



BHAVANA VARMA

Bhavana Varma, CM, OOnt

Strategic Advisor, Consultant, and Leadership Coach to Nonprofits

Kingston, Ontario, Canada

(613) 929-4828

bhavana@bhavanavarma.ca

<https://bhavanavarma.ca>

Summary

Bhavana Varma, CM, OOnt is an experienced nonprofit leader and consultant with expertise in strategic planning, governance, fundraising, and community systems transformation, with a strong grounding in equity, inclusion, and anti-oppression practices. Her skills include Nonprofit Leadership, Community Development, Collective Impact, Strategic Planning, Marketing, Coaching, Fundraising, Governance, Volunteer Management.

With demonstrated leadership in community building and resource development, Bhavana has raised record amounts annually and implementing creative strategies to respond to evolving philanthropic trends. Has led numerous collective impact and community collaboration initiatives, mobilizing multi-sector partners for projects such as the Anti Racism initiative, Youth Homelessness Plan, Youth Peer Support Program, Community Food Redistribution Warehouse, Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan, Poverty Reduction, Success by Six, and Kingston's Homelessness Collective Impact Committee.

Collaborating closely with volunteers and staff as President & CEO of the United Way in Kingston, Bhavana led significant revenue growth over the years, investing in critical local human service programs and initiatives. With a focus on transparency and accountability, this United Way was rated among the Top 100 Charities in Canada by Charity Intelligence Canada and #2 among United Ways across Canada.

In her current consulting and coaching practice, Bhavana provides strategic planning, governance development, and fundraising counsel to charities and nonprofits. She facilitates governance workshops and organizational reviews that help align mission, resources, and impact, strengthening leadership, accountability, and long-term effectiveness.

Work Experience

Strategic Advisor to non-profits, Leadership & Executive Coach

2023 – present

United Way Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington

President & CEO 1999 - 2023

United Way of St. Catharines & District

Director Finance & Admin, Director Development

1991 - 1999

Honours & Awards

Member of the Order of Canada

Appointment by Governor General Canada – 2026

The Order of Canada is the highest civilian award in Canada, recognizing people who make extraordinary contributions to the country.

King Charles III's Coronation Medal

Issued by Chancellery of Honours, Rideau Hall

This medal is awarded to those who have made a significant contribution to Canada or to a particular province, territory, region or community of Canada.

Nick Bala Award

Issued by Youth Diversion, Kingston

This award is awarded to community leaders who have made a difference in the lives of youth.

Order of Ontario

Appointment by Lieutenant Governor, Province of Ontario, 2023

The Order of Ontario is awarded to Ontarians who have demonstrated the highest levels of merit, excellence and dedication in their respective disciplines, and have made significant impacts at home and around the world

Honorary Colonel, 77 Line Regiment, CFB Kingston

Appointment by Minister of National Defence, Canada, Canadian Armed Forces 2022

An Honorary Colonel serves as an advocate for the regiment as well as the CAF, fosters esprit de corps, strengthening the military's bond with the community.

Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee award

Issued by Mark Gerretsen, MP Kingston and the Islands · Jul 2022

This award is presented to upstanding citizens nominated for their community contributions

George Hart Award

Issued by United Way Centraide Canada · Jun 2022

Awarded by United Way Centraide Canada to an employee of extraordinary distinction whose commitment, vision, expertise, and leadership have made a unique impact on their United Way & community.

Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce Legacy Award

Issued by Chamber of Commerce and Kingston Economic Development · Nov 2019

This is awarded to leaders who have made a significant contribution to the community.

Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal

Issued by Governor General of Canada, MP Kingston and the Islands · Sep 2012

This commemorative medal served to honour significant contributions and achievements by Canadians, and was issued in honour of her Majesty's service to the country.

Jim Bennett Achievement Award

Issued by Queen's University Alumni Association - Kingston Branch · Jun 2012

This is presented biennially to honour Kingstonians for outstanding achievements in careers, sport, the arts, or volunteer endeavours, contributing to the betterment of Queen's or Kingston.

Kingston Labour Council Community Award

Issued by Kingston & District Labour Council · Nov 2009

Issued for action or contribution, perseverance to issues, education or awareness to others, and the outcome of contribution to the community or a workplace

Volunteer Experience & Community Involvement

Member Board of Directors (currently Chair of the Board), Providence Village 2023 - current

Co-Chair, Diversity Council, United Way Centraide Canada 2023 - current

Co-chair, Kingston Anti-Racism Task Force 2022-current

Founder and Co-chair, KFL&A Homelessness Collective Impact Committee 2022 – current

Co-chair, Kingston Safety & Well Being Planning Committee 2019 – 2023

Chair, Youth Homelessness Steering Committee KFL&A 2016 – 2023

Board of Directors, Kingston Frontenac Public Library 2021 - 2022

Facilitator/Chair, Community Food Redistribution Warehouse, Kingston 2020-2022

Chair, Social Services Recovery Taskforce, KFL&A 2019-2022

Member, Mayor's Kingston Economic Recovery Taskforce, Kingston 2019-2022

Board of Directors, Kingston Symphony Association 2017 - 2021

Co-Chair, Poverty Reduction Initiative, Kingston 2011 - 2013

Presidents Advisory Council; National Corporate Partnership Taskforce
United Way of Canada 2009 - 2019

Founding Co-Chair, Board of Directors, Southeastern Ontario Association of Fundraising Professionals
2003 – 2004

Member Early Years Challenge Fund Committee, Ontario Early Years 2001 - 2003

Grant Review Volunteer Niagara, Ontario Trillium Foundation 1998 - 1999

Board of Directors, Kiwanis Club of St. Catharines 1997-1999

Mentor, Big Brothers Big Sisters Niagara 1997 - 1999

Volunteer Crisis Counsellor, Distress Centre Niagara 1995 - 1999

Certification

Certified Leadership Coach
Excelerator Essentials, Essential Impact

Education

United Way Worldwide

Executive Leadership Development. Program

One year Leadership Development for United Way CEOs from across the world.

Courses include sessions at Centre for Creative Leadership, Greensboro, Harvard Business School, Deloitte University, Dallas

Harvard Business School

Executive Education

Strategic Perspectives of Non-profit Management

Brock University

Human Services Leadership Certificate

University of Delhi

Bachelor of Arts