



FAUJA SINGH'S LAST RUN IN TORONTO



One year after being the first 100 year-old to complete a marathon, Fauja Singh returned to complete the 5km in the STWM in an astonishing time of 43m32s. Although it was pouring down with rain, it did not deter this 101 year-old. When asked if the rain bothered him by the media he replied, "this is natural, happens all the time, you cannot stop running just because of a little rain". Over 101 people from the community took part in the STWM (to celebrate his 101 years), mostly in the 5km but some in the marathon races as well; such is the legacy he leaves from the inspiration he provides.

Although he started off at the back (he did not want to slow down other runners), it was not long before he picked up the pace and overtook hundreds along the way as well disciplined community supporters ran behind him and as everyone he passed cheered him along. Along the route were two buses of GGSCF volunteers, the youngest being 9 years-old, who stood along the route and helped to control pedestrians and also give water to the runners of all the races. Although all were soaked, they lifted the spirits of the runners by all the shouting and screaming support they provided. At the finish, Fauja Singh was surrounded by the media and following this, he went to City Hall to have pictures taken with his supporters from around the world.

PACKED 4 DAY SCHEDULE

Fauja Singh's arrived to Toronto to celebrate his accomplishments and completed his final good-bye race in the Toronto Waterfront Marathon, an event in which he has set several records for his age category. As soon as he arrived, he headed directly from the airport to participate in relay torch run in Greektown for the opening of the Marathon festivities. The following day, he attended two

press conferences, visited children at the Khalsa School, and also attended Dixie Gurdwara much to the delight of all those present. In the evening he visited three Punjabi media outlets as well as pre-recording for the South Asian Awards that same evening. The next morning was another busy day when he took part in an early morning run for international athletes at 9am from the Running Room Store on Wellington Street. After the run, he attended the STWM EXPO as a speaker with his coaches, Harmander Singh and Nimral Singh, and also met the Toronto Vegetarian Association. Later that afternoon, he made a visit to Scarborough Gurdwara, did a training run with children and well wishers around Milliken Park where the community got to warm up with him and his coaches and do a 2Km lap around the park. This was followed with a birthday celebration with children and, of course, lots of pictures and signing of autographs. Of course the next day he was busy with the STWM and meeting family and on Monday he flew back to London, UK. Fauja Singh's real dream is that more people in our community "run/walk" and keep themselves busy and healthy, as he says it is what has kept him alive. The GGSCF hopes to take up this challenge next year.





On Saturday September 1st, the GGSCF held its monthly meeting at Scarborough Gurdwara. It was a very special evening as the Foundation held its kickoff meeting for the Run Around the World project. A very informative presentation was made by Amanjit Singh which highlighted the steps (Who, What, When, Where, How) required for the Foundation to accomplish this monumental undertaking. The meeting was a very important marker of planting a seed for this new venture currently targeted for 2019.

Some participants from the group's first run in 1993 were present at the meeting along with Supriya Kaur who drove 3 hours from London, Ontario just to attend. We are grateful to all the individuals who came out as a project of this magnitude will require a "true team effort" and we encourage others to also get involved. We were also fortunate to make new friends that evening, who wished us the very best in our future endeavors. These guests, which joined the meeting for a short period of time, included Granthi Jaswinder Singh from Sri Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) and Baba Satnam Singh from Thailand.



GURU NANAK FOOD DRIVE

This year, 4375 lbs of food was collected for the Daily Bread Food Bank on the occasion of Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Gurbpurab. This was the 18th year we have had the food drive at Scarborough Gurdwara, who have been very supportive. We would like to thank all the sangat who contributed and helped to put food on the table for those who are in need.



MASTERS BIBLE COLLEGE VISIT

On November 10th, Professor Graham Gibson from Peterborough brought 38 of his students to visit various religious places in Toronto. Their last stop was at Scarborough Gurdwara where they were welcomed by GGSCF volunteers who showed them around the Gurdwara. Ridhi Kaur (who just got married) made a presentation on the basics of Sikhism, what happens in the Gurdwara and how Sikhs contribute and participate in the larger Canadian community. The guests also got a chance to ask questions and partake in langar, which they very much enjoyed. The GGSCF supports these types of educational exchange as it is an excellent way to create a better understanding between people of different faiths.



PERSONAL CARDS

Children and youth gathered to make New Year's thank-you cards for the monthly donors that support the children that the GGSCF sponsors. Much fun was had while drawing and colouring and some of the participants also managed to make pop-up cards! The end result was very colourful and creative and we know the effort will be appreciated by all of those that receive a card.

On March 9th, more than a dozen children and youth came together and made birthday cards for the children that the Foundation sponsors. The kids, big and small alike, had loads of fun colouring and drawing their little masterpieces. Flowers, cartoon characters, balloons and pop-up hearts; the wonderful creations are all sure to bring a smile to the faces of all the kids who will get them.



FRED VICTOR CENTRE

After a long time, the GGSCF visited the Fred Victor Centre's women's shelter on December 30th and took a vegetarian meal for those living at the centre located in Downtown Toronto. The centre had already prepared a meal and so our volunteers served this and the chick peas/rice were kept for dinner. Jasmin, Imanjeet, Simmar & Amanjeet enjoyed serving the food and the women at the shelter very much appreciated the help from these young people. Members of the foundation have been attending now on a monthly basis and have enjoyed the wonderful experience at the centre. Many of our young volunteers get a chance to attend the centre alongside our adults. It is an excellent opportunity for our youth to become pro-active in community initiatives.



BUILDING, GROWING, AND LEARNING

This year's Building Bridges leadership session took place on December 28th at Scarborough Gurdwara and focused on structural changes to the Foundation, but also discussed leadership styles, team dynamics, individual thought processes, and the organization's roots. The Council started the session with a short discussion on the choices we make. Afterward, a new structure for the Foundation was proposed and adopted. Attendees were separated into four groups: *activities*, *planning*, *administration* and *programs*. Currently, the Board is not able to provide mentorship as they are too busy organizing events and this hinders growth.

In this structure, each team will take responsibility for different aspects of the Foundation: *activities* will focus on participation and volunteer base growth; *planning* will organize events; *programs* will sustain child sponsorship, EAP and CYDE; and *administration* will work on keeping records and external communications. The hope is that this will increase efficiency and encourage more ownership.



After the break, different leadership styles were discussed along with the benefits and drawbacks of each and attendees had a chance to reflect. Following the discussion, the four teams competed in a tower-building exercise with straws and paperclips. Upon completion, each group went over team dynamics and how it impacted their success or failure. The session then transitioned into a reflective activity about hemispheric dominance where each individual completed a test to see which side of their brain was dominant and learned about how this impacts the way in which they work. Finally, the group went back to our roots to discuss the vision and the mission of the Foundation followed by a reflection on the session. Overall, it was a success as the new structure provides potential for improvement and the 42 attendees learned a lot and enjoyed themselves.

CYDE



The Canadian Youth Development Endowment (CYDE) initiative by the GGSCF was set up this year as a pilot program. The program sees to support a high school student to spend one week in Costa Rica to help build a school with Projects Abroad, an organization that provides international volunteering opportunities. At the monthly meeting held on December 2nd, awards were given to three of the four applicants who had been shortlisted from the applications. An interview process will now shortlist those into two who will qualify for this challenge and then report back to the group on their experience.

MONTHLY DONORS

The GGSCF has a new telephone number 416-564-3939 and with this new letterhead and receipt books. One of the difficulties the organization faces is managing all the administration without volunteers in particular with our child sponsorship program. It was difficult to keep up with changes in information, addresses, emails from our monthly donors. Often messages were taken by different volunteers and communications was lacking to the frustration of the monthly donors. Also sponsored children profiles were not being kept up to date and there was little information being provided to the monthly donors.

This matter was discussed at the Building Bridges as a serious weakness and steps are underway to address this situation. One of these changes was to have one GGSCF telephone number and all calls are now logged and tracked so that information is not lost and follow up is made before the logged items is closed off. We apologize to all our monthly donors who are very loyal and understanding for this shortfall as we try to address this matter and improve our internal communications.

The second issue is getting updated pictures of the children we sponsor to the monthly donors. This information is lacking especially from India where the charities do not understand this need, unlike the professionally run charities like Plan Canada and World Vision. To address this we will share news we learn in the newsletters and when our volunteers visit India and are able to take pictures we will share them. One of our Council members Surjit Singh Hayre is currently in India and will bring back updates and pictures of the children in India.

SPONSORED CHILDREN UPDATE

The total number of sponsored children we now have is 302 from the following organizations:

15	Joti Saroop Kanya Aasra Trust
150	Navjivini School of Special Education
50	Plan Canada
20	Possible Worlds
8	SOS Children's Villages
50	Vocational Rehabilitation Training
9	World Vision



Juna is a girl the GGSCF supports through the monthly donor program with Possible Worlds. She lives in Nepal and was found eating mud when he father left her to the place she now calls home. Her father did not have a house and was unable to support her. The little support we send makes a huge difference in her life.



The Navjivini School of Special Education has had two towers built to house the mentally children that are under its care. The buildings were donated by business man S.P.S. Oberoi. The pictures were taken by GGSCF volunteer Ranbir when he visited the children during his holiday in India. Baltej Singh Pannu has also quit his job here in Canada and now helps at the School. If you go to India please visit Navjivini as it is a life changing experience.



The Joti Saroop Kanya Asara Trust also constructed a new building for the girls that are under its care. The land was donated and other funds were collected from NRIs and local community. This facility will offer better room for the girls than their former rented facility where there was inadequate washing and cooking facilities.

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As the years go by it is refreshing to see how much some individuals and organizations achieve in their lives. Fauja Singh with his running, GGSCF kids with planning to run around the world, drawing birthday cards for their brothers and sisters, Navjivini with the two new buildings, JSKAT with the new home for girls, Juna surviving hunger. In the world where the media often only report doom and gloom, it is inspiring to see the humanity shining through. Could not imagine the world if our Gurus had not shown us the light as to what is truly important and meaningful in life.

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