

news release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DEMOCRACY IS READY FOR ITS CLOSE-UP: ELECTIONS MANITOBA LAUNCHES STUDENT VIDEO CHALLENGE

Manitobans will vote in the next provincial election April 19 and to spark interest and discussion among youth, Elections Manitoba is hosting a school-based challenge that will have students weigh in on the democratic process.

The CitizenNext Video Challenge is open to grades 7-12 classes throughout Manitoba and runs from September 23 to November 4. Classes will create their own videos in response to three challenges, each introduced through videos by young civic leaders. Classes will get a new challenge to address each two weeks. Videos will be awarded points and badges based on specific criteria. Two classes with the most points (one from grades 7-8 and one from 9-12) will receive a class pizza party and a \$500 grant to award to a registered charity the class chooses.

The video challenge is an extension of the CitizenNext initiative that Elections Manitoba launched in 2011, which promotes early civic engagement of youth and encourages parents to bring their children with them when they vote. The initiative has the broad aim of promoting democratic awareness among young adults.

“Research has shown that those who are civically engaged at a young age are more likely to vote and be active in their communities as adults,” states Shipra Verma, Manitoba’s chief electoral officer. “With this video challenge, we wanted to work with educators to get students thinking about democracy and what it means to them,” she adds.

The challenges cover three topics:

- **Representation** – 2016 marks the 100th anniversary of women getting the vote in Manitoba, but do we have equal representation today? How could it improve?
- **Canadian Democratic Rights** – Canada has rights and freedoms other countries are striving to achieve. What are they and what impact do they have?
- **Mandatory Voting** – Is mandatory voting the recommended way to increase participation?

Teachers are encouraged to visit citizennext.ca where they can register and find a full overview of the challenge.

EXCLUSIVE Media Sneak Peek at Intro Videos

Students will learn the specifics of challenge topics through video introductions that **won’t be made public until the challenge start date.** Media outlets are welcome to view the videos and use clips in their coverage. **We ask that they don’t release the full videos to the public.** An inspiring young Manitoban is featured in each video:

Tasha Spillett – Founder of United Against Racism Aboriginal Youth Circle in high school, Tasha continues to support positive cultural identities among Aboriginal Youth in her work as an educator and in the community.

Gentil Misagaro – After fleeing the Second Congo War, Gentil and his family spent five years in Uganda before coming to Winnipeg in 2010. Today, Gentil is a sought-after performer and music producer who is dedicated to bringing art and music to youth who are at risk.

Megan Fultz – In high school, Megan helped establish the Winnipeg chapter of Oxfam and has gone on play key roles with the Women’s Education and Action Fund of Manitoba and the Legal Help Centre.

To access the videos visit <http://citizennext.ca/media/> (Password: videos15challenge)

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About Elections Manitoba

Elections Manitoba is an independent office of the Legislative Assembly. The office ensures the democratic rights of all Manitobans through the conduct of free and fair elections, by ensuring compliance with political financing laws and by enhancing public confidence in and awareness of the electoral process.

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