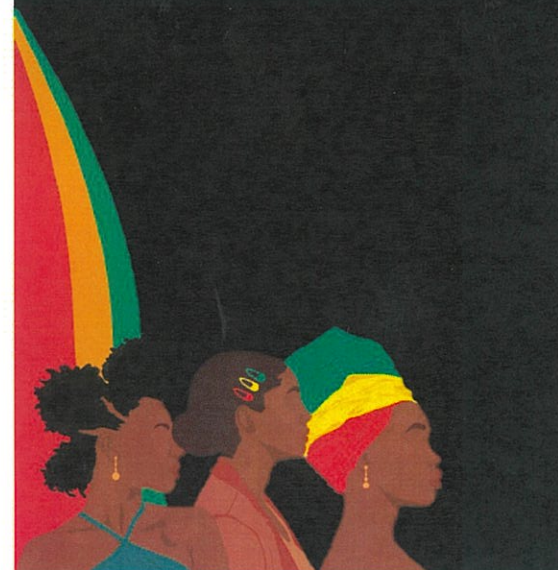


Black History Month 2023

Saluting our Sisters Awards

Thursday 9 November
2023



EQUALITY

DIVERSITY &

INCLUSION

• A VOICE FOR EVERYONE •

Contents Page

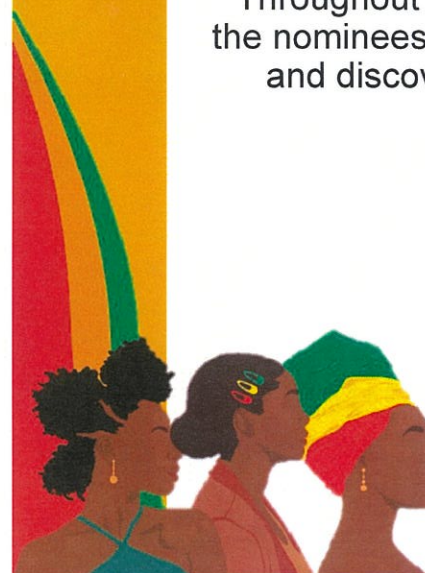
Introduction	3
Events Programme	4
Saluting our Sisters Nominees	
Sandra Boden	5
Sadé Davis	6
Nattesha Fagan	7
Jennifer Harrison	8
Marcia Harrison	9
Hyacinth Jarrett	10
Patricia Johnson	11
Delcie Keiten	12
Sankina Martin	13
Russeama Hurd-Morgan	14
Selina Morgan	15
Joyce Mtawali	16
Millie O'Connor	17
Chinyelu Emeka-Oyolu	18
Eugenie Samuels	19
Yelitza Smith	20
Marcia Spence	21
Paulette Suban	22
Councillor Jackie Taylor	23
Acknowledgements	24

Introduction

The theme of this year's Black History Month 'Saluting our Sisters' emphasises the vital role Black women have played in shaping history, inspiring change and building communities.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Team at Sandwell Council have collaborated with colleagues to nominate 'sisters' who have been selected for special recognition.

Throughout this booklet you will meet the nominees, learn about their journeys and discover why they have been nominated.



BLACK HISTORY
MONTH2023

Event Programme

4:00pm – Guest arrival and refreshments
5:00pm

5:00pm – Opening messages and speeches
5:15pm
Surjit Tour, Director of Law and
Governance and James McLaughlin,
Assistant Chief Executive

Mayor of Sandwell, Councillor Bill
Gavan

Leader of Sandwell Council,
Councillor Kerrie Carmichael

5:15pm – Award presentation
6:30pm

6:30pm – Networking and photo opportunities
7:00pm

7:00pm End of event

Our hosts for the evening will be Surjit Tour and
James McLaughlin



BLACK HISTORY
MONTH 2023

Sandra Boden

Sandra is a wife, mother, grandmother, educator, and psychotherapist. She trained as a Relate Counsellor which led her to work with couples and individuals as a volunteer Counsellor. By the time she left, she had gained a Degree in Counselling and then went on to gain a Masters in Gestalt Psychotherapy. Sandra was also involved with the setting up of The Oak Tree Counselling Service, a voluntary organisation offering low-cost counselling for people with limited income. The Oak Tree Counselling Service has been in existence for over twenty years and has touched many lives. Sandra feels privileged to hear people's stories, share their struggles, and witness the courage of the human spirit as people change their lives.



Sadé Davis

Sadé developed a passion for performing arts from a very young age and became a national champion dancer at the age of 12. After realising there was a lack of representation in performing arts, she explored her passion for creating works of art and went from performing to producing. At 19, Sadé started GAP Entertainment to train and represent underrepresented performers and produce theatre, film and television. GAP has worked with thousands of young people and their work has been commissioned on major platforms with original theatre productions and their first feature film released in cinemas. This release was the first Black British film from the Midlands in cinemas in over 10 years.



Nattesha Fagan

Nattesha is a mother of five and a retired paediatric nurse. She worked within the NHS for 11 years gaining knowledge and experience on acute medical wards, as well as working in the community for many years. Currently, Nattesha is the Chair of the Management Committee at Charlemont Community Centre and works actively as a Project Manager for Dynamic Kids providing a range of clubs and wellbeing sessions to parents and children. She has recently organised four extraordinary weeks for young people over the summer via the Holiday, Activities & Food Programme.



Jennifer Harrison

Jennifer grew up in Smethwick in a single parent household. She previously worked for Sandwell Council in the Voluntary Sector Support Team and progressed to become a Funding Officer. This role enabled her to help both organisations and people to develop meaningful projects and support local people. Jennifer's career has led her to raise over £16 million pounds in grants for projects worth much more, she is currently Chief Executive for North Smethwick Development Trust. In 2018 she was awarded the British Empire Medal as part of Queen Elizabeth's Birthday Honours in recognition of her services for the Young People and Communities of Birmingham and Sandwell.



Marcia Harrison

Marcia has worked for Sandwell Council for over 34 years, dealing with complex cases in Housing. When dealing with residents with different needs, every day is unique and brings a new challenge. This has included serious cases ranging from situations dealing with suicide, mental health, safeguarding, homelessness, asylum seekers, benefits enquiries and medical assessments. At times, this work has taken Marcia out of her comfort zone, but it has allowed her to build a strong background knowledge of many different situations. She is passionate about making changes that benefit residents and ensuring they feel heard.



Hyacinth Jarrett

Hyacinth started Jarrett's hairdressers in West Bromwich in 1970 which she operated for 40 years before retiring. She trained many people in the art of caring for Black hair including her own daughter. Over the years, Hyacinth's skills were recognised and Sandwell Council helped her to get into schools. She was invited to work with Birmingham College and London University and helped to develop their Level 4 foundation syllabus in hairdressing which was approved by the Department of Education. She developed a Black hair module which was added to the national foundation syllabus. Hyacinth's interest in community work led her to visit the Martin Luther King Centre to get ideas to help formulate the start of the West Bromwich African Caribbean Resource Centre. She has been a member of this centre almost from the start. Eventually, she became a Treasurer, a position she still holds after 30 years.



Patricia Johnson

Patricia has worked for several third sector organisations including Mind in Birmingham and Rethink. She began working at Sandwell African Caribbean Mental Health Foundation (SACMHF) in 2002 where she introduced a programme of change and transformation. During her tenure, she has successfully taken the organisation through the recession, the Covid-19 pandemic and is currently steering SACMHF through to a more sustainable future with the development of a supported housing offer and the asset transfer of a local community centre.



Delcie Keiten

Delcie is a carer for her daughter who has ill mental health. While managing several physical health challenges of her own, she is able to maintain her connection with Sandwell African Caribbean Mental Health Foundation and is still able to provide for her family. In addition to this, Delcie leads on the gardening project and she refuses to accept any expenses for her contribution. Delcie is a member of our Carers group and has volunteered for some years helping at events including our bake sales.



Sankina Martin

Sankina is employed by the Sandwell Homeless and Resettlement project at the GAP Project since 2005 and started off as a support worker and later went on to university to study to become a social worker. Her role as a support worker is to support and promote independent living for young homeless families between the ages of 16-25 years old. Sankina finds that working with young parents can have its ups and downs, however she gets satisfaction from seeing how far they have come.



Russeama Hurd - Morgan

Russeama has worked in Sandwell for over 10 years. She worked at Autism West Midlands in Smethwick, taking on a duty of care and providing a sense of belonging by helping clients gain independence and supporting them with their daily needs.

Currently, she is a learning support practitioner at Meadows School in Oldbury as well as working at the GAP Project, safeguarding mothers and babies.



Selina Morgan

Selina is a local resident of Sandwell and has been qualified as a nurse for nearly 15 years, working in various hospitals throughout her career. Outside of her nursing career Selina also does work within the community, she has worked as a youth worker for Sandwell Council which allowed her to give something back to her community whilst helping and supporting the youths of today.



Joyce Mtawali

Joyce is a wife and the mother of four girls. She has lived in England for 22 years. During her time here, she has been involved in supporting people from different communities in Sandwell through her church work as well as personal work. As an active church member, she has held different positions that involves supporting the community such as Head Deaconess. In this role, Joyce provides food, supports the sick in their homes, looks after the elderly and has volunteered as a church treasurer for 13 years.



Millie O'Connor

Millie joined Sandwell Council in 2015 as Chaplain and provides a listening ear to all employees. Millie's work in the community has stretched over 40 years and in addition to being a chaplain, she has worked for the NHS in various hospitals in Sandwell as a qualified nurse looking after premature babies. Millie has also been a foster carer, fostering more than 100 children over the years. She is also a Missionary and a devout Christian and in 2004 formed Millie's Foundation. This charity was set up to support disadvantaged children in the Philippines, UK, Africa and many other countries around the world. Millie's Foundation also provides support to a local food bank and school.



Chinyelu Emeka-Oyolu

Chinyelu was born in Ndoni, Nigeria and is a mother of five and a grandmother to ten children. She worked as a probation officer for 20 years and retired from this role in 2018.

Chinyelu is currently a Trustee for Kings Community Church and volunteers in different capacities including a befriending role with the

Christians Against Poverty, advocating for and supporting people experiencing debt and poverty. She also runs a chaplaincy service each Monday to address loneliness in the community.



Eugenie Samuels

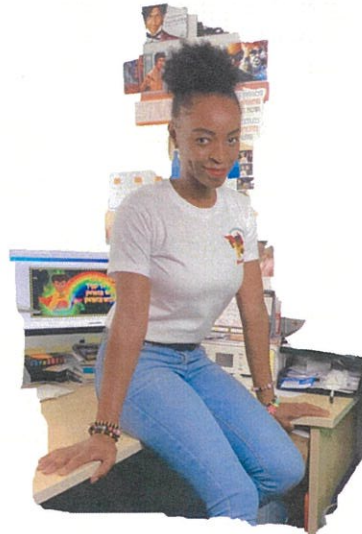
Eugenie has been a longstanding supporter of West Bromwich African Caribbean Resource Centre initially managing the bar facility and later using her culinary skills to support the catering service. She has done this alongside providing support to her disabled daughter and being a key carer for several grandchildren.

She is renowned for her specialist Caribbean catering skills and having a "community house" where locals who are isolated or without immediate family often turn up to be greeted with a flavourful meal, a welcoming arm around the shoulder and a listening ear. Socially, she is a highly respected domino player. In a male-dominated game, she has played in several dominos teams for several years. She has shown that there is no barrier that she will not break.



Yelitza Smith

Yelitza has nurtured young minds from primary school through to post-16 education in both schools and community settings. She was first introduced to the huge void in literature whilst teaching English at secondary school when working with African Caribbean boys. She worked to help elevate their grades and expand their future life opportunities. For those who were once avid readers, their passion waned in secondary school due to the lack of representation in the books they encountered. Yelitza has crafted books that captivate all readers and created the Afroboy comic where the main characters look just like the readers.



Marcia M. Spence

Marcia is the director of Marcia M Publishing House Ltd. The company grew from her bedroom to reaching and serving over 150 authors across the UK, USA, Jamaica and Europe. Additionally, Marcia is a speaker, broadcaster, blogger, a memoirist, published bestselling author and a coach for writers and female leaders. Each year, Marcia sponsors children to write and publish their books and distributes copies to local causes. Also, she has supported and influenced the development of at least three new publishing businesses in her network, through mentoring support and the sharing of information.



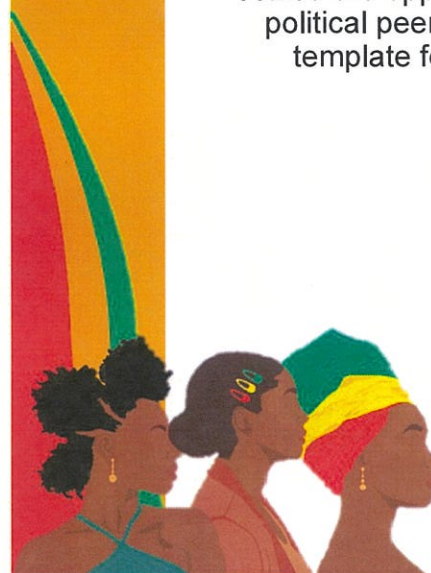
Paulette Suban

Paulette is a business professional with over 20 years within the corporate sector and has worked as a Community Ambassador setting up and developing projects with primarily BAME beneficiaries. She has led on team projects such as Youth Creation Club, Cape Parent/Tots, Cape Befriending/Visiting and Foodbank. She developed The Cape Day Elderly Centre into a thriving home-from-home Community HUB that the local community can access and benefit from. Her endeavours have earned the prestigious 'British Citizens Award', placing her in the top 1% of Jamaican descendants in the United Kingdom today.



Councillor Jackie Taylor

For as long as she can remember, Councillor Taylor has cared about the livelihoods of those around her and felt duty-bound to support those who are less fortunate. She thanks both her parents for that, both of whom travelled from different parishes of Jamaica and met here in the Midlands. Councillor Taylor has always held the values of fairness, social justice, and equality close to her heart and has practiced those values throughout her life. She has been an elected Councillor at Sandwell since 2014 and describes this as one of her greatest achievements. As the first African Caribbean Councillor in Sandwell, Councillor Taylor has seized the opportunity to learn from her local political peers and is proud to have set a template for other Black Councillors.



Acknowledgements

The EDI Team would like to thank the following collaborators for their support in celebrating this year's Black History Month:

Black History Month Task and Finish Group

Stanley Ugwueze

Tracie Mayling

Damien Morgan

Kennedy Brown

Charmain Hines

Frankie Williams

Akita Alexander

Bev Bulloumah

Councillor Jackie Taylor

Councillor Natalie Weston

Councillor Ashley Lewis

Councillor Kacey Akpoteni

Councillor Chipiliro K Nyamongo

Produced by the EDI Team: Hilda Bertie, Stacey Corbett, Shema Islam and Aneta Ziobrowski



**BLACK HISTORY
MONTH 2023**