

# B E S C E N E

The Flemington Park, O'Connor - Parkview & Thorncliffe Park Youth Magazine

Issue 1

Volume 1

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the pros & cons of young love

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# NEW BEGINNINGS

By **ABDULLAH AYAZ** - GUEST EDITOR



The desire to express yourself is a human need. People from all over the world and from many ends of the social ladder express this desire through their art, stories and culture. The communities of Don Mills, Flemingdon Park and Thorncliffe Park are culturally diverse full of nationalities from all over the world. This gives the area a rich piquant flavor, one that is not so easily captured through the sensationalism of the crime driven reporting of the mainstream media - which more often than not, stereotypes racialized young people as criminals and thugs.

**ART IS EXPRESSION.** And in my times, I have found that the Flemo/T-park community is full of unique voices trying to find forums to express themselves. For example I can name at least eight rappers from the community right off the top of my head. Yet their voices are unknown to too many of us.

This magazine was created to give young people a voice and allow us to tell our stories to the community. Youth in the area are now going to get the experience of expressing themselves through the work of welding words. Poetry and rap from street corners will now be immortalized in print, and young people's stories and experiences will be sown to paper. I can only be grateful for being part of the opening of great opportunity. Art is expression. Let Be Scene be the tool to capture it.

*Abdullah Ayaz is a resident of the Flemingdon Park community, and a student at Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute. More commonly known by his stage name Hibbed, he is a spoken word artist, has had the privilege to perform in over 20 venues across the GTA, and has released a spoken word collection under the name "In the Midst of the Mist". Ayaz co-hosts a radio show, "Flemon City Entertainment" on CFPK radio and is currently working on an Anti-violence charity show - Flash Back '08 - which will be happening in early December.*

## JOIN THE SCENE CREATE THE SCENE BE SCENE

**BE SCENE** youth magazine is a collaboration between the Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre's Catch da Flava magazine, the Flemingdon Community Health Centre and other local community agencies servicing the O'Connor, Thorncliffe & Flemingdon Park neighbourhoods. The magazine is distributed free to libraries, community groups, and selected schools in the mentioned communities and across Toronto.

BE SCENE welcomes letters, articles, stories & poems from young people (up to 24 years of age)

Submissions should be  
**NO LONGER THAN 1000 WORDS IN LENGTH**

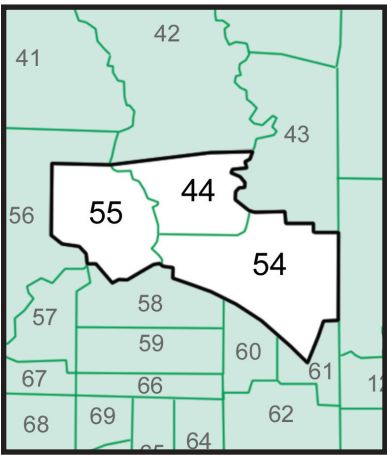
If you would like more information about how you can contribute to BE SCENE, call us at (416) 863-1074 or e-mail **BeSceneMag@gmail.com**

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From the City of Toronto:  
Neighbourhood Map

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# CAN TEENAGE RELATIONSHIPS LAST?

By **ANIBA KHAN**

High school is supposed to be the best time of your life, so why hold back on the fun with a relationship? Relationships require great commitment as well as responsibility. Most of us are not at the stage of taking such great responsibility on enduring a relationship or making the commitment to stick to one person. Haven't we all heard the phrase "Your four years of high school are the best times of your life"? Why not make it so? High school is a time to meet new people, study hard for the future, and simply have fun. It's when you slowly chugga-chugga up the roller coaster of life, facing wild loop-de-loops, hair-raising ascents, and blood curdling falls.

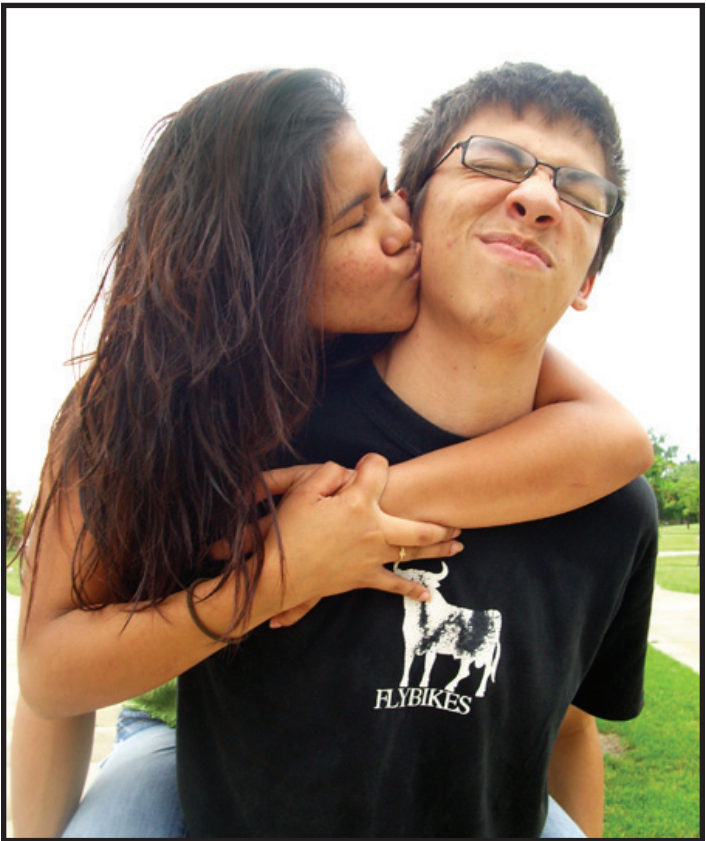


People come and go, and what better place to meet new people than your own high school? Sometimes it's true, there may only be one "perfect" person in your high school, but what about after high school. You have the whole world to explore! You'll meet new people from different backgrounds and different personalities. With a relationship, now and then you may find yourself lessening the variety of people you meet or having the feeling of being trapped. If you're lucky, you may find a non-possessive partner, but with the nature of young romantic love, it is quite unlikely.

In high school, we usually have a plan or an idea of what we want to become. At the most, we might even decide on which university we'd like to attend. Usually the chosen university is out of town or province and therefore, graduating high schoolers eventually leave for their chosen university to prepare for future careers. Sometimes we may stay in touch with our high school friends, but typically, people separate and end up going their own ways. This is the case with couples as well. Due to different university decisions or educational paths chosen, a couple may decide to separate. In most cases, meeting new people in university replace old friends and relationships nurtured during

high school. Adolescence is a tough time in a person's life. Hormones rage and popularity becomes the goal of an average person's ambition. As part of this popularity the need to simply "fit in" by going out with someone is also sought. But aside from relationships, many teens find it better to enjoy high school in other ways such as exploring careers, having part time jobs, joining sports and clubs, and hanging out with friends. This way they don't need to worry about popularity, because after high school no one remembers the popularity, they remember the moments and activities.

During teen years, a person tries on one face after another in hope to find a face of their own. Nothing is certain in high school because how can two young people, no matter how in love they may be with each other, pursue and sustain their feelings for each other when neither is financially prepared nor have a clue of what the future beholds? Teenage relationships in high school can be as fragile as glass, where one calamity has the capability of breaking the whole devotion. In this case, the calamity can be the feeling of being trapped or desertion of feelings. So why pledge yourself to just one person at such a young age? Why not enjoy life meeting new people and having fun before committing to one person and taking hold of the numerous responsibilities that come along with it.





# RESPECT

By Hibbed, Wardah, Loko & Umama

After a stressful altercation at work  
I'm questioning my job contemplating its worth  
So I tend to my agony relieve my issues  
Shed a tear out of anger, then grab a tissue

Flashed the TV to check the sports, my team lost  
Proline faltered now I got to pay the cost  
**Anger** arises **society** despises and realizes  
The daily struggle **hated** yet still reprises

Flicked to CNN , channel 33, what do I see  
Genocide in Darfur civil war loose rampantly  
First thoughts, I feel sorry that I can't assist  
But as I hear more of the story I fall deep in the abyss

Innocent women **crying**, innocent children **dying**  
People not giving two thoughts on life, **suiciding**  
Grabbed a glass of water to repress my sorrow  
Knowing that 80% of these children won't see tomorrow

Heard the phone ring, creditors ignored it quick  
Me in debt can't compare to death after bullets hit  
Like the **spread of disease**, split **families on there knees**  
Praying and begging for one thought, **one word PLEASE!**

Lord allow me to just live my life normally  
Food for my family allow them to live healthy  
Dear lord don't leave me in the belly of the beast  
Though his hunger grows greatly **don't add me to the feast**

Out of selfishness, withholding the key of power  
Soldiers reign bullets on the public like thunder showers  
**Corruption, destruction** that's there daily lifestyle  
Day in and day out until they **take their final bow**

Stayed observant all night, similar to an owl  
Was haunted in my dreams from hearin innocent children howl  
So I live newly, mind state maturely  
We all need to bond together and circulate with

R-E-S-P-E-C-T  
Find out what it means to me  
R-E-S-P-E-C-T

WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK OF ME?

Now picture this if you will, The picture is still  
After a hard day of work, you get home, you're on the couch  
Food in your hand stuffing your mouth  
Flip flip, smack the remote control, it glitches  
You're just lost watching the plot unfold,  
But ooh! Commercial comes on, **god no!**

'Cause you just wanna get back and relax,  
Or maybe you got dumped, **do you need some cash?**  
And the last thing you wanna see,  
Is one of them charity ads on T.V.  
You know the ones with them black kids running down the isle,  
Sometimes they've got **flies clawing on their eye balls** while,  
They still look straight into the camera

And boldly put on a smile...Oooh...why do they smile?  
And this is not the smile that me and you give,  
This smile is the reason for why they survive, how they live  
**'Cause this smile,**  
It looks way past your eye, and peers straight into your heart  
Makes you feel naked and bare, cold lost in the dark,

'Cause...**These are my people**...so how dare you say that you're  
too stressed to see people oppressed?  
How dare you undress our existence just **'cause you're blessed?**  
Lousy people, treating us less then you treat your own pets,  
But you better respect...**'cause we are human beings,**  
But are oppressed by the same system that puts food on your table,  
And we don't blame you, but this system crushes, and keeps  
**you comfortable**

And please don't look at us like we're the ones creating the destruction  
'Cause most problems that we have, like global warming are  
caused by your major constructions  
The reason why we don't have food on our plates is 'cause your  
companies need our fertile land to function,  
And your wastage of food and water,  
Has created a world wide **famine's eruptions**  
And it's your system, taking money from the poor and giving it  
to the rich

**That's the reason for our corruption**  
So don't look at us like we are lower...Like we don't glisten,

'Cause we got all the natural goods,  
So what can you do...**if we beat down your system?**  
'Cause then we will live off the land,  
But how will you **feed your children?**

# YOUR GUIDE TO BEING A BUG

By Qurrat Ansari

Are you sick of seeing the people who annoy you the most? Do you see people who irritate you all the time? Have you tried every single thing in the world to get revenge by making their lives as miserable as possible? Well, then you probably know that annoying your peers is not an easy job. It requires focus, attention and the essential presence of humour to be successful. Just read these seven easy tricks to make your life better and everyone else's more miserable.

The most important thing, or the "golden" factor, to get started is to set a humorous mood for yourself in your mind. If you don't have that, there's no fun in it for you, and you might as well stop reading now. If you are depressed, then you will obviously not be able to annoy someone. Try reading jokes or thinking about funny moments to add humour to your mood, but make sure no one notices, especially if you are a serious person, otherwise they will definitely figure out that you are up to something. Now that you have set that mood for yourself, make sure that the victim you are trying to annoy is in the most irritable mood possible. Annoying someone is more fun if he/she is annoyed already. You add more flavour and spice to your plan. Wait to carry out your plan until you're absolutely sure that they are annoyed about something. Now, start!



At lunch, try sitting next to them; burp at the most inappropriate times especially when they are talking to you or looking at you. All they will say is "eeeyyyeeeww!!!!" and expect you to say, "Excuse me" – but obviously don't, just have fun watching the look on their faces.

In class, sit next to them, and do the most annoying thing – fart. Mwahahahahah! Make sure no one else hears though, unless you want to be turned into a social outcast- you don't want to lose your friends now do you? Isn't it annoying when you are talking to someone and another person butts in and starts interrupting nonstop? Sounds like the perfect thing to do to your victim! Anytime they're talking to someone else, interrupt them. Make them listen to you like you are giving the most important gossip and the most important news they've ever heard.

The key factor to annoy and disgust someone is not taking care of your personal hygiene. Dirty nails, smelly clothes, and stinky breath – BINGO you've got it! Make sure you grow your nails insanelly long (if you are a guy), fill them up with black ink which will make them look like they have dirt inside them, and pretend that you don't know they are dirty. Wave them around your victim's face and make sure they look at them.

Got greasy hair? That counts too. Having that will make it look like you seriously need a shower and make you look extra disgusting!

For extra unpleasant odor, take out the old smelly clothes from the laundry basket and put them on – avoid the urge to use colognes or perfumes to cover up the stench.



Hmm, what about teeth? The best thing you could do is not to brush them in the morning, and do your best to get your breakfast/lunch stuck in your teeth. This will definitely gross them out. Plus, when you talk, your breath will stink! If you are in school sitting next to a clean freak, this will surely tick them off big time. They may even end up holding their nose and breathing through their mouths if the smell is too much for them. Even if you do nothing else, I am sure that ignoring hygiene and not taking care of yourself will really annoy your peers.

Lastly, ask them if you can copy their notes after class, and when they give them to you, don't even think of returning them. Make sure you aren't taking notes during class and just chill around. Pass out jokes and act like you are useless. Panic by the end of the class and roam around talking about how much you'll have to catch up on. At the end of the class, just take their notebook and barge out saying that you will return it sometime – which, we both know, you won't.

All these tips put together will definitely result in a chaotic day for your victim. This behaviour will annoy, repulse, irritate, disgust, and aggravate them so much extent that they won't even bother looking at your face for the rest of their life.

If these steps don't work with your victim, then the person who you are trying to annoy is obviously more annoying than you, and therefore immune to anything you do. In this case I would suggest joining forces to create the most annoying duo your school has ever seen. Good luck!



# WHY THE INBOX, WHEN YOU HAVE THE MAILBOX!?!?

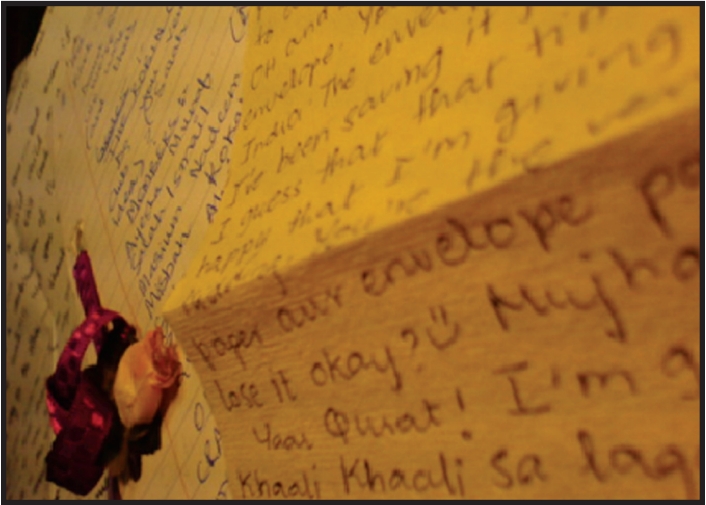
By QURRAT ANSARI

Trees produced the barks. The barks produced the fibers. The fibers helped man in producing paper. Paper produced ideas. Ideas generated feelings. Feelings went to the heart. The heart poured them out all at once, inking each and every single feeling on that mere part of the tree. The pieces were sent out to everyone, by everyone. Once upon a time, they were used to deliver extremely important messages to the kings, the delegates, the soldiers or even helpless lovers. Paper, or rather letters in that sense have been a universal medium of delivering messages to people near or far away. This tradition has been going on with regularity for almost centuries. After technology came along, the entire idea of sending letters to people got eliminated. The beauty of written word was hence forth concealed and not taken into view because people found emails as a much faster way of communication. The thing is that letters, whether or not they are conventional or slow, are the best medium of communication. With a loved one far away, writing letters is the best way to contact them. Its feel, its touch, its content, its bliss, the effect is just too different, and too good to be ignored.

Hand-written letters raise emotion, and make your heart get engulfed in that swarm of feelings that are poured out from your heart.

However, many believe that e-mails are the best way to communicate with someone far away from you. Today’s society is modern and does not run on conventional ways. Every one today wants things to happen quickly and fast in life; letters unfortunately aren’t fast but rather, conventional, slow and take their time to reach a person. Emails do the job of reaching someone as soon as you hit send – they don’t even take a jiffy to reach anyone. In addition, when you are sending your message, you don’t need to line up at the post office, and pay for the message! You sit at home and send it for free. It requires less energy, work and effort to send. Letters are seen as an old, tedious method of sending messages. Therefore, in the 21st century emails should be seen as a much better means of communication. What we, in the Western world, do not bother thinking about is that there are still many places on earth where not everyone knows how to access emails. Emails being high tech require some knowledge and also a computer, which believe it or not, is still not accessible to everyone on earth. Moreover, letters carry so much more feeling in them than e-mails, and this feeling comes because the reader knows how troublesome it is to first handwrite the message, then post it,

and then have to pay for it. The effort that goes into sending letters is what makes them so special. It is so much more meaningful when you can read the message of the sender in his/her own writing, while holding the medium it’s written on, and reading it again and again. Even if letters take time, the anticipation they hold, the excitement that waits to receive them is different. You can smell and feel the person who has written them with the scrawls of their writings on the sheet of paper, whether it is



handmade or made by machines. Most of the time when people read letters, they want to read it again and again without hurting eyes. E-mails, on the other hand, can damage one’s eyes, and that is a proven fact. With letters, there is no such problem like that. What you read is just writing and all the different types of writings used to imply some point- like “love” would be capitalized or inked out in a unique way- a way which would give away the emotions of the person. You can feel the paper, and see if tears were shed when it was being written on. You can feel the tears, the markings on the paper, the writing that gives away so much about the person’s mood and the person’s feelings when he/she was writing on it. Hand-written letters raise emotion, and make your heart get engulfed in that swarm of feelings that are poured out from your heart. They anticipate desperation from both the sides – where it goes from and where it has to be received. The waiting makes it even better. The more you wait, the better the feelings you have when you read the letter. The total experience you have when reading a letter you anxiously wait for, is too deep to be captured completely through words. When you read a handwritten letter, you can picture a person’s face in your head, and you can hear his/her voice ringing in your ears with that same emotion in mind. The scrawls in the piece of paper, the way they are written signifies love and appeals more towards the heart. You know exactly what the person is trying to say to you. The feeling that the words have been inked out by

the person themselves, makes the heart melt. The feelings you get are more genuine and true from the heart. Reading hand written letters makes you go deep in thought and get lost in the realms of another world. It makes you think a lot about the content without any distractions. When you read one, your entire concentration is focused towards the piece of paper. It makes you think highly of the person who writes for you and in turn strengthens your relationship with them. Letters encapsulate a bond within themselves; they create a relationship, they create love and strengthen and tighten your bond with another person. Letters can be preserved forever. You can keep them with you for the rest of your life without worrying about getting them deleted or corrupted like you would for e-mails. You can keep them with your most precious belongings and read them whenever you want without the worry of them being lost in all your other “accounts”. You can make them stay with you forever for the rest of your life without worrying about losing access to them. What I want YOU to do now is to wonder about whether it is worthwhile to send a letter or an email. This was all an account

of what I have felt when I received personal letters in my hand and when I read them. I can simply not think of comparing this beautiful form of communication to that of a quick, effortless e-mail. The reason I wrote this was to make people realize how important letters are as a medium. Now, don’t you want to write a letter to someone, just anyone, or perhaps just write it out and send it off to the sea in a bottle? I believe that you will feel the beauty of this when you start writing one and that feeling will be further more exhilarated when someone receives it.





## GOT SOMETHING TO SAY? THEN THE YOUTH EDITORIAL COMMITTEE IS THE PLACE FOR YOU!

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# FLASH BACK '08

By HUFSA AKBAR

Free-styling, singing, dancing and beat-boxing are only a few of the highlights from our community's best charity concert ever! Flash Back '08 is definitely the most memorable event of the year, a hit expressing its message of anti-violence and a chance for performers to share constructive messages in their pieces. With a turn out of over two hundred people and raising \$1300 for charity; plus food, friends, live music and entertainment – you couldn't have asked for a better night out!

The night started out with Marc Garneau's Ms. Parish and followed by Mint and Crow rocking the stage. The audience was then astonished by Wardah's piece, mesmerized by Akanksha's graceful dancing skills and captured by Hibbed's sensational poetry. And just before intermission, Danyal Wani touched the hearts of all with his vocals and Spitz-o-Mania surprised the crowd with a song for Flemo City Media and much more!

With only half of the sizzling performances completed the aroma of deliciously baked, hot and fresh quiches and samaosas filled Thorncliffe banquet hall; followed by the sweet smell of delectably mouth-watering, chocolate and vanilla cup-cakes.

As the audience munched away the remaining bits of their refreshments, Lal, the international band, Loko and Greg Stokes hyped up the crowd with their lively performances. The audience was then forced to their feet for a better look at Triple Threat's spectacular dance performance. And just when they thought the night was over and the concert couldn't get any better...the big jam begun!

With the night still young, the free-styling tournament shook the house down! Encore after encore, no one was willing to end



the showdown. Sheldon Francis, the host, literally had to snatch the microphones away! Raps, poems and beat-boxing had the whole hall filled with applaud, cheers and immeasurable enjoyment. The boys rocked it all the way!

From the poets, Hibbed and Loko, Loko took the winning word while Rapper Stokes won the freestyle over Crow (though poets and rapper's first rounds were a tie). Finally beat-boxers Danyal



Wani and Mint, free-styled until Mint had won. But the fun wasn't over yet, there was one more tournament between the winners and losers: and of course, the winners (Loko, Stokes, Mint) won again!

Loads of fun and tons of thrills took place throughout the night (not to mention the raffle of Raptor tickets), but nothing was as strong as the reason for the event: Anti-violence. All proceeds →



went to UMOVE (United Mothers Opposed to Violence Everywhere), to raise awareness that violence affects every youth, everywhere and all others as well. This event brought the youth of the community together and would not have been possible without Flemo City Media, Involve Youth, Regent Park Focus, Flemington Health Centre, Kathleen Wynne, and TNO. Despite all the entertainment, the purpose was to reach out and raise awareness that violence has got to stop – we have all suffered enough.

Abdullah Ayaz and his Flash Back '08's committee's hard work of many months finally became a successful reality. It not only



showed community members how important it is to stop violence and portray positive messages, but also kept them entertained throughout the evening. Food, music, raps, beat boxing, free-styles: what more can you ask? An evening filled with all the fun you can imagine and all the while for such an important cause. Each and every person who exited that hall left with huge smiles and thoughtful thoughts. A most delightful time was Flash Back '08. All that left them to wonder was, "When is Flash Back '09?" See you there!

## LAMENTING THE LOSS OF FOOD BASICS

By AYESHA DESILVA

The Flemington Park Food Basics, was a grocery store that was previously located in the Flemington Park Plaza. It contained a wide variety of necessities at bargain prices and met the needs of many low-income, culturally diverse families living in the community. When the store closed due to the expiration of their lease, it upset and inconvenienced many people. Now the nearest grocery stores for residents of Flemington Park is The Superstore and the other Food Basics located in Thorncliffe. Unfortunately, these stores do not meet the full needs of the Flemington Park neighbourhood. The Thorncliffe Food Basics while offering a wide variety of food products is just too far away for low-income families to travel to without a car. The Superstore is relatively close and although it also offers a wide variety of cultural food items, its prices are far above the range of the average Flemington Park family.

There are other reasons to be concerned with the loss of the neighbourhood grocery store. Prior to its close, the Flemington Park Food Basics was the biggest store in the plaza. As the main shopping destination its location in the plaza attracted business to the other smaller retail shops in the mall. Upon asking the Lacozy Gift Shop whether their business was affected, the sales-



person answered that the store's business had decreased. Upon writing this article it is still unclear what the landowners are planning to do with the vast empty space that was once the Food Basics we had all taken for granted. We can only hope that it will be as useful and accessible as it's predecessor.

*Since this article was submitted we have learned that the Food Basics has been replaced by a Shoppers Drug Mart.*



# ONE ON ONE - ZAKRIA RAHIME

By LINA H



*An interview with friend, classmate and artist, Zakria Rahime. Zakria is 17 years old, and is from the Hazara nation of Afghanistan.*

**Lina:** How long have you been practicing art?

**Zakria:** I have practicing art for 9 years. I had formal training for about 5 years and since then I have been teaching myself. The formal training was very useful though, it helped me learn most of the basic skills.

**Lina:** How did you arrive at your style?

**Zakria:** Well realism is very popular style in the world and takes a lot of skill. I also really enjoy the challenge.

**Lina:** What does your art tell about you?

**Zakria:** My art tells where I am from, how I care about my nation’s art, culture and history.

**Lina:** What does your art tell about your people?

**Zakria:** My people were very artistic from thousands of years ago, they supported art. They were very advanced not only in art but sciences even around 2000 years ago.

**Lina:** What are your artistic influences?

**Zakria:** My parents, my culture and my nation (Hazara). My father and my younger brother Shoaib also practice art which inspires me even more.

**Lina:** What experiences have most influenced your choice of subject matter?

**Zakria:** My peoples’ history; the destruction of the great Bamiyan statues, which were made around 2000 years ago by the Taliban.

**Lina:** How would you define an artist?

**Zakria:** Someone who uses his skill and ideas to create something those others can not.

**Lina:** What is special about your art?

**Zakria:** Well, it has a subject matter special to my purpose. First of all, art is a beautiful talent to have. My purpose is to show the art of my nation, its culture, and its history through art to the world. Also, when others destroy our art and culture, we are trying to make new ones.



**Lina:** What do you believe it takes to produce valuable art?

**Zakria:** Well, it takes a variety of things such as: time, skill, good ideas, and valuable subject matter.

**Lina:** What do you intend for your art to do?

**Zakria:** First of all, for people to notice it, think and study about it. Then ask question concerning it and find the true answers.

Where and what times/ places has your art been viewed at?

My art have been viewed in many different places in Canada. 5 times In Toronto: Toronto convention centre, Japanese culture house, Polish centre, City Hall for refugee right week, Thorncliffe public school for citizenship ceremony, twice at our own community ceremonies, four times in Winnipeg, once In Quebec, Montréal. Couple of times in Pakistan, and in Quetta where I was living.

**Lina:** Is there more to Zakria?

**Zakria:** Well, I belong to Kouchani Art Society, which is an art organization for artist from my Hazara nation. They have members all around the world such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Canada, American, England, Australia, New Zealand. Iran etc. I am 2 times world finalist in River Of Words poetry and art contest. I play sports, especially soccer. Also, I am interested in digital media too such as graphics and 3d animation.

**Lina:** Tell me something most people don’t know about your art?

**Zakria:** I put my name in my paintings: Zakria Hazara, because it introduces Hazara people to civilization and shows individuals that it was the Hazara’s who are the natives of Afghanistan and let them research about my people’s history (not from the internet because anyone can put up anything) and learn about who we are.

# MY LAST BANANA

By ABDULLAH AYAZ

It was a hot day, in the streets of Karachi, Pakistan. I was a ten years old at the time and we were on our way on our family motorcycle to visit the zoo. My father mumbled on about how it was going to be a horrible day and how we had forced him to come. Initially he had refused to go, but my mom tugged her husband into accepting the trip.

To many westerners, it may be a peculiar sight to see a family of six on one motor bike, but in Pakistan this is quite normal and comfortably too, I may add.

As we parked and made our way towards the zoo I saw a fruit stand and begged my grumbling dad into buying bananas for the all the animals I was expecting to see inside. After a few minutes of whining, I found my self holding a bunch of moldy bananas.

That is when, from the corner of my eye, I saw a glimpse of a wondrous sight, the monkeys!

The heat of Pakistan made the animals very lazy. Nearly all of them had sought refuge under the shelters of their pen and one by one, each animal disappointed me. The lion was sleeping under the shade, the birds bored me, and the bear, who was rated as one of the best animals in the zoo by my friends, was not in his cage for some medical or zoo related reason. Even after all that, my ten year old self had to hold back the complaints in order to not aggravate the inner, “I told you so”, which unsurprisingly was still lurking inside my father.

That is when, from the corner of my eye, I saw a glimpse of a wondrous sight, the monkeys! They were so energetic too. They were all jumping around and playing, pleasing their fans in order to get some food as a reward. With bananas in hand, I ran towards the monkey cages. They were my favorite. There were about four monkey cages, and I intended to go to each one feeding all the monkeys. The third cage only had two monkeys. One was bigger, and the other one was relatively smaller, but they were both reaching out of the bars to the limits of their cage, reaching for a banana. This is what I lived for. I threw one banana in, and the bigger monkey caught it before it even reached the floor. So I decided to direct the second banana towards the younger one. They both scrambled for it and there was a struggle, and in the end the bigger one was again victorious. I threw another banana but that one hit the bar and fell right in front of the cage. The two monkeys fought and scrambled in order to get the banana, until the bigger one ultimately won the battle and rewarded himself with yet another one of my precious bananas. I now only had one banana left. I decided it had to be given to the little monkey.

It just had to be done. So the ten year old me, decided to climb the fence, which was pretty easy to climb for a 10 year old.

Now there was no barrier between me and the monkeys, except for the bars of their cages. I extended my hand and gave the banana to my little friend. He had taken the banana, but in his hurry had also bit into my hand. I don’t remember any pain, just a lot of screaming by others who saw. I remember nothing, but looking at the sky. It was sunny, with white clouds, no chance of rain. I still remember how it looked after 7 years. I do remember going back across the fence in the cushion of the strong arms of my father, who neither screamed or worried. The crowd was doing that for him. And as I wandered out talking to the crowd, and listening to their sympathetic words, I saw the bigger monkey,



eating his prized possession. My last banana.

It was unanimously decided that the authorities should not be told, but as we made our way out the zoo, we saw a very peculiar site. The Bengal Tiger was the only animal which was fully active, and was running about its fences. And one kid about the age of 5 was climbing the fence of that cage! Even though the Tiger Cage had smaller holes in its cage, after the fence, and was thus a better protection for the visitors, my family chastised the child and might have even saved a lot of bloodshed in the zoo that day. Nonetheless, I still had to pay my price by getting eight shots, once each week, and a scar on my hand, which will always be my reminder of my last banana. But who knows, maybe that monkey bit me so I can protect that little child.

But isn’t that what destiny is?



# COMMUNITY AGENCIES YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

## FLEMINGDON HEALTH CENTRE

10 Gateway Boulevard  
416-429-4991

[www.fhc-chc.com](http://www.fhc-chc.com)

The FHC offers primary care, a sexual health clinic, telephone consultation and other medical services as well as several community development programs.

## O'CONNOR YMCA - KICKSTART

90 Parma Court  
416-750-2344

[www.ymca.ca](http://www.ymca.ca)

The O'Connor YMCA Kickstart is a program for youth 15-30 who are out of work and out of school. Through various workshops, participants learn practical life and employment skills.

## DENNIS R. TIMBRELL RECREATION CENTRE

29 St. Dennis Dr.  
416-395-7972

Also known as the Flemingdon Resource Centre, this building is home to an aquatics centre, the Flemingdon Park Public Library, and several other programs.

## O'CONNOR COMMUNITY CENTRE

1386 Victoria Park Ave  
416-395-6682

The O'Connor Community Centre is currently under construction. Expect new programming and space for youth once the addition is complete.

## FLEMO CITY MEDIA

29 St. Dennis Dr., 2nd Floor  
416-556-2268

[www.flemocity.com](http://www.flemocity.com)

Flemo City Media is a radio station hosted by youth from the community, broadcast to Flemingdon Park and surrounding neighbourhoods every other Wednesday from 7:30pm – 9:30pm.

## O'CONNOR FOCUS

5 Wakunda Place  
416-752-8595

[www.frcentre.net](http://www.frcentre.net)

O'Connor Focus works with youth in the community around alcohol and drug awareness and strategies for strengthening families.

## THORNCLIFFE NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICE - MAIN OFFICE

18 Thorncliffe Park Drive  
416.421.3054

[www.thorncliffe.org](http://www.thorncliffe.org)

The TNO's main office is home to several services and programs which include: English conversation groups, employment counsellors, job search workshops, and free access to computers.

## O'CONNOR MEDIA LAB

5 Wakunda Place  
416-863-1074

The O'Connor Media Lab is a program of Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre. They teach youth to express their opinions about issues that are important to them through video.

## THORNCLIFFE NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICE - YOUTH CENTRE

45 Overlea Blvd, Unit 108  
416-421-8397

[www.thorncliffe.org](http://www.thorncliffe.org)

The TNO Youth Centre is located in the East York Town Centre (South Side Entrance). On-site programs include tutoring, homework help, boys & girls programs, and various workshops.

If you would like us to profile your community agency or youth program, e-mail us at [flemo.mag@gmail.com](mailto:flemo.mag@gmail.com)

## MEET YOUR CITY COUNCILLORS



**COUNCILLOR JANET DAVIS**  
**WARD 31 - BEACHES-EAST YORK**

Councillor Davis' ward includes the O'Connor - Parkview neighbourhood

**Community Office:**

850 Coxwell Avenue  
416-397-4870

[www.janetdavis.ca](http://www.janetdavis.ca)



**COUNCILLOR JOHN PARKER**  
**WARD 26 - DON VALLEY WEST**

Councillor Parker's ward includes the Flemingdon Park and Thorncliffe Park neighbourhoods

**Community Office:**

150 Laird Dr., Suite 101  
416-423-1434