



# SIWEC INSIGHT

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August 2017

SIKH WELFARE COUNCIL, SINGAPORE



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## IN THIS ISSUE

SIWEC hosted an Appreciation Tea for its volunteers & donors on 1 April 2017. It was the opportunity to express a heartfelt thank you to all our volunteers who touched the lives of SIWEC clients in their own special way, and thank all donors who have also contributed in making a difference.

In responding to changing times, a Community Mediation Team has been formed to mediate in family matters.

SIWEC also engaged in community outreach during Vesakhi at Central Sikh Temple to raise awareness of support services available for seniors in the community. Seniors were also encouraged to undergo free health screening provided by trained volunteers during the event.

In our ongoing series of community talks where invited speakers present on social issues and services available in the community, a senior counselor from the National Addictions Management Service presented on "Understanding Addiction".

Get to know more about SIWEC services and events at [www.siwec.org](http://www.siwec.org)

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# FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S DESK

## WAHEGURU JI KA KHALSA WAHEGURU JI KI FATEH!

Sikh Welfare Council (SIWEC) has always endeavored to provide for the needy. Besides providing financial support, SIWEC also provides assistance in the form of food vouchers, education support, active ageing, counseling.

From time to time, we introduce

new initiatives to respond to the changing social context. We recognize that family harmony and relationships are increasingly strained with the competing demands of career, family and work-life balance. Many families struggle to nurture and strengthen their key relationships - with their elderly parents, among spouses, with their children, and even among siblings. One of the results is greater estrangement among family members.

I would like to elaborate on how we have responded by launching the **Community Mediation Service** and to explain the motivation for this service as well as its salient features.

## Why start the Community Mediation Service?

In the past, our community elders were a respected source for counselling and mediation when family estrangement occurred or when family disputes arose. They were moderately successful in doing the preventative work to promote family reconciliation. In present times however, individual aspirations for autonomy and the preoccupation with self-interest over the preservation of family harmony has led to a context where family disputes mostly end up in the courts seeking legal settlement. They resort to a confrontative legalistic approach among family members is a costly process which also narrows the scope for family reconciliation. SIWEC felt that we were in a position to harness the collective wisdom of our community elders to try to address this issue. Our intent is to provide a conducive alternative platform for mediation in a non-confrontational setting which seeks to promote family reconciliation as the first step towards conflict resolution.







## Programme Focus

Our focus will be to only mediate in family-related matters. We will not mediate in financial or commercial disputes. We hope that members of the community will consider accessing our services, as one option to potentially resolve family and relationship-related matters in an amicable manner, possibly without resorting to the court system.

## The Community Mediation Process

There is no compulsion for anyone to use the Community Mediation Service as its use is voluntary for all parties concerned.

We hope that members of our community will consider using this alternative platform which promotes a non-confrontational approach drawing on community resources and goodwill to deal with family disputes. We assure all users of this service that full confidentiality will be maintained for all mediation cases. Also, nothing divulged during the mediation process will be admitted in a court of law, should the matter eventually end up there. Appointment of mediators for all cases will be done only with the mutual consent of mediators as well as the separate parties seeking mediation.

To ensure that the service is provided in a professional manner, we have assembled a team of trained volunteer community mediators from diverse professional backgrounds.

We were fortunate to have the pro-bono services of Ms Rina Kalpanath Singh (a qualified legal mediator) to conduct a 3-day Mediation Training Programme for our pioneer group of volunteers. They underwent training similar to that provided for mediators at the Singapore Mediation Centre. Our trained volunteer mediators are S Karpal Singh Mehli (Programme Co-ordinator), S Amarjit Singh, S Deep Singh, S Dilbagh Singh, S Diljit Singh Athwal, S Gurdip Singh Usma, Ms Kamaljeet Kaur Toor, Ms Sarjit Kaur Khosa and S Surjit Singh Wasan.

## Appeal to the Community

We seek your support to urge families facing issues to consider resolving them within the community by accessing the SIWEC Community Mediation Service. Should you or a family you know require this service, please contact the SIWEC office at 6299 9234, or email [info@siwec.org](mailto:info@siwec.org).

In Guru Ji's Seva  
S. Gurdip Singh Usma  
Chairman Sikh Welfare Council



A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL WHO  
HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE!!



# APPRECIATION TEA 2017

Find your pics in the SIWEC [f](#) page and [Like](#) it!!

SIWEC hosted an Appreciation Tea to recognise the contribution of our community partners, volunteers and well-wishers on 1 April 2017. Certificates of appreciation were presented to volunteers, partner organisations and donors.

Our Guest of Honour, Senior Minister of State, PMO and MP for Jalan Besar GRC Mr Heng Chee How, spoke of his strong support of SIWEC's work within the community and appreciated its constant effort in reaching out to the needy.

There was heart felt sharing by volunteers as well as SIWEC clients. Sunil Singh, a well-wisher attending the event, was pleased to hear the testimony of SIWEC clients. He said, "Since signing up as a GIRO donor in 2012, I've had limited knowledge of the actual work done. After hearing from the client this afternoon, I have a much better appreciation of how SIWEC supports disadvantaged families".

The session concluded with Hi-Tea and networking amongst participants. Besides staff and representatives of various Sikh institutions, SIWEC was especially pleased to welcome representatives from our community partners including SANA, SINDA, Singapore Prisons Service, NCSS, IMH, C3A as well as from Bukit Batok Home for the Aged, Jamiyah Home, Lighting Hearts Lighting Homes, Moral Welfare Home, Society for the Aged Sick, Sree Narayana Mission as well as the Ashram.

Guest of Honour Mr Heng Chee How  
Senior Minister of State, PMO & MP for Jalan Besar GRC





# MY JOURNEY TO BECOMING A SIWEC VOLUNTEER – BALBIR KAUR

I grew up watching my father doing selfless service at Sikh Institutions and was deeply motivated from a young age.

I took up studies in Psychology and was doing an Internship in the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). In the course of my work there, the exposure to the Drug Prevention Programme opened my eyes. I became interested to help the Sikh youth and decided to sign up with the Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association (SANA) as a counselor.

My children were concerned by my choice as they feared for my safety, knowing that I was a rather timid and introverted person. Despite that, I took the chance and went in well prepared to face the challenges.

Wow! I realised it was the best chance given to me. Today, after a decade, there is no turning back and I happily look forward to Saturdays to take the long journey where I volunteer. Believe me, upon entering the Prison to help the inmates, a feeling of contentment overtakes me.

I feel this sewa is the highest form of sewa to incarcerated humans. I will continue doing this sewa as long as my health permits me. I call upon my fellow Sikh brothers and sisters to take on this road less travelled, to help rehabilitate and reintegrate inmates back into the community as responsible members of society.



**Be a Volunteer with SIWEC.  
Sign up now!**

**WWW.SIWEC.ORG**



# ISTRI SAT SANG'S CONTRIBUTION

Singapore's Sikh Women's Wing, Istri Sat Sang (ISS) recently made a significant monetary contribution to SIWEC. On 19<sup>th</sup> April 2017, Mdm. Jagir Kaur, Chairwoman of ISS extended a donation of SGD Five Thousand (\$5000) to SIWEC. SIWEC is grateful to ISS for their commendable initiative and looks forward to future contributions by the community. Such benevolent acts will help to ensure that the welfare needs of the families and individuals we serve will continue to be met.



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

SIWEC hosted an awareness and outreach initiative on the 12th of April 2017, in conjunction with the Vesakhi celebrations at the Central Sikh Temple (CST), to engage as many Sikh devotees as possible. Our outreach effort was supported by the National Kidney Foundation (NKF), Society for the Aged Sick and the Pioneer Generation Office (PGO), with each agency hosting an information booth at CST.

SIWEC has identified the need to raise awareness of senior support services for the elderly. Our outreach efforts have lately been focused on community touchpoints such as our network of Gurdwaras, to engage Sikh seniors and their families.

One area of concern is that seniors with little or no formal education and their family caregivers lack an awareness of new initiatives and programmes targeted at the elderly.

The difficulty in communicating to seniors on how to benefit from new policies and services has prompted SIWEC's sustained outreach which complements public education campaigns mounted periodically by the Ministry of Health, the Health Promotion Board and the Agency of Integrated Care.

SIWEC also reached out to seniors beyond the Sikh community by informing our community partners' clients living in the neighbourhood to access the screening at CST. Seniors visiting CST were encouraged to undergo the free



health screening by trained volunteers, while family caregivers also got tips on how to better monitor their loved ones' health.

Staff from the PGO also engaged devotees on the role of Pioneer Ambassadors and invited those who were interested to consider signing up as community volunteers.

Health Care Practitioner Dr. Trishpal valued the opportunity to review and analyse the screening results of close to 90 visitors to CST, and to also provide focused health advice to each senior and their family caregivers.

Dr. Trishpal shared, "We often find our elderly loved ones feeling helpless and



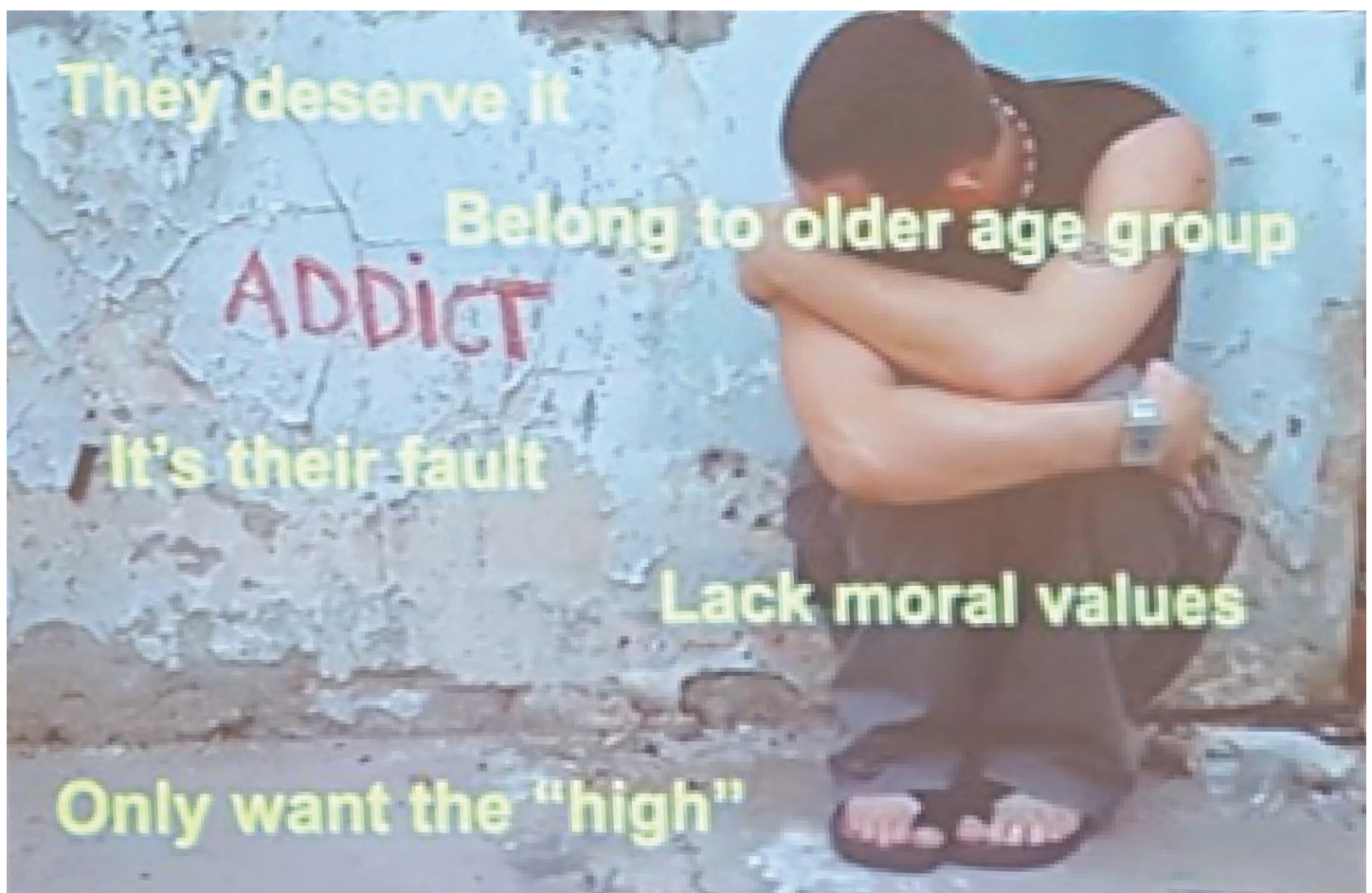
dejected from the effect of ailments that can be quite easily treated with early detection. They often simply do not know who or where they can go to for help. Harnessing community platforms to increase awareness is an equally important channel to remind them to prioritise their health and general well-being".

SIWEC will continue to harness existing platforms to raise awareness of community resources and engage seniors to prioritise their personal health and well-being. We are especially appreciative of the contribution of our community partners and volunteers who contributed to the success of the outreach initiative.

## UNDERSTANDING ADDICTION

It is a known fact that many people who are afflicted with addictions do not come forward to seek treatment for a variety of reasons. It is a growing trend not just among the youth here but also affects people across varying age groups.

SIWEC organised a talk on "Understanding Addiction" conducted by Senior Counsellor, Mr S.B. Viknesan from National Addiction Management Service (NAMS). The session explained the consequences of substance (alcohol and drugs) abuse and compulsive gambling behaviour. Besides providing participants with useful knowledge on addictions and how to identify people with such behaviours, the talk also provided tips on how people could help themselves or their loved ones to seek help and treatment.



"A slide from the talk explaining public stigma towards incarcerated addicts"





*Wishing You a*

**HAPPY NATIONAL DAY**



#OneNationTogether

## SIKH WELFARE COUNCIL

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### LIST OF SERVICES

01	HOME VISITS & FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES	HOSPITAL VISITS & HEALTH CARE AMBASSADOR PROGRAM	06
02	COMMUNITY MEDIATION	FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE & FOOD ON THE TABLE PROGRAM	07
03	EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES	ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE PROGRAM	08
04	OUTREACH ACTIVITIES	PRISON COUNSELLING & AFTERCARE PROGRAM	09
05	ELDERCARE PROGRAM	FAMILY BEREAVEMENT SERVICES	10

