



High school students showcase pop-up community projects

1UP Youth City Builders share stage with city councillor and urban planning professionals

TORONTO, March 5, 2018 – In a time when our city leaders consistently fail to get their act together, whether it is to provide sufficient shelter space in the winter, or to keep our streets safe through better design of roads like Yonge St. North, young people are stepping up in a big way to create real change in their own neighbourhoods.

Four groups of high school students across the GTA have been working tirelessly in the past year on different neighbourhood projects that address an issue in their own communities. As part of the 1UP Youth City Builders program, these students tackled issues of road safety, youth mental health, underused parks, and bus shelter design. They surveyed their neighbours, brainstormed ideas, and designed prototypes of their proposed solutions.

1UP Earl Haig, one of the school chapters in North York, is focusing on the challenge of jaywalking.

“Even though there’s a marked crosswalk less than 500 metres away, hundreds of students jaywalk across the street near our school every day as a shortcut to the subway station,” says Anya Sarvanandan, one of the school chapter leaders, “Students are constantly in danger of getting hit and there have been many close calls.”

To address this problem, students rallied to petition the local councillor to install a crosswalk, but as with most public work projects, the process would take many months. Unwilling to wait, Anya and her team are proposing to create a pop-up crosswalk on their own. Inspired by the Vision Zero campaign and the tactical urbanism movement, they plan to use bright-coloured temporary paint, chalk, and DIY signage to create a safe crossing for students, and to warn drivers to slow down and be alert.

Over March Break, Anya and other school chapter leaders will be presenting their solutions at the 1UPToronto Youth City Building Conference at Ryerson University. They will be sharing the stage with Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam and other city-building professionals to discuss ideas that would make our city more livable. Students will also compete in an ideas competition at the conference to design the lobby space of Scadding Court Community Centre at Dundas and Bathurst and the new main street of the Bloor-Dufferin development, to better serve people from all ages and backgrounds.

1UPToronto Youth City Building Conference will take place on Saturday, March 10, 2018. It is a free public event for all high school students in the GTA. To register, visit urbanminds.co/conference2018

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