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Des Moines Business Record

100 4th Street

Des Moines, IA 50309

Women of Influence Nominating Committee:

I am writing to show my support for Sarai Rice as a 2018 Woman of Influence. Sarai’s role as Executive Director of DMARC has had a tremendous impact of thousands of people in our community.

She is an expert on food insecurity and her leadership is sought out whenever people want to tackle tough problems. For instance, when the Polk County Supervisors decided they wanted to join the fight to end hunger, Sarai was one of the first people they called.

She is a known collaborator. She had DMARC participate in a study at Iowa State to look at the impact of food provided at food pantries on the health of their clients. And after seeing the results, Sarai fought to ensure that all DMARC pantries would provide healthy foods that wouldn’t make people sick. Today, our pantries are providing more fresh fruits and vegetables and give our clients the choice of which healthy foods they want that are low in fat, salt and sugar. And because of her collaboration with so many, (United Way, Food Bank of Iowa, Iowa Food Policy Council, etc.) DMARC has been awarded opportunities to operate mobile food pantries, paid for by the Polk County Supervisors, to continue our work and serve so many more that are home bound or lack transportation necessary to visit a pantry.

Sarai knows that data is so important in our fight against hunger. So she’s dedicated countless hours to ensuring we are collecting data that is helpful to our community to better help those in need. This data has been presented to city officials to help show them where “food deserts” are (areas where no grocery stores are present for low income individuals to shop) to help with city planning efforts. It has also been presented to state leaders to show them the areas in their districts that are populated with individuals using pantries. She is bringing awareness to the growing need in our community and working to do something about it!

I have worked with Sarai on the board of DMARC for the past 5 years and I’m honored to be able to work with her. She cares for the dignity of all in our community and has been a tremendous role model for me to always challenge the status quo to strive always to do more. I can’t think of a better recipient for the Women of Influence award.

Sincerely,

Jody Mead

DMARC Board Member