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# YORKU

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# President

Bringing global perspectives into the classroom

BY MAMDOUH SHOUKRI

**T**his past November, I had the distinct pleasure of speaking to the Empire Club of Canada, recognized as one of the oldest and largest speakers' forums, with a membership comprised of some of this nation's most influential leaders from the business, labour, education and government sectors. I was honoured, and saw this as a great opportunity to talk about internationalization. To read the speech, please visit [yorku.ca/president/communication/speeches](http://yorku.ca/president/communication/speeches)

Why internationalization? It's a topic I am all too familiar with given that I was an international student myself, and I helped to craft the statement on internationalization by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada.

Over the last few decades, the imperative for Canada to compete in a global economy has gained momentum across all sectors, with significant intensification in new world economies like China and India. Given this change, I believe the ability to successfully conduct business in Canada and internationally will

**Over the last few decades,**

rely on a global world view that is enabled through what I call "the Endless Campus". As such, I see the export of Canadian education and the workforce of tomorrow as the defining factor in whether organizations succeed or fail.

It is interesting to note that in Canada, both universities and governments alike are recognizing the value of internationalization. Governments are introducing policies and initiatives to attract students, while universities are enhancing curriculums and exchange programs. Here at York, internationalization is a core value and is identified as a major priority in our strategic plan for 2010-2020. In this respect, I am pleased that our new Vice-President Academic and Provost, Rhonda Lenton, will be driving this plan forward.

Our strategic commitment to internationalization reflects our belief that an international perspective will help us maintain academic excellence, prepare future citizens for a more complex and interconnected economy, and ensure the continued promi-

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Mamdouh Shoukri is York's president and vice-chancellor.



nence of Canada in the world. We know that if students are to succeed globally, they should not only become experts in their fields of study but also experience the world first-hand and develop a sense of shared citizenship.

York offers the ideal environment for internationalization, given that it is one of Canada's largest and most multicultural universities, with more than 65,000 students, faculty and staff who can trace their roots to more than 170 countries. As such, we represent a welcoming environment for students coming from all parts of the world.

An advantage to being so diverse is that York is able to offer an international curriculum that brings world perspectives into the classroom. We prepare our future citizens to think and work in a global context. This has been reflected in growing activities involving internationalization of curricula, student mobility, language instructions and international collaborative agreements such as student exchanges, joint research and even joint degree offerings with other universities worldwide.

Our University has built a strong reputation, both nationally and abroad, for the quality of our academic programs, as evidenced by the students featured on the following pages, the calibre of our graduating class and our outreach to the business community. This success is evident through the more than 250,000 alumni worldwide who are making significant contributions in this interconnected world. ■

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# Jobopolis

Young or old, people who work see their jobs and employers in a similar light

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MCKENZIE JAMES

**A** NEW STUDY BY PAUL FAIRLIE, York professor with the School of Human Resource Management, reveals (surprisingly?) that workers of all ages want many of the same things – a finding that flies in the face of most media stories, which usually portray the generations as wanting vastly different things from their jobs.

Fairlie, who completed his BA, MA and PhD at York, says job satisfaction and work ethic have been slipping in North America and Europe for decades. “There are claims that people are slowly withdrawing psychologically from work as a life pursuit,” says Fairlie. “This may have to do with other long-term trends around work intensification, job insecurity (downsizing starting in the 1990s), rising rates of occupational stress and health problems, and decreasing trust in corporations – for example, the recent bank bailouts.”

“If we add to this an increasingly complex and anxious world – post-9-11 – people are starting to think more about: ‘Who am I? What am I doing with most of my waking hours? What should I be doing? Is what I’m doing at work making the world a better place, or am I contributing to these problems?’”

Fairlie says annual national polls suggest the need for meaningful work among workers has increased during the past 20 years. While meaningful work is still important to people – and becoming more so – Fairlie believes a growing number of people may be getting more jaded and are, instead, seeking meaning elsewhere, in their families or in their communities.

Fairlie surveyed 1,000 people in 50 US states and what he found runs contrary to accepted opinion that young people who work want something different than older people who do. “A lot of the received wisdom on this matter is, quite frankly, based on hearsay,” says Fairlie. “I felt more research needed to be done to actually test this out.”

Fairlie discovered that age and generation had only a 0- to 3-per cent impact on how people saw their work and what they desired from their workplace. It also didn’t matter how the generations were defined. Positive working conditions were far

more responsible for people’s job satisfaction levels, commitment and retention rate than age categories were, his study revealed.

His research showed that all workers were motivated by similar things (among 33 work characteristics measured), such as intrinsic rewards (e.g. freedom to be creative and make decisions, task variety, opportunities to identify and use one’s own strengths, employee involvement) and organizational support (having the right resources, training, procedures and communication to do one’s best). An area defined as “meaningful work” topped the list across all ages and generations.

Meaningful work was measured as self-actualizing work (enabling you to realize your full potential, values and life goals), social impact (having a positive impact on people and things through your work), feelings of personal accomplishment and believing that your highest career goals can be achieved within your current organization.

“People who report high levels of meaningful work are physically and mentally healthy. So much so, that psychologists and the World Health Organization are redefining ‘health’ to include a meaning component,” says Fairlie. “Thus, meaningful work is healthy work, leading to lower costs around benefits, disability and absenteeism.”

In his study, he also found that a mere 10 per cent increase in meaningful work was linked to 7 per cent higher satisfaction, commitment, stay intentions and lower burnout.

Fairlie notes there are many studies that show “dimensions of meaning” in life touch on what is most important to people. “It’s about what matters most to people in their lives,” he says, “so it makes sense that employers should consider how to address this through job and workplace features that make for competitive advantage. Meaningful work can be provided relatively easily without re-tooling jobs or the workplace. Sometimes, it could just be an updated communication strategy.”

Ultimately, it may not be a question of what an employee program costs but, rather, what the costs will be for employers who do nothing. ■

# Universe



**PAUL FAIRLIE:** Are people withdrawing from work as a life pursuit?



# No Lamp Left Behind

How York's "FreeStuff" initiative helps divert household items that would otherwise burden landfills

**F**REE STUFF. What's not to like? Well, nothing apparently, if the ongoing success of York's new "FreeStuff" program is anything to judge by. As anyone who's lived in residence knows, moving-in and moving-out day usually generates a kind of cleaning zeitgeist where residents invariably jettison a lot of stuff that's perfectly usable – from couches, chairs and lamps to CDs, books and tea kettles – that they simply don't want to schlepp home or no longer have a use for.

Take that naugahyde La-Z-Boy recliner Uncle Ned gave you for living in rez, for example. If it won't fit in your parents' Civic for the trip home in April, no worries. Just leave it behind, secure in the knowledge that it will find a good new home.

Created to reduce waste during the annual student move-out period, the FreeStuff project is a joint initiative between York's Housing Services, Residence Life, Waste Management and the President's Sustainability Council.

During the months of March and April, FreeStuff tables are set up in each of the University's undergraduate residences. Students are encouraged to share unwanted items prior to moving out of

residence for the summer. At the end of the FreeStuff period, any remaining items are donated to the Oasis Clothing Bank.

In 2012, the first year of the program, clothing, household items and books made up most of the items collected, but printers and other electronic items were also up for grabs.

York grad Andrew Plunkett (MES '99), sustainability project coordinator, Office of the President, says one big advantage of the FreeStuff program – aside from diverting perfectly usable items from the landfill – is that students help with the sorting process, which saves the University housing staff a lot of work. Last year, more than 3,748 lbs of clothing, household items, books and electronics were collected and donated to Oasis. Used batteries are also collected and recycled, explains Plunkett. "It's a great way of raising environmental consciousness in the residences," he says.

York also recently launched the reYUse website, giving members of the York community the ability to exchange unwanted items year round by posting them online. To learn more about reYUse, or to look for or offer items, visit [reyuse.blog.yorku.ca](http://reyuse.blog.yorku.ca) ■

**A** NEW STUDY by York University Kinesiology & Health Science Professor Jennifer Kuk and lead author Sharona Abramovitch reveals that many people grossly underestimate the size of one food serving (as defined by Canada's Food Guide) – especially when it comes to grains and vegetables. "Because people tend to underestimate the size of one serving, it's very easy for people to overeat, even though they may think they're being careful [by using the Food Guide]," says Kuk. "What happens is, people look at the guide and assume a 'single serving' is – quite naturally – what they regularly would have as a single serving." For instance, the Food Guide calls for three daily servings of

## A Lot on Their Plate

Why Canadians consistently underestimate food serving sizes

meat (or alternatives) for men and two servings for women. The guide defines a serving as 2 ½ oz or a ½ cup of cooked fish, shellfish, poultry or lean meat, "but if you normally think of an 8-oz steak as a reasonable single serving of meat, that alone exceeds the guide's maximum daily

allowance by more than 50 per cent for a woman," explains Kuk.

Participants in the study – 145 Caucasian, Black, South Asian and East Asian participants – were asked to select what they thought was a single serving of various foods. Participants were then asked to estimate how much of a particular food they ate in one sitting and were asked to recall their diet over 24 hours.

Researchers found all four ethnic groups inaccurately estimated the total number of servings they ate in one day and overestimated the number of servings of milk and alternatives.

What can be done? Kuk says the solution may be to revise the Food Guide to make it more straightforward and user friendly. ■



The story behind York's  
new *Goddess of Democracy*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MCKENZIE JAMES

# Statuesque

**R**OUGHLY A YEAR AFTER the removal of the first *Goddess of Democracy* – the commemorative statue to the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre – from the foyer of the York Student Centre, a bronze version of the work has been unveiled on the north side of the building, just west of the entrance doors. The work is a gift from the Toronto Association for Democracy in China (TADC). The original artwork was removed this summer because of renewal plans for the centre.

The new 8-ft tall piece is the work of Ruth Abernethy, whose other sculptures include a figure of Glenn Gould (*The Glenn Gould Gathering*, outside the CBC building on Front Street) and Oscar Peterson at the piano outside the National Arts Centre in Ottawa.

This *Goddess* is the second memorial at York to the 1989 student movement in China. (Another sculpture memorializing the tragedy, a bronze relief of tank tracks, shoes and a crushed bicycle on the outside wall of the University of Toronto's student union building, was unveiled in 1992. And like the York sculpture, it was a gift from TADC.) The original goddess statue was erected in 1989 by Chinese students in Beijing's Tiananmen Square at the height of the student protests in China.

York's first version of the *Goddess* was built with the same materials the Chinese students used to erect theirs (wood,

plaster, canvas and modelling paste), says Bruce Parsons, professor emeritus, Faculty of Fine Arts. Parsons was instrumental in both constructing York's first *Goddess* and in helping with its replacement. "I was the go-between, between the Chinese community and finding an artist for our bronze," he says. "I think we found the right sculptor in Abernethy."

For her part, Abernethy says she was delighted to take on the project. The *Goddess* now joins her five other works that grace various parts of Toronto, including one in Mount Pleasant Cemetery and three pieces on the Toronto Islands (*Franklin and Rabbit*, *Goose*, and *Bear*) and, of course, *Glenn Gould* on Front Street.

Abernethy was born in Lindsay, Ont., into an art- and music-filled family that ran a mixed farm. She now lives outside Stratford, Ont., in Wellesley, with her husband and two sons. She began her career in theatre, making props, and brings that sensibility to her work even now, she says.

For *Goddess*, Abernethy worked from rough sketches and photos of York's original and the Beijing original, provided by Parsons, but she says she mainly envisioned it herself. She also made the decision to produce the finished product in bronze. "I just love it as a material," she says. "I love the legacy of it. It's miraculously genuine and it's saying you've got the next 10,000 years to come and see me." ■





## In the Media

### When Bad is Good (for Ethics)

“Scandals are good for business when it comes to [interest in] business ethics. A number of years ago it was something that we had to make more of argument to have included on the curriculum or we had to convince students of the necessity of it.

The last few years that’s very much not the case.”

– ANDREW CRANE, director of the Centre of Excellence in Responsible Business at York’s Schulich School of Business, *The Globe and Mail*, Nov. 5, 2012

### Easy Money

“Whenever you’ve got an opportunity to make a lot of money, people are going to be corrupt – people are going to be involved in it.”

– MARGARET BEARE, professor at York’s Osgoode Hall Law School and author of books on organized crime, speaking about the Charbonneau commission, corruption and how to combat it, *Montreal Gazette*, Sept. 29, 2012

# Winning the War?

## Tecumseh, Brock and the War of 1812

**WHO WON THE WAR OF 1812?** It depends whom you ask – Canadians or Americans. While the debate continues, historian, political scientist and York Professor James Laxer, Department of Equity Studies, Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies, has weighed in on the conversation with his recent book – published in 2012, the war’s bicentennial – titled, *Tecumseh & Brock: The War of 1812* (Groundwood Books/House of Anansi Press, 2012). At the heart of the story is the unlikely friendship and political alliance of Tecumseh, the Shawnee chief and charismatic leader of the native confederacy, and Major-General Sir Isaac Brock, defender and protector of the British Crown. Interestingly, the two men collaborated in person only for a few days.

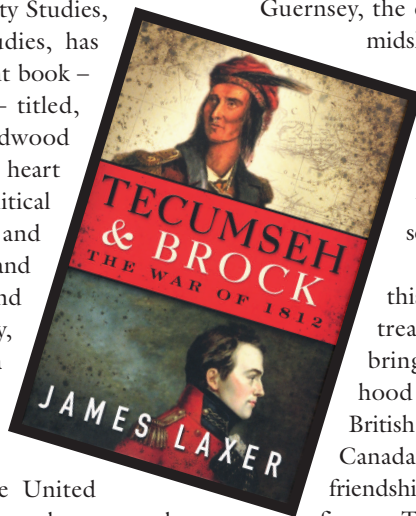
Tecumseh, born in 1768, lived during turbulent times: the thirteen colonies revolted against British rule, becoming the United States in 1776, and settlers had begun to push westward. Tecumseh realized that unless the tribes came together to form a great confederacy, they would never be able to hold onto their land. And so he began to travel great distances, encouraging many tribes to join forces with him against the Americans. On June 18, 1812, the US declared war on Great Britain. Tecumseh sided with the British, hoping to create an independent native

state north of the Ohio River. He developed a magnetic friendship with Major-General Brock, commander of the British troops in Upper Canada, and together they took Fort Detroit.

Brock was born at St. Peter Port on the Channel Island of Guernsey, the eighth son of John Brock (1729-1777), a midshipman in the Royal Navy, and Elizabeth de

Lisle, daughter of Daniel de Lisle, then lieutenant-bailiff of Guernsey. Brock’s actions, particularly his success at Detroit, earned him a knighthood, membership in the Order of the Bath, accolades and the sobriquet “The Hero of Upper Canada”.

Laxer offers a fresh and compelling view of this decisive war – which historians have long treated as a second American revolution – by bringing to life the Native struggle for nationhood and sovereignty; the battle between the British Empire and the US over Upper and Lower Canada; and finally, at the heart of it, the unlikely friendship and political alliance of two key historical figures: Tecumseh, the Shawnee chieftain and charismatic leader of the Native confederacy, and Major-General Brock, the protector and defender of the British Empire. *Tecumseh and Brock* is a powerful work of history, an epic story of empires and emerging nations, politics and power, and two leaders – neither of whom was Canadian born and both of whom were killed in battle. ■





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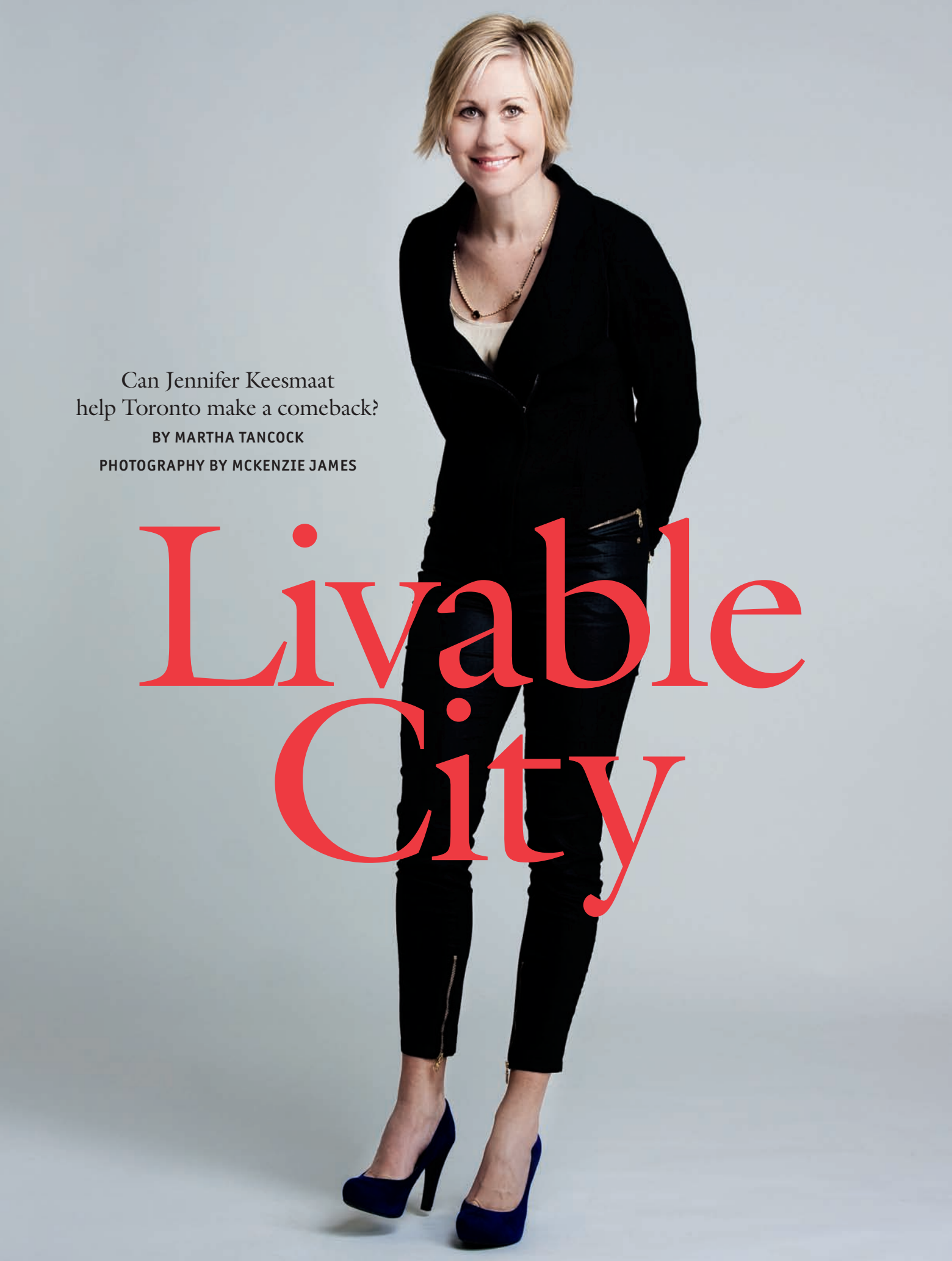


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Can Jennifer Keesmaat  
help Toronto make a comeback?

BY MARTHA TANCOCK

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MCKENZIE JAMES

# Livable City

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**WHEN HEADHUNTERS FIRST** scouted her for the job of Toronto's chief planner, Jennifer Keesmaat (MES '99) didn't bite. Why not?

Well, her career as an urbanist committed to creating places where people flourish was really taking off. The firm she founded in 2003, Office for Urbanism, had recently merged with a creative powerhouse of Canadian architects and engineers to form Dialog, an integrated urban design group committed to sustainability and community engagement. Dialog had offices across the country, she was a partner, and she was winning award after award for master and culture plans that revitalized downtowns from Iqaluit and Mississauga to Halifax and Saskatoon. A vocal proponent of walkable, livable cities, she was in high demand as a speaker, chairing an annual summit on revitalizing downtowns and holding roundtables on planning practices with students. *Pedestrian Jar*, a short film she co-produced, satirizing attitudes towards pedestrians, had premiered at the 2011 Toronto International Film Festival. Last May, invited to give her first TED talk on "an idea worth spreading", she extolled the virtues of walking to school.

But the seed was planted, and when the headhunter called for the third time, Keesmaat paused. "I had poured an enormous amount of passion into working with communities across Canada," she says. "I started to imagine pouring that same energy into my own city, the city I love." Maybe she'd give it two years. Impossible, countered her recruiters, insisting it would take at least five years to even begin to understand Toronto's planning complexities. I'll do it, she decided, and she officially started on Sept. 10, 2012.

Keesmaat grew up in Hamilton, Ont., and studied English and philosophy at Western University. She intended to go into law, but changed her mind after a summer pushing paper in her uncle's office. One day, after she had married and moved to Vancouver, she heard poet-activist Bud Osborn speak about homelessness in the city's Downtown Eastside. It was an eye-opener for her, and after the lecture she asked Osborn what she could do to help. Squatters were occupying a vacant Woodward's store at the time, so Keesmaat threw herself into organizing public forums to raise awareness about the dire need for affordable housing. It was all she could talk about. At a party, a friend told her she was starting to sound like an urban planner. "What's a planner?" she asked. Read Jane Jacobs, her friend suggested, and Keesmaat devoured *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Intrigued, she took a few community planning courses and then moved to Toronto with her husband, eager to learn more about urban planning at York.

While her partner ran All-A-Board Youth Ventures, a private charity the couple set up to help at-risk youth find employment,

Keesmaat enrolled in graduate courses in urban development processes, politics and planning, social policy development and municipal governance. She also spent a year at city hall doing independent research for her major paper on a topic that still compels her – how competing interests and political decisions shape planning outcomes. She had discovered her passion.

Expectations are high for Toronto's first female chief planner, with just 12 years' experience; plucked, at 42, from the private sector and not from the city's planning division. "Everybody's watching her," says Roger Keil, director of the City Institute at York (CITY), who invited her to launch his CITY Seminar Series last October.

Frank and fearless, Keesmaat has already publicly weighed in on several controversial issues. Before she started at city hall, she tweeted that removing the Jarvis Street bike lanes was a bad idea. In December, when talk turned to tunnels to replace the city's crumbling Gardiner Expressway, she told the *Toronto Star*: "I'm not big on massive investments in infrastructure that are about moving more cars." That's not exactly the message city hall has been spreading in recent years.

Meanwhile, she's rewriting an antiquated planning framework, unchanged for 40 years, and hiring the new talent required to lead future planning directions for the city. What seemed like a gargantuan task when she started "is still a gargantuan task" three months later, she says. Toronto faces unprecedented growth. Like other cities, it can't afford to fix its rapidly aging infrastructure. And as the disparity between Toronto's rich and poor grows, so does the need for affordable housing, says Keesmaat. The city could use a cycling plan and a walking strategy, and, she adds, planners need to address climate change and find ways to reduce Toronto's environmental footprint.

If she could wave a magic wand, Keesmaat would wish first for a pot of gold (and then for more time with her husband, son and daughter). Instead, she reminds ratepayers that they can't have zero property tax increases and still expect the first-rate municipal services that make Toronto hum. "When you consider how much we spend on lattes every year, why are we freaking out about how much we pay in taxes? We need a reality check," she told the CITY Seminar audience last fall. "We need to start having this conversation: If you want something, you have to pay for it." Not one to dither, she kicked off that conversation in February with a consultation process on transportation called "Feeling Congested?"

"This is likely going to be the most important work I do," says Keesmaat. "I walked into this role because I saw an opportunity to set the vision and to clarify how we as planners can truly shape this city. There's always a sense of urgency around here, but this is a hopeful and exciting moment." ■



*Believe!*

Darlene Jones's Grade 6 students nominated her for a teaching award – because she made them work so hard!

# Tough Love

BY MARTHA TANCOCK  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MCKENZIE JAMES

How do we  
Choose  
- Front cover

London A  


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**L**AST SEPTEMBER, Darlene Jones (BA '91 and BED '98) found a memo in her mail slot at Brookview Middle School. Busy preparing for the new school year, she couldn't make out the scrawl and disregarded it. More cryptic messages arrived but also went unanswered until whoever was trying to get her attention printed: "*Toronto Star* Teacher Award". What?

After spending a summer in England, Jones had forgotten her Grade 6 class had nominated her and she never expected to win anyway. But of the more than 250 entries for the annual prize, hers truly stood out, says Louise Brown, the *Star's* education reporter and a member of the judging panel that selected Jones for the newspaper's fourth-annual provincial prize. First of all, not just one but 12 of Jones's students nominated her. And secondly, they complained about too much homework, but actually really appreciated how hard Jones pushed them: "Ms. Jones is always on your back to get your work done and she never stops until you do it," wrote Nicole Peters. "The only thing I don't like about Ms. Jones is she gives too much work! Every day I go to school, it's do this and do that, but she is one of the best teachers I've ever had. Like Ms. Jones says, the more practice, the better," wrote Jessica Tran.

Jones came late to the profession. After earning a BA in history, she worked in a number of office jobs until "one day I said, that's it; I've got to follow my passion." She enrolled in York's Faculty of Education's pioneering Urban Diversity Program, studying under Patrick Solomon in 1998. Now it's been 14 years since she walked into her first Grade 6 class at Brookview, near Jane and Finch. This school is exactly where she wanted to teach. As a fifth-generation Ontarian descended from escaped American slaves, Jones was the only Black person in her Brantford, Ont., high school – and the first and only one in her family to attend university. She knew the power of determination, and what it takes and feels like to succeed.

As a young student, Jones always kept immaculate notebooks and worked hard. "Teachers like it when they see kids working hard," she says. "I was also one of the quiet ones, so they wanted to bring me out, to tap into me. That's what I try to do as a teacher, too."

Brookview students used to rate dismally on the provincial Grade 6 reading, writing and math tests. Two years ago, Jones and two colleagues launched Weekend Warriors, offering extra coaching on Saturdays. Sometimes as many as 90 children turned up. Reading scores quickly shot up by 10 per cent to 60 per cent and have now reached 70 per cent.

"I learned early in my career that I had to be innovative," says Jones. Some pupils struggle with issues at home that make them angry, apathetic and disengaged, she explains. "This is why my main goal is to change their mindsets about school, build their resilience and urge them to persevere – to beat the odds."

Jones goes the extra mile to help her students reach their potential. From day one of class, she sets the bar high – finish this assignment, finish that book. She asks parents to sign off on homework and will phone – sometimes drop by – to spur kids on. "From me, they get consistency," she says. "Only when I see they're monitoring their own progress do I back off. I tell them: 'Don't you ever stop, don't you ever give up.'"

"I like Ms. Jones because if you're walking into her class with Level 1s and 2s, you're sure not coming out like that," wrote one of her student nominators Darren Aning. "She loves progress."

Jones stocks a fridge in her classroom with juice and healthy snacks for students so hunger doesn't impair their learning. She often lends them toonies to buy lunch. After school, she cheers at their soccer games or watches them figure skate. "Call me if you need me," she tells them. "A lot of students like to come to school but don't give their all. 'I'm giving my all,' I say to them. 'So you give me your all.'"

Building solid relationships is the key to motivating children, she tells teachers who often turn to her for advice. "Praise is the best medicine ever." She believes humour can defuse anger, too. Once she stopped a boy who was kicking every locker as he proceeded down the hall. "Why are you messing up your shoes like that?" she asked him. He hadn't thought of that. And so he stopped.

Jones has papered her second-floor classroom with inspiration – for herself as well as her charges. Tacked next to the blackboard is a sepia-toned photo of her great-grandparents. "Because of their resilience, I am here," says Jones. Young daydreamers can't look anywhere without seeing posters of Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi and especially Barack Obama (Jones's hero) or reading encouraging words: "No one can do everything, but everyone can do something" and "Just because something is difficult, doesn't mean you shouldn't try".

Jones will soon be working her magic on a bigger scale, as a vice-principal. As a teacher, though, what she loves most is "the 'Aha!' moment, the yes-I-can-do-it moment, when kids see their own potential. That gives me joy." ■









**H**E SERVED IN THE INFANTRY, but Scott Waters waited 20 years before entering a real theatre of war – as an artist in Afghanistan

Like the archetypal young man on a quest to define himself through masculine pursuits, Scott Waters (MFA '04) joined the army after high school. Raised on *Platoon* and *Full Metal Jacket*, he yearned to see combat. Too bad for him, the Cold War was over and civil war hadn't yet erupted in the Balkans. After three years doing drills in the infantry, he quit to study art in Kelowna, B.C. At 42, his blood still quickens at the prospect of entering a theatre of war, and in the fall of 2011, the Toronto painter and York instructor seized the chance to be embedded with troops in Afghanistan – as a Canadian Forces war artist. Armed with a sketchbook, camera and notepad, he got to know soldiers in pre-deployment training in Alberta before joining them in Kabul for three weeks last winter. The combat mission was over, but Waters was shuttled around the dangerous city to observe Canadians training Afghans – the new mission – and visit camps. “Make sure you paint the tedium,” soldiers told him. He did, in a series of “twin” images and portraits – soldiers wearing identical uniforms, poses and expressions – depicting the repetition of military life, featured at three recent solo exhibits. Ever driven to make sense of the soldier's lot, Waters reads military memoirs and Christian contemplative writing. In 2006, he published a memoir, *The Hero Book*, about his early military experience, and these days he blogs as much as he paints. A recent Diamond Jubilee Medal recipient for his contributions to Canadian history, Waters also tests himself physically – pedalling to Halifax, training for marathons – while seeking his deeper, truer self and searching for meaning. ■

# The Art of War

He served in the infantry, but Scott Waters waited 20 years before entering a real theatre of war – as an artist in Afghanistan

BY MARTHA TANCOCK ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY KC ARMSTRONG



A portrait of a young woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a dark corduroy jacket over a black and white patterned top. She is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a plain, light gray.

# Shining Stars

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## Meet York's brightest students

BY MARTHA TANCOCK  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SOPHIE KINACHTCHOUK

**E**VERY YEAR, *YorkU* magazine puts a spotlight on York's most stellar students. The 10 profiled here attained the highest grade point averages in their respective Faculties after finishing second year last spring. Midway through their undergraduate careers, they are in peak form, but their achievements come as no surprise. These perennial scholarship winners have always strived to do their best. They're smart, creative, competitive, disciplined and intoxicated by learning. Ties can be expected, but this year there was an unprecedented three-way tie – in fine arts. Like the York populace at large, these young achievers are mostly immigrants or children of immigrants, and grateful for the sacrifices their parents made to give them better opportunities. Some know precisely where they are going while others are savouring the journey. This is their time.

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### Passion Play

Esther Phua ■ Glendon  
GPA: 8.63

**THE DAUGHTER OF A FINNISH MOTHER** and Singaporean father, Esther Phua (pictured, left) grew up in an actively Christian family in Toronto. She sees parallels between her academic and faith journeys. As a young girl, she focused on obeying the rules and fulfilling others' prescriptions for success. So in Grade 9, the A student ran for student council and joined five clubs. She made it look like a breeze – then burned out. "If the cost of accomplishment is your health, it isn't worth it," her mother told her super-achieving child. Phua shed her I-can-do-everything drive and enlisted only in "things I felt called to." Passion, decided the fan of Christian spiritualist writer Donald Miller, would be her litmus test for choosing what to get involved in and what to study. While high school

peers stampeded towards medicine and engineering, Phua won essay awards in the arts stream. Let her older brother be the doctor. At York, the insatiably curious 20-year-old has swerved in wildly different intellectual directions but finally settled on communications and linguistics. The Glendon blogger and ambassador is still dogged by perfectionism and waffles about her future – maybe she'll try journalism. Meanwhile, she relishes organizing singsongs and Bible study at summer camp, and strumming her guitar at a campus Christian club. Nothing beats raising her voice in joyful worship with others.

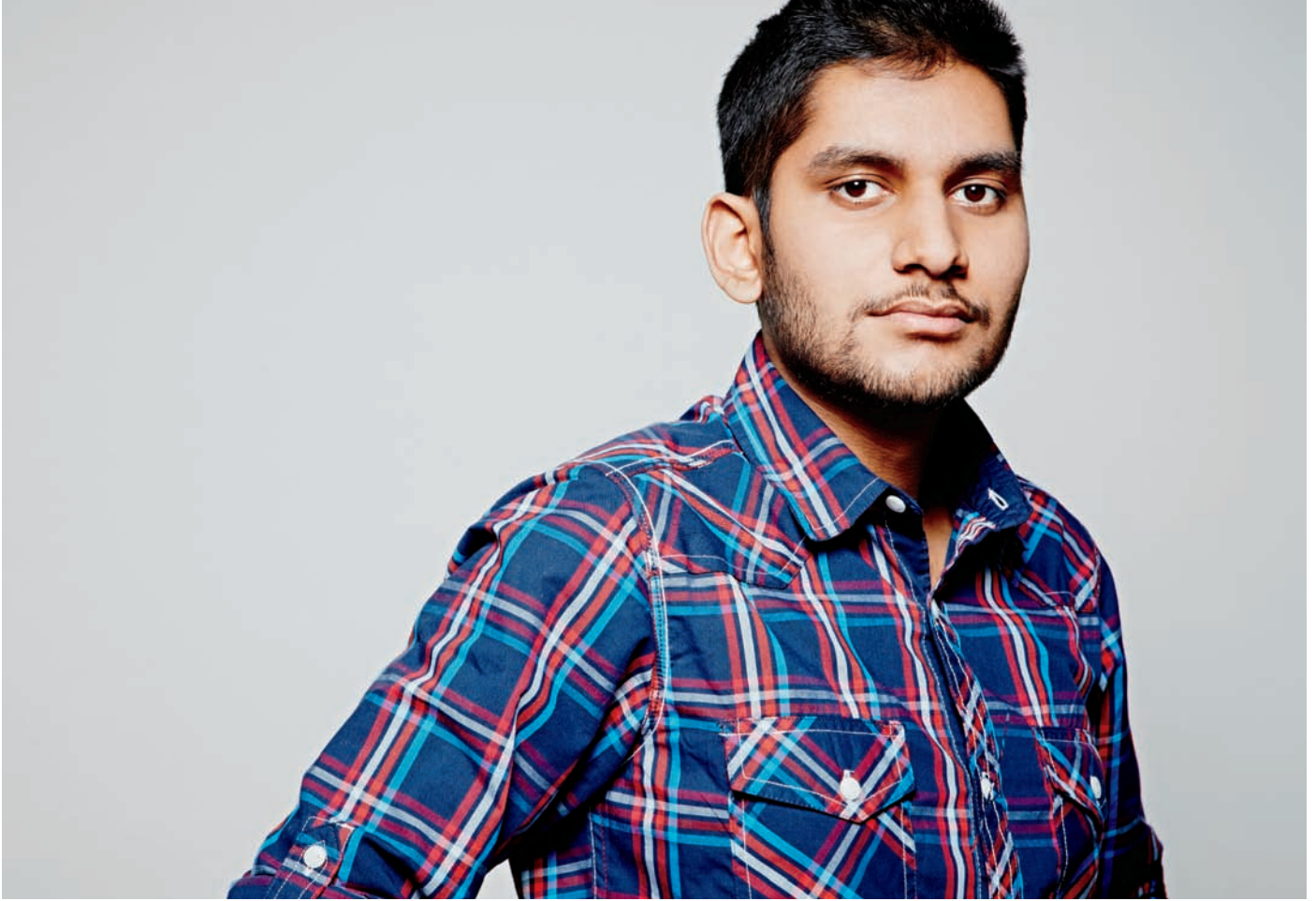
### Pain Reliever

Aasil Chatha ■ Faculty of Science  
GPA: 8.95

**IN 2005, AASIL CHATHA** emigrated from Pakistan with his mother, brother and three sisters. His engineer father stayed behind to work, determined to give his family better prospects in Canada. They settled in Maple, Ont., where Chatha started Grade 8. "It was tough coping with culture shock and a different language," says the 20-year-old biology undergrad. But the A student soon adjusted and by Grade 12 won enough scholarships to cover almost all his university expenses. "It does pay to get high marks!" Like his older brother, Chatha aims to go into medicine. As a child, he witnessed his grandfather struggle with diabetes. "That's when I decided I wanted to be a doctor, to alleviate people's pain and suffering." For two summers he volunteered in a hospital emergency ward. "It reinforced my passion for the profession and made me want to do it for the rest of my life." He's aced the Medical College Admission Test and awaits offers from med schools. Meanwhile, the fan of "Breaking Bad" and "Game of Thrones" promotes York's UNICEF Club, plays soccer and badminton in Ahmadi Muslim leagues, and reserves weekends

**PHUA:** Can-do drive





**CHATHA:** Eye on medicine

for friends. Someday this new citizen may be a heart surgeon or a kidney specialist here in his family's adopted home. "This country has given us so much, we just can't leave."

## Suzuki Method

**Kimiko Suzuki** ■ Faculty of Fine Arts  
GPA: 8.36 (three-way tie)

**KIMIKO SUZUKI PRACTISES HER VIOLA** as much as three hours a day, determined to make a living performing on the instrument with the deep, mellow sound that hooked her at age 11. With her pedigree, chances are she will succeed. Her father conducts musicals from Broadway to Los Angeles and her mother used to teach music. When Suzuki followed her violinist sister to Etobicoke School of the Arts, the classically trained pianist wasn't fixated on a music career. Soon, however, she was playing in the school orchestra, string ensemble and theatre pit, taking lessons from Toronto Symphony Orchestra members and attending summer music camps. At 19, she became assistant principal violist with the Koffler Chamber Orchestra, and then she followed its director, Professor Jacques Israelievitch, to York where she's performing

more than ever and freelancing as an accompanist, arranger and tutor. Suzuki is so shy she speaks in a whisper, but you wouldn't know it when she performs on stage. "I try to forget about the audience and connect to the music." For the 21-year-old fan of *Harry Potter* and other fantasy novels, "music's pretty much my life," she says. Grad school beckons. "Sometimes I wish I had been serious at a younger age, especially when I see the competition." Wait till they hear her.

## Good by Design

**Yessi Arifin** ■ Faculty of Fine Arts  
GPA: 8.36 (three-way tie)

**UNPLUGGED, THAT'S YESSI ARIFIN.** The design student drives her friends crazy because she can't be bothered to charge her cell phone. For recreation, this pescatarian from a family of Indonesian restaurateurs explores Toronto's ethnic cuisine when she's not doing downward dog or curling up with a big book like *The Brothers Karamozov* by Fyodor Dostoyevsky. Arifin treasures a slower, quieter pace and prefers to work by hand. "I feel I can learn more. I'm more self-reflective." She is hardly anti-technology, though. Last year, inspired by the

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Jane and Finch community, the 20-year-old immigrant who grew up in North York, Ont., dreamed up a mobile application that enables residents to draw, write and take photographs of the neighbourhood they call home. Her app, “Layers”, was a semi-finalist at the 2012 Adobe Design Achievement Awards and it signals her desire to use design to forge a better world. One day, she can see herself teaming up with non-profit organizations like Theatre of the Oppressed. First, she hopes to intern at IDEO, a San Francisco-based design firm devoted to advancing social good. Like her father, an insurance executive who retired at 40 to paint, Arifin dares to be different – and do good. “Designers can play an important role in making complex data understandable and rendering it relevant to tackling social problems.”

## Linguistic Adventures

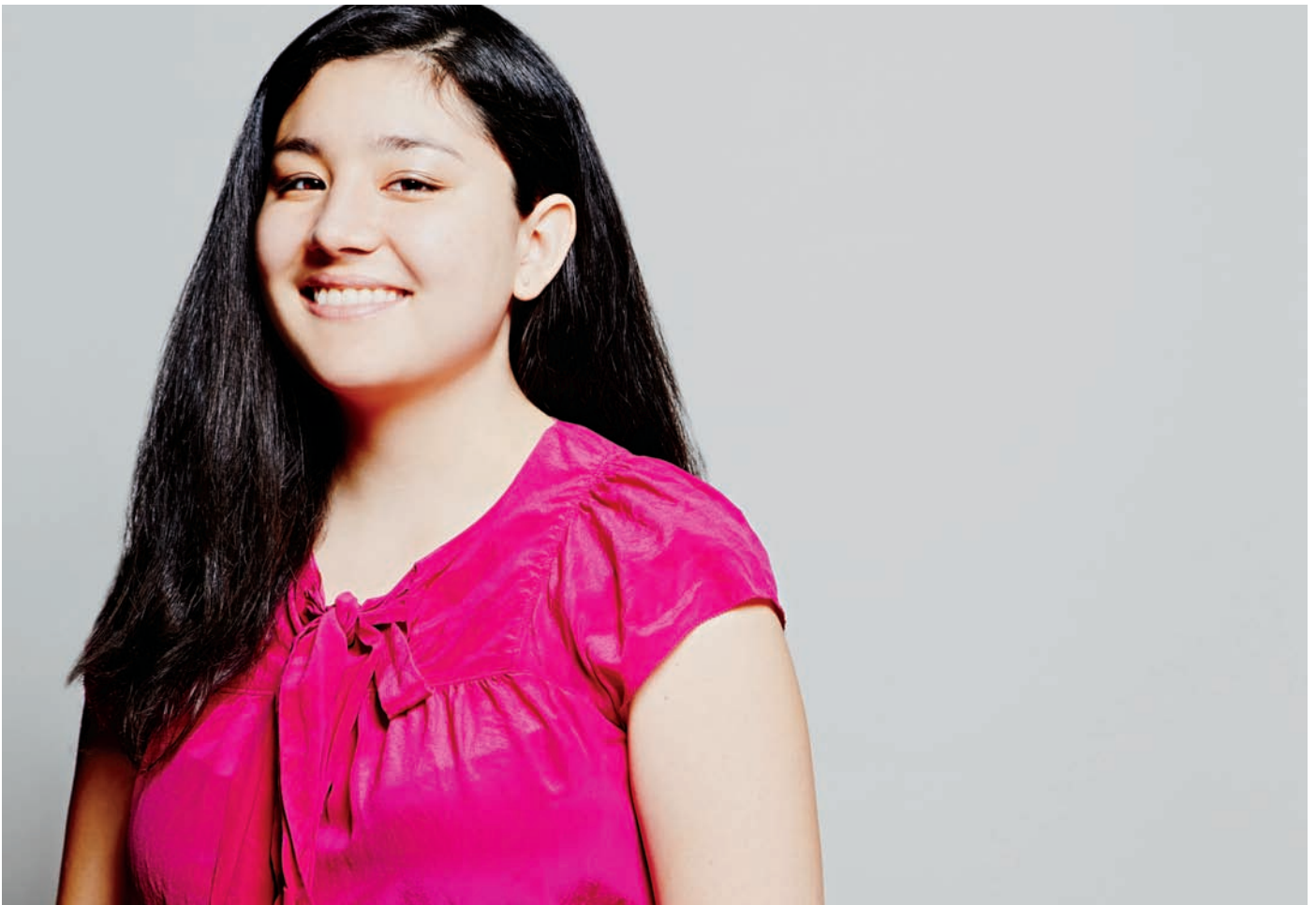
Katy Shum ■ Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies

GPA: 9

**GOOD AT EVERYTHING**, curious about all, Katy Shum could have

studied international development, business or nursing, but chose linguistics at York. The middle daughter of Hong Kong immigrants, she spent her childhood occasionally translating for her Cantonese-speaking parents in Scarborough, Ont. She also speaks Mandarin, and studied French and Spanish in high school. “I didn’t want to just learn other languages,” says the 19-year-old whose latest enthusiasm is Japanese. During high school, the children’s tutor and Christian youth group leader worked at a summer camp in Arizona, where she learned Navajo greetings and encountered a culture very foreign to her own. “It was the first of my linguistic adventures,” she says. For Shum, it triggered a fascination for the nuances of language, the pitfalls of translation and how “each language opens you up to a whole new world view.” Linguistics, she discovered, would lead her there. Next year, the dragon-boat paddler hopes to afford a fourth-year exchange to Tokyo. Then what? If she doesn’t jump into speech pathology or teaching children, she might try translating the Bible for minority-language peoples, saving dying tongues and spreading literacy. “My goal is to help people communicate with each other. If you don’t understand another person’s perspective or culture, you get prejudice and discrimination.”

**SUZUKI:** Practise makes perfect







## Green Entrepreneur

Zara Anucha ■ Faculty of Environmental Studies  
GPA 7.78

**ZARA ANUCHA COASTED IN HIGH SCHOOL.** On report cards, teachers typically wrote: “Zara is very smart but needs to apply herself better.” The middle child of five, born to highly educated Nigerian immigrants, smartened up in Grade 10. University loomed and her parents nagged. The spark that finally ignited this late bloomer was the environmental club. She threw herself into recycling and awareness-raising campaigns. “The environment is the biggest issue of my generation and I wanted to be involved,” says the Richmond Hill, Ont., commuter. And she remains involved. Instead of living at home in first year, the daughter of a York social work professor moved into the Pond Road Residence to participate to the max. She won an award as a residence environmental ambassador and then joined 22 other young people selected by the Ontario government to help develop a provincial youth strategy. “It

**ARIFIN (LEFT):** Design for a better world

**SHUM (BELOW):** Curious about it all







**ANUCHA:** Keeping her options open

was pretty cool working together to influence policy.” Deeply concerned about social justice and equity, and entrepreneurial like her pharmacist father, Anucha can see herself founding a green, socially responsible business. But the poet who watches “Pretty Little Liars” may end up in graduate or law school instead. “That’s why I keep my grades high. I don’t want to close any doors. I’m still figuring things out, making mistakes, exploring.”

## In Business to Teach

**Soobia Haider** ■ Schulich School of Business  
GPA: 8.76

**SOOBIA HAIDER CAME TO CANADA** from Pakistan at the age of five with her baby sister and parents, professionals who wanted the best education for their daughters. By middle school, she was winning prizes at science fairs and acing spelling bees. “If I can get an A, why not an A-plus?” says the 20-year-old over achiever. “It sounds like an obsession, but it isn’t really,” she laughs. Haider is interested in much more than high marks. In high school, the president of the Muslim Student Association

raised funds for girls’ education in Pakistan, tutored math and science, and contributed to the Canadian Young Scientist Journal. Why did this math and science whiz choose business? She was hooked after her first business class in Grade 10. “I loved the idea that business combined math and people.” At Schulich, Haider is a teaching assistant for a first-year statistics course and helps produce the student newspaper. An avid reader who does her homework while watching “Suits” on TV, she also cheers for the German soccer team and tweets about her favourite celebrities. Fluent in English and Urdu, she dreams of seeing the pyramids and trekking through rainforests. Career-wise, Haider aims to earn a CA, CFA and MBA and then become a professor. “I think teaching is amazing, just for the satisfaction of helping people.”

## Horsing Around

**Meghan Bacso** ■ Faculty of Fine Arts  
GPA: 8.36 (three-way tie)

**MEGHAN BACSO LIVES IN A HORSEY WORLD.** Since she was 12, the design student from Kitchener, Ont., has been competing in



**HAIDER (ABOVE):** Business prof in the making?

**BASCO (RIGHT):** High on her horse

horseback riding most weekends, most seasons – even throughout University. The sport suits perfectionists like her, because horse and rider are judged on form. “I can spend way too long on tiny little details even professionals don’t notice,” admits the former provincial silver medallist on York’s equestrian team. You can see that same attention to detail in her commissioned pastel and pencil horse portraits, a lucrative sideline that pays to keep her horse, Sully, in a King City stable. Despite a schedule crammed with assignments, riding practice and competitions, Bacso delivered 20 portraits in time for Christmas. “At orientation, somebody said I could kiss my scholarship goodbye” because it’s hard to sustain a qualifying average. Not for Bacso. “I’ve never really been one who doesn’t get my work done,” she says. She reads no novels, watches no TV. The hobby artist was leaning towards biology but applied to York’s design program on a whim instead. “Everybody’s always saying do what you love, so I went for it.” She likes the program better by the year – the theory, problem-solving, creativity and the different directions she could go as a graphic designer. “It’s turning out to be really exciting.”





## No Borders

Elizabeth Fung ■ Faculty of Health  
GPA: 9 (tie)

**AS A TEENAGER**, Elizabeth Fung bucked the family trend and flirted with the arts. Growing up in Markham, Ont., she played clarinet, sang in her high school choir and loved to paint and do pencil portraits in art class. But by Grade 11, reality intruded. A science career promised more stability for the brilliant student of chemistry, physics and biology. The second youngest of five children of an engineering professor and a pharmacist graduated with a 96.4 per cent average and enrolled in kinesiology at York – a stepping stone to medicine. She was attracted by York’s multicultural diversity and the many student clubs, hoping such a milieu “would encourage me to be more outgoing,” she says. Not that the award-winning student is the retiring sort. She works in the kinesiology office, is vice-president academic of the kinesiology student organization, and volunteers as a student health ambassador and peer mentor. For the past two summers, Fung has helped a professor research children’s active play. Next summer, she will write the Medical College Admission Test, determined to be a pediatrician. “I love working with kids,” says the 20-year-old, who can see herself joining Doctors Without Borders one day. To her, life seems full of possibility. “Don’t you wish you knew what would happen in the future?”

**FUNG:** En route to med school

## Gifted

Rebecca Atkins ■ Faculty of Health  
(No photo available.)  
GPA: 9 (tie)

**REBECCA ATKINS WAS READING NOVELS** by the age of four. The precocious seventh child of Barrie, Ont., financial planners was living up to her middle name, Andekas, Estonian for “gifted”. Last fall, the bookworm grazed on Plato’s *Republic* and devoured *She’s Come Undone*, Wally Lamb’s novel of a girl who has a breakdown. It struck a chord. In Grade 12, depression almost paralyzed Atkins. “I was in a really dark place.” Despite sleeping 16 hours a day and missing 40 per cent of her senior year, she finished top of her graduating class and won the Governor General’s Award. Thanks to medication, therapy and especially “a social worker who made a difference,” she beat the ‘black dog’ – and decided to become a youth crisis counsellor. She enrolled in psychology at York after working for a year, but commuting from home leaves no time for soccer, skiing, camping, cycling or videogames – her guilty pleasures. When not studying, the heavy-metal fan and accomplished piano player finds her bliss by writing songs with her boyfriend. She also volunteers at a mental health clinic, where she finds deep satisfaction from calming distressed clients. “Being able to make a difference, even if it is just in one person’s life, is so powerful.”



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# Magnetic Attraction

It's true! Men's and women's brains do things differently

BY MICHAEL TODD

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MCKENZIE JAMES

**F**OR DIANA GORBET, the long journey to an eventual PhD in the area of “visuomotor transformation science” started early – age six, to be exact. Gorbet, a York grad (BSc '99, MSc '02, PhD '06), was a self-described “weird kid collecting bugs, putting them in jars, labelling them and seeing what they ate” – fascinated by how things worked even in her earliest childhood years. Her science studies began in her suburban north-Toronto backyard where she spent endless summer hours studying and looking for insects. “Basically, I wanted to investigate whatever crawled, flew or burrowed,” says Gorbet with a laugh. “What made things tick? I was intensely curious about it all.”

Gorbet says she didn't inherit the science gene from either parent per se, but she did have relatives who were bona fide, card-carrying PhDs who worked in labs in the US. “I definitely was aware of that side of the family – my scientific cousins,” says Gorbet.

That curiosity and drive would eventually lead to her current work, studying – among other aspects of neuroscience – the body's motor functions and how visual input is translated into motor movement. Interestingly, Gorbet started out in chemistry, not biology, when she enrolled at York as an undergrad. “We had to take courses in all of the sciences in first year,” she says. “I took biology and loved it. To me it was more like being in my backyard.” Gorbet never looked back after that. Biology was “how things worked.”

In her third year, Gorbet took a course on circadian rhythms (all living things have a built-in biological time clock) and later volunteered for a York professor as a lab assistant, studying kissing bugs – blood sucking, beetle-like insects around 2- to 3-cm in length that attach themselves to the lips of human sleepers at night to feed. “I learned how to maintain a colony, dissection, sample collection and experiment design. It was a really good experience and I stayed on for my MSc,” says Gorbet.

She later took a neuroscience course in the last year of her master's. “It was really cool and that's when I first met Professor Lauren Sergio who'd just been hired and was setting up a new lab,” says Gorbet. Sergio had received some significant

funding and was looking for PhD students to help her with research. “I'd never considered neuroscience but the opportunity came my way so I grabbed it.”

Sergio's lab primarily focused on issues relating to motor control. More specifically, she was investigating how the brain controls all our movements to, say, pick up a pair of glasses or a coffee cup. While these movements might seem simple from the outside, the processing power the brain uses to do such tasks far outstrips memory capabilities of any supercomputer that currently exists.

Our ability to control our movements underlies all our interactions with the world around us – both people and objects. To successfully perform even the simplest reaching movements, for instance, the brain must combine information from multiple sources (vision, hearing, sense of body positioning in space, working memory and previously learned motor patterns, to name just a few) and then transform this combined information into a pattern of complex muscle activity that will get you what you want or where you'd like to be.

“This transformation of information takes a lot of intricate brain processing that we still don't fully understand,” says Gorbet. To look into the brain, Gorbet uses a variety of brain imaging and neurophysiological approaches, including functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), electroencephalography (EEG) and transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS), a powerful electromagnet held outside the skull that inhibits or stimulates sections of the brain while a person performs motor tasks.

While some motor movements are probably innate and are almost automatic – such as direct reaching – more complicated movements (best described as “indirect”) must be learned. Putting on glasses would be a good example.

Another indirect movement would be learning to use a computer mouse to control a cursor. It's a skill that's learned. (Just go to the nearest computer and turn the mouse to the horizontal instead of vertical orientation and try to manipulate the cursor. You'll quickly see how difficult ‘simple’ tasks really are.)

Gorbet's discovery of gender-related differences in how men's and women's brains process information was more of a





**GORBET:** Getting inside our heads

happy accident than by design. During her PhD studies, she was researching how our brain transforms visual information into a reaching movement. Her pilot study involved two men and two women. When the numbers came in, Gorbet noticed what she first thought were anomalies in the data. “I couldn’t figure it out,” she says. “It looked like something was wrong with the results. They seemed to indicate that the patterns of brain activity during movement planning were distinctly different in men and women.”

At the time, Gorbet says there was nothing documented in the literature in terms of motor control that indicated there would be any differences between men and women. “Other areas of neuroscience had found differences in brain activity between men and women in language processing, for instance, but not motor control,” says Gorbet. So she decided to replicate the reaching task experiment once again, this time using larger numbers of men and women – 10 in each group – while monitoring brain activity using functional MRI.

Statistically, the results were significantly different between men and women. “In a nutshell, what I’ve found is that when men reach for an object, we tend to see activity on the opposite side of the brain to the reaching arm. [All subjects in the study were right-handed, so it was the men’s left hemisphere ‘lit up’] – what we call contra-lateral,” says Gorbet. However, she found that in women, the brain activity for the same task was generally in the same area as the men’s but tended to be in both hemispheres.

Furthermore, when magnetic pulses were used to decrease brain activity in a region of the brain opposite to the reaching arm, it caused impaired reaching ability in men but not in women. This extra activity in women could be acting as an emergency backup system.

“What happens is that, typically, reaction time goes down in men but not women,” says Gorbet. “We use a powerful magnet and hold it above a person’s head. Then we send magnetic pulses into the brain. This sets up electrical stimulation but does not hurt the brain in any way. Depending on the frequency of the magnetic pulses, you can either facilitate/increase activity or inhibit it in specific areas of the brain. When we decreased activity, you could see the deficits in the men’s reaching movements. In women, we didn’t see any significant deficits because their brains may be compensating.”

What to make of the results? Gorbet says this bi-lateral nature of women’s brain processing may be a built-in protective measure designed as an evolutionary backup. “Why, exactly, women have that capacity is hard to know,” says Gorbet. One suggestion put forward to Gorbet by a colleague, Doug

Crawford (a York professor affiliated with York’s Visuomotor Neuroscience Lab and Centre for Vision Research) was that this trait could have evolved because women are much more prone to stroke during childbirth due to big changes in blood pressure. It might make sense for the brain to have a backup in case a part of it was damaged.

“When you look at this from an adaptive perspective, you are going to live longer and have more children and pass on your gene pool if you are able to compensate for having a stroke and still go about your day-to-day life,” explains Gorbet.

The implications of Gorbet’s findings are not just “men versus women” scientific curiosities. Her results raise important questions about current research modelling, as well as medical intervention strategies for treating neurological disease.

“Clinically, the data suggests very strongly that if you damage the same region of the brain in a man and a woman, the results of that injury will be different,” says Gorbet. “So what it means for therapy or diagnosis is that you need to look for different things. The symptoms for women walking into the ER with a stroke tend to be different than those shown by men. And if we don’t understand how brain processing differs in the brains of men and women, then we’re really missing out on an opportunity to tailor our medical treatments to specifically cater to different needs. There are also implications for neurological disorders that are inherited.”

Gorbet notes that in clinical neurological trials, most animals used today are male – usually male mice, rats and some primates. However, Gorbet feels this creates a gender bias in the results. “Female animals are thought to have widely fluctuating hormone levels and aren’t used as much,” she says. “But it’s really quite simple to control for that and it’s really not as much of an issue as people make it out to be.” The real problem, Gorbet explains, is that male results are generalized out to female animals and then to humans, even though these may not necessarily translate.

“If you look at some common neurological diseases, women are more likely to get Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, depression and anxiety disorders. Men are more likely to get autism, schizophrenia and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). We don’t yet have a good fundamental understanding of how these diseases differ between men and women,” says Gorbet. “Results from these studies are often generalized in humans to disorders that affect both men and women, and even sometimes to disorders that are more prevalent in women. We aren’t tailoring our clinical approaches to treatment. It’s as if there was no difference. And that’s a problem.” ■

## To learn more, visit:

[ossdweb.org](http://ossdweb.org) (Organization for the Study of Sex Differences)  
[danapress.typepad.com/weblog/2011/11/sex-and-brain-science.html](http://danapress.typepad.com/weblog/2011/11/sex-and-brain-science.html)  
[cahill.bio.uci.edu](http://cahill.bio.uci.edu)  
[brainfacts.org/sensing-thinking-be](http://brainfacts.org/sensing-thinking-be)



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# Welcome to the Knowledge Economy

Why Canada's future prosperity will be driven  
by brain power, not natural resources



**T**HE FOLLOWING is a precis of President Shoukri's November 2012 address to the Empire Club in Toronto.

Over the past two decades, we have been witnessing the transformation of the Canadian economy from being resource-based to an economy driven by knowledge. As such, our future prosperity will depend on our ability to transform knowledge into services and products.

This new knowledge-based economy is having a significant impact on all sectors, particularly education. It is creating global competition for knowledge workers and demand from young people wanting to pursue post-secondary education, and it's driving the internationalization of universities.

For Canadian universities and colleges, these developments have created both challenges and opportunities.

Let me start with the challenge: education must prepare students to think globally so they can work within an interconnected world. We must re-examine our offerings to ensure we can accomplish this task.

With challenges come opportunities. Recently, the demand for postsecondary education has increased throughout the world. This is driven by the mismatch between the demand for talent in the emerging economies, like China, India and Latin America, and their inability to provide the needed opportunities.

International education provides an economic advantage for the host country. In 2008, international students in Canada spent approximately \$6.5 billion on tuition, accommodation and discretionary spending. In 2010, it was more than \$8 billion.

International education also provides our students with the tools needed to succeed in a global environment. Moreover, international students trained in Canada represent an excellent pool of highly qualified workers. Some students may stay and integrate; those returning home will become ambassadors, supporting Canada's trading efforts.

How well are we doing at attracting international students? At the outset, I'll say that Canada is blessed with outstanding academic institutions, with multiculturalism as an asset. Speaking from experience, Canada is ideal for young and globally driven university applicants.

Unfortunately, our performance as a destination for international students does not reflect our true potential. The top countries receiving students are the USA, U.K., France, Germany and Australia.

Today, Canadian universities and governments are recognizing the value of international education. Both Dezső Horváth, dean of York's Schulich School of Business, and my good friend Amit Chakma, president and vice-chancellor of

Western University and chair of an advisory panel on Canada's international education strategy, issued reports on how to attract international students.

Several initiatives have since been developed, like Edu-Canada, which uses our embassies to promote education and support recruitment, and the establishment of scholarships for foreign students and postdoctoral fellowships.

Perhaps the most important change allows foreign students to work while studying in Canada and for up to three years after graduation, and they can now apply for permanent residency from within Canada. It's in this context that I would argue that Ontario is poised to be at the forefront to lead that growth of international students.

Naturally, there are some risks. We must recruit the highest-quality students in terms of academic and communication skills. Additionally, universities must develop infrastructure, like counselling, and opportunities for integration into Canadian life.

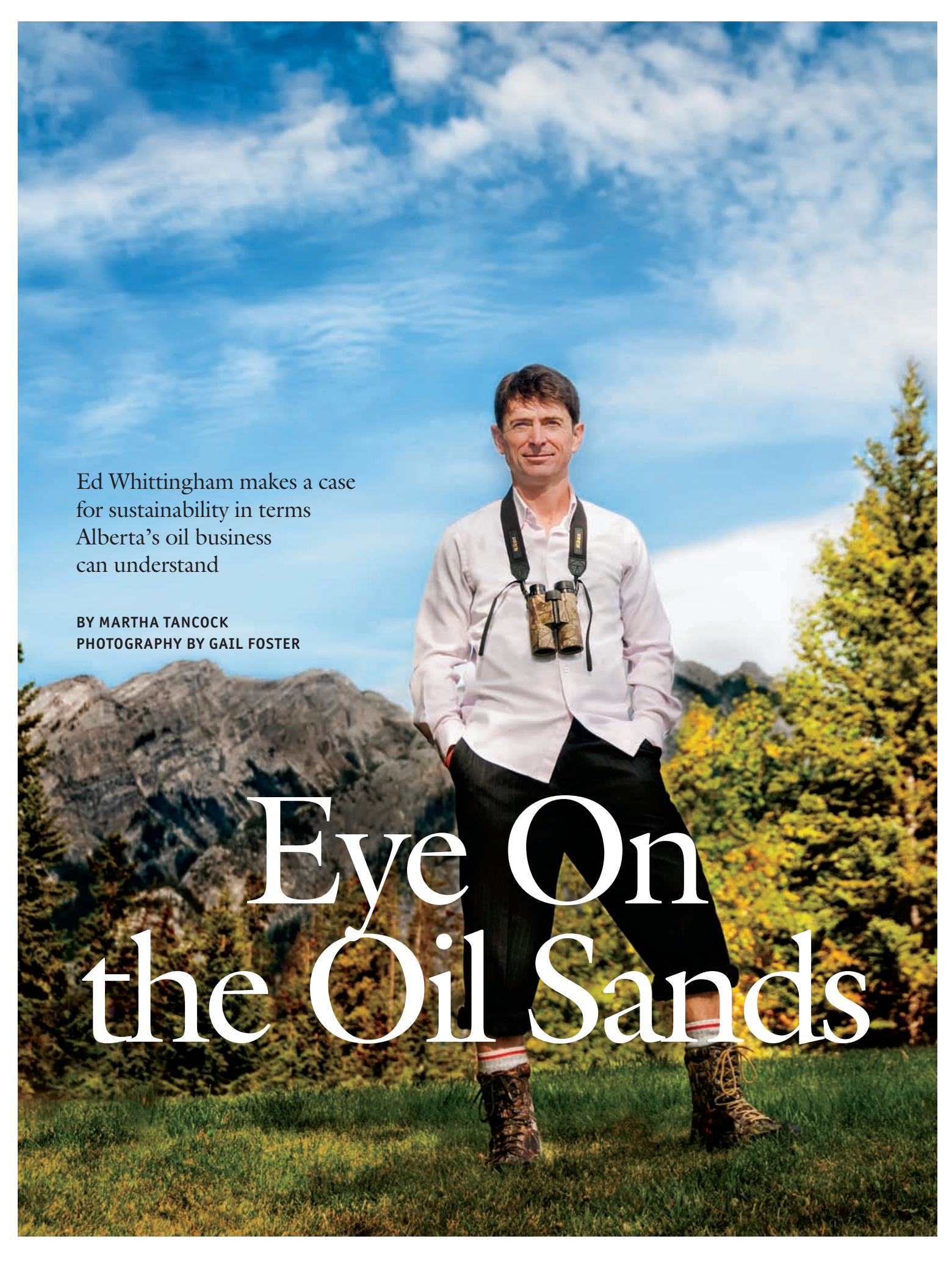
Now, let me turn to York's internationalization agenda. I believe York is the leader among Canadian universities in internationalization; it's a core value and a priority in our strategic plan for 2010-2020.

York offers the ideal environment for internationalization. We are one of Canada's largest and most multicultural universities, with a community of 65,000 students, staff and faculty who can trace their roots to more than 170 countries.

An advantage to being so diverse is that York offers an international curriculum that brings world perspectives into the classroom. We have excellent student mobility programs, funded international internships, and we provide innovative international degrees that combine regular majors with language study and courses with international content.

Our international degree programs require spending one semester overseas, we have more than 250 exchange programs with some of the world's leading universities, and our bridging programs help internationally trained professionals update their knowledge for our work environment. Our Glendon College is the only bilingual campus in southern Ontario. Schulich is ranked one of the world's top MBA schools, with one of the best executive education programs, and it will be opening a campus in Hyderabad, India.

In conclusion, to successfully conduct business internationally, one needs a global world view enabled through what I call "the Endless Campus". I ask my colleagues to adopt a common vision and collaborate to the fullest extent so we can capitalize on our collective momentum. Canada and future generations will be better off for it. Thank you. ■

A man, Ed Whittingham, stands in a scenic mountain landscape. He is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt, dark trousers, and brown boots. He has binoculars hanging from his neck. The background features a blue sky with wispy clouds, green trees, and rocky mountains.

Ed Whittingham makes a case  
for sustainability in terms  
Alberta's oil business  
can understand

BY MARTHA TANCOCK  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY GAIL FOSTER

# Eye On the Oil Sands



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**E**D WHITTINGHAM (MBA '04) drops his luggage behind the reception desk at York's Schulich Executive Education Centre in downtown Toronto. In two hours, he will attend an advisory board meeting of the school's Centre of Excellence in Responsible Business. He peers intently at his iPhone and then waves it in the air. "We hit a home run yesterday," says the executive director of the Pembina Institute, a 60-person national clean-energy think tank known for keeping an eagle eye on the Alberta oil sands. On any given day, the institute might get eight to 10 media mentions. "Look at this," he says, ecstatic, while scrolling past a blur of headlines: "Oil sands fever grips Canada, says Pembina," reads one. *The Globe and Mail* and even the *National Post* (usually a Pembina detractor) have lifted entire passages from the institute's latest report – "You can't get much better than that!" – confirming Alberta's oil sands boom is contributing to economic bust in other parts of Canada. Suddenly, Ontario's bleating about "Dutch disease" – referencing the 1960s manufacturing collapse in the Netherlands after the government over-invested in North Sea oil – sounds justified. "This," says Whittingham, "is the right report at the right time."

In typical Pembina style, the report presents a mix of analysis and pragmatic advice – like cut federal tax breaks to oil and gas companies. For 27 years, this "think-and-do tank" has been both a fierce critic of bad environmental management practices in the energy industry (the oil sands, for one, would be a lot dirtier if not for Pembina, insists Whittingham) and a consultant on good environmental management to the same sector. The income from its consulting business helps to keep it independent – no government grants, Mr. Harper – and no job is too small if it drives clients towards greener operations. "We don't advocate for anything airy-fairy," says Whittingham. "We advocate for things that are achievable."

The report is out, now "let's start the conversation," says Whittingham, who, at 40, is a great listener, a seasoned performer and, essentially, a professional conversationalist. Pembina, he likes to brag, can bring to the table politicians, executives, Aboriginal peoples, environmentalists, landowners, developers, union leaders and scientists. "We don't drive votes but we can build big-tent coalitions," he says. "Pembina has a convening power on energy issues without equal in Canada." When "suits and roots" come together to ask for the same thing, it can translate into some mighty political clout – in a mighty quiet way. Greenpeace makes the noise while Pembina makes the case behind the scenes.

Whittingham used to make the noise. The son of English

immigrants had always gone in slightly unconventional directions. Summer camp instilled a love of nature and wilderness. At 17, he won a Rotary Club scholarship to study in Japan. He took his sweet time earning a BA in East Asian studies, then detoured to Berkeley, Calif., to hone his Japanese and check out the counterculture, and ended up as a tour guide to Japanese tourists in Banff, Alta. There, he finally settled with his Japanese wife, Yuka. For five years he toured campsites with an eco-theatre troupe and worked as a conservationist, organizing protests and suing developers in the national park.

One day, he had an epiphany. It came during a nasty, highly publicized and politicized fight with Fairmont Hotels & Resorts Inc. over its proposal to build a seven-storey convention centre at Lake Louise. After a tense meeting with Fairmont Chief Executive Officer Bill Fatt (BA '74), Whittingham realized something: "For all the time we'd put into fighting, we weren't even close to understanding each other. I walked out of that meeting thinking we need to work with business, we need to give business an opportunity to make the right decision." The then 20-something decided to shed the "bad-cop" tactics for a "good-cop" approach.

He went back to school. "All roads led to Schulich," remembers Whittingham. He graduated in two years with a diploma in business and sustainability, and an international MBA. Keen to put theory into practice, he also co-founded Canada's first graduate student-led sustainability consultancy, the York Sustainable Enterprise Consultants. It's still going strong, and it led him straight into the arms of Pembina, where he began as director of its consulting program.

Whittingham has promised the think tank at least five years in his current role as executive director. An "unabashed advocate" committed to leading Canada's transition to a clean-energy economy, he spends much time on the road. He blogs, talks to the media and worries about Canada's growing reputation as "dinosaurs and knuckle draggers" on climate change. The day after leaving Toronto, he joined a Canadian delegation on a clean-energy trade mission to the Philippines. When he has a chance to spend time at home in the cool mountain air of Banff, he relaxes with Yuka and their two children, goes skiing, canoeing and camping, and hunts for deer and elk with a pal. (No disconnect here, he insists. Hunting supplies his family with free-range, organic meat, killed cruelty-free – he's a good shot.)

Whittingham jokes that on a good day he might be called a sellout by environmentalists and a tree hugger by oil producers, but he considers himself more of a bridge between opposing interests. He is indeed making a difference as a good cop. ■

# Alumni

## Derek Chezzi

Forging a new frontier

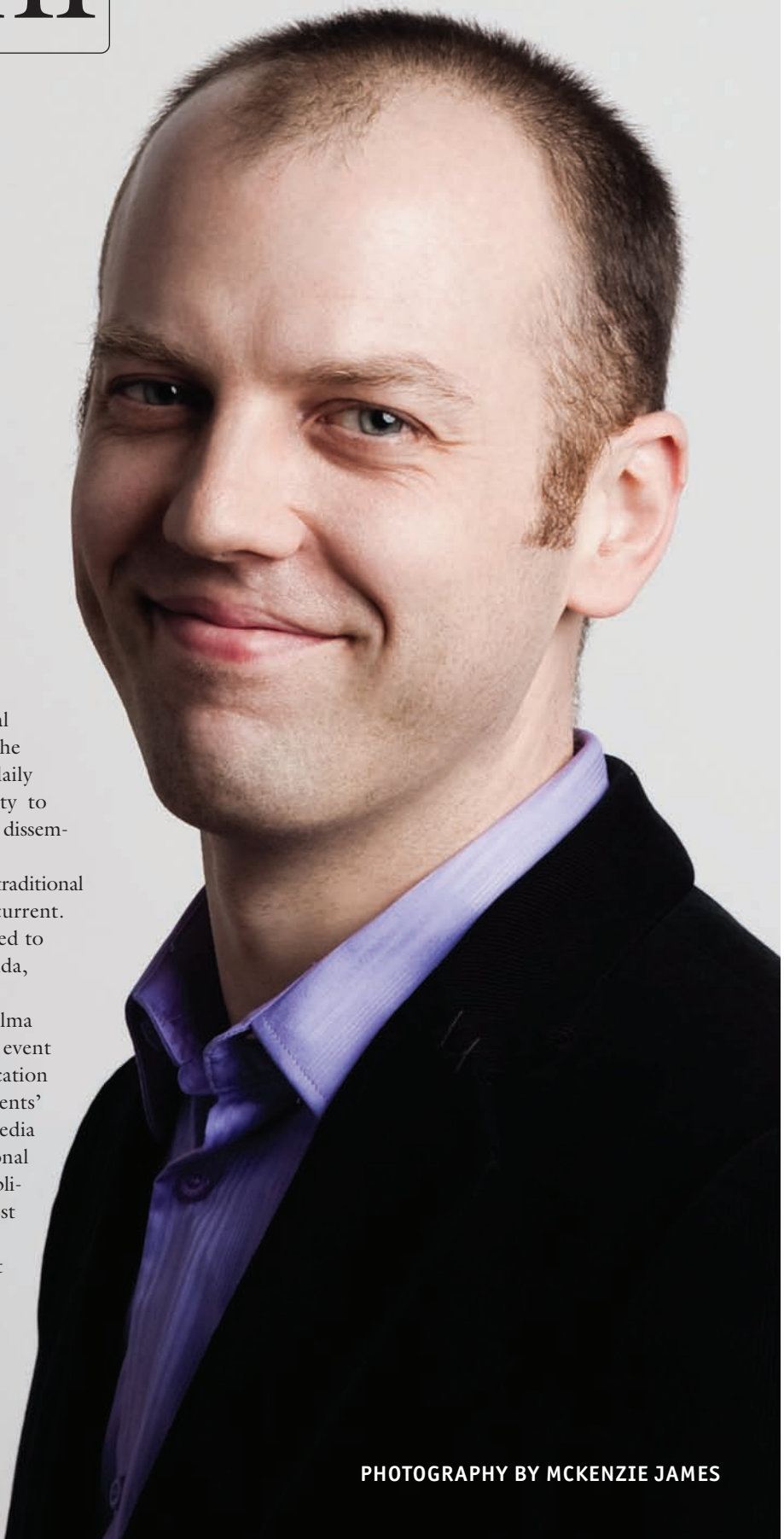
**W**HEN DEREK CHEZZI (BA '98 Winters) was editor of *Excalibur*, the world was a different place. The Internet was in its infancy and social media networks didn't exist. Since then, the Internet has become an essential part of our daily lives and has given the public an opportunity to become engaged participants in the creation and dissemination of information.

Consequently, established media outlets and traditional forms of journalism have fought to remain current. While some members of the press have struggled to adjust, Chezzi, editor-in-chief of Yahoo! Canada, has welcomed the challenge with open arms.

On Nov. 7, 2012, Chezzi returned to his alma mater to give a talk as part of a campus-wide event organized by York's Department of Communication Studies and the Communication Studies Students' Association. He discussed the ever-changing media landscape and reflected upon his own personal journey from editor-in-chief of a student-run publication to editor-in-chief of one of Canada's most visited websites.

A pioneer in his field, Chezzi has proven that taking risks and being open to new possibilities can truly pay off.

To watch a video of Chezzi's talk at York, visit [alumni.news.yorku.ca/videos](http://alumni.news.yorku.ca/videos)



PHOTOGRAPHY BY MCKENZIE JAMES



# Class Notes

**1970**

**Stone, Justice David** (BA Glendon) is a judge of the Ontario Court of Justice and is currently the 2012-2013 president of the Canadian Association of Provincial Court Judges. Previously, he served as president of the Ontario association and was national co-chair of the Canadian Bar Association's Canadian Judges' Forum. Recently, he was awarded a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for his service to the arts, and local and national justice. He resides in Durham Region, Ont., with his wife Jane, close to their son and three grandchildren.

**1974**

**Batten, Keith** (BA Bethune) is currently directing the musical *Aida* in Seoul, South Korea, for Disney Theatrical, after completing three years as associate director of *Spiderman: Turn off the Dark* on Broadway.

**1976**

**James, Dorsey** (BFA, BEd '76 Bethune), a woodcarving sculptor and teacher from Pickering, Ont., received a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in September 2012.

**Parker, Allan** (LLM Osgoode) passed away suddenly on June 13, 2012, in Vancouver. He was a proud supporter of York's Osgoode Hall Law School.

**1986**

**Bulmer, April** (BA Hons. McLaughlin), who currently lives in



1976: Dorsey James

Cambridge, Ont., has written her seventh book of poetry, *Women of the Cloth*. It will be published this year by Black Moss Press in Windsor, Ont.

**1987**

**Wright, Bruce** (LLB Osgoode) is a Vancouver corporate and securities lawyer, philanthropist, collector and cultural leader. On Nov. 14, 2012, he assumed the role of board chair for the Vancouver Art Gallery. Wright also chairs the Vancouver Opera and Frontier College foundations and serves in leadership positions on boards for Health Arts Societies, which provide professional performing arts programs for residents in health-care facilities.

**1990**

**Ferguson, Will** (BFA Founders), a celebrated author, travel writer and humourist, was recently awarded the 2012 Scotiabank Giller Prize for *419: A Novel*. A departure from his previous work, this dark thriller follows the story of a young woman's quest to track down her father's killer. In addition, Ferguson, now living in Calgary, is also a three-time recipient of the Stephen Leacock Memorial Medal for Humour.

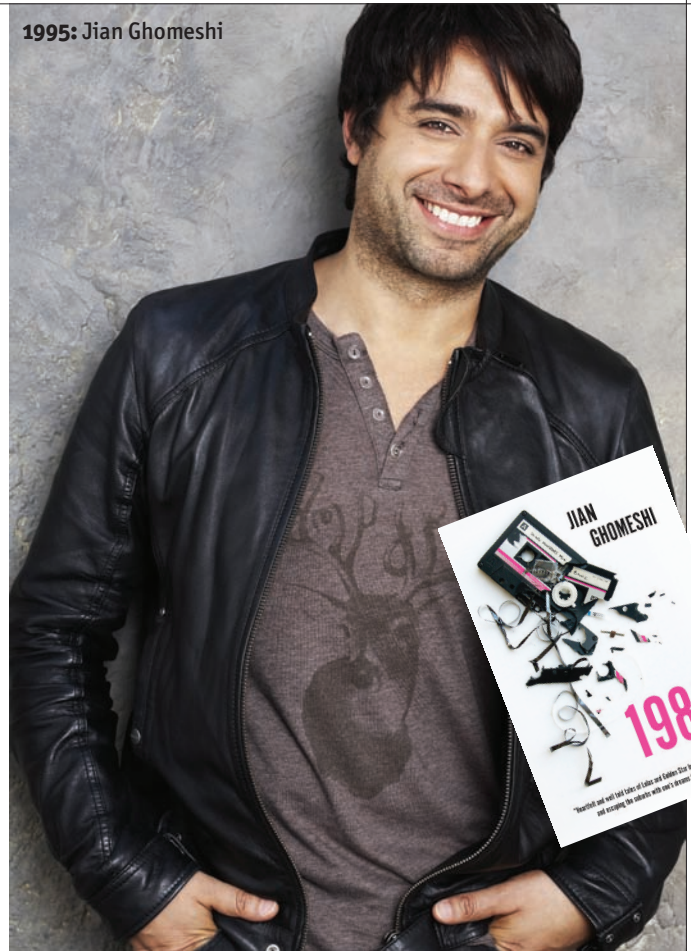
**1991**

**Persaud, Mark** (LLB, LLM '01 Osgoode) was called to the Ontario Bar in 1993 and has held a range of positions with the Department of Justice, including prosecutor, counsel to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and civil litigation counsel. He is the recipient of many awards and recognitions for his civic and public sector contributions, including a 2007 Public Sector Gold Key Award from Osgoode Hall. He was nominated for the Seoul Peace Prize in 2006. In addition to being a senior counsel with a practice in civil and criminal litigation, he is also an adjunct law professor and media commentator.

**1992**

**Bicos, Athanasios** (BAS Hons. Atkinson) returned home to Montreal to open a steak and seafood

**1995: Jian Ghomeshi**



restaurant after graduating from York. Twenty years later, he is still operating his business and is married with one child.

**1994**

**Ahmed, Kabir** (JD Osgoode, MBA '00 Schulich, LLM '09 Osgoode) successfully completed a master's degree in law at Cornell University Law School last May and is now pursuing a doctorate degree in law back at York.

**1995**

**Ghomeshi, Jian** (BA Atkinson), host of CBC Television and Radio One's "Q", has recently published a memoir, titled *1982*.

**White, Lennox** (BA Stong) has spent the past 17 years producing content related to children's mental health for the Hincks-Dellcrest Centre in

Toronto. She spearheaded The Depression Project, aimed at teenage depression and anxiety, and recently completed "A Place to Talk about Big Feelings", a series of videos that reaches out to children.

**1996**

**Von Vulte, Manfred John** (BA Hons., MA '99, BEd '12 Founders) is the deputy headmaster of Northmount Independent Catholic Boys Elementary School in Toronto. He married **Charmaine Wong** (BA '94) in 2010. On Sept. 8, 2012, they welcomed their first child, Robert John Earle. Von Vulte recently partnered with Comics Go Global from New York City, which encourages the development of language arts competencies in advanced and reluctant writers and readers, and he is the first person to



## Award Commemorates Promising Young Filmmaker

**MATTHEW SHOALTS, A GIFTED FILM STUDENT**, musician and singer, died unexpectedly on Nov. 29, 2012, halfway through his final year at York. At the young age of 21, he had already won critical acclaim and was working professionally in the film industry.

The young man from Bolton, Ont., started making movies at age 10. His first one was called *Fondue Fork Massacre* and starred his dad David as the bad guy and his sister Rebecca as the heroine. By his third year at York, he had credits on commercial features *Battleground* and *Anything Goes*. Classmates, alumni and a professor are working together to complete his fourth-year project, *Good News*, in time to show at the film program's Finish Line festival this spring.

In recognition of his promise as a director, his family has established the Matthew Shoalts Film Director's Award. The award will go to film students to defray the costs of producing their fourth-year films.

To donate to the Matthew Shoalts Film Director's Award, contact the York University Division of Advancement at 416-650-8210 or contribute online at [yorkuinmemorygiving.ca](http://yorkuinmemorygiving.ca) **M**

bring this literacy initiative to Canada.

### 1997

**Cappadocia, Frank** (BA Hons. Vanier), a Calumet Fellow and York's first director of the Centre for Student Community & Leadership Development, has been promoted to associate vice-provost for Lakehead University's Orillia Campus.

### 2000

**Beh, JJ** (BA Hons. Stong) is the co-founder of Hackernest, Toronto's largest monthly tech meet-up, and is also the Toronto organizer for Angel-Hack, which coordinates the world's largest programming marathons.

### 2001

**Stolow, David** (LLB Osgoode) is a litigation partner at Davies Ward Phillips & Vineberg LLP in Montreal. He was recently recognized by *Best Lawyers® Canada* as a leading lawyer in alternative dispute resolution, corporate and commercial litigation and appellate law. In 2012, *Lexpert Guide to the Leading US/Canada Cross-border Litigation Lawyers in Canada* mentioned him on their Litigation Lawyers to Watch list.

**Perez-Youssoufian, Evelyn** (BA Hons. Winters) was called to the Ontario bar in 2005 after articling in Ottawa. Perez-Youssoufian is currently the senior associate at Ellyn Law LLP and focuses on shareholder disputes and commercial and civil litigation. She is a speaker and author, who has appeared before the Court of Appeal for Ontario and acted as associate counsel on international arbitrations. She recently celebrated her one-year anniversary married to Gordon Stanton.

### 2002

**Gehl, Lynn** (BA Hons.) graduated in anthropology summa cum laude. Two years ago, she completed a PhD, and she is currently working at home on two books. In 2010, she founded the National Strategy of Unknown and Unstated Paternity and the Indian Act, to counteract a federal

policy that discriminates against Aboriginal mothers and babies.

### 2003

**Ball-Bene, Devin** (BA Hons. Vanier) recently earned his Certified General Accountant (CGA) designation and was selected as the 2011-2012 winner of the Award of Excellence – Professional Level, by the Certified General Accountants of Canada. The award recognizes outstanding academic success at the professional level.

### 2006: Chaukei Ngai





# Class Notes

**Greenberg, Jeremy** (BA McLaughlin) married York alumna **Sayma Hai** (BA Hons. '05) last summer.



2009: Jemima Codrington

## 2005

**Bharucha, Daraius** (BA Spec. Hons., BIBS '05, BEd '06 Atkinson) was one of the recipients of the 2012 Governor General's History Awards for Excellence in Teaching. He received his medal from David Johnston, Gov-

ernor General of Canada, at Rideau Hall in Ottawa on Dec. 10, 2012.

## 2006

**Kenny, James** (BA Atkinson) met his wife **Biljana Orescanin** (BA Spec. Hons. '07) in meteorology class at York in 2003. They were married July 7, 2012.

**Ngai, Chaukei** (BA Vanier), a certified holistic health counsellor and Bikram yoga instructor, competed in the 2012 Bishnu Charan Ghosh Yoga International Championship in Los Angeles and placed second in the world. Currently residing in Boulder, Colo., with her four-year-old son, she also recently launched a telephonic health coaching service called Wellness Fabulosity.

## 2007

**Karmali, Sean** (BA, BA Hons. '08, MPPAL '12 Founders) is a Fellow of McLaughlin College, a former Graduate Fellow of York's Centre for Refugee Studies and the recipient of the Ian Greene Book Prize. Karmali works in the public sector and serves on the City of Toronto's committee of adjustment panel.



2009: John Edwards

## 2009

**Codrington, Jemima** (BA Spec. Hons. Stong) has been published in some of Canada's largest newspapers, including the *National Post* and the *Toronto Star*, as well as numerous magazines. After snagging a worldwide exclusive interview with Sir Richard Branson, her story "Can enterprise giant Richard Branson be the face of Green Living?" was subsequently translated into three languages and reprinted in newspapers all over the

world. Currently, Jemima writes for *Canadian Real Estate Wealth Magazine*.

**Edwards, John** (MA) and his band members from The Musicians In Ordinary for the Lutes and Voices have been appointed ensemble-in-residence at St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto.

## 2011

**Smith, Chrystal** (BA Spec. Hons. Glendon) is currently working as a translator.

## Social Discourse



### Alumni to follow on Twitter

**@SandieR\_ctv:** Sandie Rinaldo (BA '73 Founders) is the weekend news anchor for "CTV National News" and an investigative reporter for "W5".

**@jianghomeshi:** Jian Ghomeshi (BA '95 Calumet) is host and co-creator of "Q with Jian Ghomeshi", a daily arts, culture and entertainment magazine on CBC Radio One and CBC Television. He recently published a memoir titled *1982*.

**@DavidRoccasVita:** David Rocco (BA '92 Founders) is chef, host and producer of "David Rocco's Dolce Vita", a popular Italian cooking-travel television series. He is also the author of two award-winning cookbooks, the most recent being *Made in Italy*.

**@lraitt:** Lisa Raitt (LLB '96 Osgoode) has been member of Parliament for Ontario's Halton Region since 2008 and is Canada's current labour minister.

### Stay connected to York's alumni community by joining [facebook.com/yorkualumni](https://www.facebook.com/yorkualumni)

**Jodi Goodfellow** (BFA '99 Bethune) recently co-founded Fashion Forward ([fashion-forward.ca](https://www.fashion-forward.ca)), a free online marketplace for people who want to buy and sell new and nearly new clothing and accessories for men, women, children and pets. The website went live in June 2012.

**Lorelei Silverman** (MSc '99, PhD '03) and **Rosalind Silverman** (MSc '00, PhD '03) are the founders of Models of Human Diseases ([wix.com/conferencenet/mhd](https://www.wix.com/conferencenet/mhd)), a non-profit organization aimed at providing support and mentorship to Canadian students and Canadian foreign-trained biomedical professionals. The group has more than 25 ongoing projects and was recently nominated for a Scotiabank National Game Changer Award.

# Alumni News



**TORCH BEARER:**  
Randy Williamson (left) and Guy Burry

## Changing of the Guard

Long-serving YUAA chair Guy Burry passes the torch to Randy Williamson

**I**N DECEMBER, the York University Alumni Association (YUAA) board marked the end of an era as Guy Burry (BA '82) stepped down as chair and handed the baton to Randy Williamson (LLB '88).

"Guy has left us with a good group of people," says Williamson, who has served at Burry's side as vice-chair since 2006. "He may not be on the board, but he will continue to influence how we do things."

Over the past eight years, Burry has used his undeniable charisma and infec-

tious enthusiasm to increase alumni engagement and assemble a group of equally energetic, highly skilled and accomplished alumni to serve on the board. "The thing that I'm most proud of is the quality of the people that we've been able to attract," says Burry. Current board members represent the broader York community and collectively "have an interest and informed voice that will help the University understand its alumni," he says.

Founded in 1974, the YUAA fosters lifelong, mutually beneficial relationships

between alumni and the University. The association board has ensured the unique perspective and vision of York alumni are considered in the University's governance.

Burry has helped strengthen the relationship between the association and the University. He has demonstrated the valuable role alumni can play in helping to recruit new students, solicit donations and build its reputation and brand. Now, he says, "it's time for new ideas, a new direction."

For six years, Burry and Williamson have worked closely together as chair and vice-chair. Burry has helped Williamson build the tools and nurture the contacts he will need to effectively lead the board.

Williamson, a lawyer and businessman, sees the board's role as predominantly advisory and hopes to build upon the work that Burry started. He hopes to further develop York alumni chapters locally and worldwide, capitalize on the successes of alumni and the Faculties from which they hail, and work with alumni associations on campus to promote a vision of what it means to be a York graduate.

As he steps into his new role, Williamson says he is thrilled to "be involved in an organization that's not just managing success, but that is building success. We have a great 50-year start, but we have so much more to do."

With his no-nonsense approach and get-it-done attitude, there is no doubt that Williamson will work hard to ensure these goals are met.

This past December, the YUAA board also welcomed new board members: Al Burton (LLB/MES '00), a partner at Thomson Rogers; Dawn Palin Rokosh (BA '98), director at the Ontario Ministry of Education; and Neela Maharaj (BAS '09), a senior business systems analyst at RBC Royal Bank.

To read more about the YUAA board and its members, visit [yorku.ca/alumni/yuaa](http://yorku.ca/alumni/yuaa) **M**





**HIP-HOP AUTEUR:** Author and York grad Dalton Higgins

# Far From Over

Grad's new book examines life of rapper phenom Drake

**H**ow does a former child actor from Toronto, with no record label backing him, become one of the biggest hip-hop artists of his generation? That's the question award-winning writer Dalton Higgins (BA '95) attempts to answer in his new biography of Aubrey Graham, better known to fans around the world as Drake. *Far From Over: The Music and Life of Drake*, Higgins' fifth book, looks at the context and cultural conditions in Toronto and the United States that transformed the Canadian rapper into a music industry phenomenon. Recognized as one of Canada's foremost voices on hip-hop culture, Higgins has received accolades for his other works, including a collection of essays on the cool, diverse dad movement and an in-depth examination of the globalization of hip hop. ■

## LEGACY GIVING

*"Everyone can do great things. One of the benefits of a scholarship... is that it allows someone to go for their dreams and maximize their potential"*



- Jerome J. Liu, MD'12, BSc'08,  
Dr. Murray G. Ross Scholarship recipient

The Dr. Murray G. Ross Scholarship was established through gifts from Dr. Murray G. Ross, founding president and vice-chancellor of York University, during his lifetime and through his will, as well as donations from his friends and colleagues after his death.



### WHAT'S YOUR LEGACY?

Establish your planned gift to York and you will become a member of the White Rose Legacy Circle. If you've included York University in your estate plans, or to learn more, contact us.

416.650.8210  
legacy@yorku.ca  
www.yorku.ca/advancement

# Giving



## The Joshua Yasay Award

In memory of a criminology student who made a difference

**J**OSHUA YASAY DIED JULY 16, 2012. At only 23 years old, he was one of two innocent bystanders killed and 23 wounded in a gang-related shooting at a community barbecue on Danzig Street in Scarborough, Ont.

A month earlier, Yasay had received a provincial award from the Learning Disabilities Association recognizing his dedicated service and invaluable contribution as a volunteer with the S.T.Y.L.E. (Skills Training for Youth through Learning and Education) program. A year earlier, he had graduated with an honours degree in criminology from York. He was working as a security guard in downtown Toronto, had recently opened a barbershop in his hometown of Ajax, Ont., and was planning to pursue a master's degree before embarking on a career in law enforcement, his lifelong dream.

A caring, funny and mature young man respected by many, Joshua was the epitome of a well-rounded student. At York, he maintained a B-plus average while juggling a part-time job at McDonald's and volunteering at a drop-in basketball program for at-risk youth in Scarborough's Malvern area.

"Joshua was definitely touched by the kids and their stories. He told me they were normal kids just trying to make it," remembers Banu Mahendran, a close friend he met in York's criminology program. Joshua offered them friendship and gave them hope. "Basketball was his favourite sport, but more importantly, he explained how important it was for the kids that he show up."

"I remember days when he was overwhelmed but understood that hard work paid off in the end," Mahendran says. "York opened his eyes to what he could accomplish. It laid a foundation for him to move on to the next step."

In the eyes of his family, friends and community, Joshua was a leader who never lost the innocent dream to change the world. They remember his tattoo, the words of Mahatma Gandhi: "Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you will live forever."

In his memory, York has created the Joshua Yasay Award for Excellence in Criminology and Community Service. The annual bursary will go to fourth-year criminology students who have positively impacted their communities through civic engagement and stewardship.

"This is such an amazing gesture on York University's part to remember Joshua," writes Mahendran. "Joshua's death had a huge impact on the community at large, and an award named in honour of him shows he was definitely someone great, someone amazing and one of a kind. The award will definitely remind students graduating from criminology at York of the true nature of our program and how important reducing crime and victimization remains."

The University has launched a campaign to raise \$25,000 to endow the Joshua Yasay Award for Excellence in Criminology and Community Service. To contribute, contact the York University Division of Advancement at 416-650-8210 or contribute online at [forJoshua.ca](http://forJoshua.ca)





# YORK ALUMNI

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