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Mission:

Through our education, advocacy, support, leadership and customer-centered services, we will improve the quality of life of persons experiencing mental illness and that of their families, caregivers and friends.

Proudly funded by:
Dear NAMI St. Louis members, volunteers, supporters, donors and friends,

Life has changed so much since our last newsletter! COVID-19 has changed our world in so many ways. Although we are all practicing physical distance (which is what we should be calling it instead of social distance), the amount of collaboration, coordination, and change in everyday practices is astonishing. In the past three weeks, I have been on numerous conference calls or zoom meetings that demonstrate our resiliency and creativity. Once we are on the other side of this experience, I am more optimistic than ever that NAMI St. Louis will come out of this time a stronger organization and better able to provide services in the St. Louis region.

We have already pivoted by changing change our programming. The first change has been to add extended hours to our HelpLine. We are very concerned about our members, volunteers, and supporters who may be struggling during this time. We have called and talked to many of you who have loved ones living with mental illness who are struggling with the change in daily routines. If we don't work hard at it, many of us can become even more isolated, anxious, and depressed. Please know that NAMI St. Louis cares and that we want to hear from you. This is why we extended our HELPLine hours to include Saturdays and Sundays from 9 am to 5 pm. Please contact us if you are feeling isolated and need to talk to someone or need help finding resources.

We are also providing new online programming. Heather Richardson and Heather McDonnell did a great job of adapting the NAMI Support Group model to an online format. We held our first one three weeks ago, and now we are offering four different support groups. Angela has done a great job of leading our daily check-ins with the community. They are a time to just see another smiling face, talk about your feelings, and get support if you need it. Today, we held our first Lunch and Listen series, which was a great success! I always learn from hearing people tell their story and the tools that help them to live in recovery.

As you will read, NAMIWalks St. Louis is a virtual event on May 30, 2020. Heather Richardson and the NAMI National team have been working hard to make the walk memorable and a day where 30 plus other NAMI communities around the country celebrate a day of hope!

Given all that is going on, mental health is on everyone’s mind. People, who didn’t think mental health was important a month ago, now do. That is great news! Hopefully, the stigma surrounding mental health will no longer be the hurdle it once was. Although the NAMI St. Louis team is working remotely, we miss you all! I know this is an uncertain time, but know that the NAMI St. Louis team is always here to help and support you. Please reach out to us via the HELPLine (314-962-4670 or info@namistl.org) and join us for our exciting new programs.

Please stay safe and well!

Christine
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic all NAMI St. Louis in person programming has been suspended. Any programming that was occurring has been placed on hold and will resume where it last left off once it is safe to resume normal group activity.

NAMI St. Louis recognized that now more than ever there is a need for us to offer programming during this time of national vulnerability. So, in order to do our part and stay true to our mission of providing education, advocacy and support NAMI St. Louis has begun offering some online programming via Zoom. Zoom is a video conferencing online platform that allows participants to interact.

Programming offered by NAMI St. Louis via Zoom includes:

**Weekly Family Support Groups:**
Family support groups are for individuals 18+ who have a loved one 18+ with a mental health diagnosis.

**Bi-Weekly Basics Support Groups:**
Basics Support Groups are for parents/caregivers with a child 18 and younger with a mental health diagnosis or are exhibiting symptoms.

**Community Check-In Conversations:**
Community Check-In conversations are offered daily in 30 minute timeslots to provide some socializing while "social distancing".

**NAMI St. Louis Weekly Speaker Series:**
The NAMI St. Louis Speaker Series features In Our Own Voice and Ending the Silence presenters sharing their journey with their mental health diagnosis.

If you are interested in participating in any online programming go to: https://www.namistl.org/online-programming/

NAMI St. Louis has also extended our HelpLine hours to seven days a week from 9:00am to 5:00pm to better serve the St. Louis community during this time. Individuals can call the HelpLine to get information about local resources or to simply talk to someone. **If you need more information about programming or if you need someone to talk with contact NAMI St. Louis at info@namistl.org or 314-962-4760.**
NAMWalks St. Louis Update

We have thought a great deal about how to keep NAMWalks going because NAMWalks is the best day of the year. We can’t just cancel it. Now, more than ever we need each other! We also need to connect and we need our NAMWalks St. Louis!

We have been working with our NAMI National Walk Team on how best to celebrate NAMWalks in these uncertain times. They have come up with a fabulous idea: NAMWalks Your Way!

NAMWalks Your Way St. Louis: A Virtual Event!
Join us on Saturday, May 30, 2020, with many other NAMI affiliates for NAMWalks St. Louis Your Way! It will be a NAMWalks only with more reach and where thousands across the county will be walking together to bring mental health to all!

What is a virtual walk?
A virtual walk is an online experience, on a specific day, when walk participants use social and digital platforms to raise awareness and funds by sharing stories and doing an activity of their choice.

What is the specific day?
Join NAMWalks Your Way St. Louis on Saturday, May 30, 2020, along with other NAMI affiliates and NAMI National as we live stream and share mission content and resources throughout the day while helping to create the sense of community we all need now more than ever.

What is NAMWalks Your Way St. Louis?
NAMWalks Your Way St. Louis means what it sounds like: with so many of our lives compromised and constrained, you get to make NAMWalks your own. You can walk around your block, you can walk around your garden, you can walk with a wok in your kitchen. If you work from home, now you can walk at home. You can stand on your head. You can form a team and see who is the funniest, fastest or most artistic. You can “Hula hoop for hope.” You can self-fundraise while you self-quarantine — or do it as part of a team. Whatever way you do it, it is NAMWalks Your Way!

The need to fund our vital programs and services remains as urgent as ever. During times of crisis -- such as what we’re all going through right now -- even more people rely on NAMI St. Louis for support and assistance.

Stay tuned as we will be sharing more information on how you can take part in our virtual event in the upcoming weeks. Together we will continue to work toward our goal of Mental Health for All!
Memorials & Tributes

A memorial or tribute donation is a generous and thoughtful way to honor loved ones. Memorials and tributes may be made by mail or online. Indicate whether your donation is in memory of someone who has passed away or in honor of someone living. All memorials and tributes are listed in the NAMI St. Louis newsletter.

MEMORIAL OR TRIBUTE DONATION: https://www.namistl.org/donate_now/

In Memory of...

David Bernat
Bekebrede Household
Ms. Janet Benne
Mr. Cody Bernat
Mr. Jonathan Bruns
Ryan and Ashley Cox
Mr. Samuel Deitte
Ms. Karen Emerling
Michael and Marissa Ermeling
Perry and Diane Fix
Foley Household
Ms. Laura Freeman
Hake Household
Ms. Gabrielle Hall
Joseph and Madeline Hallemeier
Holmes Household
Mr. Mark Horne
Hutchison Household
John and Lindsay Kraus
Matteuzzi Household
Robert and Anne Pennell
Ms. Jennifer Lyn Phelps
Mr. Ian Powers
Mr. Timothy Roberts
Ms. Alice Rothermich
Ms. Lisa Staberg
Gary Strauss and Lynn Swoboda
Morgan Thomas
Robert and Cathy Thomas
Christopher and Virginia Thornhill
Mr. Alexander Thornton

Mr. Bryan Wahle
Doin and Melinda Walker
Whiteside Household

Georgia Bybee
Mr. Trevor Reese
Ms. Vickie Wibberg

Steven Deering
William and Elisa Roth
Dr. Giuseppe Aliperti
Genell and Stephanie Bess
Vincent and Marianne Burkemper
Mr. John Corn
John and Suzann Cross
Dr. Mary Hastings
Ms. Deborah Kuster
Jean Lockwood and Dennis Vertrees

Elias Engel
Mr. James Moore

James Michael Farace
Ms. Judith Farace
John and Helen Pond
Ms. Rose Marie Weckenmann

James Hartman
Ms. Nancy Fitzgerald

Albert Morris Kleiman
Ms. Evelyn Kleiman

Ben Lurk
James and Rosanna Schmeizle
Mr. Raymond Trautman

Kurt Martin
Ms. Helen Bollner
Nance Frost (Carr Lane Mfg. Co.)

Audrey Masker
John and Evelyn Detzel

Matt McMillen
Ms. Patricia Culbert

Faye Meyer
Ms. Pauline Nocifora

John
Ms. Lori McGhee
United Health Group

Timothy Sanders
Mr. Lawrence Friedman

Michael "Murdoch" Scherer
Ms. Peggy Wilson
Mr. David Wraith

Matthew Scherrer
Mr. Steven Ems
19 Coping Skills for COVID-19...

1. Meditate daily
2. Exercise (walk, run, yoga, etc.)
3. Write in a journal
4. Read a book
5. Work in your yard/garden
6. Watch a movie
7. Call/text/email friends and family
8. Have Zoom or video chat events with friends and family
9. Color/draw
10. Listen to music
11. Cook your favorite meal
12. Spring cleaning
13. Play a board game/do a puzzle
14. Watch a funny video
15. Have an at home Spa Day
16. Look at the stars at night
17. Join a NAMI St. Louis Community Check-In
18. Attend the NAMI St. Louis Speaker Series
19. Join a NAMI St. Louis Support Group

How can YOU help NAMI St. Louis on Give STL Day?

NAMI St. Louis is participating in Give STL Day on May 7, 2020. Early giving started this week so you can make YOUR donation now! No donation is too small. Click on the link below to make your donation today!

Give STL day on May 7th is hosted by the St. Louis Community Foundation. This day is a 24-hour, online day-of-giving designed to highlight giving across the St. Louis region.

Due to the challenges of COVID-19, NAMI St. Louis has had to postpone key fundraising events making Give STL Day even more important for us. We need your help in making Give STL day a success so that we can continue offering virtual mental health education and support services during this time of greater need.

Mark your calendars for May 7th, and save our giving link to your favorites by clicking the link below.

Two ways to support NAMI St. Louis on Give STL Day:

1. Participant in Early Giving by donating anytime between April 6th - May 6th.
2. Participant on Give STL Day by donating on May 7th. *If you are unable to donate on May 7th, you can pre-schedule a donation.

The Give STL Day link:
https://www.givestlday.org/namistl
Staff Spotlight

Featuring: Lizette Hill, Donations Specialist

How did you first get involved with NAMI St. Louis?
While I was not working, I decided that I wanted to volunteer my time. I took some time to figure out what I was passionate about and determined that it was mental health and animal welfare. I decided on mental health because I know how debilitating a mental illness can be, making even the smallest of daily tasks seem overwhelming. The volunteer app that I was using did not bring up any non-profit organizations that focused on mental health so I did my own search online to find one that needed volunteers. After looking into a few organizations, I felt like NAMI St. Louis would be the best fit for me. I began volunteering in October 2019, working in the office doing data entry and helping out with prep for the annual gala. When the opportunity to work at NAMI presented itself, I gladly accepted it!

What is the most rewarding part of your job?
The biggest reward has been being able to read and hear the comments from those people NAMI has touched/helped: Reading a note from a family member that is donating to NAMI in honor of a family member who has struggled with a mental illness; listening to a Family-to-Family facilitator who was helped by NAMI years ago with how to advocate for her son whose life was torn apart by a mental illness; reading the comments from a CIT class evaluation on how an officer feels better prepared to handle a situation with a person suffering from a mental disorder. I am encouraged when I see how many “Ending the Silence” and “In Our Own Voice” presentations have been made. I’m encouraged not only by how many people NAMI has reached out to, who will now be more inclined to help someone that they see struggling with mental health and who will be more inclined to ask for help if they, themselves, are struggling with a mental health concern, but also by how many people have been presenters; people who probably still suffer from mental health issues, but who have fought back against its full control over them and are helping others do the same.

What does your typical day look like?
I haven’t had a “typical” work schedule in a while, since I went from not working at all, to volunteering a few times a week at NAMI, to working temporarily at my previous employer while also working part-time at NAMI St. Louis, and now just strictly working for NAMI St. Louis part-time. For me, most days include the following statement: “Hey Ann, I have a question.” Thankfully for Ann, the number of times that she has had to hear that has slowly gone down. Because I’m new to the organization, I feel like I’m always coming across new things to learn, so no day really feels “typical” to me.

What do you do for fun when you are not working?
When it’s cold outside or raining, I am happy to stay at home, curl up on the sofa, and take a nap. I LOVE naps! When the weather is nice, I force my dog to go on walks. (My dog is convinced that she will be killed if she leaves our street. I need the Dog Whisperer).

What is something that most people wouldn’t know about you?
My first major in college was Interior Design.
NAMI St. Louis Advocacy Update

Like everyone else, the Missouri Legislature has been taken over by the COVID-19 pandemic and is practicing social distancing, with most legislators working from home. The business of passing bills has come to a virtual standstill, although the Legislature by law needs to pass a budget for next year by May 5. The Missouri Legislative Session runs from early January until May 15. Now with an almost certainty that the Legislative Session is over for this year, except for finishing the budget and a bill that authorizes federal and state funds to "address coronavirus preparedness and response" in Missouri. Legislation that NAMI St. Louis was supporting for passage this year has come to a halt.

Medicaid expansion has been a major policy focus for NAMI St. Louis and while no significant steps have been made by the Legislature to increase Medicaid in Missouri on a permanent basis, there have been temporary changes as a result of the COVID19 pandemic. For instance, Missouri will now cover adults between the ages of 19-64 who test positive for the COVID19 virus and meet eligibility requirements, such as incomes up to 85% of the federal poverty level (FPL) and resource requirements of $4,000 per individual and $8,000 per couples. Additionally, as a result of a federal law addressing COVID19, no participants shall be terminated from Medicaid unless they request it or move from the state. To read more about changes to Medicaid and other social services in the state of Missouri, go to: https://dss.mo.gov/covid-19/.

Finally, the NAMI St. Louis is proud to receive funding, supported by sales tax dollars from the Community and Children’s Resource Board (CCRB) of St. Charles County. For every dollar spent in St. Charles County, 1/8 of a cent goes to help non-profit agencies like ours provide mental health and treatment services to kids and teens in St. Charles County. The NAMI St. Louis Advocacy Committee is supporting a ballot initiative in St. Charles County called "Putting Kids First" that will increase the cents that goes to help non-profits like NAMI St. Louis who are providing resources to kids in need of mental health services and their families ultimately improving their quality of life. If you are a resident of St. Charles County and a registered voter and are interested in learning more about “Putting Kids First” contact Angela Berra at aberra@namistl.org.

The next NAMI St. Louis Advocacy Committee is Thursday, April 16, via video conference from 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm. If you are interested in participating, please contact Angela Berra at aberra@namistl.org.
Ways to Volunteer with NAMI St. Louis

Nothing is more important to our success than dedicated volunteers. Volunteers are needed to lead support groups and classes—both for individuals with a diagnosis and for those who are caregivers.

**Volunteer opportunities for caregivers include:**
- Childcare Providers for NAMI Basics courses
- Crisis Intervention Team Panel Speaker
- Ending the Silence Presenters
- Family-to-Family Course Teachers
- Family Support Group Facilitators
- Family & Friends Presenters
- NAMI Basics Course Teachers

**Volunteer opportunities for individuals with a diagnosis of mental illness include:**
- Crisis Intervention Team Panel Speaker
- Ending the Silence Young Adult Presenter
- In Our Own Voice Presenters
- NAMI Connection Support Group Facilitators
- Peer-to-Peer Facilitators

**Other volunteer opportunities include:**
- Ambassadors (represent NAMI St. Louis in the community)
- Board Members
- Committee Members
- Data Entry
- Events
- Grant Writing
- HELPLine Phone Associate
- Social Media

**VOLUNTEER TODAY - contact Heather McDonnell at hmcdonnell@namistl.org or 314-962-4760**
Ways to Support NAMI St. Louis during this time

- **Follow NAMI St. Louis on social media (Facebook, Twitter, & Instagram).**
  - You can find the most up-to-date information about what we are doing for the St. Louis Community.
  - Share our posts!
- **Join our virtual NAMIWalks event on May 30, 2020!**
  - Celebrate mental health and help end the stigma.
- **Update your NAMI St. Louis membership**
- **Donate online.**
  - Any amount is helpful.
- **Join us on our Community Check-In Conversations.**
  - Socialize with us while "social distancing".
- **Join an online Support Group.**
  - Give yourself some virtual space to process.
- **Come listen to our amazing presenters tell their mental health journey in our Speakers Series.**
  - Be inspired by their willingness to share.
- **Call/text/email your loved ones and friends.**
  - Even the ones that don't have mental health conditions. We all need one another right now.
- **Be kind to one another!**
  - "Kindness is free. throw it around like confetti".