



Diversity, Equity & INCLUSION



By **Dr. Nancy Koury King**
President, Senior Options

This article is the third in a series on Diversity & Inclusion.

In this article, I talk with Ann Conn, President & CEO, The McGregor Foundation and Tangi McCoy, CEO, McGregor PACE.

McGregor: Black Lives Matter

Located in East Cleveland, Ohio, McGregor is a multi-level community that offers independent living, affordable housing, assisted living, and two nursing care and rehab locations. The organization also operates Ohio's only Program for All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) program serving Northeast Ohio in three areas. The PACE quadrupled the number of seniors McGregor serves. The McGregor Foundation makes grants to non-profit organizations serving the vulnerable elderly.

In 1990, a group of board members, led by **Rob Hilton**, who later became CEO, decided they needed to do more with the organization's resources. The mission statement was sharpened to focus on supporting seniors in need and those who serve them. What began as a home for "aged gentlewomen accustomed to surroundings of refinement and culture" is now one of Cleveland's largest providers of services to low income, minority seniors.

To continue its journey with diversity, McGregor has been very deliberate in developing its new members. The board now looks at all characteristics – location, expertise, age, race, and gender to build diverse individuals. The complexity of the organization meant that the board needed to expand its knowledge. **Ann Conn**, President & CEO, The McGregor Foundation, said, "We were initially organized to meet the needs of the community in 1877. However, today we must adapt to meet the needs of 2020 and beyond."

While the board worked on improving its representation and diversity, Ann states, "The staff is already representative of McGregor's community. In fact, McGregor's front-line workforce is about 85% minority; and its management is about 75% minority. This alignment is unusual in our field of aging services."





Ann Conn
President and CEO
McGregor Foundation

Tangi McCoy, CEO of McGregor PACE, proposed to the leadership team the idea of acknowledging Black Lives Matter and doing it on Juneteenth.

After hearing about it, McGregor wanted to make it an organization-wide event. “If something is wrong, you need to stand up and say that it is wrong. It’s not ok to say you’re not a racist. You have to stand and do something more,” stated Ann.

The organization’s inclusion initiative was strengthened by partnering its PACE program with another PACE program and the National PACE Association (NPA). The alliance resulted in joining together to honor George Floyd and Black Lives Matter on Juneteenth. From there, the idea spread, and the National Pace Association encouraged PACE organizations to participate.

McGregor participated in the event at all of their campuses and PACE locations. At McGregor PACE, Tangi reported that all the PACE employees participated, including the physicians, nurse practitioners, support and professional staff. They all decided to wear black and went outside and filled the parking lot (socially spaced, of course). As they knelt in the parking lot the traffic passing honked their horns in support.

McGregor employees could participate wherever they were – privately or with a group. Many employees exited the front of the building and knelt for nine minutes, using the opportunity to reflect on that event’s meaning. “After we knelt, we had an opportunity to talk. Many of us were moved to tears, especially in realizing how long nine minutes is.” shared Ann.

The NPA further responded by writing and disseminating a powerful Black Lives Matter statement. Ann describes McGregor’s response, “While we as an organization fully endorsed the PACE statement against racism, we received feedback from the board that we needed to go further. We all wanted to make sure it didn’t stop there. So, we crafted our statement, pulling together board and staff members to contribute. We want to be clear where we stand, and what our next steps will be as an inclusive organization.” See right to see McGregor’s statement. >

What is Systemic Racism?

Also known as **institutional racism**, systemic racism is a form of racism that is embedded as a normal practice within society or an organization. It can lead to such issues as discrimination in criminal justice, employment, housing, health care, political power, and education, among other issues.



Supporting Seniors In Need And Those Who Serve Them

To our McGregor Community:

The events of the past month have shown us that racism continues to be at the root of so much pain and ugliness in our society. We are outraged, heartbroken and saddened that so many in our community continue to experience the harsh reality of racism. While silence is a choice, it is not an acceptable one.

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Tangi McCoy
CEO
McGregor PACE

McGregor shared the statement internally to staff, residents, clients, family, board members, their website and social media platforms. Our team responded very positively to the event and our statement. Many expressed their appreciation to McGregor for showing its support. “We talk a lot about the workforce and culture because we want to have all individuals feel welcome. You have to start by taking a stand. Your lack of taking a stand supports the status quo,” said Ann.

While the overall response was supportive, Ann acknowledges that some residents were not on board. She received a couple of complaints from residents asking her to take down the Black Lives Matter sign that was posted in the campus’ front yard. One resident said, “I don’t feel comfortable with that Black Lives Matter sign out there. Don’t you know that all lives matter?” Ann responded, “I’m not saying that all lives don’t matter. What I am saying is, as an organization, we need to take a stand, and that is why the sign is there.” Ann advises that not everyone will be on board. “Everyone won’t accept it. Expect obstacles and resistance.”

So, what is the next step for McGregor? Ann says McGregor has reached out to the Northeast Ohio Diversity Center, a local non-profit, tapping into their expertise to help McGregor evaluate all of the commitments they made in their inclusion statement. “We want to see where we need to change, where we are doing a good job, and where we can improve. I do think that we can do better with LGBTQ rights. We may be stronger in racial inclusion than in LGBTQ inclusion, so we have some work to do there.”

I asked Tangi what her advice would be for other leaders who who have interest in starting a conversation about race and inclusion in their organizations. Tangi notes, “Some leaders may not think it is an important issue or do not want to get involved but advises, if they listen and learn, if they are living, they can’t deny that there’s a problem. My advice would be to reach out to a colleague who has experienced starting conversations within their organization about race and inclusion and ask for their support. Get a team; don’t try to do it on your own.”

Tangi acknowledges, “It’s challenging to do this, it is. It was difficult for me. My employees were coming to me and asking if we were going to do something. They wanted us to make a stand. Employees look at their leaders and wonder why they aren’t doing or saying something. They were my inspiration to take that step and not sit quietly.”

Ann Conn serves as President and Chief Executive Officer for the McGregor Foundation with more than 20 years of experience working in the Senior Care Industry. She provides leadership to McGregor, whose mission is to serve vulnerable seniors through direct service provision and philanthropic support. McGregor provides rehabilitation, nursing, housing, and hospice services in conventional settings and works to keep seniors independent in the community through its PACE program. Ann received her BS in Business Administration from Youngstown State University and her executive MBA from Case Western University in Cleveland, Ohio. Ann currently serves on the board of directors for the Leading Age Ohio Foundation and Evergreen Cooperative. Ann can be reached at Ann.Conn@mcgregoramasa.org

Tangi McCoy is the Chief Executive Officer for McGregor PACE where she’s responsible for the overall operations. Tangi has worked in long term care for 21 years; eleven years as a Nursing Home Administrator before transitioning to community healthcare. Before long term care, she worked in the health insurance/Medicaid managed care industry for more than ten years. Tangi has an MBA in Health Care Administration from Cleveland State University’s School of Urban Studies, a BS from Kent State University, and is a Licensed Nursing Home Administrator. Tangi has served on various boards, to include the Cuyahoga County Department of Senior and Adult Services. She is an Alumni of the National LeadingAge Leadership Academy and a previous member of Kiwanis International. Tangi can be reached at Tangi.McCoy@mcgregorctr.org



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