



SIWEC INSIGHT

Sikh Welfare Council, Singapore

July - September 2014

Welcome to yet another issue of our SIWEC newsletter!



ELDERCARE PROGRAM: SUNHERI SAHLEIN CLUB

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Outreach to the Community



"Sojhi Seva Day" was celebrated on 31st August 2014 with a difference where children put into practice the message of "Vand Ke Shakna" and other Sikhi values which they have been absorbing throughout the year in the Sojhi classes. Children, parents and Sojhi teachers participated enthusiastically in Joreyan di seva, langar di seva, bhadeyan di seva in addition to raising \$1921 for the beneficiaries of SIWEC. The idea was for the children to see their parents and teachers as role models - just as they did seva, their elders too are doing seva, in a different form. Seva from the heart is invaluable. No age bars, no age limits!

The Proceeds were used by SIWEC to provide new furniture and equipment for the Welfare Clients.



***Sojhi classes are Sikhi classes run for kids and teens at Sikh Centre, Silat Road Gurdwara.**

The primary goal of our newsletter is to **Engage and Share with You** SIWEC's recent & forthcoming events. We also look forward to hearing from you on how you may want to volunteer and get involved in our activities. Besides the Food on the Table program, other SIWEC activities include Prison Visits, Counselling, Bereavement and Financial Assistance. SIWEC was awarded IPC status by the Commissioner of Charities on 5th November 2009. In keeping with our IPC status, about 10% of our needy clients are non-Sikhs.

WHAT WE DO: The Sikh Welfare Council (SIWEC) is a charitable organisation with an IPC status ("Institutions of Public Character"), which formulates overall policies in respect of welfare services in Singapore. A comprehensive detail of SIWEC's functions and activities can be found on our website at www.siwec.org.

SIWEC'S MISSION: "To improve the welfare and well-being of the community". In this context, programs and scope of support, and assistance have been expanded in the past few years. **BUT MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE!**

WELFARE DAY AT KATONG GURDWARA

SIWEC held a Welfare Day at Sri Guru Nanak Sat Sang Sabha on the 29th of June. We conducted health screening for 81 individuals. The health screening covered checks on blood pressure and blood sugar levels. Based on test results, some individuals were advised to seek medical advice. Siwec also took this opportunity to update the Sangat on Siwec's role and programs and reiterated the need for support from the community to handle the prevalent social issues that face our community. A total of three talks were also conducted, these talks encompassed: orthopaedics, the importance of Making a Lasting Power Of Attorney (L.P.A) and will making.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2014

SIWEC's Annual General Meeting was held on the 12th of July 2014, at the Central Sikh Temple. During the meeting, the members were briefed on Siwec's 2013 annual report. The members were also updated on the challenges facing SIWEC, new programmes and outreach to the society. The members noted that the awareness of SIWEC activities has gradually increased. The Annual Report and Financial statements were approved.



INSPIRE



Hi.... My name is Aman Sokhal (12 years of age)

I am a young kid like everyone else out there, and I was really fascinated by patkas because they looked so cool and I always thought that I will have a patka too, but didn't know when that will happen. So 5-6 years later, I decided to grow my hair for a patka. When I was 11, I visited to India and that influenced me a lot to grow my hair.

My hair is long now and I am wearing a patka. My first day of wearing a patka was yesterday (September 11th 2014). I was really nervous like crazy, I thought people would say is that "a tennis ball on your head" or "you look weird", but it wasn't like that.

I knew if I discipline myself to do what I know I should do I will be fine, so I did the mool mantra 5 times, and off I went to school confidently like a proud Khalsa Singh. I just did waheguru simran for the whole day in the back of my head, and I knew everything would be okay, because I had sense that Guru is right in my heart.

So kids please don't be scared or nervous because everything is going to be just fine. I didn't get bullied so you guys will not too. If you're having trouble going to school, do the mool mantar 5 times and think that the Guru is right in your heart and that will heal your fear!

I walked into the school wearing my patka nervous and proud the same time, but also knew as I am a very popular person with a amazing personality, (I mean the school says that believe me). So once we sat in the class I asked my teacher if I could go in all the grade 7 and 8 classes to explain why and how I look today that I am the same person but taking a different path following my religion Sikhism.

My teacher and best friend came along side of me and went to each class which made me more confident as I walked into the classrooms. My teacher and best friend was very supportive of me and they also explained to the class. All of the kids in the classroom clapped when I finished my presentation and everyone in the school said how they are very proud of me, it was amazing experience.

I am telling you I was SO nervous, but I knew I had strength that the Guru is right with me. Think ahead for a moment and how you feel after accomplishing your mission in being yourself. Accept this responsibility for your life, know that it is you who will get you where you want to go. No one else. Just go out there being strong in yourself, brave like a lion (sher).

I am very thankful to God as he has shown me this path to take.

**Ik oonkar sat Naam kartaa purakh
Nirbau nirvair akaal moorat
Ajoonee saibang gur prasad jap
Aad sach jugaad sach
Hai bhee sach nanak hosee bhee sach
Waheguru ji ka Khalsa waheguru ji ke fateh**

By Aman

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

At the Council Review Meeting held in Feb 2014, attended by the Heads of many Sikh Institutions, SIWEC was requested to lead the initiative in attending to this long outstanding problem of the declining performance of Sikh students, as evidenced by the results in the national exams in Singapore. SIWEC has established a small Task Force to review the issue and initiate required actions. It is headed by Amritpal Singh Randhawa, with a representative/s from the SSEF (Jasbir Singh/ Bhupinder Singh), Sikh Centre (Harminder Kaur). The Sub committee's has had 5 meetings till date and have profiled students from the three Punjabi Schools. Siwec's Membership committee has agreed to hire a community engagement officer who will spearhead this initiative.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY STUDENTS

SIWEC has agreed to fund needy students who are currently studying in Punjabi Schools (under the jurisdiction of the Singapore Sikh Education Foundation). The first instalment of funding will be for 108 students for the year 2014 and will amount to \$43,200. We will be continuing this assistance for year 2015 also, this money will be channelled to the payment of school books, uniforms and school fees.

HOME TUITION FOR NEEDY CHILDREN

A new program has been started to assist needy to improve their academic performance. The Sikh Sewaks and a group of students from the Singapore management University(SMU) are providing volunteer service to provide home tuition for such students. 15 students have been enrolled for this endeavor.

YUVA MENTORING PROGRAMME

To be a youth mentor, you don't need special skills - just an ability to listen and to offer friendship, guidance and encouragement to a young person...and you'll be amazed by how much you'll get out of the experience.

One of the greatest ways to affect a child's life positively is by becoming a mentor. Studies show that mentoring someone can benefit both the mentee and the mentor. Mentoring is a shared opportunity for learning and growth.

If you have a sincere desire to help children, are an active listener and an empathetic person, who looks for solutions and opportunities in life, you have all the qualities a good mentor has. It will not take up much time as well. All it will take is a telephone communication with your mentee once a week and a face-to-face meeting once a month.

You can take steps to create a bond and positively influence a teen or a child by checking SIWEC's website for information on becoming a mentor.

HOSPITAL/HOMES VISITS

One of the services provided by SIWEC is to visit patients in the hospitals/homes. The purpose of the visit is to provide comfort and care, and assistance, if required.

SIWEC makes about 20 monthly visits to various hospitals in Singapore. Each visit lasts between 30 to 40 minutes. Currently, we have about 15 active healthcare ambassadors; they are registered nurses providing this service on behalf of SIWEC. We hope the Sikh Community would continue to inform SIWEC if any loved one has been hospitalised and requires a visit, or prayers to be done at the hospital for the patient.





Ride For Charity 2014

After 6 months of training, 60 riders are now in the final phase of their preparations for the bicycle ride from Malacca to Singapore.... all in aid of the **Sikh Welfare Council**. It is a rather colourful sight to see them all in their gear and roadies, assembling at Car Park B1 at East Coast Park at 7.00am every Saturday morning. Covering about 100km in the blazing heat and occasional downpour, helping one another out with energy bars, bananas, electrolytic drinks, a push up the hills in Mandai and Sembawang, and the occasional tyre puncture..... one can see the camaraderie that has developed in the group.

To ensure no one remains a stranger in the event, a recent bonding session over dinner for the riders and support crew saw them engaged in a real fun "speed dating game". The final training session on 8th November saw the group spilt into teams for an Amazing Race.....before they all converged to Toh Drive for a very special breakfast hosted in honour of all 90 riders, support crew and well-wishers registered for the event.

The event is expected to raise over \$100,000 for Sikh Welfare Council to expand on its programmes and reach out to a wider range of beneficiaries.

Come show your support for the event by flagging them off at the Central Sikh Temple on 28th November. There will be kirtan and prayers from 9.00am to 10.00am before we wave off the 2 coaches and 10 cars. And join us in receiving them back on Sunday, 30th Nov. at Central Sikh Temple at about 7.00pm. Thanks giving prayers are scheduled from 6.30 pm to 8.00 pm.

This is a community project.....by the community; for the community. Come, please lend your support.....be it by donations and/or your presence.



From July to September 2014:

SIWEC and its volunteers have conducted about **100 counselling sessions** for Sikh inmates in the Prisons.

- We assisted **18** families in bereavements
- **19** individuals have been assisted either through counselling or by referrals to other governmental Agencies
- **21** Families were assisted with food rations/financial assistance
- **61** individuals in homes/hospitals have been visited by our Health Care Ambassadors
- **15** students were provided with tuition



How You Can Help....

DONATE NOW
easy, fast, secure



The Sikh Welfare Council is a Volunteer Welfare Organization (VWO) that depends on the community for volunteers as well as the funds necessary to carry out its various assistance programmes. We are presently assisting more than 20 deserving families on a regular basis so that they can tide over difficult times; we also do a host of other programs. Obviously, this requires a great deal of resources on the part of SIWEC. We would therefore like to appeal to the community at large to help us support the less fortunate. You can do this in various ways, including:

- Giving a one-off donation (e.g. on-line via PayPal, cheques, bank drafts, Give asia etc).
- Making a GIRO application to provide a monthly (recurring) donation. Please contact us for the GIRO Form.
- Making a Bequest (Will).
- Giving a Memorial Donation - a thoughtful way to remember a loved one while giving support to others.
- Volunteering your time and participating in other activities, such as ferrying elderly/ disabled Sikhs to and from Gurdwaras.

To donate online please visit us at

<http://www.siwec.org/donate/support-our-work/how-you-can-donate>.

ELDERCARE PROGRAM: SUNHERI SAHLEIN CLUB

SIWEC has embarked on a new project aimed at providing senior ladies with a medium to meet and embark on mini-workshops, which empower them with skills that may help them cope with their ailing health. These mini-workshops are divided between other leisurely activities and outings. Examples of activities are, health talks, flower arrangement classes, an outing to the Changi War Museum, cooking classes, talks on the new pioneer generation scheme and many much more activities. A total of 30 elderly ladies are currently involved in such activities that are held at the Central Sikh Temple every Tuesday. The name of the group is; 'Sunheri Sahlein Club'. There is a dedicated team of 10 volunteers who spend their precious time assisting with these activities. Elderly ladies are welcome to join this group, please call SIWEC office for more details.





What is Sewa?

SEWA is such an inexpressible virtue which can't be stated in words. So, instead of trying to define what Sewa is, let us see some cases which are the real motive behind sewa. Such 'sewa' turns out to be a fruitless deed, far from True Sewa.

- * It isn't sewa if it is for the purpose of getting a tax-deductible receipt.
- * It isn't sewa if your heart and soul aren't in it.
- * It isn't sewa if it isn't done with honesty and integrity.
- * It isn't sewa if it's for building your resume.
- * It isn't sewa if it is meant to be a stepping stone to bigger and better things.
- * It isn't sewa if you need to tell others, now or later, that you did it.
- * It isn't sewa if lack of appreciation by others, or their criticism, drives you away.
- * It isn't sewa if you believe that it is your right to do it.
- * It isn't sewa if you have to fight against others to do it.
- * It isn't sewa if you snatch it away from another, to do it.
- * It isn't sewa if you begin to believe you're the best one to do it.
- * And, it isn't sewa if it distresses you that others take credit for what you've done.

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਗਾਖੜੀ ਸਿਰੁ ਦੀਜੈ ਆਪੁ ਗਵਾਇ ॥
It's not easy to serve the True Guru. You have to be humble & selfless.
- Guru Amardas Ji (ang 649)

IF YOU ARE BETWEEN
16 AND 25 YEARS
OF AGE,
JOIN US!!!

CALL 6299 9234

WE NEED YOU!
BE A YOUTH MENTOR!!!



SIWEC BECOMES FULL-FLEDGED MEMBER OF NCSS

After an extensive review process Siwec was accapeted as a full member of the National Council of Social Services (NCSS), effective 15th July 2014. SIWEC will now have access to the numerous support services provided by NCSS and participate in its events, programs and training courses.