



# NAMI Westchester

National Alliance on Mental Illness

The Official Newsletter of NAMI Westchester, Inc.

DECEMBER 2020

## FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MARIE CONSIDINE

To all our friends,

Welcome to the last month of 2020. We are officially in holiday season, while amidst a global pandemic – sounds like the ultimate oxymoron, right? We know that this year has brought challenges and hardships, yet has brought new acts of caring for ourselves and others, and an increased attention to mental health.



This month and into the new year, please pay close attention to the behaviors of yourself and those around you. Loneliness and stress can lead to the “Holiday Blues” during the time from Thanksgiving to the new year. In most cases symptoms are temporary, but they can be serious if they last for more than two weeks, leading to clinical anxiety and/or depression. Here are some tips to build resilience during this stressful time: <https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/October-2020/Building-Resilience-During-a-Difficult-Year>.

NAMI Westchester is here to help. Please share our newsletters and social media posts, so your friends and followers can access support as well. You may consider giving a gift of membership to NAMI Westchester this year – a great way to say, “I care about you.” Please visit <https://www.namiwestchester.org/memberships>.

It has been through the generosity of our membership that we have been able to strengthen our programs and services this year and have become more valuable to the Westchester community. Giving Tuesday is today, and our goal is \$10,000. Please know that every dollar adds up and will help us achieve our mission and goals in community education and in providing support to families and those living with mental illness. Please consider a donation as you are able: [www.namiwestchester.org/donate](http://www.namiwestchester.org/donate).

I will keep you, your families and close ones in my heart this holiday season and wish you the very best.

*Marie*

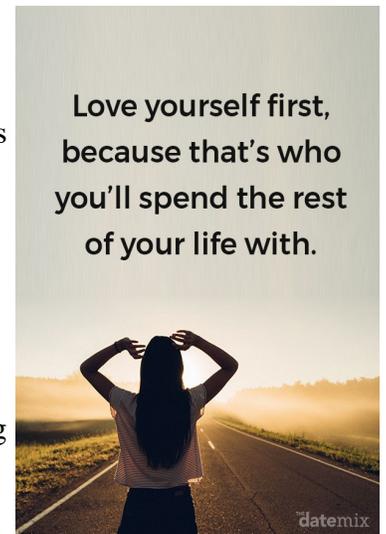
## HELP US EDUCATE OUR COMMUNITY IN NEW WAYS

NAMI Westchester is having great success in bringing presentations via Zoom to **colleges and businesses**. At the college level we often provide *In Our Own Voice* presentation to students in psychology and social work classes. Professors at Fordham University, Westchester Community College, Iona College and the Cochran School of Nursing have all brought us in on a yearly basis for their classes, and the only difference this year is that all is virtual.

For businesses, we have been sharing mental health awareness presentations, which includes an *In Our Own Voice* presentations. Recently, we presented to more than 400 Morgan Stanley employees in the U.S. and UK.

If you know of a professor or employer who would be interested in us providing a mental health education, please have them call Program Coordinator Sharon McCarthy at (914) 598-3869.

Love yourself first,  
because that's who  
you'll spend the rest  
of your life with.



[www.namiwestchester.org](http://www.namiwestchester.org)  
<https://www.facebook.com/NAMIWestchester.org>

HelpLine  
(914) 592-5458

## THOUGHTS DURING THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

As 2020 comes to a close, it will certainly be remembered as the year of controversy, the COVID-19 pandemic, and a *new normal* --physical distancing, mask-wearing, constant hand washing and sanitizing, being homebound with our **family**, being parents and teachers, working and learning remotely, and more isolation. So many have struggled with their mental illness, and some lost hope. Seeing those signs are increasingly more critical to reach out for help and to save lives.



Out of this experience has come some creative ways for NAMI to maintain social contact through technology: reaching out to peers, families, corporations, religious organizations, and schools. We encourage you to participate in the many NAMI presentations and programs to remain connected during this time. Always remember, “*You Are Not Alone.*” Call for support and to register for our virtual programs.

While we all miss celebrating the holidays with our families and loved ones, this year we are being safe, staying home, following all the medical advice, so that next year we can all be together again. So many are finding ways to share joyful experiences and to keep in touch. Groups are holding weekly video chats, doing “Zoom dinners,” reading with grandchildren, having family virtual puzzle and game nights to keep in touch. Reach out, keep in touch, and join in.

To the health care and all essential workers who have sacrificed and go to work every day under dire circumstances to help others – we THANK YOU and are all so grateful. To the many wonderful organizations and volunteers who stepped up to help our county residents with delivery of food during the pandemic – WE THANK YOU. To the Westchester County Dept. of Community Mental Health for your continuous support – WE THANK YOU.

A very special THANK YOU goes to our NAMI Westchester staff, who work so hard to provide the programming and needs for our community and respond to the many calls for help. As always, to our many wonderful members, families, and volunteers who so generously support us during the year with our programs, NAMIWalks Westchester and Giving Tuesday so that we may continue to offer our free programs – WE THANK YOU. Never has the time and need been so important.

The year 2021 brings hope that we can return to the normal as we know it with the inspiring news of the vaccine trials as we continue to follow safe protocols. On behalf of the NAMI Westchester Board of Directors, we send our very best wishes to you and your families for a very safe, happy holiday season and a brighter new year.

With much appreciation,

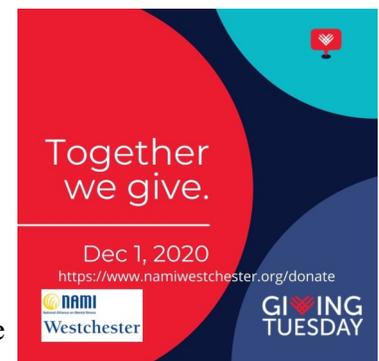
Louise M. Ellis, LCSW-R  
President

## GIVING TUESDAY

In this time of uncertainty, there's a fundamental truth that gives us hope - that together we can do extraordinary things.

The Westchester community is strong. Join us on #GivingTuesday and let's rally to build a community of hope for all those in need. Your donations to Giving Tuesday at NAMI Westchester helps provide free access to services, programs, support and advocacy for individuals and families whose lives are affected by mental illness and co-occurring disorders.

Generosity gives everyone the power to make a positive change in the lives of others, please give locally at <https://www.namiwestchester.org/donate> where 100% of your donation will help our community.



You can also donate via our Facebook fundraiser at <https://www.facebook.com/donate/397987651384496/> or create your own Facebook fundraiser at <https://www.facebook.com/fund/NAMIWestchester.org/>.

## PARTNERING WITH A NEW LOCAL NONPROFIT

In October, NAMI Westchester worked with The Nicholas Center, a 501(c)(3) organization based in Port Washington, Long Island that opened a new location Pleasantville, Westchester County. The Nicholas Center allow adults with Autism to lead healthy and active lives, while fostering meaningful relationships, and promoting independence, employment, skill building, enrichment and full participation in the community. The Pleasantville Center currently serves 13 individuals with Autism. They attend programming five days a week, gaining new skills, socializing and working with partner organizations in the community.



*“The Nicholas Center is pleased to partner with NAMI Westchester. Our team is making great strides helping to package custom masks and thank you cards for their volunteers. NAMI Westchester’s core values of hope, inclusion, empowerment, compassion and fairness align with The Nicholas Center’s values and approach. Our participants enjoy their work immensely, as well as making connections with the NAMI Westchester staff – their warmth and energy is evident.”* – Jeremy Scalchunes, Clinical Director, Nicholas Center Westchester

We at NAMI Westchester always looks for ways to collaborate with other nonprofits. We appreciate the effort of The Nicholas Center and look forward to working together again. More info on The Nicholas Center at <http://www.nicholascenterusa.org/westchester.html>.

## SAVE THE DATE: ANNUAL ADVOCACY EVENT



Our Annual Advocacy Town Hall will be held virtually on Wednesday, January 27, 2021 at 7 p.m.

Matthew Shapiro, Associate Director of Public Affairs at NAMI NYS, will present on the 2021 NAMI NYS Action Agenda and Michael Orth, Commissioner of Westchester County Dept. of Community Mental Health, will address what is relevant in Westchester.

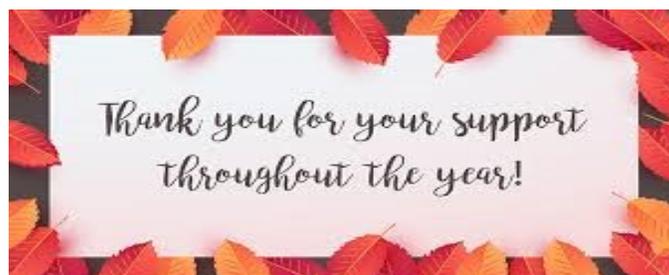
Please register at <https://advocacy2021.eventbrite.com>. Registration is required to receive the Zoom link.

## SHOPRAISE

We are so grateful that the support we receive from our community helps to improve the quality of life for all individuals and families whose lives are affected by mental illness and co-occurring disorders. Now we have made it even easier to help our cause!



It is simple, download the ShopRaise mobile or desktop app and every time you make a purchase at a participating retailer, a percentage will support **NAMI Westchester**. Click to download and start supporting us with every purchase: <https://ShopRaise.com/for/NAMIwestchester>.



## AMAZON SMILE

If you are an Amazon shopper ... when shopping, please Amazon shop via [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and choose NAMI Westchester as your favorite non-profit & Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible purchases to NAMI Westchester.

Logging in via AmazonSmile brings you to the same Amazon you know -- same products, prices, service. This benefit is also available via the app. AmazonSmile is available year-round. Please set your account to connect with Amazon Smile, directing the contributions to NAMI Westchester on each purchase. There is no additional cost to you -- this is a donation on the part of Amazon, supporting customers' favorite charities.



## NAMIWALKS WESTCHESTER 2021

The 2021 NAMIWalks Westchester website is now open! Take the first step and register for NAMIWalks at [www.namiwalks.org/westchester](https://www.namiwalks.org/westchester) taking place on May 22, 2021.



## NAMIWALKS WESTCHESTER 2021 SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Sponsorship opportunities are available for the 2021 NAMIWalks Westchester. We will be walking virtually on the **National Day of Hope** and have planned exciting ways to highlight our sponsors. There are levels to fit every budget and your donation is tax-deductible.

Your financial contribution to NAMI Westchester helps a create an environment where people affected by mental illness can experience hope, recovery & wellness. Please contact Sharon Regan Masciovecchio at [info@namiwestchester.org](mailto:info@namiwestchester.org) for more information or to receive a sponsorship brochure.

