

*“Being here makes you appreciate life, makes you cherish every moment, every breath.”*

Chara Upshaw is one of McGregor’s beloved employees. Being with McGregor for over 17 years in various roles has made her an asset to our organization. Chara first began her journey volunteering at McGregor when she was a child. As an adult she began working in dietary services, then later became an STNA, and now has a role in Hospice.

Beginning in dietary services allowed Chara to build relationships, she was able to start connecting names to faces before working with those residents, in the future, as an STNA. She treasures the individuals she has met and the stories she has heard. Chara has also grown professionally throughout her time at McGregor, especially with the Earn & Learn program. Earn & Learn is a program that allows individuals to earn their STNA license while receiving full-time wages. With this, Chara has had the opportunity to raise her children while working and becoming an STNA.

Chara looks back on her early years of McGregor. After her first year at McGregor, her mother sadly passed. She experienced a type of embrace like no other. Chara’s coworkers became her ultimate support system while going through the unimaginable. She felt loved and knew, even as a new hire, she was not just a name at McGregor, but a real person. *“That’s what made me want to stay and keep coming back.”*

McGregor has inspired Chara to make a difference. She explained how even seeing a resident smile shows her she is making a difference here. Chara wants to tell future employees to never give up. There are countless opportunities for growth, and there is always a shining light. These words have enabled her to get through everything life has thrown her way.

*“It’s an honor for me to work here and represent McGregor”* Chara concludes.