Local team to participate in NAMI Walk

Krystle Wagner
Sep 25, 2017

Local residents are walking to raise awareness and funds for a national organization that provides mental health resources, education and advocacy.

More than 26 participants are signed up for team Extended gRace participating in the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Walk in Grand Rapids. Everyone on the team is participating to show their support for someone with mental illness, said Sara Barco, Extended gRace’s team captain.

Check in begins at 8 a.m. and the event starts at 10 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 1, at Davenport University in Grand Rapids.

With the walk two weeks away, community members can still join the team. Sign up online...
There isn’t a charge to participate, said Barco, who is also on the Extended Grace’s Board of Directors.

The team’s goal is to raise $1,000. Money raised through the event will go toward NAMI efforts.

NAMI is the nation’s largest grassroots mental health organization, and is dedicated to building better lives for Americans affected by mental illness. About one in five adults experience a mental illness in a year, according to NAMI.

Extended Grace Executive Director Barbara Lee Van Horssen said they created a team as a way to give back and support NAMI for all of their services.

Barco said she wanted to get involved because her son has a mental illness, and noted that she learned about resources through the Momentum Center. Barco said it’s challenging to find resources.

Van Horssen, who is now NAMI certified, said that NAMI provides critical resources and resources for political advocacy.

“We want to recognize we’re all in this together,” she said.

Locally, NAMI provides the Family Support Group every fourth Tuesday of the month. The group meets 7-8:30 p.m. at the Momentum Center, 714 Columbus Ave. in Grand Haven.

The group is free and is for family members, loved ones and caregivers of individuals with mental illness.

As the Extended gRace team prepares for the walk, Barco thanked everyone who has sponsored the team, which includes Weiss Chiropractic, Tri-Cities Auto, Riverside Nursing and Rehabilitation, Grant Williams Mediation, Ipsum Designs and Greenridge Realty.

Anyone interested in becoming a sponsor can sponsor the entire team or an individual participant. To become a sponsor, email office@extendedgrace.org.