

# 2013/14 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships Coyne Family Foundation Award



**AKASH SHAH**  
Graphic Design  
Freshman  
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As a child, I would be left alone with my small set of Legos to play with underneath the dining table. Art acted as the unifying factor, bringing the entire family together. I can still remember me and my dad going to the trash-dump behind our apartment building, scavenging for supplies to build a model aquarium. I remember my sister teaching me how to write the cool bubble lettering so I could make the titles for my poster-board. I remember my mother staying up late with me to bind a small fish encyclopedia with pretty green ribbons. And I can still remember the look on the other kids faces when it was my turn to present. My God, were they amazed! This was the first moment I developed an interest in art.



Worldstudio  
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the professional association for design

## AKASH SHAH

Graphic Design



In my early teen years, I was in a socially downward spiral and was growing disinterested in my studies. Around this time, I found the world of themeing. Themeing acted as a gateway to other forms and mediums of art. I started learning motion graphics, which opened me up to graphic design, illustration and branding. I was able to show some of my work to John Mannes, who was running for Montgomery County Region President. He lost that election, but when he was running for the Student Member of the Board, he offered me a position on his campaign. We won that election in large part due to the innovative use of design and effective branding. That experience not only opened up several opportunities for me in school but it also helped me battle some of my social issues and gave me a new purpose and path to follow. It is for those reasons that I have chosen to further my knowledge and artistic capabilities to become a full-fledged graphic design artist.

One of those opportunities was a position on the 2012-13 Student Advisory Council. It was here that I was able to work alongside other student leaders and representatives to advance the concerns of students, ranging from lobbying on budgetary issues to student outreach and involvement. However, while I was able to help other students in this capacity, I was never fully able to participate in LGBTQ issues, even though I am a transsexual, due to the lack of sympathy or even casual indifference on the part of my parents. In the future, once I am able to independently support myself, I intend on rectifying that by giving back to those brave enough to come out at such a young age, whether it be in a moral or financial capacity. In addition to that, much like the support I have received from the online art community, I also intend on sharing my artistic knowledge with those who are just starting out or just need help getting inspired.

