

**EMBARGOED until 8:00pm EST, December 3rd, 2015**

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## ***Everyday Political Citizen award winners promise a more inclusive future for Canadians***

### ***Non-partisan charity Samara Canada and community leaders recognize “Everyday Political Citizens”***

**Toronto, December 3, 2015**—On the day when Parliament is set to resume, Samara Canada is thrilled to announce the three winners of the **2015 Everyday Political Citizen** award, which celebrates the many ways in which unelected Canadians engage with politics. The winners show that everyday political action can make Canada stronger and also more inclusive of persons with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, young people and newcomers.

Since June, Samara Canada, a charity that is a non-partisan champion of increased civic engagement, received over 300 nominations for the third annual Everyday Political Citizen contest. From that list, 18 judges from across the country, including Rick Mercer, UNICEF Ambassador Hanna Godefa, Hon. John Baird and CBC host Shad, selected a [shortlist](#). Today the jury has chosen a winner in three age categories. **Edmonton’s** Indigenous community organizer **Cory Nicotine** (age 18-29 category), **Vancouver’s** youth and newcomer advocate **Hana Woldeyes** (under 18 category) and **Toronto’s** accessibility advocate **Luke Anderson** (age 30+ category). (This [link](#) will feature the three winners as of December 3<sup>rd</sup> at 8:00 pm.)

**Cory Nicotine (age 18-29 category)** is a Cree man of Saddle Lake, AB, currently based in **Edmonton, AB**. Inspired by Idle No More and a life-changing trip to Tanzania with Canada World Youth, Cory started the program Knowledge is Powwow to break down cultural and religious barriers among youth. Of Cory, Everyday Political Citizen juror Bob Sutton said, “By hosting a series of events amongst vulnerable youth from diverse backgrounds to discuss together such issues as social justice, civic engagement, voting, religious pluralism and diversity, Cory has exemplified the kind of citizen action that cannot go unnoticed. Clearly by his spirit, his action-orientation, and his grasp of the very essence of our humanity, Cory represents the very best of Canada’s future, and he will no doubt play a pivotal role in it.”

**Hana Woldeyes (under 18 category)** of **Vancouver, BC**, is a 17-year-old advocate for newcomer youth. Hana immigrated to Canada from Ethiopia two years ago. Since then, she has educated school teachers and principals about newcomer youth experiences, and has learned about Canada’s political system to make it more accessible to other newcomer youth. Juror and Samara’s co-founder Alison Loat says, “Who can’t be inspired by Hana Woldeyes? A newcomer to Canada who within just a few short years is more involved than many who have lived their lives here, and who furthermore is helping those around her better understand how politics works and how to connect to it.”

**Luke Anderson (age 30+ category)** is a structural engineer based in **Toronto, ON**, who suffered a spinal cord injury in 2001 and now uses a wheelchair. Luke founded the StopGap charity to provide temporary ramps to local businesses to allow for increased accessibility. Ben Errett, who nominated Luke, said, "Luke has brought together volunteers and donors to create real, positive change at street level for everyone who has difficulty with commonplace barriers. His work is political in the best possible way: it unifies diverse interests in the common cause of making public life tangibly better for all citizens."

The three runners-up this year are **Abdikadir Warsame** (age 18-29 category) based in **Regina, SK**, a Somali-Canadian who works with youth exiting gangs; **Jorgina Sunn** (age 30+ category), an Indigenous mental health advocate based in **Saskatoon, SK**; and **Corbin Grieves** (under 18 category) of **Oxford House, MB**, who represented his community before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

**Interviews are available with the winners and runners-up, some jury members, as well as Samara's Executive Director. Luke Anderson, Cory Nicotine and Abdikadir Warsame will be available in Toronto for interviews from December 1<sup>st</sup> to December 4<sup>th</sup>.**

The winners will be announced by video by Rick Mercer at a celebration in Toronto on **December 3<sup>rd</sup> at 8pm.**

## **About the project**

Everyday Political Citizen was launched in 2013. Conducted coast to coast to coast, the project recognizes the diversity of politics and democracy in Canada, crowd-sourcing nominations for active political citizens and celebrating some of the many thousands of ordinary people engaging in big and small ways that enrich Canada's political culture.

"Samara's [research shows](#) that Canada requires a culture shift towards 'everyday democracy,'" said Jane Hilderman, Executive Director of Samara Canada. "The Everyday Political Citizens are role models for all Canadians."

Everyday Political Citizen juror Nancy Close added: "Samara's Everyday Political Citizen project serves to remind us all about the 'power of the people,' that 'knowledge is power,' and of the importance of each us being involved, informed and engaged citizens in our democracy."

## **About Samara**

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

**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](http://www.samaracanada.com) or via Twitter [@SamaraCDA](https://twitter.com/SamaraCDA).