

FTW Friday: Everyday political citizen

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In spite of the recent trend toward political scandal in Canada, [Samara](#) a non-partisan charitable organization, is doing its best to recognize the everyday people who are contributing positively to politics in Canada. They've announced the Everyday Political Citizen jury, which will select two winners to receive the award for 2013. The Jury will include Preston Manning, Kirstine Stewart and Rick Mercer. Mercer in particular has been vocal about the need to engage citizens in the political process.

"I've ranted a lot about youth voter turnout and garnered some attention just because I lead a public life," Mercer said about the project. "There are so many people who keep our democracy moving in private and never get recognized. How and why someone gets involved shouldn't be a state secret—it should be a state celebration."

The goal of having a less cynical political population seems to be related to low voter turnouts and polls showing democratic satisfaction is at an all time low in Canada (55%).

Samara co-founder, Michael MacMillan, addressed the need for more recognition at the grass roots level, saying: "Everyday Political Citizens play a fundamental role in making politics work. And unlike volunteers in other sectors, these individuals too often go unrecognized, as politics is not seen to be a worthwhile place for good, honest people to invest time, these people are the antidote to today's cynical views on politics."

Now, my nature is to be skeptical of this kind of thing. Peppered throughout the Samara press releases are buzz words like "democratic vibrancy" and cliches like "building a better country". It's hokey. But I think it's a worthwhile effort. The civic minded people of this country deserve better, and at least recognizing that they exist is optically important at this time.



The typical avenues used to engage people in the democratic process clearly aren't working. Tools like attack ads and finger pointing are a huge turn-off for most, and simply saying "make sure you vote folks" is just another phrase we tune out at this point. I say we embrace the earnestness of this award, even if it may not feel right.

Oh, feel free to nominate me [here](#). I voted in two of the last three elections!