topics include Adapting After Trauma and Stress, Getting Out of Thinking Traps, Taking Time for Yourself, and Dealing with Anger and Frustration. This past year has forced many of us to accept situations that we felt we’ve had little or no control over, even my grandson, who’ll have to wait a bit longer for his first tractor pull.

Rest assured, though. COVID won’t last the rest of our lives.

Linda K. Schmitmeyer, of Middlesex Township, serves as secretary for the NAMI Butler County Board of Directors. A former Butler Eagle columnist and editor, she is the author of “Rambler: A Family Pushes Through the Fog of Mental Illness.” Visit her website, www.lindaschmitmeyer.com; she can be reached at linda@lindaschmitmeyer.com.

RAISING AWARENESS

On the various aspects of mental health and mental illness

May 2 - 8, 2021, is designated **Tardive Dyskinesia Awareness Week**.

Tardive Dyskinesia: The words may be hard to pronounce, but for the 600,000 Americans who experience this challenging neurological condition, it's also difficult to live with.

Tardive dyskinesia, or TD, may develop as a result of long-term use of the antipsychotic medications used to treat bipolar disorder, depression, or schizophrenia. It can cause involuntary movements of the body, such as rapid eye blinking, sticking out of the tongue, lip pursing, and jaw clenching. Some people experience twitching and jerking of their arms or legs. In severe cases, the muscles associated with breathing can even be impacted.

The uncontrollable movements of TD may be disruptive to people's lives due to the symptoms themselves and the impact they can have on emotional and social well-being. According to a survey posted on NAMI Keystone PA website, patients with diagnosed or suspected TD reported that their condition moderately, very, or extremely affected their ability to sleep (51%), work (31%) and eat & drink (29%).

For a more information on TD and current treatments, visit the [NAMI web-site](#). To read a personal story from NAMI's You Are Not Alone blog series, [click here](#).



May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Mental health is essential to everyone's overall health and well-being, and mental illnesses are common and treatable. Living a healthy lifestyle and incorporating mental health tools to thrive may not be easy but can be achieved by gradually making small changes and building on those successes. Seeking professional help when self-help efforts to improve your mental health aren't working is a sign of strength, not weakness.

"What mental health needs is more sunlight, more candor, and more unashamed conversation." - Glenn Close

"Anything that's human is mentionable, and anything that is mentionable can be more manageable. When we can talk about our feelings, they become less overwhelming, less upsetting, and less scary." - Fred Rogers

"Mental health...is not a destination but a process. It's about how you drive, not where you're going." - Noam Shpancer, PhD

"You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, 'I have lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.' You must do the thing you think you cannot do." - Eleanor Roosevelt

Discussion Group Focuses on Books About Mental Health, Mental Conditions

Want to learn more about mental health and mental conditions? Join NAMI Butler's new Book Discussion group, which meet at 7 p.m. every other month via Zoom on the last Thursday of the month.

The first meeting was on April 29, and participants discussed "Hidden Valley Road" by Robert Kolker. An Oprah's Book Club 2020 selection, the nonfiction story is of an American family with twelve children, six of whom were diagnosed with schizophrenia. The family became one of the first to be studied by the National Institute of Mental Health, and their experience became part of researchers' quest to uncover the true nature of this mystifying disease.

The 7 p.m. June 24 discussion will focus on self-care. The book selection is "The More or Less Definitive Guide to Self Care" by Anna Borges, available at local bookstores. Participants are also welcome to share their favorite tips from books on self-care available within the Butler County Library System.

"If you don't have time to read a book, join us anyway for this discussion of self-care, which is so important for everyone," says **Juliana Hopkins, a NAMI Butler board member who moderates the book discussions.** "You're also very welcome to just listen if you don't feel like sharing."

Those interested in joining the discussions can do so by following NAMI Butler County PA [Facebook Page](#) and clicking on Events. No prior registration is required; participants join by clicking the Zoom link posted on Facebook.

For more information, call 724-431-0069 or email info@namibutler.org.

UPDATES

Executive Director featured on WISR Radio

Donna Lamison, NAMI Butler's executive director, was part of the Tracey Morgan Extended News Program April 20 on WISR Radio. With NAMI reporting a 41 percent increase in calls to the Crisis Hotline in the first three months of the COVID pandemic, understanding the many aspects mental health conditions has never been more important. The interview is packed with interesting facts, figures, and helpful information for those dealing these illnesses. The 24-minute interview is available at <https://www.wisr680.com/interviews/>. Search Word: NAMI.



Donna Lamison, Executive Director
NAMI Butler County PA

NAMI FaithNet

Talk Reaches Butler County's Faith Community

Faith leaders from six different Butler County congregations participated in NAMI Butler's inaugural **Bridges of Hope** presentation on Feb. 9. The ministers met via Zoom as part of NAMI Butler's effort to help educate and inform community leaders of the programs and support available to local families experiencing mental health issues.

Topics discussed included how mental illness impacts individuals and families and the role faith communities can play in helping families affected by serious mental illness. The 30-minute presentation was followed by comments from and Q&A with a Butler County couple who has lived-experience with mental illness.

Bridges of Hope is part of NAMI's FaithNet, an online resource that provides and promotes the creation and exchange of information and tools to help educate faith communities about mental illness and the role spirituality plays in recovery. It's not a religious network but a mental health education and awareness outreach to clergy and congregations of all faith traditions as well as to individuals who seek faith as a component of their recovery. For more information on FaithNet, visit www.nami.org or call 724-431-0069.

Support Group meetings continue via Zoom

NAMI Butler is continuing to host Support Group meetings via Zoom. These twice monthly meetings—on the first Thursday and third Monday—provide opportunities to gain insight from the challenges and successes of others facing similar circumstances. They are peer-led groups for adult family members, caregivers, and loved ones of individuals living with mental illness. For a complete list of meeting times, see the Calendar on Page 6, or visit <https://namibutler.org/calendar/>



National Alliance on Mental Illness

Butler
County PA

NAMI Butler Event Calendar—May 17 through September 7, 2021

NOTE: As COVID restrictions ease, in-person meetings may resume for some events; click [Calendar](#) for an, up-to-date listing.

May 17, 5:30-7:00 p.m.—Virtual Family Support Group via Zoom

May 22, beginning at 10 a.m.—Golf Scramble for Mental Health, Bonniebrook Golf Course, 104 Serene Lane, Butler (see cover article)

June 3, 7:00-8:30 p.m.—Virtual Family Support Group via Zoom

June 21, 5:30-7:00 p.m.—Virtual Family Support Group via Zoom

June 24, 7 p.m.—Book Discussion Group via Zoom: “The More or Less Definitive Guide to Self-Care” by Anna Borges (For more on the new NAMI Book Discussion Group, see p 5.)

July 1, 7:00-8:30 p.m.—Virtual Family Support Group via Zoom

July 6, 6:00 p.m.—NAMI Butler Annual Membership Meeting,
Lions Shelter, Alameda Park, Butler, PA 16001

July 19, 5:30-7:00 p.m.—Virtual Family Support Group via Zoom

Aug. 3, 6:00 p.m.—NAMI Butler Board of Directors meeting via Zoom

Aug. 5, 7:00-8:30 p.m.—Virtual Family Support Group via Zoom

Aug. 16, 5:30-7:00 p.m.—Virtual Family Support Group via Zoom

Aug. 26, 7:00 p.m.—Book Discussion Group via Zoom

Sept. 2, 7:00-8:30 p.m.—Virtual Family Support Group via Zoom

Sept. 7, 6:00 p.m.—NAMI Butler Board of Directors meeting via Zoom

Sept. 20, 5:30-7:00 p.m.—Virtual Family Support Group via Zoom

To register for any of NAMI Butler's events, please call 724-431-0069
or email info@namibutler.org.



Butler
County PA

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please complete and mail the form to our office, or you can join by clicking [here](#)

_____ **YES**, I want to become a member of the NAMI Butler County PA

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

MEMBERSHIP PER YEAR

_____ \$40.00 (Regular)

_____ \$60.00 (Household)

_____ \$5.00 (Open Door)

\$_____ Donation *

**NAMI Butler County PA is an exempt organization as described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; EIN 25-1805693.*

Please make check or money order payable to:

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