

Guru Gobind Singh Children's Foundation

Issue 28

January 2011

GURU NANAK FOOD DRIVE



This was the 9th Annual Guru Nanak Food Drive and it achieved the highest total collection of 12,053 lbs of food. The previous record of 7,736 lbs. The higher collection can be a result of several factors, greater need and response from the sangat, the food drive was held over a longer period, the response from the Gurdwaras was stronger than ever and also because the ethnic media got behind the collection by getting the message out to the community. This year's collection went to two food banks. The food collected from Gurdwaras across the Greater Toronto Area and Halton went to the Toronto Daily Bread Food Bank, and the food from Mississauga went to the Seva Food Bank. In total the following eighteen Gurdwaras were involved which is also a new record:

- Gurdwara Damesh Darbar (Ebenezer)
- Gurdwara Jot Parkash Sahib (SunPac)
- Gursikh Sabha Canada (Scarborough)
- Guru Ravidas Sahib (Burlington)
- Halton Sikh Cultural Association (Oakville)
- Nanaksar Gurdwara Gursikh Temple (Etobicoke)
- North York Sikh Temple
- Ramgarhia Sikh Society (Rivalda)
- Rexdale Singh Sabha (Baywood)
- Ontario Khalsa Darbar (Dixie)
- Shromani Sikh Sangat (Dunwin)
- Shromani Sikh Sangat (Pape)
- Sikh Heritage Centre (Mayfield)
- Sikh Lehar Centre (Bramsteele)
- Sikh Spiritual Centre (Toronto)
- Sri Guru Nanak Centre (Glidden)
- Sri Guru Singh Sabha (Malton)
- Sri Guru Singh Sabha (Weston)

There were 2 trucks and a van collecting the food all day on November 28, a true team effort with almost no breaks. The GGSCF would also like to thank Aura Kitchens and East



Metal Products for allowing us to use their trucks for the collection. Food was delivered to Seva Food Bank (2,074 lbs) and to the Daily Bread Food Bank (9,979 lbs). The Foundation would like to thank everyone who made the effort to donate food this year. A special thanks to all volunteers who assisted through the various stages of the food drive.

SCOTIABANK MARATHON



Bright and early on Sunday September 26th, many individuals from the GGSCF set out to complete the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront marathon. Although the sun had yet to rise, these individuals gathered together to take on one of the most enduring physical activities of their lifetime. As the marathoners and half-marathoners assembled at the start line the group gathered to wish each other all the best. With that said they went off, accompanied by the cool weather. Just as the Run Across Canada has exposed the

GGSCF to the beautiful country we call home, the Scotiabank Marathon allowed participants to take in the scenery of downtown Toronto as they ran alongside the waterfront. The marathon is well known for being very flat, fast and festive; this off course only encouraged all participants as they ran alongside entertainment and enthusiastic supporters cheering along the way.

The majority of the group had never taken part in a half-marathon and so naturally they were determined to successfully complete the course. With both high spirits and determination all were able to add a new accomplishment to their list. The adults showed that age is truly only a number, and that nothing is impossible! as the oldest runner was the only one to complete the full marathon. Next year more of the participants are hoping to take part in the full-marathon. All in all it was a very active day full of much excitement and a bit of friendly competition, the soreness felt over the next couple of days was definitely worth it all. Next year the foundation hopes to see Fauja Singh running the full-marathon in Toronto as he will then be 100 years old.

SEVA FOODBANK



GGSCF was introduced to a new great initiative that was assembled by members of the community to embody some of Sikhism's main tenants and in essence contribute to the general outcry of less fortunate human beings. This newly developed initiative of Sikhs Serving Canada, a registered not-for-profit organization, is the Seva Food Bank that has recently opened up in Mississauga, Ontario. They act on the basic Sikh tenets of sarbat da bhallā (the well-being of all) and seva (selfless service) and in doing so strive to fight hunger in our community by ensuring all citizens have access to an adequate, sustainable and nutritious supply of food. Several members of the GGSCF were fortunately able to make it to the opening day of the food bank in early September of this year. They were given a great Punjabi welcoming with food and opportunities to help around. They were also taken for a tour of the food bank and shown how the process of donation and order works. Not only was the initiative great but the people were amazing as well. The group consisted of people from all different ages and ethnicities. It was another refreshing event to meet new people who loved serving the community just as much. Furthermore, the official opening of the Seva Food Bank was by mayor of Mississauga herself, Hazel McCallion. The Seva Food Bank is a great opportunity to connect with one's

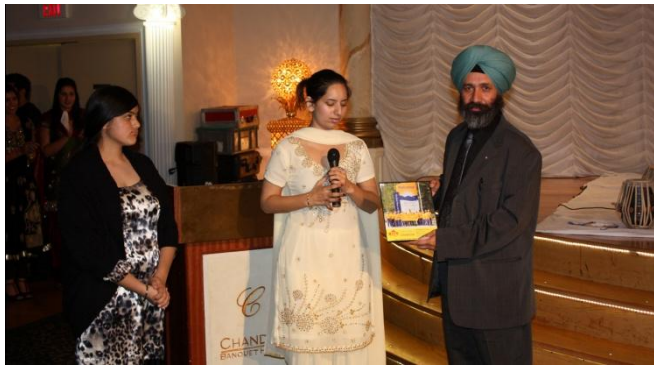
immediate community and give back on a local scale. Moreover, the Foundation was asked to help volunteer with the Food Bank and without any hesitations we were more than happy to help. They immediately had agreed to train members at the October GGSCF meeting, who would be interested in volunteering at the Food Bank on Sunday afternoons. The members of the Seva Food Bank came from the west side of Toronto and explained to us the main reasons why the food bank was needed. They also trained us with the use of power point presentation and information booklets. Through their presentation they were able to explain the way that the food bank system works and that one must understand the safety concerns before working in a warehouse environment. They informed us that volunteers are needed in all aspects of the process, from fund raising to downright filling orders and shelves.



In addition, on Sunday November 14, 2010, eight volunteers from the GGSCF went to help out for the first time with the new Seva Food Bank in Mississauga. The volunteers spent time taking food orders from those that use the food bank and then filling these food orders based on what was available. It was a little disheartening to see the need especially in a country like Canada and the limited amounts of food that were available. It was also reassuring to see the way Seva Food Bank is working to fill this need especially on a cold wet afternoon when some of the patrons started waiting before the food bank opened that day. The GGSCF would like to thank Sarpreet who took this new initiative to organize the volunteers and will be doing so again in the future. For more information on the food bank visit their website: www.sevafoodbank.com



SURSAGAR ANNIVERSARY



Thursday October 28, 2010, SurSagar held its 16th Anniversary at Chandni Banquet Hall as well as announcing their future projects. Amritvir Kaur and Jaytagan Kaur represented the GGSCF at the event and acknowledged the generosity of organizations like SurSagar, a medium that the children/youth can use to contact many people in the community. A special mention was made of last year's Run Across Canada and all the coverage the radio and TV station provided. Ravinder Singh Pannu, the owner and founder of SurSagar was also presented with a plaque in the way of thanking the whole SurSagar team for their long term and ongoing support to the GGSCF.

BIBLE COLLEGE VISIT



On Saturday November 6, 2010, mature bible college students from Peterborough visited the Gurdwara. The students are studying World Religions and each year the class makes a trip to visit the various places of worship in Toronto and the Gurdwara is usually the last place they visit as they get to try the Langar before they head back to Peterborough after a long day. Avneet Kaur and Surjit Singh greeted the visitors and went through a presentation to explain the basic beliefs of Sikhism. There were lots of interesting questions asked by the students in particular the comparison of the belief of this faith and the others they study. The discussion would be useful to Sikhs as well as many things we take for granted being born into the faith while it is refreshing to hear how others view us and our practices.

GURU NANAK WALK



This year's 10km route was chosen by Sarpreet and involved a walk from Lake Ontario and along the Don River to Todmorden Mills, the first lumber mill that supplied wood to Toronto in 1795. In all, 34 participants from all ages took part on October 23rd, a wonderful warm autumn day and very appropriate to see the seasonal fall colours of the trees and leaves. Parts of the walk went through Toronto's history over the past two centuries which was very intriguing. Participants saw the Eastern Gap which was formed in 1852 by a storm thus creating the Toronto Islands, Cherry Beach, the Toronto harbour, the Don River and many bridges crossing it including the Prince Edward Viaduct (Bloor Street bridge), Rosedale valley and Riverdale Farm. The walk took a lot longer because of the many places to see along the way and with all the climbing up and down in the valley.



INTERNATIONAL YOUTH SYMPOSIUM

On August 5th to 8th there was the International Sikh Youth Symposium held at Scarborough Gurdwara. For three days there were speeches from children as young as 6 years all the way up to young adults aged 22 years. There were debates about Sikhism and its relevance to everyday life. There was also a banquet for the participants from all over North America as well as trips to local attractions. The GGSCF volunteers played a small role in transporting the children/youth participants with family members to and from the airport as well as daily trips from their hotel to the Gurdwara and back. The event was an excellent way to see what children and youth are capable of given the opportunity to read books on Sikh history and then relate these events to the impact on their daily lives.

POSSIBLE WORLDS FOUNDATION

In December 2010 the GGSCF Board endorsed the support of a new charity that serves to better the lives of children in need, the "Possible World Foundation". It is a registered Canadian charity that supports orphans in Nepal. The orphan homes for 130+ children were founded and managed by Michael John Hess and the founder of the charity here in Canada is Toni Thomson a resident of Toronto. The charity seeks to free children from poverty and exploitation by providing a safe environment for them to grow up in and obtain an education free from societal rejection.

The charity and the needs were brought to the attention of the GGSCF by Karindeep Kaur and Sunita Bhowmik who have been supporters of the GGSCF since its inception in 1999. In November, a DVD was viewed at the monthly meeting and the overall feeling was this charity is very much like the GGSCF and that we should support the work that it does. If you would like to sponsor a child please let us know and the cost is \$20/month.

GGSCF MANAGEMENT CHANGES

For 2011 there are a couple of changes to the Board and Council of the GGSCF. Amritvir Kaur was nominated to the Council for 2011 because of her strong leadership and organizational skills. She will be the youngest member but the Board is confident she will contribute actively. The Council also elected to change one Board member for 2011, the new member being Nimratvir Kaur. Nimratvir was chosen as she set goals in 2010 and worked actively at achieving these. She organized the CN Tower Stair Climb, the meeting at Dixie Gurdwara and letter writing sessions to the sponsored children. She has been involved with the GGSCF since it started and over the years has grown from a participating child to a leader and motivator for others. Listening to her speeches you realize her depth of understanding and passion for life.



Amritvir Kaur

Nimratvir Kaur

Harjot Singh has stepped down from the Board after serving five years. His accomplishments are too many to mention here, but he is a founding member of the GGSCF and one of many with whom the Children's Run Across Canada could not have been accomplished. His insight/wisdom and the ability to get things done have all contributed to the GGSCF and will continue to contribute in the years to come.

A full list of GGSCF Board and Council members is available on the web site. This includes meeting dates for the Board which are open to all the volunteers of the GGSCF and anyone else interested in the foundation. However,

proposals from groups/organizations need to be made at monthly meeting and should there be interest by the volunteers the matter will be considered by the Board.

GURU NANAK EAP FOR STUDENTS

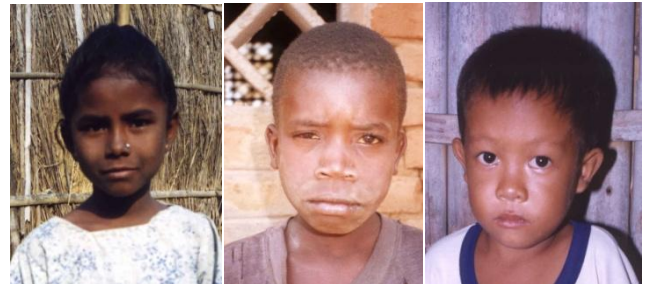
The pilot Guru Nanak EAP (Education Assistance Program) for Sikh students was in full swing over the summer. The EAP evaluation committee review applications and three awards were made. These loans were made to students of engineering, business and law at Ryerson University and Windsor University. The purpose of the program is to permit students to borrow money to complete their studies and then pay back the loans when they have employment. The returned loan money would then be reused to support future students. For those wanting to know more please visit the GGSCF web site.

CHILDREN SPONSORED

It has been reported that we do not provide enough information about the children we sponsor. To correct this we would like to update you on the number of children presently being supported by the various charities the GGSCF supports:

Plan Canada - 45
Vocational Rehabilitation Training Centre - 50
Joti Saroop Kanya Aasra Trust - 12
World Vision - 9
SOS Children's Villages - 6
Navjivini School of Special Education - 90
Possible Worlds Foundation - 5

At the end of 2010 the total number of children being supported was 217 or \$5,222 in monthly financial support.



Sponsored children – from left to right Laxmi, Tambulaini and Edmond

EDITOR – Sundeep Singh

A historical year has surpassed for the GGSCF and our volunteers as we have celebrated our 11th anniversary and on the way have accomplished several feats. Recently, many have debated the inactivity of the Foundation in our community. However, in my opinion the Foundation has made its strongest ties to the community to date. For example, the record-breaking Food Drive which was across 18 Gurdwaras shows the growth of the Foundation within our community. Completing a common goal unites us all and that is the wonderful experience of seva.

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