

## Bloomington Youth MLK AWARD NOMINATION - 2020

<b>First Name</b>	Karen
<b>Last Name</b>	Schmidt
<b>Address 1</b>	409 E. Grove St.
<b>City</b>	Bloomington
<b>State</b>	IL
<b>Zip Code</b>	61701
<b>Phone</b>	309-824-2257
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<b>Is the nominee aware that you are nominating them for this award?</b>	No
<b>First Name</b>	Kaylin
<b>Last Name</b>	Richards
<b>Address 1</b>	202 Packard St.
<b>City</b>	Bloomington
<b>State</b>	IL
<b>Zip Code</b>	61701
<b>Phone</b>	309-660-2275
<b>Email Address</b>	<a href="mailto:ndrcommunications@gmail.com">ndrcommunications@gmail.com</a>
<b>What school does the student attend?</b>	Bloomington High School
<b>What grade is the student in?</b>	11th

**1. What are your reasons for nominating this individual?**

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is: ‘What are you doing for others?’” Dr. King’s often-quoted challenge to us has led to a national day of service for many. For some, it has become a way of life. This is the case for Kaylin Richards, who has distinguished herself as a bridge-builder, a peace-maker, and a servant-leader willing to roll up her sleeves for her community. Kaylin has built a significant record of service to others, sharing her time, creativity and organizational skills to build connections among people and across programs; using her voice to uplift others through her music; and expressing empathy and sensitivity to a broad spectrum of our community through her volunteer activities and work assignments. Kaylin has truly distinguished herself, emulating the many values that Dr. King has called us to embrace.

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**2. How has the nominee demonstrated commitment to improving cooperation and fostering mutual respect among people of different racial, ethnic, religion and other backgrounds**

Kaylin's engagement with many non-profit organizations and programs is extensive, and clearly focused on supporting social justice, embracing diversity, and lifting up those in need. These include:

- Volunteering with the West Bloomington Revitalization Project Veggie Oasis through the Westside Revitalization Project to serve families and individuals in need of fresh food. Her work with this program is driven by her commitment to address food insecurity and provide options for healthy eating.
  - Working with Gold Star families and veterans' families in ceremonies and events for over three years, to honor those in service and their families. Her work includes organizing our community's annual Barbeque With The Brave event.
  - Serving as the Anti-Bullying Ambassador for the Chicago Area Project (CAP), a juvenile delinquency prevention program founded in 1934. In this work, she has represented CAP in Springfield, Illinois.
  - Serving as a Junior Camp Leader with the Bloomington-Normal Boys and Girls Club.
  - Engaging with several Project Oz Youth Action Board community service projects, including serving as co-organizer of the annual "Run Drugs Out of Town" campaign and 5K for Project Oz; participant in the annual Prescription Drug Disposal program with Normal Police Department and Project Oz, collecting drugs and needles to keep them away from our youth and out of our water systems; canvassing the community to assess community support for smoking bans near schools and parks; participating in Tobacco Clean Up Day, working in a park to clean up trash and collect cigarette butts and other related products; and participant in Reverse Trick or Treat, canvassing to provide adults with information about the negative impacts of alcohol on the brain of an adolescent and teen.
  - Volunteering in the clothing closet ministry at Mt. Pisgah Church to sort and distribute clothes and goods to those in need.
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- Volunteering in the food pantry at Mt Pisgah Church, assisting in sorting and distributing of food to those members of the McLean County community were in need.
  - Raising money for scholarships provided to young girls and women in McLean County through the Soroptimist International-BN Chapter
  - Using her voice, and singing for the Sugar Creek Alzheimer's Special Care Center, Heritage Manor Assisted Living Home and Westminster Village Assisted Living Home. She serves as choir president with the Mt. Pisgah Sunbeam choir, directing and teaching music and organizing community outreach programs to provide hope to those in need of spiritual encouragement. At BHS, she is vice-president of the choir.
  - Actively and consistently participating in many Not In Our Town events.
  - Working with the Media-Cation Foundation, Inc., an organization focused on educating communities, children, and young adults through the creation and distribution of all forms of multimedia. With the help of this foundation, Kaylin released her first unsigned artist single entitled, "I See The Sun." This single reached over 1,000 SoundScan downloads in one week, with all proceeds used to fund programs that support youth-focused entertainment education and training.
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**3. How has nominee's efforts addressed discrimination, prejudice and the effects of past discrimination?**

Kaylin works as a Youth Development Professional at the Boys & Girls Club. In this role, she serves as a mentor, coach and tutor for youth up through the 5th grade. As a supervisor at the Club, Kaylin is a mandated reporter, nurturing students in their academic work as well as in their personal lives. Kaylin builds strong relationships that help Club members become self-confident and respectful of themselves and others, laying the groundwork for our next generation of leaders who speak truth to power.

Kaylin is co-founder and President of the Black Student Union (BSU) at Bloomington High School. As President of the BSU, Kaylin set forth a goal to coordinate activities that strengthen cultural and political awareness, and to launch and sustain a student organization that is recognized and respected for addressing issues that African American students, as well as the entire student body. BSU is dedicated to promoting cultural awareness and student leadership in high school and throughout the community. Under Kaylin's leadership, the BSU debuted the "Black History Museum," including with tours, live performances and artifacts, a first for Bloomington High School. The response from the student body, faculty and staff was enthusiastic, and the exhibit reached over 300 individuals. Based on this success, the BSU will scale up its hours to stay open over a three day period to allow for more visitors.

Kaylin's work with the WBRP Veggie Oasis reflects her deep understanding of the challenges that some in our community face. The Veggie Oasis serves mainly the westside of Bloomington, a diverse part of our community often faced with economic challenges. In her work with the Veggie Oasis, Kaylin encourages people to take what they and their families need to eat. She is sensitive to the lack of healthy and fresh food in this part of Bloomington; her service in volunteering with the Veggie Oasis demonstrates her

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strong commitment to being part of the solution to lifting up our community and sharing our resources.

In 2018, Kaylin volunteered three hours every week for a full year as a voter's right advocate. In this work, she encouraged eligible voters to utilize their right to vote and educated young voters across McLean county about the importance of their vote, and why their vote matters in every election. She also encouraged youth to participate in local civic engagement activities. Her commitment to voter registration and voter rights is on-going.

Kaylin is a proud member of the NAACP, recognizing this organization's commitment to social justice and equality for all people. At the recent 100th year anniversary of our local chapter, Kaylin served as a featured speaker and performed vocally.

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**4. What recognition has the nominee received for his/her service to others?**

In 2016, Kaylin was awarded the YICU – For A Better Tomorrow Service Award. This award honors young leaders who make a positive impact on others’ lives and their community through everyday actions in their neighborhoods, schools, social service agencies or through voluntary service to others both locally and globally.

In 2018, Kaylin competed in the NAACP ACT-SO competition and won the gold medal. She competed nationally in San Antonio, Texas, representing Bloomington in the vocal contemporary category.

In 2019, Kaylin was awarded Junior Leader certification from the Boys & Girls Club of Bloomington – Normal.

Kaylin’s leadership abilities have been recognized by her peers and serves as President of the Bloomington High School Chorus; previously, she served as the Secretary of the Bloomington High School Chorus and was elected Freshman Class President at Bloomington High School.

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**I agree that the information provided on this nomination form is true and accurate. I also agree that if any information provided is not true the nomination will be void.**

Yes

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