



# North Shore Young Civic Forum

Brought to you by:



# Cohort Album

*Spring 2022*

# The Forum Facilitation Team





**Rowan  
Gentleman-Sylvester**

Civic Education Program  
Manager, CityHive  
she/her/hers

Rowan is one of the two co-leads for the 2022 Forum and also co-facilitated the 2020 cohort of the Forum. She is deeply passionate about civic engagement, experiential learning, dialogue, and environmental sustainability and has worked with a number of local municipalities and community partners to improve youth engagement across the region. Rowan completed her BA in Communication at Simon Fraser University where she spent more than a year focused on researching the role of youth (ages 13-30) within our democracy. Rowan was born and raised in East Vancouver and now lives in North Vancouver. Having lived most of her life on these unceded lands, and as a sixth-generation Canadian settler, she is constantly navigating and deepening her understanding of the power of land and place. Rowan enjoys combing through the racks at local thrift stores, spending time in the woods with her dog, practicing at-home yoga, and getting absorbed by good books.



## Faiz Jaffer

Democracy Café Lead  
North Shore Community Resources  
he/him/his

Faiz, one of the two co-leads for the 2022 Forum, is a member of the LGBTQ2S+ community and is passionate about civic engagement and social justice education - primarily decolonization and anti-racism. He's led advocacy campaigns for the American Civil Liberties Union, youth-led efforts to humanize those on opposing sides of societal issues, and workshops on unlearning homophobia. Faiz completed his BA in Political Science at Western University, with a focus on how the legacy of the 17th-century illusion of a racial hierarchy (used to justify North American slavery and global colonization) survives in modern society. Faiz has deep roots to this topic, most notably for having spent over half of his childhood in a segregated, former cotton slave town in southern Georgia (U.S.). He's since lived on the unceded lands colonially-known as Burnaby, Ontario, New York, and the North Shore - where he enjoys getting lost in nature, riding his motorcycle, meditating, painting, obsessing over the NBA, and baking nanaimo bars.



## Hassan Merali

Alumni Mentor-Facilitator  
he/him/his | they/them/theirs

Hassan Merali is a passionate advocate for civic engagement, public dialogue, and participation in the democratic process. He is also passionate about sustainability and diversity and inclusion. Hassan is finishing his Bachelor of Arts degree at Capilano University where he is majoring in Interdisciplinary Studies; his research focuses on the intersection between digital technology and public discourse. Hassan's experiences on the Capilano University Board of Governors, Capilano Students' Union Board of Directors, the North Shore Young Citizens' Forum, and the North Vancouver Constituency Youth Council have shown him the power an engaged young person can have on the world around them. Having lived on the unceded lands of the Coast Salish Peoples, which is referred to as the North Shore, for most of his life, Hassan is dedicated to increasing the accessibility of its public institutions so that everyone can feel that their voice is heard and have a say in the decisions that affect their future.

# The 2022 Forum Cohort



# Alp Cetinakinci

*(he/him/his)*

Currently, I am a university student at the UBC, majoring in political science and minoring in international relations. I see myself working in government after finishing my studies. I love learning about new cultures and would love to travel more when I get the opportunity.



# Brooklyn Sutherland

*(she/her/hers)*

"Hello, my name is Brooklyn Sutherland and I grew up here on the North Shore. I went to Seycove Secondary high school and was Student Council President in my senior year. Soccer was my passion in high school but I let this go in university as I began the journey towards a degree in environmental engineering. This has taken me to Prince George and back for my studies. Currently I am in my fourth year of study at UBC.

Other detours I have taken during my degree include two travel experiences, one exploring Southeast Asia and the other learning French in Montreal. While challenging, these two experiences have helped shaped who I am especially since I did them alone. During my free time for the last several years I repaired a sailboat and enjoyed going for weekend trips and one longer 3 month trip. Sadly I sold the boat and now will get my sailing fix through the Deep Cove Yacht Club Sunday race series.

Mental health has recently been a big part of my life and would consider myself a good person to talk to on the subject. My family is very important to me and we all have my grandma to thank for me being a part of this. I look forward to taking part in this program!"



# Charlene Seward

*(she/her/hers)*

Charlene Seward is a proud member of the Squamish Nation with close family ties to the Snuneymuxw Nation. Charlene is an experienced facilitator, who values creating safe spaces for rich dialogue, and frames all the work she does with a lens of reconciliation and decolonization. Charlene is grateful for the opportunity to work with the North Shore Young Citizens Forum, and hopes that it will be an opportunity to engage in localized reconciliation efforts.



# Charlie Cook

*(they/them/theirs)*

Charlie Cook is a non-binary white settler who works on the ancestral, stolen lands of the Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh people at The Museum of North Vancouver. After obtaining a BFA in theatre from Cornish College of the Arts, they began working as a tour guide and museum interpreter. Charlie struggled their way through school with an undiagnosed learning disability and wants to help break down the barriers many marginalized communities face when pursuing education. They are passionate about science communication and believe in municipal government's power to educate citizens.



# Chelsea Woolhouse

*(she/her/hers)*

"Chelsea is a community-minded program manager and communications specialist with a healthy obsession for sustainable community development. Over the past ten years, she has worked with local governments and environmental non-profits where she developed an interdisciplinary approach to project management, strategic communications, and stakeholder engagement.

Chelsea is passionate about local food systems, stemmed from growing up on a certified organic farm in southern Saskatchewan. Following this passion, she completed a degree in environmental practice and a graduate diploma in sustainable business management. Currently, she works in food security for two non-profit organizations: Farm to School BC and North Shore Table Matters Network.

Chelsea loves to travel and has lived and worked in many exciting places around the world including New Zealand, France, and two overseas French departments: Saint-Pierre and Miquelon (North America) and Mayotte (Africa). In 2017 Chelsea moved to British Columbia and now happily calls North Vancouver home. When she is not out exploring new trails on her mountain bike, Chelsea is planning her next travel adventure."



# Dorsa Khormali

*(she/her/hers)*

I graduated from UBC in 2020 with a Bachelor of Arts. During my studies, I have taken courses from diverse disciplines that have introduced me to new perspectives on different subjects. My career background includes working for immigration offices as well as volunteering for community events. I'm currently working in public health, which has been an exciting career experience. I'm hoping to contribute to my community in any capacity I can.

# Emma Campbell

*(she/her/hers)*

"I am a settler living on the unceded lands of the Tsleil-Waututh, Squamish, and Musqueam people in the so-called District of North Vancouver. I grew up here and am now raising my two young children here with my husband. I received a Bachelors of Media Arts at Emily Carr University and co-started a small video production company with my husband and a friend. In addition to working in film and TV I have also worked as a photographer but at the moment I am a stay-at-home parent with my 6 and 2 year old. I am deeply concerned about the climate crisis and have been involved in different types of activism around the climate for about 10 years.



# Essya Nabbali

*(she/her/hers, they/them/theirs)*

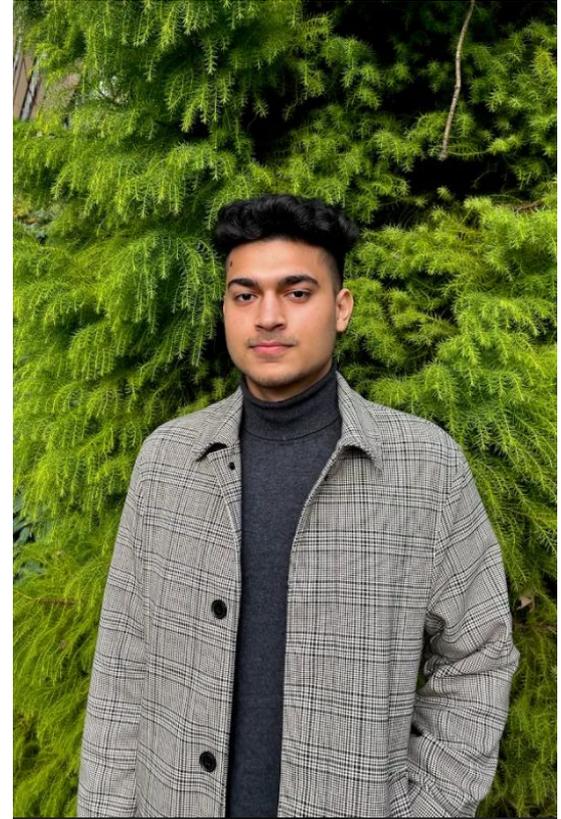
I am a faculty member at Capilano University in the Departments of Sociology and Criminology, cross-appointed to Interdisciplinary Studies and Women's & Gender Studies. I currently sit on Senate and serve the Women & Gender Equity Committee of the Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC. It has been only in the last several months that I have stepped down from also serving the Vancouver Women's Health Collective (being twice voted into the role of Vice-Chair), the Vancouver Status of Women, and the Women's Advisory Committee of the Vancouver City Council. I am a researcher, data storyteller, and occasional poet, with publications in both journals and books.



# Harman Singh Bhoday

*(he/him/his)*

Harman Singh flew straight to Canada ,after completing his high school in India, to find better education and more opportunities but he found so much more. Harman has a passion for meeting new people and making new friends. His excellent communication skills allow him to make meaningful connections with people. His cheerful personality makes him all the more approachable. He is always optimistic and likes making jokes to keep others around him positive and merry. His love for nature is immeasurable. His reason for choosing Canada for his further studies was due to the mesmerizing geography and the incredible amount of nature. He chose Capilano University to do his undergrad because of it's Capu's being located on the mountain and in the woods. He has a very focused work ethic and he never says no to work.



# Ian Vanagas

*(he/him/his)*

Ian is a software developer and writer based in North Vancouver. He works at an interactive video startup, as well as other side projects. He writes about communities, creation, tech products, and internet culture. He's passionate about the application of technology in making people's lives better, small business, health and fitness, and the internet.



# Keerthana Girija Ravi Kumar

*(she/her/hers)*

Hi my name is Keerthana Girija Ravi Kumar, I'm from the south part of India, called Tamil Nadu. As an immigrant, I faced lot's of challenges in getting a job but fortunately Canadian people around me were so friendly and welcoming. And it helped me to be motivated and not to give up on my goals. As an immigrant and with my experience I understand how people's support could change one's life. I started my career working in ""Election Canada"" (federal election campaign) as an assistant HR and was involved in hiring poll workers and since then I explored many opportunities and designations. Currently I work in a firm as an Assistant accountant.

I'm a person who likes to cook, play badminton, hang out with people and learn new things. I'm interested in the forum because I strive to take the initiative to help on special projects, and I have a strong desire to help others through improving education, which has led to my past success. I want to further my spirit for people and stakeholder engagement, and this program offers me the right opportunity at the right time in my life. Through this cohort program, I aim to leverage the potential of a determined and passionate learning circle.



# Ken Schultze

*(he/him/his)*

"Ken Schultze is a young adult who was raised and currently lives in West Vancouver. He attended the University of British Columbia's Sauder School of Business where he graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce with Honours. Currently, he is managing a small business in West Vancouver. He has aspirations to either attend law school or complete a master's degree in urban planning.

During his spare time, Ken trains for the 400m hurdles, hikes, and cooks. He also volunteers in his community where he is on the West Vancouver Place for Sport fundraising committee.

By participating in the North Shore Young Civic Forum, Ken hopes to deepen his understanding of how a municipality functions and how to strengthen his voice in the community. As a young adult living in West Vancouver, he has concerns about the high cost of housing and poor quality of transportation alternatives.



**Laura Drury**

*(she/her/hers)*

# Matt Rowan

*(they/them/theirs)*

I am a law student, cognitive science graduate, community organiser, and artist from Vancouver, as well as an alumnus of the Transport 2050 Youth Advisory Council. As someone who is passionate about seawalls and seawalks that aren't under water at high tide, breathable air, and not dying and not being dead, municipal politics excites me — when provincial and federal governments aren't doing enough, municipal politics is a place where average people can work together and directly encourage a few representatives who all live in the community they make decisions about to take the initiative on things like climate responsibility, housing affordability, modernising infrastructure and services, and reconciliation, at least to some extent. As someone who grew up in West Vancouver, opportunities to work with people in West Van (and the North Shore generally) are always welcome; "silent majorities" that are neither silent nor the majority aside, I think I owe it to the community that raised me to show up and help with the cause of making sure every opinion in the community; be it people living or working there; gets heard. I also formerly had blue hair and currently have pronouns.



# Michelle Lau

*(she/her/hers)*

I am Michelle, a year 3 SFU Environment student. Majoring in Global Environmental Systems and certificate in Sustainable Development.

I am an international student who's from HK.

I'm talkative and love meeting new friends.



# Nathan Chua

*(he/him/his)*

I grew up in West Vancouver and attended elementary and high school on the North Shore. I am currently pursuing a Combined Major in Sciences degree at UBC and working part-time as a Compliance Officer at Health Canada. My interests lie in public health and finding ways to improve people's lives on a daily basis. Listening is always a good starting point. I also believe that people connect through food and this is a great way to reach out to others. Being a volunteer for Believe Street Meal and the West Van Senior Center Café have been humbling experiences. As a foodie and a home Chef, I enjoy preparing meals, trying new recipes, and just gathering at the dinner table. I have also worked in the artisan food industry and I am a proponent for buying local and supporting independent businesses.



# Nicholas Smith

*(he/him/his)*

"I grew up in southern Ontario, where I developed a fascination with urban planning, architecture and cartography. I pursued these interests at the University of Toronto, where I studied urban and environmental geography. I also completed a Masters in Environmental Policy before commencing law school. When not studying, I competed as a member of the varsity rugby team.

I articulated at a large full-service firm and then specialized in employment law before moving to Vancouver in 2020. Seeking a change of pace and looking to shift into a public serving role, I was fortunate to find a position as a legal advocate at North Shore Community Resources. Through this work, myself and my colleagues provide free legal information, advice and representation to vulnerable members of the North Shore community. This position has given me an opportunity to learn, in an intimate and often sobering manner, about the difficulties our community faces in terms of housing affordability, income security and accessibility.

Outside of work I enjoy cycling, hiking, volunteering and exploring the many fascinating nooks and crannies of Vancouver.



# Nubia Souza Budau

*(she/her/hers)*

"I'm passionate about migration, culture and identity and always find ways to learn more about these topics. I have a Bachelor's in International Relations and an Associate Certificate in Leadership and Conflict Resolution. While in university I was immersed in research projects related to international migration. Later as a volunteer at the Canadian Red Cross, I had the opportunity to facilitate workshops on refugees and support refugee claimants arriving in the Lower Mainland. I'm currently part of a mediation practice group and a member of the North Shore Immigrant Inclusion Partnership Advisory Council.

I've been living on the North Shore for the last decade and love going for walks and hikes in this beautiful place.



# Parnian Ashrafi

*(she/her/hers)*

Parnian is in her first year at UBC Sauder studying commerce. She finds importance in using her platform and privilege to learn from her community and amplify the voices of those underrepresented. As a curious learner guided by social change and urban planning, she feels a direct responsibility to identify and help reduce inequalities within her community, especially for marginalized groups. Having been a part of the West Vancouver District Youth Advisory Committee and Teen Advisory Group, Parnian has experience in representing youth voices in civic engagement, bridging the generational gap in city planning. Now in university, she is a financial analyst for the UBC Sustaingineering club, helping create sustainable impact in local and global communities.



# Sean Willows

*(he/him/his)*

Sean has been working in social services with at-risk youth for the last five years. He currently works as a Youth Worker at West Vancouver Secondary and is attending school to receive his Masters of Counselling. He is passionate about advocacy work and LGBTQ+ issues. In his free time Sean is usually exploring the outdoors on the North Shore.



# Vinitha Kaliraj

*(she/her/hers)*

New comer to the North shore. Holds master degree on VLSI Design. Recently completed certifications on First Aid, Mental health first aid, Work Safety, Food handler and Customer service. Also, currently doing a diploma on SQAT from CCTB. Have been Volunteering to community services and active foster member of BCSPCA. Interested in administrative tasks and management.

