



2020 ANNUAL REPORT

PREPARED BY

Synthia Smith
Executive Director

a note from our

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Greetings Sisters of Nia family!

This year, Sisters of Nia, Inc. celebrates 12 years of operation and programs! I hope that you, our Sisters of Nia families and friends, alumnae and current, reflect on our shared legacy and feel the same pride and excitement that I feel as we progress through this new year. This is an exciting time to be part of Sisters of Nia.

It is also a transformational time. For 11 years, Sisters of Nia, Inc. served the youth and families of Sacramento with a high-quality yet extremely affordable program. We have built bridges to the community, developed leaders for the public good, and cultivated an unmatched culture of sisterhood at the middle school level.

Sisters of Nia, Inc. is a valued and unique program in the Sacramento community. There are no other programs like ours in the area, or perhaps even in the nation. Our three-year model allows us to build strong relationships with the girls and their families and promotes working together as a community to bring out the best in our youth.

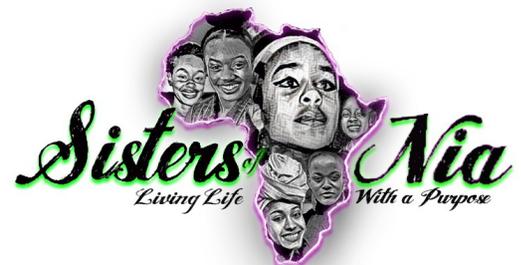
We have succeeded in providing such a needed and beneficial entity for young people in the community through our commitment to community donations and grass-roots fundraising and have creatively designed our program with our humble budget. We have benefited from great rewards as a result.

We are extremely proud of all the accomplishments presented in this annual report, all of which are made possible through our collaboration with an extraordinary group of partners and funders. We are deeply grateful for their support, which has given us the flexibility to adapt to the changes around us. But today's global crisis has made it clear that much remains to be done to realize our mission and vision of ensuring that our girls are supported, nurtured, and empowered to live their life with a purpose.

Wishing you many blessings!

Sincerely,

Synthia Smith, Founder and Executive Director



program overview

WHO WE ARE

Sisters of Nia, Incorporated is an organization dedicated to serving adolescent girls in grades six, seven, and eight living in urban communities. Founded in 2009 on the Ps7 Middle School campus in Oak Park, the program began with only 12 girls, but at full capacity, has 36 girls enrolled. Through the teaching of African-Centered values, Sisters of Nia aims to nurture and reinforce the natural strengths of girls, while encouraging them to live their life with confidence and purpose.

Sisters of Nia is open to girls of all ethnicities and backgrounds. Our data has proven that participation in our three-year program leads girls to have increased emotional maturity, enhanced decision making, increased academic achievement, more positive peer relationships, and enhanced life skills. Our activities and lessons are based on researched theory in order to achieve the highest levels of growth and success for our participants.

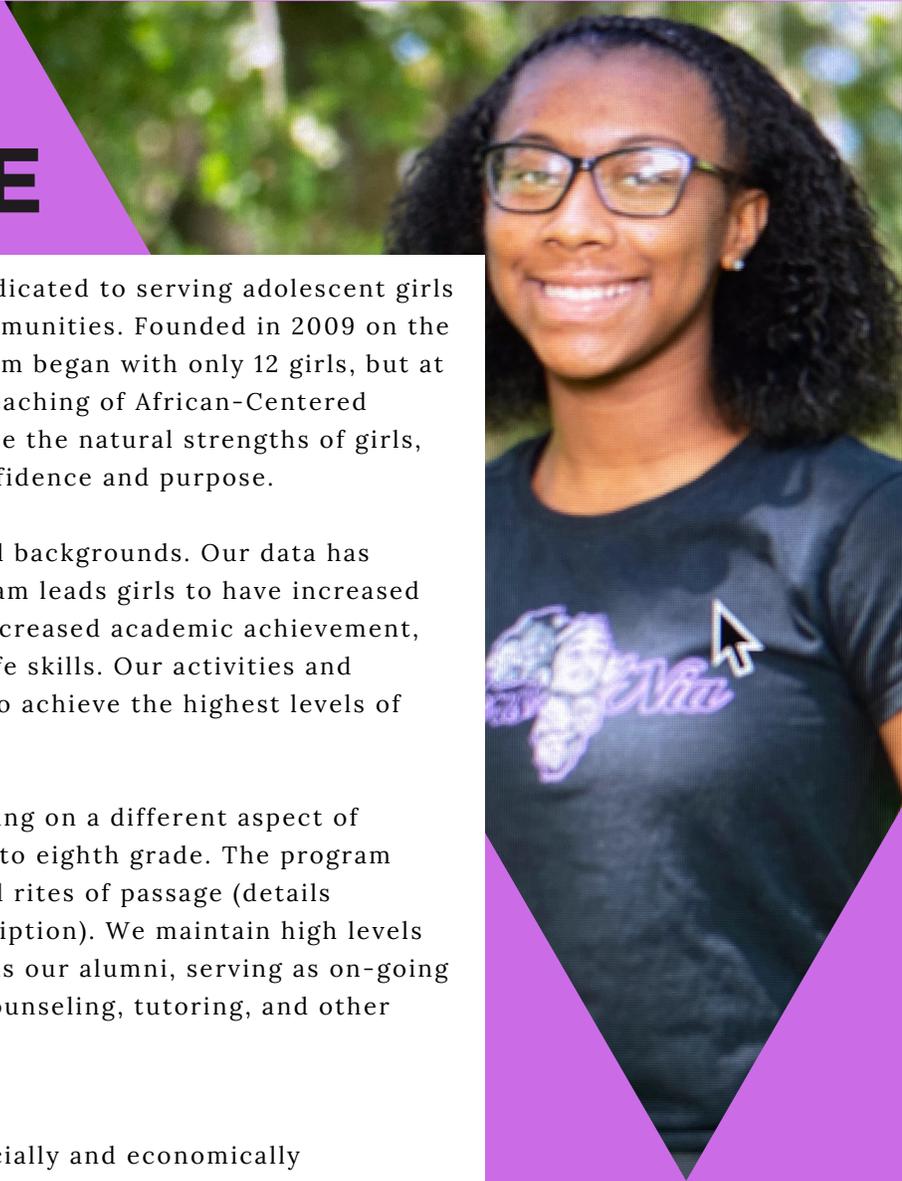
Sisters of Nia, Inc. is a three-year program, focusing on a different aspect of adolescent female life each year from sixth grade to eighth grade. The program culminates in eighth grade with a college tour and rites of passage (details regarding this ceremony are in the program description). We maintain high levels of contact with our enrolled participants as well as our alumni, serving as on-going community resource that provides referrals for counseling, tutoring, and other outreach services for families in need.

Our Mission:

Sisters of Nia, Incorporated seeks to empower socially and economically disadvantaged adolescent girls by providing cultural and educational programs designed to instill strong social skills, leadership development, and academic excellence in our young ladies.

Our Vision:

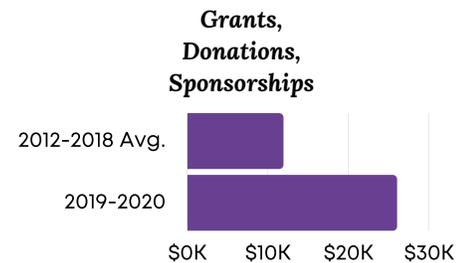
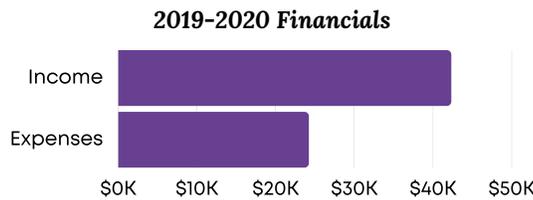
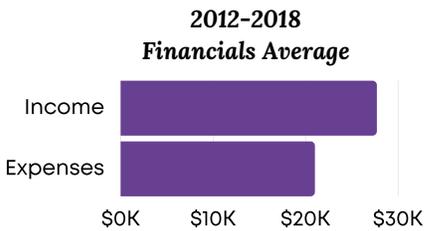
To inspire, encourage, and empower girls to reach their fullest potential and live their life with a purpose.



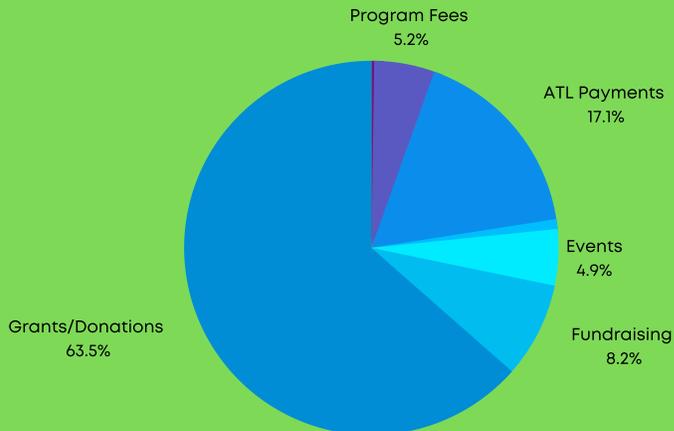
the numbers

OUR FINANCES

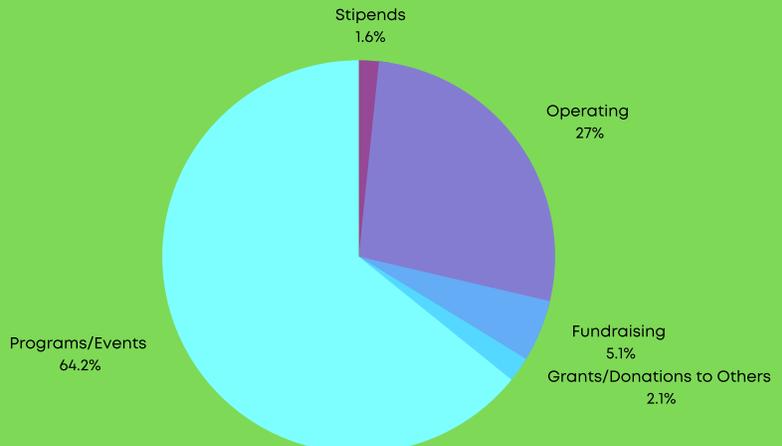
Because this is our first annual report, this page provides an overview of our finances from 20012-2018 and a more direct overview of our 2018-2020 finances. Prior to 2012, the program was funded predominantly by Synthia Smith with financial support from the board of directors. Please note, our finances operate on a fiscal year.



**2019-2020
Income Overview
Total Income - \$42,348**



**2019-2020
Expenses Overview
Total Expenses - \$24,247**



what we offer

OUR PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

In addition to our monthly meetings with the girls, we offer multiple programs, activities, and events.

Rites of Passage Ceremony

Our three-year program culminates with a rites of passage ceremony, symbolizing the girls moving to new levels of maturity, as purposeful, confident, and motivated young women. Prior to the ceremony, each girl must complete a series of eight tasks, each representing one of the Nia principles. Tasks include research, presentations, and interviews enabling the girls to learn about and connect with a variety of African Americans in their families, communities, and career interests. Upon completion of the program, each girl will be armored with a set of tools to be well prepared for her future.



HBCU/Black History Tour

As part of their culminating rites of passage, the 8th grade Nia girls attend a Historical Black Colleges & Universities (HBCU)/Black History Tour to visit various HBCU's and locations focused on African and African-American history: Spelman College, Clark-Atlanta University, and Georgia Tech University; the King Center and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s childhood home; the APEX Museum (an African history museum); the Center for Civil and Human Rights; the CNN Center; the World of Coca Cola, the Atlanta Zoo and Aquarium, and other locations as well. The purpose of this trip is to bring the African history lessons from our weekly sessions full circle, and to reinforce each of the Sisters of Nia principles. During the trip, the girls are able to make visual connections from many of the weekly lessons. Upon returning home, each girl will prepare a presentation to be given to the 6th and 7th grade Nia girls, and will share highlights about her experience on the trip.



Youth Leadership Conference

Each year, Sisters of Nia hosts a free leadership conference targeting Sacramento area boys and girls ages 11-14. Nia alumni and community leaders give their time to present workshops which provide youth with information and skills for building self-esteem, drug and alcohol abuse awareness and avoidance, peer pressure, self-control, sex education and health, and the law. These workshops are facilitated by professionals (educators, attorneys, counselors, medical workers, teachers, motivational speakers, etc.), college students, and our Sisters of Nia alumni. Many of our alumni, as well as other high school students, are invited to work for community service. The main goal of the conference is to educate and inspire youth to work to their fullest potential, live their lives with a purpose and to take on leadership roles in their families, schools, and communities.



Parent Outreach Workshops

The workshops focus on creating and strengthening the bond between parents and their daughters. The purpose of these workshops is to provide intervention resources to increase parent-child connectedness among the girls and parents with which we work. The workshop is free and includes a nutritional dinner for the entire family. Using curriculum produced by ETR Associates (Education, Training, Research Associates), our workshops focus on four main topics:

- Workshop #1: Parent-Child Connectedness
- Workshop #2: Understanding My Adolescent Daughter
- Workshop #3: Increasing the Connection with My Adolescent Daughter
- Workshop #4: Listening to My Adolescent Daughter

Other Programs Offered Since 2009:

- Summer Performing Arts Camp
- Youth Talent Show
- Retreat with 7th & 8th Grade Nia Girls
- Mother/Daughter Spa Party
- Mother/Daughter Brunch
- Father/Daughter Bowling Competition
- Father/Daughter Brunch
- Entrepreneur Fair
- Health Fair

*Our first 10 years
at a glance...*

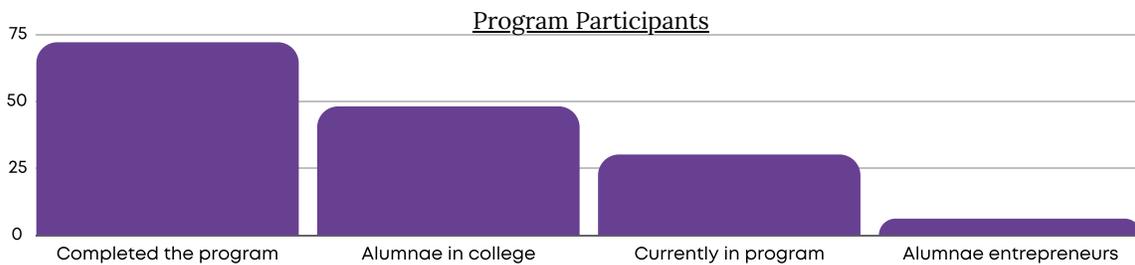
100%

of the girls who have graduated our program report that after being part of Sisters of Nia:

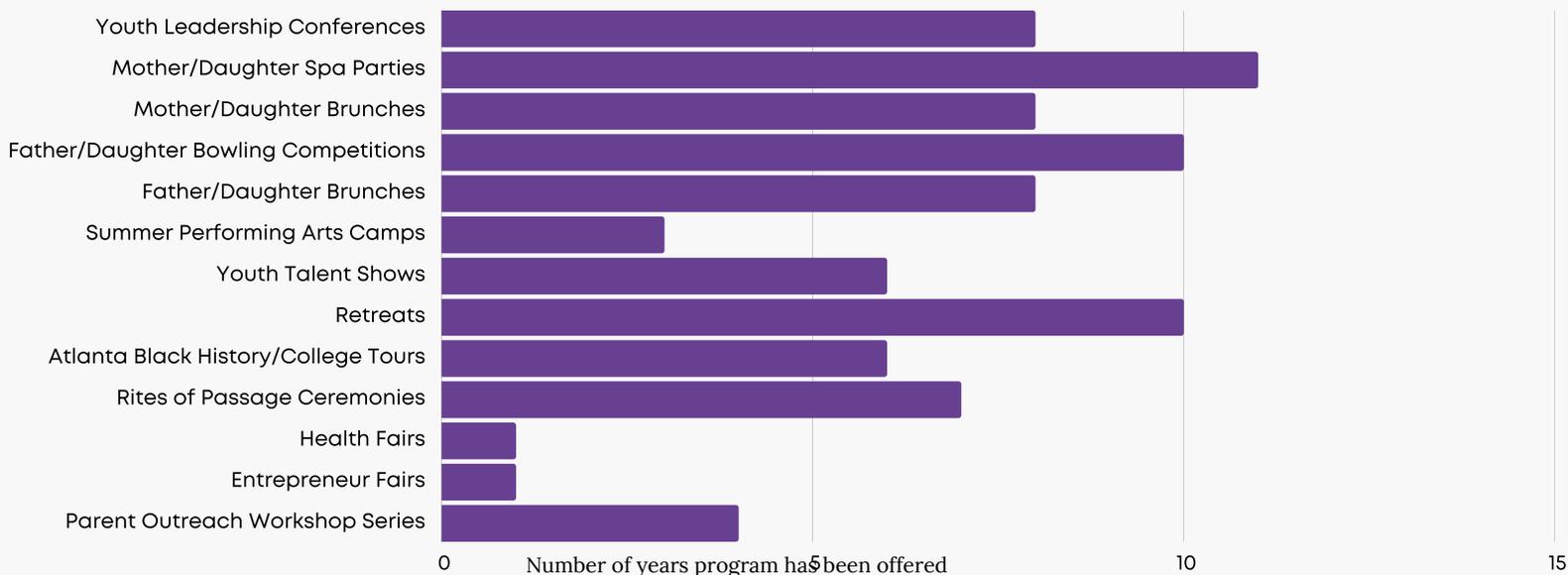
- *their self-esteem has improved.*
- *they are more confident.*
- *they have improved as a person.*
- *the program made an overall positive impact on their life.*
- *they would recommend the program to other girls.*

PROGRAM STATISTICS

Because this is our first annual report, this edition will provide an overview of the first 10 years of Sisters of Nia, Inc. and will also highlight our 2019-2020 year as well. During our first five years in operation at Ps7 Middle School, our program was only open to girls who attended that school. In 2014, we decided, at an effort to expand the program and offer Sisters of Nia to girls throughout the Sacramento area, to stop accepting new girls in the program and closed out our last 8th grade group at Ps7 Middle School in 2016. We moved our meetings to the Sacramento Food Bank for one year. In 2017, we moved our meetings to Pacific Charter Institute, a local charter school. We now have girls in the program living in various areas in Sacramento County.



Programs Offered Since 2009



this year's

END OF PROGRAM EVALUATIONS FROM OUR PROGRAM GRADUATES

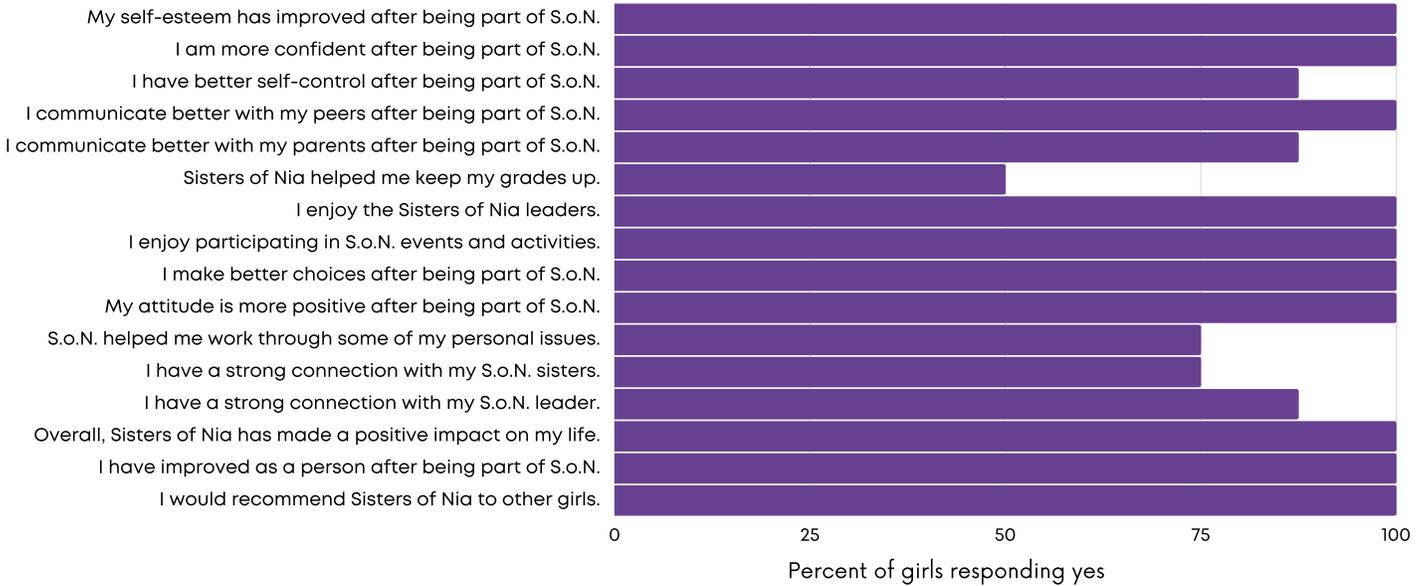
At the end of their 8th grade program year, each girl is asked to complete a program evaluation. This page highlights the feedback we received from our 2020 program graduates.

"I enjoyed learning new things because I took those things and used them in the world."

"This program made me a more positive and independent person."

"I found a second family and felt so welcomed."

"I enjoyed the bond with the leaders and my Nia sisters. There were never any fights or arguments at all."



"I was really insecure with myself a lot, I really had bad anxiety issues that took an effect on me. Now, this program has helped me feel myself a lot, and my anxiety is a lot better. Also my maturity has improved too!"

"This program has taught me a lot about my culture and I made a lot of irreplaceable friends and memories."

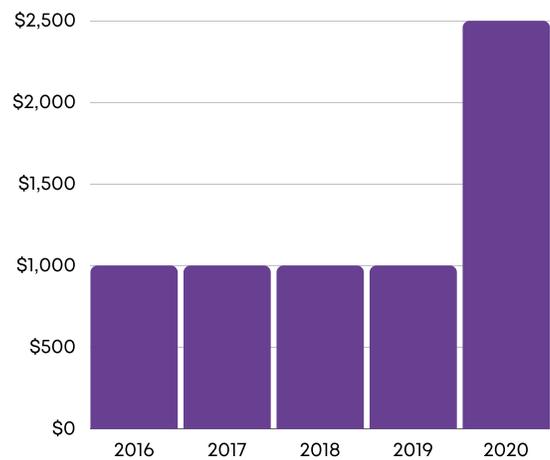
"It really helped my confidence, public speaking and my concept of a community."



100%

of the girls who've graduated from our program and from high school have gone on to college.

Amount Awarded in Scholarships



Colleges & Universities our Alumnae are Attending

HBCU's

Benedict College
 Hampton University
 Howard University
 Langston University
 Prairie View A&M University
 Texas Southern University
 Tuskegee University

University of California

UC Davis
 UC Irvine
 UC Los Angeles
 UC Merced
 UC Riverside
 UC San Diego
 UC Santa Cruz

California State University

Cal State Long Beach
 Cal State Northridge
 Chico State University
 Sacramento State University
 San Diego State University
 San Francisco State
 Sonoma State University

Other:

Tulane University
 University of Nevada, Las Vegas

May of 2016 was our first year awarding scholarships as that was the first year we had alumnae girls graduating from high school. One scholarship has always been delegated a to Sisters of Nia alumnae. The other scholarship has always been open to any girl graduating high school in Sacramento County. Each scholarship award was \$500.

However, in 2020, as a result of a large boost in donations from the Big Day of Giving, we were able to award a total of five scholarships. Four were awarded to current high school graduates and one was awarded to a Sisters of Nia alumnae returning to college in the fall.

Meet our 2020 Scholarship winners...

Mikayla Ray ~ Returning to College Scholarship Recipient (\$500)

Attending Sacramento City College

Majoring in Communications

"As an African American woman, I plan on using my platform to inspire members of my community to look outside of their immediate circle and plan/set goals that will lead to major accomplishments."



Ayanna Boateng ~ Woman on Fire Scholarship Award Recipient (\$750)

Attending Tulane University

Major: Undecided, Interested in Educational Studies and Criminal Justice

"In America, being a student of color with a low economic status negatively impacts the number of opportunities and resources you receive leading to a large achievement gap. My career goal is to ensure funds are being equitably distributed to low-income schools with a predominantly student of color population to ensure students are receiving an adequate amount of resources and academic opportunities. My career choice will benefit the community because it will help students of color receive academically rigorous curriculum, preparation resources, higher-quality teachers, and a higher variety of courses to take."



Alana Smith ~ Woman on Fire Scholarship Award Recipient (\$750)

Attending Howard University

Majoring in Television & Film

"The skills I acquire from my TV/Film degree will help me to impact the world through art; this includes acting, screenwriting, producing, and directing my own work. I hope to join the ranks of other talented individuals within the entertainment industry, telling stories and increasing black representation through my platform as an LA-based filmmaker. I plan to develop my own production company, which will allow me to produce content that serves to advocate for the underserved and to promote tolerance throughout the world. I will also be able to provide internships to those interested in filmmaking and give back to my community."



Chianne Carrier ~ Sisters of Nia-Sample Family Scholarship Award Recipient (\$250)

Attending UC Riverside

Double Majoring in Creative Writing and Communications/Minoring in Business

"I want to change the world through words because I have always had a connection to literature and education. After college I want to be a full time poet and start a nonprofit organization which will help youth heal through art. I want to provide a free art center that focuses on helping marginalized youth."



Syrai Harris ~ Sisters of Nia-Sample Family Scholarship Award Recipient (\$250)

Attending UC Santa Cruz

Double Majoring in Business Management Economics and Linguistics

"I envision creating a chain of grocery stores in communities of color that experience food deserts. My goal is to give people access to nutritious foods regardless of their zip code."



COMMUNITY SERVICE

Community Service is an integral part of our program. Each year, our girls participate in at least one community service project as a group. In addition, our 8th grade girls are required to participate in a minimum of 3 different community services projects as part of their rites of passage. Some of the community service projects our girls have participated in as a group include:

- Visit & perform for residents at a convalescent homes
- Put together bags of necessities for the homeless
- Reading books to early elementary age students
- Collect clothing for fire victims
- Clothing drive for children in need
- Volunteer at the Sacramento food bank
- Participated in the MLK March in Sacramento
- Assistants, servers, runners, and cleaners at community events



NOTABLE PERFORMANCES

Creative and Performing Arts is also a large part of our program. Our girls have the opportunity to showcase and develop their talents at a number of program events including:

- Summer Performing Arts Camp
- Dance Classes/Partnerships
- Kwanzaa Program
- Black History Month Program
- Talent Show

We have also visited African and Black History art galleries, plays, musicals, and dance performances as a group at:

- Sacramento State University
- Celebration Arts
- Images Theater Company
- Sojourner Truth Multicultural Art Museum
- Sacramento African Cultural Festival
- The Brickhouse Gallery & Art Complex

In addition, we have partnered with several other community members and organizations to provide dance classes to our girls.

The girls have performed dances, songs (in Xosa and Swahili), skits, and monologues in a variety of settings. A few of our most notable performances have been the following:

- Sacramento Kings Game for Black History Month (2020)
- California State Department of Education (2019)
- Crocker Art Museum Black History Month (2017)
- Veterans Outreach Community Black History Month (2014)
- Community Performance at Fairytale Town in Sacramento (2012)
- Our annual youth talent shows, Kwanzaa celebrations, and Black History Month performances (2009-2020)
- Winter Holiday Song Performances (2012-2016)



PROGRAM AWARDS & RECOGNITION

One of our greatest accomplishments was from our participation in the 2017 ReInventEd, a competition meant to celebrate and promote grassroots innovation in education. Teams submitted proposals for innovative, education-related projects, received coaching, and presented a competitive final pitch in front of a panel of university and community judges. Our pitch was on our overall program...we won both Audience Favorite and the Final Grand Prize. As the winning team, Sisters of Nia received \$5,000 which was applied to purchase a trademark for our logo.

July 2017 ~ ReInvented Semi-finals Audience Favorite for helping Sacramento's youth create purposeful lives and for our innovative education project.

Sept. 2017 ~ ReInvented Finals Grand Prize Winner for grassroots innovations to reinvent and reignite education.



Other Achievements:

Provided Cultural & Diversity Training training for:

- Girls Rock Sacramento - 2020
- Elk Grove Cosumnes Services District Parks & Recreation - 2019, 2020
- PS7 Middle School Teachers & Administrators - 2011

Other Recognitions:

- 2016 Peacebuilding Award for ourstanding leadership in building future women leaders through the Afrocentric models of Sisters of Nia
- California Legislative Assembly Certificate of Recognition for our commitment to serve community and promote peace, 2016
- Recognition of Outstanding Contribution to North Sacramento Community Health Fair, 2013
- Sacramento Black Child Development Institute, Inc. recognition for Outstanding and Lasting Contribution, 2011

THIS YEAR'S CHALLENGES

AND HOW WE OVERCAME...

COVID-19 brought many challenges this year, but we were able to adapt and overcome them all. For one, we had to switch our in-person meetings with the girls to Zoom meetings, which required our facilitators to quickly learn how to navigate technology they were not familiar with. In addition to quickly learning how to utilize Zoom, the facilitators also had to convert our in-person lessons to virtual lessons while maintaining the quality, importance, and high level of engagement for each one. This was definitely a challenge. However, our facilitators quickly adapted and have now become quite savvy with several new tech tools such as Google Classroom, Jamboard, Flocabulary, and Canva all at an effort to deliver high quality, engaging lessons to our girls.

We had to cancel our Gospel Brunch which was to be held in March, our only fundraiser which supports our scholarship fund and our 8th grade Black history/college tour to Atlanta.

This event raises \$1,200-\$1,500 annually. However, we quickly shifted and created an online fundraiser selling themed gift baskets. We raised \$00 from this sale.

Unfortunately, our annual 8th grade Atlanta trip had to be cancelled due to COVID-19. We lost over \$1,200 to nonrefundable travel expenses as a result. However, we are planning to attend this trip in the summer of 2021 should it be safe to do so. Our 9th grade alumnae will be joining our 8th grade group on that trip...we can't leave them out of this experience. As a result, we will be continuing our monthly meetings with our 9th grade alumnae so we can stay connected.

Finally, our 8th grade rites-of-passage celebration was postponed from June, when it is traditionally held, to August in hopes of being able to have our traditional ceremony. Unfortunately, COVID-19 did not allow our traditional ceremony to occur. For the first time, our rites of passage ceremony was held with just our 8th grade girls and their immediate family members outside at a park, with masks and social distancing required, which made it a much more intimate event. We have traditionally rented a facility for the ceremony. After holding the event at the park, we realized the park is the most appropriate setting for the rites-of-passage. We have decided to hold our rites-of-passage ceremony at a park with just the 8th grade girls and their immediate family members each year moving forward.

We are quite proud of how we have been able to sustain ourselves and continue to provide quality programs and events to our girls despite the challenges that COVID-19 has brought.

What's next?

THE FUTURE OF SISTERS OF NIA, INC.

We are quite excited about what the future holds for Sisters of Nia! Despite COVID-19, we have had a very successful year and received more funding in donations than any years prior. We are very grateful and appreciate the support of all our donors and stakeholders.



The funding we received this year has enabled us to:

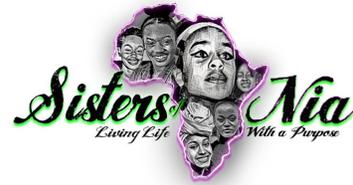
- provide monthly stipends to our Executive Director and Facilitators for the first time since our founding.
- secure a professional grant writer.
- increase the number of scholarships we offered by 250%.
- increase the dollar amount of the scholarships we awarded by 250%.

With future funding, we will:

- secure a new meeting facility.
- publish our curriculum.
- offer program affiliations & program leadership training.
- secure a website designer.
- increase (again) the number of scholarships we offer.
- increase (again) the dollar amount of the scholarships we offer.
- re-establish our summer performing arts camp.

*We truly appreciate our donors,
grantors, and sponsors!*

THANK YOU!



With heartfelt gratitude and appreciation, we would like to thank ALL of our donors, grantors, sponsors, partners, and volunteers for your support over these past eleven years. Your support is huge in our efforts to provide quality, innovative programs and activities to adolescent girls in middle school in the Sacramento area. Our projects and programs were realized because of your donations and time. On behalf of the Sisters of Nia girls, staff, and Board of Directors, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your support and generosity. Below is a list of corporate and organizational support we have received over the years.

Large Sponsors (Over \$2,500+)

Construction Financial Management Association
Otto Construction
Rancho de los Amigos
Sacramento State University
SephoraNoir
Sierra Health Foundation
Starbucks

Other Sponsors (Up to \$2,499)

Active 20/30 Club
AirCom Mechanical Inc.
Bank of Commerce
Bank of Sacramento
B.E.S.T. Program
Black United Fund of Sacramento Valley
Elk Grove Community Services Parks & Recreation District
Gil Moore Oil
Girls Rock Sacramento
Good Day Sacramento
Images Theater Company
Laguna Children's Dentist
Nia Women of Purpose
One Community Health Foundation
Raley's
Sacramento Cultural Hub Media Foundation
Sacramento Kings Foundation
Sacramento LINKS, Inc.
Safeway
Sojourner Truth African American Art Museum
St. Hope Public School
Trader Joe's
Travelers Aid Emergency Assistance Agency
Walmart
Yes2Kollege Education Resources

All individual donors and supporters (Too many to name!)

Past & Current Partnerships

B.E.S.T. Program
Black Child Development Institute
Black United Fund of Sacramento Valley
BlyueRose Dance Project Community Organization
Elk Grove Community Services Parks & Recreation District
Elk Grove Youth Dance
Elite Studio of Dance
Girls Rock Sacramento
Great Parents Empower
Images Theater Company
Kimyetta Barron Photography
Market 1 Builders
MOVE Dance Studio
One Community Health Foundation
Otto Construction
Pacific Charter Institute
Pannell Meadowview Community Center
Project R.I.D.E.
Rancho de los Amigos
Sacramento Cultural Hub Media Foundation
Sacramento Food Bank
Sacramento Kings Foundation
Sacramento State University
SephoraNoir
Sojourner Truth African American Art Museum
St. Hope Public School
Starbucks
Travelers Aid Emergency Assistance Agency
Yes2Kollege Education Resources

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!