

Honouring the Voices Behind CSPA's Mission

At the Canadian Skin Patient Alliance (CSPA), volunteers are the foundation of everything we do. Their passion, lived experience, and dedication fuel our mission to build a more inclusive, accessible, and supportive future for people living with skin, hair, and nail conditions. This National Volunteer Week, we are proud to honour the outstanding individuals who help bring our vision to life.

Volunteering with CSPA is more than lending time—it is about creating real, lasting change. Our volunteers offer diverse perspectives, professional expertise, and heartfelt commitment. Whether by developing patient education resources, shaping advocacy initiatives, leading organizational strategy, or sharing personal experiences to raise awareness, every contribution helps empower patients across Canada.

Among these incredible volunteers is Simal Qureshi, whose own journey with severe atopic dermatitis and challenges accessing culturally sensitive care inspired her to take action. Simal's work developing inclusive educational resources ensures that all patients—especially those from underserved communities—feel seen, heard, and supported in their healthcare experiences.

Zahra Rehan combines her background in clinical epidemiology with her personal connection to the patient community to drive forward critical initiatives. Through organizing *Breaking Barriers* and leading patient input projects for drug coverage approvals, Zahra has bridged the gap between research and patient advocacy, ensuring that lived experiences inform systemic change.

Leadership at CSPA is also shaped by lived experience. Mimma Spagnolo, our Chairperson, draws strength from her journey with Gorlin Syndrome to advocate for equitable care and amplify patient voices. Her strategic leadership and unwavering compassion have helped CSPA grow into a stronger, more influential organization.

Behind the scenes, Christian Liu plays a crucial role in CSPA's sustainability and success. As Treasurer and Board Member, Christian's expertise in finance and health economics helps ensure that the organization remains financially sound and poised for future growth—demonstrating that volunteering takes many forms, all essential.

Valerie Doyon, a dermatology resident and talented writer, connects with patients through education. By translating complex medical topics into relatable, accessible content, Valerie addresses practical concerns that traditional resources often overlook, helping patients feel informed and empowered in managing their conditions.

Finally, Rikki Baker brings courageous advocacy to the forefront. By sharing her experiences as an Indigenous woman living with rosacea, Rikki highlights the systemic barriers faced by racialized patients. Her involvement in national conversations through *Breaking Barriers* and the Indigenous Skin Spectrum Global Summit ensures that all voices are represented in the future of dermatologic care.

At CSPA, volunteering is not a side project—it is central to who we are. Volunteers help us identify gaps, challenge inequities, and offer support where it is needed most. Their work not only strengthens our organization but also transforms the broader healthcare landscape, creating ripples of change that benefit patients from coast to coast.

This National Volunteer Week, we extend our deepest gratitude to each and every volunteer who has shared their time, skills, and hearts with us. Your leadership, compassion, and commitment inspire us every day. Together, we are building a future where every patient feels supported, respected, and empowered in their skin.

Thank you for being the heart of the CSPA community!