



2011 Top 20 Under 20™ Bios



Ivneet Bains

Surrey, British Columbia

Age: 19

Ivneet came to Canada from India in 2007 and, soon after, founded *Math4me*, a mentoring organization which develops young Canadians academically and personally. It is managed by university and high school students, and focuses on math and on fostering self-confidence through public speaking activities such as debates. "Bullying and the lack of motivation and guidance among students inspired me to change (students') attitudes through volunteering," says Ivneet. Math4me now boasts sixteen employees and has impacted over 300 students. Some participants' grades have increased by 60%! With complete devotion to Math4me, Ivneet plans to scale it up with the goal of touching over a million lives and staying true to their mission statement: students today, scholars tomorrow.

Jennifer Cloutier

Ottawa, Ontario

Age: 19

Losing the use of her legs in a car accident at the age of six, Jennifer became dedicated to improving the lives of the disabled and those with chronic illnesses. Her experience fuels her passion for stem cell research: currently, Jennifer is studying Human Development and Regenerative Biology and donates her research efforts to the Harvard Stem Cell Institute working on understanding cellular reprogramming. Her Top 20 sponsor, a Professor Emeritus of Harvard's Department of Neurobiology, hails Jennifer as, "one of the most impressive, perhaps the most impressive" student he has ever taught. This year, Jennifer was elected as President of Women in Science at Harvard-Radcliffe and will represent Canada at the Adaptive World Water Ski Championship. Humble and clear with her intentions, Jennifer says, "I am truly driven in whatever it is that I can do to help others."

Darren Cole

Toronto, Ontario

Age: 16

When Darren discovered that 37% of the 900,000 Canadians who use food banks each month are children, he started Kids Against Canadian Hunger (KACH). KACH has raised more than \$20,000 to date for Food Banks Canada - money which can purchase up to \$200,000 worth of food. KACH has 1,800 Facebook members and a website which raises money for Food Banks Canada, and educates students and teachers about hunger in Canada. A respected speaker at local schools, Darren organized a successful Hunger Conference to help youth understand and fight child hunger; another is in the works for 2011. Darren also organized TOPS for Teens, raising over \$2000 for teens in need during the holiday season, and along with his two brothers, started KIDPACKS, which in four years distributed almost \$1M in school supplies and backpacks for needy students.

Corey Cook**Winnipeg, Manitoba****Age: 18**

Corey is an advocate for an organization called *Mino Bimaadiziwin*, an Ojibwe word meaning "The Good Life". It teaches First Nations youth lessons of their culture's history and ways to cope and deal with the specific issues that challenge them, including how to avoid substance abuse, gangs and peer pressure. Facing a variety of hardships throughout his early years, today Corey is a prime example of the program's success. Since enrolling four years ago, Corey has become both a speaker and a recognized community leader. He is called upon for interviews and has participated in the documentary, "Mino Bimaadiziwin: Touching The Sky". Corey declares, "I feel like it's the answer for First Nations nationwide, and I am proud to be a part of the solution that will restore First Nations' youth everywhere their identity as a distinct proud nation!"

Sameer Dhar**Edmonton, Alberta****Age: 19**

In 2009, Sameer co-founded GEOMEER, an Edmonton-based charity dedicated to providing families in need with basic necessities so that they may flourish. After raising \$14,000 to help support victims of the Haitian earthquake, Sameer recognized that there was also a strong need for charity closer to home. Along with the GEOMEER team and forty-one local schools, Sameer raised approximately \$100,000 in cash and products which included cleaning supplies, toiletries and non-perishable food - enough to last for several months for local families. Now in his first year at the University of Alberta, Sameer is enrolled in the Faculty of Sciences. He holds numerous awards for community leadership, including the Alberta Premier's Citizenship Award and plans to expand his charity province-wide.

Megan Fultz**Winnipeg, Manitoba****Age: 19**

Megan became involved with Oxfam at a young age and, once she discovered there wasn't a local Winnipeg chapter, she decided to help start one. Megan takes a leading role in Oxfam Winnipeg's fundraising initiatives, such as Run 4 Darfur which raised \$15,000 for relief efforts during that crisis. She is also currently serving her second term as the youngest Prairie Regional Chair of the national organization. Megan was the Winnipeg volunteer leader for Oxfam's partnership with the band Coldplay in the You've Got Power campaign for global citizenship. This budding philanthropist also donated a portion of her \$70,000 TD Scholarship for Community Leadership to the University of Winnipeg's Global Citizenship Fund for bursaries to assist refugee and First Nations students, affirming that the recognition alone was more than enough.

Tiffany Harrington**Oshawa, Ontario****Age: 17**

It seemed to Tiffany that today's youth have lost a sense of respect for the elders in their community. To bridge the divide, she created *The Cross Generational Exchange*, an initiative which determines participants' interests across different categories, including culture, fashion, ecology, history, music, nutrition, recreation and sports, and then partners the youth and seniors accordingly. The project's goal is to provide a platform for the young and the elderly to share their views in seminars and forums. The participants are encouraged to think critically, work on projects together and experience days in each others' lives: seniors are taken to local schools to see what it is like to attend school in today; likewise, students are taken to seniors' facilities where they experience what an average day is like for their counterparts.

Mohsin Khan**Toronto, Ontario****Age: 19**

Regent Park and Moss Park are among Toronto's roughest neighbourhoods. Mohsin believes many of their problems stem from a lack of youth involvement. To create a solution, he established a non-profit, peer-lead channel for positive youth involvement opportunities. He founded Lead2Peace in 2009 and now leads a team of over 25 youth. The Lead2Peace team takes students outside their classrooms to place them into situations where they witness community-wide problems firsthand. With a \$2,000 budget, the students must come up with their own social initiative plan to support their chosen issue. Funded by donations and corporate sponsors, Lead2Peace is not only encouraging home-grown answers to stubborn problems poised, it is well-positioned to becoming an enduring cornerstone in the communities it serves.

Ben Kim**Mississauga, Ontario****Age: 18**

Ben Kim met like-minded peers at Shad Valley Camp and soon after galvanized a team of fellow "Shads" with the idea of starting an organization for people who love music and humanitarianism. Thus Musicians Without Borders (MWB) Canada was born. By hosting fundraisers, benefit concerts and art festivals across Canada, MWB Canada met their goal of raising \$10,000 to purchase a cargo van for the Ugandan village of Tekera. This vehicle has given an entire community not only a way for low-income villagers to get around, but access to fresh produce for those who live far from the city market and an ambulance. Confirmed benefit concerts are lined up for 2011 and Ben and his team are planning the next phase of gaining chapters for MWB Canada at post-secondary institutions across Canada.

Rita-Clare LeBlanc
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Age: 16

Unsure what to do with a \$77.12 Christmas gift that had to be invested in a project, Rita-Clare was instantly inspired when she went to a youth conference on education in Africa. With little guidance and forging into unexplored territory, she researched what it would take to build a school in Africa and found the perfect partner charity. Rita-Clare established the organization MYST: Maritime Youth Standing Together and connected with the all-volunteer, Ohio-based group called African Sky. Starting with the initial \$77.12 investment, Rita-Clare and her team of 30 peers have now raised \$13,500 to build a brand new school in Mali. Rita-Clare is proud of their accomplishment, and that it is all youth-driven and that she has introduced philanthropy to Canadian youth who never imagined the impact they could all have.

Michael Lim
West Vancouver, British Columbia

Age: 19

Having witnessed several family members succumb to cancer, Michael knows firsthand the devastating effects of this disease beyond the staggering statistics. Currently a medical student, Michael hopes that he can relieve the burden of cancer for patients through compassionate clinical care, outreach, advocacy and research – he endeavours to contribute to scientific breakthroughs by utilizing the expertise acquired from participating in scientific research for the past 6 years. Indeed, as part of a team of scientists led by Professor Ashok Venkitaraman at the University of Cambridge, Michael co-authored a paper published in the high impact, peer-reviewed journal, Cancer Cell. Michael has recently been awarded a Cancer Research UK graduate studentship to embark upon a PhD at the London Research Institute; this will be pursued alongside medical studies at University College London as part of the MB PhD programme.

Yale Michaels
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Age: 19

At the age of 12, Yale turned his passion for science into a mission by securing a lab position at the University of Manitoba. Not one to shy away from a challenge, Yale took it upon himself to solve the challenge of finding a way to destroy harmful cells in the human body, while leaving healthy cells intact. After years of r&d, Yale created Smart shRNA, a system that distinguishes healthy cells from corrupted ones: each cell is entered and, if it is found to be diseased, only then, the therapy is activated. Currently involved in disease research at the Harvard Medical School, Yale hopes to one day aid in the treatment of diverse terminal illnesses.

Adam Moscoe**Ottawa, ON****Age: 19**

Adam has held leadership roles in projects which promote civic engagement, including the inaugural TEDxYouthOttawa, Ottawa Kindness Week and Towards 2020: Canada's Commitment to Children and Youth. One of the leaders of the Canadian Federation of Jewish Students, Adam coordinates Holocaust and genocide awareness month, allowing youth to connect meaningfully with Survivors and advocate for global action to prevent genocide. Adam works to build bridges between Christian, Jewish, and Muslim students passionate about social justice and human rights, through initiatives as the Tzedaka-Sadaqah Project. An award-winning musical theatre performer, Adam uses drama and singing to empower individuals with developmental disabilities. In high school, he led the FUSE mentorship program which promotes community involvement and combats bullying and hazing. According to Adam's nominator, "...he's just getting started!" Adam will pursue studies in clinical psychology and aspires to run for MP someday.

Madison Schill**Oshawa, Ontario****Age: 17**

It only takes one night only to change someone's perspective about life and that is all Madison needed to ignite the fire in 40 of her peers to address misconceptions and stigmas about homeless youth in their community. Madison organized "One Night Out" so students will better understand life as a homeless person. They visit local soup kitchens and areas in the city with a high rates of homelessness, then spend a night in their school gymnasium – no extras allowed, just a pillow and sleeping bag. After a donated hot breakfast is served to participants in the morning, they must go straight to class. A model who has appeared in *Elle Canada* and *Flare*, Madison is making plans for her project to live on through an inspired next generation of student leaders and a documentary which she and her school board are currently developing.

Corey Sherwood**Brampton, Ontario****Age: 19**

When we are lost we seek guidance from a variety of references. Need directions? Refer to a map, or GPS. Not sure what to do with money? We seek assistance from the bank or an accountant. Planning the rest of your life? Look to Corey and his foundation "Student to Future" which he co-founded to mentor and be a resource to help all high school students through the tumultuous tasks of planning their post-secondary educational future. This budding humanitarian, who with the help of many volunteers, raised \$18,000 for the 2009 Haitian earthquake victims, created his foundation after working with at-risk youth and finding very little that specifically addressed their concerns, obstacles and needs as they dreamed of attaining a post-secondary education. "It made me realize the importance of giving back to society and helping those less fortunate than myself," says Corey.

Rui Song**Saskatoon, Saskatchewan****Age: 15**

Rui has the long-term goal of using biotechnology to improve human health through agriculture and found success not only as she captured first prize at the 2010 National Sanofi-Aventis BioTalent Challenge. Her innovative approach involves finding a molecular marker to differentiate pathogen races attacking lentil crops. Rui has a keen interest in the impact of genes on the diversity and function of an organism, with some of her previous research including the role of blueberry antioxidants in preventing cancer and the link between cold tolerance and antioxidant levels in blueberries. Rui advocates for understanding the relationship between human health and food security, saying the young generation needs to truly understand the importance of agricultural development. She endeavours to pursue a career in the life sciences, where she can continue to make innovative and exciting discoveries that will benefit the world.

Grant Sparling**Blyth, Ontario****Age: 18**

While Grant was in the eighth grade, he developed a set of hybrid golf clubs which lead him to nab the coveted finalist position at the Canada Wide Science Fair. After facing financial barriers, Grant was unable to obtain a patent and, within a year, three separate major companies released sets of hybrid clubs. A few years later while attending the Shad Valley enrichment program for students, Grant and his team, *Medicine for a Better Tomorrow*, created Formulation V720, a revolutionary accomplishment: the world's very first, and only, flu vaccine in pill form. Eliminating mass immunization processes is not only cost effective, it reduces many problems association with inoculations. Refusing to allow history to repeat, Grant sought out legal advice and has secured a provisional patent in Canada and the US for his team's product.

Caitlin Stockwell**Victoria, British Columbia****Age: 17**

We all know our shoe size, big or small, but we are often unaware of our carbon foot print size. As an environmentalist who is determined to get solar panels at her school, Caitlin wanted to draw further attention to the issue of climate change. She created cc350, in which sponsored teams of 55 students cycle laps, relay style, around her school's track for a total of 350 laps. 350 is a significant number because it is the safe upper limit of parts per million in the earth's upper atmosphere - according to current science - in order for humanity to reverse climate change effects. An eco-fair and sporting event, cc350 drew all members from the community, including The Green Party, and raised \$8,000 to help her school's goal of becoming a zero waste establishment. She was also successful in securing a \$20,000 grant which will allow the school to install solar panels in the fall.

Jacinthe Veillette**St. Tithe, Quebec****Age: 19**

Jacinthe, an anorexia survivor, is passionate about the issues and impacts of eating disorders. After collecting over 2,000 signatures on a petition to do something to change our society's attitude towards beauty, she took her message straight to the Québec government and met with the Minister for the Status of Women, Christine St. Pierre. Determination allowed Jacinthe's message was heard loud and clear, to the extent that, in October 2009, the provincial government created *Québec Charter for a Healthy Image*. Jacinthe plays a very active role to this day in promoting awareness of the Charter through speaking engagements and media interviews.

Anoop Virk**Coquitlam, British Columbia****Age: 18**

Vancouver's downtown East Side is internationally known for its desperate inhabitants and persistent social and health problems: drug abusers, high rates of poverty, illness, prostitution and homelessness. Many of those suffering on the East Side feel lost and disconnected. Anoop and her colleagues, fellow students and a teacher, created *Project Helping Everyone Locate Loved Ones* (HELLO). It is designed to support the East Side's population who want to reunite with their family members. Participants are asked to complete personalized greeting card to their family member, and Project HELLO uses it as a catalyst in starting the process of a possible reunion. Rather than offering a meal or a blanket, Project HELLO offers comfort to the wounded spirits of the East Side, and reconnects them with loved ones from whom they have been estranged. To date, Project HELLO has brought together more than 170 families.