

Guru Gobind Singh Children's Foundation

Issue 10

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AKHAND PATH 5TH ANNIVERSARY



What a way to start a New Year that marks the 5th Anniversary of the GGSCF. A Sri Akhand Path was held at Dixie Gurdwara on January 9 to 11, 2004. The path and kirtan was predominately done by youth all volunteers under the direction Tajinder Kaur Sanghera.



It was five years ago that children held a charity dinner in January 1999 to mark the 300th anniversary of the creation of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh. The children and youth celebrated this occasion by establishing the GGSCF and with a relay run from Toronto to Ottawa to mark the event. In the five years since the number of children that are being helped has grown from the initial 5 to over 100 children. At the event Gurjit Kaur Flora spoke about what the GGSCF meant to her and how it had changed her life by being involved and thereby also changing the lives of other children.



In reflecting back the GGSCF has come a long way in the last five years but many volunteers feel it has so far to go yet. With

WaheGuru's blessing one step at the time it is hoped that we can move on that path and attain the vision of the GGSCF stated below:

"A Foundation run by children/youth with a vision to help other children meet their basic needs, while adding meaning to their lives, and carrying out the work in the spirit of the teachings of Sikh Gurus"

BRANCH 0311

The GGSCF has a new branch at Ontario Khalsa Darbar. The Gurdwara Committee approved the branch after a presentation was made by children and youth to the management on October 5, 2003. The first meeting was held by the children and youth on November 22, 2003 at which it was agreed to hold future monthly meetings on the third Sunday of each month from 4pm to 6pm. This is a good achievement for the children and youth that previously had to travel to Brampton or Scarborough for meetings.



The GGSCF would like to acknowledge the outstanding support by the Gurdwara Committee towards the children and youth. Not only did they approve the branch but also gave a room inside the Gurdwara that can be used by the branch. A computer and furniture was also donated. The GGSCF hopes it can show in time that the Gurdwara Committee made the right decision. The children and youth responded to the support by helping with renovation of the library and a Food Drive on Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Gurpurab.

GURU NANAK WALK



This fall the GGSCF had a 16 km walk along the Toronto waterfront from the Eastern Beeches to the Western Beeches. The event was held on October 12, 2003 and many participated in the event from across GTA. The event that was a struggle for some was to remember the great journeys that Guru Nanak Dev Ji undertook in his lifetime to spread the message of peace and teach us that we are all the creation of One God. The participants walked, ran, roller bladed across the Martin Goodman Trail along the waterfront seeing many of the sights that we often miss when we drive by. Amritvir, Nimratvir and Rimpay from Branch 0302 managed the event with help from others branches. They also prepared signs/posters of Guru Nanak Dev Ji's travels that participants could read along the route and answer general knowledge questions.

FIRST GGSCF DEBATE



With an objective of having more communication and opinion forming discussions between children and youth the GGSCF held its first debate on October 26, 2003. The debate motion was "Are parents raising their children well". The debate was chaired by Parminder Kaur Flora and the main speakers were Charanjeet, Jasraj, Gunpreet, Gurjit, Sidd and Paramjit. There was a good turn out and lots of ideas and opinions expressed both by adults who were interested in the debate topic and also the youth who participated. The key point was how you can present your views, opinions and have facts to backup your position and to do this constructively while also allowing and listening to other opinions.

GURU NANAK FOOD DRIVE

The total amount collected this year was 7,500lbs and \$770. This was a little less than last year but still a huge amount. The following Gurdwaras worked with the GGSCF in this community effort:

- Brampton Gurdwara (Sikh Heritage Centre)
- Mississauga Gurdwara (Shiromani Sikh Sangat)
- North York Gurdwara & Weston Road Gurdwara
- Oakville Gurdwara (Sikh Cultural Society)
- Dixie Gurdwara (Ontario Khalsa Darbar)
- Scarborough Gurdawara (Gursikh Sabha Canada)

Inderpal Kaur Wig main organizer said, "It is good to see that while remembering Guru Nanak Dev Ji's birthday that we as a community actually contribute to those in need like our Guru's teachings".



HUNGRY MOOSE PARADE

The GGSCF took part in the Hungry Moose Parade again on thanks giving October 13, 2003. The route was the same as last year from the Fire Station at Yonge and Lawrence to the North York Harvest Food Bank. Apart from the parade the GGSCF kids helped to unload and sort the food at the end. Taranpreet Kaur Billing the event coordinator for the youth also made a donation of \$200 from the Guru Gobind Singh Children's Foundation.

MONTHLY SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

As outlined in the last new letter the GGSCF has now a monthly sponsorship program. This allows those contributing funds to sponsor a child through one of five charities or just made a monthly contribution to the GGSCF. The program means that the contributions are made automatically by electronic banking from the contributors account to the GGSCF account. Tax receipts are issues in January for all the donations made in the previous year.

Manpreet who manages the program said, "It has been successful in pushing the number of children we help to over a 100 by the end of January and the numbers keep going up as more contributors join the program. No amount is too small some of the younger members still in high school/university contribute \$5 per month. It is not the amount but the willingness to see the young ones want to do their part. Other who work sponsor one or more children based on their circumstances and means. Those who join and want to sponsor a child are sent a profile and a photograph of the child their money is helping. Also all the money goes towards helping children as all the administration is provided by volunteers. We really appreciate the support and encouragement we receive".

GURSIKH UNITED SOCCER CLUB

During 2003 the GGSCF was supported numerous times by Gursikh United Soccer Club under the leadership of Sidd and BA. The soccer club helped the Brampton Branch with the Guru Nanak Walk by combining the event with their end of season trip to Ontario Place.



The trip to Ontario Place was successful and what was most popular was the "India Kingdom of the Tiger" on the huge OMNI Max screen at Ontario Place and all the rides of course.

FOOD FOR HOMELESS

Like previous years the GGSCF took free hot meals to the homeless and those on low income. The meals were served at the Fred Victor Centre once a month on a Sunday from 4pm to 6pm.

This year the responsibility for this effort was transfer from Gagandeep Kaur Babra who has gone to university to Gunpreet Singh Rekhi. Gunpreet showed excellent leadership in getting many new individuals to go for the first time and the food was taken over five months from November 2003 to March 2004. All those who help out enjoy the experience and talking to the homeless who now know them very well. In fact some eagerly await the meal as it is free and also different from what they typically receive. Some comments by the youth that attended this years program are given below.



Manminder Kaur Mokha - Thinking that you've fed about a hundred people in just an hour or so makes you feel really good inside... If you've never gone to the homeless Shelter before, GO NOW.

Sharon Kaur Ruprai - I know now that I will not throw out any leftovers...I now say Thank you more than ever to my parents for putting food on the table for me and giving me shelter and clothes!

Sukhpreet Kaur Punia - Some people that I talked to at the homeless shelter had once gone around the world to visit countries such as India, and Pakistan and now they were in the homeless shelter for food... It changed my perspective on life by showing me that life does not evolve around money

Harjot Singh Sabharwal - The experience helped me to lower my pride and to cherish everything that I have... I saw and talked to people who can't even afford to eat on a regular basis, and if everyone can see that maybe they will appreciate what they have

Hardeep Kaur Shergill - I learned that even though we live in a "democratic" and "just" nation, there was a huge gap between the rich and poor... This experience makes you realize just how lucky we are, and opens up ones eyes to reveal the injustice in the Canadian society.

Ishnan Kaur - I learned a lot. For example how appreciative people are, who don't have as much as we do. And we have so much yet don't have the time to thank our parents... I assumed the people would be scary and mean. However it was the total opposite. Those people are so thankful, and show so much care, I haven't seen for a long time.

WINTER SKATE



The winter skate on December 28, 2003 was again a huge success with more than hundred participants from Brampton, Mississauga, Toronto and Scarborough. The mild weather and the event being on a Sunday meant that the skating ring at Nathan Philips Square was packed out but that did not deter anyone from having fun and seeing the season lights.

The mild weather meant that young and old all tried to skate some for the first time, others experts and some even wearing the Maple Leaf shirts. As usual there was hot chocolate and hot fries from local vendors for all those who were tired out by the experience.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The children and youth have a busy year planned being the 5th anniversary of the GGSCF. For information on events and to get involved with, or to participate in these and other events of GGSCF, please visit our website regularly for updates at www.ggscf.com

SCHOOL VISIT

With the entire bad wrap that youth get with drugs and gangs here is something very positive. A class of students from Albert Campbell Collegiate High School visited the Gurdawara on December 12, 2003.

The students were explained about Sikhism by Avneet Kaur Jaswal. She is a former student at the school, now attending York University and representative of the GGSCF at Scarborough Gurdwara. There was debate and a question and answer period all of which kept the students engaged all day. The students really liked the Gurdwara food. Avneet said, "This sort of communication is very important to help others in the Canadian community understand who we as Sikhs are and also it makes us Sikhs proud of what we have and our rich history and belief system".



LETTER WRITING



On February 22, 2004 children wrote letters to the children the GGSCF supports. Many of the children found it fun and educational to read the profiles and learn more about the children the GGSCF is helping.

Most of the children found that life is very different for those they are helping and not at all like life in Canada. Things we take for granted like school, toys, TV, shoes are uncommon to many of the children.

LEADERSHIP



Pavandeep Singh Billing only 14 years old organized the first event for Branch 0311 by having a charity bowling trip to Trans Bowl on December 20, 2003. It was well attended and a great deal of fun was had by all. The event earned Pavandeep a well deserved the "Leadership Award of the Month". It is good to see the teenagers use the abundant energy they have to a worthy cause. Also Navdeep Singh Bains a volunteer and supporter of the children and youth with the GGSCF won the liberal nomination on March 21, 2004 for the riding of Mississauga/Brampton South. It is good to see the youth grow to be such positive role models, be active leaders in the Canadian community and motivate other children and youth for tomorrow.



CHANGE IN ORGANIZATION

The GGSCF Board was changed by the Council in January 2004. The following two new members were added:



Panveer Singh Lachhar, 20 years old student of Ryerson University who has helped to establish the Branch 0311. He has been involved with numerous events over the years with the runs in Dixie, the annual Hungry Moose parade and more recently with the Basketball Tournaments for children and youth.



Gurjit Kaur Flora a student of Agincourt Collegiate Institute. She will become a Board member in April when she turns 18 years. Gurjit has been a long time volunteer, even prior to the establishment of the GGSCF in 1999. She was involved with organizing the runs in Montreal and across Toronto. She is also a volunteer with Gursikh United children & youth soccer club.



Retiring from the Board is Manpreet Kaur Jaswal. She has been involved with the GGSCF since the beginning with contributions too many to mention here. She was the main organizer of the run in 1997 across Toronto, one of the organizers of the run to Ottawa in 1999, was the spokesperson for the foundation at Parliament Hill, founding Board Member of this charity, secretary and initiator of the monthly sponsorship program. She is only 24 years old presently studying at York University.



In April Gurjit will replace Harjot Singh Bains. Harjot joined in 1999 with the run from Toronto to Ottawa, a founding Board Member of this charity, organizer of all the runs 1000km and 24 hours runs at Dixie Gurdawara and run/walk children youth challenge at York University held in August 2003.

He also initiated the branch at Dixie Gurdawara and helped to keep the children and youth united across different Gurdwaras groups and regional/geographical boundaries. He is only 22 years old presently studying at Darmeian College at the University of Buffalo.

Both retiring Board Members will continue to be involved with the GGSCF. As the organization is young and small it cannot afford to "retire" anyone, all this means is that they no longer take legal responsibility for the GGSCF. All retired Board Members are expected to contribute more when they are off the Board than when they were on the Board, so the changes are a win win situation for the Guru Gobind Singh Children's Foundation.

HELPING MORE CHILDREN

The response from all those who have visited the Joti Saroop Kanya Aasra Trust and the Vocational Rehabilitation Training Centre has been very positive. Many have returned from their holiday in Punjab and have become part of the monthly sponsorship program. This has allowed the GGSCF to ask for the profiles of more children that we can help. Here are some of the new children we are helping.



EDITOR - Inderpal Kaur Wig

When you have set goals to achieve does time not fly by. It only seems like yesterday that we set out on our goal to establish a foundation under the name of our tenth Guru and the last five years have just gone by so quick. There have been struggles along the way but then there is with anything worth while achieving if you think about it. We do not have to look very far back to see this. Our parents struggle with us the children, their life would have been much simpler if they only looked after themselves, our Gurus lives were difficult and some sacrificed their families in the struggle to give us freedom of belief and break us away from the illusions of this world. Maybe it is the struggles that define us. During the last five years we have been blessed by Guruji in being able to help with the GGSCF and during this time he has helped us, as I am sure he will continue to help us in the times to come. May we be worthy of such blessing and confidence he has placed in us.

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