

Y-Team gives youth voice

Students have plenty to say about life in York Region

A teenager writes a letter about a lack of hangouts in Keswick.

Another question: how the mayor of East Gwillimbury is so sure it's teenagers who are responsible for his town's vandalism problem.

A girl challenges the school board's dress-code banning halter tops in class.

Young York Region residents are facing issues of which older generations may be only vaguely aware. They are running events to support worthy causes, or just to entertain themselves, sometimes without a lot of support from the rest of the community.

They have their own voice and their own ideas and they don't always hear those voices in the media.

The York Region Newspaper Group has always been concerned about covering news that matters to all of our residents, including youth. Now we have our own group of young writers that will tell their peers' stories in a way they can understand.

The Y-Team is made up of 12 high school, college and university students from across York Region, all with a passion for writing and communicating.

Their work will be appearing in our newspapers and on yorkregion.com

They represent a range of interests and you'll find their work on our news, sports entertainment and feature pages.

They already have stories planned on topics as diverse as finding work when you have just returned to town from college, to backpacking to changes in young people's eating habits to sitting in with an indie band as it cuts its first CD.

All of them are volunteering their time and, in return, we are hoping to give them experience and a chance to shine.

We hope you will keep an eye out for their stories.

If you have any ideas about stories for the Y-Team, e-mail dteetze@ymg.com



CHRIS COOPER
Markham

I am 17 years old, graduating from Markham District High School.

In September, I will be pursuing a degree in journalism at Carleton University. This summer I will be working as a counsellor for Markham camps.

I am actively involved in the school's music program, playing in a jazz band and a wind symphony. I also play guitar with my garage band, Hybrid Vinyl. I also loves to write about music and am a self-professed hipster with an affinity for Neil Young.

My writing interchanges between hard-hitting community issues and lighter life-section fare, but is usually centred around a youthful and down-to-earth view of life in the suburbs.



COURTNEY YIP
Markham

It would be cliché to admit that ever since I was a little girl, I have always wanted to be a writer. I am going to embrace that unoriginal statement, however, and tell you all that ever since I was a little girl, I have always wanted to be a writer.

I remember putting together my first book in elementary school and, ever since then, whether it was writing for newspapers like The Economist and Sun, or my university paper, The Campus (Bishop's University), I have been unstoppable. I write about everything I see. My family dinners become miniature movies, my encounters with friends become the next line in a play; every moment of my life, another chapter in my living book. My imagination is never dulled and my love for art and photography help bring what I see around me everyday out of my mind, and into each word I write down, or each photo I take.

Writing and photography are a natural therapeutic outlet. Most of my childhood was spent in front of cameras whether modeling for family pictures or for small agencies. Finally, now that I have found solace in being on the other side of the photographic eye, I couldn't be happier or more certain of what I wish to do with my future.

With writing it is hard to develop an opinion you can back up entirely, especially in the news. The constant search

for the "truth" is one that will most likely never be found. However, we can embrace a more open-minded approach to reading and writing in which creativity is accepted, not discredited. I hope that soon, instead of getting just the cold hard facts, we can walk away from a story with a little more understanding, while having a lot more fun.



PAYAL DOSHI
Markham

I am currently majoring in sociology at York University. I am looking toward graduating and furthering my studies in broadcast journalism. I will be attending Niagara College in the fall.

I have a passion for writing, as expressed through the work I have done with the York Excalibur newspaper.

I had the opportunity to be a sports writer for the paper, where I had the opportunity to discuss various varsity issues.

I am a sports enthusiast, who enjoys playing as well as writing.



NEIL SPRINGER
Thornhill

I have one year left in the journalism program at Centennial College. Afterwards, I'm interested in the one-year post-graduate public relations course. I hope to start as a journalist, but eventually settle down in PR.

I will be 23 years old on May 11. I have lived most of my life in Canada, but from January 1998 to June 1999 I resided in London, England. At some point I hope to live and work in Japan, but I would pursue opportunities in other countries as well.

I am a rabid action movie fanatic; anything involving Dolph Lundgren, Jean-Claude Van Damme, Chuck Norris, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Steve Seagal or Gary Daniels is cool with me. But no Vin Diesel or Sylvester Stallone because they suck. Musically, I worship the ground Frank Zappa walked on.

In terms of politics, I fall just to the right of center, but have a more leftist outlook on the environment. Some have said that makes me a walking contradiction for sorts, but I say that I have a different sense of balance from others.



KELLY FOSS
Aurora

Studying honours media information and technical culture at University of Western Ontario.



ANTIA VARONE
Vaughan

Finishing Grade 11 at Villanova College in King City.



SAM DUNSIGER
Thornhill

Completed first year of journalism at Ryerson University.



DIANA PETRUCCI
Newmarket

In fourth year of honours bachelor of arts program at University of Toronto.



ANGELICA BLENICH
Richmond Hill

Studying political science and international development at Dalhousie University.



KRISTINA BAXTER
Bradford

In third year of English rhetoric and writing at University of Waterloo.



KRISTEN EVERSON
Newmarket

Entering fourth year of journalism at Carleton University.

NO PHOTO

ADAM MCLEAN
Richmond Hill
Studying journalism at Humber College.