

# Dominican Center for Women wins 2015 Nonprofit Excellence Award

the Nonprofit Center of  
Milwaukee



The Amani neighborhood in Milwaukee has been described by UW-Milwaukee’s Center for Economic Development as “the epicenter of social and economic disadvantage in Milwaukee.” Bordered by Center Street, Keefe Avenue, 20th and 27th Streets, the neighborhood has very high unemployment and crime rates in a residential landscape marred by foreclosed homes and vacant lots.



When the Dominican Center for Women was designated in 2012 as the anchor community organization for the Amani neighborhood by the federal Building Neighborhood Capacity Program (BNCP), it was clear that an all-out organizing effort was needed to tackle the issues and concerns of the community. The Dominican Center got to work and is building a model resident-led revitalization plan.

As a result, an Amani collective voice has emerged through the creation of the resident group Amani United. Community projects include neighborhood cleanups, anti-violence vigils, voter education that greatly increased turnout in the November 2015 election, canvassing to collect data on perceptions while engaging residents in neighborhood activities, and more.

A highlight of the community organizing work was the opening of the new Moody Park, which was celebrated by 500 people in August 2015. Amani United residents took an active role in the park design, with COA-Goldin Center helping to support their goals. A new Friends of Moody Park Group was formed to develop programming for children and families. The Amani United Safety Task Force was formed, and the groups are working with Safe & Sound to provide resident safety training and develop a watch group.

“Successful neighborhood engagement is integral to neighborhood stabilization and growth,” said the award nominator. Community organizing by the Dominican Center and Amani United “...provides hope that the Amani neighborhood will eventually be known as an empowered community and is a safe place...”