

# Respect Works Here

## Community Champion

**Min Sidhu** is a woman of strong convictions, fearless energy and dynamic leadership. The long list of community organizations she has been a part of, led and started, are a reflection of her commitment to the community, the pride in her heritage and the passion for her work. She is a dynamic force who has been an active and engaged leader in her personal and professional life.

Originally born in London to Indian immigrants, Min grew up speaking Punjabi and valuing the traditions of her heritage, yet also very much like most English kids in her neighborhood. While her father had experienced significant racism when he came to London as a youngster, Min felt safe and welcomed in a very multicultural neighbourhood. She has experienced micro-aggressions both in Canada and England, but focuses on keeping positive and moving forward.

Min came to visit her mother's sister in Kelowna, fell in love with the beautiful Valley and decided to move here permanently. She returned to England to complete her schooling, then began her Canadian life in Vernon in 1993.

In 1996 she started her career as the constituency assistant for the Vernon MLA and has for the past 22 years worked diligently to support her MLA and to assist constituency members with a variety of tasks.

While the job is very demanding, it is work she loves, as it allows her to make an impact and to keep learning.

"Legislation is changing all the time and you have to stay on top of that," she explains. "I've grown a lot in this role and it has changed so much over the past 22 years, as you can imagine."

Min has also connected with other constituency assistants in the Okanagan region and initiated an annual professional development meeting where they share learnings and connect to support each other.

She is very proud of being a part of the political process and takes the right to vote very seriously, remembering what her father had gone through in England to attain an equal vote for everyone. She now ensures she always votes when eligible, and one time even refused to go in for emergency appendix surgery, until she had had a chance to cast her ballot. "It's really important to us," she says in sharing the story.

Min has volunteered on a number of boards and societies, including Okanagan Anti-Racism Board, Multicultural Society of Vernon, Vernon Women's Transition Board and the Community Foundation of the North Okanagan. She also founded and is Honorary Chairperson of the Vernon Punjabi Heritage Society which offers Bhangra and Punjabi lessons for children.

“ While my passion for community is extremely important, my daughters are definitely my number one. ”

~ Min Sidhu

In 2011 Min was awarded Woman of the Year, and in 2018 the BC Community Achievement Award in recognition of her efforts. She is also an active member of the North Okanagan Sikh Cultural Society.

"I don't have many hobbies apart from being involved with my community. I really don't have any extra time," she laments, but it is difficult to imagine how she even gets done all of the things she is already doing.

While her passion for community, politics and voting is huge, Min is very clear that her three daughters, Simraj (21), Jairaj (18) and Dilan (15), are her most important passion.

"My girls are my focus, they are definitely my number one" she says, her pride and love clearly evident.

