

Winds

OF CHANGE....

...stories from NAMI Lexington



**The future's in the air. I can feel it everywhere.
It's blowing with the winds of change.**

- Adapted from Songwriter Klaus Meine

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



National Alliance on Mental Illness

nami | **Lexington**

Our Story

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Chapter 1 WINDS OF CHANGE



Kelly Gunning Director of
Advocacy and Policy

Life is all about change. Change can feel scary and exhilarating at the same time. Changes can take the form of conscious, calculated risk or change can be thrust upon you like fiery arrows from the nether regions (can anyone say, ‘worldwide pandemic’?). If there is one thing certain I’ve learned about change, it is to embrace it. If you think you can dodge change, safe and comfy in your safe/comfort zone, you will never grow. You will remain ‘the same’, never knowing what might have been or how you could have evolved – if you had just...

Nature teaches us much about change, in fact it was the inspiration behind our entire Fall Campaign, if you will. (Many of you know, by now, that I am a nature-girl. I practically live in the woods that surround my home, my Native-given name is ‘Sticks and Stones Woman’ – because, you guessed it...I love finding unique sticks and stones and piling them up everywhere). Driving in to work one recent, early Fall morning I was lamenting to Phill that I was still awaiting my ‘download’ of inspiration/instruction regarding our message for Mental Illness Awareness Week, The Candlelight Vigil, the NAMIWalks and our Annual Meeting. I told him I needed to have quiet and meditate on the drive in and open myself to receiving the Wisdom we needed to share. We approached the bridge over the Kentucky River as the sun was rising and it was angled perfectly, providing a luminous splendor of golden hue on the now changing leaves – just a spectacle to behold! Bearing witness to that first harbinger brush of Autumnal Equinox change! The gift was given! I had my guiding wisdom. Our message was: change. The wonderful inevitable-ness of it. Sometimes, Natural, driven by time and cycles; sometimes forced and chaotic, constant - though.

To fight change is to fight the life cycle itself, it is an affront to natural order. So, as Phill and I approach the Autumn of our cycle and our time in NAMI we will, like the changing leaves, surrender graciously, leaving a rich blanket of nourishing and sustaining ground cover so that all the magnificent, new, blossoming possibilities for our NAMI Mission will continue to do what we do best...*Grow and Change*

Always,

*It all started with a seed of an idea
that took root as does a small acorn...*



Chapter 2 FROM ONE ACORN, A MIGHT OAK GREW

by Tracy Jacobson, Coordinator of Family Programs



"Families may not all look the same, but at NAMI Lexington all those who have been impacted by a mental health condition can find mutual support, compassion, wisdom and knowledge from others dealing with similar issues. You are not alone... Recovery is a journey and there is hope."

Change and evolution have not escaped NAMI Lexington's Family Programs. It has become apparent that there is considerable increased interest in virtual participation in all aspects of family programming. This year, three hybrid Family Education Programs were offered so attendees could choose to participate either in person or via the Zoom platform. Distance and transportation barriers are no longer a limitation for attendance.

The monthly virtual family support group experienced continuous growth this year. A monthly in-person Family Support Group is also available. Change has allowed more consistency among the Young Adult group. Participants meet monthly via Zoom and occasionally for social outings in the community.

Another great family resource is NAMI's first book titled "[You are not Alone](#), The NAMI Guide to Navigating Mental Health" is the first of its kind and an excellent source of wisdom and advice for individuals and family members. Social media, Mental Health Newsletters, bloggers, and Mental Health websites have all assisted in improving understanding and attitudes towards mental health conditions.



When the winds of change bring unexpected mental health challenges, you don't have to make the journey alone.





Chapter 3 SEEING THE FOREST AND THE TREES

NAMIWalks Lexington has seen its fair share of change over the years. This year we returned to the site of the original Eastern State Hospital. Many attendees felt a full circle moment because they worked at both the new and old hospital or visited ESH as patients or loved ones.

It is important to step back and see the whole forest. Many voices had to come together to advocate and fight for a new hospital and that is one of the many reasons we have the Walk.

We are excited to celebrate another successful Walk raising over \$50,000. Our friends, family, and community partners turned out to support us at the Walk with more than 300 in attendance. Our presenting sponsor, New Vista not only sponsored but raised over \$3,000 via team donations. We had 32 teams register and 366 walkers register on-line.

We grew our Kidz Zone bigger this year than ever before. It was so much fun watching kids and those young at heart play games and win prizes. We have decided to re-brand our Kidz Zone as a "Fun Zone" so everyone can feel welcome to enjoy the games and activities. As fundraising continues to change, so do our needs. When before fundraising was done in-person and through events now it is on Facebook and other social media platforms. Cash in hand is becoming a thing of the past with pay pal, apple pay and credit cards becoming the norm. NAMI Lexington adapts and grows as the times change creating a seamless fundraising experience for our donors.

We are excited to see where the winds blow us and how we can grow with these invaluable funds.



Chapter 4 STRENGTH IN NUMBERS



Celebrating Our Students and Volunteers!

THANK YOU FOR HELPING US NAVIGATE THE WINDS OF CHANGE!

NAMI Lexington was founded by volunteers and has grown, in large part, through the countless hours of selfless service generously donated to the cause by our wonderful volunteers. Without these selfless individuals and organizations, we could not do all that we do here at NAMI Lexington.

2023 saw a return to many in-person activities that required volunteers. We have counted 1,376 hours of volunteer time so far this year. Our Board of Directors volunteer their time to share their expertise and experiences with us so we can have access to the latest innovations in mental health advancements and leadership to guide us forward.

Our student volunteers enjoy complete access to all of NAMI Lexington's meetings, advocacy efforts and educational programs. Nursing students, pharmacy, premedical, psychiatry and social work students all volunteered with us this year, together, providing in excess of 490 hours of student volunteer service.

Just to name a few, these wonderful people have given their time and talent to assisting with Mental Health Court; Teaching Tracks at Participation Station; Conducting POPS (Peer Outcome Protocol Survey) and needs assessment surveys; Helping with office admin work; Working our Warm-Line that allows individuals to reach out to real people during times of need. Other invaluable contributions of time include assisting during events, presentations and support of peers.

To illustrate just how important these folks are to our success, our volunteers put in 253 hours of volunteer time this past year - just on our NAMIWalks Fundraiser alone! Held annually, NAMIWalks is our biggest advocacy and fundraising event each year and simply cannot happen without our volunteers! Students, community partners, friends and family members all took time to step up and help us run a smooth Walk. We are profoundly grateful and recognize and applaud you all! We could not do what we do without YOU!





Chapter 5

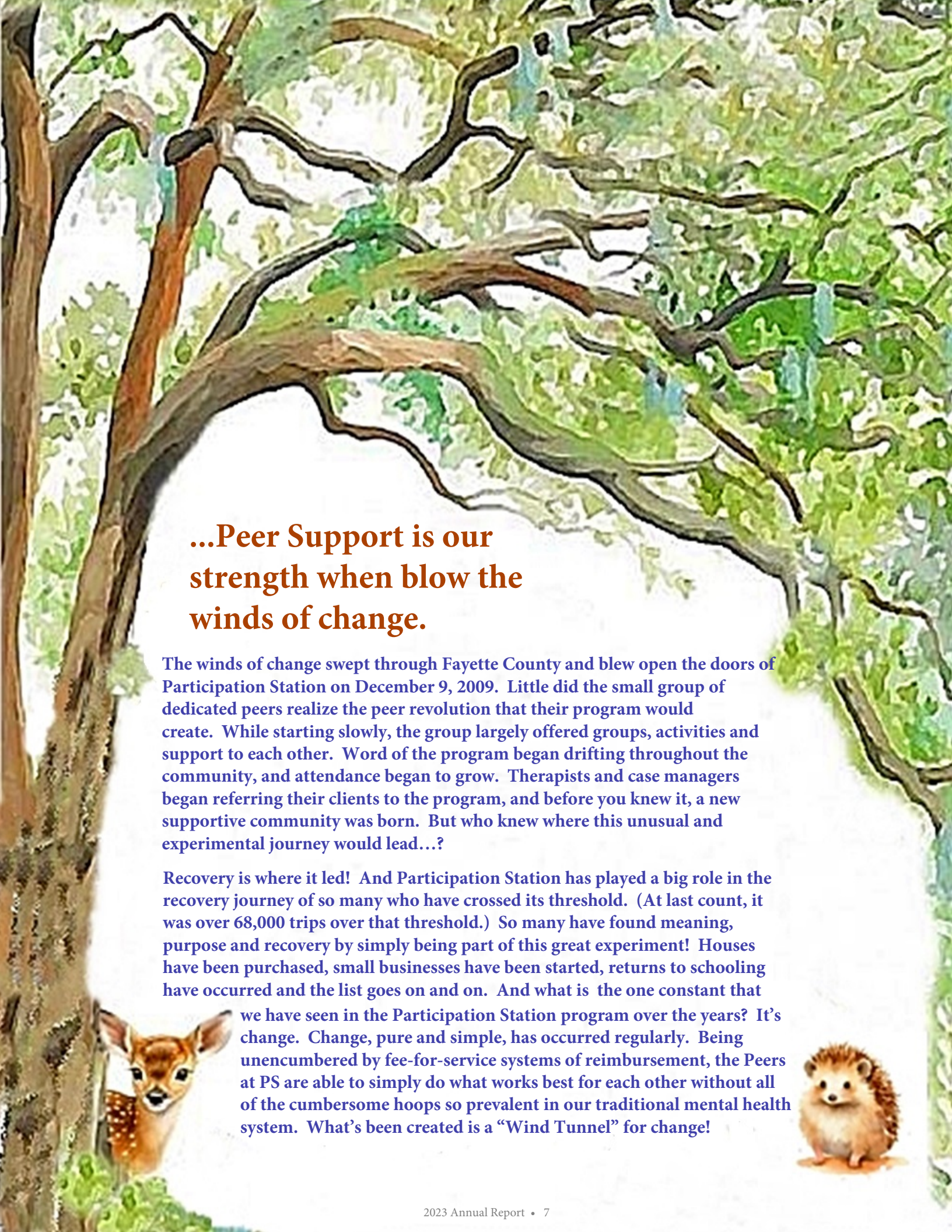
THERE IS A LOT HAPPENING AT

Participation Station
a peer operated center

Many years ago, NAMI Lexington was a young and vibrant advocacy group made up largely of family members of people with serious mental illness. These family members fought hard for the needs and rights of their loved ones and made many wonderful things happen. As time passed, they began embracing the concepts of recovery and began changing and growing. Using their newfound knowledge, they started including more and more diagnosed individuals in their events and activities.

As these folks participated more actively in NAMI, they quickly developed new skills and knowledge and embraced the idea of “NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US”. It only made sense to have the active participation of people experienced in living with a mental illness. NAMI Lexington then worked with New Vista (Bluegrass.org, at that time) and an incredible group of peers, which truly signaled the birth of the Lexington Peer Support Movement. The peer group acted as a focus group for what was needed in our community and laid out the game plan for the creation of Participation Station, Kentucky’s first peer operated center.

With Deep Roots Like a Mighty Oak...



...Peer Support is our strength when blow the winds of change.

The winds of change swept through Fayette County and blew open the doors of Participation Station on December 9, 2009. Little did the small group of dedicated peers realize the peer revolution that their program would create. While starting slowly, the group largely offered groups, activities and support to each other. Word of the program began drifting throughout the community, and attendance began to grow. Therapists and case managers began referring their clients to the program, and before you knew it, a new supportive community was born. But who knew where this unusual and experimental journey would lead...?

Recovery is where it led! And Participation Station has played a big role in the recovery journey of so many who have crossed its threshold. (At last count, it was over 68,000 trips over that threshold.) So many have found meaning, purpose and recovery by simply being part of this great experiment! Houses have been purchased, small businesses have been started, returns to schooling have occurred and the list goes on and on. And what is the one constant that we have seen in the Participation Station program over the years? It's change. Change, pure and simple, has occurred regularly. Being unencumbered by fee-for-service systems of reimbursement, the Peers at PS are able to simply do what works best for each other without all of the cumbersome hoops so prevalent in our traditional mental health system. What's been created is a "Wind Tunnel" for change!



Participation Station, Inc. programs have taken root! This list includes, but is not limited to:

**“Deeply rooted,
we stand
strong...”**



- Tracks
- Social Events
- Warm-line
- NAMI Connections
- Adult Peer Support Specialists (APSS)
- KY Consumer Operated Service Programs
- Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)
- Eastern State Hospital Peer Support Program
- System Navigators
- APSS Training Program
- Anxiety Workshop
- Double Trouble in Recovery
- Schizophrenia Alliance

As each aspect of the peer initiative took root and grew stronger, more opportunities emerged. Daily Tracks taught by participants identified individuals that were progressing in their recovery journey to be enrolled in the Kentucky System Transformation Advocating Recovery Supports (KYSTARS) APSS training curriculum. With the skill sets gained from the APSS training, some of those peers have been hired to work on the Eastern State Peer Support Team providing psycho-educational groups, support groups, unit based groups and visitation education to both patients and families of ESH patients 7 days a week! Other peers have chosen to join the 10+ year old Warm-line, offering a warm ear to people that are often very isolated in their struggles in their recovery journey. Or become a System Navigator, assisting anyone who comes in the door by helping them access the wonderful community supports that we are so lucky to have in the Lexington area. Our System Navigators offer true peer support and walk next to individuals as they access assistance, whether that be for housing, food, utility assistance, healthcare/insurance, medication issues, provider issues, etc.

The success of Participation Station and their use of SAMHSA’s Toolkit for Consumer Operated Service Programs(COSP) gave them the opportunity to spawn similar programs across the state with supportive funding from the Kentucky Department of Behavioral Health/Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities (KYDBHDID). PS has offered training, technical assistance and immersion to COSPs from Pikeville to Paducah. Over 10 peer programs have sprouted up across the commonwealth.

Chapter 6 NOT JUST ANOTHER FAIRY TALE

By Bill Buckman, MSW, CSW, Coordinator Fayette County Mental Health Court

Once upon a time there was much distress in the forest of Lexington surrounding the issue of the criminal justice system and people with serious mental illness. Sometimes, if people with serious mental illness were not getting the help they needed, such as medication and therapy, their symptoms would get so out of hand that they eventually did things that got them in trouble with the authorities. Back then, there weren't many options available for getting those folks the help they needed. Often, they would just be kept in jail for a while without getting any treatment, and when they were released, they would be right back in the same boat they were before. Often, they would end up back in jail or maybe even a hospital for a little while, and then back again.

Some very wise people were so concerned about this issue that they thought and thought and scratched their heads and thought some more, and they began trying to find out what some other wise people in the empire were doing to help end this “revolving door” problem and around the year 2012, they got together as a group to hold a public forum to try to find solutions. There were wise people from NAMI Lexington, Eastern State Hospital, the Catholic Action Center, the Central Kentucky Housing and Homeless Coalition, the Kentucky Mental Health Coalition, the court system, and the county jail. They called their forum “*Stop the Revolving Door.*” They had deep discussion about things called outpatient assisted treatment, 202A statute, and something fairly new in the empire called mental health courts. From this great meeting of minds emerged something called the “*Take Down the Wall Committee,*” whose mission it was to continue researching and talking and advocating to bring about positive change.

One of the fruits of their work was the Fayette Mental Health Court, which was designed and implemented by volunteers in 2014. Around that time, the Grand Leader of the Lexington forest started a special task force to help address homelessness. Along with many other good initiatives that were decided on by this task force, the mental health court was seen as a powerful tool to help fight homelessness. When the task force presented it’s findings to the Grand Leader and the Council of Leaders, together it was decided that a portion of the treasure of the Forest should be used to help the good people with the mental health court continue their important mission.

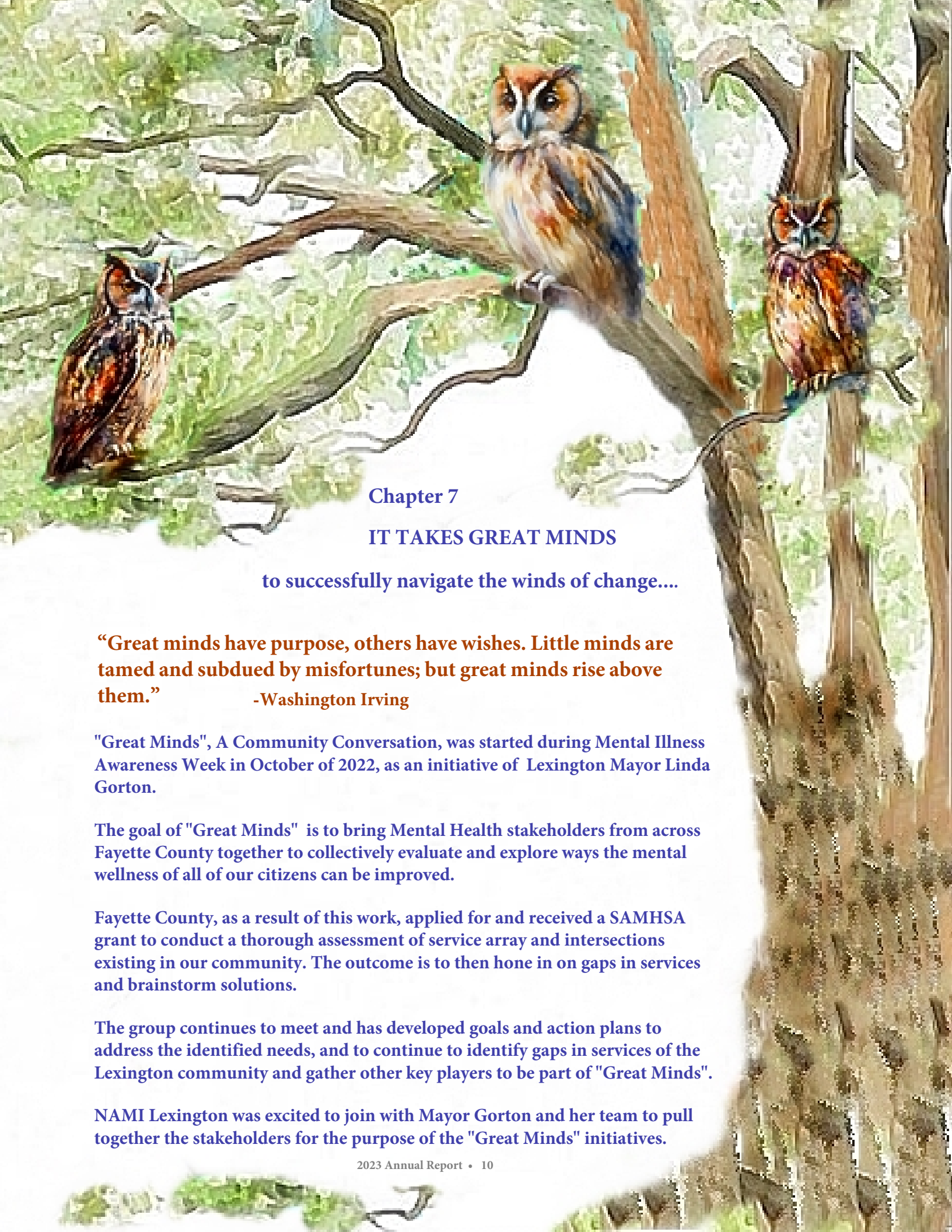
Since that time, the Mental Health Court has helped more than 200 people with serious mental illness, and almost 70 of those people completed the very rigorous year-long (or longer) program to graduate with honor. The Leaders of Lexington Forest soon found that the Court was actually saving much more gold than they were being given, due to the jailer, judges, police, sheriffs, and emergency responders not having to spend so much time rescuing, arresting, and locking up people. As a matter of fact, just in a recent two-year period of time, the mental health court saved the Forest in Lexington over three million gold coins! When the land’s treasury wizards calculated their savings, it turned out that they had received almost a one thousand percent return on the investment! That savings can be used to buy a LOT of acorns for the rest of the forest creatures!

Since the Mental Health Court first began, there have been some changes in staff over the years, but the current team, which includes a wise judge, attorneys, psychologists, social workers, adult peer support specialists, probation officers, sheriffs, and volunteers, continues to carry on the important mission of the Court. They help many people navigate recovery from serious mental illness, substance abuse, and trauma, and help the Lexington Forest become an even better place to live! Mental Health Court is not afraid of the winds of change -- we welcome each new opportunity to serve our community that blows our way. FMHC - Improving our Forest - One individual at a time.

From a single acorn of an idea... came a mighty forest that withstands the winds of change.



A forest begins with a single tree. So, too, our program changes lives one individual at a time.



Chapter 7

IT TAKES GREAT MINDS

to successfully navigate the winds of change...

“Great minds have purpose, others have wishes. Little minds are tamed and subdued by misfortunes; but great minds rise above them.”
-Washington Irving

"Great Minds", A Community Conversation, was started during Mental Illness Awareness Week in October of 2022, as an initiative of Lexington Mayor Linda Gorton.

The goal of "Great Minds" is to bring Mental Health stakeholders from across Fayette County together to collectively evaluate and explore ways the mental wellness of all of our citizens can be improved.

Fayette County, as a result of this work, applied for and received a SAMHSA grant to conduct a thorough assessment of service array and intersections existing in our community. The outcome is to then hone in on gaps in services and brainstorm solutions.

The group continues to meet and has developed goals and action plans to address the identified needs, and to continue to identify gaps in services of the Lexington community and gather other key players to be part of "Great Minds".

NAMI Lexington was excited to join with Mayor Gorton and her team to pull together the stakeholders for the purpose of the "Great Minds" initiatives.



National Alliance on Mental Illness

NAMI Lexington

Chapter 8 2023 NAMI Lexington Award Winners



JERAMIE WARD "Movin' On" AWARD

***Kevin Haggerty**



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT:
***Carolyn Colliver**



VOLUNTEER AWARD
***Jennifer Giles**

NAMIWalks Awards:

-Corporate Fundraiser
New Vista

-Individual Fundraiser
Fareesh Kanga

-Individual Team Fundraiser
UK Trail Blazers



WINGS AWARD
***Devine Carama**



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT:
*** Faye Morton**



NAMIWalks Awards:

-Best Team T-Shirt
The Ridge

-Team Spirit Award
The Ridge

-Best Dressed Pet
Luna and Kristopher Gruber

PIONEER AWARD
***Dr. Nat Sandler**



Chapter 9

...A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



You have heard this before - Change is the only constant! Navigating the winds of Change requires gaining buy-in and commitment from your team and your stakeholders – both internal and external. Embracing the concept of “The Destination is the Journey” can be down-right scary. Uncertainty and Vulnerability are the companions of Change and the building blocks for developing resiliency, strength, and loyalty to your team and your mission. Change requires growth, collaboration, and empathy and inspires adaptability, innovation, and empowerment.

Whew – that’s a lot of fancy words! The sentiment I mean to convey is that Change may be the most exhilarating theme individuals, organizations, and communities can share in a lifetime. NAMI Lexington is privileged to work with the best hearts and minds to address the challenges that can only be met with significant Change. We are beyond grateful for our dedicated board, staff, volunteers, and community partners.

We are also thankful for this opportunity to share our Annual Report with you. While it is hard to capture the breadth of opportunity we are experiencing at this moment, we hope to offer you a taste of what is and what lies ahead. We offer you a full serving of heart-felt gratitude for your role and thank you for all you do and for your continued support.

Best regards,

Phill Gunning
Executive Director



Chapter 10 USING OUR ACORNS WISELY

Financials - 11/01/2022 - 10/31/2023

SUPPORT and REVENUE

Opening Balance \$97,024

Contributions, Membership, Memorial, Misc. \$57,867

Fundraising and In-Kind services \$73,710

Grants \$97,706

Program Service Contracts \$863,360

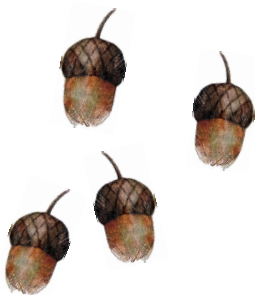
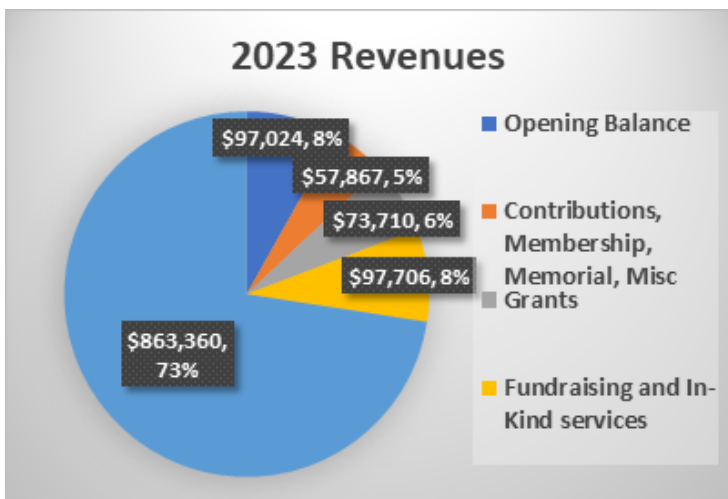
Total - \$1,189,667

EXPENSES

Program Services \$834,488 General and Administrative \$74,456

Fundraising \$31,116

Total - \$940,060





Chapter 11



A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS *Metamorphosis of NAMI Lexington: Emerging as a Kentucky Leader in Advocacy*

It is with great pleasure that I write to you as the Chair of the Board of Directors of NAMI Lexington, to share our annual report and reflect on our remarkable journey of transformation. Just as a caterpillar undergoes a remarkable metamorphosis to become a beautiful butterfly, so too has NAMI Lexington evolved and emerged as the State of Kentucky's leader in helping individuals, families, and caregivers whose life experience includes living with a serious and persistent mental illness. This incredible change happens as a result of many years of relentless dedication and hard work.

The Journey of a Caterpillar - Like the humble caterpillar, NAMI Lexington started its journey in a formative stage. We crawled painstakingly, step by step, through various challenges and obstacles. Our early years were marked by growth, development, and a constant pursuit of knowledge. Just as a caterpillar devours leaves to grow and thrive, our organization digested the experiences and expertise of its members to fortify its foundations. Faye Morton and Carolyn Colliver are two of those who made outstanding contributions to NAMI Lexington at that time.

The Cocoon Stage - The transition from a caterpillar to a butterfly is a delicate process that happens within a cocoon. Similarly, we reached a pivotal stage in our journey where we needed to broaden our strategies, innovate our methods, and reinforce our commitment to our mission. This cocoon stage was marked by internal changes, establishing external relationships, and adaptation to the ever-evolving social, medical, and political landscape. Dr. Nat Sandler represents the invaluable support of NAMI Lexington by the psychiatric community at this stage.

The Emerging Butterfly - Now, we are emerging from this cocoon stage, transformed and revitalized, much like a butterfly breaking free from its chrysalis. We have developed vibrant wings, which represent our newfound capabilities, innovations, and resilience. These wings have enabled us to soar to new heights and venture into uncharted territories. Devine Carama epitomizes a community partner who will take this journey with us.

Today, we proudly stand as a leader in Kentucky advocacy community, admired for our adaptability, dedication, and vision. Our organization's continued metamorphosis is a testament to the hard work, dedication, and expertise of our members, staff, and leadership. We have evolved to become a symbol of the resounding spirit exhibited by those we seek to support. We remain committed to serving individuals, families, caregivers and our community with unwavering dedication. We are determined to uphold our core values, foster continuous growth, and provide the best possible support to those we touch.

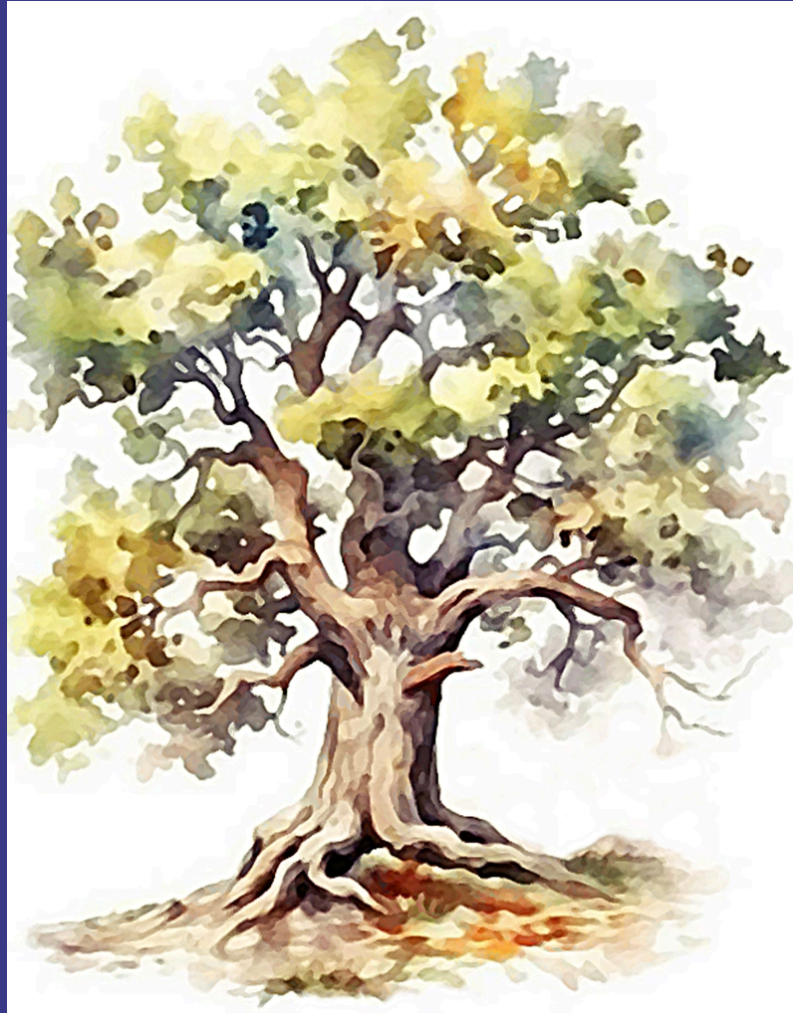
Thank you for your unwavering support, and here's to a brighter future as we continue to spread our wings and soar on the winds of change!

Warm regards,

Dr. Cynthia Faulkner
Chair of the Board of Directors
NAMI LEXINGTON



A CALL TO MEMBERSHIP...



One person can make a difference. It all starts with you. Become part of the exciting winds of change happening at NAMI Lexington. You CAN be part of changing lives with NAMI Lexington. From a single acorn...a mighty oak can grow.

Visit <https://www.namilexington.org/> to become a member and see just how much positive impact one person can make.

Thank you!

to ALL of our COMMUNITY PARTNERS
for your support of NAMI Lexington!

Just as a forest is a delicately balanced natural ecosystem with everything working in harmony and balance, we rely on our community partners, supporters and sponsors to serve as our "Recovery Ecosystem".

Creating the environment that individuals and families need by working with us to provide the necessary tools, services, and supports for recovery to occur, these are the folks who joined us to help build and protect our "forest" by providing both the services and funding that help make it possible for us to do what we do at the level of excellence that NAMI Lexington programs are known for.



Carried on the Winds...



Our Story Continues...

Note of Acknowledgment

NAMI Lexington wishes to thank all those involved in our success this year and every year. We also would like to thank everyone who had a part in the making of this Annual Report.

We especially wish to acknowledge Geneva Coleman, for serving as graphic artist on this project and helping to bring our vision to fruition.

