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Fourth Finalist Announced in Annual Staples/Ashoka Youth Social Entrepreneur Competition

The Viewpaper Brings Citizen Journalism to Indian Youth

ARLINGTON, Va. — Sept. 4, 2010— [Ashoka](#), the world's community of leading social entrepreneurs, and [Staples](#), Inc. (NASDAQ: SPLS), announced today the fourth of eight finalists in the [Staples/Ashoka Youth Social Entrepreneur \(YSE\) Competition](#). The fourth finalist, Shiv Bhaskar Dravid, 24, is a young social entrepreneur working to harness the power of Indian youth and create a platform to involve them in national discourse. The global competition recognizes youth-led organizations who are addressing 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.

The eight finalists of the Staples/Ashoka competition will receive cash prizes, consulting from Staples executives and an all-expenses-paid trip to speak at TEDxYSE, a Youth Venture-hosted conference held in Washington, DC on Nov. 13. TEDxYSE leverages the global TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) conference model, which enables local community groups to organize, design and host their own independent, TED-like events. The TEDxYSE event will be held at Sidwell Friends, in Washington, DC. For more information, please visit <http://www.tedxyse.com>

Shiv is the founder and creator of The Viewpaper, a youth journalism website for young people in India. Shiv was inspired to take action when he realized that his own daily experiences were quite different from the observations and discussions among media elites. He wanted to speak out and share his thoughts, but no newspaper editor would take him seriously because of his age. The more he was ignored and rejected for his "lack of gray hair," the more he realized that youth opinions were not widely valued. In a leap of entrepreneurial faith, Shiv quit his job and recruited volunteers to help him develop the business plan and strategy for his website.

The Viewpaper (theviewpaper.net), which is seen by more than 150,000 readers a month, is citizen journalism in action, publishing daily articles written by youth staff writers. Over the last three years, they have engaged close to 4,000 young people in sharing their views and opinions and has emerged as India's largest youth paper. The Viewpaper has already expanded to five other issue-focused websites, including a UK version (<http://theviewpaper.co.uk/>). Shiv has ambitious plans to scale his work and hopes to branch out to 50 sites within the next year.

Shiv is driven by his belief that if enough young people express themselves in the same time and place, the combined power of their voices will be a force for positive change. “Youth think outside the box,” Shiv says, and combining their efforts only multiplies the potential for innovative solutions. His hope is that by giving youth a voice and a platform to share their opinions, he can encourage his country – and the world – to value the youth perspective.

“Shiv Dravid serves as a wonderful example of the entrepreneurial spirit and the civic leadership of young changemakers in communities around the world,” said Gretchen Zucker, executive director for Ashoka’s Youth Venture. “Shiv’s determination has made a positive impact in the lives of youth in India - a core measurement for this Staples/Ashoka competition.”

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

“Staples and Ashoka provide young entrepreneurs like Shiv Dravid a chance to show how their Ventures are creating a positive, lasting impact in communities all around the world,” said Shailesh Karwa, co-Chief Executive Officer of Staples India. “Shiv’s courage and success is inspiring, and his platform to give youth a voice serves as a model of ingenuity we hope others will embrace to lead their own social cause.”

Ashoka’s Youth Venture[®] engages over 75,000 young people in pursuing their dreams to create change 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 young people, like Shiv Dravid, create 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.

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.

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

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 26 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.

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