



SIWEC Insight

Quarter 1, 2015

In this issue

- 2 Adoption of good governance practice
- 3 News: Ride for Charity 2014
- 4 Community Outreach
- 5 Inspire: Malacca-Singapore Cycling to raise funds for SIWEC
- 6 Our programs
- 8 Collections: RFC 2014; 3 Days of determination through the lens of a teen aged 13!
- 9 Inspire: Volunteering from the heart
- 10 Events : A new milestone



Celebrating Singapore's 50 years

The Sikh Welfare Council (SIWEC) would like to wish all the Sikhs in Singapore and our other readers a great year. We look forward to updating you about our programs and other initiatives. Do keep a look out on the new happening for this year.

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!

Connect with us

Visit us at www.siwec.org

Email us at info@siwec.org

Reach us on our hotline **6299 9234**
Drop by: 2 Towner Road, #06-02, Singapore 327804.



<https://www.facebook.com/SikhWelfareCouncil>

Patron

Kartar Singh Thakral

Trustees

Mohinder Singh Thakral
 Naranjan Singh Brahmputra
 Daljit Singh Gaggarbhana
 Manmohan Singh Thakral
 Gurcharan Singh Narula
 Mahn Singh Bajaj
 Jagjit Singh Sekhon

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Chair

Amarjit Singh Wasan

Vice Chair

Inderpal Singh

Vice Chair

Gurmit Kaur Sroya

Secretary

Dinesh Singh

Asst Secretary

Sharanjit Kaur

Treasurer

Harmit Singh

Asst Treasurer

Amritpal Singh**Committee Members**

Manmohan Singh
 Jasmindar Singh
 Malminderjit Singh
 Ranvir Singh

Co-Opted Members

Jagjit Singh Sekhon (advisor)
 Sarjit Kaur Gill

Secretariat Team

Ranjit Singh Wahla
 Sanjiv Singh
 Ranjit Singh Vahan
 Karam M Kaur
 Gayethri Vankobar
 Kartar Kaur
 Harbhajan Singh
 Jasminder Kaur

ADOPTION OF GOOD GOVERNANCE PRACTICES

In the last two years SIWEC has made substantial progress in reviewing work processes and in adopting good governance practices. Through an interactive process, work plans are adopted at the beginning of the year, translated into individual staff plans. A monthly monitoring system has also been established to review progress on the work plans and to make adjustments along the way, as necessary. The work plans clearly identify activities to be accomplished under each major objective/ goal and the timelines for completion. The achievements of the work plans form the basis for the presentations at the monthly Membership Committee (MC) meetings and the annual performance appraisal of staff for which a formal system has also been established. The results of the appraisal determine the salary increases for staff, which also takes into account similar increases in related market segments. An organized process to determine the timing and agenda for each MC meeting, the presentations to be made, writing and finalization of the minutes of discussion, and follow-up actions to be taken after the meeting has also been adopted.

Work processes in a number of other work areas have also been developed to ensure accountability, transparency and efficacy. These include a systematic way of determining the level of support to be provided to needy clients and in referring such clients to other government agencies for assistance. SIWEC works closely with numerous government agencies to serve the community more effectively and to optimize the use of its own funds.

SIWEC helps 20 families go digital

SIWEC has worked in collaboration the Media Developmental Authority. 20 families will be benefiting from this move as they transition from analogue to Digital TV (DTV). The

DTV assistance scheme is aimed at helping less fortunate Singaporeans. With DTV, residents will be able to enjoy their favourite MediaCorp TV programs with better quality pictures and sound, multi-language subtitles and electronic program guides.

NEWS

Ride for Charity 2014 raises \$210,000 for SIWEC

SIWEC gears up to fulfilling its mission



Ardas before flag off.

As the sun set on 30th November, over 50 riders pedaled from Woodlands to the Central Sikh Temple, to be greeted by a thunderous beat of the dhol, cheers and jaikaaras. Following closely behind them were the support crew in their vehicles that provided guidance, direction and sustenance to the riders along the route. Having started their journey 270km away in Malacca the day before, it was certainly an achievement for everyone to have completed the journey. The arrival was immediately followed with an Ardas to thank God for a safe return.

The management committee of SIWEC is most appreciative to all involved in this noble cycling event who adopted SIWEC

as their beneficiary for the funds raised. Special thanks goes to the Organising Committee, the riders, support crew and well wishers on the trip, all pledge card holders and above all, each and every single person that donated to SIWEC.

SIWEC is humbled to receive over \$210,000 that has been raised. SIWEC remains absolutely committed to using these funds judiciously for the welfare of the community. Besides expanding its existing programs, SIWEC is initiating several new projects. The focus is on education, a leveler to uplift those unfortunate and need assistance.

SIWEC has also come up with the **Academic Excellence Program (AEP)** to help our children in their school performance. The program will involve identifying children who are underperforming, prioritizing their needs and providing relevant resources to help them reach their full potential.

Concurrently, we have launched a **Financial Assistance Program** for our children in the Punjabi centres. This includes assistance for school fees, books and uniforms. Other initiatives include appointing a

Health Care Ambassador to attend to our senior citizens. Up to date, a total of 194 elderly have been paid visits. A **Prison Counsellor** to reintegrate those returning to society and a **Communications and Publicity Officer** have also been appointed to reach out better to the community.

We look forward to working together with the Organising Committee and the community for our financial needs as we implement programs for those in need.



Focused cyclists.



Cyclists in action.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Gurburab at Central Sikh Temple



SIWEC held a Health Screening exercise in conjunction with Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Gurburab at the Central Sikh Temple on the 5th of November. 80 individuals took part in the exercise, which covered checks on blood pressure and blood sugar levels. Based on test results, some individuals were advised to seek medical advice. We also promoted our ride for charity event and gave out brochures and pamphlets regarding SIWEC and our programs.

YUVA Mentoring Program



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.

Our target is to 30 more mentees on board by 2015

If you are between 16 and 25 years of age, join us!!! Call 6299 9234

We Need You! Be a Youth Mentor!!!

Birthday Visits

SIWEC, in collaboration with Sri Guru Nanak Sat Sang Sabha, visits the families/clients on the special occasion of their birthdays. Presents and a cake are gifted to the individual and if the client is a Sikh, a short Ardas is also done. SIWEC is very grateful to the committee and sangat of the gurdwara for working with us in this endeavor. It is through these partnerships that people from the community actually take ownership in assisting the less fortunate.



INSPIRE

Malacca-Singapore cycling to raise funds for SIWEC

by

Kirat Kaur (originally published in [Asia Samachar](#))

If you were driving through the gulleys off Malaysia's North-South Highway and happened to catch a stream of white and yellow jerseys whiz past the corner of your eye, you may have been forgiven for thinking these were simply ordinary cyclists taking advantage of the uncharacteristically good weather.

In fact, these were no ordinary cyclists.

These were highly committed and well-trained Sikhs who had signed up for Ride For Charity 2014 – a two-day cycling event from Malacca to Singapore to raise funds for Singapore's Sikh Welfare Council (SIWEC)

SIWEC is a registered charity that provides bereavement services, financial support to needy families, education support, prison outreach, and other social welfare programs.

The Ride For Charity (RFC) kicked off on Nov 28 morning with kirtan and ardaas at Central Sikh Gurdwara Sahib, before the team made their way in buses to their starting point in Malacca.

Following breakfast at the Gurdwaras Sahib Malacca, bright and early on Saturday morning, the cyclists flagged off, spending the next two days hunched over their trusty two-wheel companions, backs arched on the ready, heads bowed over their bicycle handles deep in focus.

With 50 riders and 36-support crew and well wishers in total, the contingent made waves as it passed through town after village, negotiating potholes, pedestrians and traffic. Support teams followed in vehicles to make sure the riders stayed hydrated and were taken care of throughout the gruelling trek.

The cyclists had to contend with blazing heat for most of the ride, but were caught in a heavy downpour the first afternoon just before reaching the rest stop at Batu Pahat.

Everyone was in high gear and ready to pick up where they left off on Sunday morning, though, and the team made it to the gurdwaras in Johor Bahru in time for *chai* (tea) at 4pm, before ending off the last leg back to the Central Sikh Gurdwara Sahib in Singapore.

Rider Simer Narulla said, "The energy and camaraderie about the group at the weekend were a highlight for me. After months of training together, it was clear that we had all established a bond and were determined to complete what we'd set out to do."

The group had been training together since April, and consisted of people from all walks of life. Fifteen non-Sikhs joined the team, and there were five women on board. Team members ranged in age from 24 to 70 years.

"On the trip we had one gentleman who is 70 and rides like the wind!" Simer said. "These are people who care about keeping fit and healthy, and who are keen to do their bit for society. I'm thankful to have met them through RFC."

While the numbers are still being finalised, the RFC is estimated to have raised over \$200,000 for Siwec. Siwec plans on using the funds to expand its programs to reach a wider range of beneficiaries, as well as initiate new programs.

The mood at Central Sikh Temple was electric as a crowd of supporters welcomed the riders home with cheers, dhol beats and jaikaaras on Sunday evening.

A glow radiated across the faces dripping with sweat and exhaustion, marking evidence of a heartfelt and fulfilling adventure, all for a good cause.

Many of the riders felt the support crew was the backbone of the endeavor. Support crew member Hartirathpal Kaur said, "RFC was pure heart and soul. I feel privileged to have been a part of the experience."



OUR PROGRAMS

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE PROGRAM (AEP)

This year, SIWEC has a new academic professional on board. As an educationalist and having 16 years of experience with the Ministry of Education (MOE), Mr. Harbhajan will be leading the brand new Academic Excellence Program. Under this program, he will be looking into the issue of improving academic performance of Sikh students who are not doing well in Primary 1, 2 and 3. The aim of this program is to holistically review reasons for student's underperformance. Customized support/ coaching/ mentoring/ counseling will be provided in order for the child to improve his/her performance better academically. To date, he has approached 12 pupils targeted for the AEP. Out of these, seven pupils are agreeable and are now on the program, with six professional tutors engaged to assist them.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR PUNJABI EDUCATION

SIWEC is at present supporting about 108 needy students with their school fees, books and uniforms. Each student is given financial support of up to \$400. SIWEC is now taking a holistic approach to determine if these families need any other assistance.

YUVA

The YUVA mentoring project has been rekindled with a new batch of five mentees who are being mentored by older youths. These youths have gone through a four-day mentoring course (with assessment) and have been certified. The aim of this program is to empower youths/children in our community to make positive life choices that enable them to maximize their potential.

BE A BEFRIENDER!

The Befriending Program is a service undertaken by trained volunteers to give offenders the necessary support and guidance before and after their release. This service is meant to give additional emotional support to participating inmates and is open to those who lack positive peers and emotional support from family and friends.

The aim of this program is to encourage greater involvement from members of the community, specifically the various ethnic groups. As the community realizes the importance of their involvement in the reintegration of ex-offenders, program such as this can be an important platform to inspire, empower, educate and equip both the ex-offender and society at large. To know more about the program, call us.

OUR PROGRAMMES

HOSPITAL / HOME 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 hospitalized and requires a visit, or prayers to be done at the hospital.



SUNEHRI SAHLEIN CLUB

SIWEC has embarked on a new project aimed at providing senior ladies with a platform 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, outings to the Changi War Museum and Sentosa (Madame Tussauds), 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 group is known as the 'Sunheri Sahlein Club'. There is a dedicated team of 10 volunteers who spend their precious time assisting with these activities. They ended their activities for the year 2014 with a trip to wax museum Madame Tussauds (Sentosa), after which they proceeded for lunch at Ponnusamy restaurant. The owner of the establishment graciously donated the lunch. This event also gave an opportunity for SIWEC to thank and appreciate the Volunteers with small mementos. SIWEC chairman Amarjit Singh Wasan graced the occasion and gave a short speech touching on the importance of the program and also thanked the volunteers who are pivotal to the program. SIWEC is looking to expand on this program in the year 2015 with a bigger pool of ladies and through extensive workshops/seminars.



Ladies posing with Shahrukh Khan at Madame Tussauds.



Chairman presenting plaques of appreciation to volunteers.



Preparing flowers for Chingay.



ITE West cooking lessons.



Our aunty ji posing with Fandi Ahmad.

COLLECTIONS

RFC 2014; 3 DAYS OF DETERMINATION THROUGH THE LENS OF A TEEN AGED 13!

by Etasha Kaur

"The atmosphere was electrifying! As the cyclists darted towards the finish at Central Sikh Temple, accompanied by intense 'dhol' beats and cheers by well-wishers, emotions of all parties spontaneously sprung up. Witnessing tears swell up in the eyes of the 'sangat', as they championed the end of their mission with roars of 'Bole Sonihal', triggered the same in me."

The narrative above was shared with me by my relative who ferried my two younger sisters to the end point to welcome back my dad, Paul Singh, who was amongst the 51 cyclists for the 'Ride for Charity (RFC)' event. And just where was I during this epic finish of the event in Singapore? My mum, Sharan, a fellow support crew member, Auntie Ramnik, and me were stuck in a massive traffic jam while heading to the Tuas Checkpoint!

The night before was a sleepless one filled with excitement and anxiety. My dad always told me after returning from practice rides that the actual journey would be a challenge as the terrains in Singapore are different from the ones in Malaysia. The drive to Malacca was fun and filled with pockets of silence where we all had many questions running through our minds. After a night's stay at the Emperor Hotel, Malacca, it was time to kick-start the RFC!

After obtaining the blessings from Guruji, we started the event smoothly. With the help of the Malacca police mobile squad escorts, the cyclists were led out of Malacca safely. Along the way to our lunch stop at Parik Java, it was evident that most of the cyclists were tired and needed to recharge for the post lunch ride to Batu Pahat. Unfortunately for them, this long journey to Batu Pahat was extremely hot. Nevertheless, they persevered and continued to ride all the way successfully to Batu Pahat. After the cyclists rode in the torturous heat for some time, they all stopped at a local food joint where they refreshed themselves with soothing coconut water. We all then finally headed straight to our hotel for the night stay. While we made our way there, it suddenly started to pour heavily. The cyclists were drenched but extremely grateful for the sudden change of weather. It was like God decided to smile at us so as to reward the cyclists for their relentless effort earlier!



Not long after breakfast, we set out on our ride with the very same spirit and character. All of us were eagerly waiting to head to back to the Central Sikh Temple; to be welcomed back by our loved ones and well-wishers. The only difference was that this time the roads were narrower and thus more challenging for the cyclist. We were anticipating some cyclists to detour along the way, and so we would be warranted to deliver redress but well, the credible bonding that these mighty ones had clinched upon, countered all mishap. We hence did not have to lead any disarrayed cyclists back!

The following journey to Pekan Nanas was filled with beautiful scenery and wonderful weather. This graciousness boosted the morale of everyone, injecting essential motivation especially for the 51 cyclists, many of whom were already worn out by the preceding hours and hours of painstaking pedaling. Upon reaching Pekan Nanas, it was time for a deserving lunch. It was from here that we had our eyes and minds set on reaching the final destination in Malaysia, JB. The entourage would take a split at JB, where the cyclists would go to the JB Temple while we in our cars would head for the Woodlands Checkpoint. Only two out of our 9 support cars led the cyclists to JB. Communication was a very important between the two cars to ensure all of the requirements were followed. With the help of the planners, communication was not an issue as all of us had gotten

Malaysian SIM cards. Once we entered JB town, the cyclists went to the temple while the cars once again headed to our final destination, Central Sikh Temple.

We were in for a rude shock at Woodlands Checkpoint owing to a massive jam. Standing still for more than an hour, across which, we had barely crawled 100m, we then decided after close to another hour to take the Tuas alternative. The cameras on the directional webpage on our mobile phones indicated a clear transition to Singapore. Three cars including us as such decided to digress towards Tuas.

Our eagerness to be at the finish with the cyclists, hence chancing upon Tuas, turned around to be an unpleasant experience! Out of all the support cars, only the three cars that had moved to Tuas did not make it in time to witness the cyclists being welcomed back. Though trapped in the jam and with no avenue to resolve, we remained optimistic and kept on encouraging each other. Those that had made it back kept updating us by sending pictures and videos of the cyclists embracing at the Central Sikh Temple. I was fortunate that my two little sisters were at the end point to usher in my dad, and to give me first hand reiteration of the chain of events that unfolded. As a 13 year old teenager, I may not have years of experience engaging in charitable work and events, but as an enthusiast of helping as a volunteer in school and community projects, I can say that the RFC has been a phenomenal blast for me and for my family. I can even proudly and confidently say the same for the other members of this adventure!

The RFC event was certainly not a religious 'yatra', but an endeavor that gained support from many multi-ethnic personalities. However, as a dedicated Sikh, I must say that the exchanges with our gurdwaras and nature at large at various points along the event made me proud. I stand as a stronger Sikh and human filled with humility and generosity after just superficial participation in RFC 2014.

INSPIRE

VOLUNTEERING FROM THE HEART

Many people find a meaningful life when they begin to volunteer. An example is **Mr. Hardial Singh**.

Hardial was a carefree person but he worked hard. Over the years, his volunteer work has taught him to appreciate life and to love himself even more.

It all started when he was asked to do a favour to help transport a deceased to the crematorium in Mandai. Without any hesitation, he decided to take up that favour. It was from then on that his volunteer journey started.

He has been volunteering to drive the hearse for the Sikh Welfare Council (SIWEC) for the past ten years.

Over these years, he has also embraced to learn more than just driving the hearse. He has also picked up the rituals that take place for a persons' last journey.

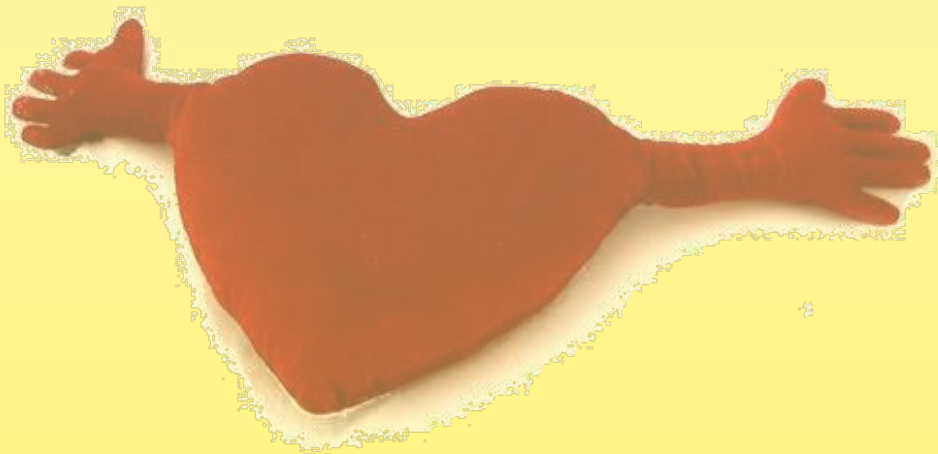
Hardial is now able to bathe the deceased and conduct any other prayer or ritual required.

Married with two kids aged 19 and 5 years old, Hardial gets his motivation from them. His wife always encourages him to do his part with sincerity and humility. His kids also do their part to serve the community in their own way, i.e. sewa in the temple.

Hardial feels blessed as his flexible working arrangement allows him to continue with this sewa. As sales professional in a travel industry, his boss is very supportive with his decision to volunteer within the community.

When asked about certain misconceptions such as taking a shower after a funeral, Hardial brushes off this question by saying that these are all man made stuff. In fact, Hardial makes sure that he is clean and proper before doing his hearse sewa.

According to Hardial, life is unpredictable. Each and every day has to be cherished, and most importantly we have to appreciate each day that passes by. He is now a very focused man and prefers to spend more time with his family whenever he is free.



EVENTS

Ride for Charity 2014 marks a new milestone

SIWEC honored to receive a cheque of \$210,000



Cheque presentation to SIWEC.



Mr. Amarjit from SIWEC thanking RFC.



Mr. Karpal from CSGB.

The Organising Committee of Ride for Charity 2014 celebrated the success of its first fund raising event, Ride for Charity 2014 on 13 February with a big bang. A dinner was held at the NUS in Suntec Exhibition and Convention Centre to appreciate those who made this fundraiser successful. The participants, sponsors and all others who had a part to play attended this event. All the proceeds will go to SIWEC to assist less fortunate families and their children. SIWEC was proud to receive the cheque and is all set to help more needy families.



Did you know?

From January to December 2014:

- ❖ SIWEC and its volunteers have conducted about **550 counseling sessions** Sikh inmates in the Prisons.
- ❖ We assisted **69 families** in bereavements
- ❖ **41 individuals** have been assisted either through counseling or by referrals to other governmental agencies
- ❖ **110 Families** were assisted with food rations/financial assistance
- ❖ **194 individuals** in homes/hospitals have been visited by our Health Care Ambassadors

How you can help:

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 programs. 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>.

Sikh Welfare Council

2 Towner Road, #06-02, Singapore 327804. Tel: (65) 6299 9234 | Email: info@siwec.org | Website: www.siwec.org

Sikh Welfare Council is a registered charity (UEL S98SS0018L) with IPC status

(IPC No. IPC000683, IPC Period: 05/11/2013 - 30/09/2015)

Be a SIKH BEFRIENDER Because everyone needs a friend



HOW CAN A BEFRIENDER HELP?

A **Befriender** must be a good listener, maintain close contact with the ex-inmate and make periodical visits to his home and family.

An active **Befriender** will meet up with the inmate in prison once a month during the last 10 months of the inmate's imprisonment.

Upon the inmate's release, the **Befriender** will follow-up at least once a month for 6 months to assist in his reintegration.

A **Befriender** will do what a friend will do for a friend in trouble. Often it takes a timely suggestion, advice, encouragement or assistance to change a life.

A **Befriender** with basic training in befriending, can be an effective change-agent.

Some ways in which a **Befriender** can help an ex-inmate:

- Build a bond of confidence and trust
- Encourage the ex-inmate to keep away from negative peer groups and further trouble
- Help strengthen family relationships
- Support good work habits
- Support aspiration for educational and skill upgrading
- Encourage spiritual, sporting and leisure pursuits
- Develop personal grooming and confidence

You can be special !

**Be a BEFRIENDER
CONTACT US**

**We are just a phone call
away....**

6299 9234

