



Issue 37

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VAISAKHI RADIOTHON



On April 13th, Foundation volunteers filled the radio waves of 770AM to wish sangat of the Greater Toronto Area a Happy Vaisakhi and make requests for donations to the children the GGSCF supports. This was the first radiothon done after many years by a completely different group of volunteers. All were a little nervous about how it would turn out but the community responded with love and kindness. A total of \$26,240.13 was pledged. The GGSCF would like to thank Jagdish Grewal, Yudhvir Jaswal and Rana Sidhu for their support during their program and giving time for this cause.

The best part of the radiothon was the stories shared by the listeners. One short story we would like to share was about a special 11 year old boy named Jonveer, who called in and said he would like to donate his birthday money to help the children in need. The amount did not matter, it never does, but it was the principle and mindset he had to not be selfish. For us, this was an amazing showcase of Sarbat da Bhalla and highlighted our motto "children helping children" and why we exist today. I think we all were amazed by his actions and thanked him for making his donation. About 5 calls later, Jonveer called in studio again and said he forgot to do something. He forgot to give a jakara. Bole So Nihal Sat Sri Akal! We were amazed with response and the words of encouragement we received on air by donors and supporters. While it was a special day for Sikhs we also received donations from people of other faiths too, which is perfect as the GGSCF supports children in need regardless of their faith. The experience inspired the young volunteers to reach out to the community even more and maybe make this a yearly event.

INSPIRATIONAL STEPS



On May 22nd, the 4th Annual Inspirational Steps event was held in fabulous weather with the largest turn out of runners and walkers. This year 433 runners took part in 5km, 12km, half-marathon, and full-marathon races, starting at different Gurdwaras across the GTA and finishing at Dixie Gurdwara. To try to have everyone finish together, the various distance races were started at staggered times: 5am for marathon walkers and 7am for runners at Scarborough Gurdwara; 9am for half marathon participants from Ramgarhia Gurdwara; 10:30am for 12km participants from Rexdale Gurdwara and 11am for 5km participants from Malton Gurdwara. The common finishing time meant the runners/walkers were greeted by an enthusiastic crowd cheering, screaming, and ringing bells as they crossed the finish.



Ajmer Singh Sidhu Cup of Inspiration presented to marathon winners by his family members

The winners in the various distances were:

Marathon:

Male (1) Manjit 3:58:19 (2) Jason (3) Raminder

Female (1) Talwinderjit 6:51:36 (2) Pawandeep
(3) Karanpreet

Half Marathon:

Male (1) Jasvir 1:37:00 (2) Simranjit (3) Harjot

Female (1) Keerit 2:30:25 (2) Pardeep (3) Jasleen

12Km:

Male (1) Jaskaran 1:05:08 (2) Vikram (3) Ajaypal

Female (1) Kiran 1:14:35 (2) Ranbir (3) Simran

5Km:

Male (1) Kiran 20:12 (2) Balwant (3) Dalvir

Female (1) Sukhmani 28:28 (2) Balreet (3) Ramanpreet

A full list of participants and finish times are available on the GGSCF website for this year and previous 3 years.

We had many members of the community taking part, but no one was happier to see the entire community than Baba Fauja Singh, whose continuous cheer and support made it worthwhile for all of the runners and walkers as they crossed the finish line. It was Baba Ji's marathon efforts at the Scotiabank Toronto Water Marathon that led to the annual Inspirational Steps event and, at the age of 105, he still remains an inspiration to many, demonstrating that everyone can find a way that they can begin and/or maintain physical activity in their everyday lives, especially in a form that they enjoy (e.g. walking, running, dancing, yoga, biking, etc.).

We are grateful for all the support that was received from sponsors, Gurdwaras, media, volunteers, and – last but not least – all the participants for their enthusiasm, cheer, determination, and inspiration! We hope the event will continue to grow encouraging more to take up some activity to keep active and healthy.

CN TOWER STAIR CLIMB



This year, the Foundation entered nine climbers in the CN Tower Stair Climb for the World Wildlife Fund and \$900 was raised for wildlife and environmental conservation efforts. We would like to congratulate all the participants, especially Harjot Bains who once again had the fastest time 14m:22s from our group and will thus keep the Mata Kishan Kaur Sidhu Cup for one year. This is the 22nd year that we've participated in the event, stretching back to 1995. Although the number of participants have decreased over time it is still a significant challenge for the new and returning participants.

FUN DAY & G.S.UNITED



With overcast skies, the annual G.S. United Soccer Tournament began in the morning and saw both the youth and the men's teams compete. Later in the afternoon, the fun day got off to a rocky start with the weather, as it rained on and off. At about 1pm, there was massive downpour and much of the sangat left the park to seek shelter and eventually went home. As a result, the fun day and Gurdwara picnic were cancelled. However, volunteers did stay to see the soccer tournament, where the Ontario Khalsa Darbar Soccer Club won the finals and were presented with the Ajmer Memorial Cup. The picnic was rescheduled for September 10th, the same day as the Ontario Cup Finals, which would be won by the G.S.United women's team.



NAGAR KIRTAN

The Nagar Kirtan bus seva on April 24th was a bit more challenging this year as we tried to change the way the sangat got to downtown and back. Bringing in something new is always challenging as people are used to the way things have been done previously. The changes included three bus hubs at Dixie Gurdwara, Damesh Darbar and Rexdale Gurdwara. The buses from neighbouring areas were pooled to these locations so that waiting time for the bus was minimized and buses could make the second trip quicker from the hubs. The morning went smoothly but the evening trip back home did not, particularly from the Dixie Gurdwara line. As the Dixie Gurdwara line is the longest, it was switched to the west side of University. Many out of town buses parked in wrong places and the line became too wide and this caused frustration and confusion. The cold weather did not help and many very



young or very old had a hard time waiting. Still it was a good day to do seva and shows we still have more challenges to face to make the transportation smoother. The GGSCF volunteers would like to thank all who helped, some even from the sangat when they saw our need. With the goodwill of many, everyone got home safely, even though a little late and a little cold.

LETTERS TO CHILDREN



This year, the first meeting was used to send letters to the 50 children we sponsor through Plan Canada. Plan sent postcards with a map of Canada and volunteers wrote New Year's greetings and drew colourful pictures for the children we support. Just like all of us like to get gifts, these letters mean a whole lot to the children we sponsor as it's one of the few chances they have to communicate with their donors who provide the financial support that gives these children an opportunity to attend school, have some shelter, and hope for their future.

SENIORS TRIP



On August 21st over 100 seniors on three school buses visited Peterborough's world famous lift lock and the Riverview Park & Zoo. The seniors were greeted by local Sikhs, councilors and politicians, who welcomed them with flags, a band and police escort onto McBride Island on the Otonabee River where they had a picnic and enjoyed food and drinks. The seniors listened to the history of Peterborough, got awards from the local dignitaries, spent time touring the zoo and the train ride, playing games, sharing poetry and songs. Although the morning started off wet in Toronto, the entire day in Peterborough passed by with excellent weather, sunny, breeze and the natural setting under the trees was much appreciated by all. A special mention to Mohinder Sidhu our local volunteer in Peterborough for making all the arrangements and setup at a wonderful spot under trees and on an island.



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION



Every year the GGSCF gets together to reconnect and plan for the coming year. This year we decided to make it a little more challenging! To thank all our wonderful volunteers for their hard work and dedication to the Foundation we took them to archery tag! Thirty five volunteers gathered at Archers Arena on December 3rd and released their inner warriors! After learning how to use our bows we had foam-tipped arrows flying across the room! Our coach gave us different scenarios to challenge us and we couldn't be happier. We ended the day with pizza and updates on future events. The volunteers are excited for what we have planned for the upcoming year. We wouldn't be able to manage our events such as the Nagar Kirtan Buses or Inspirational Steps without the help of our volunteers. Looking forward to working with all of you in 2017!

25th ANNIVERSARY

It has been 25 years since Scarborough Gurdwara opened on January 27, 1991. This was celebrated at the Gurdwara where the GGSCF had a chance to make a presentation about the activities with which they have been involved. The GGSCF was born out of the children, youth and adults that attended Scarborough Gurdwara with the first relay run in 1993, the next in 1997 and then the 1999 run to Ottawa to mark the 300th Anniversary of the Khalsa and the founding of the GGSCF. Many of the youth have grown up and now have children of their own. A booth was also setup in the lobby where the newer, younger volunteers got a chance to collect donations, register runners/volunteers for the upcoming Inspirational Steps and G.S.United Summer Soccer Season. With the blessings of Guruji, hopefully the new generation are also inspired to live a life of spirit and seva in the years to come.

OTHER EVENTS

On April 1, Peel Art Gallery, Museum and Archives (PAMA) opened its doors for Sikh Heritage Month. The kick-off featured artwork, musical performances and live demonstrations. The GGSCF attended the event and celebrated Fauja Singh's 105th birthday.

On June 18th the GGSCF were once again helping C-SASIL with the annual wheel chair race held at Brampton Soccer Centre. In total, 10 teams entered and each team consisted of 5 members who completed two laps each. Though the fastest received prizes, all those who participated got an appreciation of what it is like to try and get mobile in a wheelchair. In addition, over \$300 was raised through a 50/50 draw for the important work that C-SASIL does in supporting members of the community with mobility challenges. Local politicians also recognized the important work that is done by this group and spoke about the need to support those in need.



The GGSCF again had presence in the STWM on October 16th with those inspired by Fauja Singh and many taking part following Inspirational Steps in May. Harmander Singh came with a Sikhs in the City Team from UK and completed his 111th marathon. Pritpal completed his first marathon, along with Sandeep and Tajinder. Harjot, Sukhdeep, and Simrit completed the half marathon with a bus-full who came along with Sandhuara Brar. Congratulations to all those who challenged themselves

On November 12th mature students visited the Gurdwara to learn more about Sikh faith and practice. They were attended by GGSCF volunteers who showed them around the Gurdwara and also explained Sikhs beliefs and practices. They also enjoyed the langar, especially the rice and *sholay*, and some were adventurous and tried ladoos.

FOOD DRIVES

The GGSCF would like to thank all those who contributed to the two food drives we had this year. At the Vaisakhi food drive, 1620lbs of food was collected. At the food drive on Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Gurburab, 5289lbs of food was donated. The food was sent to the Daily Bread Food Bank in Toronto that provides food services to those in need in Toronto and the GTA.

GURU NANAK WALK



October 22nd was a wonderful autumn day with the sun shining bright, albeit a windy one on which 38 hikers joined in a 14.5km walk along Highland Creek. The journey started at Thomson Memorial Park and wound its way around the creek, through ravines, golf courses, neighborhoods, under bridges, through the Scarborough Campus of the University of Toronto, through to the opening into Lake Ontario and then along the shoreline to finish in Port Union Waterfront Park. It was surprising how much beauty there is within our city and sometimes one could not even tell it was in the middle of the city. The autumn leaves were wonderful in their reds, yellows and golden colours. It was a treat to also see young cross country runners in Morningside Park where they were having the Ontario School finals day.

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

As 2016 comes to a close some changes were made to the Board and Council that administer the GGSCF. Nimratvir stepped down and starting January 1, 2017 Jasjeet Singh will be replacing her on the Board. In addition the Board nominated Sandeep Singh to the Council for 2016 and Sarpreet Kaur for 2017. This should be a healthy addition to the leadership as younger members with more enthusiasm and energy take on the leadership role.

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