

## News

## Apathy is Boring aims to bridge gap between election candidates and young voters

*Social enterprise launches full-fledged campaign to engage youth in election process*

Wednesday September 24, 2008 -- Michelle Strutzenberger

With the federal election days away, Apathy is Boring is in the middle of a full-fledged campaign to engage, inform and educate youth and to make sure they get to the polls on Oct. 14.

A key component of the organization's campaign is providing tools to candidates of all stripes to help them reach out to youth and encourage them to vote.

"It is not only youth who need to make the effort to vote; it is candidates that must learn to better reach out to youth, and encourage young people to get to the polls on Election Day," says Ilona Dougherty, executive director.

Other Apathy is Boring activities include three concerts in Halifax and Montreal during the election campaign "to get young people energized about voting."

The non-partisan, youth-led organization is also aiming to spread the message about political issues to youth through interactive online technology and a media campaign including print, radio, and TV ads airing across Canada.

Apathy is Boring primarily aims to connect with "disengaged" youth, both by targeting youth themselves as well as supporting adult organizations that want to involve youth.

"We really try not to preach to the converted," says Dougherty. "We want to be an entry point for active citizenry."

The executive director says she believes they've been successful to date in fulfilling that objective.

Launched in 2004, during that year's federal election, Apathy is Boring was able to reach more than 500,000 youth in Canada in two months.

Since the 2008 election campaign began, the Apathy is Boring web site has experienced a weekly doubling in the number of unique visitors.

Dougherty, who is a co-founder of the organization, says she

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would consider Apathy is Boring a social enterprise, although it is currently more of a goal than a reality.

“It’s definitely a huge part how we make decisions about which direction we’re going,” she says.

Sponsored by a wide range of supporters, Apathy is Boring also generates income through a clothing line as well as through offering consulting services and workshops for adult organizations around youth engagement. It also provides research services on youth issues and electoral participation.

Although the organization is not able as yet to exist solely on its own sources of income, “it’s where we want to be,” says Dougherty, who defines a social enterprise as an organization that “combines principles of business with the idea of trying to make social change in some capacity.”

The executive director says she believes the objective of Apathy is Boring to become self-sustaining is similar to that of a lot of other youth-led non-government organizations in general.

“There is definitely a drive to become more self-sustaining but it’s a difficult road.”

To learn more about Apathy is Boring and how youth can get involved in election issues, visit [www.apathyisboring.com](http://www.apathyisboring.com).

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