Looking Beyond Numbers to a Collaborative Environment with DEI&B

When thinking about diversity and its roots, we can trace the strength that was created during the Civil Rights Movement to include more people of various backgrounds. As we consider Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (DEI&B), it’s important to unpack each concept as an individual entity.

Diversity without Equity, Inclusion & Belonging—and the principles and policies that hold companies accountable—doesn’t move the needle forward. Equity gives people the same access and opportunities and can manifest in different ways: a diverse board, inclusive hiring strategies, and even Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant and accessible workspaces. Inclusion is an added layer of action to have a cultural shift needed to move the work with intention. This is more than just data and numbers. When we create a collaborative environment with DEI and add Belonging (DEI&B), it builds trust, gives people a unique sense of value, and makes people feel like their voices are heard. There’s a strategic alignment for employees to stay and businesses make better decisions. DEI&B is a combination of the best practices to enhance performance and retention outcomes.

Happy International Women’s Day!

On March 8th, International Women’s Day recognizes achievements of women around the globe. This year we honor those who laid the foundation for the critical work we do at May Institute.

We thank Mary Whiton Calkins, who in 1905 became the first president of the American Psychological Association after completing her doctorate requirements at Harvard University. She was never awarded a degree, however, because of her gender.

We thank Mamie Phipps Clark, who in 1943 became the first Black woman to earn a Ph.D. from Columbia University and whose research in child psychology became instrumental in Brown v. Board of Education.

We thank Beth Sulzer-Azaroff, who in 1966 earned her Ph.D., and became one of the first to apply behavior analytic methods to classroom settings.

Pride @May — Council Establishes LGBTQIA+ Group

The Council is excited to announce the creation of May’s second Employee Resource Group (ERG), Pride @May. The mission of this ERG is to demonstrate the organization’s commitment to employees, students, and families we serve in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual/ally (LGBTQIA+) community. The ERG will create a safe space to discuss and promote awareness of LGBTQIA+ issues, plan initiatives to improve inclusion, and offer a networking opportunity for employees.

Pride @May is for individuals who identify as (LGBTQIA+), are allies of the community, and/or are passionate about inclusion in the workplace and beyond. It will be beneficial for employees interested in leading the May towards inclusion, personal growth resulting from listening to perspectives similar or different from their own, as well as professional development through networking opportunities.

With the rise of the Millennial generation and the up-and-coming Gen Z cohort, organizations are becoming increasingly prominent in the field of behavior analysis and now make up over 85% of all Board Certified Behavior Analysts.

MENSTRUAL EQUITY, PERIOD!

Following a discussion at a recent DEI Council meeting regarding access to feminine hygiene products (sanitary napkins) at May sites, the organization identified menstrual equity as an issue to address.

Subsequently, May Institute purchased sanitary napkins for distribution to all sites. Items were packaged by individuals in our vocational program and are being distributed across the organization. Each site will now have sanitary napkins in their emergency supplies (i.e., not only in bathrooms labeled for “Women”).

According to womensvoices.org, “the definition (of menstrual equity) is growing and changing, as voices from all over the world continue the conversation about period health, product access, affordability, education, and safety.”


Continued on reverse
A buzz of excitement is building in anticipation of the Annual Spring Fling in May—a time when individuals living in May residences on the North Shore, and the staff who support them, come together to catch up and enjoy a few laughs and each other’s company. The scenery, a park or event hall pre-COVID, now looks quite different with Zoom squares filled with virtual greetings and smiles. The camaraderie, however, remains familiar.

“This is one party we all eagerly look forward to,” says Ayodele Ajoose, a Program Coordinator. “Although it’s not in-person due to the pandemic, we all still expect to have a great, great time.” According to Ayodele, “One of my guys enjoys seeing a particular friend from another residence while on Zoom. So, we will ‘pin’ that house so that is the only house on the screen, and they can stay and chat. There is background noise, but they are still able to ask each other ‘how are you’ and have a short but good conversation. I’m sure he will look forward to doing that again.”

On the day of the party, each residence will turn tunes playing their favorite song. Some songs will represent the cultural and individual identity of the attendees. Many people dance and sing along. Some staff and residents choose to wear traditional clothing, showcasing pride in their heritage. “So, we are still able to learn about each other or about a culture,” continues Ayodele.

Test your knowledge of Irish facts and folklore with a bit of trivia.

1] According to legend, what did St. Patrick use to drive out snakes?
   a. Witches
   b. Rats
   c. Snakes

2] According to legend, what did St. Patrick drive out of Ireland?
   a. Witches
   b. Rats
   c. Snakes

3] Where was St. Patrick born?
   a. Ireland
   b. Britain
   c. Germany

4] How long is the lease for the Guinness brewery, St. James’s Gate in Dublin?
   a. 90 years
   b. 900 years
   c. 9,000 years

5] What are the chances of finding a four leaf clover?
   a. 1 in 100
   b. 1 in 10,000
   c. 1 in 100,000

6] What does ‘Erin go Bragh’ mean?
   a. Ireland Forever
   b. Good Health
   c. Cheers

There’s a quaint home in Western Massachusetts, one of May’s adult residences, where everyone enjoys an infusion and celebration of Puerto Rican culture. Spanish-speaking staff and staff interested in learning the language provide care to Spanish-speaking staff and residents choose to wear traditional clothing, showcasing pride in their heritage.” So, we are still able to learn about each other or about a culture,” continues Ayodele.

reminiscent of a favorite pastime in their homelands. Impromptu dance parties get everyone moving—in a fabulous way!

“The guys love reggaetón,” Janette says, smiling. “Jose will say ‘música,’ prompting staff to turn on the music. He can’t wait to start dancing. Sammy has limited mobility, so he dances by moving back and forth in his chair, his eyes wide open, happy and smiling.

“We show each other a lot of love,” she continues. “When someone comes to the residence, they feel it almost right away. We celebrate a lot together and we have fun. We’re like family—we are family.”