



National Alliance on Mental Illness

nami Delaware

Join the Movement!

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR YOU

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT! WE COULDN'T DO THIS WITHOUT YOU.



Thank You for Attending the 2021 Inspiring Hope Conference!

Thank you to our wonderful keynote speaker, Kevin Hines, for sharing your incredibly inspirational story of survival and hope. Thank you to all of our speakers for sharing resources, research, and new practices!

Stay tuned for next year's date!

SAVE THE DATE!

NAMIWalks Delaware: Delaware United

Join us for our 20th anniversary of NAMIWalks in New Castle County to raise awareness for mental health! Stay tuned for the location and for how you can get involved in Kent and Sussex County!

Saturday, May 7th



NAMI Delaware Welcomes New Staff Member

We are thrilled to welcome Sue Mulhern as a full-time staff member! She is joining the Advocacy & Education team as an Assistant Director. Sue will be focused on Corporate, Organizational, and Government Partnerships. Sue is a longtime volunteer (2019 Volunteer of the Year!) and program facilitator.

Q: Why are you excited to join NAMI Delaware's team?

A: I'm excited to become a member of an organization that has helped me grow immensely over the past several years. I am thrilled to have a job with such a positive impact on our community. Being able to transition from a volunteer to a full-time team member is a dream come true!

Q: What aspect of your role are you looking forward to the most?

A: I'm most excited to expand my role as an educator for NAMI Delaware. Being able to initiate and expand our partnerships with businesses, corporations, faith groups, schools and health care facilities is a fantastic way to further reduce stigma and "normalize" open, honest discussions about mental health.

Q: What has your previous involvement with NAMI Delaware been?

A: I've been volunteering with NAMI since 2017. My volunteer role includes facilitating many classes (including NAMI Basics), being a peer support leader, and speaking at local organizations about my own personal mental health diagnoses and journey.

Q: We would love to hear a few fun facts about you, can you share two truths and a lie?

- 1) I learned to scuba dive in the neighborhood swimming pool when I was 10 years old to get ready for a scuba trip with my dad and older brothers.
- 2) I was once dragged down a subway platform by a moving subway train in New York City.
- 3) I've driven to and from Florida over 10 times in the last 8 years.

LIE: number 3!

FALL SELF CARE

TAKE A WALK OUTSIDE AND NOTICE ALL THE COLORFUL TREES AROUND YOU

CURL UP WITH A BLANKET AND READ A SELF HELP BOOK

MAKE A LIST OF THINGS YOU WANT TO LET GO OF



Turning Grief into “Hope is Best”

by Anitta Manning

Ten years after the death of her son Aric Pringle, Nancy Polzin still finds it hard to talk about. The grief never lets up. But, with the help of Aric’s friends, family, and the music community in and around Delaware, something positive was born.

After Aric’s death in 2011, it was one of those musicians who stepped in with the idea for a concert. Following the funeral, his best friend, Pete Wiedmann, who performs with LyricDrive, Love Seed Momma Jump and others, MC’d an open mic Celebration of Life for Aric, bringing family, friends, and music community together. “As I was walking out,” Polzin recalls, “Pete said, ‘I know Aric used to raise money for mental health. What if we continue it?’”

And Hope is Best – the name of one of Aric’s songs – was born.

Hope is Best, an annual musical concert performed in honor of Aric and to raise funds to further the work of NAMI Delaware, has been held eight of the last ten years in venues throughout the state. The all-volunteer events bring together local musicians and fans for a day of music, offering an opportunity to have fun and learn more about the programs NAMI Delaware offers.

As a young man, Aric had been interested in doing counseling for recovering addicts, she says, but at the same time, “he was struggling with challenges of his own.” Aric began volunteering at NAMI Delaware, where he staffed the HelpLine line, offering resources, information, and an understanding ear. “With his work at NAMI, he felt he had found a home,” Polzin says. “He felt he could really connect with people who were struggling, whether with addiction, mental challenges, he was in a unique position to help people.”

Polzin says she wishes she had known about family support and other programs while Aric was young and struggling. “Had I known what NAMI does when Aric was in high school, I’d have been in contact with other parents, other people who have loved ones struggling with mental illness and would have understood that

there are resources out there,” she says.

With focus on promoting mental health awareness and supporting the services provided by NAMI Delaware, Wiedmann headed up the benefit concerts as music director from the first one in 2012 through 2020. Another friend and local musician, Alex Razze, who is also a painter and web designer, took over for the 2021 concert as music director, lining up musicians, the venue, and promotions. That concert, held in May at space donated by Theatre N in Wilmington, was also live-streamed, assisted by songwriter/musician Cliff Hillis, for those who could not attend because of pandemic concerns.

“My son Aric lost his life to suicide,” she says. “He was an extremely talented musician. I am touched that the Delaware musicians keep his memory and his passion for helping those with mental illness alive by putting on this concert every year.”

Dr. Joshua Thomas, CEO of NAMI Delaware, says “music is part of the richness of life. For Nancy Polzin and so many of Aric’s musician friends and supporters to come out each year in celebration of his life and the work of NAMI Delaware is both impressive and deeply heartwarming. We thank them all.”

Polzin estimates that the concerts have hosted around 44 performances of local bands “involving multiple musicians that donated their talent and time to support the messaging of Hope is Best and the good works of NAMI DE. The bottom line is that the local musicians are who have made the continuing messaging possible.”



Aric Pringle



DEAR FRIENDS

Dear Friends,
Fall is not only a beautiful time of year, but it is a busy time of year at NAMI Delaware! We are constantly striving to meet the needs of our community.

During this time of managing a global pandemic, I've noticed that many of us wear two types of masks. One helps protect ourselves and others from COVID-19 and the other figurative mask hides our emotions and reactions during this stressful time. Many of us are experiencing high rates of anxiety and depression during this very difficult time in our lives. I want you to know that NAMI Delaware is here to support you and your family.

Our programs team has been hard at work offering educational and support opportunities in our community. We successfully held another Crisis Intervention Team 40 hour training for 35 Delaware law enforcement officers this month. Additionally, we are answering an increasing number of HelpLine calls and advocating for individuals and families to get the care they need.

The holiday season is approaching. We know that this can be a stressful time for many. If we can be of support to you and your family, please contact us. We are happy to help. We also encourage you to follow our social media platforms (@namidelaware) and join our email list (you can do so at www.namidelaware.org) so you can learn about helpful tips and strategies.

We will soon be launching our Year-End Appeal where we ask for your support during your year-end giving! Please watch your mail for our envelope, our social media messages, and our emails so you can learn about our critical work in the community and how you can support our efforts. We need you!

I wish you the very best this Holiday Season and a Happy and Healthy New Year!

With Gratitude,
Josh

Joshua Thomas, Ph.D.
CEO/Executive Director

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Become a member!
Membership with NAMI Delaware gives
you great discounts and a great
community.

BEHIND THE MASK

We support, educate and advocate for people with severe and persistent mental illness.

Please help us help Delawareans.



The pandemic has affected our mental health.

1 in 3

Americans have reported **anxiety or depression** since COVID-19

1 in 5

Americans sought **mental health help** since COVID-19

1 in 4

U.S. children show symptoms of **depression**



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