

UNDER EMBARGO until November 22nd

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Samara Canada has your antidote to recent political news

19 Canadians recognized as 2016 Everyday Political Citizen Finalists

Notable:

- **Jury selects an almost entirely female shortlist**
- **Shortlist includes strong Indigenous representation**

Toronto, November 22nd, 2016—Samara Canada is pleased to announce the finalists for the 2016 Everyday Political Citizen awards. Hailing from coast to coast to the north, these 19 people were nominated by friends and family and then selected as finalists by a panel of prominent Canadians.

Samara Canada, a non-partisan charity dedicated to reconnecting citizens to politics, developed the Everyday Political Citizen project in 2013 to combat the negative narrative that surrounds politics. The individuals highlighted in this project are amazing examples of the many ways citizens can engage in politics as unelected leaders in their communities.

Jane Hilderman, Executive Director of Samara Canada, says, “The past few weeks have reminded how much politics profoundly impacts our lives every day. And, even more importantly, that democracy requires constant care and attention. This year it’s more important than ever to show the world what our democratic heroes look like: the Everyday Political Citizen finalists.”

With the Everyday Political Citizen project, Samara urges a shift towards “everyday democracy,” emphasizing positive political engagement between elections for all citizens. Indeed, Secretary Clinton reinforced that idea when she said “our constitutional democracy demands our participation, not just every four years, but all the time.”

MEET THE 2016 SHORTLIST

The Everyday Political Citizen contest received 240 nominations in 2016, bringing the number of total nominations to over 1000 since 2013. The finalists in three categories—ages under 18; 18–29 and 30 and over—were selected by a jury of 21 prominent Canadians including nationally recognized figures Margaret Atwood, Rick Mercer, author Carmen Aguirre and NHL defenseman Andrew Ference. For a complete list of jury members [click here](#).

This year, the jury recognized individuals in diverse communities across the country who are pushing to make their communities more resilient. Juror Rick Mercer said: “Empowering a community to change and make change is a powerful and enduring way to strengthen our social fabric.”

Meet the Shortlists

The 30+ Shortlist

- **Alethea Arnaquq-Baril** of Iqaluit, NU was picked by **Margaret Atwood** for making documentaries to tell the stories of activism in Nunavut.
- **Samantha Green** of Toronto, ON was picked by **Jonathan Kay** for using her voice as a doctor to advocate for health and wellness policy.
- **Farrah Marfatia** of Mississauga, ON was picked by **Carmen Aguirre** for the diversity of her volunteer work from formal politics to combating racism.
- **Peter Oliver** of Calgary, AB was picked by **Luke Anderson** for humanizing political and advocacy campaigns.
- **Naomi Sayers** of Ottawa, ON was picked by **Andrew McIntyre** for her work as a legal advocate for Indigenous women.
- **Bee Lee Soh** of Toronto, ON was picked by the **Parliamentary Internship Programme** for consistently deputing about poverty in her community at City Hall.
- **Shanta Sundarason** of Unionville, ON was picked by **Hussein Allidina** for her resolve to create change through many advocacy campaigns.
- **Carol Todd** of Port Coquitlam, BC was picked by **Andrew Ference and Ilene Sova** for honouring the legacy of her daughter in the fight against cyber bullying.
- **Bianca Wylie** of Toronto, ON was picked by **Radha Curpen** for her commitment to bridge technology with civic engagement.

Read all their nominations and jury testimonials: [http://www.samaracanada.com/shortlist-\(30-and-over\)](http://www.samaracanada.com/shortlist-(30-and-over))

The 18-29 Shortlist

- **Hafsah Asadullah** of Milton, ON was picked by **Farah Mohamed** for serving as a role model for racialized women who dream of working in politics.
- **Rosa Chu** of Markham, ON was picked by **Rick Mercer and Cindy Blackstock** for responding to a need in her community for greater inclusion of people with disabilities.
- **Angela Code** of Whitehorse, YT was picked by **Max FineDay** for revitalizing her traditional language as a tool for empowerment.
- **Harpreet Gill** of Toronto, ON was picked by **Morgan Baskin** for mobilizing her community to the ballot box.
- **Erin Kang** of Toronto, ON was picked by **Owen Charters** for using storytelling as a tool for change in Toronto's Regent Park.
- **Ruth Kaviok** of Arviat, NU was picked by **Cory Nicotine and Barry Peters** for bridging traditional knowledge with climate change research.
- **Caleb Turner** of Moose Cree First Nation was picked by **Andrea Reimer and Hana Woldeyes** for dedicating his work to improving the lives of youth in his community.

Read all their nominations and jury testimonials: [http://www.samaracanada.com/shortlist-\(18-29\)](http://www.samaracanada.com/shortlist-(18-29))

The Under 18 Shortlist

- **Emma Mogus** of Oakville, ON was picked by **Cindy Blackstock** for delivering 150,000 books to Indigenous communities.

- **Aiman Naeem** of Fort MacMurray, AB was picked by **Owen Charters** for her unwavering dedication to her community.
- **Kakeka Thundersky** of Winnipeg, MB was picked by **Rick Mercer** for mobilizing and bringing hope to her underserved neighbourhood.

Read all their nominations and jury testimonials: [http://www.samaracanada.com/shortlist-\(under-18\)](http://www.samaracanada.com/shortlist-(under-18))

In many cases, shortlisted candidates, nominators, jurors and/or Samara staff are available for interviews.

The winner will be announced—and nominees acclaimed—on **December 8th** at a celebration in Toronto. Let us know if you would like us to tell you about the winner in advance or if you would like to cover the winners' announcement and celebration.

About Samara

Samara Canada is dedicated to reconnecting citizens to politics. Established as a charity in 2009, we have become Canada's most trusted, non-partisan champion of increased civic engagement and a more positive public life.

Samara Canada's research and educational programming shines new light on Canada's democratic system and encourages greater political participation across the country to build better politics, and a better Canada, for everyone.

A samara is the winged "helicopter" seed that falls from the maple tree. A symbol of Canada, it is also a reminder that from small seeds, big ideas can grow.

We are always available to comment on our areas of research, which include citizen participation and voting behaviour, political leadership and MPs, and political parties. Our research and programming can be found at www.samaracanada.com or via Twitter [@SamaraCDA](https://twitter.com/SamaraCDA).