



## 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Surrey's Top 25 Under 25 Award Winners

The Surrey Board of Trade recognizes business and community-minded youth under the age of 25, working in Surrey or working on a business or community project in/for Surrey.

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**Name:** Mohamed Sheikh Abdir

**Organization:** Pioneer Your Dreams Agency

**Age:** 25

Mohamed is the co-founder of Pioneer Your Dreams, a Tik Tok marketing agency based in Surrey. Established in 2021, Pioneer Your Dreams has taken creative storytelling to new heights, transformed them into over 25 million views, and generated over \$500,000 in revenue for its clients. Before entering university, Mohamed worked as a Junior Sous Chef at Milestones. He was recognized as one of the top Junior Sous Chefs in Canada and the first African Canadian Sous Chef to have a signature dish featured on Milestones' national menu for two years. Mohamed is a graduate of the Marketing Entrepreneurship program at the British Columbia Institute of Technology.

**Name:** Arnav Dada

**Organization:** SPARK Foundation

**Age:** 22

Arnav is the Vice President of Finance and Strategy at SPARK Foundation, a non-profit organization that strives to empower the next generation through life education programs. Working at the Foundation, Arnav led successful projects - most recently is the COVID-19 Relief Project, where they donated over 1,500 backpacks with food and supplies to various organizations and communities. As a leader, he was awarded the Canada 150 Award, Community Leader Award, and the Governor General's Sovereignty Medal for Service, the highest volunteer award in Canada. Academically, Arnav is a consistent achiever. He is currently enrolled at SFU's Beedie School of Business and at the same time, working at KPMG, one of the world's largest accounting firms.

**Name:** Owen Davenport

**Organization:** Young Entrepreneurs of Canada Association

**Age:** 23

Owen works as a Community Coordinator for the Young Entrepreneurs of Canada Association, a BC-based charity with a mandate to empower young Canadians of all abilities and backgrounds with an entrepreneurial mindset. The PowerPlay Young Entrepreneurs program is Canada's most extensive teacher-facilitated entrepreneurial education program. Additionally, Owen co-founded 26xMillennials, a social project whose vision is to inspire, connect and build one global community by sharing success stories of unique career paths with Millennials, Gen Z, and all future generations. He was also the Vice President - External of the KPU Case Analysis Network during his university days at Kwantlen Polytechnic University, where he obtained a Bachelor of Business Administration degree.

**Name:** Emandeep Dhanoya

**Organization:** Voices of Today Foundation and Youth Transforming Society

**Age:** 20

Eman is the epitome of a person wearing many hats. She is the founder of the Voices of Today Foundation, a registered non-profit organization in the Lower Mainland that aims to use individual voices to create a positive change in the community. Established in June 2020, Voices of Today has organized relevant activities for women and Afghan refugee families. As the External Vice President of Youth Transforming Society, Eman leads annual events such as Flowers for Happiness, Adopt-A-Street, and the holiday breakfast. She is an active member of the Surrey Centre Constituency Youth Council, a sponsorship executive for the UBC Bhangra Club, and co-founder and director of Sullivan Heights Sustainability Network Club. Currently, she volunteers for the Royal Columbian Hospital Navigation and Wayfinding program while pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree at the University of British Columbia.

**Name:** Manpreet Dhesi

**Organization:** GenConnect

**Age:** 16

Manpreet is the co-founder of GenConnect, a non-profit reciprocal learning and engagement service that bridges young generations and seniors together within the community. Through this intergenerational communication, youth learn new skills like communication, cultural awareness, and social responsibility, while seniors learn new skills and hobbies and find meaningful activities. Manpreet, an 11th grader at Tamanawis Secondary School, is not new to leadership roles. She plays for the U18 soccer team and coaches for the BC Tigers Football Club, volunteers as a bhangra coach for Kohinoor Folk Arts Club, volunteers for SPARK Foundation and the City of Surrey youth events planning committee and works as the event manager for Youth Transforming Society.

**Name:** Karmin Dhindsa

**Organization:** Joe Local Business Connect

**Age:** 20

Karmin founded Joe Local Business Connect, a non-profit digital marketing agency to support small businesses, especially BIPOC-owned businesses, disproportionately affected by COVID-19. Joe Local offers numerous resources and marketing opportunities and is committed to promoting BIPOC LGBTQIA2S+ brands to its community of 3,000+ businesses, business strategists, and consumers. Karmin works with the Red Cross, YMCA, and Canadian Blood Services to serve her community. She is the winner of three provincial soccer championships and is the recipient of the Trek Excellence, Dean of Science, and Tuum Est Experiential Awards for her continued academic merit in Microbiology and Immunology at UBC.

**Name:** Vanessa Fajemisin

**Organization:** Solid State Community Industries

**Age:** 24

Vanessa is a Co-Director of Solid State Community Industries, a non-profit organization that addresses the economic mobility of racialized migrant youth. Its Youth Hub for Cooperative Enterprise helps young people start their businesses, set up as worker-owned cooperatives, allowing them to build life skills. In addition to being a co-director of Solid State, Vanessa is a mentor to the Daily Dose of Blackness cohort and a member of the Solid State web and design team. Passionate about all things (pop)culture, art and media, Vanessa uses her eclectic interests, skills, and ideas to create positive futures for racialized youth and their communities. When she's not at Solid State you can find her freelance writing, taking a walk or working towards completing her communications studies at SFU.

**Name:** Omer Faraz

**Organization:** Globalizers Philanthropy Club

**Age:** 17

Omer is a grade 12 student at Semiahmoo Secondary School and an active community leader. Omer is a Poverty Pillar Executive at Globalizers, a school-based philanthropic organization that advocates for health, equality, education, and poverty alleviation. He has been a senior volunteer with the White Rock Muslim Association for over 5 years. He has also volunteered over 200 hours with the West Coast Kids Cancer Foundation. For the last three years, he has been the President of the Semiahmoo Secondary Muslim Student Association, where he creates a platform for cultural representation at the school. Academically, Omer has received the Duke of Edinburgh Silver and Bronze Awards and the University of Toronto Book Award for academic achievement. He keeps himself busy with volunteer work with the Peace Arch Hospital Foundation Youth in Action program, their thrift store, as a French tutor, and is a member of the Nation of Youth Muslims regional team, an organization based in Western Canada which engages in research, development, and programming for the diverse needs of the Muslim community.

**Name:** Arsh Gill

**Organization:** SFU Axis Consulting

**Age:** 22

Arsh is the Managing Director of Axis Consulting, a student-led pro bono consultancy at Simon Fraser University. As Managing Director, she oversees several portfolios and supports over 30 student consultants through 50+ client engagements. Currently, she is a member of the Student Council with the Canadian Association of Management Consultants (CMC-Canada) in BC and a Career Coach at the SFU Beedie School of Business, providing peer guidance to 4,000+ students. She has previously been a Business Analyst with Fraser Health Authority to support their 5-year transformation program across 11 teams. Currently, Arsh is in her final year at SFU's Beedie School of Business. She considers her work for the student community as her most rewarding achievement.

**Name:** Daniel Istifanus

**Organization:** CoinPlay

**Age:** 24

Daniel is the founder of CoinPlay, a cryptocurrency exchange platform that provides consumers with secure, immediate, and cost-effective methods of purchasing cryptocurrencies. CoinPlay simplifies transactions and expands payment options using a revolutionary customer service model. This local business made over \$500,000 in revenue in its first year of operations. In addition to a trading volume of \$550,000 in the past six months, CoinPlay has high return rates, with over 95% of customers' reviews being five stars. Daniel's global purpose is to scale and expand CoinPlay to provide innovative currency access to people in his own native country of Nigeria. While working on his business, Daniel is enrolled at Simon Fraser University, majoring in Computer Engineering. He also obtained two reputable co-operative educations with the SFU Engineering Department and the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council.

**Name:** Jshandeep Jassal

**Organization:** Solid State Community Industries

**Age:** 23

Jshandeep is a Co-Director of Solid State Community Industries, a non-profit organization supporting racialized migrants in starting cooperatives and not-for-profit organizations. In addition, she is the lead mentor and Co-Founder of three Surrey-based non-profit organizations such as GenConnect, Let Her Talk, and the South Asian Healing Network. Jshandeep is a graduate of Simon Fraser University with a Bachelor degree with Honours in Sociology, a minor in Criminology, and a certification in Social Justice. As a research and community enthusiast, she firmly believes in strategic community development. She sees her leadership as a tool to support communities in their efforts to solve their struggles. Her work addresses social issues faced by residents of Surrey, including racism, inequity within immigrant communities, social isolation, mental health, and gender-based violence. She is also an advocate for animal welfare.

**Name:** Manraj Johal

**Organization:** KidsPlay Youth Foundation

**Age:** 23

Manraj is a Corrections Officer with BC Corrections and an active leader of KidsPlay Youth Foundation, a registered non-profit working towards keeping youth away from a lifestyle of drugs, gangs, and violence. He started as a general volunteer in 2019 and now sits on the board and oversees the international operations. He has run over 40 programs benefiting more than 20,000 kids in BC, Alberta, Ontario and internationally in Colombia and India. He and his team are working towards providing opportunities for youth to belong and find their safe space. Manraj is also a well-known athlete in the wrestling community, having won many championships since age 12. Manraj is a graduate of Criminology from Simon Fraser University and completed his diploma in Law Enforcement Studies from the Justice Institute of British Columbia.

**Name:** Sanjana Karthik

**Organization:** Your Words Matter to Us

**Age:** 18

Sanjana, a grade 12 student at Semiahmoo Secondary, is a writer, poet and advocate for social issues and mental health. She founded the non-profit organization Your Words Matter to Us to support young writers in their journey and provide them with a platform to showcase the talents that would help them secure relevant jobs and internships. She writes for Gen Z Writes, Times Canada, and Reclamation Magazine. She won a Literary Award in Poetry at the Global Peace Alliance and Polar Expression competitions. Her poetry has been published by the Poetry Institute of Canada and Polar Expressions. As a mental health supporter, she led the BC Youth Council mental health campaigns. She also co-founded myEsprit, a mental health application that offers tools and resources for all ages for their mental wellbeing. Sanjana is determined to use her creative and entrepreneurial skills in advancing social issues relevant to her community and society.

**Name:** Sahil Khaleque

**Organization:** Pioneer Your Dreams Agency

**Age:** 21

Sahil Khaleque is a marketer, influencer, community leader, realtor, and business owner. At the height of the pandemic, he co-founded the Pioneer Your Dreams Agency, a TikTok marketing company with a mission to help Surrey businesses generate revenue and grow their businesses through the power of TikTok. The agency has helped its clients collectively generate \$500,000 in total revenue and over 25 million TikTok impressions on the platform. It is now a six-figure marketing agency through his diligence and persistence in over a year of operation. Indeed, his Marketing Management Entrepreneurship earned from the University of British Columbia honed his marketing skills and helped him shape into the person he is today.

**Name:** Jesika Kula

**Organization:** Seedling Art Co.

**Age:** 24

Jesika is an innovative leader with a uniquely creative entrepreneurial mindset. She is the Founder and CEO of Seedling Art Co., a mental health-focused start-up specializing in eco-friendly art and journaling products. Besides her role at Seedling Art Co., she continues to work as the Marketing and Communications Coordinator at SFU's Charles Chang Institute for Entrepreneurship. Her keen sense of empathy and lived experience working through mental health challenges have driven her to improve and destigmatize the mental health landscape in teens and young adults, and spark an interest in entrepreneurship as a tool for problem-solving and innovation. Jesika is a recent graduate of Simon Fraser University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Interactive Arts and Technology and a Certificate of Entrepreneurship and Innovation from the Beedie School of Business.

**Name:** Gurik Mangat

**Organization:** FyreWatch Artificial Intelligence

**Age:** 18

Gurik is a promising scientist from Semiahmoo Secondary School. After seeing first-hand the destruction caused by wildfires, he created an artificial intelligence application called FyreWatchAI to give firefighters real-time information on wildfire risks in a specific area. The platform uses deep learning, specifically neural networks, to run an AI algorithm on the data and determine if wildfire conditions are present or not. This project opened many opportunities for Gurik. He was one of eight students to represent Team Canada at the 2021 Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair. It also led him to work with fire scientists in the BC Wildfire Service Commercial Research and Development division on improving the algorithm in the field data and mentorship.

**Name:** Natasha Mhuriro

**Organization:** Black in BC Community Support Fund for COVID-19

**Age:** 25

Natasha is a young Zimbabwean intersectional feminist passionate about empowering young self-identified women. She is a co-founder of the Black in BC Community Support for COVID-19, a community-based non-profit organization that fundraises to provide emergency low-barrier micro-grants to Black people in BC. Natasha brings an intersectional lens and leadership practices to foster inclusive opportunities and advance the participation of those usually marginalized. She served as President of the African Students Association and as an active member of the Black Student Wellness Committee while pursuing a degree in Political Science and Business Administration at Simon Fraser University. Her leadership has resulted in her making lasting contributions in the various fields she has worked in, marked by an exceptional devotion to amplifying the voices of young Black women.

**Name:** Maheep Nagra

**Organization:** KidsPlay Youth Foundation

**Age:** 23

As a senior member of KidsPlay Foundation, Maheep has played a critical role in positively impacting the lives of youth for the past 5 years. He has been instrumental in growing the Foundation in the Okanagan, Calgary, Toronto, India and Colombia. During middle school, Maheep started a mentorship program for teens where he educated them on ethical and social values and prepared them to be better individuals. Maheep has a deep passion for learning. He obtained his diploma in Criminology from Kwantlen Polytechnic University and currently pursues his studies to achieve a Bachelor's degree in the same field with a minor in business, with plans for a Master's degree in Criminology. He also recently enrolled at the University of Fraser Valley to complete the foundations and level 1 electrician course. Maheep has also dedicated himself to complete the Real Estate Division at the UBC Sauder School of Business. He aspires to be a police officer to use his unique mentorship skills to make a difference in the community.

**Name:** Wajeeha Rahman

**Organization:** Kwantlen Polytechnic University Case Analysis Network

**Age:** 22

Formerly Vice-President and currently an Advisor at the KPU Case Analysis Network (KPU CAN), a student-led initiative, Wajeeha is actively creating that support network for her peers. KPU CAN provides students with the opportunity to develop their skills and apply what they have learned in the classroom. In 2021, Wajeeha graduated with distinction and earned a degree in accounting from the KPU Melville School of Business, where she was awarded the President's Outstanding Graduate Award. As the President of KPU's Muslim Student Association, Wajeeha was awarded the 2021 Lieutenant Governor Medal for promoting diversity and inclusion. Wajeeha also volunteers for PowerPlay Young Entrepreneurs as a mentor to middle school students. She is now pursuing a Master of Professional Accounting degree and hopes to become a Certified Public Accountant.

**Name:** Samer Rihani

**Organization:** Little Things Matter – International Society for Children's Health and the Environment

**Age:** 24

Samer is a Research Coordinator for Little Things Matter – International Society for Children's Health and the Environment, a group that promotes leading research in environmental health. He helped establish SFU's Blood, Organ and Stem Cell Club. He received the 2019 Dr. Jack Uppal Community Service Award and the 2020 Brendan Midgley & Joseph Stryjak Celebration of Life Award for his outstanding community service at SFU. He was a recipient of the Faculty of Health Sciences Outstanding Community Service Award for making meaningful change in his faculty during his undergraduate education. Samer currently holds a seat on the BC Lieutenant Advisory Council for the Honourable Janet Austin, where he represents the City of Surrey. He is currently pursuing a Masters in Public Health at Simon Fraser University.

**Name:** Avneet Sandhu

**Organization:** She Connects Foundation

**Age:** 25

Avneet is the Co-Founder, Vice President, and Co-Director of External Relations for She Connects, an initiative that provides mentorship to young women in high school by connecting them with women mentors to foster thought exchange, dialogues and mentorship synergies. Avneet began this initiative after being selected as a Daughter of the Vote delegate in 2019, representing the Fleetwood-Port Kells riding. She had the opportunity to sit in the House of Commons and Senate in Ottawa and bring concerns facing her communities. With the Rosemary Spears Leadership Grant offered through Equal Voice, in partnership with Canada's Women and Gender Equality Department, She Connects was established and now provides a comfortable and safe space for young girls and women to share their challenges. Avneet is a Simon Fraser University graduate with a Bachelor of International Studies degree. Currently, she works at the Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces.

**Name:** Karambir Singh Dhaunsi

**Organization:** Youth Transforming Society

**Age:** 20

Karambir is the Vice President-External of Youth Transforming Society. This registered non-profit organization aims to raise awareness for local and global issues and encourage volunteerism among young people. He volunteers for the CIBC Run for the Cure, Students Overcoming Opioid Use Disorder and Addictions, the Fraser Health Crisis Line and the South Asian Mental Health Alliance. He was also a recipient of the SASSY Overcoming Adversity Award. He is constantly on the Dean's honours list and is currently in his third year at the University of British Columbia, studying in the Faculty of Science, majoring in Biology. Karambir is certified in mental health first aid and naloxone administration, earned his first-degree black belt in taekwondo and performed on a tabla (Indian-style hand drums) on professional scale at the Surrey Arts Centre's Naad Festival. Karambir is a true story of coming over adversity. While his accomplishments speak for themselves, it's important to note that he accomplished all of this following a stage 3 cancer diagnosis and subsequent battle when he was 15.

**Name:** Gurbaz Singh Grewal

**Organization:** Red FM

**Age:** 20

Gurbaz is the radio show host of "Sade Bache Sada Virsa" (Our Youth, Our Future) on CKYE 93.1 and 89.1 RED FM. As the youngest radio host, he directly impacts and empowers the youth by providing them with a go-to platform and voice, engaging them in thought-provoking debates. While pursuing a career in radio broadcasting, he is also working towards his medical degree in orthopedic surgery at the University of British Columbia. When he started at the university, Gurbaz received a \$40,000 Presidential BMO Financial Entrance Scholarship for being top in his class. Outside of school, he played for the BC Tigers Football Club and volunteers for Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE) and the Fraser Health Crisis Line.

**Name:** Soheyla Sodhi

**Organization:** Big and Little Sisters Mentorship Organization

**Age:** 16

Soheyla established a non-profit mentorship organization called Big and Little Sisters at the height of the pandemic after witnessing mental health deterioration among her peers. This organization provides a safe space where girls aged 8 - 13 can talk about anything from serious topics to their interests with a mentor close to their age. She is an executive member of the Globalizers Club at Semiahmoo Secondary, where she is currently a Grade 12 student. She is a talented musician with a passion for the violin in which she has achieved First Class Honours on the Royal Conservatory of Music level 10. She also recently received 'outstanding' on her taekwondo black belt test. Additionally, Soheyla was selected as a semi-finalist for the Loran Scholar Award for 2021-2022. She volunteers for a senior care organization, as an assistant violin teacher and taekwondo teaching assistant for kids, tutors at Smart Kookie Tutorial, and is a social media content creator for her Vancouver Symphony Orchestra School of Music's Sinfonietta orchestra. Soheyla plans to attend medical school to become a surgeon.

**Name:** Sabrina Ye

**Organization:** One World Learning

**Age:** 17

Sabrina co-founded the non-profit youth-led organization One World Learning during the pandemic to provide connections and different opportunities to students internationally and help bridge the disparity of education around the world. One World Learning signs up tutors and pairs them with students from across the globe to have weekly 30-minute lessons to improve their verbal, reading, English, math and science skills. With her adaptability, quick thinking and diligence, she created a flourishing organization with over 70 students in Asia, 25 tutors, and \$6,500 donated to local organizations and charities. As a grade 12 student at Fleetwood Park Secondary, Sabrina has prepared for more challenges by being involved in school and her community. She is the President of her school's Operation Smile Fleetwood, a volunteer for Surrey Parks' Adopt a Street Program, and a STEM subjects tutor to grade 5 to 12 students.