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"THE DANCE FLOOR AWAITS!"

Learning more about our values

Montgomery County is diverse. As the third largest county in Pennsylvania, Montgomery County is home to more than 820,000 residents, and each of those 820,000 residents is unique and different. Our county is home to an array of races, ethnicities, gender identities, sexual orientations, socio-economic statuses, ages, abilities, beliefs, and the many other qualities and experiences that make up the powerful tapestry of being human.

Oftentimes when we hear conversations about diversity, we also hear the word “inclusion.” Although these two words can share a connection, their meanings are significantly different.

Diversity is recognizing differences. Inclusion is not only accepting and valuing those differences, but intentionally inviting those differences in to become part of - wholly and authentically.

Diversity is a fact; Inclusion is an act.

I love a good quote and I use them often to better express my own thoughts. One of my favorites is by inclusion strategist Verna Meyers:

“Diversity is being invited to the party; inclusion is being asked to dance.”

As an HHS guiding principle, we want to make sure we actively live out being inclusive. I absolutely believe that “none of us is as smart as all of us,” and that only by engaging the collective wisdom of our richly diverse County can we provide the highest quality, most effective, and most responsive services to the individuals and families of Montgomery County. As the County’s Department of Health and Human Services, we firmly believe that whatever services we provide or invest in must be in respect of and relevant to our entire community; and our strategic plan will serve as our roadmap to help ensure that.

We need to hear from you: What should we be doing? How should we do it? In what ways can we work together to best meet the needs of our residents?

And if you accept the invitation, our commitment to you is best summed up in my newest favorite quote:

“Diversity is having a seat at the table, inclusion is having a voice, and belonging is having that voice be heard.”

- Liz Fosslien, inclusion designer

We promise to hear you because you are a part of this community and you belong in this process.

So in the next few days, weeks and months, whether through focus groups, online surveys, or town halls, please accept our invitation... And we’ll meet you on the dance floor!

For more information on our strategic planning process, click here.
ACCENTED TEXT:

FOCUS GROUPS, SURVEYS, TOWN HALLS... OH MY!

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is currently working with our contractor Public Consulting Group (PCG) to develop HHS’s strategic plan. During the initial stages, PCG will be collecting data and information to help frame the project and to ensure that future planning sessions are grounded in a balanced, informed view of the state of HHS, the community it serves, and the environment in which it is operating. HHS, along with PCG, will be applying inclusive efforts to gather the collective feedback of our richly diverse County.

In order to gather your collective feedback, PCG will be facilitating the following:

1. A series of focus groups inviting external and internal stakeholders to share qualitative feedback focused on the strengths and weakness of HHS, opportunities and threats from the environment, and the most critical health and human service needs of Montgomery residents.

2. A web-based survey inviting all external and internal stakeholders to provide qualitative feedback similar to what was gathered at the focus group sessions.

In later stages of the strategic planning process, HHS along with PCG will provide additional opportunities for inclusion by again inviting external and internal stakeholders to participate in town hall-style sessions. These sessions will allow individuals in the community, providers, and staff to have discussions that will stimulate collaborative thinking and further deepen a mutual understanding between individuals and groups affected by the new strategic plan. Dates for these town halls are not determined at this time but will be posted on our website and social media platform when scheduled.

mission.
The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services collaboratively provides an accessible network of resources that fosters, supports and enhances the health and well-being of Montgomery County residents.

vision.
Optimal quality of life for Montgomery County residents through coordinated services in vibrant, healthy and safe communities.

guiding principles.
Community

Inclusive
Holistic. Compassionate. Respectful.

Responsive
Effective. Integrated. Accessible.

Excellence
Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services partnered with Advocates Against Hunger, Lower Providence Presbyterian Church and the Montgomery County Foundation, Inc. to bring the Montgomery County Interfaith Coalition Conference on October 10, 2019 to Montgomery County.

The conference was developed in response to hearing that we needed to work together across sectors of the community to meet the needs of our residents. We shifted our focus to one of Spiritual Inclusion with its emphasis on what we all have in common and on those in need. Spiritual Inclusion offers a framework and methodology which is a strategic force for kindness and compassion. It shows how it is possible for us all to work together (because of our differences) and at the same time cherish our traditions and perspectives.

The mission of the Interfaith Coalition is to create a Healthy Ministry: Body, Mind, and Spirit for all residents of Montgomery County by building and strengthening partnerships, reducing fear and stigma, and providing information and awareness to those providing community outreach ministry.

This free event was open to anyone that provided community outreach ministry in Faith Institutions and Organizations in Montgomery County. Commissioner Valerie A. Arkoosh, MD, MPH (Chair) kicked off the conference, followed by a panel discussion, small group discussion facilitated by the Montgomery County HHS Emerging Leaders Program Participants, Telling the Story by Sandy Lawrence, and closing comments by Tara Gaudin, HHS Director.

The conference provided the 65 participants an opportunity to share the needs and issues Faith Institutions/Organizations encounter in their community outreach ministry, to learn about resources and services within Montgomery County and explore the opportunity to form a County-wide networking group.

Given what is happening around us, it is no longer enough to sit passively and talk about difference or diversity. Spiritual Inclusion is a personal invitation to reach out, collaborate in new ways and include everyone.
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