

# Artist collects stories of life in Mississauga

By DAVID PATERSON  
Staff

Mississauga is a city of stories, and every one is worth hearing. At least, that's the view of Faisal Anwar, an

artist who is trying to capture the city's many voices in an innovative new artwork.

Anwar has been commissioned by the Art Gallery of Mississauga to bring together voices from all over the city in an exhibition to be held later this year.

He has set up a website, MyCityStories.com, where people living in the city can write about their experiences of life in their neighbourhood.

Anwar says he is interested in hearing the widest range of voices possible.

"The stories can be about everyday life, a memory or an experience in your neighbourhood," he says.

He's also keen to hear people's feelings on the city's arts, architecture, population growth and planning.

Although the project has only been running a few weeks, already several Mississauga residents have uploaded their stories.

One poster from Erin Mills, calling herself "siyahqalam," shared her thoughts on the winter storm at the start of February, the first she had seen since coming to Canada 10 months ago from Pakistan. Writing of how she went into the storm wrapped up like an "eskimo" to take pictures, she says, "I know that this is the moment I will always cherish in my life."

Another, called "yp," recounts a



Artist Faisal Anwar (centre) has been interviewing Mississauga citizens at the Central Library for a project on people's experiences living in the city. The project will be exhibited at the Art Gallery of Mississauga later in the year. Participating here are Zakia Bano and her children Ahmed Iqbal, Fatima Bano and Emaan Iqbal.  
*Staff photo by Rob Beintema*

failed culinary attempt at Chinese New Year that resulted in "warped, mutant dumplings."

Anwar, who lives in Oakville, initially started collecting stories in Toronto in 2009 for an artwork to celebrate that city's 175th anniversary. Since then, the project has grown and now his website contains tales from 11 cities, ranging in size from megalopolises like Karachi,

Pakistan, to Balmoral, a suburb of Auckland, New Zealand, which includes a KFC fast food outlet among the notable buildings on its Wikipedia page.

In addition to the website, Anwar has been meeting with visitors to the Central Library and also is in discussions to visit schools and run workshops on the stories the students have to share.

"Our hope is to work the full year in Mississauga and find different opportunities to engage different audiences and communities," said Anwar.

Anwar's work forms part of the AGM's Roots and Branches community art project. You can contribute your story to Anwar's project at MyCityStories.com.

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