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## **Youth Art Connection & King's partner to help young artists launch social enterprises**

### **"Arts & Dialogue in Action" brings youth and King's students together in creative collaborations**

Halifax | The University of King's College and Youth Art Connection (YAC) today announced a new initiative that will see young artists from the community collaborating with students from King's to envision and develop creative projects.

"Arts & Dialogue in Action" is a youth-led pilot project designed to bring creative ideas to fruition as learning opportunities and, potentially, businesses. Through weekly meetings and ongoing coaching, YAC participants and King's students will be guided in mapping personal and collective business, career and community impact goals. All activities are arts-based with an entrepreneurial edge. Participants will meet at both King's and the YAC Hub on Bloomfield Street in Halifax.

Professional visual and performance artists will also support the initiative as mentors, coaches and activity consultants.

YAC participants and King's students are already collaborating on several initial activities, including:

- **Visions of Home** - A pay-what-you-can benefit concert for WUSC King's (Student Refugee Program), featuring music and spoken word from local hip-hop and rap artists, King's students, and members of the King's Student Refugee Program. King's Chapel, March 18, 7:30 p.m.
- A co-curated, pop-up art exhibition at King's student-run art space on campus.

[YAC](#) brings together different communities of youth through the arts for creative collaborations, supports youth to grow arts-based businesses and social impact projects, and helps them connect to opportunities throughout the city.

"Since we founded YAC seven years ago, we've discovered there are many talented young Nova Scotians with incredible talent and dreams, who need only the proper training and opportunities to turn their dreams into projects, action plans and businesses," says YAC co-

founder, Ryan Veltmeyer. “We are thrilled that our collaboration with King’s will help address this gap in a youth-led, concrete and action-oriented way.”

“Nurturing the artistic life in parallel to academic studies is part of the core identity of King’s, as is the great tradition of immersion by King’s students in the life of Halifax, including through its vibrant chapel community, the King’s Theatrical Society and social activism,” says University of King’s College President and Vice-Chancellor, William Lahey. “This new partnership with YAC builds on this rich tradition while creating new opportunities for King’s students to explore opportunities for careers in arts and culture, in and beyond Halifax.”

Marielle Nicol, a 4<sup>th</sup> year Classics student at King’s—who also owns her own second-hand clothing company—agrees. “Through YAC, I’ve connected with Halifax youth I otherwise would not have met—creative young people who inspire me,” she says. “This is a great experience for me in terms of broadening my perspectives of Halifax outside the university, as well as for developing the scope of my business.”

“In fact, I connected over fashion with rapper Shevy Price, and a few weeks later I styled looks for an upcoming photo shoot of hers,” adds Nicol.

“We hope this pilot will lead to more connections and activities between young people from various communities in Halifax and with students at King’s and in the broader King’s community” says Veltmeyer.

This collaboration officially marks the University of King’s College entry into the [Nova Scotia Sandbox Project](#). Made possible with financial support from the Department of Labour and Advanced Education (LAE), the Nova Scotia Sandbox Project is a joint initiative hosted by the province’s universities and NSCC that brings students, mentors and advisers together to take business and social concepts from idea to execution.

Within the family of Sandbox projects, “Arts & Dialogue in Action” joins The Spark Zone. Along with participants from Saint Mary’s University, Mount Saint Vincent University, NSCAD University, Atlantic School of Theology and Nova Scotia Community College, King’s and YAC participants will connect, share and learn from with other entrepreneurial-minded peers looking to launch business ideas and social innovations. [The Spark Zone](#) is housed at Saint Mary’s University and draws on the staff and resources of the Sobey School Business Development Centre in delivering its programming.

“With a focus on collaborative partnerships and community development through entrepreneurship, The Spark Zone is thrilled to include the University of King’s College on our robust team of six post-secondary partner institutions,” says Jason Turner, Manager, the Spark Zone. “Kings’ interest in creating a mutually beneficial environment for their students to engage with local artists from the Youth Art Collective resonated with our team; we are excited to see this project gain momentum as our partners build bridges between our institutions and our communities.”

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### **About the University of King's College**

Established in 1789, King's College is Canada's oldest chartered university. A small and extraordinarily lively academic community located in Halifax, Nova Scotia, King's is known nationally and internationally for its highly acclaimed interdisciplinary programs in the humanities and journalism, including our Master of Fine Arts in Creative Non-Fiction. Built on a rich cultural foundation, the university is home to the King's Theatrical Society; several choirs, including the renowned King's Chapel Choir; and the student-created and curated Laundry Room Art Gallery, among other initiatives. Through programs like the King's Public Lecture Series, Humanities for Young People and Youth Art Connection, King's reaches out to engage and partner with the broader community. For more information, please go to [www.ukings.ca](http://www.ukings.ca).

### **About Youth Art Connection (YAC)**

Youth Art Connection (YAC) is a Nova Scotia-based charity supporting youth to make positive change in their lives and their community through the power of the arts. Every YAC program is aimed at working with youth to create lasting positive change (personal and community-wide) through activating the power and appeal of various art forms, and the human passion that always accompanies quality art-making. YAC collaborates frequently with community organizations and public institutions, including the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, the National Arts Centre Orchestra, the Coady International Institute, and Halifax Pop Explosion, among others. In 2017, YAC directly served more than 500 youth across the province.

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