



BUILDING BRIDGES SESSION 2011



This year's Building Bridges leadership seminar took place on December 30 at Scarborough Gurdwara. Twenty-six participants attended the full-day session which focused on setting goals for the Foundation, learning how to organize events, and forming action plans for events that will take place in 2012 and beyond. The Council also announced changes that have been made to the Board for 2012.

The morning started off with a fun ice-breaker to allow everyone to get to know each other. Nimratvir Kaur led the session by talking about the Foundation's Vision and Mission. It was briefly discussed that perhaps the Vision could be interpreted differently to allow for more inclusivity of older volunteers and the changing age of the members. Amritvir Kaur then talked about the importance of setting goals, how to overcome the fear of failure and how to set S.M.A.R.T. goals. Everyone then set GGSCF goals for themselves for 2012 and for the 20th Anniversary in 2019.

After lunch, the Council and Board members spoke about what the Foundation means to them and shared their experiences. Other individuals also talked about its significance in their lives. Rashpal Kaur continued by talking about the importance of imagining and visualizing goals before they can be realized. She also talked about failure and commitment as well as characteristics or mindsets that individuals should bring to a project. Attendees then brainstormed ideas about events that could be done. In smaller groups, an action plan was developed for each of these events and presented to the larger group for feedback and discussion. These events included the annual seniors' trip, visits to food banks, the annual Guru Nanak Walk, the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon, an adopt-a-senior program and a Run around the World.

Upon conclusion of the session, the Council announced changes to the Board for 2012. Avneet Kaur, Jasmin Kaur and Sunny Singh stepped down after serving for two years or more. Chiranjeev Singh, Jagdeep Singh and Jasjit Singh were the new appointees and will join Nimratvir Kaur and Sarpreet Kaur.

GURU NANAK FOOD DRIVE



During two weeks in the month of November collection was made from the Sikh Sangat from 18 Gurdwaras across Toronto in support of the Toronto Daily Bread Food Bank and Seva Food Bank. On November 14, 2011, 6710 lbs of food was delivered to the Daily Bread Food Bank. This was the 10th year the food drive was held on Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Gurburab. This food amount is in addition to the food collected by Seva Food Bank on November 12, 2011 who had the support and assistance of the Punjabi media. The GGSCF would like to thank all those who contributed and donated to this cause.

YEAR IN REVIEW

On January 7, Sarpreet chaired the first meeting of the New Year at Scarborough Gurdwara where accomplishments were shared with a slide show of all GGSCF activities during 2011. Ajmer and Baldev shared a video showing the work that has been going on at Chakar, a village in India. The village already has a sports academy but is now well on its way to having a sewer system and sewage ponds for the treatment of waste and, in time, will be a model village for

India. The work is being done by the villagers themselves rather than government. Then, a video was shared of Fauja Singh's world record achievements for those who could not attend the actual event and awards left by "Sikhs in the City" were presented.



We also had 5 new members come to their first meeting, Aditi, Chas, Diljeet, Harminder and Richa as well as many faces we had not seen for a while. Jagdeep asked for support for a new video he was preparing for the GGSCF. Mandeep updated the group on the Building Bridges session that was held during the winter break. The Council mentioned the changes to the Board and all this information is on the web site which was updated by Amanjit.

WOMEN WITH PURPOSE AWARD



March 8th, 2012 was International Women's Day and the GGSCF was invited to the Fred Victor Centre (FVC) Women Fundraising Event attended by over 250 women. Wonderful prizes were auctioned off in support of the FVC's Women's Hostel. Following the auction, women then gathered at the Glenn Gould Studio for the evening's entertainment and to receive the Mary Sheffield "Women with Purpose" Awards. It was Mary Sheffield's vision that led to the development of the FVC, which today addresses poverty and homelessness. Along with Sarpreet, the award winners included a lady who after many years of abuse, both substance and physical, had the courage to turn her life around and now works/volunteers at the FVC. In the older

category was a sister who has dedicated her life to help the under-privileged. Sarpreet received the young women award for her volunteer work with the GGSCF. Sarpreet split the financial award between the GGSCF and the FVC.

FULKARI FUNCTION

On November 27th, a few volunteers of the Foundation attended Chirhian Da Chamba. The event was hosted by Fulkari Radio program at Dreams Convention Centre. The Foundation was invited to setup a booth at the event by Radio Host Harjot Ghuman-Matharu to help raise awareness of our community efforts. The purpose of the event was to have positive female empowerment and to bridge the gap between generations with the morale to do seva. It was an excellent event and opportunity for the Foundation to raise awareness in the community.

SAFAR WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CONFERERNC

On March 18th, GGSCF Volunteers set up a booth at Louise Arbour Secondary School where SAFAR hosted *Sharing Our Journeys – A Young Women's Leadership Conference*. The conference consisted of a panel of women from different careers. It was to inspire leadership in all young women in Peel Region secondary schools and to connect their creative inspiration to appropriate career paths by providing networking opportunities through Sikh women that are leaders within the community.

The youth were definitely engaged and eager to ask questions. Passion and contribution are the keys to a successful & meaningful career. The GGSCF was glad it could take part in the event as it was similar to the end-of-the-year Building Bridges seminar that takes place every December to unleash and



grow the leadership skills within all of us. SAFAR is *The Sikh Feminist Research Institute* which is an organization that helps to conduct and promote feminist research with a vision to promote gender equality.

PUNJAB CHARITY FOOD DRIVE



On April 14th as part of the Vaisakhi celebrations, the Punjab Charity Foundation held a Food Drive for Seva Food Bank. This was across the GTA outside various grocery stores where children collected donations. Seva Food Bank announced over 30,000 lbs of food was collected by the end of the day. The GGSCF helped in transporting food from Scarborough where it was collected at Golden Groceries and Subzi Mandi. A big thank you goes out to all those who contributed.

18th CONSECUTIVE CN TOWER CLIMB



On Saturday April 21st, the GGSCF group took part in the CN Tower Stair Climb for the World Wildlife Fund of Canada. This year, 22 participants took part on a cold and damp morning and raised \$2200 for the WWF. Our fastest climber in 15m 4s was Jesse Oliver who took part in the earlier climb at 6:30am with employees from East Metal who always join the GGSCF group. Jesse will hold the Mata Kishan Kaur Sidhu Cup for one year. Nimratvir, who organized the group's participation, thanked all those who took part as she mentioned that only one can be the fastest but what is more important is that you take part and in so doing, keep fit and help a really great cause. This year Jagdish Singh Grewal of Punjabi Post and long term supporter of the GGSCF (since the run in 1999) also took part in the climb with his two sons.



SCHOOL CHILDREN VISIT GURDWARA

Ahmadiyya Muslim Community school girls visited Scarborough Gurdwara on March 17th and were hosted by the GGSCF. The students were very much impressed with the building and how it was kept clean by volunteers. They also visited the kitchen to see how the female volunteers were actively involved with food preparation at the

Gurdwara; and, of course, they were treated with langar that they enjoyed, especially the "jalbis". They also liked the volunteer activities of the GGSCF, especially the CN Tower Stair Climbs, the Run across Canada and that we are helping children from all faiths in many parts of the world.

CENTENNIAL FOUNDATION GALA



On April 21st, the Sikh Foundation of Canada held its annual Centennial Gala at the Ritz-Carlton hotel in Downtown Toronto to promote Sikh heritage and culture by commemorating and celebrating the achievements of Sikhs and non-Sikhs in Canada. The event featured keynote speakers and awards presented to individuals for their outstanding social and cultural achievements. The evening also had performances from recognized musicians such as Violinder and Harbhajan Maan. The 2nd annual Scotiabank Sikh Foundation Scholarship was awarded to students at the event and the gala finished off with music and dance. The Foundation members in attendance enjoyed the event which was made possible by Gary Singh who donated a table to the GGSCF.

BALTEJ & NAVJIVINI

Our local journalist Baltej Singh Pannu left at the beginning of this year to help Navjivini School of Special Education. The school was looking for someone to take on the responsibility of running the organization into the future. Last year at a fund raising event, Baltej pledged to do this and this year he honoured his pledge by giving up his job and moving to India. Having been given so much love by the children and staff he said for him it is like returning home. He will be giving himself to this noble cause and service to humanity for his remaining years.



Before going, he gathered 35 more sponsors to help the elder people at the Sadhu Basant Trust associated with the Navjivini School for those who are adults but have no one to look after them and cannot manage on their own due to their mental handicap and need lifetime residential care.

The GGSCF is also honoured to be helped by such a dedicated spirit as Baltej and have asked him to be our agent in India when dealing with the charities we support.

Baltej understands the needs and concerns of those donors here whose main worry revolves around how the donations are used. He is setting up a system where he will send updates on the mentally challenged that are being helped and also welcomes anyone who wants to come and spend a few days at Navjivini to see the work that is being done there. In this regard, accommodations have been prepared for outside visitors where they can stay for a few days. We hope many of the donors and volunteers will make use of this opportunity when they go to India on holidays.

FAUJA SINGH'S NEW RECORDS



The GGSCF would like to wish Fauja Singh a Happy 101st Birthday. He took part in a 'Park Run' (this is a national network of 5km races) which he finished in 38 minutes and 34 seconds. On his birthday, his club, "Sikhs in the City", and teammates aimed for a combined run of 101 laps of the 2km training route in 101 minutes, but surpassed that by running 134 laps between themselves; Fauja Singh ran 5 laps (10km) in 89 minutes. It is true inspiration to many, what positive thinking and regular physical exercise can lead to with Guruji's grace.

At the London Marathon on April 22nd, Fauja Singh finished the marathon in 7h 49m 21s at the young age of 101 years. He broke his own record from last year in the Toronto Waterfront Marathon when he was only 100 years old. This was his last marathon and he wanted to do it on home soil. The GGSCF would like to congratulate him and the entire Sikhs in the City club that support him and we are proud of their accomplishments. In October we hope to honour him and the club by having 101 participants of our own in the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon.

TIME TO BOWL

On April 28th, members of the Foundation got together and went bowling at PlayTime Bowl near Yorkdale Mall. There was a lot of fun and excitement as the 11 players that came showed off their skills, or lack thereof, at knocking down the pins at the end of the lanes. All in all, it was a fun break from some of the more exciting and chaotic events throughout the rest of the year, like the Nagar Kirtan Bus Seva the following day and a good time to get together as friends. Satinder Singh, who arranged the event, would like to thank everyone for coming out and making it an enjoyable afternoon.



BUS SEVA NAGAR KIRTAN

On April 29th, Sikhs across the GTA gathered to celebrate the 313th anniversary of the Khalsa. This year, Nimratvir led the GGSCF's 56 volunteers in managing the buses for the 6th consecutive year. In the morning, volunteers were scattered at 17 pick-up locations, stretching from Burlington to Whitby and including a Shuttle Bus service between the CNE and City Hall.

This year, the sangat had to wait more than an hour for the roads to be opened as some parade floats had closed off University Ave. This caused large crowds to gather at the stops; Dixie had over 1000 people in their line and, of course, this resulted in a lot of panic and pushing when the buses did arrive. Most of the sangat were well behaved, however, and cooperated with the volunteers.



EDITORS- Sundeep and Paramjit Singh

It is good to see lots of positive events within the GGSCF at the beginning of 2012. We live in a time when negative news sells and we are exposed to it 24/7 by all the news channels. There are wars, droughts, starvation, financial crisis, unemployment, damage to the environment that it is hard to find much good news stories. We seem to be consumed by doom and gloom. However even if reported or not there are volunteers all over the world like those in the GGSCF who reach out and give a helping hand and with their deeds the world is a better place.

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