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**CONTACT:** Amanda Nieto

**PHONE:** 909-447-2407

## **Baldwin Park Unified Provides Mental Health Training for Student Leaders**

**BALDWIN PARK** – Baldwin Park Unified School District, in partnership with the California Department of Education and Kaiser Permanente Baldwin Park Medical Center, will host a National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) High School Training day for student leaders and club advisers.

NAMI Club members will learn the ins-and-outs of running a successful organization during the all-day training event on Saturday, Sept. 21 at Kaiser's Baldwin Park Medical Center.

"I hope to gain a better perspective of different situations and become a safe person people can talk to," said Marisa Martinez, Baldwin Park High School senior and NAMI Club president. "It is important to learn the signs and be able to help at this age because this is when a lot of signs and symptoms go unnoticed because they are classified as 'teenage attitudes' or being moody."

Martinez, alongside other student leaders and club advisers will learn how to expand NAMI awareness on school campuses. The training will provide toolkits and templates to discuss mental health topics, as well as materials and resources to bolster club outreach.

NAMI Clubs are student-led clubs that promote mental health awareness and reduce the stigma of mental illness through engaging activities and educational events, including resource and activity fairs.

"I want to expand NAMI awareness at my own campus by creating a discussion around mental health," Sierra Vista High School senior and NAMI Club member Jade Zuniga said. "By creating a discussion, I hope that my peers are able to learn how to navigate through high school without mental health issues preventing them from being their best selves."

Baldwin Park High School world language teacher and NAMI Club adviser Nicole Melamed will attend the training with 14 of her students; Sierra Vista High School social science teacher and NAMI adviser Melanie Graf will be accompanied by 16 students.

North Park Continuation High School psychologist and NAMI adviser Janni Martinez will attend with five students. Holland and Olive middle schools also will be represented.

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At the training, advisers will receive advice on how to navigate their roles as mentors and trusted adults to provide students with additional mental health resources.

Schools from other local districts also were invited to the training day.

NAMI on Campus High School Club training was created to improve school environments by increasing mental health awareness and highlighting the importance of health and wellness.

“This opportunity is deeply important to me because if my school and teachers hadn’t told me about this program, then I would not have sought it out on my own,” Sierra Vista High School senior and NAMI Club member Cynthia Gomez said. “Now I will be able to learn more, expand my horizons, and help others because of this program.”

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