



NAMI Washtenaw County

National Alliance on Mental Illness

Annual Report

Year in Review

900+
Support group participants

54
Community outreach presentations

53
Class participants

61
New volunteers

Dear Friends,

I am deeply grateful to the volunteers, board members, partners, donors, and community members who supported NAMI Washtenaw County in 2025. Together, our successes and challenges reaffirmed the importance of a connected mental health community. As we move into 2026, we remain committed to listening, learning, and growing together to meet evolving community needs. This work echoes NAMI's founding in 1979, when families came together around a kitchen table to build a more compassionate future for all.

In 2025, we hosted our first NAMIWalks, bringing together more than 300 participants and exceeding fundraising expectations. We were grateful to welcome 61 new volunteers, whose involvement allowed us to expand Ending the Silence presentations and strengthen community outreach supporting students, crisis intervention trainings, and local organizations. Across Washtenaw County, our team participated in 54 resource table events and 72 hospital outreach visits, while our support groups and classes reached more than 900 individuals.

At the same time, our community faced significant challenges, including cuts and delays to housing, food, and health supports that so many of our community members rely on. In response, our advocacy team, working with Fresh Start Clubhouse, trained peers to share their lived experiences with lawmakers to advance meaningful policy change. In 2026, we will build on this momentum by expanding in-person support groups and classes, increasing facilitator training, extending outreach to rural communities, and continuing to advocate for systems that improve mental health outcomes.

None of this work would be possible without the dedication of our peers, volunteers, and supporters. Together, we are strengthening the community and advancing NAMI's mission of a better life for all affected by mental illness.

Sincerely,

Judy L. Gardner

Executive Director

NAMI provides advocacy, education, support, and public awareness so that all individuals and families affected by mental illness can build better lives.

Classes

Family-to-Family

Family-to-Family is an 8-week class for families, significant others and friends of people with mental health conditions that covers different mental health conditions, community resources, self-care, and coping skills.

41 Family-to-Family graduates this year

Participants say taking Family-to-Family helped them [improve their communication with their loved one](#), [take better care of themselves](#), and [practice active listening](#).

100%

of Family-to-Family participants surveyed said they would recommend the program.

“I feel more capable of advocating (for my loved one) as a result of what I've learned and the connections made.”

-F2F participant

Peer-to-Peer

Peer-to-Peer is an 8-week peer-led class for adults who live with mental health conditions that covers coping strategies, how to navigate the healthcare system, and how to access other resources.

12 Peer-to-Peer graduates this year

Participants describe Peer-to-Peer as [informational](#), [welcoming](#), [safe](#), and [enlightening](#). They say taking the class helped them learn more about how the brain works, practice self-compassion, and feel less alone.

“I feel more confident to deal with my stressors and be at peace.”

-P2P participant



Support groups

About Our Support Groups

We have a variety of support groups for people who live with a mental health condition and family members and friends who live in support of someone with a mental health condition. Group leaders have personal experience with a mental health condition and are trained in group facilitation.

Changes in 2025

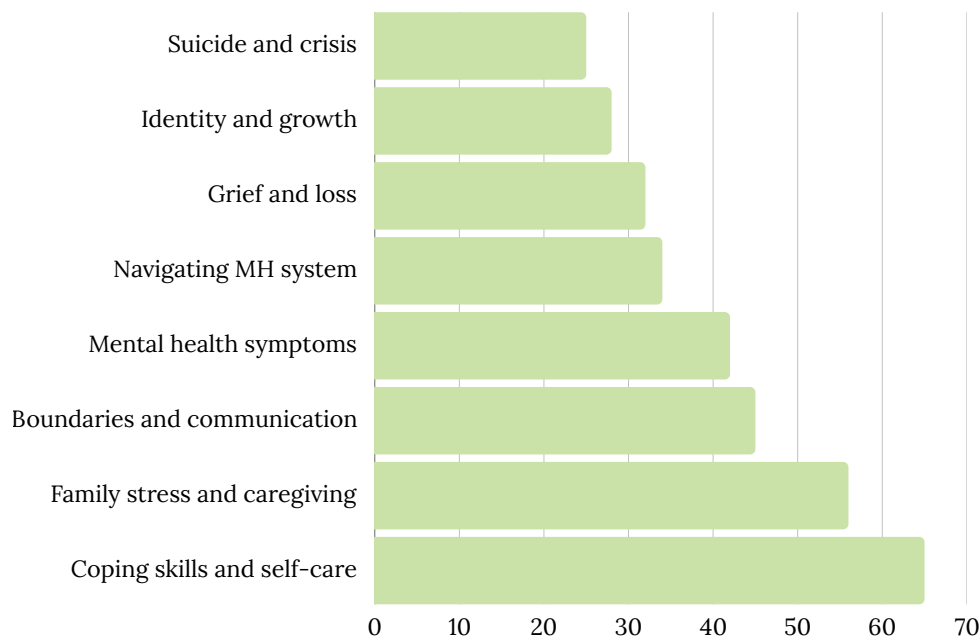
This year, we expanded our Connection Recovery group, a support group for any adult who lives with a mental health condition. Participants now have the opportunity to join up to four times each month.

We also expanded access to our Connection Recovery support group by bringing it to women who are incarcerated at the Washtenaw County Jail.

920 people joined our support groups this year

Looking Ahead to 2026

Our goal is to offer more in-person options for those joining our support groups.



Most Common Topics in Our Support Groups

These are the topics that came up most frequently during each of our support groups in 2025.

Community Outreach

Hospital Outreach

Our peer volunteers visit in-patient and outpatient/partial programs to provide support and understanding from someone who has been through the experience.

72 hospital visits

Community Events

We attend various events in the community to share resources. Thanks to our community partners, we were able to connect with more people in Washtenaw County and share information about our programs at 54 different locations/events in 2025. We truly appreciate all of our community partners who have helped us reach more individuals in need of mental health support.

54 resource table events

Mental Health Treatment Court

NAMI WC supports the Washtenaw County Mental Health Treatment Court, which was created to provide probation to adult offenders whose mental illness contributed to the commission of their crime.

Looking Ahead

According to NAMI, Americans in rural areas must travel 2x as far to their nearest hospital and are 2x as likely to lack broadband internet, limiting access to telehealth compared to Americans in suburban and urban areas. Recognizing these barriers, we're committed to increasing our outreach efforts in rural communities.

This year, we attended more events in Chelsea, such as the Chelsea Farmers Market. Our goal is to expand our outreach in rural areas of Washtenaw County.



Presentations

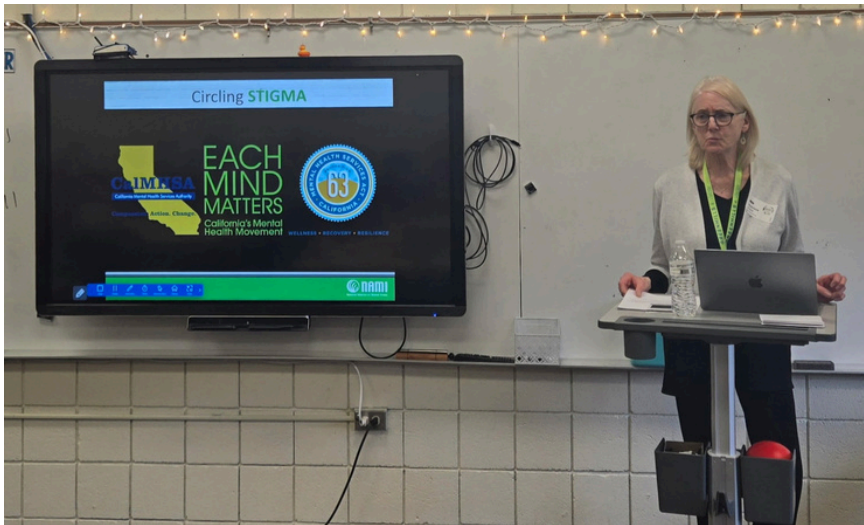
Ending the Silence

Ending the Silence (ETS) is a 50-90-minute presentation NAMI volunteers make at schools to educate students, family members, and school staff about the early signs of a mental health condition, how to get help, and tools that can be used to help safeguard mental health and well-being.

Community Presentations

We have expanded this educational approach to the broader community by partnering with organizations and participating in initiatives such as Crisis Intervention Trainings (CIT) for law enforcement officers.

27 presentations in 2025

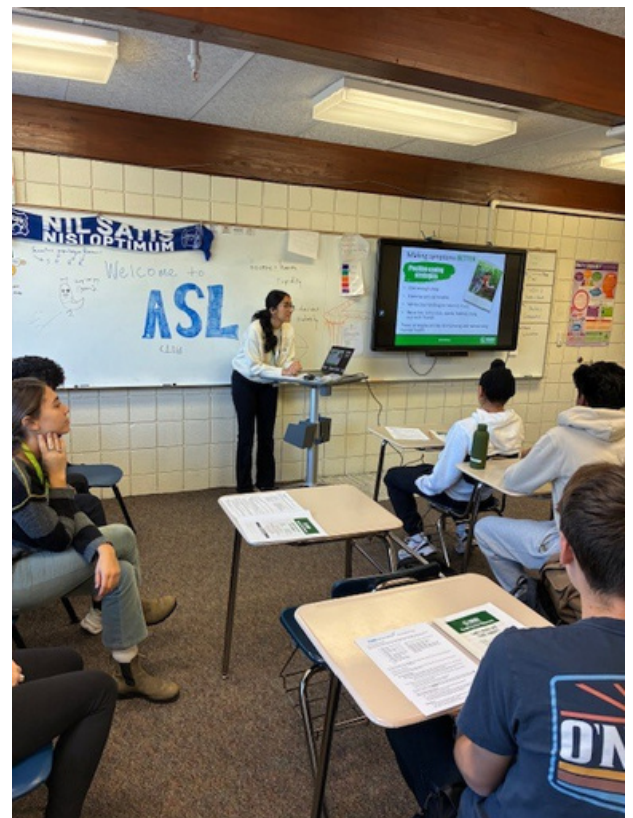


“Officers had the opportunity to hear firsthand stories from individuals with lived experience navigating mental health challenges. These powerful narratives underscored the reality that someone may appear calm or in control yet be fighting an invisible internal battle. This perspective was incredibly impactful, deepening empathy and understanding among our officers.”

- Ann Arbor Police Department

“It was a great format to start with the education, it set the stage for the personal stories afterwards. Everything was GREAT!! I'm so glad we partnered and look forward to continuing the partnership!”

-Greenhills School Teacher



Community Building

NAMI WC Social Clubs

According to the CDC, 1 in 4 adults in the U.S. say they lack social and emotional support, and 1 in 3 adults in the U.S. report feeling lonely. We know that social isolation and loneliness can have a serious impact on mental well-being, and living with a mental health challenge can also increase the risk of loneliness and social isolation. Knowing that social connection and community contribute to better mental health outcomes, we started two social clubs this year to gather together as a community: a hiking club and a book club.

Discord

We also joined Discord as another way to connect with our community. [Join us](#) to stay connected. If you're new to Discord and interested in joining us, learn more about setting up an account [here](#).

Newsletter

As another way of connecting with our community, we send out a monthly email newsletter that features mental health stories from community members, program updates, and upcoming community events. To expand on this, we launched our [biweekly update](#) this year. Now, on a biweekly basis, we send out updates featuring our upcoming events, program dates, support group meetings, community events and initiatives, and volunteer and advocacy opportunities.

Volunteers

Our work would not be possible without the support of our amazing [volunteers](#). In 2025, 61 new volunteers joined NAMI WC. We currently have 232 volunteers. This past year, we focused on strengthening connections among our volunteers and creating more meaningful opportunities to engage with one another. In 2026, we're aiming to expand on these efforts by streamlining communication and creating more spaces for volunteers to connect, collaborate, and grow together.



Advocacy

NAMI advocates to improve the lives of people affected by mental health conditions.

Our advocacy team works to provide training and experience to mental health advocates. This year, one of the ways we did this was through Story Jam trainings in partnership with Fresh Start Clubhouse. Story Jam is a process for teaching people with mental health conditions and their loved ones how to tell short advocacy stories about mental health recovery that advocate for improvements in care, housing, and other needs.

As demand for mental health support continues to increase, our advocacy team is also confronting changes to housing, food, and health insurance supports that members of our community rely on.

Key Areas of Interest for NAMI WC Advocacy

Housing

State reforms

Federal cuts

Healthcare access

**Outreach and training for
mental health advocates**

Medicaid and Medicare

Policy changes

Food access

Mental health stigma



NAMIWalks



In 2025, we hosted our first-ever NAMIWalks Washtenaw County, through which we raised \$68,000 to support our free mental health programs. Thank you to all of our wonderful walk teams, participants, volunteers, community partners, sponsors, generous match fund donors, and board members who helped us raise awareness.

314

registered walkers

28

teams

\$68,000

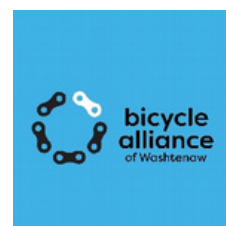
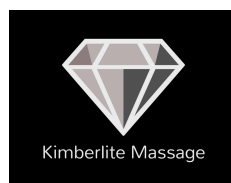
raised to support our mental health programs



Thank You

Thank You to Our 2025 Sponsors

Washtenaw County Mental Health and Public Safety Millage
NAMIWalks Washtenaw County Match Fund



Thank You

Thank You to Our 2025 Program Partners & Community Champions

22aDay	Neutral Zone
A&H Lawn Care	NEW Center
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention	One Million Steps for OCD
Andy LaBarre, Washtenaw County Commissioner	Onyx Salon and Extension Bar
Ann Arbor Police Department	Parkridge Center
Ann Arbor Smiles	Pittsfield Township Senior Center
Arbor Psych Group	Planet Fitness Saline
Arrowwood Hills Community Center	Rowing Fest U.S. Rowing
Brazeway	St. Louis Center
Bryant Community Center	The Gage Foundation
Chelsea High School	The Safe Calm Place
CHRT	Therapaws
City of Chelsea Social Work	Trinity Health
Comerica	United Way of Southeast Michigan
Dance Xplosion	University of Michigan College of Pharmacy
Debbie Dingell, United States Representative	University of Michigan Hatcher Graduate Library
Delonis Center	Veteran Affairs Ann Arbor
Delta Psi Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha	Voices of Courage
Double Good	Washtenaw Alive
Eastern Michigan University	Washtenaw Community College
EMU Basketball	Washtenaw County Foster Grandparent Program
Felicia Brabec, former Michigan State Representative	Washtenaw County Health Department
First United Methodist Church	Washtenaw County Mental Health Treatment Court
First United Methodist Church of Ann Arbor	Washtenaw Housing Alliance
Fresh Start Clubhouse	Washtenaw Intermediate School District
Friends In Deed	We The People Opportunity Farm
Garrett's Space	Workout1
Greenhills School	Ypsilanti Community Schools
Happy Camper Cafe	Ypsilanti Pride Festival
Heinz C. Prechter Bipolar Research Program	Ypsilanti Township
Jewish Family Services	Zeta Zeta Sigma Sorority Ann Arbor Chapter
Keystone Community Church	
Michigan Medicine Psychiatry	

A special thank you to Judge Karen Valvo, whose years of service as a champion for diversion treatment, and NAMI Washtenaw County's program partner through the Mental Health Treatment Court, have allowed so many to receive the mental health care they need.

Thank You

Thank You to Our 2025 Board Members

Pat Streeter, President
Gizem Kestley, Vice President
Wendy Ascione-Juska
Max Baker
Robin Batten
Oliver Cameron
Mark Creekmore

Daphne French
Eric Hammar
Chuck Hughes
Rochelle Igrisan
Lois Maharg
Patricia Root
Lisa Stanton

A special thank you to Lois Maharg for her years of service on the NAMI Washtenaw County board. Our organization has flourished through her championing of the newsletter, numerous fundraising events, and Family-to-Family facilitation.

Join Us

Are you interested in helping us build better lives for people living with a mental illness and their loved ones?

- Become a volunteer
- Become a member
- Join a class, support group, or activity
- Sign up for our email list
- Donate



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