



May 21, 2019

Des Moines Business Record
2019 Women of Influence
Recognition Selection Committee

Dear Committee Members:

It is with great pleasure that I write today in support of the nomination of Nancy Mwiroti as a 2019 Emerging Woman of Influence honoree.

Inspirational, innovative, nurturing, empowering, positive, role model, teacher, giver, compassionate and persevering. These are words that truly embody Nancy Mwiroti, particularly when it comes to her work with young refugees and youth with barriers to success. Gallup studies say the number 1 indicator of student success is Hope and through Nancy's personal efforts in greater Des Moines, many young people are now on a path to success because Nancy gave them Hope.

From its roots as an after-school dance class, Nancy started Pi515 to expose young refugee girls to the world of STEM, give them the tools to explore and gain technology skills, and inspire them to see and believe that technology could be their pathway to a great career and life. Recognizing the potential and her innate nature to think big and give it her all, Nancy left her career in real estate and business management to focus full time on Pi515. With minimal financial and physical resources, Nancy has amassed a strong contingency of volunteers and a core group of business mentors and leaders to champion her mission and build on the dream. Today Pi515 serves hundreds of female and male students in the metro from all walks of life. And as a true believer and supporter of Nancy, I know she has only scratched the surface of what she can and will accomplish in changing the lives of young people and building a solid tech pipeline for our employers.

Nancy's accomplishment to date have not gone unnoticed. In 2018, the Partnership recognized her as our Excellence in Education EDGE award recipient. Also in 2018, the Technology Association of Iowa named her one of Iowa's leaders of innovation through their Iowa Catalysts project. Recently she received the Wells Fargo Hidden Figure award at the Iowa State Capitol. Additional recognitions received by Nancy include:

- 2017-2018, member of the Iowa Computer Science Standards review team;
- 2018, finalist for the Most Inspiring Women of Iowa – Courage Award;
- 2016, participant in the White House Conference on Inclusive STEM Education for Youth of Color;
- 2016, featured in the Des Moines Register as one of the 15 People to Watch in Iowa; and
- 2015, finalist for both STEM Champion and Diversity Champion as well as a nominee for Entrepreneurship Innovation at the Iowa Women of Innovation event.

One last word I would use to describe Nancy Mwiroti is Deserving. She has given so much of herself and asks for only one thing in return – a better future and a chance to fulfill dreams for those she serves. Her commitment and actions toward making greater Des Moines and Iowa a better place for young people, particularly girls and minorities, makes her deserving of the honor to be named 2019 Emerging Woman of Influence.

Sincerely,

Mary Bontrager, Executive Vice President
Talent Development