



High school students to inject new ideas into library youth hub

Toronto Public Library partners with 1UP Toronto Conference on youth design jam

TORONTO, February 23, 2019 – If you think libraries are becoming a place of the past, think again.

11 youth hubs at Toronto Public Library branches across the city are filled with young people every day after school looking for a safe space to hang out, do homework, or participate in a variety of programs.

One of these thriving youth hubs is at the York Woods library branch in North York. The branch is scheduled to be renovated later this year, which presents an opportunity for staff to upgrade the youth hub and address some of the current challenges of the space. As they rethink the way youth services are delivered at libraries, who else would be the best to ask for ideas other than the youth themselves?

This is why Toronto Public Library is partnering with 1UP Toronto, a youth-led program focused on educating and engaging high school students in the city building process. Their annual 1UP Toronto Conference is one of the largest youth convenings in the city focused on urban issues. As part of this year's conference, student teams will be paired with architects, urban planners, and designers in a 3-hour "design jam" to brainstorm creative and youth-centred solutions for the York Woods hub.

The conference will also feature four groups of high school students across the GTA, who have been working tirelessly in the past year to tackle issues that affect youth in their neighbourhoods. As part of the 1UP Toronto program, these school chapters are each given a micro grant and paired with a mentor to lead a community design-build project.

Nadia Mohsin, a grade 12 student at Father Michael McGivney Catholic Academy in Markham, is working with her team to redesign the underused courtyard space at her school. They plan to repurpose milk crates to build furniture and create shared spaces where students can have lunch and play board games.

At Pierre Elliott Trudeau High School, Mengyu Gao and Hayden Poon are both aspiring urban planners frustrated with their transit system. Despite the resources already available, they saw how their peers still have very little knowledge about bus routes and schedules. Hoping to promote public transit usage, they are now designing a student-friendly transit pamphlet and planning to distribute copies at school.

Student leaders including Mohsin, Gao, and Poon will be presenting their solutions at the 1UP Toronto Youth City Building Conference at Ryerson University. They will be sharing the stage with experienced city builders and grassroots leaders such as Shawn Micallef and Sabina Ali to discuss bold and innovative ideas, big and small, that would make our city more equitable and livable.

1UP Toronto Conference will take place on Sunday, March 3, 2019. It is a free public event for all high school students in the GTA. To register, visit 1uptoronto2019.eventbrite.ca.



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