

# TALKING ABOUT RACISM: A Community Conversation



# ZOOM INFORMATION

- To Ask Questions:
  - **Use Q&A Function**
  - Questions may be grouped and we may not get to all questions
- The presentation portion of the seminar will be recorded.



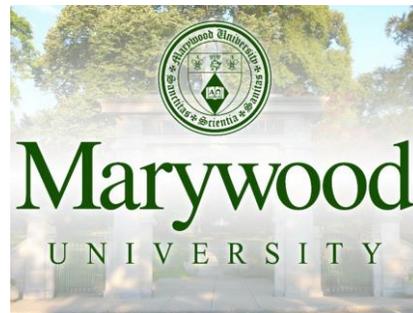
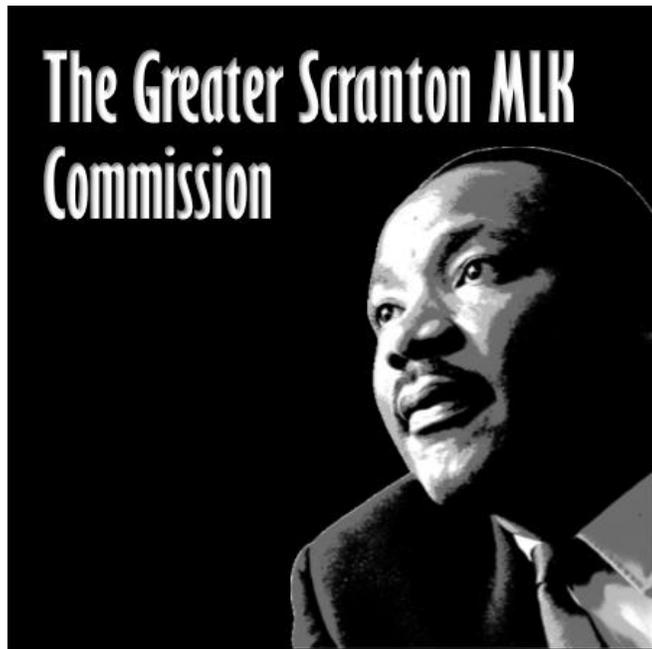
## WHY WE ARE HERE: TO TALK ABOUT RACISM

- Racism is a longstanding problem in our country, including for Black and Brown neighbors here in Northeastern Pennsylvania.
- We are here to seize the moment to ensure our region is a welcoming and inclusive community for diverse communities of color.
- Talking about racism is difficult, but with **curiosity, knowledge, and empathy**, we can **listen, learn, and work for change**.
- This series is a **learning journey**: missteps and growth will happen along the way.

# THE GREATER SCRANTON MLK COMMISSION

- OUR MISSION: to promote Dr. King's principles of non-violence, equity, and love through education and service.
- OUR PURPOSE:
  - To work inclusively with community partners to improve interracial relations everywhere.
  - To encourage economic and social growth within our minority communities.
  - To recognize those individuals who have contributed towards the economic and social growth within our minority communities.
  - To promote principals of non-violence, equality and love.
  - To tell the stories of the struggles and continued progress.
  - To provide education and leadership training for adults and youth.

# COLLABORATION: SPONSORS & SPEAKER ORGANIZATIONS



## HOW TO APPROACH TODAY'S CONVERSATION

- Listen with **openness** – not to agree/argue, but to hear/understand
- Listen with **empathy and humility** – imagine what the issue feels like for people with lived experiences different from yours, especially those in communities of color
- Listen with **justice** in mind – even if you have complicated or conflicting positions, think about the issue in terms of “justice” and “reconciliation”
- Extend **grace and mercy**, and **ask questions that lead to greater understanding**

# TODAY'S SESSION: DEFINING AND IDENTIFYING RACISM

- Session 1: **Defining and Identifying Racism**
  - Moderator: Cathy Ann Hardaway, MLK Commission President
  - Presenters:
    - Arthur Breese, Director of Diversity, Geisinger
    - Teresa Grettano, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of English & Theatre, The University of Scranton



## WHY START WITH DEFINITIONS?

- We start with definitions to gain clarity of concepts, terms, beliefs, behaviors, and consequences.
- We start with definitions to make sure we are “speaking the same language” to avoid disagreement or confusion over terms instead of ideas.
- Definitions matter! **Especially to Merriam-Webster!**
- Most of the information we present tonight came from two sources:
  - Racial Equity Tools
  - ABC News “What do terms like systemic racism, microaggression and white fragility mean?” by Halimah Abdullah, 6/14/2020

# DEFINING RACISM AND WHITE SUPREMACY

- **Racism** involves one group having the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the institutional policies and practices of the society and by shaping the cultural beliefs and values that support those racist policies and practices.
- **Racism** can be exerted on an individual and an institutional or systemic level.
- Individuals may not be racist but systems we live in are. We may not have a hand in creating the racist structures we are living in today, but we have a responsibility to fix them.
- The different forms of racism we discuss tonight feed into each other, support each other, and perpetuate a system in the US that benefits white people and oppresses people of color, especially Black Americans.

## DEFINING RACISM AND WHITE SUPREMACY

- **White Supremacy** is often imagined through the KKK and Nazism. This is how it was discussed in the Presidential Debates on Tuesday night.
- It is broader than that. It's systemic in the way that racism is systemic. It's the idea (ideology) that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of white people are superior to people of color and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions.
  - a political or socio-economic system where white people enjoy structural advantage and rights that other racial and ethnic groups do not, both at a collective and an individual level.
- Examples: models for medical research, religious imagery, representation in the media, beauty norms, workplace behavior

# INDIVIDUAL RACISM, PREJUDICE, AND DISCRIMINATION

- **Individual racism** refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism and can be deliberate or unintentional. It often takes the form of **prejudice** and **discrimination**.
- Examples
  - Telling a racist joke or using a racial epithet
  - Assuming someone's occupation or reason for being somewhere
  - Crossing the street to avoid people of color
  - Locking doors or clutching purses when people of color approach

# SYSTEMIC, STRUCTURAL, AND INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

- **Systemic Racism** is a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity.
- Examples
  - Food deserts in Wilkes Barre
  - School districts in NEPA with discrepancies in full-time teachers or college prep
  - Health disparities in NEPA and nationwide
  - Crime sentencing and consequences

# QUESTIONS?



# THANK YOU FOR JOINING THE CONVERSATION

- Upcoming Sessions:
  - Thursday, **October 8: Understanding White Privilege and Allyship**
    - Moderator: Ida Castro, JD, MLK Commission, GCSOM
    - Presenters:
      - Jessica Nolan, PhD Professor of Psychology, The University of Scranton
      - Leon John, PhD, Director of Alumni Engagement, East Stroudsburg University

# THANK YOU FOR JOINING THE CONVERSATION

- Upcoming Sessions:
  - Thursday, **October 15: Discussing Black Lives Matter**
  - Moderator: Lia Richards Palmiter, PhD, MLK Commission, Marywood University
  - Presenters:
    - Glynis Johns, Founder, Black Scranton Project
    - Yerodin Lucas, PhD, Interim Director Office of Equity & Inclusion and Title IX Coordinator, Marywood University

## JOIN US AGAIN

- Register at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/TalkingAboutRacism](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TalkingAboutRacism)