

SUPPORT DEPARTMENT QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Q1 2026



As we begin this edition of our newsletter, we would like to take a moment to reflect on the continued growth and impact of our community. Through shared commitment and collaboration, we remain dedicated to advancing awareness, advocacy, and access to mental health resources.

This publication highlights the ongoing efforts of our volunteers, partners, and supporters whose dedication helps strengthen our mission. Their contributions make it possible to expand programs, provide educational opportunities, and support individuals and families throughout our community.

We are grateful for your continued engagement and support. Together, we move forward with the shared goal of fostering understanding, promoting well-being, and ensuring that no one faces mental health challenges alone.

With gratitude,

Support Department Team

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What's Happened

Congratulations February Graduates!



Mark Wronkiewicz

Marketa McCoy

Mike Broderick

Justin Cominos

Moira Callahan

Nicole Argus

Yana Dubrovsky

Darnell Walker

Derek Jones

Ethan Hoard

Jason Ferrari

Jerry Joseph

Justin Anderson

We appreciate you so much!

What's Happened

NAMI DuPage expresses self-love through Plates of Hope



NAMI DuPage Peer Social



What's Upcoming

OPEN HOUSE



FRIDAY, MAY 29TH, 2026

5PM TO 8PM

NAMI DUPAGE

117 N COUNTY FARM RD.

WHEATON, IL 60187

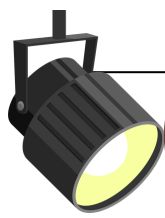
JOIN US FOR MUSIC, HOT DOGS, WHEEL OF FORTUNE, RAFFLES, AND INSPIRING SPEAKERS WHO WILL SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT NAMI RESOURCES AND SUPPORT SERVICES.



NAMI DuPage invites the community to attend the Growing Hope: Shine a Light Gala on Saturday, May 16, 2026 at 5:30 PM at the Chicago Marriott Naperville.

This special evening will bring together supporters of mental health awareness for a night of dinner, dancing, live entertainment, and exciting auctions and raffles. The gala helps raise vital funds that support NAMI DuPage's free mental health programs, advocacy efforts, and peer support services for individuals and families in our community.

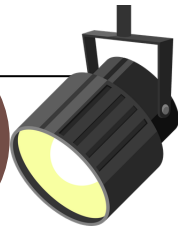
Join us for a meaningful evening that celebrates hope, recovery, and the power of community support while helping expand access to mental health resources throughout DuPage County. For tickets, sponsorship opportunities, or more information, visit namidupage.org/gala.



Voices of NAMI DuPage

“Eric Metcalf”

Director of Peer Workforce Development



Q. What inspired you to work at NAMI DuPage?

Truly, when the job was presented to me to apply, it took me three times to say yes. I like to think of it as the Grinch who stole Christmas, when the Grinch's heart grew. The third time, I felt the tag in my heart. I literally said, EHHH, okay, I applied, interviewed, and got the position. The reason for that is that I did not think there would be enough money in this for me because my life was totally shattered at the moment, and I needed to repair a lot of things.

Q. What moments at NAMI DuPage stayed with you?

There are so many moments, but some of the piper moments would be as I would train or mentor, sharing everything would be reflected back on me because I am big on leading by example. So if I am telling our peers to practice coping strategies or self-care, I too need to practice them.

Q. What myths about Mental health do you wish people would understand better?

That has nothing to do with competence; it doesn't mean you're bright or smart; it just means that you may process differently.

Q. What makes NAMI DuPage unique?

I say this a lot in different places and spaces. That, for me, is the extended family, and it may not be made up of blood relatives. We share a common bond: not fitting in. But here I do fit in.

Q. How would you describe the team culture in three words

Love, understanding, and appreciation

Q. What keeps you motivated on tough days?

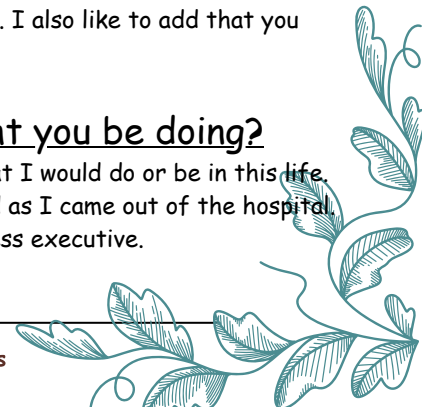
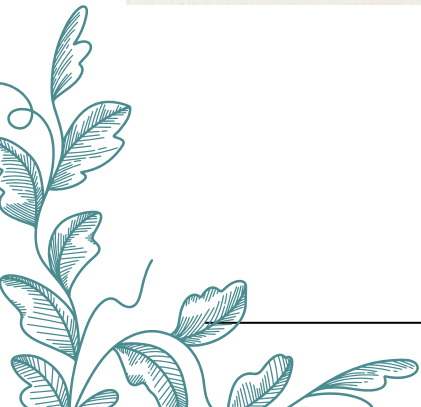
The peers, peers like yourself. When I see you guys grow, evolve, and develop. That doesn't mean you won't make mistakes or be corrected by action or behavior. It is the development. For example, today I was able to see peers in a school doing the work firsthand. That makes the job worthwhile and everything to me because you go from Being a student now, you're the expert in the room.

Q. Favorite book, podcast, or quote related to resilience and hope.

I shared this a lot earlier today. We only heal what we reveal. I also like to add that you don't have to tell everybody, but you must tell somebody.

Q. If you weren't in this role, what might you be doing?

Well, this work was not on my radar; it was not something that I would do or be in this life. It happened because something personal happened to me, and as I came out of the hospital, I would probably be working in Corporate America as a business executive.



STORIES OF

IMPACT



In this issue, NAMI Dupage Intern Alexa Schill shares how her recovery path has impacted her life.

Q: Hello Alexa, how did you become involved with NAMI DuPage?

I became involved with NAMI DuPage after hearing Eric and Shuchi come to my class at College of DuPage. I was very inspired not just by their stories but also by the way they supported each other and how highly they spoke of the team at NAMI.

Q: What was your life like before NAMI DuPage?

My life prior to NAMI DuPage has always been very full! Daughter, mom, wife, artist, business owner ~ lots of different spaces that are always filled! The Recovery journey has ebbed and flowed throughout those various stages of my life, and not always with adequate care and support. Navigating PTSD and anxiety has often been very hard and challenging. It is a constant pivot of learning what works and what doesn't.

Q: How has your life changed since your involvement with NAMI DuPage?

NAMI DuPage has given me a space to put my "story" down. My recovery journey has always been heavy layers of trauma, grief, anxiety, and depression. At NAMI DuPage, I get to put all of that down in the sense that it is not treated as a burden or something to hide. It is utilized as a strength and an opportunity to improve other people's lives. I have a space to use it for the higher good and work in an environment that fully supports and understands that all our journeys are unique.

Q: In what ways has NAMI impacted your recovery?

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Q: What would you like to say to the NAMI DuPage team who helped you get here?

A million Thank You's doesn't seem like enough! I am so grateful for the entire NAMI DuPage team. I appreciate the opportunities to learn from everyone here and am constantly amazed and humbled by their dedication and support for each other and the work we do. Working with NAMI DuPage is a life-changing experience for me!

Q: What are your aspirations in the next 3-6 months?

In the next 3-6 months I plan on finishing school, taking the CRSS exam and am hoping to continue my work with NAMI DuPage. I love all the different ways that NAMI helps our community and am hoping to have the opportunity to contribute to helping that grow.



In the Spotlight:

EI , CRSS Intern



Why did you choose to do your internship at NAMI DuPage?

I chose to do my internship at NAMI DuPage because I love the diversity and the number of people I get to work with. different types of personalities I get to see every day.

How would you describe your internship experience at NAMI DuPage?

I could describe my intership experience as rewarding and also coming full circle for me and my own recovery journey.

What drew you to work in the human services field?

What drew me was having my own personal experiences in Mental health, and I didn't like the clinical feeling. It is the peer model, which means I can share my personal experience with other people. I like to say that I meet people where they are at

What's your favorite experience at NAMI Dupage?

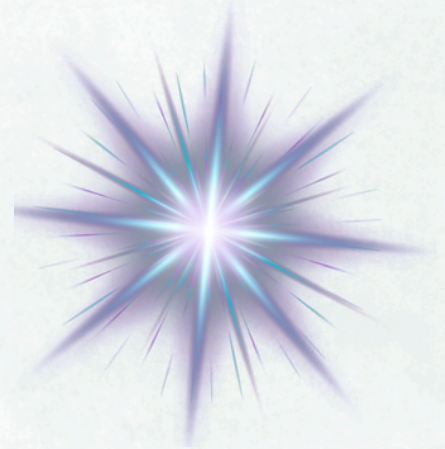
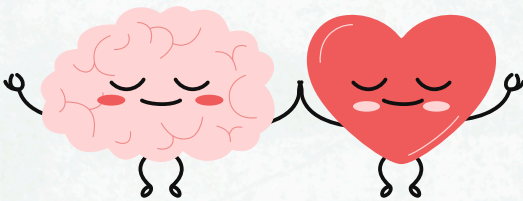
This is going to sound overconfident, but I just kept getting myself involved in events that are offered. Being able to go to the Linden Oaks facility, because I once was admitted there; it was a full circle moment I have experienced in my internship.

How do you manage stress that comes with a demanding workload?

I personally practice self-care activities like driving around in my car and doing some energy healing. I am also big on energetic frequencies and how energy transfers. I just like to clear other people's energy.

Is there something you'd like to accomplish in the future related to your CRSS credential or your work with NAMI DuPage?

I would take the test and pass it. But also getting positive feedback from my supervisors, which made me feel I can do this type of work and that I am ready for whatever comes my way.



Thanks for Sharing your Story, EI
Interview done by Nicole Argus

Mental Health Recovery - *Why Reaching Out Matters*



Page done by Jason Ferrari

Recovery in mental health is often described as a personal journey, but one of the most powerful elements of healing is connection with others. When people struggle with depression, anxiety, trauma, or other mental health challenges, isolation can quietly become part of the problem. Feeling alone in our experiences can deepen shame and make it harder to reach out for help.

Many advocates have spoken about the importance of connection in recovery. Selena Gomez, who has openly shared her own mental health journey, once offered simple but powerful advice: "Try not to isolate... find one person to trust and tell your heart to."

That message reflects an important truth in recovery: healing often begins when we realize we are not alone. Sharing our experiences with someone we trust can reduce the weight of what we are carrying. Whether it is a friend, family member, peer support group, therapist, or community organization, connection reminds us that our struggles are part of the shared human experience.

At NAMI DuPage, this idea of common humanity is central to everything we do. Through education, support groups, and community outreach, we create spaces where people can connect, share their stories, and support one another. Recovery may start with one conversation, one moment of honesty, or one person willing to listen.

CONNECTIONS CORNER

Trivia time

1. What are a group of pandas called?

2. Where would you find the world's smallest street?

Mindful Self-Care Tips

- ****Pause and Breathe****: Take one to two minutes to concentrate on your breath. This practice can help alleviate stress and bring you back to the present moment.
- ****Savor Daily Moments****: Engage your senses by enjoying music, taking your time to eat, or simply appreciating the feeling of being outdoors.
- ****Digital Detox****: Disconnect from your phone, laptop, and social media several times a day. This can help diminish anxiety and foster a deeper connection with yourself and your surroundings.

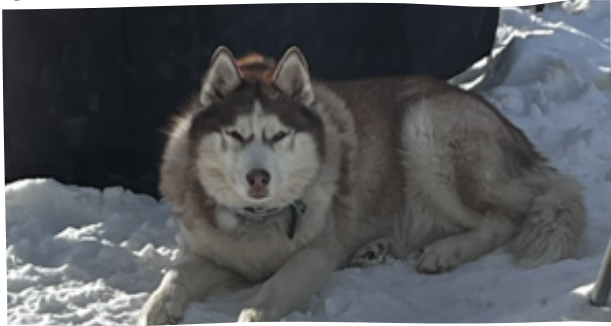
*do things that make you forget to
check your phone*

1. A group of pandas are called an embarrassment
2. Worlds smallest street is in Scotland



PET CORNER

These are my friends that live in Portage, Indiana, with my daughter, husband and four children. This makes for a very lively house. They all enjoy it when I come to their home and have a great deal of fun with them. Many times, I walked the children to school, take the two dogs along with us for a nice morning walk. These pets are all rescue pets from local shelters and private owners.



Link is a Siberian Husky and was taken in by my daughter when her owner gave her up and could not take care of him any longer. Link loves to go outside in the cold winter months and roll around in the snow. He enjoys being outside for hours at a time. He is about 8 years old.



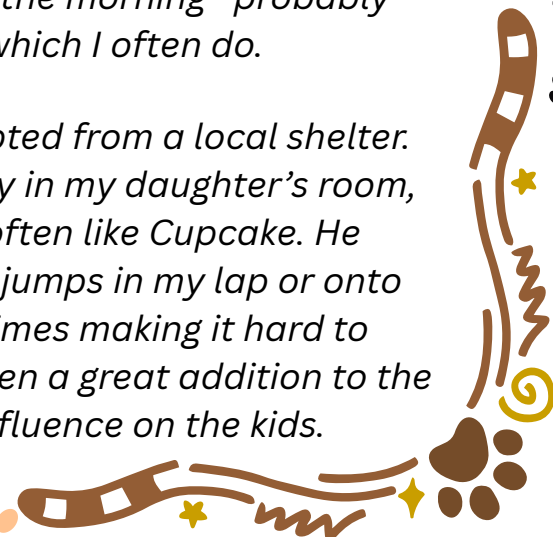
Pearl is a purebred boxer and was acquired from a local boxer rescue facility. She has a great deal of energy and is constantly with me and knows where to come when she wants someone to pet her which is always and I cannot say no. My daughter got her when she was a puppy and immediately adapted to home life and loves to be with children.



Cupcake is a black-and-white cat my daughter adopted as a tiny kitten from a local shelter. She was very skittish at first and mostly hid in my daughter's room, but she has grown more comfortable and now comes out often. She usually greets me in the morning—probably hoping I'll feed her, which I often do.



Louie is a gray cat adopted from a local shelter. At first he stayed mostly in my daughter's room, but now he comes out often like Cupcake. He loves to play and often jumps in my lap or onto my bed at night, sometimes making it hard to sleep. The pets have been a great addition to the family and a positive influence on the kids.



take care
of your mind



Rest Up Week

Rest Up Week – June 29 – July 3

In alignment with the model encouraged by NAMI National, NAMI DuPage will observe a Rest Up Week from Monday, June 29, through Friday, July 3.

The office and all programming will be paused so our entire team has the opportunity to rest. Whether through support groups, education, outreach, living room or individual support, we carry important responsibilities that require energy, compassion, and resilience.

We must put on our own oxygen masks first.

#NAMIDuPageRestUp



Self-care
IS EMPOWERMENT

Monthly Events to Remember



Monthly Events to Remember	
APRIL	Annual meeting/Volunteer Celebration April 16
MAY	NAMI Gala : May 16 Mental Health Awareness Month open house : May 29
JUNE	Peer Training : June 6-7 and June 20-21
JULY	Rockin' for our vets at Cantigny with Lt.Dan Band : July 11 Cookies for Cause : July 23 - July 26
SEPTEMBER	Run For the Mind/NAMI Walks : September 13
NAMI WRAP CLASS	8 weeks Educational Class : April 16 th - June 4 th , July 14 th - Sep 1 st , October 20 th - December 8 th

For a detailed listing of all upcoming classes, events, and groups, please visit the Events Calendar on the NAMI DuPage website.

From the NAMI DuPage homepage, click on "News and Events," then scroll down and select "Events Calendar."



for WRAP class



This newsletter is brought to you by the hard work and team efforts of the following folks:

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