

NAMI
National Alliance on Mental Illness

New Hampshire

presents

THIS IS MY BRAVE[®]

THE SHOW

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 7PM



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NAMI New Hampshire

presents

THIS IS MY BRAVE[®]

THE SHOW

PRODUCTION TEAM

Melissa Wieters	Show Producer & Co-Director
Nathan Fink	Co-Director
Kristen Welch, CFRE	Show Producer & Fundraising Manager
Brittany Porter	Marketing/PR Coordinator
Stephanie Vazzano, LCMHC, ATR-BC, CST	Mental Health Professional
Melinda R. Wolfe, MS, APRN	Mental Health Professional
Patrick Roberts	Fidelity Coordinator





DEAR FRIENDS,

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR JOINING US IN THE AUDIENCE TODAY!

What a journey it has been since This Is My Brave produced its very first show in Arlington, Virginia, in 2014 – a show inspired by our co-founder and former Executive Director, Jennifer Marshall. I know that she and her co-founder, Anne Marie Ames, never imagined at that time the success that Brave would realize. Since 2014, This Is My Brave has produced 89 more shows in dozens of cities across the U.S. and in Australia. Story by story, This Is My Brave is shining a light on mental illness and addiction and helping end the stigma that has so long surrounded these issues.

COVID-19 presented us (and the world) with challenges we never could have expected. If there's any good that came from the global pandemic, it is that our society is finally understanding the need to prioritize mental health and wellness. And we at This Is My Brave are here for it! Storytelling has and will always be a path to authentic connection and healing. We are especially proud to have a platform in place where all stories can be shared and all storytellers can be affirmed and celebrated.

We are thrilled to be back in Concord to bring you This Is My Brave - The Show in partnership with NAMI New Hampshire. I am incredibly honored that this cast of amazing storytellers has stepped forward to share their powerful personal testimonies of living well and thriving while managing their condition. I know that this show will shine a light on mental health and substance use disorders and let others who are facing something similar know they are not alone.

Especially now, opening up conversations in this community through creative storytelling will have a lasting impact for so many. We hope that the stories you hear tonight will spark important conversations in your circles!

Every time a story is told – every time we shine a light on mental health or substance use conditions – we let someone know that they are not alone. We can give someone the gift of hope and provide them with a sense of community based on shared experiences.

YOU ARE A VITALLY IMPORTANT PART OF THIS STORY, TOO.



Mental illness does not discriminate. It may affect you. It may affect someone you love. We need to acknowledge that mental illness is something that we may encounter in our lifetime. We must stop the secrecy that stigma has imposed on us and begin to share openly and honestly about our experiences. When we do, we will end the stigma. We have come so far in ten years, but we still have so much more work to do. There are millions more stories to be shared, We will start by sharing a few more on this stage tonight.

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US ON THIS JOURNEY.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erin Gallagher'.

Erin Gallagher,
Executive Director

OUR MISSION



The mission of This Is My Brave is to empower individuals to put their names and faces to their personal stories of recovery from mental illness and/or addiction.



"So much power in real stories of struggle & hope."

DAWN LITTLEFIELD, AUDIENCE MEMBER, DEKALB SHOW

OUR VISION

Someday, we will live in a world where we won't have to call it "brave" for talking openly about mental illness. **WE WILL SIMPLY CALL IT "TALKING."**

This Is My Brave, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is the leading platform for individuals to share their stories of living successful lives despite a diagnosis of a mental illness or addiction. Our main event is This Is My Brave - The Show, a live stage production featuring a cast of individuals who use the performing arts to share their stories and inspire others. We're opening up the conversation about mental health disorders in communities all across the country.



THIS IS MY
BRAVE
THE SHOW

Thank
you!

A heartfelt thank you to our amazing mentors,
who so selflessly gave of their time and talents to
support NAMI New Hampshire's production of
This Is My Brave. Hope truly starts with you!

Nathan Fink

Meg Leonard

Sammie Hackett

Rosie Forrest

Maria Cinilia

Sonya Lyn

Jennifer Fink

Andrew Mitchell

Anthony Payton

Karen Privé

Melissa Wieters

Womankind Counseling Center

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We are proud to
support these
brave storytellers!

ORDER OF SHOW

OPENING REMARKS

Susan L. Stearns

Executive Director, NAMI New Hampshire

Olivia Zottos

Brave by Sara Bareilles and Jack Antonoff

INTRODUCTION OF STORYTELLERS

Melissa Wieters

Show Producer & Co-Director

Liz Stella Ford	<i>Depression</i>
Holly Stevens	<i>Transformation (time moves on)</i>
Anna Harris	<i>Community and Perseverance</i>
Quba Paciorek	<i>Leave Me Alone</i>
Kristen Moody	<i>My Gremlin and Transformation</i>
Sara Valli	<i>I Had a Sister</i>
Don McCullough	<i>When Can I Go Home</i>
Deb Pendergast	<i>My Brave Hands</i>
Brian Harlow	<i>Make The Call</i>
Hayley Smith	<i>Jealous of the Birds</i>

CLOSING REMARKS

Susan L. Stearns

Executive Director, NAMI New Hampshire

BRAVE AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE



Please **DO** take out your cell phones during performances and **SHARE** on your social media platforms that you are watching!



SHARE your photos, favorite lines or takeaways using the hashtag **#STORYTELLINGSAVESLIVES** and tagging us **@THISISMYBRAVE**

Help us tell the world that we're here, and you're watching!

*Laugh at the funny, be comfortable with the sad,
be inspired by the resilience.*

Need a break during the show? **We understand. Things can get heavy.**

Please exit quietly, and let your friends and family know that you're okay.

We'll be here when you're ready :)

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Mental health recovery & balance

A NOTE FROM NAMI NEW HAMPSHIRE

Welcome to NAMI New Hampshire's inaugural production of *This Is My Brave*! I am profoundly grateful to everyone who helped bring this event back to the Granite State – our production team, our volunteers, our sponsors and donors. I'm especially thankful for our storytellers, who have truly inspired us all over the past four months. They are saving lives and giving the gift of hope by sharing their lived experiences.

Our stories – the good, the challenging, the heartbreaking – unite us. They help us know we are not alone. They give us hope in our darkest days. They show us there is light to be found. They empower us. In our work at NAMI New Hampshire, we are privileged to bear witness to the power of storytelling every day.

So often these stories are told when people are connected at NAMI New Hampshire's free support groups and education programs; as they prepare to testify and share their own experience or that of their loved one with policy makers; or when we are gathered together to raise awareness and crush stigma at NAMI Walks New Hampshire. Together, our stories open the door and invite honest conversations about mental health, suicide, and substance use. Together, we are working to dispel stigma and eradicate discrimination. Together, we are letting folks know they are not alone.

Tonight, I urge you to really listen. Hear the voices of these brave folks, many of whom have never set foot on a stage or shared their deeply personal stories before auditioning for this show. These are stories of hope and recovery. They are stories of pain and joy. If you are inspired by what you heard tonight, we need your voice, too. Join us as a volunteer, a donor, or an advocate!

Michelle Obama writes, "History has shown us that courage can be contagious, and hope can take on a life of its own." Over four decades ago, our founders had the courage to share their stories to raise awareness, dispel stigma, and ensure a better life for their loved ones. Our storytellers continue that work tonight. Hope abounds, and I am so glad you are here to experience it with us this evening.

Enjoy the show!



Susan L. Stearns

Susan L. Stearns
Executive Director



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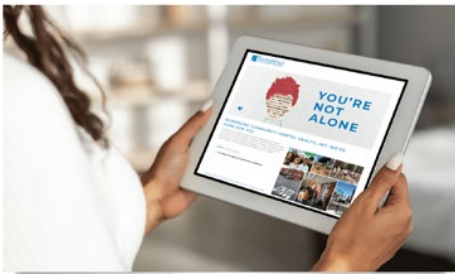
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Source: 2021 Delta Dental data



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| Integrated Health | Psychiatric Emergency Services | Residential Programs |
Wellness Education



Scan the QR code to support NAMI New Hampshire's production of *This is My Brave!*

Your gift helps us continue to provide free support, education, and advocacy to over 40,000 Granite Staters each year.



Thank you

for giving the priceless gifts of help and hope!

#storytellingSavesLives



Thank you to the
\$100+ Brave Supporters
listed below and all who
made a gift to NAMI NH
for our production of
This Is My Brave.

Mary Ann Aldrich

Peg Bennett

Jillian Beverstock

Catherine & David Gruette

Nancy Husarik - In Memory of Joshua Rand

Joe Keenan

Patrick Miller

Nanci Phillips - In Memory of Frank Phillips, Sr.

Susan L. Stearns

Holly Stevens

Kristen Welch - In Honor of the 2024 Cast of TIMB

SHOW VIDEOGRAPHY
AND PHOTOGRAPHY



ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO

provided by

Anthony Riso Photography

www.anthonyriso.photo

Instagram: @arisophoto



THE CAST



LIZ STELLA FORD (SHE/HER)

Liz Stella Ford sees all of life through the eyes of an artist, and navigating a brain injury is no different. After a hit and run accident with a drunk driver, Liz's life and art changed. With the love and support of her husband and two older children, they all rallied to work through the healing together. Liz worked to find ways to further her rehab, and when she couldn't find what she looked for, she created it. You can learn more about Liz at Lizstellaford.com.



ANNA HARRIS (SHE/HER)

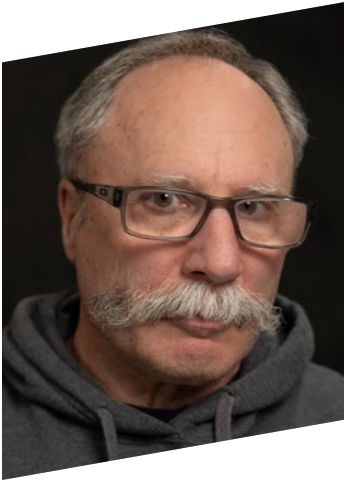
Anna Harris is 36 years old and lives in the beautiful city of Lawrence, Massachusetts. This is her first time participating in a production of *This Is My Brave*. She loves Carly Simon, helping others who need help, and animals. Anna enjoys traveling to Connecticut to visit her parents, and spending time with her fur sister Mary and her fur nephew Ollie who lives in NYC.

THE CAST



BRIAN HARLOW (HE/HIM)

Brian Harlow, a Concord resident, relocated back to his home state of New Hampshire from Cambridge, MA a few years ago to help family members who have struggled with the disease of addiction and has thrown himself into advocacy ever since. Brian has seen the devastation of substance misuse firsthand and what it can do to individuals and their families. In addition to NAMI NH, Brian shares his advocacy skills with other NH organizations and causes. He served on the board of the NH Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence and currently sits on the board of New Futures. Brian sees the intersection between sexual assault/domestic violence and substance misuse and advocates for trauma-informed services for all. His *This Is My Brave* story focuses on his personal struggle with depression and reframing trauma.



DON MCCULLOUGH (HE/HIM)

Don McCullough is a singer-songwriter who lives with severe ADD. As a young man he experienced periods of housing insecurity, military court martial, incarceration, job instability, and divorce. He spent periods of time drifting on the road. After a 32-year career as a firefighter, retiring at the rank of captain, the terrors of PTSD bottled up inside after a career experiencing one traumatic event after another overwhelmed him and drove him to self-medicating and addiction. Again, he found himself homeless, jobless, and hopeless. Five years ago, he found recovery and finally, peace. As a master's level therapist at Community Partners of Strafford County, he pays it forward by working with individuals experiencing mental illness, addiction, and housing insecurity. He remembers what it's like to be in their place.

THE CAST



KRISTEN MOODY (SHE/HER)

Kristen resides in New Hampshire with her husband, dog, and hamster. A social worker by training, Kristen now focuses her time on writing, creating art, self-care, and creating a life worth living. She hopes by sharing her poetry chronicling her struggles with mental health she may let others know that they are not alone and provide some insight and hope. Kristen's debut poetry book, *A Work in Progress*, is available on Amazon.



QUBA PACIOREK (THEY/THEM)

Quba Paciorek is a neurodivergent artist who grew up in Franklin, New Hampshire. After a rough decade-long journey through social anxiety, major depression, disordered eating, homelessness, and a few psych ward stays, they have found an outlet to tell their story through music and movement. Making somehow both ambient and unsettling music and media, they hope their art will break through to someone who has gone through similar events and similarly had to be resilient to survive.



DEBORAH A. PENDERGAST, BA, EFO, AEMT (SHE/HER)

Deb has recently semi-retired after 30 years in the fire and emergency medical services. Her most recent position was Fire Chief and Director of NH's Fire and EMS Training Academy, serving as the first female career Fire Chief in NH. Deb spent the last 8 months as interim Fire Chief for the Town of Alton, and now she finds herself back at the Department of Safety/Fire Academy working part time as the Mental Health and Wellness Coordinator, following her passion to assist responders with mental wellness. Additionally, Deb is the past President and an 11-year Board member of the Lakes Region Mental Health Center. As a mental health advocate, Deb admits having experienced post traumatic stress and the resulting physical and psychological adverse changes. Finally, Deb raised 3 amazing daughters and she is passionate about supporting and understanding her youngest daughter's diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder.



HAYLEY SMITH (SHE/HER)

Hayley Smith is a musician who loves to spread the joy of her craft wherever she goes. She is an elementary music teacher in southern NH and leads a children's choir at Concord's Figaro Music Studios. She is a pianist and vocalist with a bachelor's degree in music composition. Songwriting has been extremely helpful in processing her mental health journey over the past six years. In 2018, she experienced her first severe depression which led to an eventual Bipolar Type 2 diagnosis. She wants to help educate people about Bipolar Disorder and give hope, especially to those who may be grappling with a new diagnosis.

THE CAST



HOLLY STEVENS, ESQ. (SHE/HER)

Holly Stevens has lived with depression and post-traumatic stress disorder since childhood. She works to normalize mental illness in both her personal and professional life. As the Director of Public Policy for NAMI New Hampshire, Holly advocates for all people affected by mental illness and suicide. Holly shares her 21-acre homestead with her husband, dog, parrot, two cats, four chickens and five turkeys. In addition to writing, she enjoys live music, reading suspense novels, and playing tabletop games with friends.



SARA VALLI (SHE/HER)

Sara is actively working on releasing grief as she has lost two siblings to opioid overdoses. As a speech language pathologist and assistive technology specialist, Sara helps students impacted by the reverberations of familial cycles to overcome their challenges and engage in effective learning experiences. In addition to her role in education, Sara is a Reiki Master, utilizing her skills to collaborate with those in recovery, aiding them in developing effective strategies for self-healing. Her summers are spent immersed in the vibrant atmosphere of music festivals, where she works with a specific focus on fostering open discussions about the transformative power of music. Sara champions the idea that letting the music be the healing force can be a profound and therapeutic experience.

BRAVE SINGER



OLIVIA ZOTTOS (SHE/HER)

Olivia is a Junior Social Work major at Plymouth State University. She is beyond thankful for the opportunity to perform in this wonderful program, as she feels it is highly important to continue to raise awareness about mental health and end the stigma. Olivia has enjoyed performing throughout her life with numerous theaters on the Seacoast of NH including The Seacoast Repertory Theatre, Prescott Park Arts Festival, The Rochester Opera House, and more. Enjoy the show!



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PRODUCTION TEAM



MELISSA WIETERS SHOW PRODUCER & CO-DIRECTOR

Melissa Wieters has been serving communities across the country as a nonprofit strategist and social justice advocate for over 20 years. She believes storytelling in all its forms has a unique power to build understanding, strengthen community and heal the wounds of injustice. Her lifelong passion has been to create safe spaces for people to stand in their power, boldly share their experiences and tell their truths. She has facilitated the production and publication of hundreds of stories depicting the real struggles of everyday people, and is honored to be part of the This Is My Brave NH family. As a suicide survivor in recovery from depression, complex PTSD and disordered eating, Melissa feels a strong connection with this production and is deeply proud of the raw vulnerability and authenticity of tonight's storytellers. Melissa currently works with NAMI New Hampshire to support people affected by mental illness and suicide, and resides in the Kearsarge Region of New Hampshire with her partner of 25 years, teenage son and three fur babies. Her self-care activities include therapy, mindfulness practices, music, dance, reading, writing and art. She hopes tonight's show provides those who are suffering with validation, hope and the courage to seek help.



NATHAN FINK CO-DIRECTOR

Nathan Fink is a Senior Director at the New Hampshire Children's Trust. He brings nearly 20 years' experience in education, fundraising, marketing, and narration. Nathan received a B.A. in English Literature from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh and a Master of Fine Arts in writing from the University of New Hampshire. His work in academia, community mental health, and advocacy focuses on elevating the stories of everyday people striving to build community. Nathan can be found forever (re) hammering the floor nail of his old house in Durham, NH, where he lives with his wife and two feral sons.

Sharing brave stories to improve mental health across New Hampshire



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New Hampshire

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SOCCER FIELDS ON S FRUIT ST
CONCORD, NH

GRANITE STATE'S LARGEST
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IF YOU ARE IN NEED OF IMMEDIATE HELP PLEASE CALL 911



The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States.

CALL OR TEXT THE LIFELINE ANYTIME, 24/7.

Línea de Prevención del Suicidio y Crisis: 1-888-628-9454

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THE CRISIS TEXT LINE CAN BE ACCESSED
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STORY TO 741-741

Envía un mensaje de texto con la palabra AYUDA al 741741 para comunicarte de manera gratuita con un Consejero de Crisis.



TAKE A MENTAL HEALTH SCREENING...

IT'S EASY AND FREE!

Taking a mental health screening is one of the quickest and easiest ways to determine whether you are experiencing symptoms of a mental health condition.

Mental health conditions, such as depression or anxiety, are real, common, and treatable. And recovery is possible.

We are thrilled to partner with Mental Health America, which offers 10 mental health screens. You can share your results with your physician or health care provider.

Take a free and confidential screening today by visiting:

[HTTP://BIT.LY/BRAVESCREEN](http://bit.ly/bravescreen)

THIS IS MY BRAVE LEADERSHIP



MARLON DELEON (HE/THEY)

Program Coordinator

Marlon is a lot of things, and among them he is a husband, father, disabled Navy submarine veteran, retired grade school violinist, budding guitarist, aspiring writer, recovering alcoholic, and strives to love all neighbors. In 2016 he took the stage in Valparaiso, Indiana for his first This Is My Brave Show.

After that, his life was peaches and unicorns forever. Actually, in some ways, it was just the beginning. In 2017 he married his best friend, Andrea, and later that year they welcomed their first child. 2018 brought them their second child, and 2019 brought Marlon the diagnosis of Bipolar Type II. In 2021 Marlon shared more of his story in the virtual APIDA Community show, and he ecstatically joined the Brave staff in 2022. Marlon truly believes that #StorytellingSavesLives and he will never underestimate the importance of sharing the message that it's ok to ask for help.



ERIN GALLAGHER (SHE/HER)

Executive Director

Erin is proud to be a part of the This Is My Brave team as Executive Director. Following the suicide of her son, Jay, in 2016, Erin and her husband became passionate mental health advocates and have worked tirelessly to influence policy on appropriate responses, particularly in the public schools, to suicide warning signs. She enjoys working with This Is My Brave volunteers towards ending the stigma associated with mental health and substance use disorders in honor of Jay. When Erin is not working, she enjoys spending time at her alma mater, James Madison University, visiting her oldest daughter, Lindsay. She also loves logging hours with husband Tim while watching fastpitch softball played by her youngest, Laurene, who is a student at Mt. St. Mary's University in Maryland.



AALIYAH OGLETREE (SHE/HER)

Director of Development

Aaliyah recently joined This Is My Brave in 2023. She has worked in both the nonprofit and business sectors for over a decade. Aaliyah is a passionate advocate for mental health and human rights. Her own diagnosis of PTSD and anxiety and the stigmatization she faced inspired her interest in mental health advocacy. Aaliyah graduated from the University of New Orleans with a B.A. in Drama & Communications with a Minor in History. She is working on completing her Arts Administration thesis at Drexel University. Aaliyah is a native of New Orleans and has a great love for its culture, especially eating its cuisine like King Cake, crawfish, and gumbo. When she is and isn't working, Aaliyah enjoys spending time with her two favorite people in the world, her daughters Taylor and Jordan.

THIS IS MY BRAVE OUR FOUNDERS



ANNE MARIE AMES

Co-Founder

Anne Marie held a variety of PR and strategic communications positions throughout her career, but her favorite job was creating and producing This Is My Brave. She found her passion and her mission – to help others share their stories – and made tremendous contributions to the organization from launching the initial concept to strategizing on growth and expansion over the four years of her tenure. Anne Marie’s sudden passing on August 23, 2017, was a shock to the many who loved her, and she is deeply missed.



JENNIFER MARSHALL

Co-Founder

Jenn (she/her) was diagnosed with Type 1 Bipolar Disorder in 2006 at the age of 26. She’s had four hospitalizations within five years – two in 2005 before any diagnosis was reached, and two more because she was trying to protect her newborn son (postpartum psychosis) in 2008 and her unborn daughter in 2010 – and all were because she was unmedicated at the time. Writing her way through life with a mental illness became her way of healing, and her award-winning blog BipolarMomLife became an inspiration to many. Jenn created This Is My Brave because she learned first hand how powerful and therapeutic it was to live openly and not hide her diagnosis. She wanted to give brave individuals from the community a platform through which to creatively share their stories of living with mental illness to educate and inspire others. After leading This Is My Brave, Inc. for seven years, Jenn stepped down from her role as Executive Director in 2022. She lives outside Washington, DC with her husband and two children.

Board of Directors

Jessica Kennedy, Chairperson
Adam Bromberg
Dr. Kyaïen Conner
Jennifer Marshall

Advisory Board

Doreen Gentzler
Dr. Mark Komrad
Dr. Robert Post
Dr. Hayley Sherwood

THIS IS MY BRAVE RESEARCH



DR. KRISTIN KOSYLUK

Lead Researcher

is an Assistant Professor of Mental Health Law & Policy at the University of South Florida in the College of Behavioral and Community Sciences. She is the Producer of This Is My Brave - College Edition at USF and has served as the lead evaluator of This Is My Brave's programming for the past seven years. Eliminating the stigma around mental illness to promote treatment seeking and recovery and prevent suicide is Kristin's passion, fueled by her clinical experiences as well as her own experiences with anxiety and depression and those of friends and loved ones. When Kristin is not conducting stigma research or teaching the amazing students at USF about recovery and evidence-based practices, her greatest joy is spending time with her husband, David, and seven-year-old daughter, Emma. Kristin is a lover of crafting, especially crochet and dollhouse miniatures.

THIS IS MY BRAVE

The vision of This Is My Brave is to one day live in a world where we don't have to call it "brave" to talk openly about mental illness. We'll simply call it talking.

#StorytellingSavesLives

This Is My Brave - The Show is a live presentation of touching essays, original music, poetry and comedy performed by a dozen individuals or storytellers living with - or loving someone with - a mental illness.

After performing and telling their stories with TIMB, storytellers experienced a significant increase in:

- Empowerment**
- Self-Esteem**
- Self-Efficacy**
- Optimism**

This research was conducted by Dr. Kristin Kosyluk, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Mental Health Law & Policy at the University of South Florida, Dr. Jennifer Tran, Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Pennsylvania, and Michelle Wilks, BS, Doctoral Candidate of the Behavioral and Community Sciences PhD Program at the University of South Florida

THIS IS MY BRAVE'S IMPACT

SINCE 2014, THIS IS MY BRAVE HAS...



produced
110 shows



with over
1000 storytellers



18,500+ audience
members



in **53** cities in
U.S. & Australia



& **300k** YouTube
video views

2023

College Edition at Dean College
College Edition at University of South Florida
DEAFinitely, Inc.
Eagle Valley, CO
Floris UMC
Flourishing Families with Boston University
Penn State Abington
Stories from the Veteran Community - vol 2*
Inaugural Teen Mental Health Month campaign, August

2022

Broward County, FL
College Edition at University of South Florida
DeKalb, IL
Eagle Valley, CO
Los Angeles, CA
New Hampshire
Philadelphia, PA
Stories from the College Athlete Community*
Stories from the Veteran Community*

2021

College Edition (Spring)*
• Boston University
• Boston College
• Brandeis University
• Lesley University
• Northeastern University
College Edition at Boston University (Fall)
National Teen Show*
National Teen Show at Floris UMC

New Hampshire*

Stories from the APIDA Community*
Stories from the Black Community - vol 1*
Stories from the Black Community - vol 2*
BraveTV*
Brave Beyond the Stage*
#BraveDays*

2020

College Edition at Boston University
Hampton Roads, VA*
Houston, TX*
Napa Valley & St Helena, CA
New Hampshire*
St Louis, MO*
Washington, DC-area Teen Show*
BraveTV Pilot Season*

2019

Baltimore, MD
Boise, ID
Carroll County, MD
Columbus, OH
College Edition Pilot
• Brandeis University
• Harvard University
• Lesley University
• Northeastern University
• Tufts University
Concord, NH
DeKalb, IL
High School Edition Pilot - Hershey, PA
Houston, TX
Northwest AR
Orlando, FL

2018

Arlington, VA - Spring
Arlington, VA - Fall
Baltimore, MD
Bentonville, AR
Bethesda, MD
Boise, ID
Boston, MA - Spring
Boston, MA - Fall
Charlotte, NC - Spring
Charlotte, NC - Fall
Elkins Park, PA
Ft. Lauderdale, FL
Iowa City, IA
Lansing, MI
Los Angeles, CA
Mullumbimby, Australia
New York City, NY
Orlando, FL
Philadelphia, PA
Sterling, VA

2017

Bentonville, AR
Boise, ID
Boston, MA
Canberra, Australia
Cedar Rapids, IA
D.C. Women's Summit, Washington, DC
Des Moines, IA

Germantown, MD

Jacksonville, FL
Kansas City, MO
Lewiston, ME
Los Angeles, CA - Spring
Los Angeles, CA - Fall
Napa, CA
Perth, Australia
Sedona, AZ
Valparaiso, IN
Washington, DC
Wheeling, WV

2016

Arlington, VA
Baltimore, MD
Denver, CO - Spring
Denver, CO - Fall
Greenville, SC
Iowa City, IA
Oklahoma City, OK
Valparaiso, IN
Washington, DC

2015

Arlington, VA
Boston, MA
Harrisburg, PA
Iowa City, IA
Los Angeles, CA
New York City, NY

2014

Arlington, VA

*Indicates virtual programming

Statistics are current as of January 2024

THIS IS MY BRAVE HISTORY

FROM A BLOG TO A SHOW

In August of 2011, more than six years after Jennifer Marshall's bipolar disorder first surfaced, she decided to start a blog. It became a place where she turned to write about her life as a wife and young mom to two small kids, and writing helped her begin to heal. She titled it: Bipolar Mom Life. Jennifer wrote anonymously at first, because she was afraid of being judged. She also worried that disclosing her mental illness may make future employment opportunities difficult. For eighteen months, Jennifer wrote and found community online. Other writers who were openly sharing their stories of overcoming mental illness inspired her, and when she landed her first paid writing job, Jennifer decided to stop hiding behind a pen name.

When WhatToExpect.com published her first article with Jennifer's byline, it was also picked up by AOL.com (the parent company). The outpouring of support and gratitude when that piece hit the Internet with her real name was overwhelming. She knew immediately that disclosing was the right decision. She could finally talk about all parts of her life, and not just the shiny, fun moments.

About six months later, Jennifer had the idea to launch a theater show. A simple storytelling show where individuals from the community could tell their stories through creative expression to break down the stigma associated with mental illness. She wanted to give individuals from the community the same opportunity she had – a stage on which to share their story of living a successful life despite mental illness. Jennifer met her Co-Founder, Anne Marie Ames, at a mutual friend's party and recruited her to help put the project out to the world.

Jennifer and Anne Marie launched This Is My Brave on Kickstarter in October of 2013 and the excitement surrounding the project grew and grew. They offered tickets to the first show and handmade "BRAVE" bracelets, among other items, as rewards for financial pledges of support. Within 31 days, the campaign had surpassed their goal of \$6,500 to fund the first show, ending up with over \$10,000 in contributions. It was clear that the community wanted to help bring this show to life – they believed in the vision and Jennifer and Anne Marie were dedicated to delivering an exceptional production.

After the success of the debut show in 2014, Jennifer and Anne Marie began receiving interest from individuals in other cities to bring the show to their community. This Is My Brave, Inc was formed as a 501(c)(3) and the organization began to expand to new cities through the support of volunteers willing to donate their time and expertise to coordinate shows.



Photo credit: Jim Folliard



"I finally feel comfortable with my mental health story in a way I never have before. Like the power it used to hold over me is gone."

ERIN TROIA, 2018 ARLINGTON STORYTELLER



FROM ONE SHOW TO NATIONWIDE + AUSTRALIA

Since 2014, This Is My Brave has produced more than 65 unique shows in cities across the United States featuring over 800 storytellers sharing true, personal stories on overcoming depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, PTSD, psychosis, OCD, postpartum depression, borderline personality disorder, dissociative identity disorder, trichotillomania, anorexia, bulimia, sexual assault, alcoholism, substance use disorder and more.

In 2017, This Is My Brave expanded internationally with the help of mental health advocate Tim Daly, who leads our NPO in Canberra, Australia – This Is My Brave Australia, or TIMBA for short.

Jennifer and Anne Marie may have created the space for these brave stories to exist, but This Is My Brave wouldn't be the incredible community it is if it weren't for all the amazing people who have bravely come forward to share their stories. "It's my opinion that we won't be able to end the stigma surrounding mental illness and addiction until we put our names and faces on our stories," says Jennifer.

**THIS IS MY BRAVE
IS DOING THIS
ONE PERSON
& ONE STORY
AT A TIME**

SUPPORT

THIS IS MY BRAVE **TODAY!**

Were you inspired, moved, or transformed by
WHAT YOU HEARD ON STAGE TODAY?

Are you ready to join the
movement and help end
the stigma surrounding
MENTAL ILLNESS?

**GIVE SOMEONE
A VOICE TODAY**

Your tax-deductible gift helps build a trusted platform for individuals
to share their stories of recovery from mental illness and addiction.

YOUR GIFT ALLOWS SOMEONE TO BE BRAVE.

Scan this QR code now
to make a one-time donation
right from your phone



<https://bit.ly/donatebrave>

Join as a

**BRAVE
CHAMPION** 

and become a sustaining member
for as little as **\$10 per month.**

<https://bit.ly/BraveChampion>

THANK YOU!

YOUR GIFT PROVIDES PEOPLE LIVING WITH MENTAL
ILLNESS THE OPPORTUNITY TO COME FORWARD
AND SHARE THEIR STORIES, BOLDLY AND BRAVELY.