

Reel Blog SHAH, Wali

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COMMUNITY

## UofT student Wali Shah named Poet Laureate of Mississauga

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A University of Toronto student has been named Mississauga's new poet laureate.

Wali Shah, a well-versed Pakistani-Canadian from Mississauga, assumed the role of poet laureate from the city's first honorary poet laureate, Anna Yin.

Shah is a spoken word poet and TEDx speaker, who has performed with international recording artists such as Selena Gomez and Kendrick Lamar. He is now set to perform for the first time as poet laureate during Mississauga's Canada Day celebration at Celebration Square on July 1.

"Wali's selection as poet laureate makes a statement about the arts in Mississauga," said Paul Damaso, director of the city's culture division. "Like Wali, our arts scene is young, cool and emerging with unlimited potential. Wali is the perfect poet laureate for our city, and he'll do

a fantastic job with championing and raising the profile of literary arts and spoken word across Mississauga and beyond."

Shah is a South Asian spoken word poet and public speaker, and an Alumni of Canada's Top 20 Under 20. His experiences range from being a TEDx speaker to performing poetry for 15,000 Microsoft partners at the Air Canada Centre.

Shah is presently studying at the University of Toronto Mississauga and advocates for social change through his work. He has partnered with Crime Stoppers and Bell Let's Talk, and has helped raise over \$1 million for the United Way.

As a poet laureate, Shah will focus on three key objectives - serve as a literary ambassador for the City of Mississauga to audiences both within and outside of the city, raise the profile of writers in Mississauga, and create an artistic legacy through public readings and civic interactions.