

2014 Nathan Gilbert Youth Innovation Fellows

We're pleased to announce our 2014 fellows.

joshua barndt

joshua is an urban ecologist and community artist who wants to explore the community land trust model and youth housing insecurities in the neighborhood he grew up in, Parkdale. For the past while he has been engaged in conversations about the systemic roots of housing insecurity and been involved in the Parkdale Neighborhood Land Trust (PNLT), a community based institution that wants to make community owned land available for lease to providers of affordable housing. He will undertake qualitative research with a newly created Youth Research Team of the PNLTL to investigate long-term affordability of housing and alternative housing models and create policy recommendations for communities facing gentrification and the preservation and promotion of mixed-income neighborhoods. joshua holds a MS in Design & Urban Ecologies from Parsons the New School for Design and a BFA in Interdisciplinary Arts from Concordia University. He has received numerous awards for his community arts work assuming many roles including among others lead artist, facilitator, program manager & curator. Joshua is considering a number of mentors including Kuni Kamazaki of the Parkdale Neighborhood Trust, Rick Eagan, West Neighborhood House, and UofT professors Susana Bunce, David Hulchanski and Emily Paradis

Chris Connolly

Chris is interested in exploring employment and income security for young change makers working for social and economic justice. His experiences have led him to question why young change makers, often facing multiple systemic barriers related to their ethnicity, immigration status, sexual orientation and other social identities, are often precariously employed, in debt and lacking the safeguards against health and other emergencies needed to live stable and rewarding lives. Because of the complex and multi-systemic nature of employment security for young people, Chris will depart from traditional research methodologies towards the mindset and methodologies of design thinking (design-specific cognitive activities applied during the investigative process). Chris recently completed his Masters in Public Health at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto and also holds a Bachelor of Science from McGill University. He currently works as Evaluator and Communications Coordinator for the Youth Social Infrastructure Collaborative (YSI). Supporting Chris' work are Chris Lee from the YSI Collaborative, Marc Langlois, Café 12, Phyllis Novak, Sketch and Amy Hosotsuji of the Grassroots Youth Collaborative among others.

Mojan Jianfar

During the course of her fellowship Mojan will examine how to more effectively engage and plan for youth participation in city building processes. She is interested in showing the value and role that creative, innovative and collaborative processes can have on participatory neighborhood planning, focusing on youth as change agents and future civic leaders. Structural and practical limitations exist when it comes to engaging youth on planning issues in Toronto. Through research, interviews and focus groups, Mojan will gather information to better understand what barriers young people face and how they would like to see them changed. Mojan recently completed her Master of Environmental Studies in Urban and Regional Planning at York University and did an undergraduate science degree at the University of Toronto As Director of Projects + Partnerships at The STEPS Initiative, Mojan uses art and creative processes as a means to reimagine how to positively impact communities while creating a platform for young people to challenge and change the way public spaces are used in their communities. Mojan will be working on her fellowship with the help of the STEPS Initiative, Maximum City and archiTEXT.

Alana Lowe

Alana would like to explore how marginalized students are experiencing structural violence in the Toronto District School Board and what systems are currently in place to hold administrators accountable for the personal and systemic violence that these students are experiencing? She is curious to know what it would take to convene an autonomous community-based committee that monitors student experience and how to identify allies within the TDSB. She is also interested in discovering how alternative programming within the TDSB, such as the Each One Teach One program at Western Tech, Success Beyond Limits at Westview C.I. or the Rise Program at East York C.I. supports students experiencing structural violence. Alana will be using community-based participatory research to explore this systemic issue. Alana holds a BPA in Communications from Athabasca University and an advanced Diploma in Broadcast Journalism from Humber College. She is currently the Community Arts and Production director at Stolen From Africa. Alana will be mentored by Chelsea Takalo, Student Equity Advisor with the TDSB's Equity Department and hopefully by Mahad Mohamood, author of *The Toronto District School Board & Structural Violence* report.