



Happy Holidays

December 2023

Dear Friend,

Do you recall a time when you felt utterly out of place? I vividly remember my kindergarten friend, Anna, who arrived at school wearing a meticulously sewn witch's costume. Unfortunately, her sleep-deprived mother sent her in costume on October 30th, a day *before* Halloween. Decades have passed, yet Anna still recounts the stares and unkind remarks, etched in her memory as if it were yesterday.

Anna's experience lasted the length of a school day. Imagine having that same horrible feeling all day, every day! This is the reality for many battling mental illness. And it's not confined to disheveled or unhoused individuals; it can be the struggling college student amid classmates who've moved on to careers and marriage, the father who is laid off from his job and now uses alcohol or pills to self-medicate, or the immigrant, scarred by trauma, and isolated due to cultural and language barriers.

But it doesn't have to be that way.

I am asking **you**, our friend, to join NAMI DuPage in being the ally every individual impacted by mental illness in our community needs. Be the friend who comprehends the stigma, the isolation, the setbacks, and the heartaches; who values human dignity when others falter; who speaks truth when it's uncomfortable; and who offers hope in moments of despair.

In the words of the late Senator Hubert Humphrey, **"The best healing therapy is friendship."**

Your friendship and support are invaluable today and every day. Thank you for being an indispensable part of NAMI DuPage's mission.

With gratitude,

Geri Kerger

P.S. This year, alongside your donation, we invite you to share a message of support for those utilizing our services. Simply write a note of encouragement on the enclosed sheet and return it with your donation. Your message will adorn a star gifted to program participants during the holiday season. Donations of \$100 or less will provide 1 star, \$500 will facilitate 5 stars, and \$1000 will enable us to provide 10 program participants with your personal message.

Thank you for coming! I really agree, it is so important to talk about mental health instead of keeping quiet. I always ask my friends how they are doing.

*When I saw that other people recovered, it gave me hope that I could too.
-CH*

*Because of Peer Support, I am alive.
-MR*

This presentation really helped me and was really good timing because there is a lot going on in my life.

2,050
plus people have contacted NAMI DuPage for resources.

Program Year 2023

Our Impact in DuPage County:
22,653
people served

**Support Groups
Peer Support
Living Room
Youth Education**

2,433
sessions of education and support have been offered.



NOTE OF ENCOURAGEMENT

1 STAR = \$100 • 5 STARS = \$500 • 10 STARS=\$1000

