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Yukoner on short list for political citizen award

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By **Sidney Cohen** on **December 1, 2016**

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Angela Code, a former outreach co-ordinator at BYTE and long-time Whitehorse resident, has made the shortlist for Samara's Everyday Political Citizen award in the age 18 to 29 category.

Samara is a self-described non-partisan charity that champions civic engagement. It also does research on Canada's democratic system and political participation.

The Everyday Political Citizen project, which was started in 2013, recognizes the work of unelected leaders in communities across Canada.

Nominees are chosen for being active in their communities and encouraging others to engage in politics.

This year, the shortlist will be reviewed by a panel of judges that includes famed Canadian author Margaret Atwood, advocate for indigenous children and human rights Cindy Blackstock, Walrus Magazine editor Jonathan Kay, and others.

Hinting at the outcome of the Nov. 8 United States presidential election, Jane Hilderman, Samara's executive director, said in a statement that, "It is especially crucial today to make it known that politics need not be shrouded in a veil of negativity.

"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," she said.

"This year it's more important than ever to show the world what our democratic heroes look like: the Everyday Political Citizen finalists."

Code is Sayisi Dene from Tadoule Lake, Manitoba, but has been living in Whitehorse since she was 10 years old.

For two years at BYTE, Code ran workshops on safe partying, healthy relationships, and more to youth in communities across the territory.

Culture and language revitalization is her passion, and Code endeavours to make young people proud of who they are and where they live.

She even directed a feature documentary film to this end, called *We Are Our Language*, which was released in 2013.

Every day, Code works toward decolonization. She does this, in part, by carrying on cultural traditions such as handgames and tanning hides.

She also works with ReMatriate, a photo campaign that aims to deconstruct and destroy stereotypes of indigenous women that have been pervasive in popular culture throughout history.

In one photograph, Code is shown in a black windbreaker and hunting boots, clutching the antlers of a downed caribou.

Because she is currently travelling in Europe, Code could not be reached by the Star for an interview.

Code was selected by juror Max FineDay, co-executive director of Canadian Roots Exchange.

That organization brings indigenous and non-indigenous youth together for discussions and workshops aimed at dismantling stereotypes, sharing knowledge and forging bonds across cultures.

“(Code’s) passion for teaching positive relationship behaviours to youth, ensuring that indigenous women are positively represented in media, and dedication to northern languages and culture make her a role model for young people right across this country,” said FineDay in a statement.

“Her ideas, passion, and innovative approaches contribute greatly to her region, and to our country – this is political citizenship at its finest!”

The Everyday Political Citizen contest is in its fourth year.

Winners in four age categories – under 18, 18 to 29 and 30 plus – will be announced by Rick Mercer on Dec. 8.

Samara awards the Everyday Political Citizen contest winners with a plaque and will work with them throughout the year “to help them amplify their stories,” said Samara spokesperson Bailey Greenspon.

For example, last year’s winner appeared on The Rick Mercer Report.