

## Voices of Change: Stories that Inspire Are Being Collected by University Students

Founded by Princeton University sophomore Ari Satok and his brother, Josh, a junior at Yale, "Voices of Change" ([voicesofchange.weebly.com](http://voicesofchange.weebly.com)) is among the new online initiatives that describe themselves as "social action journalism." The enterprise is "dedicated to interviewing and then profiling different, interesting, and inspirational people to share the messages and ideas their lives can represent."

"These profiles are meant to inspire, educate, and empower," said Toronto native Ari Satok in a recent interview.

The addition of relevant websites to stories featured in Voices of Change gives the site's growing audience an opportunity to follow up on stories they find particularly engaging. A link to "Save Dafur," for example, follows a profile about Joey Cheek,

an Olympic Gold Medalist speed-skater who donated all of his prize money to Darfur aid. Rwandan refugee Paul Rudatskira and college student Christian Smutherman's combined stories about the power of faith in overcoming hardship includes a link to Tony Blair's Faith Based Act, and another, about cancer victim Mandi Schwartz, has links to the American and Canadian Cancer Societies, along with a bone marrow registry.

Ari Satok credits the journalism courses he's taken at Princeton as a significant source of the inspiration for Voices of Change. "I fell in love with the notion of interesting people telling their stories," he said. A class trip to Washington, D.C., where students visited National Public Radio (NPR) studios and Washington Post

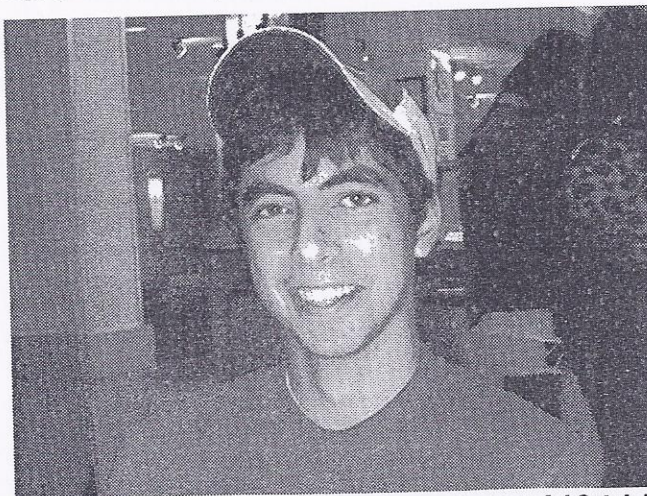
headquarters provided "an incredible experience." The fact that the trip occurred the day after Osama Bin Laden was killed definitely added to the excitement of observing radio and print journalists at work.

Voices of Change is a work in progress. Interviewers from other colleges and universities have joined the staff and, with the Satok brothers, they are eager to identify new subjects. Ari Satok is particularly keen on the "cool local stories" the Princeton milieu has to offer, like the recent profile of Princeton graduate and resident Jim Farrin, founder of the Petey Green Prisoner Assistance Tutoring program. The brothers and the writers who have joined them look forward to building on a \$500 grant they've received from the Council of the Humanities. Several professional journalists, including former Time, Inc. Managing Editor Jim Kelly; award-winning NPR journalist Joe Richman; and Pulitzer Prize-winning Washington Post reporter Anne Hull, have already signed on as advisory board members.

Ari, a Sociology major, and Josh, who is majoring in Religious Studies, say that Voices of Change is meant to be "inspiring, uplifting and enlightening." Asked whether presenting only positive journalism might come across as too optimistic, Ari Satok's answer was prompt and self-assured: Voices of Change is meant to be the real thing.

Write to [voicesofchange@hotmail.ca](mailto:voicesofchange@hotmail.ca).

—Ellen Gilbert



**SOCIAL ACTION JOURNALIST:** Princeton sophomore Ari Satok is one of the founders of "Voices for Change," an online site that presents new weekly stories about people who succeed against the odds.