

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia
Office of the Chief Clerk
Room 402, City Hall
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 230979)

RESOLUTION

Congratulating the Kwanzaa Cooperative for inaugurating the first City Kinara in Philadelphia history and for organizing Kwanzaa programming at the Free Library to uphold the traditions of Kwanzaa in Philadelphia for years to come.

WHEREAS, Kwanzaa is an African-American and Pan-African celebration that honors history, values, family, community, and culture. Observed from December 26th through January 1st, its origins are in the first harvest celebrations of Africa from which it takes its name; and

WHEREAS, Kwanzaa was established in America in 1966 during the Black Freedom Movement by Dr. Maulana Karenga. Kwanzaa reflects the Movement's concern for cultural grounding in thought and practice, as well as its associated calls for unity and self determination; and

WHEREAS, The Kwanzaa Cooperative is a Philadelphia based cultural and social change organization formed in 1980 under the guidance of Dr. Maulana Karenga. The mission of the Kwanzaa Cooperative is to provide a local authority on the true meaning and mission of Kwanzaa for the tri-state area; and

WHEREAS, The membership of the Kwanzaa Cooperative consists of some of the first celebrants of Kwanzaa in Philadelphia, dating back to 1968. The membership has been deeply committed to the celebration and has achieved an expertise on both Kwanzaa and African history and culture generally; and

WHEREAS, Maisha Sullivan-Ongoza, known to many as Mama Maisha, is the Chairwoman of the Kwanzaa Cooperative in Philadelphia. Mama Maisha is a longstanding teacher, community leader, and dedicated builder of transformative justice movements in Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Since its founding, the Kwanzaa Cooperative has provided its local expertise to media, schools and universities, faith based organizations, and local government. This shared expertise has included local news interviews, the development of educational materials and presentations, annual community education workshops, annual Kwanzaa celebration planning assistance, and assisting the City with the annual Kwanzaa lighting of Boathouse Row; and

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WHEREAS, The Kwanzaa Cooperative's largest annual contribution, assisting The City of Philadelphia and Department of Human Services with their annual Kwanzaa children's program, served over 300 children throughout the week during the celebration. Held at the main branch of the Free Library, this event taught Philadelphians about Kwanzaa, its history, and its importance in the community; and

WHEREAS, The Kwanzaa Cooperative, after having suspended many of its traditional activities during the COVID-19 pandemic, has worked closely with the Office of Councilmember Kendra Brooks, Visit Philadelphia, Welcome America, the Free Library of Philadelphia, and the Philadelphia Department of Parks and Recreation to relaunch their celebration of Kwanzaa in Philadelphia this year; and

WHEREAS, Mama Maisha, having crafted hundreds of kinaras, including a kinara sculpture for the City of New York, and taught hundreds of people to build their own kinaras, will present the largest and most ornate of her kinaras for her home City of Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, This year, the Kwanzaa Cooperative will present the first City Kinara in Philadelphia history. The Kinara is an original piece of artwork created by Maisha Sullivan-Ongoza and will be displayed at City Hall during the week of Kwanzaa. It stands over nine feet tall and will be located at the southwest corner of City Hall; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia has displayed a City Christmas Tree since 1913 and a City Menorah since 1974; and

WHEREAS, The presentation of a City Kinara at City Hall is a critical step forward for the Kwanzaa Cooperative, the City of Philadelphia, and the entire Philadelphia community; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Congratulates the Kwanzaa Cooperative for inaugurating the first City Kinara in Philadelphia history and for organizing Kwanzaa programming at the Free Library to uphold the traditions of Kwanzaa in Philadelphia for years to come.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Maisha Sullivan-Ongoza to congratulate the Kwanzaa Cooperative for this historic achievement.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the fourteenth day of December 2023.

Darrell L. Clarke
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Michael A. Decker
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Brooks

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Brooks, Jones, Squilla, Lozada, Gilmore
Richardson, Thomas, Gauthier and Driscoll