

New Majority

McGregor Foundation initiative responds to needs of our aging population.



It is projected that in 2030, adults 65 and over will outnumber children under age 20, says Susan Althans, director of philanthropy and secretary to the board for the McGregor Foundation.

“According to the Center for Community Solutions, there are more than 300,000 older adults living in Cuyahoga County, representing 24 percent of the total population,” says Althans. “To identify and address the needs of the ever-growing older adult population, a workgroup of leaders from McGregor, Cuyahoga County Department of Senior and Adult Services, the City of Cleveland Department of Aging, Benjamin Rose Institute, Enterprise Community Partners and other key senior living organizations has been formed.”

The initiative, the New Majority, will address service delivery, coordination and integration, as well as public benefit issues, explains Althans.

“McGregor is front and center on this initiative because we are currently

only grant-making foundation in Ohio devoted exclusively to the needs of vulnerable seniors,” says Althans.

The New Majority will be guided by The World Health Organization (WHO) Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities program, and specifically the WHO’s Age-Friendly Cleveland Assessment and Plan, created in 2015. WHO considers the quality of life for older adults to include access to health and medical care, affordable and safe housing, outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, social participation, opportunities to work and volunteer.

“Cleveland was fortunate to be selected as an Age-Friendly community. The goal of the New Majority is to roll out a broader county plan,” says Althans. “We are just beginning our work in this area.”

“Aging in Northeast Ohio began as a conversation with my colleagues,” says Lee Ann O’Brien, director of External Relations at McGregor, “and grew into a program series McGregor supported with the City Club of Cleveland in 2016, focus-

ing on key issues facing our community in relation to senior care and the current state of aging in Northeast Ohio.”

Rob Hilton, president and CEO of the McGregor Foundation, says he believes the foundation will always support a nursing home environment because most likely there will always be a need for that kind of senior care.

“But I also think McGregor will become more and more actively involved in independent housing and homecare,” says Hilton. “People just prefer not being in a nursing home. And medical care is improving to the point where much more care can be done in the home than in the past. We are just beginning to see the impact the Boomers have on the aging services industry,” says Hilton, adding that the New Majority’s goal is to get the countrywide network of service providers to seniors to come up with a plan to allocate scarce resources.

(The McGregor Foundation was established in 2001 to broaden its parent company’s support to vulnerable seniors. The foundation awards about \$1 million in grants each year to programming and institutions beyond its five campuses.) ■



Susan Althans,
director of
philanthropy,
secretary to the board,
McGregor Foundation