



NAGAR KIRTAN 2012



On April 29th, Sikhs across the GTA gathered to celebrate the 313th anniversary of the Khalsa. About 10,000 people participated in the parade at the CNE and more joined in along the route while lots more waited for the arrival at City Hall. This year, Nimratvir led the 56 volunteers in managing the buses for the sixth consecutive year. In the morning, volunteers were scattered at 17 pick-up locations, stretching from Burlington to Whitby and a shuttle bus service from CNE and City Hall.

This year on the return trip, the sangat had to wait more than an hour for the roads to be opened as some parade floats had parked and 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 behaved well, cooperated with the volunteers and everyone had left by 7:45pm. Although there was disappointment expressed by the volunteers at the behavior of some and there were many people who had ideas of how it could be organized better, however very few actually do this seva because it is challenging and requires a lot of patience.

In addition to the Nagar Kirtan Bus sewa, the GGSCF organized the annual Baisakhi Food Drive that took place from April 13th to April 29th. Boxes were placed at Scarborough Gurdwara and sangat donated generously towards the collection for the Toronto Daily Bread Food Bank. Altogether, 2915lbs of food was collected for the thousands of people across Toronto who rely on food banks to feed their families. The Foundation would like to thank everyone who contributed to the Food Drive.

13th ANNUAL CHARITY RUN

More than a hundred people gathered along the Mississauga waterfront and ran this weekend during the Foundation's Annual Run which took place on August 26th. This year, both a 5-kilometre race and a 10-kilometre race were held and 133 individuals took part. Those that participated enjoyed the scenic route through J.C. Saddington Park, past the Port Credit Harbour Marina, and along Lake Ontario. Although it was an incredibly hot and humid day, participants braved the heat while running, jogging and walking the distance for charity. The Foundation's fundraising target was to collect \$5000 for the 299 children that it currently sponsors; with the efforts of all who attended and contributed, more than \$13,000 was raised and will go to help our less fortunate brothers and sisters around the world.



After the run, refreshments were served and an awards ceremony was held for the winners of the races. The fastest male and female in the 10-kilometre race were Harjot Singh Bains and Mona Dhaliwal, respectively. The top three finishers of the 5-kilometre race, in order, were Gursheer Dhillon, Raj Grewal, and Deepi Mann. Awards were given out in several age categories as well. Member of Provincial Parliament Harinder Takhar also said a few words and presented the Foundation with a letter of recognition on behalf of the Government of Ontario. Sukhdev Singh Manna from the Spinal Cord Injury Association, Jullundur who is visiting from India also encouraged the participants, in particular the children on the important charity work they are doing and how it helps those in need in India. He said it was encouraging to see so many young people involved.



Altogether the run was a wonderful success. Thousands of dollars were raised for charity and all who participated – whether in competitive spirit or together as family and friends – much enjoyed the day.

FAMILY FUN DAY

There was a whole lot of fun to be had in Bhagat Puran Singh Park as hundreds of children came out for a day of joy, excitement and competition. On August 19th, Scarborough Gurdwara's annual picnic took place and Foundation volunteers made it a special day for the youngsters by organizing a fun day.



Kids were hopping all around the jumping castle, and racing each other through the inflatable obstacle courses. All the while, others were getting their faces painted to look like little superheroes and princesses. Those with little grudges took them out on the dunk tank where they relished the opportunity to drench their friends. But with such a hot day, nobody really minded the soaking. With all the tickets sold for these events, the Foundation not only filled hundreds of kids with joy but collected over \$1865 for the children we sponsor so that we might also make their lives a little brighter.

Along with the fun day, the volunteers helped out with the GS United Soccer Tournament and skills competition. The kids who have played soccer throughout the summer had a chance to show off their skills and were awarded medals and trophies for their efforts. The Gurdwara also planned many



events such as races, sports, and tug-of-war competitions for the parents and older folks. There was also a lot of food which was enjoyed by everyone.

Overall, the turnout was amazing and kids and their parents alike had a tremendous time throughout the day. Although we were short on volunteers, the few that did help tirelessly spent the whole day managing the activities and the kids were most grateful to them.

SENIORS AT HIGH PARK



This year's Annual Seniors Trip took place on July 14th and our elders were treated to a day at High Park in Toronto. As they arrived, they were served with tea and snacks before they went on their merry way to explore the park. While some seniors strolled through the zoo and the flower gardens, many boarded a trackless train which took them for a ride around the 400-acre park, the largest in Toronto. When they had seen enough, they returned to have *langar*. Afterward, they all got together with the volunteers and shared stories, jokes, songs and did *giddha*. They were also told some history about High Park and some trivia questions about Sikhs and the world. Despite the hot and humid weather, everyone kept cool by sitting in the shade and enjoying cold *lassi*.

All the seniors enjoyed themselves and were very grateful to the organizers and volunteers; the more adventurous ones were already excited about next year's trip and had all sorts of ideas for the venue while others were just happy since they don't get an opportunity to go out and see places. Unlike the usual trip to Niagara Falls, the new location posed some challenges but, overall, the trip went very well and the volunteers enjoyed spending time with the seniors. This year we had about 150 seniors – roughly twice as many as last year. We hope the numbers grow even more in 2013.

COLLECTING CHANGE FOR CHILDREN

On July 8th, the United Sports Kabaddi Tournament was held at Wildwood Park, Mississauga. Hundreds of people came out to watch Kabaddi teams compete and to enjoy entertainment of various types. A few members of the Foundation were present and spent the day serving langar to all the spectators and players. As they lined up to be served, many generous individuals donated their change. When the tournament came to a close, some Foundation volunteers went around the stands to make a final collection. Spectators jumped up to empty their pockets into the buckets and boxes that were carried around and by the end of the day, we were able to collect \$2000 which will go towards helping 299 of our brothers and sisters that the Foundation currently sponsors around the world. We are grateful to United Sports & Cultural Club Inc. as well as Jagdish Singh Grewal for helping the Foundation and we would like to thank all those that so kindly donated towards our cause.



CELEBRATING CANADA DAY



All across the country, Canadians were celebrating Canada Day on July 1st and the Foundation was in on the action. As with previous years, we were part of the Canada Day Parade in Scarborough. Seventeen yellow-clad volunteers got together at Scarborough Town Centre and had lots of fun decorating our van and truck with balloons, Canada flags and pretty much anything that was red and white. Once they were ready, they marched down Brimley Road; shouting, cheering, playing music and waving flags to get the hundreds of spectators and on-lookers excited. All the little

kids along the road were jumping, shouting and most overjoyed as our group passed by and our younger volunteers showered them with balloons and candy. Our volunteers and all the spectators much enjoyed the parade, all the way to the finish at Lawrence Avenue. The Foundation, along with more than 30 different groups, participated in the parade to celebrate our wonderful country's 145th birthday and we wish all Canadians a Happy Canada Day!

RACE AGAINST RACISM

On June 16th, the 12th annual Race Against Racism took place at Mississauga Valley Park. It started off with Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion sharing a few words with the participants and the singing of the national anthem. The participants then lined up and started the 5-kilometre race. They continued on streets, through scenic parks, over bridges and along streams before finally returning to finish. The Foundation was well represented with 14 participants as well as an information booth where we were able to tell people about all the fun things we do.



As always, people from many different community groups attended and participants enjoyed the free food and diverse cultural entertainment after the race. This year there were more participants than ever and the event was much enjoyed. The race is organized by Peel Regional Police to celebrate the diversity in our community.

A SPECIAL MEETING

On the evening of June 2nd, the attendees of the monthly meeting at Scarborough Gurudwara were treated to four special presentations. Firstly, Surjit Singh Babra, a proud supporter and member of the foundation, was asked to share his experience of being a recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for his achievements, which he brought to the meeting and passed around for everyone to see! Surjit Babra was very humble in receiving the award and shared kind and encouraging words for the youth. Secondly, Ajmer Singh presented a video on the change and development in his village of Chakar (Ludhiana) in Punjab, India. The village has become a model for all to follow in Punjab by including an all natural filtration and sewage

system, parks for children and adults and a sports academy. Thirdly, Sunny Singh presented a video and pictures on the children the GGSCF sponsors from Navjivini School of Special Education, Joti Saroop Kanya Asara Trust, and Vocational Rehabilitation Training Centre. After all that, the volunteers had time to reflect on their personal fears in a presentation by Jasjit Singh. Towards the end, certificates were also presented for those who took part in the Walk Across Canada for Drug Awareness on behalf of Balwinder Kahlon and Drug Awareness Foundation Calgary.



SUMMER FUN EVENTS

On July 22nd, the Foundation held a car wash at Dixie Gurdwara to raise funds for the Annual Run. It was a hot and sunny afternoon as fourteen volunteers gathered in front of the Gurdwara armed with hoses, sponges and squeegees. As cars drove up, they – along with some volunteers – were immersed in a bath of soapy water, scrubbed and dried; when they drove off, the cars sparkled and so did their drivers who were overjoyed and donated generously. Together, we washed about 30 cars and collected almost \$400 in so doing.



On June 23rd, the annual Malton Community Festival took place in Wildwood Park, Mississauga. Along with many other community groups, the Foundation set up an information table where we were able to reach out to many people and tell them about the different events that we organize and encourage them to get involved. With great weather and many different things to take part in, everyone had a lot of fun. The Foundation would like to thank Baljinder S. Tamber for giving us this opportunity.



On June 10th, Canadian-South Asians Supporting Independent Living (C-SASIL) organized the 2nd Annual Abilities Challenge which took place at Brampton Soccer Centre. It was a wheelchair relay-race to raise awareness about disability in the community. Just like last year, the Foundation entered a team in the race. As our team went around the gymnasium propelling themselves on a wheelchair, others cheered them on all the way to the finish. Although we didn't make the podium, the event was a lot of fun and really helped to gain an understanding of the challenges people with disabilities encounter and how fortunate we are. Overall, the turnout was great with 21 teams participating and even more people cheering them on. C-SASIL is an organization that promotes disability rights and provides services to those that have disabilities.



On June 9th, the World Sikh Organization (WSO) held their annual dinner at Chandni Banquet Hall with this year's focus on human rights issues. Members of the Foundation were also in attendance and received an award for our service to the community along with several other individuals. Keynote speaker, Prashant Bhushan who is a Senior Advocate of the Supreme Court of India, then made a speech on the state of human rights in India. Overall, the dinner was enjoyed by all. The World Sikh Organization is a group that aims to protect the interests of Sikhs around the world and advocate for human rights of all individuals.

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It has been a busy summer with so many events. This is challenging for those that help with the GGSCF and allows us an opportunity to get new volunteers involved. By working together we can accomplish so much more.

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