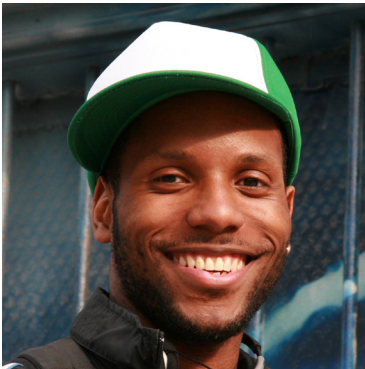




Saada Awaleh-God

My name is Saada Awaleh-God and I am in my final year at York University. I am currently perusing a degree in Psychology which will hopefully be preceded by a certificate in Bachelor of Education. As a young leader in Toronto, I am involved in many endeavors. I am currently a facilitator at Scadding Court Community Centre for Youth Lounge, a drop in centre for “at risk Youth”. For the past 4 years I have also served as an executive member for York University Black Students Alliance (YUBSA). This Origination is one of the largest services funded by the York Federation at York University. As a Pan-African origination our mission is to foster the self-empowerment of black students academically, financially and socially with the ultimate goal of straightening the wider black community.



MARIO “THE VOYCE” MURRAY

Mario Murray grew up in the Caribbean island of St. Lucia. Having to be very resourceful to feed and educate himself there, gave him a strong sense of self and self-worth. He moved to Canada in October of 1998 where he began pursuing music in high school, then in and around his university and college communities. The values entrenched in his music eventually led him to Beats to da Streets a program focused on guiding street involved youth to make positive changes in their lives through the culture of Hip Hop. He now serves as the workshop Coordinator.



RAKHI MUTTA

From a young age, Rakhi Mutta has had the opportunity of being apart of many innovative and culturally sensitive projects. She has spent the last seven years working directly with at-risk, low-income and marginalized youth.

Currently working with Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood Centre and the Toronto District School Board, in the safe schools program she finds creative ways to engage expelled and suspended students. Rakhi uses urban arts and the impact of urban entertainment and culture as tools for engagement and empowerment.

Her latest project is an innovative music program called “Artistic Effusion” that allows youth to learn lifeskills through hip-hop. In its first year the project released a CD/DVD. In its second year the youth had the opportunity to participate in an exchange program to Nanaimo, BC where they ran anti-oppression workshops and performed all over the city. They will soon release another album, a DVD including a short documentary, and two music videos.



TAIWO BAH

Taiwo Bah 27, has been a youth advocate and worker for many years. He led the way in the Blake-Boulton community as a youth representative to the Board of Directors at Eastview Neighbourhood Community Centre. From the age of 14, Tai took advantage of the many opportunities for youth leadership in his community and is now very much a community animator and youth advocate for the up-and-coming 14 year-olds on Blake St. Currently he works with Youth in Power, a youth identity, outreach, and leadership group for young people living in Toronto’s low-income communities. In his professional capacity, he writes stories and takes photos at various youth events for Toronto Community Housing, Canada’s largest social housing provider.



SABRINA “BUTTERFLY” GOPAUL

Sabrina ‘Butterfly’ Gopaul, 29, is Head News Correspondent for Jane-Finch.com. a site created and ran by youth, a host for a community radio station, and editor of a youth magazine. She graduated in Journalism and is involved in numerous community initiatives. She’s a single mother to her 11-year-old boy, ‘Z’, and they live in Jane and Finch. She’s vocal about children/youth issues, women issues and access to education/employment. She voices passionate viewpoints about her experiences and her vision for a stronger Jane and Finch. She’s an active leader and is determined to showcase the positive side of her hood.



Jama Mahlalela

Founder of Concrete Hoops Basketball Camps which aims to provide youth leadership development through the game of basketball. The program includes international exchange programs between Toronto and Swaziland, which are focused on youth engagement and life skill development. Jama Mahlalela is a graduate of the University of British Columbia and the University of Toronto where he holds a bachelor of human kinetics and a bachelor of education degree. Jama is also in his second year as an assistant coach for the University of Toronto Mens Basketball team and is the Coordinator of Basketball Development for the Toronto Raptors Basketball Club. Overall, he has found ways to use the game of basketball to excite youth and provide opportunities for global connections and self development.



Arsema Berhane

Arsema Berhane, 25, born in Asmara Eritrea and migrated to Toronto Canada in 1990 via Sudan. She lives in the O'Connor Community where she has nurtured her passion for Community Development by being an active leader for 17 years. She loves working with youth and has been doing so all over North America, Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. She has also designed and implemented innovative educational, recreational, social, and culturally appropriate programs and activities to support youth and their families.

Arsema loves to travel and connect with people from all walks of life. She dreams of visiting every country in Africa, and lives to make a difference and touch the lives of others.



SABRI ESSA

Sabri Essa, 22, Live in the west end of Toronto. I am a student and mentor in the community. I've worked on several youth empowerment/leadership programs during the years and focused a lot on young black men. I've coordinated drama/ theatre programs for young immigrants to express the oppressions that they face when they come to Canada. I've worked on several conflict resolution/mediation skills programs with youth all over the city of Toronto. I've worked in a variety of environments with young people from community centers, to high schools even shelters for the homeless. The thing that represents Toronto with me is that Toronto is multi-cultural and so am I. I am able to speak & write 5 different languages, I understand their cultures, traditions and religions. This makes it easy for me to interact with youth from different corners of the world. Ase!



HELENA SHIMELES

Helena is 22 years young. She loves to sing, write, eat ice cream, surf the internet,vibe to music, and listen intently to song lyrics. She is the Executive Director of Young Diplomats, a dynamic youth-led organization that seeks to provide resources, services, and support to Ethiopian youth in Toronto. She just completed her Honours Bachelor of Science Degree this June at University of Toronto, and is entering a Masters program in the fall to conduct research on youth and HIV. She is inspired by her family, her homeland, and newborn babies.