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COMPLETE

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Q1

NAME:

Sana Syed

Q2

District 2

COUNCIL DISTRICT

Q3

YOU AND THE ARTS Give us a sense about your relationship with the arts (Some ideas to consider) • What art form or cultural organization do you particularly enjoy? • Are your family members involved in the arts? • Share favorite cultural experience in the last two years? • What virtual arts programs have you and your family enjoyed during the pandemic?

While working at CBS 11 back in 2010, I formed Kimiya International, a 501(c)(3) that addresses human rights through documentary films and photography. Film has become my passion and what I do as my creative release. I love watching various documentaries that address human rights and social justice issues. I am also a lifelong traditional dancer, having learned South Asian and Middle Eastern dance while growing up.

Last year, I was a member of Leadership Dallas Class of 2020. My group was charged with creating the events/day of speakers and programming for the arts and culture month. We planned for the month of May all year and covid derailed a lot of what we originally planned. Thankfully, we were still able to have the Dallas Black Dance Theater talk to us about their work via zoom and share one of their beautiful performances – one of my favorite performances during the pandemic. We also learned from some of the leaders in the arts – such as Terry Loftis.

Despite the pandemic, we attended virtual concerts and outdoor comedy shows last year.

Q4

ADVOCACYThe support of our elected City leaders is important to ensuring arts and culture remain a priority at City Hall and part of the civic dialogue. **QUESTION:** How have you advocated for the arts community and/or how will you do that going forward?

I have advocated for the arts by connecting it with trauma healing. My non-profit, Kimiya International, recently was selected to be a part of the United Way Social Innovation Accelerator (SIA) program to launch Fight Club, a trauma therapy program that combines boxing, yoga and therapy for women in Dallas. We are currently developing a curriculum for a dance and art therapy program to launch in 2022.

I believe the arts not only are an essential part of expression and freedom – it is what helps us unite and heal during difficult times. I will always look for ways to participate, contribute to and elevate the arts, as the arts must be seen as an essential part of our community.

Q5

SUPPORT & RECOVERYPrior to COVID, the Dallas creative economy was on track to have an economic impact surpassing \$1B a year, a vital business sector. The pandemic derailed that momentum. Arts facilities were the first to close and will be among the last to reopen at full capacity. The city's nonprofit arts and cultural community has lost more than \$95M and over 1,000 jobs, and cultural tourism has virtually stopped. City support has been critical to keeping these institutions alive. Even in a tough budget year, this need remains. **QUESTION:** Will you work to see that City support continues and how will you ensure arts and culture play a key role in the Dallas economic recovery?

Yes, I will work to see that city support continues and ensure our contribution and connection remains intact for the community, schools, groups and businesses. Initially, budget concerns were high, but due to ongoing construction during covid and federal relief to the tune of \$300 million, there is no need to cut any arts programs, but rather ensure that they are properly supported.

Q6

EQUITY AND NEIGHBORHOODSThe top pillar of the Dallas Cultural Plan is Equity, with a goal of ensuring arts and culture are accessible in communities that have been historically underserved. And we know when arts are purposefully embedded in the community, they can fight urban blight and create vibrant neighborhoods. **QUESTION:** How will you keep the focus on equitable access to the arts; and specifically where and how would you like to see art used to address challenges in your City Council District. (Some ideas to consider)• Murals• Underpass transformation• More opportunities for ALAANA artists in underserved communities• Popup cultural centers• Neighborhood performances• Economic incentives for developers to create affordable galleries, workshop spaces and artists' housing

Equitable access to the arts involves access, affordability and diversity/inclusion. By creating more spaces for street art, underpass transformation as we see in places like Vancouver, using underpass areas for multimedia art events, movie screenings, closing down roads to traffic for street performances, creating economic incentives for developers to have a portion of their developments include space for art or artistic expression and events – these all play a role in showing how our city can elevate our role in the arts and touch people of all socioeconomic backgrounds.

Q7

PARTICIPATIONThe Dallas arts and cultural community is diverse and growing and contains a range of genres, ethnicities, locations and more. Every group, especially those serving your district, is honored when elected officials attend a program, visit our organizations, or even stop by a monthly DACAC meeting to say hello. **QUESTION:** Will you commit to attending local programs (performances, exhibitions, classes) or meeting with a Dallas arts organization on a regular basis? What would that look like?

I do regularly attend programs in the city and will continue to do so, with the commitment to also meet with arts organizations on a regular basis and learn how the city can continue to support this important part of our city and grow our contribution and offerings to the community.
