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## **The Artists Mentoring Youth (AMY) Project Announces New Artistic Director**

The Artists Mentoring Youth (AMY) Project announces the appointment of **Nikki Shaffeeullah** as the new Artistic Director of the organization, effective January 5, 2015.

“We are thrilled to announce **Nikki Shaffeeullah** as AMY’s new Artistic Director. Nikki is a theatre maker and an educator with a deep commitment to social justice and the creation of inclusive and accessible spaces. Nikki stood out among an impressive slate of candidates for her deep understanding of the complexities of the work, her excellent track record as a producer and facilitator, and her clear and spirited vision for the organization. She is an excellent fit for AMY. We are delighted that the project is in such good hands and are very excited about the future directions of the organization,” says Board Chair, Claire Calnan.

The AMY Project builds the leadership, confidence, and unique voice of young women in Toronto by providing them with performance training, connections to artistic mentors, experience working in a professional theatre, and support towards the early growth of their careers. The project operates on four core values: Inclusivity, Artistic Excellence, Mentorship, and Building Community. Founded in 2005, the organization has been co-Directed by theatre artists **Claire Calnan** and **Weyni Mengesha** since 2006. The AMY Project marks its tenth anniversary year in 2015 and is delighted to celebrate this landmark with the announcement of the next generation of leadership.

**Nikki Shaffeeullah** is a theatre facilitator, performer, director and researcher. Originally from Toronto, Nikki has led community-engaged theatre projects across Canada and internationally. Nikki is Editor-in-Chief of *alt.theatre*, Canada’s only journal examining the intersections between politics, cultural plurality, social activism, and the stage. She holds a BA in Theatre and International Development from McGill University, and a Master of Fine Arts in Community-Based Theatre at the University of Alberta. Her graduate thesis *Staging Diversity: A Decolonial Praxis of Intercultural Feminist Theatre Creation* won the Canadian Association for Theatre Research Award in Intercultural Theatre. Nikki founded the artist-activist collective Undercurrent Theatre, performs with the acclaimed improv company Rapid Fire Theatre, and has taught performance at the University of Alberta Department of Drama. She has been recognized with a Nextfest Emerging Artist Award and as one of the Alberta Council for Global Cooperation’s Top 30 Under 30.



"The mission of the AMY Project is rare, valuable, and necessary. I am honoured to be given the task of nurturing a project that has become such a vital part of Toronto's cultural and social landscape," said **Nikki Shaffeullah**.

In the coming months, we look forward to sharing with you news of our new directions. We hope that you will join us in celebrating our tenth anniversary year.

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