
THE FUTURE
IS BRIGHT

ANNUAL REPORT

2023



National Alliance on Mental Illness

nami

Westside
Los Angeles

2023



Welcoming Change

Letter from our CEO, Erin Raftery Ryan

2023 was an incredible journey for our affiliate. Our collective efforts in the realm of mental health advocacy, education, and outreach have yielded significant impact and positive change. I am immensely proud of what we have accomplished and grateful for the unwavering dedication of our team, Board of Directors, Advisory Council, volunteers, and members.

Throughout the year, we have tirelessly worked to break down stigmas surrounding mental health, increase awareness, and provide crucial support to those in need. Our innovative programs, educational classes, support groups, Ending the Silence presentations, Lanetta Wahlgren Internship Program, CalHOPE, Annual Gala, and outreach initiatives have reached new heights, touching the lives of countless individuals and families. Through community outreach initiatives, educational campaigns, and partnerships with like-minded organizations, we have successfully amplified our message, fostering a more compassionate and understanding community.

As our affiliate has grown and evolved, we have recognized that supporting our community means more than maintaining our commitment and this has led us to work behind the scenes on ensuring our growth and stability. After careful consideration and strategic planning, our board has decided to embrace a change that reflects our organization's growth, vision, and commitment to excellence and they have appointed me as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of NAMI WLA. This change in title reflects our collective efforts to elevate our organization to new heights and reinforces our dedication to leadership. I want to express my gratitude to the board for this commitment; our shared journey continues, and I am excited about the bright future that awaits us at NAMI Westside LA and our community. I am energized by the momentum we have built and the potential for even greater impact in the coming year.

Erin Raftery Ryan

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Erin Raftery Ryan". The signature is fluid and cursive.

CEO
NAMI Westside LA

Board of Directors



Adaline Fagen
Co-President

Entrepreneur/CEO, trained Family-to-Family teacher, Annual Gala fundraising chair



Dorit Haroni
Co-President

Top fundraiser for Mental Health Awareness Month, helped establish our social media base, Annual Gala fundraising chair



Sarah Haufrect
Treasurer

Mental health advocate, communications director, and writer featured in Psychology Today



Sheila Carter
Secretary

Business owner of over 30 years with a background in business and finance, a trained Family-to-Family Teacher



Dr. Karen Wilson

Clinical Neuropsychologist, Director of West LA Neuropsychology, Founder of ChildNEXUS.com



Lanetta Wahlgren

Mental health advocate and Founder of the NAMI WLA UCLA Lanetta Wahlgren Internship program, supporter of students and future mental health advocates



NAMI WLA Staff



Erin Raftery Ryan , CEO

Erin is honored to be of service to NAMI WLA as the Executive Director. In 2023, she continued to find innovative ways to reduce the shame and stigma associated with mental health conditions by collaborating with like-minded organizations like the Move with Kindness Foundation to bring the Hearts and Minds Program to the community, establishing new partnerships for our Annual Gala allowing other organizations to make an impact on mental health, and attending state and national conferences with mental health leaders and change makers to advocate for our community.



Elizabeth Stephens , Program Director

As NAMI WLA's Program Director, Elizabeth supervises our Peer Programs & Services and the LWF Internship and Volunteer programs. She is passionate about mental health advocacy and ensuring that the appropriate mental health services are accessible to all. Coming from a place of lived experience, Elizabeth understands first hand the importance of addressing the stigma surrounding mental health and building a community of hope for all of those affected by mental health conditions.



Kathy Vasquez
Operations/Executive
Assistant



Lily Rosen
School Programs
Coordinator



Alan Soto
Operations/Executive
Assistant



Montse Castel
Spanish Speaking
Program Coordinator



Cynthia Sirota
Warm Line Resource
Navigator



Bern Galvin
Financial Consultant



Lea Dominguez
HR Generalist

Supporting our Community

Support for Peers and Families

Support Groups for Peers and Families

NAMI WLA offers weekly and biweekly support groups for adults who are living with mental health condition and support groups for family members and loved ones. Our support groups provide an opportunity for people living with mental health conditions and their loved ones to share their stories, learn from one another, and give and receive support to others facing similar challenges, in a safe and confidential setting. In 2023, we expanded our peer support group to an in-person group at UCLA Resnick. By offering in-person support, we aim to create a safe space by addressing the unique needs of individuals through various means of connection and support.

Spanish Programming

Recognizing the importance of inclusivity and accessibility, we are excited to announce a significant expansion of our programming to better serve the Spanish-speaking community. We are dedicating resources to develop and enhance Spanish-language initiatives, ensuring that our mental health services are accessible to a broader audience.



Meet Montse Castel, our Spanish Speaking Program Coordinator, who helped grow our Spanish programming.

Educational Classes for Peers and Families

The NAMI Peer-to-Peer class is a free class for those living with mental health conditions, and the NAMI Family-to-Family class is a free class for their family members and loved ones. Our classes are 8 weeks long and are taught in a progressive manner by a team of trained mentors who have personal experience on the matter. Our classes are for adults (18+) who are looking to better understand themselves and their own recovery or their family members' recovery.

"I learned I am not a burden on those around me and that my loved ones love to support me the way I love to support them. I can reach out to those around me in healthy and productive ways!"

- P2P Class Student

Partnership with The Jewish Federation

We launched our partnership with the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles to provide mental health resources to their community. With this partnership, Clinical Mental Health Advocate Sharon Dunas and Warm Line Resource Navigator Cynthia Sirota are able to provide support to community members in need.



Sharon Dunas



Cynthia Sirota

Supporting Students

Ending the Silence

This past year we expanded our Ending the Silence (ETS) presentations into --- schools, and reached over 1,550 students. These presentations, given by a family member of a loved one with a mental health condition, cover warning signs, facts, statistics, and share how students can get help for themselves or a friend. This is followed by a Young Adult, who shares their experience living with a mental health condition. These presentations provide students with the tools and language to start conversations about mental health with their parents, teachers, and peers- and we have plans to expand into new schools and communities in 2024!



Meet Lily Rosen, our new School Programs Coordinator at NAMI WLA! With an impactful internship experience at NAMI Wisconsin under her belt, Lily is deeply committed to expanding our 'Ending the Silence' presentation.

Regional Youth Summit



We hosted a Regional Youth Summit in December 2023 consisting of a series of events, including presentations, workshops, and trainings, to empower young individuals in mental health awareness and advocacy. This summit united experts, professionals, and youth voices to tackle mental health challenges, offering a platform for open dialogue, educational workshops, and inspiring stories. The series of events led to a special in-person installment of the Janis Black Warner Speaker Series featuring the documentary film, "Our Turn To Talk," followed by a youth mental health advocate panel with speakers from the Teen Mental Health Advisory Council from Friends of Semel Institute, UCLA Active Minds, and UCLA Wellness Commission.

NAMI on Campus

NAMI Westside Los Angeles has a presence at UCLA and on high school campuses, sharing information and resources with students, faculty, and staff. We currently have 4 clubs and 60 student club members.

Supporting Students

Lanetta Wahlgren Internship Program

We are proud of the growth with our Lanetta Wahlgren UCLA Internship Program. This program combines Lanetta’s strong interests in academia and the mental health field as it paves the way for the next generation of mental health advocacy. It has also introduced us to amazing college students who have infused the office with their energy and fresh ideas!



We honored Lanetta Wahlgren for her transformative contribution to our internship program and profound impact on the lives of aspiring mental health professionals and advocates. Lanetta Wahlgren has played a pivotal role in shaping the future of mental health advocacy by investing in the next generation who is passionate about making a positive difference in the lives of all those affected by mental health conditions. Our current staff and former interns, Elizabeth Stephens and Marian Alino, presented Lanetta with the honor. Current interns were in attendance and recognized at our Annual Gala.



From Interns to Current Staff



Elizabeth Stephens
Program Director



Marian Alino
Communications
Coordinator



Iris Lin
Membership
Coordinator



Alan Soto
Internship Coordinator

“I hope to contribute to a societal shift where mental health is given the same importance as physical health”

CalHOPE

What We Do

Our team of resource navigators run a warm-line service in both English and Spanish, and attend remote and in-person outreach events during which they listen with compassion and refer community members to supportive resources. Our team additionally offers Resource Navigation Sessions, in which counselors provide individualized support. Through their extensive outreach and peer support, our team provided resources at 101 outreach events, direct support to 271 peer and family members and 41 groups.



Jolissa Hebard
Outreach Team Supervisor



Jared Bendifallah



Britt Turpack



Oshri Hakak



Debbie Brazil



Diana Barrios



Maraisa Glass



Engaging our Community

Every month, we invite mental health professionals, advocates, and others with lived experiences with a mental health condition to share information and insights with our community. We thank Janis Black Warner for her support in allowing us to produce this monthly event and invite speakers to speak on so many important topics.



JANIS BLACK WARNER SPEAKER SERIES

REAL TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH



Thank You to our 2023 Speakers!



January 2023
Brenda Sarai Zuniga on anxiety and stress reduction



February 2023
Adam Sholder, founder of Insight Enrichment Group on Building Resiliency



March 2023
Dr. Mark Ragins on Recovery Perspectives of Homelessness and Mental Illness



April 2023
Kevin Nahai on debunking mental health misconceptions



May 2023
Dr. Steven Marder, attending psychiatrist at UCLA's Psychosis Clinic



June 2023
Ale Gomez and Wendy Anguiano from Equality California



September 2023
Susan Smiley MEd on Mental Health's Best Kept Secret



October 2023
Ryan Dusick, associate marriage and family therapist, founding drummer of Maroon 5



November 2023
Bruce Lewitt and Carol Larkin from Proxy Parent Foundation



December 2023
Feature documentary film "Our Turn to Talk" and youth mental health panel

Advisory Council

Our Advisory Council members share their knowledge and expertise to uphold our mission of providing free education programs along with support, guidance, and hope for the growing number of Angelenos affected by mental health conditions.



Juan Acosta

Juan Acosta is a first generation Mexican immigrant who grew up in Woodland, California. Juan has done work throughout the state of California, across the country and around the world. He has served on various national committees and speaks at conferences and festivals, including United Nations side events and the first-ever Youth Mental Health Action Forum White House event. Juan co-authored the NYT bestselling "Channel Kindness: Stories of Kindness and Community" with musical artist and actress Lady Gaga.



Dr. Xavier Amador

Dr. Amador is a world-renowned clinical psychologist and forensic expert, author of 120 peer-reviewed scientific papers and eight books. He has lived experience as a family caregiver of relatives with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. He has founded NAMI's Scientific Council, helped launch Family-to-Family, Peer-to-Peer and In Our Own Voices. Dr. Amador resigned from Columbia University and NYS Psychiatric Institute to honor his commitment to families that asked him to educate family caregivers, mental health practitioners, and professionals.



Karena Dawn

Karena Dawn is an entrepreneur, trainer, New York Times bestselling author, and co-founder of Tone It Up, a leading fitness and lifestyle community for women. Karena has been featured in Forbes for creating a "fitness empire" and on the Create & Cultivate 100 List honoring women who are masters in their field. Karena is the founder of the mental health nonprofit charitable foundation The Big Silence and hosts a podcast of the same name. Through all her work, Karena is dedicated to helping others feel confident, empowered, and fulfilled.



Dr. Waguih IsHak

Dr. Waguih William IsHak, MD, FAPA, is a professor and clinical chief of psychiatry at Cedars-Sinai and clinical professor of psychiatry at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. Dr. IsHak has more than 30 years of experience with specific expertise in outcome measurement in depressive symptom severity, functioning, and quality of life. He is researching innovative ways to measure and improve the detection and treatment of depression as a way to restore and maintain health and remove behavioral barriers to wellness.



Janis Black Warner

Janis Black Warner is the recipient of our Distinguished Service Award for her passion and advocacy for all those affected by mental health conditions. She is a philanthropist and angel sponsor for our monthly Janis Black Warner Speaker Series, and her support allows us to provide our community with free conversations and presentations from mental health professionals and mental health advocates. She worked closely with the Beverly Hills Department to sponsor their mental health dog and named the dog NAMI after our organization.

Over the past year, our Advisory Council has grown to include Sharon Dunas, NAMI WLA Present Emeritus, who now also serves as our Clinical Mental Health Advocate.



As we prepared for our Mental Health Gala, we called on the support and expertise of additional Advisory Council Members to create an impactful event raising awareness for mental health and breaking stigma. Our Council is comprised of professionals, community leaders, and individuals with lived experience, provide valuable insights that help shape and enhance the nonprofit's programs and services. For our Annual Gala, we worked with our existing Advisory Council and new members, Juan Acosta, Joli and Andrew Altshule, Dr. Xavier Amador, Karena Dawn, Sarah and Andrew Ellenbogen, Charlotte and Gary Gilbert, Adir Haroni, Sharon Kashfian, Maryam and Josh Lieberman, Jessica Meisels, Jennifer and Zev Norotsky, Dr. Waguih IsHak, Doug Warner and Janis Black Warner.

Our Turn to Talk

Our December 2023 installment of the Janis Black Warner Speaker Series included the documentary film “Our Turn to Talk” and a youth mental health panel. The event convened young minds and brought

attention to the unique struggles faced by youth but also fostered empathy, understanding, and a sense of community.



NAMI, the Beverly Hills Police Department’s Mental Health Dog, was a special guest for the evening. Janis Black Warner, mental health advocate and

sponsor of our monthly Speaker Series, helped name NAMI.

Hearts and Minds



On April 28, we held an event at the Mar Vista Boys and Girls Club with Allison Holker Boss and Family and the Move with Kindness Foundation to encourage youth and their

community to take care of both their mental and physical health through movement and dance. Through this event, we launched the Hearts and Minds program leading into May, Mental Health Awareness Month. We are so proud of making this connection with community leaders and passionate mental health advocates to create such an inspiring event and we are thrilled to continue our work with the Move with Kindness Foundation.

Matthew Diep led a dance and mindfulness workshop which culminated into a performance for all the attendees to close out the event.

The event also included an Ending the Silence presentation lead by Jolissa Hebard, music workshop with Oshri Hakak, and mindfulness activity with Joy is Everywhere.



Annual Gala

Our Annual Gala, held on May 12 at the Pacific Design Center in West Hollywood was a night to remember - a night of celebration and hope for all those affected by mental health conditions! Our passionate community of peers, families, and mental health advocates came together to support our mission of providing education and support, advocacy, and prevention and early intervention. Thank you to our NAMI WLA Team, Board Members, Advisory Council, Sponsors, and Members for helping create such an impactful night.

We presented Lanetta Wahlgren with the Heart of Advocacy Award, Pure Edge, Inc. with the Heart of Innovation Award, and Allison Holker and daughter Weslie Boss with the Heart of a Champion Award. The night included a very special tribute to the life & legacy of Stephen "Twitch" Boss and the Move with Kindness Foundation.



Adam Havener hosted the event with presenters including Derek Hough and Jenna Dewan. Musical guests included DJ Ruckus and Aloe Blacc. We had a Free Your Me photo booth for gala attendees to express their emotions while being photographed by Jennifer Cawley, the photographer behind our Free Your Me mental health awareness campaign which launched in 2021. We also announced our partnership with Innerworld and Meta to promote their new digital mental health platform.

Thank you to our Gala Co-Chairs, Adaline Fagen and Dorit Haroni; our Board of Directors, Sheila Carter, Sam Griffel, Sarah Haufrect, Lauren Reynaldo, Lanetta Wahlgren, Dr. Karen Wilson; and our Advisory Council Members, Juan Acosta, Joli and Andrew Altshule, Dr. Xavier Amador, Karena Dawn, Sarah and Andrew Ellenbogen, Charlotte and Gary Gilbert, Adir Haroni, Sharon Kashfian, Maryam and Josh Lieberman, Jessica Meisels, Jennifer and Zev Norotsky, Dr. Waguish IsHak, Doug Warner and Janis Black Warner.



In The Community

NAMI CA Conference

NAMI WLA Executive Director Erin Raftery Ryan, Board Member Sheila Carter, and CalHOPE Outreach Supervisor Jolissa Hebard represented our affiliate at the NAMI CA Conference, spoke with mental health leaders, and made so many connections.



At The Ebell of Los Angeles with Mayor Karen Bass

Erin Raftery Ryan and NAMI WLA Board Member Sheila Carter took part in a discussion led by Mayor Karen Bass, Dr. Va Lecia Adams Kellum of LAHSA, Janey Rountree, and other pivotal figures about the insights on the humanitarian crisis of homelessness in LA



The Signing of SB326

Our team, Erin Raftery Ryan, Jolissa Hebard, Cynthia Sirota, and Garrett Shaw, was present at the signing of SB326 (The Behavioral Health Services Act). Special shoutout to Jolissa Hebard, whose courageous story touched hearts before the pivotal signing of the revised Mental Health Services Act.



EDLE in Washington DC

Erin Raftery Ryan attended the Executive Director Leadership Exchange in Washington DC and collaborated with other NAMI leaders on continuing our work to strengthen our impact on mental health.



In The Community

Winter Advocacy Conference

NAMI Westside LA's Erin Raftery Ryan and Sharon Kash attended the Winter Advocacy Conference with CALACAP (California Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry), alongside Assembly members Jacqui Irwin, Josh Lowenthal, and Rick Chavez Zbur.



Britney Brunch at The Abbey

We worked with The Abbey on our Do-It-Your-Way fundraising and awareness-raising program by hosting this Brunch event on to support the launch of Britney Spears' new memoir The Woman in Me.



Every Brilliant Thing



PLAYBILL

OFFER PLAYHOUSE
AUDREY SKIRBALL KENS THEATER



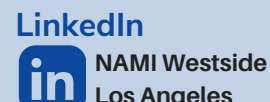
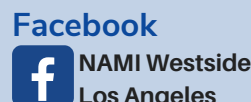
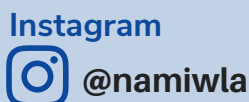
We're profoundly grateful for the collaborative effort between the Geffen Playhouse and NAMI WLA, particularly during Suicide Prevention Month. Our Executive Director Erin Raftery Ryan and Board Co-President, Adaline Fagen, celebrated the opening night of the play "Every Brilliant Thing."

Do-It-Your-Way with OPHS

We launched our Do-It-Your-Way fundraising campaign with the Oak Park High School cheer and stunt team! Our partnership with OPHS increases awareness and education about mental health among youth and teenagers.



To see more of us in the community, follow us on social media



For the latest news and updates, visit www.namiwla.org or call us at 310-889-7200

In The Community

NAMI on Campus



Britt Turpack has been leading our NAMI on Campus program, bringing NAMI WLA mental health resources and wellness events to colleges and high schools, including UCLA and Pepperdine University among many others. Through this outreach, we strive to empower students with the resources to navigate their mental health.



NAMI WLA Trainings

We are committed to enhancing the quality of our programs and services holding training sessions for our Family and Peer support groups, Family and Peer educational classes, Mental Health First Aid trainings, and QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Suicide Prevention trainings.

2 Family Support Group Trainings

English and Spanish training
12 new facilitators

2 Peer Support Group Trainings

Trained members of PFAC (Patient Family Advisory Council) at UCLA Resnick, NAMI WLA peer leaders, and NAMI UCLA interns

QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Training

Trained 26 individuals consisting of staff, community members, and Board of Directors

Mental Health First Aid Training

Trained 16 staff and community members

Ending the Silence Trainings

Led by Program Director Elizabeth Stephens

2023 IMPACT REPORT

Platinum
Transparency
2023

Candid.



ENDING-THE-SILENCE PRESENTATIONS

4,000+ STUDENTS REACHED

With survey data showing over...

77% of students reporting learning something new and **91%** students agreeing that as a result of the presentation, they know how to help themselves, or others if they notice the warning signs

SUPPORT GROUPS AND EDUCATIONAL CLASSES

8,885 MEMBERS SUPPORTED

LANETTA WAHLGREN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

9 NEW UCLA INTERNS

NAMI ON CAMPUS CLUBS

4 STUDENT-LED CLUBS



In 2023, our CalHOPE team has Held...

348 Individual/Family 1:1 sessions

54 Group sessions

135 Outreach Events

JANIS BLACK WARNER SPEAKER SERIES

700+ STUDENTS REACHED

Thank You to our Donors and Partners



LANETTA WAHLGREN FUND JANIS BLACK WARNER



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