



## CONTINUING THE LEGACY:

# NAMI Delaware Shares Vision and Updates

Dear Friends of NAMI Delaware,

Earlier this year, Dr. Joshua Thomas retired as Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director after 11 years of exemplary service. Josh helped grow a small non-profit organization into a true community partner to help anyone affected by severe and persistent mental illness (SPMI). His advocacy took NAMI from southern Sussex to northern New Castle counties and all points in between while providing hope for the one in five Delawareans living with a mental health condition.

This year, our NAMI Walk will be held on Saturday, May 4th! NAMI Walks Delaware is our signature effort to raise funds, host friends, and spread awareness for those who look to NAMI Delaware for advocacy and action on their behalf. NAMI Delaware invites everyone to join us for a day of celebration, entertainment, and community service on May 4th at Bellevue State Park in Wilmington. Sponsorship opportunities and team registrations are now available on our website: [www.namidelaware.org](http://www.namidelaware.org). For more information about NAMI Walks Delaware, please email Aaron at [engage@namide.org](mailto:engage@namide.org).

The funds raised from our annual walk are critical to fulfilling our mission and allow us to provide much-needed services to those living with SPMI and their families. For example: NAMI Delaware continues to coordinate several monthly support and discussion groups. Whether you have a loved one experiencing a mental health condition, you are looking for peers to aid your personal mental health journey, or you identify as LGBTQ+ and are looking for a safe space, NAMI Delaware is here for you. In addition, our programs team offers a variety of complimentary classes, presentations, and training such as NAMI Family and Friends - which can provide hope during a challenging time, and NAMI: In Our Own Voice - which can help change attitudes and reduce stigma towards people living with mental health conditions. Every NAMI Delaware presentation allows participants access to safe spaces while providing an additional support network. For more information about our various programs, please get in touch with Jenn Ford, Programs Director, at [jford@namide.org](mailto:jford@namide.org).

One of the most fascinating things about NAMI Delaware is our statewide housing program. We currently manage 79 properties and provide safe, affordable housing for almost 300 residents who live with mental illness. This task requires intensive daily work, and our housing team is highly dedicated to our residents! The Housing team continues to go above and beyond the call of duty for our residents to ensure that they have a safe, clean place to call home every day. Community partners are also invited to participate in our Days of Caring program. These team-building volunteer service projects provide help with basic maintenance and yard work to keep our homes safe and attractive in their neighborhoods. For more information about organizing a Days of Caring event for your group, please get in touch with Merton Briggs, Senior Director of Housing & Facilities, at [mbriggs@namide.org](mailto:mbriggs@namide.org).

On behalf of the entire team at NAMI Delaware, we would like to thank you for your continued support of our essential mission. We sincerely appreciate your donations, volunteerism, and collaborations, which help us remain a strategically for anyone impacted by SPMI in Delaware.

With appreciation,



**Aaron Mitchell**  
NAMI Delaware Board Vice President & Walk Chair



# Make a Difference at NAMIWalks Delaware: Walk with Us for Mental Health for All!

Join NAMI Delaware's NAMIWalks event on Saturday, May 4th at Bellevue State Park!

NAMIWalks is the nation's largest mental health awareness event, and your participation makes a real difference. Funds raised directly support NAMI Delaware's mission of education, advocacy, support, and public awareness for mental health.

Together, we can achieve Mental Health for All!

Become a sponsor, participant, or donate today!

Together, we can create a future where everyone has access to the mental health support they need.

## Here's why you should participate:

- ✔ It's a powerful way to show your support: Walk alongside others who understand the challenges and triumphs of mental health.
- ✔ Make a difference in your community: Funds raised stay local to support NAMI Delaware's vital programs.
- ✔ Be part of a vibrant movement: NAMIWalks is a chance to connect, share stories, and build a more inclusive community.

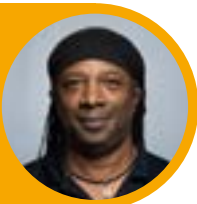


Visit our website to learn more & register.



## NAMI Delaware adds to its Board, Sussex County Committee

**NAMI Delaware added four new leaders, including two board members, during its annual meeting March 20.**



Norwood J. Coleman Jr.,

**Norwood J. Coleman Jr.**, Executive Clinical Administrator at the Life Health Center in Wilmington, joins NAMI Delaware's Board of Directors.

Coleman, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Wilmington resident, holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in social work from Delaware State University.

He is a trauma-focused clinician and mental health administrator, working with children, adults and families.

**Dr. Marlene A. Saunders** and **Lisa Bass Cooper** are joining NAMI Delaware's Sussex County Committee.

Saunders received her bachelor's degree in what is now Delaware State University and her Master's in Social Work from University of Pennsylvania. She worked in the social work field for several years, then taught that discipline at DSU. She lives in Bridgeville, where she has been a Town Commissioner for four years.

Cooper, a Selbyville resident, is a Content Marketing Consultant and founder of Holistic Homes Inc. in Silver Spring, Maryland. The mission for Holistic Homes, which opened in December 2023, is to aid adults with mental health conditions through supportive housing and therapy.



Dr. Marlene A. Saunders



Lisa Bass Cooper

# Leadership & Staff

## Office of the CEO/Executive Director

**CEO**, Vacant  
**Carla Moore**, Senior Director of Finance  
**Andreina Cerrato**, Operations Coordinator

## Housing Team

**Merton Briggs**, Senior Director of Housing & Facilities  
**Marie LaFevre**, Senior Housing Manager  
**Doug Culton**, Property Manager

## Advocacy & Education Team

**Jenn Ford**, Director of Programs  
**Jacqueline Saldana**, Southern Delaware Coordinator  
**Wesley Ingram**, Programs Manager  
**Jim Trojan**, Programs Facilitator  
**Hannah Lewitas**, Fellowship Program – Educational & Support Programs Focus

## Board of Directors

**Mary Berger**, Board President, Executive Director of Advancement Operations, *University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine*  
**Aaron Mitchell, REBC**, Board Vice President, Vice President, *Conner Strong & Buckelew*  
**Edward M. McNally, Esq.**, Board Secretary, Retired, *Morris James, LLP*  
**Julius Meisel, Ph.D.**, Board Treasurer  
**Mary Allen Anderson**, Director of Communications, *Widener University*  
**Vaughn Bond**, New Castle County Director of Public Safety  
**Norwood Coleman, Jr., LCSW-S, ACSW**,

## Life Health Center

**Erin Heilig**, *Long & Foster/Forbes Global Properties*  
**Wade G. Jones, LPCMH, LCDP, CAADC, CCS**, *Alternative Solutions Consulting Group, LLC (Sussex County Representative)*  
**Van Shea Sedita**, Vice President, Service Design Lead, *M&T Bank*  
**Marilyn Siebold, NC**, *Wilmington University*  
**John Treadwell**, *New Castle County Police – Retired (Kent County Representative)*

## Advisory Board

**Jon Barber**, *Retired*  
**Steve Beltran, RN**, *Christiana Care*  
**Lt. Harold Bozeman**, *Wilmington Police Department*  
**Lydia De Leon, MS, LPCMH**, *Westside Family Healthcare*  
**Lisa A. DeLeonardo, Psy.D.**, *Psychologist, Private Practice*  
**Erin Exelby**, *Rockford Center*  
**Sarah Galbraith**, Principal & Team Lead, *Veeva*  
**Mike Gavula**, Senior Director of Business Development & Admissions, *Elwyn*  
**Beth Hirst**, *CSL Behring*  
**Kathleen Jennings**, Attorney General, *State of Delaware*  
**Neil S. Kaye, MD**, *Private Practice, General Adult, Forensic, Psychopharmacology and Neuropsychiatry*  
**Rita Landgraf**, Director of US Partnership for Healthy Communities, *University of Delaware*  
**Burley Melton**, *Retired*  
**Marcus Wilson, Pharm.D.**, Chief Analytics Officer, *Anthem, Inc.*

## Sussex County Committee

**Erin Willis** (Chair)  
**Lisa Bass Cooper**, *Holistic Homes Inc.*  
**Shawna Mayles**, *Beebe Healthcare*  
**Dr. Marlene A. Saunders**, *Town Commissioner*  
**Lt. Lee Weller**, *Delaware State Police*

## Kent County Committee

**Dr. Cynthia Newton** (Chair), *Delaware State University*  
**Chaplain Pamela Adams**, *Delaware State University*  
**Dr. Mark Borer**, *Psychiatrist*  
**Dr. Amy Gootee-Ash**, *Delaware State University*  
**Lt. Chuck Sawchenko, Ret.**, *Delaware State Police*

## New Castle County Committee

**Aaron Mitchell, REBC** (Chair), *Vice President, Conner Strong & Buckelew*  
**Edward M. McNally, Esq.**, *Retired, Morris James, LLP*  
**Julius Meisel, Ph. D.**, *Retired*  
**Mary Allen Anderson**, Executive Director of Communications, *Widener University*  
**Vaughn Bond**, *New Castle County Director of Public Safety*



Your support helped us shine as national leaders.

NAMI Delaware was recently recognized as the nation's top chapter for its outreach, advocacy and education. Thank you for making all this happen.



We must all work together to support individuals with mental illness post-pandemic.

SCAN TO DONATE