



Celebrating Life

By Danei Edelen

Nothing says spring like the feeling of fresh air blowing through our house on a warm spring day like the afternoon after the Georgetown Community Day at [Georgetown Elementary](#). After two years of isolation, I think everyone was looking for an excuse to get out of the house and be around people again. "Working a booth" was a quiet victory for both Anita and I. Anita and I had met five years earlier when I founded NAMI Brown County. We have been through a lot in the last five years, the death of her son, me being hospitalized three times, COVID, and the war in the Ukraine. As I remarked to Anita in the car, "We are just grateful to be well enough to work a booth". Welcome to a new chapter in our lives. Watching Anita console a grieving mother with the touch her hand, validated again for me today why I founded NAMI Brown County. "Together, we are making a difference, one day at a time, one life at time."

My name is Danei Edelen. I am founder of the [NAMI Brown County Ohio affiliate](#). In July, we will be celebrating five years for NAMI Brown County at the Child Focus on July fourteenth. Becoming known in my community as founder of NAMI Brown County brings me a quiet thrill. In April, I spoke at the [Brown County Chamber of Commerce](#) luncheon to tell people about the party. I was so nervous, that I could hardly touch my food. A woman from one of our community banks came up to me at our NAMI booth at the Georgetown Community Day and told me I had done a nice job. "Why, thank you!" I said with profound relief.



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Part of the reason this party means so much to me is because I have lost two people in my life to suicide as well as having my own suicide attempt. I have lived through that dark night of the soul related to suicidal thoughts. NAMI was a lifesaver for me. I am convinced that if I had known about NAMI before, I would have found the help I needed.

Suicide has become an epidemic in this country. [Suicide](#) is now the second leading cause of death for people ages 10-34. The [988 Implementation Act](#), introduced by Congressman Tony Cárdenas, provides federal funding and guidance for states to implement a 988-phone number to replace 911 for mental health crisis calls. The 988 Implementation Act provides funding for a crisis response infrastructure that relies on trained mental health specialists instead of armed law enforcement. NAMI Brown County also has free Zoom calls on the second and fourth Thursday of the month. If you or someone you know is struggling, please know that you are not alone. Anita and I are living proof that there is life after a mental illness diagnosis.

Danei Edelen

Danei Edelen is the president for the [NAMI Brown County Ohio affiliate](#). In 2020, Danei won the Ohio News Media Hooper Award. Danei is a Community Leader for [patientslikeme](#). Danei is also an award-winning mental health columnist for the [Brown County Press](#), [Clermont Sun](#), [News Democrat](#), [People's Defender](#), [Times Gazette](#), [Wilmington News Journal](#), and [The Bargain Hunter](#). She is a blogger for the [Challenge the Storm](#), [the Mighty](#), [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#) and [NAMI Ohio](#). Danei has 20 years of marketing experience working for technology companies like NCR, Oracle, and Amdocs. She has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Communications from Malone University and a Market Research Certificate from Northern Kentucky University. You can contact Danei at daneiedelen@gmail.com or (513) 436-0010.



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