

**NAMI Portage-Wood Counties
Officers and Board Members**

President:

Andrea Mora
Wisconsin Rapids
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counties@gmail.com

Vice President:

Samantha Varga
Plover
715-347-6001

Treasurer:

Linda Froehlich
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Co-Secretaries:

Kristi Ahrens
Paula Wolf
Stevens Point

Board Members:

Marvin Lutz

Andrea Mora

Sam Varga

Linda Froehlich

Kathy Hartman

John Hartman

Kristi Ahrens

Jen Moton

Suzanne Campbell

Paula Wolf

Dixie Weber

Aubrey Hill

From the Editor

As I write this final newsletter of 2025, there's a quiet mix of emotions—an ache of endings intertwined with the spark of new beginnings. The year's last chapter always carries a certain weight, a soft reminder of all that has passed and all that still waits just beyond the horizon. The holidays bring their familiar warmth—gatherings filled with laughter, the comfort of shared meals, and the gentle hum of gratitude that seems to settle over everything. Even as winter begins to unfold—my least favorite of all seasons—I find myself learning to see its beauty.

The cold still bites, and yes, the snow still finds its way down the back of my collar, but I've realized the season isn't asking me to love it—it's inviting me to notice it. To pause in the stillness, breathe in the crisp air, and recognize that even in the grayest moments, there is wonder to be found. Life often mirrors winter in that way—there will always be discomfort, things we wish away, moments we can't control. But in choosing to look up instead of down, to see the beauty instead of the burden, we reclaim a bit of peace. I choose to find joy in the contrast, warmth in the cold, and hope in the quiet stretch of days ahead. I wish you to find the same peace and acceptance, and to find a way to bring joy into your heart this holiday season. And, as always, please remember — you are not alone in your journey, NAMI is here for you. Take great care.

—Andrea



"If you choose not to find joy
in the snow, you will have
less joy in your life but still
the same amount of snow."

Meet the NAMI Portage and Wood Counties Board

We are excited to introduce the new Board of Directors for NAMI Portage and Wood Counties! This dedicated group of individuals brings together diverse experiences, passions, and perspectives — all united by a shared commitment to improving mental health in our communities. Our board plays a vital role in guiding NAMI's mission, ensuring that we continue to advocate, educate, and support those affected by mental illness. Together, they will help shape the direction of our programs, strengthen community partnerships, and champion hope and understanding across Portage and Wood Counties. We're also pleased to announce our appointed officers for the year:

- **President:** Andrea Mora
- **Vice President:** Samantha Varga
- **Treasurer:** Linda Froehlich
- **Secretary:** Paula Wolf



From left to right: Marvin Lutz, Lisa Piekarski, Dixie Lee Weber, Jen Moton, Paula Wolf, Samantha Varga, Linda Froehlich, Barbara Wetzel, Andrea Mora, and Kathy Hartman.
(Not pictured: Suzanne Campbell and John Hartman)

What is NAMI?

The National Alliance on Mental Illness is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization

It was started in 1979 in Madison, Wisconsin by two mothers who were looking for help with their sons. NAMI provides advocacy, education, support and public awareness for people whose lives are affected by mental illness. (www.nami.org).

The NAMI Wisconsin mission is to improve the quality of life and promote recovery for people with a mental health condition.

NAMI Portage-Wood Counties, our local affiliate, offers support groups for families or individuals led by trained facilitators.

We also offer classes and events that are free to the public. These are funded through memberships, donations, fundraising and grants.

Monthly Mental Health Speakers

NAMI Portage and Wood Counties along with Suicide Prevention Portage County offer a free Mental Health and Wellness Speaker on the third Monday of each month. It takes place from 6:00–7:00 p.m. in Stevens Point at the Midstate Independent Living Consultants building located at 3262 Church Street in Stevens Point.

Our last speaker of the year is our NAMI Board President Andrea Mora, whose presentation is titled *Five Steps to Living Well with a Mental Illness*.

For many, attending one of our Monday night speakers is their very first introduction to NAMI—and often, the first time they truly feel seen, heard, and understood. It's more than just an event; it's a space where real connection happens, where stories resonate, and where healing begins. Some have even found lifelong friendships that

Our Year in Review

In October we gathered for our annual affiliate meeting to reflect on a year filled with growth, impact, and connection. It was a time to express our gratitude to the Board members whose service helped shape our success, and to welcome new leaders who will carry our mission forward. Together, we celebrated the progress NAMI Portage and Wood Counties has made in advocating for mental health, supporting individuals and families, and strengthening our presence across both communities.

This past year, we expanded our reach through numerous support groups, community events, and fundraising opportunities that made a real difference in people's lives. Two major events—one in Stevens Point and another in Wisconsin Rapids—brought hundreds together for a shared evening of education, conversation, and hope. With free meals, entertainment, resource tables, and powerful stories of lived experience, we reminded our communities that mental health matters to us all. Through every connection, presentation, and partnership, we continued to live out NAMI's mission: ensuring that no one faces mental illness alone.



Become a Member of NAMI Portage-Wood Counties

Did you know that by becoming a member of NAMI Portage and Wood Counties, you're not just supporting those living with mental illness and their loved ones—you're helping create a stronger, more connected community? Your membership gives you access to the programs and services we offer, while also helping us continue our mission of providing hope, support, and education to those who need it most.

Memberships start at just \$5, and every dollar goes directly to our local affiliate—right here in our community.

Ready to join us? Visit namiwisconsin.org/membership, select our affiliate, and become part of the movement today.

Join a support group and take care of you!

SUPPORT GROUP for PEERS

(those living with a mental health condition)

Stevens Point

First Thursday of each month

St. Paul Lutheran Church

1919 Wyatt Avenue

6:15–7:45 p.m.

Contact:

Linda • 715-572-7135 or if you need transportation

Wisconsin Rapids

Third Wednesday of each month

McMillan Library

490 East Grand Avenue

6:00–7:30 p.m.

Contact:

Andrea • 715-321-6672 or

Sammie • 715-203-3073

Marshfield

Fourth Tuesday of each month

Faith Lutheran Church

207 South Cherry Avenue

6:00–7:30 p.m.

Contact:

Suzanne • 715-712-2196 or

Andrea • 715-321-6672

SUPPORT GROUPS for FAMILY AND FRIENDS

(those with a loved one living with a mental health condition)

Stevens Point

First Monday of each month

NAMI Family Support Group

St. Paul Lutheran Church

1919 Wyatt Avenue

(Door 3, lower level)

6:30–8:00 p.m.

Contact:

Kathy • 715-254-5452 or

Marvin • 715-592-4522

Wisconsin Rapids

Second Monday of each month

NAMI Family Support Group

McMillan Library

490 East Grand Avenue

6:00–7:30 p.m.

Contact:

Lisa • 715-572-5797

Kathy • 715-254-5452

Wisconsin Rapids Support Groups

NAMI Portage and Wood Counties is here for you. Each month, we offer two support groups at McMillan Library in Wisconsin Rapids: Family Support Group (second Monday of the month) and Peer Support Group (third Wednesday of the month). Both meet in a private room from 6:00–7:30 PM.

Our **Peer Support Group** is a safe, welcoming space for anyone living with a mental health condition. Led by trained facilitators who have walked similar paths, these groups provide understanding, encouragement, and a genuine sense of belonging. Here, you don't have to explain yourself—others simply understand. Through shared stories and supportive conversation, participants find connection, build confidence, and are reminded that they are never alone on their journey.

Our **Family Support Group** offers comfort and encouragement for family members, partners, and loved ones of those living with mental health conditions. Guided by trained volunteers who know these experiences firsthand, the group provides a place to share openly, gain practical insight, and draw strength from others who truly understand. Families leave with not only emotional support, but also resources, strategies, and the reassurance that hope and healing are possible. Together, we learn, grow, and support one another every step of the way.

For more information, please visit our website: www.namiportagewoodcounties.org.

Become a member

Did you know that by becoming a member of NAMI Portage and Wood Counties, you're not just supporting those living with mental illness and their loved ones—you're helping create a stronger, more connected community? Your membership gives you access to the programs and services we offer, while also helping us continue our mission of providing hope, support, and education to those who need it most.

Memberships start at just \$5, and every dollar goes directly to our local affiliate—right here in our community.

Ready to join us? Visit namiwisconsin.org/membership, select our affiliate (Nami Portage and Wood Counties), and become part of the movement today!

Join Us As A Volunteer!

At NAMI Portage and Wood Counties, volunteers are at the heart of everything we do. There are so many meaningful ways to get involved—each one offering the chance to bring hope, raise awareness, and strengthen our community. Whether you want to share your personal story, become a trained support group facilitator, teach a class, or help out at community events, your time and talents can truly change lives.

As a volunteer, you'll be part of a team that provides education, advocacy, and support to individuals and families affected by mental illness. NAMI Portage and Wood Counties is a volunteer-led nonprofit, powered by passionate community members who care deeply about mental health—and we would be honored to have you join us.

If you're ready to make an impact, reach out to us at 715-544-9653 or email namiportagewoodcounties@gmail.com. Together, we can build a stronger, more supportive community.



Portage and Wood Counties

P.O. Box 21
Stevens Point, WI 54481
715-544-9653

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Nov-Dec 2025 Newsletter

Check out our website namiportagewoodcounties.org
Facebook NAMI Portage-Wood Counties, like us on Facebook and see our inspirational posts.
Call NAMI Portage and Wood Counties 715-544-9653

Your Membership Helps Support NAMI Portage and Wood Counties

Membership includes regular mailings from NAMI Portage and Wood Counties, NAMI Wisconsin, and NAMI National. Donations and membership fees are tax deductible.

Make checks payable to NAMI Portage and Wood Counties. Mail with this form to:
Linda Froehlich, Treasurer, 4309 Heffron Street, Stevens Point, WI 54481 (715) 572-7135

Date: _____

Name: _____ Organization, if applicable _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Telephone Number: (____) _____ *E-mail Address: _____

*The NAMI Portage and Wood Counties newsletter is sent by e-mail. ☐ Check here if you would prefer to receive a hard copy

Please select your type of membership:

☐ Household Membership \$60 Names in household: _____

☐ Full Membership \$40 ☐ Open Door Membership \$5 ☐ Donation Only \$ _____

☐ Please accept my \$ _____ donation in addition to my membership.