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The Telegram

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fundraiser Sikh youths excited about run

Everton McLean
The Telegram

Still gushing about the new scenery while imagining all the sights left to see, 20 young people from Toronto came to the capital city this week, ready for the run of a lifetime - a cross-country trek from St. John's harbour to Vancouver.

They have 8,000 kilometres to go, and took their first steps downtown Wednesday, a journey that will mean each of them will run seven kilometres every day along Canadian roadways until the end of August.

The group of 20 young Toronto Sikhs are part of the Guru Gobind Singh Children's Foundation (GGSCF), a youth group devoted to helping other young people.

The group has raised \$110,000 for the run, and \$10,000 will go to children's hospitals in each province, while the remaining \$10,000 will go to a clinic in an African village.

"We are all motivated, we are all excited," said Sophia Randhawa, 20.

"We're going to be running from the (St. John's) harbour and then catching a ferry back to Nova Scotia."

For Randhawa, giving up her summer to raise money for hospitals isn't that much of a sacrifice - she said she's looking forward to seeing miles of Canada she otherwise wouldn't get to.

Starting the run in Newfoundland was a treat for her, she said. "We love the scenery. You don't really see this in Toronto."

The GGSCF, which was founded 10 years ago, has a history of doing long-distance runs for charity. The money helps the organization sponsor children around the world, Randhawa explained.

"Currently, we sponsor 200 children. We started off sponsoring five children," she said, adding the decision to fund children's hospitals in Canada this time was part of repaying people in this country for supporting the disadvantaged.

"What we're doing now is helping Canada out and children in Canada," she said, adding the run has been in the works for two years.

"We've been training for this for a really long time," she said.

Pavan Ubbi, 18, is also running, just days after finishing high school. She said her classmates and friends were surprised to hear she was devoting her summer to the fundraiser.

"I've been telling everyone," she said. Ubhi said she's looking forward to meeting members of the Sikh community from across Canada and being part of something positive.

"Everybody is putting so much effort into it, there's so much volunteer work that it's a proud moment," she said.

More information on the run, including the route and donation information, can be found at www.ggscf.com.

emclean@thetelegram.com

Figure:

Pavan Ubbi (left), 18, and Sophia Randhawa, 20, are members of the Guru Gobind Singh Children's Foundation running cross Canada to raise funds for children's hospitals. - Photo by Keith Gosse/The Telegram

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