



**Community Safety Awards 2011**  
**Winner profile: YOUCAN**  
**Youth Community Safety Program**

Engaging youth in social justice. Developing young leaders. Preventing violence and creating peaceful communities. These are the principles behind YOUCAN, a non-profit organization for youth and by youth.

YOUCAN programs are based on the premise that we teach young people a range of subjects in school, but we often fail to provide them with the skills they need to have healthy interpersonal relationships and to peacefully address the conflicts that arise in their lives. By giving them those skills, YOUCAN helps foster healthy, safe communities—and kids who care.

YOUCAN programs teach important values such as dignity and self-respect, honesty, trust, choice, commitment, responsibility and cross-cultural understanding. Through workshops and training programs, marginalized youth learn to think more positively about themselves, others and the future. They learn communication, negotiation and anger management skills. They also discover how to deal with conflict without resorting to violence.

The result is that participants develop greater self-confidence. They find out they can make a difference. They change their behaviours and attitudes. Most importantly, they begin to believe in themselves.

Established in Ottawa 14 years ago, YOUCAN has since trained close to 30,000 youth across Canada. Hundreds of them have gone on to become YOUCAN Trainers.

In the words of one young participant, “YOUCAN has given me hope and opportunity. I now have the tools I need to prevent violence in my life and to make a positive impact in my community.”

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