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ANNUAL REPORT



Sukhmani Haven invests in the needs of international students who are facing abuse in Canada. We aim to provide emotional, financial and housing support.

MESSAGE FROM CHAIR



Baljit Sikand
Chair of Sukhmani Haven

"I want to express my deepest gratitude to all the volunteer aunts who stood by me during my most challenging times. Your kindness, emotional support, and unwavering dedication gave me the strength to move forward. I am also incredibly thankful to the entire Sukhmani Haven team for providing me with a safe place to stay when I needed it the most. Your efforts have truly made a difference in my life, and I will always cherish the support and care I received."

Rajwinder Kaur

At Sukhmani Haven, we believe in the power of compassion and community. What began as a small effort to support a few individuals has blossomed into a movement that has touched the lives of hundreds. This journey has been made possible by the unwavering dedication of our volunteers, ambassadors, and supporters who work tirelessly to ensure that every student in need finds a safe haven, emotional support, and the resources to rebuild their lives.

Together, we are creating a brighter future, one step at a time. Let us continue to stand united, empowering those in crisis and fostering hope for a better tomorrow.

Sukhmani Haven is deeply indebted to the tireless efforts of our **ambassadors and volunteers**. Ambassadors are volunteers who are sponsored by Committee Chairs. They provide strategic advice and generally assist Sukhmani in achieving its goals. We would like to thank:

- Jaswinder S. Bhatti
- Upinder S. Dhanoa
- Prabhjeet Garewal
- Jannat Garewal
- Kulbir Gill
- Harjot Mangat
- Hardeep Mann
- Kiran Sawhney
- Gurjit Sidhu
- Sgt. Amarpreet Sohi
- Puneet Grewal
- Pankaj Gupta
- Opdash Johal
- Punreet Kaur
- Sarabjeet Kaur
- Indervir Toor
- Keren Mann
- Birdavinder S. Deol

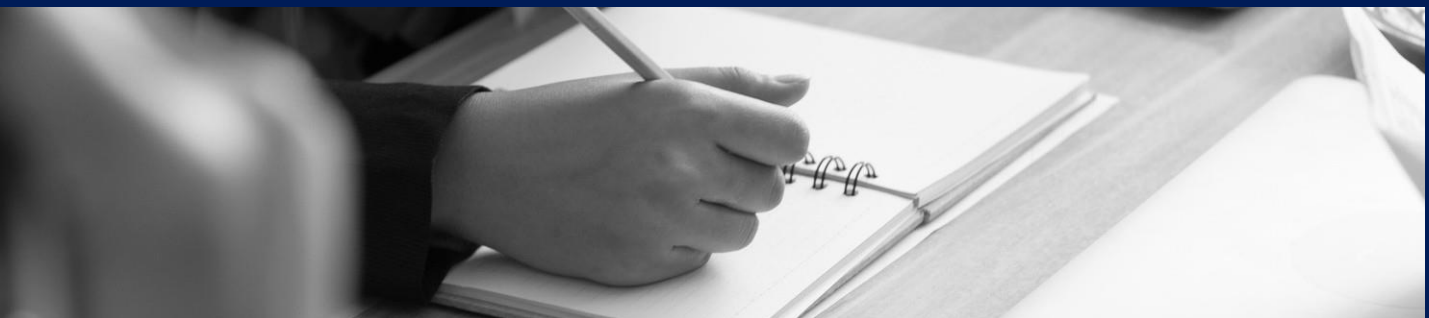


PURPOSE & VALUE

Sukhmani Haven was formed in 2022 to provide a safe space for young women to live in dignity while pursuing their respective journeys in Canada. Our short term goal was to provide accommodation and social services to international students in crisis, for 8 to 10 young women. Currently, we are catering to 11 women-with plans to house 4 more.

The themes of our work this past year include:

1. **Financial and Emotional Support:** We provided financial assistance and emotional support to students facing severe challenges, helping them regain confidence and a sense of purpose.
2. **Family Reunification:** We assisted families on the brink of homelessness by providing temporary shelter, financial support, and help in finding permanent housing, enabling them to stay together and rebuild their lives.
3. **Empowerment and Independence:** We supported individuals escaping abusive relationships by offering a safe place, counselling, and resources to rebuild their lives, leading to financial independence and advocacy for others in similar situations.
4. **Educational Support:** We extended loans for college fees and provided emotional support to students, helping them continue their education and achieve their academic goals.



"I am deeply grateful to the entire team Sukhmani Haven for their unwavering support and for providing me with housing during my difficult times. The positive environment of the house has been instrumental in my healing process, helping me feel safe and regain my confidence. Your kindness and dedication have truly made a difference in my life, and I will always cherish the care and support I received. Thank you for being a source of strength and hope."

-Sukhminder Mann



MEET THE TEAM



Deepa Mattoo

Deepa Mattoo is an award-winning lawyer and intersectional feminist. As Executive Director of the Barbra Schlifer Clinic, she leads strategic litigation, including cases before the Supreme Court of Canada, and advocates for equity through anti-oppressive and anti-racist practice. She has addressed Parliamentary committees and UN forums, and was recently named one of Canada's Top 25 Most Influential Lawyers.



Lovely Viridi

Lovely is a dedicated social worker who believes in the power of community to create lasting change. With a foundation built on compassion and connection, she strives to empower those around her through direct support and action. Her involvement in local social programs, volunteer efforts, and leadership on community boards speaks to her.



Satwinder Gosal

Sat is a seasoned commercial lawyer who has provided leadership to and advised many nonprofits. He served on the Peel Police Services Board and was a chair of a social housing project. Sat has been a strong advocate for international students and was the first lawyer to take the Sukhmani Pledge: A Pledge he continues to champion. Sat is recipient of the King Charles III Coronation medal for outstanding community development and philanthropy.



Pawanjeet Garewal

Pawanjeet is a community leader and progressive thinker. Sikhi guides her daily intention and passion for selfless service. For over 30 years Pawanjeet has supported the settlement journey of hundreds of newcomers to Canada. She tends to the daily needs of the girls staying in the Haven, and mentors and guides the girls with love and compassion.



Bhagwan Grewal

Bhagwan has experience working in various senior management roles in IT, including 25 years at a financial services firm. He has also owned and managed commercial real estate for over 10 years. Among other volunteer positions, Bhagwan Grewal plays a crucial role in IT management of Sukhmani Haven as well as making sure all students receive information at outreach events.



Dr Gurcharan Syan

Dr. Syan is a passionate cardiologist, who has shown a lifelong commitment to community services. He has been a longtime advocate for the health and wellbeing for international students moving to Canada. He has completed successful missions in India, educating communities about the services Sukhmani Haven can provide for their children.



Harlene Bajwa

Harlene is a lawyer by profession and specializes in criminal law. She is currently working as a provincial Crown Attorney. Harlene is passionate about community involvement and engagement. She has volunteered with various organizations and initiatives in the past centered on assisting others need.

ADVOCACY

“We will advocate for:

- fair employment policies,
- protection from exploitation,
- government funding for social infrastructure,
- reduction of tuition fees, and
- reform of the roles of agents.”

In February 2024, Sukhmani presented to 100 interfaith leaders. In March, we attended the City of Brampton’s International Day of Woman activities connecting with several organizations. We continued our dialogue with the Region of Peel Police, asking them to take a more empathetic stance to young students who had run afoul of minor offences. International students have language barriers or a lack of understanding of their rights as citizens, employees or tenants. Sukhmani Haven advocates on their behalf to mitigate these difficulties for students. In March 2024, we advocated for the urgent health crisis affecting international students, particularly the lack of accessible services and supports. During this time, we supported three students in returning to their families, which required extensive advocacy with health agencies and coordination with medical professionals.



In one case, our efforts involved working with a Justice of the Peace and securing necessary documentation. In another, one of our volunteer directors personally accompanied a student to India due to the severity of the crisis. These individual cases highlight the depth and complexity of advocacy required to respond to such emergencies.

CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

Sukhmani has continued its active communication strategy to broadcast its services. Directors have continued to undertake TV and radio interviews, having featured on Red FM, the CBC and the Toronto Star. We still think it vitally important to continue the conversation that it is simply unacceptable for members of our community to exploit students: whether by underpayment for services, charging excessive rent or propositioning them with sexual advances. The market for Labour Market Impact Assessments (LMIA) is still rampant with reports of \$25,000 to \$50,000 being assessed for a single assessment.

In meeting students Sukhmani Haven has continued its active communication strategy to amplify awareness of its services and advocacy efforts. We remain committed to publicly challenging the exploitation of international students.

Throughout the year, Sukhmani directors and volunteers have attended various community events, organized outings for students, and conducted outreach with partner agencies to strengthen support networks and build community connections. We also submitted a formal letter to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) outlining the adverse impacts of changes to the Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) program and the restrictions imposed on immigration pathways, which have created significant barriers for students seeking stability and long-term settlement.



To counter negative narratives, Sukhmani launched media campaigns celebrating the positive contributions of international students. Our directors and ambassadors conducted interviews with students who have successfully gained residency, including one student who launched a thriving lawn maintenance business.



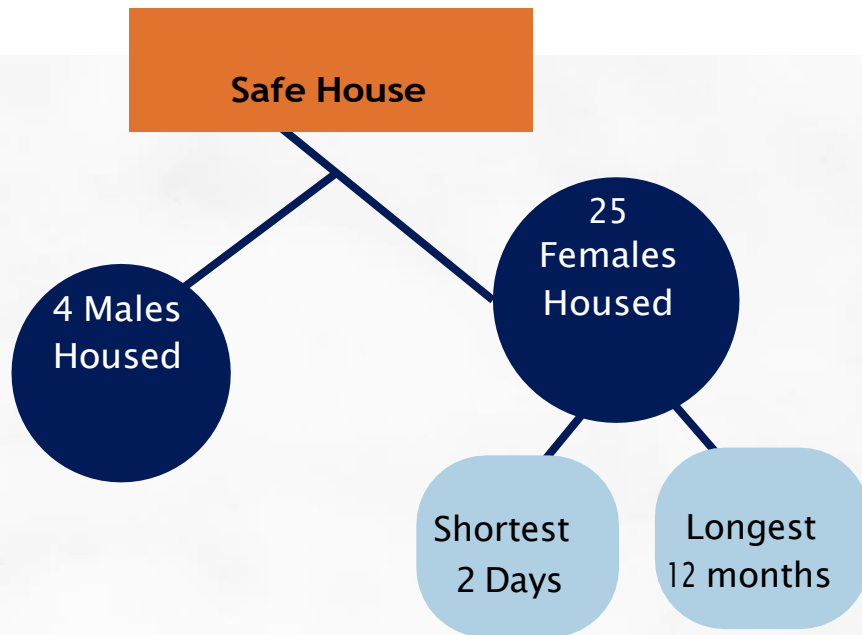


cg 2024 SUMMARY

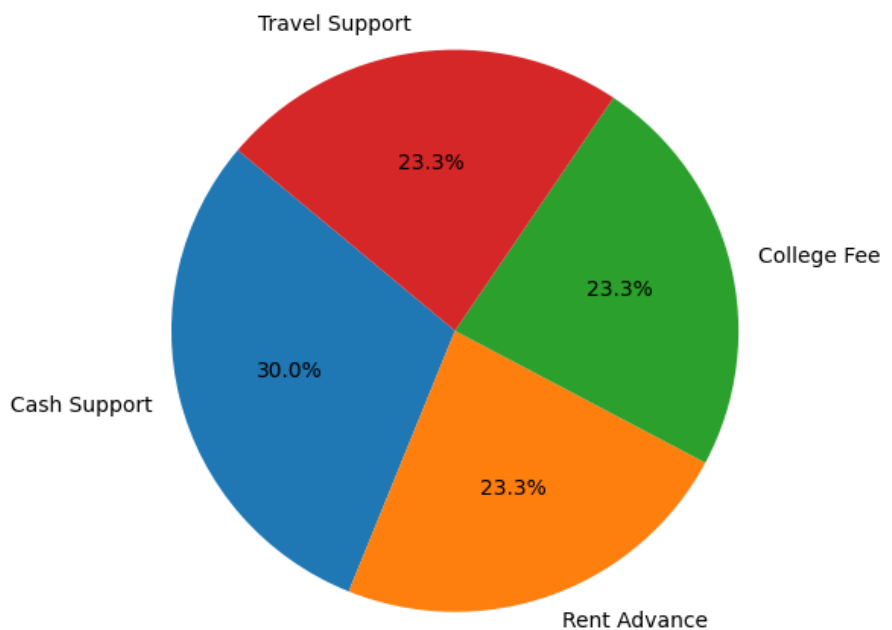
94 Hr Pro-bono
Legal Services

Over 300
Hotline Calls

Over 40
Jobs Referrals



Programming-Associated Costs Breakdown (\$12,000)



OUR PROJECTS



Sukhmani Pledge

Sukhmani has encouraged lawyers to take the Sukhmani Pledge—offering pro bono legal services especially in immigration, landlord/tenant, labour and employment cases. The array of services has expanded with a recent recruit offering family law advice.

Acknowledgement

In 2024-25, 15 Lawyers and Paralegals took the Sukhmani Haven Pledge; we would like to thank:

Daman Aujla
Harlene Bajwa
Bikram Bal
Shawn Dandiwal
Birdavinder Deol
Harminder Dhillon
Bicky Dhugga
Sat Gosal
Aman Nagpal

Sarah Khan
Deepa Mattoo
Sandev Purewal
Naaila Sangrar
Sonia Sidhu
Purva Singh
Jim Smith
Garav Gill

PRO BONO LEGAL SERVICES

Members of our legal team were particularly active over the last year pursuing unscrupulous landlords. In one instance a lawyer and articling student immediately went to the aid of a student who had been threatened with physical violence and was asked to vacate the premises illegally. Our team was successful in extricating the student from this dangerous situation. A statement of claim has been issued against the landlord wherein punitive damages are being sought. Our team will pursue the matter to trial if necessary- such is their commitment and conviction.



OUR PROJECTS



In 2024, we allocated \$3,600.00 to provide financial support to students. Students will be given a loan, repayable when they are able to get back on their feet.

Loans will be given for the following:

1. College Fees;
2. Food and Rent; and
3. Travel Support

Our Goal for 2025: \$15,000.00

We need your help: Please sponsor a Student Loan in your name in 2024–2025.

Terms: There would be no re-payment for the first two years and thereafter a re-payment schedule would be negotiated based on the needs of the student. The loans will provide important debt deferral and shall foster self-reliance.



OUR PROJECTS

Future Projects

The political landscape is changing quickly. It appears that many students will be forced to work under the table due to the restriction on hours that can be worked off-site (24 hours as opposed to 40 hours). Chances for exploitation will increase. The need for organizations such as ours will be



ever more compelling. Sukhmani will apply for funding to increase its services– whether to rent another house or to assist with finding jobs.

Mentoring

Mentors have always been valued sources for acclimating in a new environment. Sukhmani has been inundated with resumes and applications for jobs. **We are a non-profit organization with absolutely no staffing costs.** That being said we are deeply gratified that volunteers have stepped in when required. In this same vein we will be leaning on more volunteers to institute a mentoring program. The mission of the program will be to empower youth by fostering meaningful connections between experienced professionals and businesspeople and aspiring students– providing guidance, support and opportunities for personal and professional growth.





HOTLINE AND WEBSITE

Immediately upon incorporation, Sukhmani Haven launched a dedicated website and established a 24/7 hotline—(289) 652-2488—monitored by committed directors and volunteers. Recognizing the urgency and sensitivity of the needs we address, we swiftly enacted and implemented robust confidentiality policies to protect those reaching out for support.

While many of our referrals come through word of mouth and trusted organizational partners, our website and outreach efforts have become essential tools in ensuring families and communities in need can find and connect with us. These digital and community-facing channels extend our reach, making it easier for those in crisis to access safety, resources, and compassionate care when they need it most.

CLIENT TESTIMONIALS

Many clients and their families we work with send us heartfelt videos and messages as their testimonials. These stories reflect the impact of our work and the compassion of our volunteers.

Manjot Kaur

"After arriving in Canada, I was placed in the wrong academic program by my agent. The stress and isolation affected my health, and I was abandoned by my cousins. Eventually, I was dropped at a gurdwara, where kind individuals learned about my situation and connected me with Sukhmani Haven. The team provided emotional support, food, and a safe place to stay. They helped me recover and arranged my return to India, with a team member accompanying me. I thank them from the bottom of my heart."

Ravi Kumar

"Due to serious health issues, I couldn't continue my education and had no support. Volunteers from Sukhmani Haven helped me access medical care and arranged my journey back home, even covering my travel costs. Their kindness gave me hope and a path forward. I'm deeply grateful for everything they've done for me."

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

2024-2025



SUKHMANI HAVEN

Statement of Cash Flows

Year Ended February 28, 2025

	2025	2024
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses	\$ 15,529	\$ (23,329)
Changes in non-cash working capital:		
Accounts payable	2,810	1,558
Prepaid expenses	(18)	2,007
	2,792	3,565
INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH FLOW	18,321	(19,764)
Cash - beginning of year	142,393	162,157
CASH - END OF YEAR	\$ 160,714	\$ 142,393

2022 INAUGURAL GALA

The Sukhmani Haven of Hope Gala exceeded expectations in every way. Initially we aspired to attract 400 people on a weekday in an effort to raise \$100,000.00. Instead 550 people attended and thanks to the largesse of corporate sponsors we raised over \$180,000.00. We were regaled by dances from a Seniors Group, by an inspiring keynote speech from Ramneet Brar, a student who has excelled, and a rousing fusion musical performance by Folks and Guy. Perhaps the highlight was an auction of wonderful art, ably led by evening Emcee Jannat Garewal.



2024–2025 Building Community, Sustaining Hope: A Year of Connection and Impact

In 2024–2025, Sukhmani Haven's Board of Directors, alongside our passionate ambassadors and engaged community members, came together to host a dynamic series of events that celebrated connection, compassion, and collective action. These gatherings were not only joyful and meaningful—they were instrumental in raising the vital funds needed to sustain our mission of healing and empowerment.

Highlights from the Year:



• **Annual Fall Dinner:** Our signature event brought together supporters, partners, and friends for an evening of reflection, celebration, and generosity. The dinner featured inspiring stories from those impacted by our work, alongside a curated program that honored our shared commitment to survivor-led change.

- **Holiday Season Gatherings:** Throughout December, we hosted festive events that embraced the spirit of giving and community. These intimate celebrations offered moments of warmth and gratitude, while also supporting our year-end fundraising goals.
- **Community Meetups:** From informal coffee chats to structured dialogues, our community meetups created space for connection, learning, and collaboration. These events helped deepen relationships with local partners and fostered a sense of belonging among those we serve.

Each event was designed to align with our message and to generate the resources necessary to continue our work. Together, we built momentum for a future where every one has access to safety, dignity, and justice.



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