



Surrey & White Rock
**TOP 25
UNDER 25**

2026 WINNERS

The Surrey & White Rock Top 25 Under 25 Awards celebrates the passion, innovation, and dedication of young leaders making a difference in our community. Each year, we recognize 25 remarkable individuals under the age of 25 who are driving positive change through business, entrepreneurship, or community projects in Surrey and White Rock.

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Name: Armaan Thandi

Organization: Downtown Surrey BIA

Age: 21

Armaan is a dedicated leader and SFU Sustainable Business student. As a Junior Policy Analyst for the Ministry of Forests, he researched barriers to Indigenous economic participation, and at the Downtown Surrey BIA, he supported over 50 local businesses through strategic outreach. A recognized environmental advocate, Armaan was named a 2026 Climate75 Fellow and has collaborated with Stanford Psychiatry's Circle Initiative to co-design youth climate anxiety programs. His community impact spans leadership roles at Foundry BC and CityHive, as well as spearheading sustainability projects with the Vancouver Kindness Movement. From mentoring at-risk youth to receiving the Bibi Harnam Kaur Leadership Scholarship, Armaan exemplifies a profound commitment to civic engagement and environmental policy.

Name: Arsh Jassal

Organization: Pill Planner

Age: 24

Arsh Jassal is a Doctor of Pharmacy candidate at the University of British Columbia. He is the founder and developer of Pill Planner, a digital health platform designed to improve medication adherence, safety, and accessibility for patients managing chronic therapies. This innovative tool utilizes AI and multilingual translation to assist patients with complex dosing schedules or language barriers. Arsh's leadership is extensive; he currently serves as President of the UBC Pharmacy Pediatrics Club and has held executive roles with the UBC Heart & Stroke Foundation Club. His clinical excellence was recognized with the Experiential Education Award, and he previously received the UBC Presidential Scholars Award. Beyond academics, Arsh serves his community as a Canadian Red Cross Personal Disaster Assistance Responder.

Name: Avleen Bharaj

Organization: Hands of Hope

Age: 17

Avleen is the Founder and Head Director of Hands of Hope, a youth-led nonprofit dedicated to supporting individuals experiencing homelessness. Under her leadership, the organization has raised over \$4,400 and coordinated the assembly of 300 care packages containing essential hygiene supplies. She also launched Haircuts for Hope, a monthly grooming initiative designed to provide dignity and support to vulnerable community members. Through Hands of Hope, Avleen maintains strategic partnerships with organizations like Surrey Urban Mission and NightShift Street Ministries to enhance local outreach and food service operations. Her extensive commitment to service earned her the Volunteer of the Year award from Khalsa Aid.

Name: Desmond Tompkins

Organization: Youth Arts Council of Surrey/White Rock Museum & Archives

Age: 22

Desmond Tompkins is an emerging arts leader who heads the Youth Arts Council of Surrey (YACOS), coordinating social-justice programming for artists aged 13–25. Aside from his work with YACOS, he manages public outreach for the White Rock Museum & Archives, connecting residents to local heritage through inclusive education. A 2025 KPU Gender and Sexual Equity Advocacy Award recipient, Desmond's artwork has been featured in the Surrey Art Gallery and Pulp Magazine. He is a member of several arts organizations, including the BC Museums Association and the BC Alliance for Arts and Culture, where he conducts outreach and supports fellow artists.

Name: Gaganpreet Heer

Organization: Hands for Life Foundation

Age: 21

Gaganpreet is the Co-Founder and Lead Instructor of the Hands for Life Foundation, a youth-led nonprofit dedicated to providing free, accessible, and inclusive CPR education to all communities. Beyond his foundation, Gaganpreet is a certified Red Cross First Aid Instructor and co-founder of Youth Helping Together, an initiative that has raised over \$5,000 for local charities including BC Children's Hospital. A notable milestone is receiving the Delta Police Outstanding Citizen Award after he intervened during a mental health crisis on the Alex Fraser Bridge to help save a life. Outside of these roles, he operates his own business - Reflection X Auto Detailing. Currently, he is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Biology at the University of British Columbia.

Name: Gavin Singh Sangha

Organization: Pharmacure Community Society

Age: 22

Gavin is the Founder and Director of the Pharmacure Community Society, a youth-led nonprofit dedicated to improving health literacy and preventive care access in the Lower Mainland. By delivering screenings and education in culturally familiar spaces like gurdwaras and mandirs, his organization has reached over 5,000 individuals. Gavin also serves as Vice President of the Heartwise Foundation and has contributed to harm reduction by developing Punjabi-language educational videos for NaloxHome. His professional experience includes serving as a pharmacy assistant and a hospital volunteer, where he was accepted into the STIR leadership program. Gavin successfully bridges the gap between clinical research and grassroots public health, striving to become a family physician dedicated to health equity.

Name: Gurfathe Singh Brar

Organization: VoiceWell

Age: 19

Gurfathe is the Founder of VoiceWell, a volunteer organization dedicated to advancing health equity by providing Punjabi-speaking patients with accessible, research-based medical information. Inspired by his grandparents' challenges navigating the healthcare system, he leads a team of seven students in creating and distributing Punjabi medical infographics to local clinics. He is also finalizing a major retranslation of the Concussion Awareness Training Tool in collaboration with UBC researchers, a project that supports a resource used by over 175,000 people globally. Beyond medical translation and research work at UBC, Gurfathe is also a head coach for the White Rock Titans' flag football team. He is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Science at UBC with plans for medical school.

Name: Hiya Sharma

Organization: Youth Volunteer Team

Age: 17

Hiya Sharma founded the Youth Volunteer Team to support seniors living with dementia. Her initiative has grown to include 30 volunteers who provide art therapy, storytelling, and cultural activities for over 50 seniors at Kinsmen Place Lodge. A dedicated advocate for health awareness, Hiya has reached hundreds through campaigns for BC Transplant and Diabetes Canada, earning the Live Life, Pass it On Award. Beyond her community service, she is a Teen Ambassador for the Canadian Association of Girls in STEM and serves as Co-Chair of her school's student executive council. These leadership roles and her academic excellence led to her selection for the prestigious 2025 Shad program at Toronto Metropolitan University, Canada's premier national STEM and entrepreneurship initiative.

Name: Isabella Wen

Organization: Rose Tainted Ceilings

Age: 18

Isabella Wen is a social entrepreneur and founder of Rose Tinted Ceilings, a grassroots feminist media group focused on breaking glass ceilings. She has produced over 100 podcast episodes and delivered workshops to 300+ at-risk youth across Canada, the U.S., Ghana, and Afghanistan. A Loran Scholar finalist, Isabella represents Canada on the TikTok Global Youth Council and the FIFA World Cup 2026 Leadership Council. Her extensive policy work includes co-authoring recommendations for UNICEF Canada and supporting Canada's negotiating team at UNCSW70. Additionally, she serves as an advisor to the Canadian Coalition for Children with Incarcerated Parents, bridging the gap between marginalized voices and global decision-making spaces.

Name: Isherpreet Dhaliwal

Organization: One Blood for Life Foundation

Age: 17

Isherpreet Dhaliwal serves as the BC Lead for the One Blood for Life Foundation, a nonprofit focused on increasing blood donation and stem cell registration. At 17, he organized a landmark blood drive at Queen Elizabeth Secondary, drawing over 150 donors in a single day and gaining coverage from CTV News and Global BC. His leadership has been instrumental in recruiting 40 volunteers and signing up over 750 new stem cell registrants in early 2026. Isherpreet's work includes the Match4Hapi campaign, seeking life-saving donors for leukemia patients. Currently completing his secondary education with high academic standing, he plans to pursue civil engineering to continue building community systems and solving complex problems.

Name: James Yin

Organization: EcoFabrica / Thrive Student Investment Challenge

Age: 17

James Yin is a Grade 12 student at Southridge School and a social entrepreneur who bridges business with community impact. He founded EcoFabrica, a sustainable fashion venture that has donated over 500 items to refugee families and raised thousands for the Peace Arch Hospital Foundation. James also established THRIVE, a global financial literacy initiative engaging over 100 participants across three countries to make investment education accessible. A Wharton Global Youth Case Competition finalist, James has conducted research on industry greenwashing and completed professional certifications in corporate finance. As Co-President of the Noble Youth Society, he has led numerous fundraisers, proving that entrepreneurial leadership is most powerful when dedicated to social good.

Name: Jasmin Kaur Bains

Organization: Students Overcoming Substance Use Disorder and Addictions Society of Canada (SOUDA)

Age: 23

Jasmin Kaur Bains is the Community Outreach Director and Women's Case Manager at Students Overcoming Substance Use Disorder and Addictions Society of Canada, a youth-led non-profit addressing substance use and mental health in Surrey's South Asian community. Currently pursuing a Political Science degree at UBC, she balances a full academic load with full-time volunteer leadership. Jasmin has spearheaded major initiatives, including high school overdose response training and the "Stick Together" hockey program for recovery. She also provides critical frontline support, personally assisting vulnerable women by navigating shelter systems and accompanying them to appointments at the Roshini Clinic. By combining academic policy knowledge with hands-on compassion, Jasmin bridges the gap between marginalized individuals and life-saving community services.

Name: Joban Chahal

Organization: One Nirvair Network

Age: 20

Joban is the founder of The One Nirvair Network, a mental health initiative established to improve cultural understanding and resource access within South Asian communities. She has connected with numerous health organizations and policymakers to advocate for youth-informed mental health equity. A Bachelor of Science student at KPU, Joban is also the Founding Co-Vice President of NextGen KPU, where she led campaigns resulting in 275 stem cell registry additions and 211 blood donations. Her leadership extends to the Lifespan Cognition Lab as Outreach Manager and GirlUp Fraser. Recognized with the Rogers Employee Scholarship, Joban effectively integrates healthcare engagement, academic research, and policy awareness into a unified leadership trajectory.

Name: Komal Preet Uppal

Organization: Girls Rising to Achieve, Connect and Empower (GRACE)

Age: 22

Komal is the founder of Girls Rising to Achieve, Connect and Empower, the first women-centred mental health and academic confidence community established to bridge gaps in campus support. A Dean's List Psychology student at KPU, Komal is the first author of a published, peer-reviewed psychology paper addressing ChatGPT usage in academia. Her community impact includes leading themed activities and designing awareness walk apparel at Timber Creek Tertiary Care Facility, as well as providing academic support to diverse students through Pathways Surrey. Additionally, she volunteers at the Jim Pattison Outpatient Care and Surgery Centre. Combining academic excellence with frontline service, Komal aspires to become a physician focused on mental health.

Name: Krivan Mirok

Organization: Mindscribe and The Resource Centre

Age: 14

Krivan Mirok is the 14 year old founder of The Resource Center, an AI-driven educational platform designed to help K-12 students and educators navigate personalized learning pathways. He also developed MindScribe, an innovative assistive-communication system that utilizes eye-tracking and specialized AI models to support non-verbal individuals. A highly accelerated learner, Krivan maintains a 97% academic average and has completed advanced credentials in AI and linear algebra from Harvard and Stanford. His work has earned provincial recognition, including the BC GameChanger Award and the BC Hydro Power Pioneers Community Service Award. By pairing technical expertise with community-centered design, Krivan is setting a new standard for youth innovation in Surrey.

Name: Misha Panesar

Organization: Heartwise Foundation

Age: 20

Misha Panesar is the Founder of the HeartWise Foundation, a registered, youth-led nonprofit established after her brother's late diagnosis of a congenital heart condition. The organization focuses on prevention-based heart health education, reaching approximately 2,000 students through its Youth Ambassador Program and partnerships with the Surrey School District. Misha leads a team of 20 volunteers who deliver school presentations and community outreach. Her academic work includes research at the University of Victoria, where she examines gaps in the early detection of aortic valve disease. Additionally, she volunteers in the Emergency Department at Surrey Memorial Hospital. Misha's leadership effectively combines healthcare advocacy, community service, and systemic health policy research.

Name: Mohkam Singh Malik

Organization: More Than a Suburb

Age: 20

Mohkam Singh Malik is a storyteller and community organizer who founded More Than a Suburb, a media platform dedicated to showcasing Surrey's authentic narrative and demystifying civic politics. The initiative has gained significant traction, amassing over 2 million views across various platforms. As the youngest member ever appointed to the City of Surrey's Livability, Social Equity, and Public Safety Committee, Mohkam directly influences policy for over 740,000 residents. He represented the University of British Columbia at COP 30 and provides strategic advice to public officials through his consultancy, MTS Strategies. Mohkam's leadership bridges the gap between institutional policy and youth engagement, actively shaping Surrey's present through media and advocacy.

Name: Palak Vashisht

Organization: Five Rivers Foundation Canada

Age: 22

Palak is a student researcher and advocate dedicated to health and education equity. She serves as a leader within the Five Rivers Foundation Canada, a nonprofit that provides culturally responsive health literacy, harm reduction, and STEM mentorship to underrepresented populations. The organization has raised over \$30,000 and delivered more than 50 workshops, including Naloxone training and Advanced Care Planning. Palak is also a researcher lead at the Lifespan Cognition Lab and a research assistant at the Health and Well-being Lab. She has co-authored peer-reviewed publications and presented at international conferences, focusing on social isolation and cognitive health. Currently, Palak is completing a Bachelor of Science at the University of British Columbia, majoring in Integrated Sciences with a specialization in Neuroscience, Cognition and Public Health.

Name: Riley Williams

Organization: Balance Co-Lab

Age: 22

Riley is a fourth-year Sustainable Business BBA student at SFU's Beedie School of Business, pursuing a minor in Resource and Environmental Management. As Project Lead for the Indigenous Management Database at Balance Co-Lab, an organization supported by a \$2 million federal grant, Riley manages a social innovation initiative containing over 600 resources. This project bridges Indigenous and business knowledge to benefit practitioners and First Nations globally, including those in Surrey. Riley's milestones include securing the first funding increase in 23 years as Chair of The Peak and winning five business awards totaling \$12,950. Additionally, he has been selected for five international delegations, including the World Bank Summit and COP 30.

Name: Romina Khaksar

Organization: Instea

Age: 22

Romina is the founder of Instea, a clean-label brand that utilizes freeze-drying technology to transform real brewed tea into a premium, instantly dissolvable format. Developed through the Charles Chang Institute for Entrepreneurship, the venture secured \$10,000 in funding and sold out its initial production run within two months of launch. Romina's professional milestones include co-founding Expohub, where she orchestrated over 10 pop-up markets for 350 small businesses, attracting 15,000 attendees. She also holds food safe and nutritional labelling certifications to support her goal of scaling her company into a global consumer packaged goods brand. Currently, she is a Bachelor of Business Administration student at Simon Fraser University, with concentrations in Marketing, Operations Management, and Innovation & Entrepreneurship.

Name: Saachi Dhaliwal

Organization: Under the Scope BC

Age: 19

Saachi Dhaliwal is the Founder and architect of Under the Scope BC, a centralized research platform designed to eliminate barriers for undergraduate students seeking academic opportunities across British Columbia. Since launching the initiative over a single winter break, the platform has surpassed 2,000 visitors and earned recognition on SFU's Career and Volunteer Service pages. Saachi's notable achievements include receiving the \$40,000 SFU USES Scholarship, earning the highest Girl Guide honours, and successfully petitioning to introduce the first Advanced Placement course at North Surrey Secondary. She also serves as a junior debate instructor at Fostering Debate Training Academy and a shadow student at the Surrey Neuropeak Clinic. Currently, she is an undergraduate student at Simon Fraser University.

Name: Sabine Lapointe

Organization: Playful Palette Foundation

Age: 17

Sabine is the President and Founder of The Playful Palette Foundation dedicated to removing financial barriers to arts education. Under her leadership, the organization has raised over \$7,000, mobilized 50 volunteers, and provided free music, dance, and acting lessons to more than 300 children across the Lower Mainland. Sabine's notable accomplishments include securing long-term business partnerships with Ignite Dance Company and Beyond the Stage, raising \$2,000 through a sold-out variety show at the White Rock Players Club, and being selected as a 2026 TEDx White Rock speaker. She also serves as the Events Coordinator for the White Rock Youth Ambassador program. Currently a Grade 11 French Immersion student at Earl Marriott Secondary, Sabine plans to pursue a future degree in Public Administration.

Name: Stephanie Quon

Organization: CAN-ACCESS

Age: 24

Stephanie Quon is the Founder and Executive Director of the Canadian Network for Accessibility in Healthcare (CAN-ACCESS), a national initiative advancing disability inclusion through accessibility audits and retrofit planning. Under her leadership, the organization has launched 120 projects supported by \$4.2 million in funding, including accessibility improvements across Surrey community centres. Stephanie's career highlights include founding The Sprouts Initiative - which redistributed 50,000 meals to shelters - and being named one of Canada's Top 100 Most Powerful Women. A prolific researcher with over 40 peer-reviewed publications, she is also a Canada's Walk of Fame Community Hero. She is currently training to become a physician as a second-year medical student at the University of British Columbia, building on her background in Electrical Engineering.

Name: Sukhman Kaur Dhillon

Organization: Hands for Life Foundation

Age: 21

Sukhman is the Co-Founder and Lead Instructor of the Hands for Life Foundation, a student-led nonprofit providing accessible CPR, first aid, and heart health education. She developed a culturally responsive training model that delivers multilingual workshops in Punjabi and Hindi to overcome language and financial barriers in Surrey. Her notable accomplishments include establishing strategic partnerships with inpatient addiction treatment centres and women's shelters to provide life-saving skills to vulnerable groups, as well as winning the Connecting the Community Award at the 2026 YWCA BC Women of Distinction Awards. She is also a recipient of the prestigious Cmolik Foundation full-ride scholarship for her community leadership. Currently, she is a Kinesiology student at the University of British Columbia.

Name: Sukhman Kang

Organization: Youth STEM Program

Age: 22

Sukhman is the Founder of the Youth STEM Program, a community initiative dedicated to providing equitable and hands-on science enrichment for children. In this capacity, she developed a specialized curriculum and led interactive lessons that have reached over 300 students across various classrooms, sparking curiosity for scientific exploration. Additionally, she is a recipient of the UBC Trek Excellence Scholarship and UBC Presidential Scholars Awards. Alongside her commitment to community impact, Sukhman has demonstrated academic excellence, consistently ranking in the top 5% of her undergraduate program and faculty at the University of British Columbia. Sukhman recently graduated from the University of British Columbia with a Bachelor of Science in Integrated Sciences, specializing in Physiology and Infectious Diseases.