



## INSPIRATIONAL STEPS



World Record Holder Baba Fauja Singh inaugurated the first "Inspirational Steps" event on May 19<sup>th</sup>. The event saw some 206 registered participants and many others take part in the first Sikh-organized marathon in Canada. Starting at Dixie Gurdwara at 9 a.m., the 5 km participants were given medals when they got to Malton Gurdwara, the 12 km participants were given medals at Rexdale Gurdwara, the half marathon (21.1 km) participants were given medals at Ramgarhia Gurdwara and seven participants completed the marathon (42.2 km) and were given awards at Scarborough Gurdwara.



All Gurdwaras were very supportive of the event and many participants pushed themselves to do more than they had previously done or thought they could do. Participants also honoured those that inspired them by wearing their names on their bibs. The youngest participant who was 4 years old

was so proud to complete 5 km and the oldest, a 72 year old, limped to a 21 km finish, but finish he did and two wheel chair participants who completed 5km. We had some first time marathoners and some who had run it before. We also had people from outside the Sikh community who experienced the spirit of Sikhs as they entered the Gurdwaras. Fauja Singh says, "...exercise is like an intoxicant and you want more, but unlike illicit drugs, it is good for your body and spirit. The most wonderful part is that you get to meet so many positive people who all inspire each other through the physical and mental barriers we all have, so we can gain courage, strength and awareness of who we are." Well done to the participants, and also to all the GGSCF volunteers who stood in the sun for hours assisting those along the route with water, directions, and safety; they were an inspiration in themselves.

Fauja Singh was also pleased that so many people were inspired by him to run, he mentioned everyone wants to meet him and have a photo taken with him, but few actually make the effort and take up running/walking. He said it is the running and the people's warmth and affections that has kept him going to this ripe age of 102. The GGSCF will make this an annual event to inspire others to take steps as Fauja Singh has done for all of us and we will continue to invite him as long as God graces us with his presence. For those who missed out, next year's run/walk is on May 18, 2014 and full details are available on [www.ggscf.com](http://www.ggscf.com).

## 20<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY RUN



On October 27<sup>th</sup>, children and youth took part in a 51km relay run from Scarborough Gurdwara to Dixie Gurdwara to



celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our first children's relay run. Participants gathered at 7:30am in the morning at Scarborough Gurdwara to do the ardas and ask for Guruji's blessings. Runners then assembled under the Nishan Sahib outside and began the run together at 8:00am. Continuing in a relay format, they proudly carried and passed along a Nishan Sahib and, with a bit of teamwork, started covering ground quickly. Within a few short hours, they arrived at Ramgarhia Gurdwara, where they briefly stopped for lunch. As with all the Gurdwaras along the route, the children and youth thanked the sangat for all of their support over the last 20 years and received donations towards the children that are sponsored by this charity.

The journey continued on through the two Rexdale Gurdwaras at Baywood and Carrier and then onto Malton Gurdwara before finally coming to an end at Dixie Gurdwara. Despite the cold weather and a small bit of rain, the 32 runners, along with the support of 18 volunteers, were undeterred and in high spirits all the way to the end. In October 1993, the same run was done by the children and youth group, some of those participants would go on to form the GGSCF in 1999, and 20 years later, it seems more children and youth are there to carry the Nishan Sahib. We look forward with much hope and ardour to see what awaits us in the next 20 years!

## VAISAKHI SEVA



This year again, all the GGSCF volunteers were out in force to carry out the bus seva for the downtown Nagar Kirtan from the CNE Grounds to Toronto City Hall. Over 50 volunteers, ranging in age from 9 years to adults, manned the 17 bus stops from across the GTA area as well as also helping to manage the "out of town" buses. In total 196 trips were made in the morning moving 9,500 people and an equal or greater number in the evening trip home. The OSGC were very helpful this year in arranging for police and parking on University Avenue due to the difficulty experienced last year which closed the road for more than an hour. Even then, some people were upset and some elders had to wait a long time for the shuttle buses because of road closures and traffic; hopefully we will learn from this experience to make future management go more smoothly.

We would like to thank all those who cooperated and showed patience in difficult circumstances.

On May 5<sup>th</sup>, the GGSCF had booths set up at both Gurdwaras during the Nagar Kirtan to collect registration forms for those that would like to take part in the "Inspirational Steps" walk/run or apply for a student loan from the Guru Nanak Education Assistance Program (EAP). Both Gurdwaras were cooperative and supported this initiative. While much of the sangat's focus was on the Nagar Kirtan, those who appreciate and are inspired by Fauja Singh did sign up for this walk/run also.

The annual Vaisakhi food drive collection was held from April 10<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>. In total 590 lbs of food was collected and given to the Daily Bread Food Bank. The donation was very much appreciated as we have learned from the news media that the donations were very much down over the Easter break. Also, later in the year during the month of November, sangat donated generously during our 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Guru Nanak Food Drive in support of the Toronto Daily Bread Food Bank. Altogether, 7786lbs of food was collected at Scarborough Gurdwara, so much that it was a struggle to find space for it all in the lobby. We thank all those who contributed as your generosity will go a long way in helping many families.

## THE BIG CLIMB



This year, the general attendance at the CN Tower Stair Climb was down from previous years probably due to the increase in funds needed to register for the climb. The donation jumped from \$75 per climber last year to \$100 per climber this year. The GGSCF had 36 climbers raising \$3600 for the World Wildlife Fund which was more than our group had last year, thanks to Harman who registered 10 climbers at the last minute. Nimratvir thanked all those who climbed and announced the fastest climber from the GGSCF group was Amandeep Singh Chahal who climbed in 14m 28s and thereby gets to hold the Mata Kishan Kaur Cup for the coming year.

## CANADA DAY CELEBRATIONS!

The Foundation children again took part in the Canada Day parade in Scarborough much to the delight of the participants and the crowds of onlookers along Brimley

Road. Candy and balloons were handed out to children along the route as everyone enjoyed some Punjabi music. Our group was also joined this year by the children's Panthic Gatka group whose performance entertained all of the spectators.

## ANNUAL RUN AND FUNDAY



This year the GGSCF combined the Annual 5km Run/Walk in the month of August with the G.S.United soccer tournament and Scarborough Gurdwara's Picnic and was held in Bhagat Puran Singh Park. The sunny weather brought out the largest participation so far at this event. About 30 runners participated in the 5km run that started at 10:30am and was won by Harjot Singh who finished in 21m54s. After this there was a soccer tournament for both the children and the adults organized by G.S.United. This was followed by a children's fun day with rides, cotton candy and picnic races as well as special events such as shoe throwing, 3 legged races, volleyball, shot put and the tug-of-war. Throughout the day there was lots of food to enjoy while participating or watching these events. In total, \$4030 was also collected for the children the GGSCF financially supports with the effort of those who took part in the Annual Run and those who bought tickets for the children's rides managed by our young volunteers

## SWTM & SIKHS IN THE CITY



For 10 years now, the GGSCF has been taking part in the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon (STWM) ever since Fauja Singh became the first person to break the 6 hour barrier for those over 90 years of age. This year

although Fauja Singh was not here, his running club, Sikhs in the City, had a 6-person team from the UK lead by Harmander Singh (coach to Fauja Singh). GGSCF participants were in all events.

### Another Race:

Each year during the month of June, Peel Regional Police organizes the *Race Against Racism* and this year was no different as many participants took part in a 5km run/walk in Mississauga Valley Park. The event was well attended by many community groups and participants of all ages, including volunteers of the Foundation. Mayor Hazel McCallion opened the event as usual and started the race. After the race, there was entertainment and picnic food for everyone to enjoy.

## GURU NANAK WALK

This year, the Guru Nanak Walk took place along the Humber River Trail on September 28<sup>th</sup>. Amidst sunny skies and a stunning view of Highway 401, the ardas was done in Pine Point Park before beginning the adventure. Over bridges and trails, through parks and meadows, 51 participants made their way through the neighbourhoods of Weston and Humbervale before walking through the flowerbeds and picturesque plantations of James Gardens, where they were served lunch and stopped for a short break. During this time, children and parents alike reflected on the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji and shared what he meant to them. After some rest, everyone continued through Lambton Woods down to the array of bridges nearing the mouth of the river. At the end, participants crossed the Humber Bay Arch Bridge to complete the 15.6km journey, with Lake Ontario and the CN Tower in view.



## WHEELCHAIR RACE

Earlier in the year during the month of June, C-SASIL held its third annual wheelchair race in support of Canadian-South Asians Supporting Independent Living at the Brampton Soccer Centre. In all, 12 teams took part in very competitive races. The Foundation entered three teams and helped with volunteers on two others as the turnout was a little less than the previous year. Our fastest team placed 4th overall but the winners were all those who took part and learned about some of the challenges faced by those with disabilities. Harvinder Kaur who organizes the event with support from Jagdish Singh thanked all those who came out to support this event.



## MONTHLY DONORS

Monthly donors, we would like to identify the best way to contact us: Tel. No. 416-564-3939. This was changed last year and is also available from our web site [www.ggscf.com](http://www.ggscf.com). This was mentioned in our last newsletter but some still have the old number from previous letters, etc. This number is an answering service where you record a message and we get back to you. The other option is to send an email to us at [mail@ggscf.com](mailto:mail@ggscf.com).

As mentioned in the last issue, due to the difficulty in keeping the monthly donors updated on the sponsored children, we are providing updates in newsletters. The Navjivini School of Special Education was visited by GGSCF volunteer Lakhbir Kaur Saggu while visiting India. She was very much impressed at all the work being done by the school and all the very dedicated staff. She spent the whole day sitting with the children and seeing them in class, learning crafts, embroidery and other life skills.

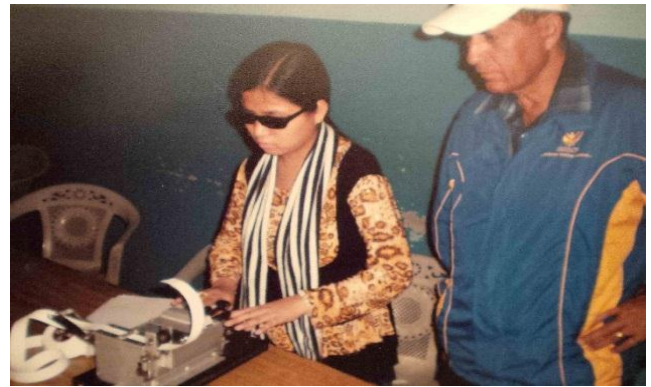


## VRTC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The VRTC proudly informed us that some of the GGSCF sponsored visually impaired students of the Institution had participated in the State Level Competition organized by the Punjab State Branch of the National Federation of the Blind at Hoshiarpur from November 30<sup>th</sup> to December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013. The Students bagged six first prizes, four second prizes and five third prizes in various creative activities and also won the Champions Trophy. VRTC would like to thank all the monthly donors who send them support.

Other achievements for the following students who have passed 12<sup>th</sup> grade and are going onto higher studies:

1. Gagandeep Kaur - joined Diploma in Computer Science in our institution
2. Sunny Shukla - is doing Animation in our institution and also joined for Graduation in the College
3. Suni - is doing one year Diploma in Animation
4. Mandeep Kaur - has joined for Graduation in the Govt. College for Women, Ludhiana
5. Punjabu - has also joined one year Diploma in Computer Science in our institution
6. Jenus - has joined College for Graduation



Surjit Singh Hayre also visited VRTC while in India and is pictured with a student learning to type brail so that other blind children can read what is written.

## JSKAT WEDDING



At the Joti Saroop Kanya Asara Trust one the girls got married in May 2013. This is the fourth marriage at the trust. Dr. Harminder Singh would like to thank the monthly donors for making this possible. A picture of the new couple enjoying lunch after the marriage ceremony in the presence of her sisters at JSKAT.

## EDITORS: Amanjit, Paramjit, Sundeep Singh

Gurfateh! It was another incredible year for the foundation as we took on another great venture in Inspirational Steps which we are proud to build upon this upcoming year. We hope this will leave a legacy for Fauja Singh's incredible achievements and he will always retain the title of being the first person at the age of 100 years to complete an official marathon and many of us were able to witness that historic achievement at the STWM. We also had an opportunity to help our brothers and sisters abroad with fundraising initiatives throughout the summer from change collections and our annual run and fun day. We hope to build from what we learned in 2013 and apply it to 2014 and continue to grow as an organization, family, and individuals. Chardi Kala!

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