

SisTers PGH

Trans-led community center,
resource provider, and shelter
transitioning program



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Official Statement from Ciora Thomas, Executive Director of SisTers PGH

In light of recent conversations surrounding Dominique Morgan, I want to be clear in stating my personal and professional experience as Executive Director of SisTers PGH and SisTers PHL.

In 2023, I was invited by Dominique Morgan to join the Tenacious 10 for the Flyer Crown Project, after she expressed being inspired by the work I've led here in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I accepted with intention, believing in the vision of supporting our sister TS Madison, whom I've known and respected far longer than I've known Dominique. As a fellow Libra sister and longtime supporter of TS Madison, I stepped into this cohort with excitement and a deep commitment to seeing Black trans women win.

While our organization initially treated the emerging allegations against Ms. Morgan as unconfirmed, we made a conscious choice to pause and observe. We withheld judgment in the hope that transparency and accountability would come forward. Unfortunately, what followed was not an honest engagement—but silence, dismissal, and deflection. When I began reaching out to Dominique privately—through email, text, and phone—she offered no response. I was not even offered the benefit of a conversation, despite the real risk this situation posed to our organization and our reputation.

Let me be very clear: I was not given the basic respect of a phone call to discuss how this might affect our shared work.

Instead, Dominique attempted to “temperature check” me by offering a birthday gift two weeks after my birthday—a gesture that now reads more like manipulation than care. I see it now for what it was: an attempt to manage perception, rather than take responsibility.

After stepping away from the Tenacious 10 and the TS Madison Starter House collaboration, Dominique attempted to publicly spin the story—suggesting that I walked away for false or personal reasons. That narrative is not only untrue, it's dangerous.

My decision to walk away had everything to do with how I and my organization were mishandled. I'm not sure what Dominique thinks she knows about Pennsylvanians—but let me be clear: we don't play that. We move with integrity. We lead with values. And when someone disrespects our mission, we protect it at all costs.

The harm was real.

And what's worse is that Sisters PGH never received the full grant funding we were promised as part of this project. That directly impacted the services we could provide to Black and Brown trans people in our city. This is not abstract—this is about resources that never reached the people who need them most.

When we first joined the cohort, we were promised two years of funding. But all of the organizations waited at least eight months to receive their first installment. And after Dominique was subsequently let go from Borealis Philanthropy, we were told we would only receive one year of funding instead. I'll speak for myself when I say this put Sisters PGH in a very vulnerable position. We planned based on a commitment that was not honored. That put our ability to serve our communities in Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, and Philadelphia County at risk.

Let me also be clear: this is not about Borealis Philanthropy.

This is about Dominique Morgan, who made promises she did not keep. The commitment of two years of funding came from her directly. In fact, I want to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude to the staff at Borealis who stepped in to pick up the pieces after her departure. Their care, professionalism, and continued engagement made sure that we were still seen, heard, and supported—even under less-than-ideal circumstances. For that, I'm deeply thankful.

As someone who has watched how interconnected Dominique is with harm across multiple communities, I believe her continued efforts to center herself in drama—and fight every single person who challenges her—has completely eclipsed her ability to lead with grace, clarity, or accountability. That energy bled into the cohort. What started as inspiration became something else entirely. Eventually, she was no longer someone I wanted to look up to.

I want to look up to leaders who are focused, grounded, and emotionally available. Leaders who think about our youth when they make decisions.

Leaders who care about the people in jail, the trans folks struggling on the margins, the community members our Black trans-led nonprofits exist to serve.

Because if you can misappropriate funds—repeatedly—and still sleep at night, then you are not thinking about the future of our people.

Enough is enough.

What's even more harmful is that there were a select few who actively gaslit the victims of Dominique Morgan's harm throughout our community—because I am not the only one. And although some are unable to come forward out of fear of retaliation, or because of how closely Ms. Morgan is connected within their work, I see you. I honor you. I appreciate every sister and sibling who has reached out in support of me, my voice, and our organization. I love you, and I see you too.

I also want to take a moment to name something important for those still asking, “What happened?”

Dominique Morgan has a documented history of financial misconduct—including at The Okra Project, where significant funds were taken under false pretenses, including money that was meant to bail out incarcerated Black trans folks in Brooklyn. I want to extend my deepest, undoubted love to The Okra Project, its leadership, and every person impacted by this harm. As an Executive Director myself, I can only imagine the weight of discovering that your mission, your funds, and your trust have been violated in this way.

To the folks who never received bail support because those resources were misused—I see you. I hold you in my heart. And I name this publicly because it's part of a pattern that must be addressed. You don't have to take my word for it—look into it. The information is there.

I also want to be transparent in saying that I never had any intentions of leaving the Tenacious 10 or stepping away from supporting the TS Madison Starter House. In fact, I never formally submitted a resignation. I remained committed to the mission—as I set out to do from day one.

But when Dominique stopped communicating with me and it became clear there was no remaining structure or decision-making process after her exit from Borealis Philanthropy, I was left without any pathway to continue. I was effectively pushed out through silence. And I say that not because I am seeking to return, but because it's important to understand how this breakdown happened. It wasn't a matter of disinterest or disengagement on my part. It was a matter of leadership failing to engage me.

It's heartbreaking that we have to confront this kind of harm within our own Black trans community—but I'm calling for change. I believe that we can do better. I believe we must do better. And that change must always include accountability.

Let this be a moment where we recommit to community care—not in word, but in action.

Let this be a moment where truth-telling doesn't cost us our safety.

Let this be a moment where we protect each other more fiercely than we protect proximity to power.

We are worthy of that. We are deserving of that. And we will keep moving forward—together.

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Ciora Thomas

Executive Director, SisTers PGH & SisTers PHL