



that was easy:

Published on staples.newshq.businesswire.com (<http://staples.newshq.businesswire.com>) on 10/12/11 10:30 am EDT

Staples and Ashoka Name Winners in 5th Annual Youth Social Entrepreneur Competition

Release Date:

Wednesday, October 12, 2011 10:30 am EDT

Terms:

[Community Relations](#)

Dateline City:

ARLINGTON, Va.

Young Entrepreneurs Driving Social Change with Technology will be Celebrated at Techonomy for their Achievements Addressing Social Issues

ARLINGTON, Va.--([BUSINESS WIRE](#))--[Ashoka](#), the world's community of leading social entrepreneurs, and [Staples](#), Inc. (NASDAQ: SPLS), announced today the winners of the fifth annual Staples/Ashoka Youth Social Entrepreneur (YSE) Competition. The global competition highlights youth-led organizations using innovation and technology to address social issues affecting their communities, and is part of Ashoka's [Youth Venture@](#), an initiative that identifies and fosters young entrepreneurs all over the world who are creating positive change.

This year, the competition received hundreds of entries from 50 countries addressing a diverse range of issues, from the environment to healthcare and education. The competition applauds exceptional young people and their unique use of technology to make a positive impact in their community and the world.

The 2011 competition winners include:

- **Vineet Singal**, 21, United States, is the founder of [Anjna Patient Education](#), which provides health education programs to free health clinics to help disadvantaged and low-income patients learn about nutrition, diet and a healthy lifestyle. Vineet previously volunteered at several free clinics and witnessed firsthand the high volume of patients with preventable conditions like stress-related illnesses and obesity and the lack of health education and patient counseling available. With Anjna Patient Education, Vineet is determined to break the cycle of chronic, preventable diseases by developing interactive health education applications for underserved populations.
- **Eden Full**, 19, Canada, is the founder of [Roseicollis Technologies](#), a social enterprise designed to implement unique technologies in developing and emerging markets. The organization's primary technology is the SunSaluter, a cost-effective solar panel rotator that increases the efficiency of solar panels to bring alternative energy and electricity to developing countries. In August 2010, Roseicollis Technologies provided electricity, for the first time, to two villages in Kenya to help improve the lives of more than 1,000 residents. The villages can now safely collect firewood, charge cell phones and power radios to remain updated on current events. Eden and Roseicollis Technologies aim to install the SunSaluter in additional countries, including Tanzania, Uganda and Western China.

- **Karthik Naralasetty**, 22, India, created www.socialblood.org, a social media platform to help address the blood shortage crisis by connecting blood donors and recipients of the same blood type through facebook. After witnessing a family's struggle to find O+ blood donors every 25 days to treat its four year-old child's rare medical condition, Karthik knew he needed to take action. Karthik brought Socialblood.org to life and today, this central platform that matches blood donors with recipients has more than 500 users with future plans to expand globally.
- **Vivek Nair**, 23, Singapore, founded Damascus Fortune, an organization based in India that has developed a technology to produce carbon nanotube and carbon nanofibers from industrial flue gas. The technology converts carbon emissions from automotives and industrial plants such as rice mills, power plants and petrochemicals to produce carbon nanotubes and carbon nanofibers, which are used for composites, nano-electronics, optics, energy storage and many other science applications. Vivek and his team of 15 engineering students are working on further developing the technology, lowering the cost of production, and finding new applications that will help reduce climate change. Damascus Fortune aims to install this technology in almost all flue gas emitting industrial plants and automobiles in India, Singapore, China, EU, UK and USA to reduce global warming in a large scale.

"This year's Staples/Ashoka YSE Competition demonstrates how youth today are uniquely leveraging technology to create lasting and impactful solutions for a better world," said Gretchen Zucker, executive director of Ashoka's Youth Venture. "We are pleased to recognize these students and hope their achievements inspire more youth to become changemakers."

"The winners of this year's Staples/Ashoka YSE Competition are an innovative and tech-savvy group that will continue to drive social change and make a positive impact on communities for years to come," said Amy Shanler, director of community relations for Staples, Inc. "We look forward to celebrating their entrepreneurial spirit at the Techonomy conference and helping each venture grow and address critical social problems around the world."

The four winners will receive an all-expenses-paid trip to [Techonomy 2011](#), a prestigious conference for technology leaders featuring the founders and executive leaders for global technology innovators such as LinkedIn, Mozilla and Salesforce.com. The conference is being held November 13-15, 2011 in Tucson, Arizona. Winners will also receive \$500 to support their Venture's development.

During the Techonomy conference, the grand prize winner will be selected by vote after a pitch off, and awarded an "Around the World Learning Tour" that will provide an opportunity to travel the globe and meet other youth social entrepreneurs, Ashoka Fellows and Staples associates to further develop their venture's impact. The four winners were selected by an elite panel of judges, including: Christine Putur, senior vice president and chief information officer, Staples, Inc.; JJ Ramberg, host of MSNBC's "Your Business;" David Kirkpatrick, chief executive officer, Techonomy Media; Armelle Carminati-Rabasse, human capital and diversity global managing director, Accenture; Mohammed Barry, winner of the 2010 Staples YSE Competition; and Gabi Zedlmayer, vice president, global social innovation, Hewlett-Packard.

Since 2006, Staples Foundation and Ashoka have supported young entrepreneurs throughout the world as they work to create positive change. Through more than \$3 million in funding, Staples has enabled Ashoka's Youth Venture to expand to eight countries in North America, South America and Europe and has helped 50,000 youth volunteers launch and operate 2,000 ventures that have had impact on nearly 200,000 people.

For additional information on the 2011 Staples/Ashoka YSE Competition winners, please visit the competition web site at: www.ashokayouthcompetition.org.

About Youth Venture

Ashoka's Youth Venture aims to help an entire generation of young people develop as changemakers, who will improve their communities now and throughout their lives. Youth Venture inspires and supports teams of young people to launch and lead their own civic-minded organizations and businesses. Youth Venture was created by Ashoka, the global pioneer of the social entrepreneurship sector and the world's biggest network of changemakers. We believe that the greatest contribution we can make to the world is to increase dramatically the number of changemakers today and in every future generation. This is the key factor for success for every part of society, from a school to a company to an entire country. Ashoka's Youth Venture operates in 18 countries and online at www.youthventure.org.

About Ashoka

Ashoka is the world's community of leading social entrepreneurs—individuals with innovative and practical ideas for addressing social needs. Working with these social entrepreneurs, Ashoka builds communities of innovators who work

collectively to transform society and design new ways for the social sector to become more productive, entrepreneurial and globally integrated. For more information, please visit www.ashoka.org.

About Staples in the Community

Staples contributes to educational and youth-oriented community efforts, from literacy and mentoring to career skills development, through in-kind and monetary donations and grants from Staples Foundation, the private charitable arm of Staples, Inc. Through its community relations efforts, Staples and Staples Foundation have helped more than 6,000 organizations in 2,000 communities across 27 countries. Community relations is also an integral component of Staples Soul, which recognizes the connection between long-term business success and the impact Staples has on associates, communities and the planet. For more information, visit www.staples.com/community.

Language:

English

Contact HTML:

for Staples, Inc.

Lynda Curtis, 781-559-0423

lynda.curtis@rfbinder.com

or

for Ashoka's Youth Venture

Tina Choi, +44 20 8816 7988

tchoi@ashoka.org

Ticker Slug:

Ticker:

SPLS

Exchange:

NASDAQ

Source URL: <http://staples.newshq.businesswire.com/press-release/community-relations/staples-and-ashoka-name-winners-5th-annual-youth-social-entreprene>