

Valeria Mariño:



I've always had a keen interest in sustainable development, from a very young age I've organized and participated in events that's raised awareness about this issue in my home country of Peru.

As an International Baccalaureate student, I focused on making my volunteer projects work towards informing disadvantaged communities about the actions taken in favor of education and sustainability. I was also was part of a project that helped them raise their level of instruction with continuous tutoring; to make my country have a more conscious population.

When I moved to Canada in 2016, I started working with organizations, such as Nature's Ride and Natoura's Journey, that promoted the relevance of environmental problems through information platforms that were adapted according to the age of different publics

In 2017, I was accepted to study at the Haskayne School of Business at the University of Calgary, where I'm about to enter my second year of a Bachelor of Commerce degree, with a major in finance. Throughout this time, I have participated in various offices at the university where my aim was to make each work environment more efficient and to provide students with a better service. My long-term goal has always been to introduce the factor of sustainability to my business studies, as it is now evident to me that the bond between these two areas is getting stronger. Through this and other close experiences to sustainable energy development, I seek to determine the best way to complement business and sustainability at an undergraduate level to make this a more appealing academic pathway for future generations.

Mehul Gupta:

I firmly believe in creating a world where people can openly discuss mental health in a supportive environment with access to resources that help them succeed.

Therefore, I began 'RANA Youth', an organization committed to bringing attention to mental health issues and raising money to fund mental health research. To date RANA Youth has raised tens of thousands of dollars for mental health research at the Alberta Children's Hospital and has brought its message of inclusivity and acceptance to hundreds of Calgarians.

Additionally, I champion inclusivity by encouraging others to speak out about their issues and have worked closely with government and non-profit sectors to destigmatize the issue of mental health in my community. Most notably, I endeavored to identify how comfortable minority and indigenous youth were reaching out for mental health resources in Calgary. This resulted in reports to both the municipal and provincial government giving recommendations on how to better serve these underrepresented populations. Finally, I spearheaded a national media and volunteering campaign with Kids Help Phone designed to shed a light on the various resources and individuals available to youth struggling with their mental health. Through all these initiatives, I hope to create a stronger, more interconnected community.

Reeana Tazrean:

I am a hardworking student who can also be defined as a speaker, innovator and philanthropist. I'm passionate, eager and possess the desire to explore, reflect and challenge myself while remaining compassionate towards others. I believe in the importance of lifelong learning as well as self-growth. My curiosity drives my desire to change the world.

My past volunteer work and research have investigated mental health challenges as well as using synthetic biology and genomics to better our day-to-day world. I'm a volunteer at the Boys and Girls Club, the Calgary Public Library, Free the Children, The Calgary Bridge Foundation and Empowering Minds. I'm also the co-founder of Rant and Relate; an organization started to raise awareness and prevention on mental health issues. I'm currently employed at Kumon, where I strive to create a strong mathematical and literacy base for young children. I'm also highly involved with the iGEM Foundation in San Francisco, where I works alongside CEOs to come up with innovative approaches to solving complex problems regarding synthetic biology.

Tristan Holmes:



I am 16 years of age and in the 11th grade at William Aberhart high school. I'm involved in competitive swimming, and love sports such as golf, & tennis. I'm bilingual and can speak both English and Spanish. I'm currently a member of "Heart of Orange" which focuses on working together with others to build a strong and caring community. I'm also a founding member of the schools' board game club. I enjoy my life despite being faced with many challenges which only strengthened my resiliency. Therefore, I understand the importance of community when faced with obstacles.

My first challenge occurred when I was only 6 years old, I was in the Alberta Children's hospital ICU. They were constantly poking me and saying that it wouldn't hurt, when it actually did. This physically and emotionally damaged me, making me distrustful of adults. Illnesses involving inflammation plagued me for many years, culminating in seizures which made life very difficult in a variety of ways. However, I have always tried to remain positive and to support others who are facing challenges, through empathy and compassion.

The thing I'm most proud of is competitive swimming. This shows my personal resiliency to be able to swim competitively in spite of health challenges. I'm also proud to be part of the Aberhart community and work together with others to make school, and the surrounding community a better place. I believe that working together can make us all become stronger. We can all overcome challenges when we are part of a safe and caring community.

Nimra Dar:



As a third-year chemical engineering student, I consider it very important to be challenged academically and yet also contribute within the community. Having held 9 executive positions and participating in over 22 extracurricular clubs over the past five years have taught me that leadership is about constantly thinking into the future and guiding people towards a vision. As president of Key Club, I was able to implement solutions, and aid the community in a local and international aspect with over 85 members. One of the projects organized annually was the Geomeer project - providing low-income families with non-perishable food items. Subsequently, I have initiated multiple fundraisers for the floods in Pakistan, the typhoon in the Philippines, and towards eliminating the disease tetanus worldwide raising up to \$2,000 annually for three years.

At the age of 17, I was invited to do a TEDx Talk, at the TEDx Edmonton Youth Conference, about developing a tutoring app. Focusing on helping students reach their passions for student success and to develop an effective, ameliorated education system not only in my school, but worldwide. As VP Communications of the Chemical Engineering Student Society, VP Internal Affairs of SPE and Vice President of Metsoc and Metallurgy Student Chapter, I organized fundraisers, events and guest speakers for students to get involved and learn about the potential of the engineering mining, petroleum and chemical option. Being the head executive of the Graduation Council, I organized the graduation banquet, representing the Muslim minority and accommodating those observing Ramadan.

Although leading a busy life, powerlifting and kickboxing, I have found time to volunteer at the local mosque, and provided Muslim students a praying area as secretary of the Jummah Namaz group.

Ayisha Khalid:

My name is Ayisha Khalid and I am a second year Bachelor of Health Sciences student at the University of Calgary.

Currently, I am undertaking a student-led research project under the University of Calgary titled “the role of religious leaders in promoting cancer screening among female South Asian immigrants.” Despite Islam being a huge informer of decisions in the lives of Muslims, religious leaders have scarcely been consulted in research regarding Muslim health. By interviewing religious leaders, I aim to change that, and break down the wall between religion and science in order to encourage sustainable collaboration among all community members.

Since April of this year, I have also been involved in creating and executing curriculum for immigrant and refugee youth, as a part of University of Calgary’s “Immigrant and Refugee Youth Learning Activities” program. This program’s summer-long sessions intend to equip youth with tools to becoming ambassadors for health and wellness in their communities. Having the chance to be involved in the development of a program that aims to sustainably empower the leaders of tomorrow has only fueled my desire to lead further positive change in the community.

Throughout high school, I took on many leadership roles: as a basketball coach, a teaching assistant, a tutor, and various mentorship positions in numerous buddy programs. I found that as a role model, I learned different ways to help others make their own lives better which I continue to apply today, whether that be through empowerment, resource creation, or just encouragement.

Aishwarya Khanduja:

I am a fourth-year biomedical science student at the University of Calgary Cumming School of Medicine. My dedication and commitment to community and wellbeing, along with my pursuit of personal growth are demonstrated through my work. I founded First Generations Organization (1GO) which serves as a national ambassador for providing support, resources, and guidance for high school students who face a lack of resources with regards to post-secondary education. Being passionate about global health, I'm also a founding member and director of media and technology of Canadians for Safe Syrian Healthcare (CSSH), which aims to advocate for safe healthcare in Syria and for an increase in trained medical and humanitarian aid to the region. Following my interests in global health and knowledge translation, I'm also the director of logistics of Canadian Coalition for Global Health Research (CCGHR) and will be pioneering a western conference in the upcoming academic year. I truly believe in, and go by the saying, "Global Impact, Local Beginnings", which I have also coined as the theme of the conference. Additionally, I'm passionate about the arts, I'm an intern at Humainologie, a media production non-profit, where I spearhead initiatives within the organization to increase empathy within the community, and its understanding of the human condition. Ultimately, I feel like I was born to be a leader, I've been told my capabilities extend beyond my determination, and teamwork; I'm insightful, ambitious, and accomplished, all while ensuring I work to help others realize their potential.

Jaskaran Singh Grewal:



I am a 3rd year student at the University of Calgary, pursuing a Major in Biological Sciences and a Minor in Philosophy. I'm also the Co-President and Co-Founder of Synapse Neuroscience Outreach, a federally registered not for profit organization that aims to inspire and empower students to pursue neuroscience academically, professionally, or however else they are inspired to do so. Concurrently, I also serve as the VP External for the UofC branch of STEM Fellowship (an organization which aims to equip high school and undergraduate students with the skills and knowledge needed to pursue Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics (STEM) related initiatives), as well as an Advisor for Project Pulse Calgary, another non-profit organization that aims to help and guide youth interested in the health sciences. Outside of these pursuits, you can find me in the lab (doing cool neuroscience research), at cafes and restaurants around the city, or at the rink. My ultimate hope is that people from all walks of life have access to resources that allow them to make their dreams attainable, and that nobody falls victim to unfortunate, but preventable circumstances.

Kevin Lin:



I am a Grade 12 student at Webber Academy. I'm the Cofounder and Executive Director of InterCal Music, a nonprofit organization that provides performance opportunities for high school musicians at local senior centers. I also Cofounded the Alberta Team Math Attack, an annual provincial competition that hosts hundreds of junior high participants at the University of Calgary and University of Alberta.

Every year, I've been elected to my Student Council Executive Team, where I will now serve as Vice President. In junior high, I ran various drives where over 1000 books, 3000 food items, and 500 pairs of shoes were collected. A significant portion of these donations went to the victims of the Fort McMurray wildfires. Furthermore, I organize annual donations of thousands of dollars to the Children's Cottage.

At school, I coach elementary basketball, junior high boys' basketball, and junior high debate. I've also guided several debate teams to top finishes at regional tournaments, as well as a Top 10 ranking at the Canadian Junior National Debating Championships. Thus, I was invited to coach at Debate Boot Camp, a weeklong training program that hosted 80 aspiring and avid junior and senior high debaters from across the city.

I would say my most notable contributions to Webber are my efforts in enhancing its STEM activities. I teach the Senior Math Society and Junior Contest Math Club, the latter of which I founded. My junior high students have received invitations to compete at the International Mathematics Competition.

Miriam Melendez:



I'm from El Salvador and came to Canada in the year 2008, I came with my 2 brothers to reunite with our mother after being apart for 4 years.

I became a mother at the age 16 to my now 8-year-old son Andres. I've been independent since the age of 8; my mother left the country due to my father being abusive. My brothers and I then had to endure abuse; my brothers would be worst as they would get beaten to the point where they couldn't attend school for 1-2 weeks due to not being able to walk. Our stepmother would abuse us as well when our father would leave the country for work, she would cut our electricity, water, and lock the fridge.

Many angels came into our lives in order for us to survive, that's when I learned that there are also good people in life and I wasn't all bad. Coming to Canada was a cultural shock and being around my mother was sure difficult at first as she was a stranger to me who I thought had abandoned me. I later on realized she flew the country in order to save my brothers and I from a life filled with abuse. Now being in Canada has given me the opportunity to be happy with my son and be able to forgive the people who hurt me in the past. My mental health in now really good and thanks to much therapy needed I was able to overcome depression and many childhood traumas.

Gabriela Bejarano:



I grew up in a small country in central America named El Salvador. I was raised by my mother who was a teen mother, she had me at the age of 16. My father was 52 when he got my mother pregnant, he was a pedophile who would constantly abuse young girls. Due to my mother's age and low possibilities in El Salvador she became a prostitute to be able to maintain me. Due to this I was sexually abused by one of my stepfathers, I never told my mom about it since I was scared for her safety. She was very vulnerable to abuse, I endured a lot in my childhood and was molested plenty of times. When my mother got married and became a church member I thought my life was finally going to be a good one. I then had to start working by the age of 11 to maintain my mom and sisters. Everything I earned would always go to my household, I never bought anything for myself since I didn't want my sisters going through what I went through myself as a little girl. I struggled to get through high school since my mother wouldn't support my education and said I needed to work full time to bring more money in; but I knew I wanted an education, I needed a future for myself and my sisters. I always thought why God is putting me through all this, as my life would never get easier. In the year 2015 my father's sister whom I had not had contact with called me and offered if I'd like to come to Canada, I thought I was not real, but I accepted. Last year, July 19th to be more precise I came to Canada and realized that everything I went through was for a reason. I'm now enrolled in school learning English and live a life free of abuse with my new family that love me and support me.

Sarika Haque:



I am a student studying Biological Sciences at the University of Calgary. I am currently conducting research at the Cumming School of Medicine, in order to identify and prioritize barriers to primary healthcare access faced by nationwide Bangladeshi-Canadian immigrants, such as myself, in hopes of mitigating them through future policy changes.

I serve as a member on U of C's Refugee Student Board, therefore I am part of a team that sponsors 1-2 refugee students each year, in order to give them the opportunity to pursue a degree of their choice, while providing them with safe accommodations, both paid for by the university. I am affiliated with various extracurricular clubs and organizations that allow me to be an active and engaged student alongside my academics.

I am also involved in multiple volunteer positions that have allowed me to make a difference in my local and global community. I have been volunteering at the Peter Lougheed Centre to provide support for children and adults, teaching ice skating to young children at the Village Square Leisure Centre, running fundraisers and awareness campaigns for the WE organization, and more. Recently, I went on a volunteer trip to India in order to build two classrooms and a washroom for a local school in the village of Kumbhalgarh.

Through the various roles that I have explored, from personal experiences, to research, to volunteering, I aim to demonstrate my passion and commitment to providing my community groups with equal or more opportunities through positive community engagement.

Marigold Mioc:



My name is Marigold Mioc, I'm 9 years old and going into the 4th grade. I was Little Miss Calgary in 2016. I attended many events in the city during my reign where I volunteered my time, fundraised, and gave speeches as a representative of Calgary.

I have volunteered with Epilepsy Association of Calgary, Meals on Wheels, Junior League of Calgary, 100 Kids who Care, Calgary Syrian Refugee Support Group, Made by Momma; as well as at many community events, banquets and festivals. I've helped in the following ways at events: Usher, food and beverage sales, check- in desk, face painting, storytelling, draws, handing out awards, selling tickets, collecting data, clean up, set up and take down, applying temporary tattoos, handing out balloons and promotional items, and giving speeches.

I've had a business, called Marigold's Heart Garden, since the age of 5, making and selling flower headbands.

I am interested in human rights, gymnastics, politics, reading, travel and have a strong love for animals.

My goal is to be Prime Minister, so I can help people and make a difference in the world.

I regularly attend human rights rallies, community events and motivational workshops, including seeing Tony Robbins in 2017. I enjoy attending policy planning meetings and have worked on writing my own policy for continuing education.

I have used her own money to help sponsor a family from Syria as a Group of 5 sponsorship, and for buying food, Christmas gifts and toys for the homeless. I've also helped with securing donations of baby items and cash donations for Made by Momma, a local charity.

I've helped to secure donations of toys, furniture and clothing for newcomer families.

Over the years I've won some awards, including: Fort McMurray Fundraiser Spelling Bee Trophy 2016, Citizenship Award from my Mandarin class at John G. Diefenbaker High School 2016, Standout Publications Top 150 Canadians 2017, Government of Canada volunteer service award 2017, Great Kids Award from the Ministry of Children's Services 2018, Community Spirit Award from True Beauty Foundation 2018.

Tina Guo:



I am a second-year medical student currently studying at the University of Calgary's Cumming School of Medicine. Prior to entering medical school, I served as Vice-President Events of the newly founded Mental Health Awareness Club for three years, allowing me to spearhead the Break the Silence initiative, consisting of seven monthly panel discussions and one year-end summit per year to discuss various mental health topics and dispel the stigma surrounding mental illness. In my role, I also organized Random Acts of Kindness events for my peers during stressful exam seasons to disseminate small gifts and encouraging messages to students. Three years of involvement in Outrun the Stigma Calgary also culminated in my role as the organization's Co-Chair, in which I led a team of fourteen planning committee members to organize a fifth annual run in support of Distress Centre Calgary, a 24/7 free crisis counselling and professional counselling hotline. In the year that I organized the event, the run attracted 311 participants and 91 volunteers, and raised over \$34,000 for the Distress Centre Calgary, breaking all of the organization's pre-existing records, and yielding a cumulative fundraising total of over \$80,000 in the five years since the organization's conception. Since beginning medical school, I was among the 40 student delegates that participated in the 2017 Provincial Advocacy Day, during which medical students from across Alberta collaborated to lobby the provincial government to establish a designated Mental Health and Addictions Fund using the future tax revenue generated from recreational cannabis sales.

McKayla Tubrett:



Sunint Bindra:

My name is Sunint Bindra, I'm a grade 12 honours student at Sir Winston Churchill High School who strives to create a difference in the world and is motivated by a passion to help others. I have served as a Canadian Delegate to the United Nations - delivering a speech at the UN Headquarters in New York regarding advocacy and the global equality for those facing injustices – and was recognized and awarded one of Top 10 individuals globally for my actions. Being an avid debater, I recently partook in the Harvard World Schools Debate Invitational - ranking amongst the top debaters at this event. I hope to be a pioneer in sustainable energy, publishing my research of infrastructure-level photovoltaic energy development in the International Social Sciences CY Journal. I've also been recognized by the Government of Canada on multiple occasions and received awards for being “an inspiration to Canada and future generations of Canadians.” In the past I've volunteered in underprivileged communities in Gurgaon, India helping various marginalized groups. I founded a national non-profit organization partnered with acclaimed NGO's focusing on peer-to-peer support, empowering local youth to assist their disadvantaged peers across the globe and to serve underprivileged communities. As a renowned author, I've written about the United Nations and global peace, publishing my writings in the AU Business Review and other respected avenues. I will be attending an Ivy League University this upcoming fall, anticipating a double major in Neuroscience and Economics.

Arshiya Shareef:

Hi, my name is Arshiya. It has been four years since I came to Canada, which I did for the sole purpose of a good quality of education. It has been two months since I walked across the stage with a degree in Bachelor of Science. Education has been very dear to me, unfortunately not very easy.

Born in a backward Muslim caste in a Hindu country, with parents unemployed, going to school was an “expensive right”. Even harder was coming to Canada. Here, in an unfamiliar territory, working on my basic English communication skills to maintaining my identity as a Hijabi and catching up with the academic culture, every day became a struggle. There would be days when I would feel helpless and ever more days when I would be hopeless. I would fail over and over again. Each time, I got shattered, I got up... stronger than before.

Now, with a passion for public health, I have done some interesting research projects on Cancer treatment and someday I hope to determine the most effective yet painless therapy for aggressive and resilient cancers.

Apart from studies, I am really interested in photography and almost obsessed with sports. Last but not the least, I am thankful for all that I have been blessed with – the opportunities that I got, the memories that I made, the people that I met and especially.... for My beautiful parents, who worked and prayed hard to give me more than they ever had or got.

Mohammad Moin Tinwala:



My name is Moin and I'm committed to working together to build a more just, sustainable, and innovative world. I believe this can be accomplished by cultivating a strong mindset for positive change and selflessly serving others through initiatives we are most passionate about. From a young age, I've been actively working in local and global communities for various causes such as the advancement of education, youth empowerment, health equity, elimination of poverty and inequality, and more. For example, I co-founded an international humanitarian and development organization called House of Dreams. They have built an orphanage in Pakistan along with a water well, pump, and filtration system that provides clean water to many communities. Through my experiences, I've loved learning from those I worked with and served with, and have gained a strong sense of purpose, meaning, and fulfillment. Moving forward, I'm inspired to continue and expand my efforts after seeing the meaningful impact that has resulted in the lives of others. Furthermore, I hope to empower more individuals to leverage their leadership potential and discover how the act of giving opens powerful pathways to personal growth and happiness.

Omer Mansoor: