



SIWEC INSIGHT

Sikh Welfare Council, Singapore

April-June 2014

Welcome to yet another issue of our SIWEC newsletter!



Ride for Charity 2014

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Outreach to the Community

Vesakhi Mela

Vesakhi Mela celebrations were held at Singapore Khalsa Association on 27 April 2014. SIWEC, conducted health screening for about 136 individuals. The health screening covered checks on Body Mass Index (BMI), blood pressure and blood sugar level. 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 for the event and also on information regarding SIWEC and our programs.



Vesakhi Celebrations at Central Sikh Temple

SIWEC participated in the Vesakhi Celebrations at the Central Sikh Temple from the 12th to the 14th of April 2013 by setting up a booth to promote its activities and launch the Ride for charity event. We also gave a short presentation to the sangat on our current programmes and the future challenges.



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!**

Outreach at Sikh Centre during Sikhi Class Graduation



Manmohan Singh, SIWEC Committee Member and volunteer overseeing counselling services for Sikh inmates, addressed 30 graduands of the Sikhi 101, 202 and Divine Reflections programmes, on volunteering opportunities to counsel and befriend Sikh inmates. He explained that these initiatives provide community support for inmates in their rehabilitation by nurture the motivation to change, and to help inmates deal with reintegration challenges upon their release.

Dr. Jasmin Kaur, (Psychologist, Senior Assistant Director, Prisons) and a graduand of Sikhi 202 class, then shared on the new counselling curriculum which she helped develop in collaboration with Dr Jaswant Singh of Sikh Centre, and her colleague, Dr Melvinder Singh. This new approach to be piloted early in 2015 infuses relevant Sikh values within an evidence based psychological framework of 3 modules comprising 7 sessions each.

All volunteer counsellors will be provided with training and supported in the effort to perform meaningful seva for a growing numbers of incarcerated Sikhs who struggle to break out of their addiction to drugs and to avoid criminal behaviour upon their release. Members of the community with the calling to serve in a counselling or befriending role are urged to call SIWEC at 62999234.

Visit to the Prisons in Conjunction with Vesakhi

SIWEC Secretariat, Counselors together with priests from Silat Road Temple, Central Sikh Temple, Pardesi Khalsa Dharmak Diwan and Khalsa Dharmak Sabha visited the inmates at the prisons on the 2nd and 9th of April 2014. This was to celebrate Vesakhi with the prison inmates with prayers and refreshments. The inmates were highly appreciative of SIWEC's efforts in organising this event for their benefit. It is hoped that they appreciate the need for them to change for the better upon their release. It was a great experience for those who participated.

Ride for Charity 2014



Interested in participating in a three day charity cycling trip from Malacca to Singapore from 28 Nov (Fri) to 30 Nov (Sun)? The effort is for the Sikh Welfare Council (SIWEC). This is not a religious drive but one of humanity; hence cyclists from all faiths are welcomed to join us.

Itinerary is as follows:

1. Fri 28th Nov (noon) - Depart from Singapore by chartered coach together with our bicycles.
2. Fri (evening) - Overnight stay in a Malacca hotel.
3. Sat (morning) - Ride from Malacca to Batu Pahat (100km).
4. Sat (evening) - Overnight stay in a Batu Pahat hotel.
5. Sun (morning) - Ride from Batu Pahat to Singapore (150km).
6. Sun 30th Nov (evening) - Arrival in Singapore.

Interested cyclists will need to provide their own bicycles and \$200 to cover the trip expenses of transport, insurance, accommodation, jerseys and refreshments. Every cyclist is expected to raise \$500 for SIWEC's charity needs, but this is not an absolute figure. Put in your best effort and any amount is welcomed. Any unspent funds from the \$200 to cover cost will be donated to SIWEC as well. (A Tax Relief of 2.5 times of the amount of donation made.)

To date, 95 supporters of the project have signed up with about 45 registering to ride. The others are support crew or well-wishers. We are targeting about 80 riders. Do not be daunted by the distance as this is a leisurely cycling trip with multiple pit stops. It is NOT a race. It is a fun cum charity event.

You are encouraged to join our riders for their weekly Saturday morning rides at ECP (Carpark B1 at 0800H) to clock mileage and build up your endurance.

We have several riders in their 40s, 50s, and even 60s. So don't worry about being out of shape either.



Do contact Manjit Singh Randawa at 9855 0192 or email at manjitsr@hotmail.com or Manjit Singh Sevea at 9109 9720 or email at admin@siwec.org to register or for more details.

Game for it ??? Join! If you like to donate to the cause where the beneficiaries are the needy families, step forward and approach any of the riders or support crew with pledge cards to collect donations.



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.

INSPIRE!

MasterCard President and CEO, Mr Ajay Banga, delivered an inspiring commencement address at the New York University (NYU) Stern School of Business recently, where he talked about the value of diversity among other things.

SIWEC would like to highlight excerpts of this speech that our readers may find motivating:



My passion for diversity comes from the fact that I am diverse. To state the obvious, I tend to stand out in a room – turbans and beards will do that to you. My part-time hobby is being “randomly” searched at airports! And I run a global company. That’s not exactly common for someone who looks like me. And I can tell you there have been a hundred times when I’ve felt different from everybody else in the room. But I realized very early in my career that if I weren’t comfortable with myself, then I couldn’t succeed. It’s critical that you figure out who you are and be comfortable with it. What’s important is what you do and how you do it, not where you come from or what you look like. That’s going to be very important for your future.

So, let me put this to you in a different way. In Nature, you get penalized for not being diverse enough. Being a panda and having bamboo as your only food source quite dramatically increases your chances of becoming extinct. You get penalized for this in the business world, too. IBM nearly went under in the early 1990s because it missed the entire PC Revolution. Kodak missed the digital revolution.

Diversity is what drives better insights, better decisions, and better products. It’s the backbone of innovation. It’s what defines a great leadership culture. And there are four attributes of that kind of culture which stand out for me.

The first is a sense of urgency. Our world today, with its amazing technological advances and the fact that this innovation cycle is ever-shortening, has no space for those who procrastinate. It’s that urgency that makes me say to colleagues of mine in the company that “if you have good news for me, take the stairs...if you have bad news, take the elevator.” I need to know that quickly, so I can do something about it.

The second is a sense of balance. A lot of people think that urgency and patience are contradictory. And they could not be more wrong. You need to be patient enough to listen to everybody, but yet, you must have a sense of urgency to take a decision and to execute.

The third is to be courageous enough to take what I call thoughtful risks. Rarely are you going to have perfect information in the careers that you’re going to have. The willingness to take a decision at that time will depend greatly on your ability to take a thoughtful risk, which ultimately depends on your courage. As Winston Churchill said, “success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.”

And the fourth is to be competitively paranoid. And by that I don’t mean be fearful. What I mean is constantly ask yourself if you’re missing something. Is there more to the problem? Is there a better solution? If you don’t question everything, if you’re not competitively paranoid, you will not have the sense of self-introspection that you so sorely will need to be a real leader.

So, a sense of urgency, a sense of balance, deep courage, and competitive paranoia – all of these are tremendously facilitated if you surround yourself with people who don’t look like you, don’t walk like you, don’t talk like you, and don’t have the same experiences as you. And why is that so important?

Because a group of similar people tends to think in similar ways, reach similar conclusions, and have similar blind spots.

The whole speech may be viewed on YouTube or read on the MasterCard website.

From April to June 2014:

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

- We assisted **15** families in bereavements
- **22** individuals have been assisted either through counselling or by referrals to other governmental Agencies
- **20** Families were assisted with food rations/final assistance
- **61** individuals in homes/hospitals have been visited by our Health Care Ambassadors



How You Can Help....

DONATE NOW
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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>.

“It's never too early to start”

There is a chance you may have gotten your pulse checked by her. Some of you may even have parted with a drop of blood at her request.

Meet Jaspreet Kaur, a healthcare volunteer, who many of you would recognize as a fixture at SIWEC's health screening booths. She is after all a trained healthcare professional, so there is great synergy to be drawn from her time spent volunteering with SIWEC and her professional work.

Perhaps what is more surprising is that Jaspreet began volunteering with SIWEC at a young age. Now aged 32, Jaspreet started contributing her time and expertise to SIWEC six years ago when she was 26. At the point where many of her peers would rather focus on their careers or spending their free time in more social or recreational activities, she chose to instead dedicate her time outside of work to a more altruistic cause.

But there really is no reason why one cannot do both, Jaspreet, a project coordinator in the nursing sector, argued. “Although balancing my work with my volunteering commitments can sometimes be challenging, it actually helps me improve on my time management skills as at the end of the day, it all boils down to how well you manage your time. Moreover it is also about the priorities in your life. For me, while work and socializing are essential, it is also important to be able to make a difference to the lives of others.”

Living by this mantra, Jaspreet volunteers at SIWEC's monthly health events and lends her expertise in the health screening process, testing for blood pressure and blood sugar levels, among other things. She first started volunteering at SIWEC in 2008 as she felt that it was the ideal platform for her since its services matched her professional and volunteering interests. “As a nurse my



passion is to contribute as much as I can to society and so, I felt SIWEC was the ideal place for me to volunteer.”

However, volunteering runs in her blood and Jaspreet does not have to look very far for inspiration in this regard. She got her first taste of volunteering in the community with the Singapore Khalsa Association (SKA) Ladies' Wing, courtesy of her mother, who is an avid volunteer with the group. “I used to help out there because of my mum, and I enjoyed it a lot.” Besides, she also has other members of her extended family who are key volunteers in other community organizations.

That familiarity with the organizations and with the volunteering opportunities available in the community certainly helped her in coming forward, Jaspreet noted. That is where she feels more can be done to increase the youth involvement in volunteering within the community.

“We need to create greater awareness among young Sikhs on the opportunities available for volunteering and what they can expect. I feel that if they know these better, they will come forward to help in areas that appeal to them,” she suggested.

She feels that this could be done through relevant camps and talks, including in those that already exist, and through team building activities for instance as this will build cliques and peer influence helps in attracting younger members of the community to come forward.

But Jaspreet acknowledges that there are other challenges that young people like her may face when volunteering for community organizations like SIWEC but these can be overcome after some time. Drawing from her experience, she said that initially speaking Punjabi to the older generation at healthcare booths was a problem, but over time the practice has made her improve her linguistic abilities in this aspect.

But it is not just for healthcare, with the aged or within the Sikh community that Jaspreet contributes to as she also volunteers at the Hindu Endowments Board (HEB) Ashram Halfway House where she provides support and help to ex-offenders. She said that this helps her better understand people of diverse races and backgrounds while it also allows her to improve the lives of a completely different segment of a society, whom she firmly believes deserve a second shot at life. That is not only refreshing it is also an extremely selfless dedication.

If more young people like Jaspreet come forward to make a difference, we could certainly be in a better position to address the issues prevalent in our society.

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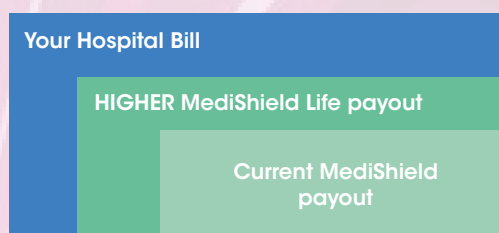
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For more information please call MOH at 1800 225 4122