NAMI Welcomes Three to Staff

Brandy Flores  Rose Arizola  Michael Ramirez
Chief Development Officer  Admin. Support & Warmline  Intern

Brandy Flores is a graduate of Our Lady of the Lake University with a Master of Science degree in Organizational Leadership. She served as the cohort leader for her Master’s program and graduated with a 4.0 GPA. She also has her Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology with a minor in Sociology from The University of Texas at San Antonio. Brandy is certified in Supervisory and Management from the University of the Incarnate Word School of Business in partnership with the San Antonio Area Foundation. Brandy served on the Board of Directors for the Association of Fundraising Professionals as the Vice President of Programs for three years. Her experience includes 10 years of Development and Fundraising for the nonprofit sector. She has successfully built a network of donor relations, working on campaigns, special events, and marketing that has highlighted the organization and increased donor retention and sustainability.

Rose Arizola’s most recent role was with Haven For Hope, serving with them for the past three years, first as a residential specialist, then as an intake enrollment specialist. During this time, she was able to take part in trainings that helped to equip her to better serve the community, one of them being a certified mental health peer specialist. Being able to work in a community that has clients with a range of different needs, from the back-end residential part, to the front “door” was an amazing opportunity for her. She gained a wealth of better understanding about meeting people in the present moment, so we can walk through this journey of wellness with them.

Rose’s lived experience has led her to be on a wellness journey for over 15 years. One of the things she aspires to live by is

SAVE THE DATE!
NAMI-San Antonio’s Pathways to Hope Conference is August 26-27.
Stay tuned for further details soon!
one of Oprah’s statements, when she shared, “I am vulnerable, and I am willing to share my whole truth, by opening up my soul, so that others can see their souls in mine.”

Rose feels that God’s next right step for her was to become a NAMI Bridges to Care Wellness Champion, and transitioning over to work with NAMI/Bridges to Care.

Rose’s family enjoys volunteering with the community that has supported them from the beginning, and they also enjoy everything outdoors. Together her husband and she are parents to 6 children, 3 grandchildren, one dog, “Chewie” and one cat that adopted them, whom they call Sylvester. Her family’s success for living well, is being aware of who they are and where they came from.

Michael Ramirez is an Intern working with NAMI in his Capstone experience while working toward his Ph.D. He was born in San Antonio and has an older brother and sister. Michael graduated from The University of Incarnate Word with a bachelor’s in rehabilitive science with a minor in psychology and is currently getting his doctorate in occupational therapy from The University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences. Michael has a passion for the mission of NAMI San Antonio to promote recovery and optimize the quality of life for individuals affected by mental illness through support, education, advocacy, and research. In his free time, Michael enjoys riding his bicycle, watching movies, listening to music, and spoiling his cat, Morty.

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**Join us at our next In-Person General Meeting!**

**Tuesday, June 7th at 11:30 a.m.**

**Meeting Location:** Covenant Presbyterical Church, 211 Roleto Dr., San Antonio, TX 78213

**TOPIC:** S.M.A.R.T. and other Multidisciplinary Mental Health Response Teams formed by the City of San Antonio.

**SPEAKER:** Ernest “Ernie” Stevens

Ernest (Ernie) Stevens is a published author with a #1 selling book on Amazon titled: Mental Health and De-escalation: A Guide for Law Enforcement Professionals. Ernie was also a contributing author for, Police Mental Barricade. Ernie was a police officer for 28 years, serving 26 of those years with the San Antonio Police Department where he was a founding member of the Mental Health Unit. Ernie has been featured on the Emmy Award Winning HBO Documentary, Ernie and Joe: Crisis Cops. He has also been featured in NBC’s documentary, A Different Kind of Force. Ernie was interviewed by ABC’s Nightline’s Byron Pitts, and featured on officers trained to respond to mental illness calls. Ernie has been featured in over 27 publications and deemed an expert in Crisis Intervention Training. He is a graduate of Wayland Baptist University and holds a B.S. degree in Criminal Justice. He is married to his wife Lisa who he attended school with since elementary school. He has two incredible children, Reed and April. Ernie continues to assist communities build and program manage multidisciplinary response teams, pairing a clinician, officer, and medic together to respond to crisis calls. He currently works with the Southwest Texas Regional Advisory Council as a Crisis Response and Resiliency Manager.

Lunch will be served at no cost.

**Registration** is required by June 2, 2022.
Nearly 20 years ago Jackie and Ed Dickey’s family was in the throes of managing daily life with family members who had been diagnosed with mental illness. Finding treatment was only the start of that challenge.

In time, when one of their family members was referred to NAMI SA they told us about the educational programs NAMI offered to families. As a result they signed up for a Family to Family class as soon as one became available.

.......and life got better.

Jackie and Ed learned how to more effectively communicate and problem solve. They learned more about the disorders and treatment options locally and the best way to access care. What was truly amazing was that this was all provided by trained volunteers who had their own experience with similar problems. They no longer felt so alone in this struggle. It made such a difference that they decided to invest their time so that other families could get the support, education and advocacy needed to better navigate the mental healthcare system. They began teaching in the educational programs of NAMI Family to Family and NAMI Basics and became state trainers for those programs so that other affiliates in Texas could build their programs with classes for families.

In the years since, they have both served on the NAMI San Antonio Board of directors, Ed having served as board president. Later he was elected to serve on the board of NAMI Texas and offered administrative support as Interim Executive Director at NAMI Texas.

Currently they serve as teachers for NAMI Family to Family and NAMI Basics. They offer NAMI Family and Friends presentations and facilitate NAMI Family Support groups. Jackie volunteers in the office on Mondays with the NAMI Warmline.

Jackie and Ed know that healthcare challenges regardless of origin require competent treatment but also a supportive community. Mental illness due to its nature can be incredibly isolating for those who suffer. The education and support offered by the NAMI programs help to resolve that isolation with understanding peers ready to share their lived experience as well as their encouragement. People become better advocates for themselves and their families.

San Antonio needs a strong NAMI and volunteers at NAMI strengthens the organization to meet that need.
Make Sure to Renew you NAMI Membership or become e NAMI Member!

Would you like to get the latest mental health updates, participate in online discussion groups, learn how to advocate in your community and add your voice to the mental health movement?

Create a NAMI account for FREE:
Subscribe to content that interests you, such as NAMINow! Connect with others in discussion groups, manage your profile, preferences, and subscriptions. Upgrade any time!

Consider NAMI membership and one payment gives you access to the local, state, and national levels. Joining helps build donor confidence, plus we learn more from our fellow members and peers!

There are three (3) membership options depending on what works best for you and your family:

- **$60 per year for Household:** Includes all members living at the same address
  (This is ideal if you attend Family-to-Family and/or want to train to be a program leader/presenter.)
- **$40 per year for Individual**
  (This is ideal if you attend Peer-to-Peer, Connection and/or want to train to be a program leader or outreach presenter.)
- **$5 per year for Open Door:** Limited budget? We got you!

All members have the benefits of a free account plus:
- Receive the NAMI Advocate magazine
- Get discounts at the NAMI Store
- Earn member-only content online
- Have access to discounts at the annual National Convention

More importantly, NAMI San Antonio members make our voice stronger in legislative advocacy.
Facilitators Needed

- LGBTQIA+ Connections
  - “NAMI San Antonio is looking for individuals who want to lead a support group. If you are part of the LGBTQIA+ community, have a mental health condition, and are currently living in wellness please email Analicia Coronado at Analicia.c@nami-sat.org to ask about becoming trained.”

- FSG
  - “NAMI San Antonio would like to start a Family Support Group for Parents and Caregivers of Children and Teens but need facilitators with lived experience. If you fit this description and would like to lead a support groups for other families in our area please email Analicia Coronado at analicia.c@nami-sat.org.”

- If you are a trained NAMI Class Leader and are available to teach a class, please reach out to amy.jp@nami-sat.org

Courses Available

- Basics
  - In Person, Saturdays, July 9-August 13, 2022 (10:00am-12:30pm), in zip code 78239
  - Registration closes once capacity has been reached or on July 15 at 3pm.

- Peer-to-Peer
  - In Person: Tuesdays, June 14-August 2, 2022, from 6:30pm-8:30pm, in zip code 78205
  - Registration closes June 20 or once the course reaches capacity.

  In Person: Thursdays, June 23-August 11, from 6:30pm-8:30pm, in zip code 78228
  - Registration closes June 29 or once the course reaches capacity.

  Online, Wednesdays, July 20-September 7, 2022 (6:30pm-8:30pm)
  - Registration closes once capacity has been reached or on July 26 at 3pm.

- Family to Family
  - In Person: Tuesdays, June 14-August 2, 2022, from 6:30pm-9:00pm, in zip code 78205
  - Registration closes June 20 or once the course reaches capacity.

  Online: Wednesdays, June 15-August 3, 2022, from 6:30pm-9:00pm
  - Registration closes June 21 or once the course reaches capacity.
What is the NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group Program?

NAMI Connection is a recovery support group program that offers respect, understanding, encouragement and hope. NAMI Connection groups are:

- Free and confidential
- Held weekly for 90 minutes
- Designed to connect, encourage, and support participants using a structured support group model
- Led by trained facilitators living in recovery themselves.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting Type</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>San Antonio Clubhouse</td>
<td>Every Wednesday</td>
<td>11:00 am to 12:30 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGBTQIA+</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veteran’s Group</td>
<td>Every Thursday</td>
<td>6:30 pm to 8:00 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Mental Health</td>
<td>2nd &amp; 4th Saturday</td>
<td>1:00 pm to 2:30 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Over 40+</td>
<td>Every Saturday</td>
<td>6:00 pm to 7:30 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTSD/Trauma</td>
<td>Every Friday</td>
<td>11:00 am to 12:30 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women’s Veteran</td>
<td>Every Monday</td>
<td>11:00 am to 12:30 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, &amp; People of Color)</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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Participant Perspectives

“NAMI Connections has made me realize that I can truly feel comfortable around my peers and I really needed that feeling!”

“I believe NAMI Connection means hope.”

“NAMI Connection is the promise of what is and what can be in our lives.”

Register at nami-sat.org/support to find out more about NAMI
Join us at NAMICon 2022, NAMI's annual convention taking place virtually June 14–16.

Announcing our Keynote Speaker: Mayim Bialik!

We are excited to announce the first day plenary speaker for NAMICon 2022, actor, author and mental health advocate Mayim Bialik. Mayim Hoya Bialik is best known for her lead role as Blossom Russo in the early-1990s television sitcom “Blossom,” her award-winning portrayal of Amy Farrah Fowler on CBS’ “The Big Bang Theory,” and as the current co-host of “Jeopardy!.” Earlier this year, she made her debut as a feature writer and director with “As They Made Us.”

Mayim is also a champion for mental health awareness and advocacy. After wrapping production on “Blossom,” Bialik took a break from acting to earn a B.S. and Ph.D. in Neuroscience from UCLA where she studied obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). She’s authored multiple books, two of which reached #1 on the New York Times Best Sellers list (“Girling Up: How to be Strong, Smart and Spectacular” and “Boying Up: How to be Brave, Bold and Brilliant”).

Tune in on June 15 at NAMICon for a discussion between NAMI CEO Daniel H. Gillison Jr. and Mayim Bialik for her perspective on living #StigmaFree.

NAMICon 2022 will feature more than 30 workshops built around five tracks along with plenary speakers and special events at an incredible value: $10 for students and peers, $15 for NAMI members, $25 for non-members. Your registration fee includes all virtual activities. However, please note, programming for Tuesday, June 14 is dedicated to our NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates. General attendees are invited to begin their convention experience with our opening plenary on Wednesday, June 15, at 10 a.m. ET.
Announcing: NAMI Texas Book Club

NAMI Texas is ecstatic to announce the launch of the new NAMI Texas Virtual Book Club! This book club is free to participate in and is open to everyone. The first book club meeting will be on Tuesday, May 31st, at 7 pm CT, coinciding with the final day of Mental Health Month (May).

For our first book, we will be reading *Healing: Our Path from Mental Illness to Mental Health* by Dr. Thomas Insel. This book has been described as a "bold, expert, and actionable map for the re-invention of America’s broken mental health care system".

Join us May 31st for a fun conversation on Zoom about Dr. Insel’s wonderful book! Register [Here](#)!

NAMI Texas recognizes the importance and value of reading. Whether you are a long-time avid reader, or are simply looking to explore reading “for pleasure”, anyone can get involved in this fun hobby! There are many health and wellness benefits to reading. Just to name a few:

- Improved brain function (memory, cognition)
- Improved vocabulary and comprehension
- Better ability to empathize with others
- Reduces stress and improved quality of sleep

Join us for NAMI Texas’ new, and free to attend Virtual Book Club through Zoom. Quarterly starting May 2022, NAMI Texas will highlight our Book Club selection (with input from Book Club members). Our picks will vary in topic, both fiction and non-fiction, but in general will be focused on mental health and wellness.

You don’t have to finish the entire reading to attend—just come prepared to participate in active discussion with key takeaways. These meetings are open to all individuals and professionals.
In the NAMI Community...

Alpha Tau Omega Chapter
Women’s Health & Wellness Committee
presents
SHARING HOPE:
A Mental Health Awareness and Resources Forum
May 28, 2022 at 10 AM

Donnie Windham Whited, Psy.D.
NAMI Board Member
NAMI Education Committee Chairperson
Wellness Champion- Samaritan Cohort

Donna Costa, LMSW
NAMI Bridges To Care San Antonio
BTCSA Wellness Champions and Program Information

Co-Sponsored by:

Register via the link below or scan QR CODE
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_mXO4ctw3T_aDaUQGIXWwQQ

The NAMI San Antonio & BridgeBuzz Newsletter is published monthly. The deadline for submissions is the 20th of the preceding month at 12:00 pm. Please submit your articles and photos to Geri Gregory at geri.g@nami-sat.org. For questions, you may also call 210-242-1226.
Dr. Andy Gray, BTCSA Wellness Champion

We’d like to start a new series of articles to honor our BTCSA Wellness Champions – those who have completed training with us. We find their enthusiasm for mental health work inspiring and their passionate commitment beyond measure. Our now 565 Wellness Champions are the reason BTCSA has been so successful – see statistics on p. X.

Education and training drew Dr. Andy Gray to Bridges to Care – San Antonio. Dr. Andy knows that learning, sharing, and empowering is how a community is impacted. COVID-19 only magnified the needs of our community, especially regarding Mental Health and our communities of color. Any training and education that can learned and used to help our communities is something he wants to be involved in.

The opportunity to take training and education and replicate it outside of the classroom and meet people where they are energizes him. As a mental health person, Dr. Andy knows we need more trained mental health individuals. BTCSA provides the opportunity to train interested individuals in our churches and communities. Many people will go to a church or faith community before going to see a psychologist. It is here that we can impact our communities first. Intervening early and if needed refer to a psychologist. The right training, the right intervention at the right time.

Dr. Andy’s is the lead therapist with the Rapha Cohort. Dr. Andy assesses individuals and coordinates the interventions for individuals who contact Rapha cohort for assistance. Individual’s needs are assessed, and counseling is scheduled with one of Rapha’s counselors, all who have been thorough BTCSA training.

A wise man leaves an inheritance for his children, a great person leaves an inheritance in their community. BTCSA has helped to provide Dr. Andy an opportunity to effect changes, one person at a time, leaving his community better one family at a time.

Dr. Andy has been married to his high school sweetheart Jennifer for 24 years and has three children. He is a Clinical Pastoral Counselor and is a member of the National Association of Christian Counselors and the American Association of Christian Counselors. Dr. Andy has specialty training in abuse and trauma and marriage and family therapy. Dr. Andy spent more than 20 years as a Texas Licensed Paramedic before earning his PhD and works with first responders who suffer from PTSD.

SACRD.org Mental Health Portal is Open!

With 1,700 + programs related to mental health, SACRD.org’s mental health portal is a valuable resource for BTCSA Wellness Champions and all with whom they come in contact. Check it out at www.sacrd.org/mentalhealth.
In the NAMI-Bridges Family…

We congratulate those who have achieved something extra-special...

Gina Paxton, NAMI Facilitator, who was named the “Alamo Area Branch of NASW/Texas 2022 Social Work Student of the Year (MSW)” on March 25.

Have you, or someone you know in the NAMI-BTCSA Family achieved something special, celebrated a life-cycle event, or suffered a loss? Please let us know by contacting Geri Gregory. We will list the joys and sorrows here in order to share our support for one another.

Honor or Memorialize Someone Special by Giving to NAMI-BTCSA

We offer you the opportunity to honor or memorialize someone special by contributing to NAMI-BTCSA. It’s so easy!

Simply click HERE to make your donation, and we will list it in our Newsletter. Likewise, you can also make the contribution, but ask that we NOT publish it in the newsletter.

We can’t think of a better way to honor or memorialize someone special than by giving the gift of mental health.

Examples:
- In honor of the 50th Birthday of Samuel Smith, by Sally and John Mains.
- In memory of Grace Munn, by Kenneth Paul.
- In honor of Christie Salas, upon her graduation from UTSA, by Flor Hernandez.

Also, please be sure to tell us who should receive the acknowledgement for your contribution (We will not reveal the amount).

At left, NAMI Staffers Michael Ramirez & Rose Arizola share a moment of reflection on Administrative Assistants & Interns Appreciation Day.
Greetings from Mount Zion First Baptist Church! We just celebrated our 150th Church Anniversary. What better way to celebrate than to partner with Bridges To Care to bring Mental Health awareness and resources to our church and community. We have trained Mental Health Wellness Champions ready to assist and guide members to the appropriate resources.

We have created an informative newsletter that highlights not only what is available to them at Mount Zion with our Mental Health Wellness Champions but also the services and help tools available to them city wide and National services such as Hotlines. We have provided our members with an email portal to contact us so that we can help direct them to the help they may need. Our email portal is up and running 24/7. It is a much-needed program and a rewarding ministry to serve God’s people during their time of need. The statistics show adults and youth suffering with mental illness/mental health disorders along with suicide being the leading cause of death among people ages 10-34. Even with these grim statistics there is HOPE!

Silence is no longer an option. We must work together to remove the stigma of mental Illness within our communities. It starts with each of us. We look forward to partnering with each of you and helping our community heal from the inside-out.

Listen to Mount Zion’s Podcast on Mental Health, below, with our own Donna Costa!

Real Talk about Mental Health Awareness

Kitchen Island Tea

Shhhhh we don’t talk about this at the kitchen table, but the ladies at the Island, First Lady Venita Mitchell, Rev. Cheryl Thompson, & Beverly Watson are changing that stigma / stereotype. Listen in to hear about Mental Health Wellness. Why is it important? How you can gain access to Mental Health resources? How you can become a Mental Health Wellness Champion for your community? So grab your cup and let’s chat about Mental Health with our special guest, NAMI-Bridges to Care Director of Education and Outreach, Donna Costa.
NAMI-BTCSA Seen Around Town!

NAMI-BTCSA can be seen in many places around San Antonio. Many of these photos have been featured on the BTCSA Facebook page or the NAMI-San Antonio Facebook page. Click to see our page, and don't forget to “Like” us!

Our own Donna Costa was interviewed about NAMI - watch for her Thursday, May 19 on UniVision!

Wonderful Sunday service experience at University Presbyterian. One of UPC’s six wellness champions, Cynthia T. Smith.

NAMI-BTCSA’s Donna Costa & Rose Arizola spoke about mental health at a Lutheran Women’s Conference at Trinity Lutheran Church.

NAMI San Antonio and NAMI Bridges to Care San Antonio participated in Antioch Missionary Baptist Church’s Mental Health Awareness Month kick off.
In the NAMI-Bridges to Care Community...

**SISTAS SIPPIN’ TEA**

**HEALING FAMILY TRAUMA**

**Saturday, May 28th | 9am - 10:15am**

**HOSTED BY**

*Pastor Veron Blue*

*HER FRIENDS*

Dr. Sunita, Pastor Carolyn, Shameka, Shay, Sharon and Adrianna

**FREE COUNSELING SESSIONS AVAILABLE**

**Zoom** ☎️ 271-149-7061

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**If you are a NAMI or BTCSA organization with a mental health event coming up, we will list it here. Just contact geri.g@nami-sat.org.**

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**IT'S OK not to be ok**

**MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH**

**JOIN US ALL MONTH LONG AS WE HELP RAISE AWARENESS!**

**SUNDAE, MAY 22, 2022 | 6PM**

**WITH SPECIAL GUESTS, DR. SUNITA, PASTOR V & DR. ANDY**

**ZOOM #: 2771001190**

**MAY 29 | 10:30 A.M.**

**SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE**

**JOIN RAPHA COHORTS, PASTOR VERON BLUE, OF FAMILY LIFE INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES.**

**COME FELLOWSHIP AND SHOW AWARENESS FOR MENTAL HEALTH MONTH WITH PASTOR AL AND CO-PASTOR SHAWNDA PARKER.**