



SIWEC INSIGHT

OCTOBER 2020

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Tribute to Mr S Jagjit Singh Sekhon (JJ), Past Chairman & Trustee of Sikh Welfare Council (SIWEC)



Our seniors learn to go digital

CHALLENGE YOURSELF, SERVE THE COMMUNITY!

RIDE 2 SERVE 2020

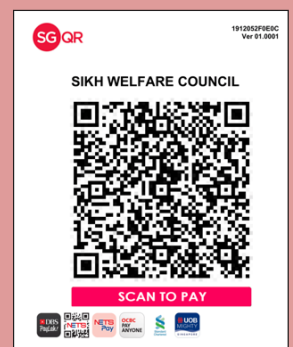
Virtual Ride: Oct 1-Nov 30
Road Ride: Dec 13

IN AID OF
SIKH WELFARE COUNCIL - SINGAPORE

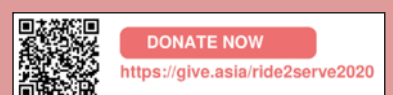
**You too can play your part
in making a difference.
Reach out to the team on areas
of how you can contribute to the event.**

DONATIONS
SIWEC
+65 6299 9234

Local Donations:



International Donations (GIVE.asia):



Despite the pandemic, the R2S family continues to deliver rations monthly and train for rides to raise funds for SIWEC. Let us support their efforts!

PATRON

Kartar Singh Thakral

TRUSTEES

Mohinder Singh Thakral
Daljit Singh Gaggarbhana
Manmohan Singh Thakral
Gurcharan Singh Narula
Mann Singh Bajaj
Jagjit Singh Sekhon

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Chairman

Gurdip Singh Usma

Vice-Chairman – Operations

Manmohan Singh

Vice-Chairman – Administration

Harmit Singh

Secretary

Simha Kaur Jastol

Asst Secretary

Sharanjit Kaur

Treasurer

Sukhbir Singh Chakkar

Asst Treasurer

Rashminder Singh Chohan

Committee Members

Albel Singh
Harmit Singh Kawatra
Sarabjeet Singh
Sarjit Kaur Khosa

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S DESK

Our Services Continue Despite Covid-19, in True Chardi-Kala Spirit



Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa
Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh

Covid-19 continues to affect almost every country in the world. It has introduced a new normal to our daily lives. While the situation in Singapore is somewhat better now than it was during the circuit breaker (CB) in June, this will continue to drive the way we do things in the upcoming months and well into 2021. Wearing masks, social distancing, working from home and avoiding crowded places are practices that will stay with us for some time to come.

Government assistance, such as the Job Support Scheme, additional financial help to those who have lost their jobs, funding to organisations providing remote services, etc., have helped save jobs and provide for those in need. While helping our clients during the CB period was extra challenging, every effort was made to ensure that those who needed help, received it. In addition to the usual assistance provided by SIWEC, we also worked with other Sikh institutions and volunteer groups, like #SGSewa, the Langgar Outreach Program (LOP) and Langgar Pick Up Program (LPU), to increase our outreach.

Currently, our SIWEC staff team is back at work, but social distancing measures and other movement restrictions continue to hamper our services. In the spirit of Chardi-Kala and Sarbat da Bhalla, we continue to seek creative ways to deliver our services, ensure our beneficiaries' interests are fully taken care of, and render help where it is needed.

Bereavement Service – Live Streaming of Funerals

Although the number of attendees allowed at funerals has increased from 10 in April to 20 in July and 30 in August, this remains a limiting factor for friends and relatives who want to bid farewell in person. Meanwhile, we continue to make live streaming available to all families. This service was initially fully funded as a Community Service between May and June. Since July, we have offered live streaming as an option for all bereaved families at a lowered cost of \$400. This service has been quite well received as travel restrictions continue to obstruct

overseas-based family members from returning to Singapore to be with their loved ones at short notice.

Government Covid-19 Financial Assistance Schemes

We continue to assist our beneficiaries and any new clients who approach us, and help them better understand the various government assistance schemes (especially for those who have recently lost their jobs or their income streams due to Covid-19), while also advising them on application processes based on their eligibility.

Family Support Services

While we have resumed visiting our clients on a limited basis, we also keep regular contact with them via voice and video calls to check on their well-being.

Prison Counselling & Aftercare Services

Prison authorities have recently allowed counselling sessions to resume, subject to all counsellors observing social distancing and mask requirements. We are grateful to be able to engage Sikh inmates again and keep them connected with Guruji in these trying times.

Healthcare Services and Senior Citizen Activities

As our seniors are more vulnerable to Covid-19, our on-site activities continue to be curtailed. We have gradually resumed visiting our senior clients on a limited basis. However, for most of them, we keep regular contact via voice and video calls to ensure their well-being.

Those who need meals continue to receive them from the Gurdwaras. We have also been sending exercise and positive mental health videos via social media chat groups to urge our beloved seniors to stay engaged, active and fit.

Education Support

During the CB period, almost all teaching and tuition classes were switched to home-based learning, delivered via online platforms. It was through this process that SSEF realised the lack of proper infrastructure and equipment to deliver high-quality education. To ensure that our children's education does not suffer due to the shortfall, SIWEC funded the purchase of 25 laptop computers at \$24,500. These were provided to SSEF teachers to

enhance and sustain the delivery of the Punjabi Language programme.

Loss of Mr S Jagjit Singh Sekhon, a Pillar of the Sikh Community and SIWEC

In the midst of Covid-19, the Sikh community and SIWEC in particular experienced the loss of our former Chairman Mr S Jagjit Singh Sekhon. His strong leadership in the community and his passion for helping, not only SIWEC clients but all who needed help, will remain a cherished memory by all. It is a void that will not be easily filled. All of us at SIWEC express our deepest heartfelt condolences to his family.

In closing, we sincerely apologise to the community and any beneficiary for where we may have fallen short in our services during the Covid-19 difficulties. We hope that, together, we will overcome this pandemic and pull through these hard times. We look forward to resuming our full services in order to address the needs of the community.

A big thank you to all Sikh institutions, service providers, government agencies, our donors, volunteers, staff, and committee members for your continued support in SIWEC's work.

Stay Home & Stay Safe

In Guru Ji's Seva

Gurdip Singh Usma

Chairman, Sikh Welfare Council



In Memoriam S Jagjit Singh Sekhon (JJ)

Past Chairman & Trustee, Sikh
Welfare Council

During his sterling lifetime of service to the community, Mr S Jagjit Singh Sekhon (fondly known as JJ) served two terms as Chairman of SIWEC between 2009 and 2013, after taking over from the first SIWEC Chairman, Dr Sorinder Singh.

JJ steered the newly elected Management Committee to restore SIWEC's ailing financial health, and strengthen its corporate governance and internal processes to be in close compliance with IPC's (Institute of Public Character) requirements. SIWEC was awarded IPC status in early November 2009 following revisions to its constitution, and became a registered charity, where its donors can enjoy income tax exemption. This helped attract more donations. In 2010, SIWEC became an associate member with the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) and was accepted as a full member in 2014.

One of the major milestones in SIWEC's fund-raising efforts was in 2011, when JJ requested for the late President S R Nathan's support in autographing 17 copies of his book,

Winning Against the Odds, for \$10,000 each. This initiative helped raise \$170,000. It was JJ's personal relationship with President Nathan that saw donors invited to the Istana for the book presentation.

Beyond fund-raising, JJ took a deep personal interest in outreach programmes to uplift at-risk youth, and educate frail seniors on their health as well as support them. He was an ardent advocate for the well-being of all Sikh patients in hospitals, and those in nursing and adult disability homes. On the latter, he worked closely with SIWEC's social workers and volunteer nurses through the Hospital Visit and Healthcare Ambassador Programme.

JJ was extremely generous in committing, without hesitation, the pro-bono use of Civic ambulance resources for the benefit of our clients and others in need on numerous instances. For example, these ambulances covered many fund-raising rides from Malacca to Singapore. Even after stepping down as Chairman to function as SIWEC Advisor, we are grateful for his continued interest, active support, and commitment.

JJ also leveraged his long-standing ties with Sikh institutions to strengthen support for SIWEC's programmes among the community and beyond. Regular Gurdwara welfare outreach days were organised to keep the sangat informed about social issues and SIWEC's services in support of the disadvantaged. He placed personal emphasis on the conduct of regular health screening activities and talks, and was one of the most ardent supporters of the active ageing programme (Sunehri Saheliaan and Sunehray Pal), run by a dedicated volunteer team who continued to refine and extend its reach to three of our Gurdwaras in 2020.



JJ (first from left) with Dr Sorinder and Kashmir Singh, after receiving their long service award from MP Inderjit Singh at SIWEC's Inaugural Volunteer Appreciation Tea



JJ (second from left) with Dr Sorinder and SIWEC Management Committee members Dinesh, Kawal Pal & Inderpal



JJ and Sikhs, with President Nathan



With youth mentors after a certificate presentation in 2012

As Chairman, JJ adopted a very hands-on approach. He accompanied the welfare staff to visit every household served by SIWEC under our Food on the Table and Financial Assistance programmes, and also made the effort to attend all Sikh bereavements at Mandai Crematorium, extending emotional support to the family.

SIWEC's Volunteer Appreciation Tea in February 2019 was the last formal SIWEC activity attended by our beloved JJ. Perhaps, it was most fitting that he was honoured with the long service award alongside fellow stalwarts who have devoted many years as bereavement support and prison counselling volunteers.

While we have lost one of our staunchest supporters, JJ has left us with a rich legacy, inspiring all who have worked with him. May we all continue to be inspired by his exemplary humanity, unstinting support of those in need, his dogged enthusiasm in service of the community, and his cheerful manner with people from all walks of life.



Festive events like Vesakhi Mela were opportunities to raise public education and community health awareness



JJ with SIWEC volunteers honoured by Mr Amrin Amin, Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Home Affairs and Health, with long service awards in 2019



SIWEC AGM 2013 with Council members representing Sikh institutions, and members of SIWEC's Management Committee

Former Volunteer Now Full-Time Staff for Five Years



Ms Jaspreet with former SIWEC staff Indrejit Kaur and her mum Ms Polly, a fellow volunteer, in 2011



Ms Jaspreet conducted health screenings as a SIWEC volunteer in 2011

Social Work Executive Ms Jaspreet Kaur, 39, has been an integral part of the SIWEC team since she joined as a full-time staff in 2015. Incidentally, she had been an active volunteer with SIWEC since 2009, helping out as a healthcare ambassador.

In her present role, Jaspreet counsels and visits four minors (school-going children and teenagers) living in boys/girls' homes, besides case-managing 30 client-families who receive financial assistance (FA) under SIWEC's FA and Food on the Table programme.

Jaspreet interviews, assesses, secures approval, and then arranges the required assistance to help families in need of financial, food, informational and socio-emotional support.

Jaspreet chose to transition to social work after working as a palliative care nurse for seven years. Her nature of work, then, often involved difficult and intense counselling sessions with her former patients. She recalls feeling a deep sense of fulfilment in accompanying her patients on their end-of-life journeys.

Jaspreet was driven by passion to work directly with client-families and provide holistic help to those facing difficulties. She reflected, "I do face multiple challenges in my chosen role, but every encounter with families that

I work with doubles my resolve to do my best, and this is what keeps me going."



Ms Jaspreet with Mdm Kartar preparing monthly rations for SIWEC's clients



Providing emotional support to a SIWEC client in a nursing home

I work with doubles my resolve to do my best, and this is what keeps me going."

For the more complex cases, Jaspreet coordinates with different agencies like the social support office network, schools and childrens' homes, as well as healthcare agencies to extend holistic support. This includes dispensing healthcare advice, and coordinating education and financial support for families.

Jaspreet also confessed, "Verbal abuse on the phone or during client home visits comes along with the work. Over time, all social workers learn to develop a coping mechanism to be empathetic and resilient on the job."

Jaspreet gains utmost satisfaction in devoting time to help her clients. Seeing her clients overcome their dilemmas, she has learnt from them to cultivate a positive attitude in overcoming her personal challenges. She notes that this line of work has strengthened her as an individual.

During her service with SIWEC, she has managed cases which still tug at the strings of her heart whether it was abandoned elderly parents, or teenagers with no adult relative to turn to for support or guidance.

Jaspreet recalled an experienced senior offering advice early in her career, "He said, 'be real, be yourself and let your personality and attributes shine through.' After I did that, I learnt that I could grow in confidence and found a self-belief in my abilities. As I developed in my career, this self-belief in my skills, knowledge and attributes is a must. We must also have high aspirations for our service users.

For some, we may be the only people they encounter that have high aspirations for them. I have gotten to devote my life's work to justice, education, and human well-being. Social work is creative, evocative, challenging, purposeful work. I have never been bored. I love the flexibility of the

profession as so many paths are possible.

I have been exposed to learning about various aspects, including mental health, working with the homeless, child-welfare and teaching. Often, I feel like I am helping to improve my clients' conditions a little, through my experience gained every day."

Bereavement

Jaspreet's scope of work at SIWEC also involves supporting bereaved families when a loved one has passed on.

She observed, "Everyone processes death in a different way. Knowing this means that you do not have to second guess your own thoughts, feelings, and actions. This is your personal journey, and you can feel, think, say, or do whatever it is that you feel you need, in order to help you grieve and heal."

"When I am with a bereaved family, most are in shock, overcome with emotions, and unprepared to deal with the situation. There were even times when family members would collapse during the bathing process. I would stop what I was doing to attend to the emotional family members first. Some of them tend to talk abruptly to us, but we must bear with it when such things happen. I have never taken it personally and always reminded myself that bereaved people are going through a very difficult time, and they need support more than anything else at that point of time."

Testimony

A grieving family member wrote to SIWEC to commend Jaspreet:

"Ms Jaspreet Kaur helped and assisted tremendously in leading the ladies in the bathing of the dearly departed. Her calm demeanour in explaining, guiding, and leading the ladies present for the bathing of the dearly departed put the ladies at ease, as Ms Jaspreet led with utmost respect to our beloved mother. Ms Jaspreet's humbleness, sense of Sewa, and purpose were evident, and the family appreciates it greatly."



Ms Jaspreet, together with SIWEC's staff and bereavement volunteers

Keeping Our Seniors Digitally Included

A group of 12 Sunehri Sahelian and Sunehray Pal members have been keeping themselves busy by signing up for a smartphone class, which spans over 12 weeks.

The class was initiated by our ardent eldercare volunteer, Mdm Charanjeet Kaur. The first two classes commenced on 3 August 2020 and the last class will take place in the third week of October.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, each class is presently limited to only 12 participants.

In view of our members' overwhelming response to the first two classes, Mdm Charanjeet scheduled two more, which started on 11 August 2020. They will come to an end in early November.

Each session is conducted over two hours for the 12-week duration. Below is an outline of the topics covered in each session.

Basic Smartphone Class	
Orientation	Generation Table / Internet Ecosystem
Lesson 1	Know Your Phone / Stickers
Lesson 2	Imikimi Cards
Lesson 3	WhatsApp Tips (1)
Lesson 4	WhatsApp Tips (2)
Lesson 5	Google Search / Voice to Text
Lesson 6	Fake News / Validating Information / Google Maps
Lesson 7	Public Transport Apps / Taxi Apps
Lesson 8	Organising Photos and Folders / Using Your Camera Effectively
Lesson 9	Cybersecurity
Lesson 10	Digital Banking / PayNow / QR Codes
Lesson 11	WhatsApp Web / Google Meet
Lesson 12	Emergency Contacts / Quiz



Participants came eagerly to every class and could not wait for it to begin



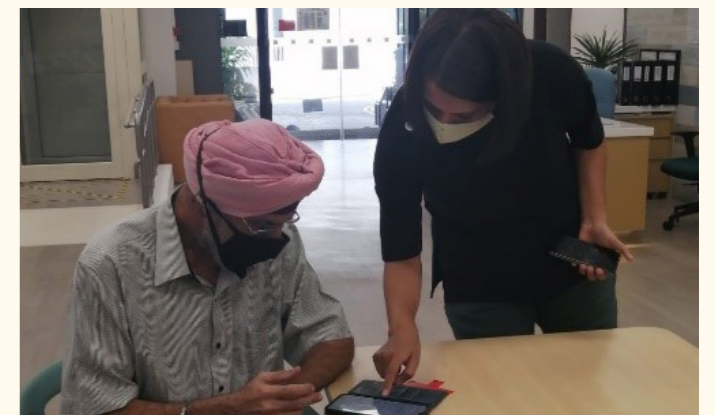
Some took a while, taking in newfound knowledge in getting the most out of their smartphones



Seniors were comforted by their instructor's nurturing presence, who attended to each participant's queries and adjusted the pace to suit the class



With attentive eyes glued on the instructor, our participants made some of the best students



Participants were not shy to ask for help when in doubt, which encouraged better understanding. It may have taken them longer to grasp certain steps, but they left the class better equipped after every lesson



Mdm Charanjeet said, "The devotion our participants showed in learning new things was truly inspiring. Our participants keenly took notes for self-study."

One of the participants, Mdm Lakdev Kaur, shared, "We understand a lot more about smartphones today. Teachers are good as they explain very clearly."

Judging from the initial course participants' enthusiastic feedback, our passionate volunteer intends to organise future classes on similar topics.

Mdm Charanjeet is waiting for clearance for classes to be held at a larger venue in the future, when some of the Covid-19 restrictions ease in Phase 3.

If you or anyone you know is interested to join classes on digital knowledge for seniors, please contact Mdm Charanjeet at 97390446 to register.

Well-Wishers' Donations During Covid-19 Pandemic

SIWEC received generous donations from numerous well-wishers, such as Sadhu Vaswani Mission Singapore and Katong Ladies, in the form of dry rations.

The SIWEC team then came together to extend a helping hand to families. With smiles on their faces and joy in their hearts, the team packed and delivered the rations to SIWEC's clients. Ms Nelvinder Kaur, a SIWEC staff, reflected, "We were all grateful to be a part of the process of performing this Sewa, which brought happiness and relief to our clients."



SIWEC's clients were pleasantly surprised. Mdm M mentioned, "I am grateful to SIWEC for remembering my family and I, and easing our difficulty during this very tough period. The SIWEC team even understood the difficulties of travelling alone on public transport with the rations. They were very forthcoming and made arrangements to deliver the items directly to my home."

Most of our clients were thankful to receive daily necessities besides dry rations. Mdm Surinder Kaur, a client of SIWEC, mentioned, "On top of dry rations, receiving household items used daily around the house, like toothbrush, toothpaste, shower foam, dish soap, kitchen towel, and bath towels, have been very helpful to us." Mdm Surinder was especially appreciative of the efforts made by SIWEC and their well-wishers.



Ride2Serve 2020 to Proceed with Exciting New Approach



Cyclists happy to see each other after training rides had resumed

With the recent easing of Covid-19 measures, our organisers have developed a fresh approach for the ride that was postponed in March.

In March, the Ride2Serve (R2S) committee had briefed riders regarding a three-day ride from Malacca to Batu Pahat to Singapore, plus an additional leg from Port Dickson to Malacca for seasoned riders.

However, due to the Covid-19 outbreak, the ride in Malaysia was called off barely a week before the event as a precautionary measure to safeguard participants.

Fresh concept

Down the road, R2S 2020 will be split into two components – a virtual and a physical ride.

Virtual event

For the virtual event, cyclists have to chalk up a minimum distance of 300 km between 1 October and 30 November. This can be done at their own time and convenience, and their progress will be recorded via Strava in the R2S club domain.

Physical event

The ride will be held physically on Sunday, 13 December, with the start and end point being Central Sikh Temple (CST) on Towner Road.

Cyclists will be divided into small groups, riding about 100 km around the island before returning to end-point.

Registration for cyclists closed in early October. Cyclists and supporters will continue to engage their friends and relations to raise funds for SIWEC until the physical ride takes place in December.

Why a virtual and physical event combination?

R2S organiser Paul Singh shared, “With the virtual ride, cyclists enjoy the flexibility to ride at any time of the day or night, even in poor weather conditions, from the comfort of their home – in a living room or bedroom!

Riding is done on a mounted bicycle connected to the Strava platform, which provides an amazingly interactive and immersive experience for cyclists.

This is a very safe option for novice riders with limited road-riding experience, and those who want to ride in a safe space unaffected by weather. Literally everyone can sign up for the virtual event, so we really hope more people will participate.”

How are riders training for the 100 km round-island ride?

Paul added, “We are pleased to see a few fresh faces who are new to cycling. Training continued in small groups last month, after the CB measures were relaxed in Phase 2. Because of the five-person restriction on public gatherings, we have spread our training rides over Saturday and Sunday.” However, the R2S spirit and camaraderie remain high as each group continues to share their photos on our WhatsApp and Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/RidetoServeSG>



Catching up after the circuit breaker



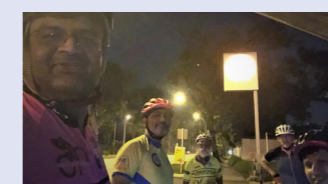
Posing for a photo before pushing forward



Some break times call for a “wefie”



Happy to meet up with friends once again



Moonlight Ride



Delighting in fitness together

What will the round-island route be like?

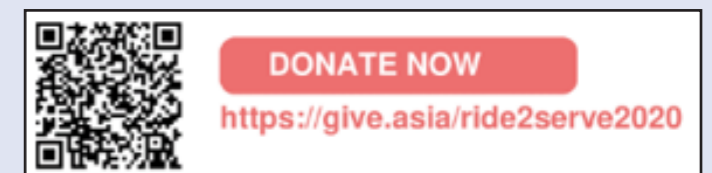
Just like our training rides, small groups of riders will be flagged off from CST to take slightly different routes across Singapore. All groups will ride towards Lim Chu Kang and head back to CST mid to late afternoon. As it is not a race, we encourage riders to have a fun and safe ride.

How can well-wishers donate and support SIWEC?

1. PayPal Donation: <https://www.siwec.org/fundraising/donations/donate-online>
2. Other Online Platforms: <https://www.giving.sg/siwec>
3. Local Donations (SGQR CODE):



4. International Donations (GIVE.asia):





R2S Family Day Hike Along the Southern Ridges

Since the deferment of R2S, organisers brainstormed long and hard for alternative activities where riders could safely spend quality time with their families. So they introduced a 7 km family hike, which took place on 10 August 2020, 8am to 12pm.

Participants were pleased to know that Covid-19 precautions, such as social distancing, were enforced during this family event.



The walk along the southern ridges of Singapore started from Kent Ridge MRT and ended at Mount Faber.

Everyone was grateful that the clear weather allowed them to enjoy a fun-filled walk with their loved ones — seniors and youth included.



The walk was thoroughly enjoyable for our participants. The organising committee eagerly awaits the next hike on 18 October 2020.

If you are keen to join in the fun, feel free to follow R2S on Facebook for more updates: <https://www.facebook.com/RidetoServeSG>.

OUR SERVICES

24-Hour Hotline
+65 6299-9234

Financial Assistance &
Food on the Table
Programme

Academic Excellence
& Education Support
Programme

Hospital / Home Visits
& Healthcare Ambassador
Programme

Eldercare & Active
Ageing Activities

Prison Counselling &
Aftercare Programme

Community Mediation &
Counselling Programme

Bereavement Services

Community Outreach
Activities

YOU CAN HELP AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Donations

A small contribution from you translates into huge benefits for the less fortunate. You can donate by:

- Making a One-off Donation
- Donating Monthly via GIRO
- A Bequest (Will) - Leave a legacy in support of SIWEC's clients
- A Memorial Donation - A thoughtful way to remember a loved one while giving support to others

Donors will be able to claim tax deduction of 2.5 times the amount donated to SIWEC.

Volunteers

Your efforts as a SIWEC volunteer enable us to successfully run our programmes and thus, make a difference to the community.

We are looking for volunteers to strengthen our services and contribute to the community at large.

To find out more, kindly contact us at info@siwec.org today!

WHOM WE SERVE

SIWEC is here to help. We serve everyone!

If you or someone you know requires assistance or is interested in our services, please call us, e-mail us or come down to meet us at the SIWEC Office.

Sikh Welfare Council

2 Towner Road, Singapore 327804
Opening hours: Monday – Friday, 9am – 6pm
Tel: 24-hour helpline: +65 6299 9234
Email: info@siwec.org
Website: www.siwec.org



Sikh Welfare Council