

July 2, 2015

Report of the Thomas C. Hood Social Action Award Committee

Dear Board of Directors,

The committee received and reviewed 16 nominations:

- Black Youth Project 100
- Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression
- Chicago Freedom School
- Chicago Women's Health Center
- Circles and Cyphers
- Companions Journeying Together
- Enlace Chicago
- Grassroots Collaborative
- Marwen
- Maxwell Street Community Garden
- Mujeres Latinas en Acción
- National Runaway Safeline
- Project NIA: Building Peaceful Communities
- Puerto Rican Cultural Center
- We Charge Genocide
- Young Men's Educational Network (YMEN)

The nominees were ranked then an average rank for each nominee was created based on the sum of ranks and the number of people who voted for a particular organization. Project Nia: Building Peaceful Communities received the highest average rank and was clear the winner.

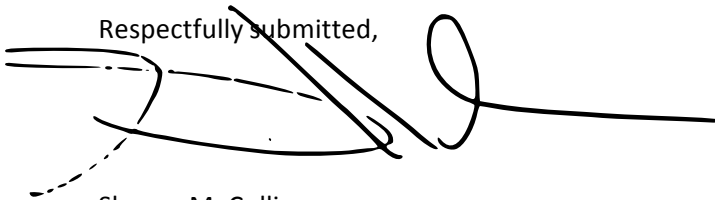
Project Nia is an organization that takes aim at the looming problem of mass incarceration and the criminalization of people of color, most specifically black youth. Because it prioritizes and serves the needs of persistently marginalized people and their communities it is exactly the type of agency for which the Thomas C. Hood Social Action Award is meant.

Project Nia is a “capacity-building” organization that centralizes a broad range of services ranging from community advocacy, community organizing, popular education, and community-based research. Service delivery goals reflect the organization’s central mission to dramatically reduce the reliance on arrest, detention, and incarceration for addressing youth crime. Project Nia’s approach instead is to promote the use of restorative and transformative practices, thus helping to empower youth to positively shape their own lives and to stand up against structural violence and oppression.

Mariame Kaba is the founder and director of Project Nia. She also co-founded several other organizations serving Chicago, including the Chicago Taskforce on Violence against Girls and Young Women, the Rogers Park Young Women's Action Team, and the Chicago Freedom School (which received the second highest score for this Award). Ms. Kaba is clearly a force in the city working tirelessly for social justice. The research, educational workshops, mentorship, advocacy, and activism led by Ms. Kaba places Project Nia among the most prolific and worthwhile service providers in Chicago.

Working with Michele, members of the committee and I, along with a representative of the organization, put together the session to highlight the work of this Social Action Award winner.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sharon M. Collins'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end. It is positioned to the right of the text 'Respectfully submitted,'.

Sharon M. Collins

Chair, 2015 Thomas C. Hood Social Action Award Committee