

COMMUNITY

'People will underestimate you'

 Everyday Political Citizens



Luke Simcoe
Metro | Toronto

Every year, Samara Canada's Everyday Political Citizen project honours Canadians who are making positive changes in their communities. The winner of the contest will be announced Dec. 3, 2015.

Metro is profiling the four EPC nominees in the Greater Toronto Area. Today, we meet Amin Ali, a 14-year-old from North York with a bright political future.

Amin Ali might be Toronto's youngest policy wonk.

The 14-year-old high school student from North York isn't your typical teenager. His hobbies include reading detailed policy documents, volunteering his time with Toronto's city youth council and engaging in nuanced political debates on Facebook.

"Only about one of my friends at school understands what I'm talking about," he says.

And at a time when many youth are eschewing partisan politics, Ali has moved in the opposite direction. He's a card-carrying member of the NDP and deeply involved in the party's local youth wing.



With a seat on Toronto's youth city council and a lengthy list of volunteer activities with the local NDP, **Amin Ali's political resume** is already longer than that of most. CONTRIBUTED

While party politics aren't perfect, he believes they're still the best avenue for making change in Canada.

"You can sit on the sidelines and complain about things or you can get a seat at the table and advocate for what you believe in," he said.

Ali believes in a more equitable and democratic Canada. He's a fan of voting reform, and perhaps unsurprisingly, he'd like to see the voting age lowered to 16.

"Youth are going to be running things one day, and we're not given adequate space to give our input," he said.

Ali is one of the youngest Everyday Political Citizen nominees, but said his experience going to NDP conventions has him used to being the youngest person in the room.

"People will underestimate you. Sometimes they'll write you off, but then when you get up and speak, they're surprised," he said.