

Thomas C. Hood Social Action Award Committee Report, 2011

Committee Members:

Tahreer Araj, Jennifer Carrera, Heather Dalmage (Chair), Susan Grossman, Peter Ibarra, Lisa Pasko (Chair-elect), Laurie Schaffner; Eleshia Smith

We received 7 nominations from the Las Vegas area. Given the mid-year change in venue, the committee was comprised of colleagues primarily from Chicago. The switch to LV added one additional layer to the committee's work: We needed to do more outreach. After some discussion we decided that it would also be appropriate to allow committee members to nominate worthy organizations, as long as they recused themselves from voting on "their" organization. In the end, three organizations were nominated by committee members. These members recused themselves in the voting process and the winning organization was nominated by a non-committee member from Las Vegas.

All seven nominated organizations would have been worthy of support. Committee members participated in ranking and discussing the organizations by email. A clear winner did emerge, Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP) Las Vegas.

From the nomination letter:

Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP) Las Vegas focuses on improving the lives of sex industry workers by promoting safety, dignity, and diversity in sex work and fosters an environment that affirms individual choices, occupational rights, and self-esteem. They are dedicated to the fundamental human rights of sex workers and their communities. Their outreach campaign seeks to include those working in the sex industry in the Las Vegas area who are often sidelined and marginalized including youth/older workers, street based workers, workers of color and transgender workers. SWOP Las Vegas works to educate policy-makers and the public on the institutional harms committed against sex workers, and advocates for alternatives. SWOP Las Vegas reaches out to sex workers and allies of sex workers by holding meetings twice a month, holding workshops, working with the media and policy makers, and engaging in a number of outreach projects.

We are inviting representatives from SWOP-LV to present at a special session at this year's conference and attend the Awards Banquet.

Other Nominated Organizations:

- Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth
- Adam's Place: A Grief Center for Children and Families
- Wellness, Redemption, & Rehabilitation Program, Inc.
- Dress for Success Southern Nevada
- The Sin City Sisters
- Straight from the Streets

I appreciate the opportunity to serve the Society for the Study of Social Problems and am grateful for my colleagues on the committee who worked diligently to ensure the integrity of the Thomas C. Hood Social Action Award.

Sincerely,

Heather Dalmage
Chair, 2011 Thomas C. Hood Social Action Award Committee