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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**SAN FRANCISCO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION TO  
HONOR COMMUNITIES ORGANIZING FOR JUSTICE**

***Annual HERO Awards Ceremony will recognize organizations, students and individuals for their outstanding contributions toward organizing communities for justice in San Francisco.***

**(San Francisco, CA)** -- The San Francisco Human Rights Commission ("HRC") and its Equity Advisory Committee ("EAC") are pleased to announce the recipients of the HRC's annual Hero Awards.

The Human Rights Commission works to increase equality, eradicate discrimination, and to protect human rights for all people. Each year, the HRC and its Equity Advisory Committee seek to acknowledge and honor those individuals and organizations who, through their daily efforts, advance civil and economic rights in San Francisco's diverse and multicultural communities. This year, we issued a special call for nominees whose work exemplifies the theme of "Communities Organizing for Justice." A large number of accomplished and notable individuals and organizations were nominated for consideration. The Hero Awards selection committee had a very difficult task selecting the finalists from such a list of remarkable candidates. Each honoree demonstrated their commitment to pursuing justice in San Francisco through community organizing, advances the mission of the HRC, and is a "HERO" worthy of praise.

**2016 HRC "HERO" Award Recipients in the "Student" Category**

- **Emir Boccara.** A rising 10<sup>th</sup> grader at John O'Connell High School and summer intern with the Community Safety Initiative, a project of Collective Impact.
- **Chinwendu Mbata.** A rising 11<sup>th</sup> grader at Raoul Wallenburg High School and summer intern with the Community Safety Initiative, a project of Collective Impact.
- **Student Leaders in the Ethnic Studies Student Organization at San Francisco State University.** A student group that advocates for human rights at SF State and the larger community through its many support programs for low-income and communities of color, the LGBTQI movement,

undocumented students and their families, and the formerly incarcerated; as well as the defense and advancement of ethnic studies.

- **Rooftop Social Justice Committee.** A student-led organization at Rooftop Middle School with a commitment to social justice campaigns that aim to serve and impact the diverse needs of their school community.

### **2016 HRC “HERO” Award Recipients in the “Individual” Category**

- **Yulanda Williams.** A Sergeant in the San Francisco Police Department, President of Officers for Justice, and Founder of the “Not on my Watch” Initiative.
- **Cristina Mitra and Natalia Vigil.** Founders and co-creators of *Still Here*, a four-year-running show at the National Queer Arts Festival.
- **Juanita MORE!** An accomplished drag performer, fashion muse, fundraiser, and gourmand.
- **Karen Shain.** The Re-entry Policy Planner in the Re-entry Division of the San Francisco Adult Probation Department.
- **Tiffani Marie Johnson.** A teacher at Leadership High School in San Francisco, founder of H2O Productions, and Ph.D. candidate at the University of California, Berkeley.
- **Liz Jackson-Simpson.** The Executive Director of Success Center San Francisco.

### **2016 HRC “HERO” Award Recipients in the “Organization” Category**

- **United Playaz.** A violence prevention and youth development organization that provides a comprehensive range of services to prepare vulnerable youth for higher education, employment, and healthy living within a safe, nurturing, and collaborative environment.
- **The Idriss Stelley Foundation.** A non-profit organization created to honor Idriss Stelley, an African American man killed by San Francisco Police Department in 2001. The ISF provides a variety of free services to San Francisco residents.
- **No New Jail SF Coalition.** A coalition of San Francisco Bay Area organizations and community members who successfully advocated to prevent a new jail from being constructed in San Francisco.
- **Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth.** A nonprofit organization that builds the leadership and power of low-income and working class youth and parents of color in San Francisco to advance racial and economic justice in schools and The City.
- **Amor for Alex Nieto.** A coalition of family, friends, and community members of Alex Nieto formed to demand justice and love for Mr. Nieto, a Latino man killed by San Francisco Police Department in 2014.
- **Urban Campesinos.** A food justice and young adult leadership program aimed at bettering the environmental, economic, and health conditions experienced by working families in the southeast neighborhoods of San Francisco.
- **Ethnic Studies Student Organization at San Francisco State University.** A student group that advocates for human rights at SF State and the larger community through its many support programs for low-income and communities of color, the LGBTQI movement, undocumented students and their families, and the formerly incarcerated; as well as the defense and advancement of ethnic studies.
- **Root & Rebound.** A nonprofit working to increase access to justice and opportunity for reentry populations and to educate and empower those who support them, fundamentally advancing and strengthening the reentry infrastructure in San Francisco and across the state of California.

- **Roadmap to Peace Initiative.** A five-year community-driven systems reform initiative dedicated to transforming the health and safety outcomes of the most disconnected Latin@ youth aged 13-24 in San Francisco.
- **Justice 4 Amilcar Perez-Lopez.** A coalition of friends and neighbors of Amilcar Perez-Lopez formed to demand justice and love for Mr. Perez-Lopez, a Latino man killed by San Francisco Police Department in 2015.
- **Do No Harm Coalition.** A coalition of more than 100 University of California, San Francisco physicians, nurses, students, and staff formed to raise awareness of the dual public health crises of police violence and institutionalized racism, which together take a disproportionate toll on communities of color.
- **Justice 4 Mario Woods Coalition.** A coalition fighting for justice for Mario Woods, an African American man who was killed by San Francisco Police Department in 2015.
- **Justice for Luis Góngora Pat.** A coalition of the family of Luis Góngora Pat, a Latino man killed by San Francisco Police in 2016, and supportive San Franciscans who, together, seek justice for Luis and to repair the harm caused by San Francisco Police officers to his family, his encampment family, and the community at large.
- **Justice 4 Jessica Nelson-Williams.** A group of family, friends, and neighbors of Jessica Nelson-Williams working to demand justice for Ms. Nelson-Williams, an African American woman killed by San Francisco Police Department in 2016.
- **The Frisco 5.** Five San Francisco residents who conducted an 18-day hunger strike to protest racially motivated misconduct in the San Francisco Police Department.
- **The Frisco 500.** In solidarity with the Frisco 5 hunger strikers, the Frisco 500 is a protest group that demands justice for people of color killed during San Francisco Police Department encounters.

Congratulations to these students, individuals and organizations for fostering positive change in and throughout the City's diverse and multicultural communities.

Honorees will be recognized on **Thursday, July 28 at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall, Board of Supervisors Chambers, room 250, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, San Francisco, CA 94102.**

For more information on the HRC "HERO" Awards or the honorees, please contact, Veronica Garcia, Policy Analyst, at [Veronica.Garcia@sfgov.org](mailto:Veronica.Garcia@sfgov.org) or (415) 252-2513.