

News Release

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Student's winning poster urges Torontonians to 'speak up' by voting on October 25

A bold, colourful design by Toronto student Shaikh Faraz Safdar has been selected for the City poster that will help spread the word to younger voters as well as other eligible electors about the importance of participating in Toronto's municipal election this fall. Election Day is October 25. There are about 1.5 million eligible voters in Toronto.

Shaikh's poster design was chosen in the "Bring It. By Ballot" poster contest by Toronto Elections to encourage youth to take an interest in the 2010 election and help promote voting in general. Shaikh's winning poster delivers the message "Your vote is your voice. Speak up 10/25/10" in thick black text that stands out from a playful, almost mesmerizing, orange and yellow graphic background. The date refers to Election Day.

Shaikh, a 17-year-old high student has an interest in graphic design, received the first-place prize of \$250 and a City of Toronto award certificate, as well as the sense of pride that comes with communicating through his design work.

"Creativity is something I take my time to think about before I start any project," said Shaikh. "The creativity runs in my family. I look forward to creating more design projects in the future."

Toronto Elections intends to feature the design on posters and postcards that will be distributed to Toronto's post-secondary schools/institutions and various youth organizations to encourage participation in the election.

Shaikh Faraz Safdar and Bonita Pietrangelo, the City's Director of Elections and Registry Services, with the winning poster, will be available at City Hall from 1 to 3 p.m. to talk about the poster contest.

Anyone 14 to 24 years of age living in Toronto was eligible to enter the contest. The 21 eligible poster designs were posted on the Toronto Votes Facebook fan page as they arrived from May 17 until August 9. The Facebook fan page had more than 1,000 followers at the time of voting. The public's comments, along with the assessment of a panel of judges that included experts and representatives of youth groups, led to the choice of first, second and third place designs in the poster contest.

Second place honours went to Chantal Stepa, 22. A recent college graduate and a photographer, Chantal produced a portrait-based poster that features the diversity of Toronto's youth. Each person who is portrayed created a funky cardboard sign and written message (such as "I'll make my city listen") that was part of their photographic portrait on the poster. Chantal won \$150 and a City of Toronto award certificate.

A design by Pallavi Thampi was chosen for third prize. Pallavi, a second-year design student in Toronto, favours bold, daring design with clean lines - as evident in her dynamic design for the election poster. She received the prize of \$100 and a City of Toronto award certificate.

"We are very pleased with the results of the poster contest and congratulate not only the winners but everyone who submitted an entry," said Bonita Pietrangelo, Toronto's Director of Elections and Registry Services. "Our goal was to inspire youth to engage their peers through creativity and to encourage each other to participate in the upcoming municipal election. The winning poster speaks volumes."

Toronto Elections communicated about the poster contest earlier this year through youth organizations throughout Toronto. Besides featuring the first-place design in products such as the public poster, the City may also consider using one or both of the runner-up designs for election promotion.

All participating judges brought a unique perspective to the panel. The judging panel included:

- Bonita Pietrangelo, Director of Election and Registry Services
- Jannie Densing, an advertising co-ordinator with the City of Toronto
- Dave Dymont, a Toronto artist and art curator who has participated in various roles for Nuit Blanche
- Ryan Powell, a youth engagement co-ordinator from Malvern Action for Neighbourhood Change who is completing his Master of Arts degree in political science
- Sandra Vides Martinez, a youth representing Youth Action Network

Toronto Elections provided a rating system to help guide the judges through the first round of entry reviews. The rating system process allowed entries to be reduced from 21 submissions to the top five, which the judges then assessed further to select the top three in the context of election communications.

The poster is available on Facebook at the official City of Toronto elections page 'Toronto Votes'.

Media can obtain electronic files of the winning art work suitable for reproduction by e-mailing mmatel@toronto.ca (a staff member with Toronto Elections).

The public can also follow the election on Twitter at [torontovotes](https://twitter.com/torontovotes) or the City's election website at <http://www.toronto.ca/elections>.

Toronto is Canada's largest city and sixth largest government, and home to a diverse population of about 2.6 million people. It is the economic engine of Canada and one of the greenest and most creative cities in North America. Toronto has won numerous awards for quality, innovation and efficiency in delivering public services. Toronto's government is dedicated to prosperity, opportunity and liveability for all its residents. For information about non-emergency City services and programs, Toronto residents, businesses and visitors can dial 311, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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