

# Meet NSCR's First Democracy Café Lead: Faiz Jaffer



*Democracy Café is a non-partisan program that encourages residents and citizens to more actively participate in civic life while encouraging governments to better facilitate citizen participation in decision making. NSCR was fortunate to be able to hire our first Lead for the program and luckier still to have found Faiz Jaffer. Learn all about Faiz, his hopes for the program and how you can get involved!*

## **Can you tell us a bit about yourself? What brought you to this position at NSCR?**

Thanks for asking! First of all, I'm very excited to be the new Democracy Café Lead at NSCR. A little background info about me: I'm from all over North America (rural Georgia, Greater Vancouver, Ontario, and New York) and am grateful and happy to be back in North Van exploring its beauty and nature! Some of the experiences that led me to this role include my time spent leading a public outreach campaign for the American Civil Liberties Union, as well as an initiative aimed at bridging the gaps between people on opposing sides of divisive political and social issues through public dialogue. These experiences increased my

appreciation for the importance of having accessible and inclusive public discourse and democratic engagement, which is why I am looking forward to supporting and expanding the incredibly necessary work being done by the Democracy Café to increase civic education and engagement on the North Shore!

**The Democracy Café Lead role is a new one at NSCR. Can you tell us about it?**

The Democracy Café Lead role was created for two purposes. Firstly, it bolsters the support of the program's ongoing initiatives – such as the North Shore Young Citizens Forum - by having someone who is solely-focused on running the program. Secondly, it provides an opportunity to expand the Democracy Café by eventually adding new initiatives aimed at increasing the number of North Shore residents who are aware of and engaged in the democratic process – in order to, ultimately, improve the health and reliability of our democracy.

**What are you excited to do in this role?**

I'm excited to help people discover how they can improve their lives through civic engagement. The majority of North Shore residents are currently unengaged in the municipal democratic process, yet experience shared obstacles that their municipality could help them overcome. I want the Democracy Café to do all that it can to make sure that everyone is aware of how our governments work and how we can engage with them to get the support that we need.

**What do you want the North Shore to know about Democracy Café? (anything to be on the lookout for/ways to get involved)**

Through the creation of this position, the Democracy Café is going to continue to grow and flourish. We want to make sure that everyone who lives, works, or studies on the North Shore feels equipped to share their voice and to utilize the democratic process to ensure their needs. Be on the look-out for new programs and initiatives aimed at increasing the democratic engagement and civic education of the North Shore public – particularly for those who tend to be left out of the decision-making process! If you're interested in volunteering or if you have any ideas you'd like to share, feel free to email me at [faiz.jaffer@nscr.ca](mailto:faiz.jaffer@nscr.ca)!