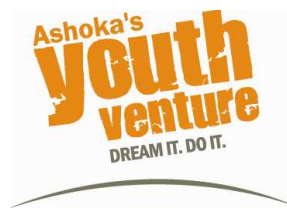




that was easy.<sup>sm</sup>



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:**

Briana Curran  
Staples, Inc.  
(508) 253-0203  
[briana.curran@staples.com](mailto:briana.curran@staples.com)

Tina Choi  
for Ashoka's Youth Venture  
+44 782 730 8841  
[tchoi@ashoka.org](mailto:tchoi@ashoka.org)

**Ashoka and Staples Launch Fourth Annual  
Youth Social Entrepreneur Competition**

*Global Competition Will Culminate at a New TEDx Conference Recognizing  
Entrepreneurial Youth Addressing Social Issues in their Communities*

**ARLINGTON, Va. — June 14, 2010**— [Ashoka](#), the world's community of leading social entrepreneurs, and [Staples](#), Inc. (NASDAQ: SPLS), announced today the launch of the fourth annual [Staples/Ashoka Youth Social Entrepreneur Competition](#). The global competition highlights youth-led organizations focusing on social issues affecting their communities, and is part of Ashoka's [Youth Venture](#)<sup>®</sup>, an initiative that identifies and fosters young entrepreneurs all over the world who are creating positive change. Since 2006, [Staples Foundation for Learning](#), the charitable arm of Staples, Inc., has enabled Youth Venture to expand to eight countries in North America, South America and Europe through more than \$2.5 million in funding.

The competition is open to existing and new Youth Venture teams, which are made up of young people between the ages of 12 and 24, who are creating entrepreneurial ventures that make a positive impact on communities.

Nominations and entries will be accepted on a rolling basis through Sept. 20, 2010. Eight winners will be chosen throughout the summer, and in October, the grand-prize winner will be selected for their outstanding impact, innovation and potential. All eight winners will be recognized at a [TEDx conference](#), a national gathering of thought leaders devoted to "Ideas Worth Spreading," on Nov. 13, 2010 in Washington, DC.

During the TEDx conference, the grand-prize winning team will be announced and presented with the Staples/Ashoka Youth Social Entrepreneur Excellence Award and a prize worth \$5,000. The seven remaining winners will receive Achievement Awards and prizes worth \$500. The grand-prize winning team will have the unique opportunity to consult with, and draw from the expertise of high-level Staples executives. All eight winning teams will get the opportunity to meet with an Ashoka Fellow - one of the world's leading social entrepreneurs. Ashoka Fellows are known for their unrivaled commitment to bold ideas and innovative solutions.

-more-

Ashoka's Youth Venture® engages over 75,000 young people in pursuing their dreams in 18 countries around the world. Since its founding in 1996, Youth Venture has launched nearly 4,000 Venture teams worldwide – one-third of which have launched as a direct result of SFFL's five-year partnership with Ashoka. SFFL's commitment to supporting Ashoka's vision of Everyone A Changemaker™ has been instrumental in expanding Youth Venture's offerings and opportunities to help people create positive change.

For additional information on the Staples/Ashoka Youth Social Entrepreneur Competition, please visit the competition web site at: <http://www.genv.net/en-us/staples-yse>.

### **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 teams access workshops, tools, adult allies, a global network of like-minded young changemakers and seed funding to establish their own ventures that solve problems around them. 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.GenV.net](http://www.GenV.net).

### **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](http://www.ashoka.org).

### **About Staples**

Staples, the world's largest [office products](#) company, is committed to making it easy for customers to buy a wide range of office products and services. Our broad selection of [office supplies](#), [electronics](#), [technology](#) and [office furniture](#) as well as business services, including [computer repair](#) and [copying](#) and [printing](#), helps our customers run their offices efficiently. With 2009 sales of \$24 billion and 91,000 associates worldwide, Staples operates in 25 countries throughout North and South America, Europe, Asia and Australia serving businesses of all sizes and consumers. Staples invented the [office superstore](#) concept in 1986 and today ranks second worldwide in e-commerce sales. The company is headquartered outside Boston. More information about Staples (Nasdaq: SPLS) is available at [www.staples.com/media](http://www.staples.com/media).

###