



SIWEC *Insight*

June 2016

Sikh Welfare Council, Singapore

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The Epitome of Harmony

All human beings are the reflection of the one and the same Lord.
Recognise the entire human race as one

– Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji



When we think of Vesakhi, we tend to think of the unwavering love and sacrifice displayed by the *Panj Pyaare* (or the five beloved) towards their Guru. We also think of the devotion Guru Gobind Singh Ji himself had towards his *Khalsa Panth* and towards justice. Less frequently however, do we speak of the vast display of unity and harmony on the auspicious day of Vesakhi in 1699.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji had asked for five heads to be sacrificed, and five beloved men came forward. Interestingly however, all the five were of different castes and each came from a different region in India. To the Guru though, none of that mattered; the only thing that did was the love and faith these brave men carried in their hearts. Upon initiation

to the *Khalsa Panth*, the *Panj Pyaare* gave up their castes and its corresponding occupations and became part of the *Khalsa*—an identity that, till today, transcends race, language, caste and creed. This was indeed a display of harmony at its best as five separate parts came together, blind of all differences, and formed one beautiful whole.

Name	Caste	Region
Bhai Daya Singh Ji	Khatri	Lahore
Bhair Dharam Singh Ji	Jatt	Delhi
Bhai Himmat Singh Ji	Kumhar	Orrissa
Bhai Muhkam Singh Ji	Chhimba	Gujrat
Bhai Sahib Singh Ji	Naae	Karnatka

IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 | SIWEC celebrates Vesakhi 2016
- 3 | Workshop for Volunteers
- 4 | Scope Programme
- 5 | Building a Caring and Sharing Singapore
- 6 - 7 | Harmony On Wheels (HOW)
- 8 | @ SIWEC

SIWEC celebrates Vesakhi 2016

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Vesakhi brings harmony amongst all groups of people and within oneself. This very spirit of harmony was accordingly furthered by SIWEC this Vesakhi when it embarked on two key events held this April in conjunction with Vesakhi.

Visit to the Prisons

On 7 and 8 April 2016, SIWEC staff, together with SIWEC's volunteer prison counsellors and priests from Silat Road Sikh Temple and Pardesi Khalsa, visited Sikh inmates currently incarcerated at Changi Prisons. The inmates had the opportunity to celebrate Vesakhi through prayers and *langgar* (free food) and were highly appreciative of the support provided by SIWEC. SIWEC's efforts in supporting our inmates in their rehabilitation and subsequent reintegration to society is an ongoing one, and SIWEC thanks all dedicated volunteers for being guiding beacons for our inmates.

SIWEC will continue with its efforts and hopes to see many more such volunteers join them in this noble community service.



Gursikhi Funfair

As part of the Vesakhi celebrations this year Central Sikh Temple, with support from Sikh Sewaks Singapore, organised a Gursikhi Funfair for children on 10 April 2016! Children had fun participating in activities such as arts and crafts, *baani* (prayer) recitation, and a quiz on Sikh history and even got to dress in *banas* (a form of dressing for the Khalsa).

SIWEC too had set up a booth at the fair in efforts to raise awareness of SIWEC's services and to encourage parents to donate to or volunteer with SIWEC. Children were given word search puzzles that contained words related to the work SIWEC does such as counselling, eldercare, and volunteers and received handmade *Penji* and *Veerji* notebooks upon completion. All children also received SIWEC goodie-bags!



Moving Forward in your Service

Workshop for Volunteers

**"Always aim at complete harmony of thought and word and deed.
Always aim at purifying your thoughts and everything will be well."**

- Mahatma Gandhi



SIWEC's volunteers, once again, lived up to the spirit of harmony in the community and embarked to get together to see how they can be better equipped to help in the rehabilitation of inmates and drug addicts.

A dialogue with counsellors was moderated by Mr Albel Singh on Saturday, 13 February 2016 to discuss volunteers' challenges in counselling and rehabilitation of drug addicts and inmates, in order to assist their re-integration into the community.

The session served to welcome SIWEC's newly recruited counsellors and meet SIWEC's existing volunteers.

After a lively discussion on approaches and tools to enhance

counselling outcomes and better aftercare support for inmates, participants were also introduced to the counsellor's curriculum guide.

The guide was prepared by Dr Melvinder Singh and Dr Jasmin Kaur from the Singapore Prisons Service, with inputs on Sikh values

provided by Dr Jaswant Singh from Sikh Centre.

Counselors now meet every quarter to learn effective counselling techniques and to better understand the addict's/ inmate's psyche, in the continuing endeavour to enhance counselling knowledge and practical skills.



SCOPE Programme

“You don’t stop laughing when you grow old, you grow old when you stop laughing.”

– George Bernard Shaw



SIWEC, in an effort to create awareness about ageing and how to prepare and deal with ageing, now runs the Self-Care on Health of Older Persons (SCOPE) programme headed by Tsao Foundation.

4. Have support group sessions to harness the power of a group responding to challenges faced in self-care planning

Thus there has been a good turn up of 59 participants both male and female and it is expected to grow. Please contact SIWEC to find out more and to participate in SCOPE programmes.

This programme aims to create awareness for those aged 50 and above of the changes in the health needs over the course of life. The programme is free and led by volunteers from the community and sessions are conducted over a span of 6 months with 2 hour -weekly sessions. Participants get to learn how to deal with a spectrum of issues and how to deal with them including :

1. Practice self-care and learn how to manage chronic diseases better
2. Build a support system to enable older persons to continue taking care of each other over the long term
3. Have a health partnering system which helps participants establish a support network that will provide motivation in achieving their own self-care plan



Building a Caring and Sharing Singapore

On 28 April, SIWEC attended the "Care & Share Thank-You Show", organised to thank everyone who has supported the Care & Share Movement. The Care & Share Movement is a national fundraising and volunteerism movement led by Community Chest for the social service sector, to encourage corporations and individuals to give their time, talent and treasures towards helping the disadvantaged.

In support of the Movement, the Government set aside \$500 million to match eligible donations raised by Community Chest and over 200 participating charities between 1 December 2013 and 31 March 2016. These matched amounts were used to build the capabilities and capacities of the social service sector and support rising needs.

Guest of Honour Deputy Prime Minister and Coordinating Minister for Economic and Social Policies Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam shared in his address to all attendees at the show that the national drive to encourage charity donations and volunteering in the social services sector had



exceeded expectations, raising \$1.3 billion in just over two years. Some 240 voluntary welfare organisations (VWOs) raised \$800 million, far surpassing initial targets, and Government matching was capped at \$500 million.

Mr Tharman praised "the unique way we go about developing the charity sector in Singapore", adding that this was a "unique partnership between government, business and community".

Such national schemes and programmes assist to develop the capacities of VWOs here. More importantly, it also affirms the various efforts undertaken by organisations such as SIWEC which is both a participant and beneficiary of the Care & Share Movement. SIWEC hopes such efforts will continue to encourage and inspire more volunteers to lend their time and efforts towards building a Caring and Sharing community and society!



Harmony On Wheels (HOW)



The Harmony On Wheels group had their second ride from 12 – 15 March 2016, covering 500km from Singapore to Malacca and back. The event raised over \$250,000 in aid of Sikh Welfare Council and Sunlove Abode for the Intellectually-Infirmed Ltd.

We spoke with some participants from this event, as they shared their views on the event.

Q1. You have taken part in this event for two years. How did you become aware of this event and what spurred you on to take part?

Ramesh Nath, Master Trainer:

My brother-in-law, Simer Narulla, told me about this event when he first signed up as a cyclist during a recruitment drive at the Central Sikh Temple. The tremendous support, inspiration, camaraderie and friendship that I saw during the first ride got me hooked, moreover at the same time I was working towards fitness and charity.



Jennifer

Ramnik Ahuja, Resident Doctor:

“Connecting with Community” has always been a major pillar of our lives. We relocated to Singapore in 2012 and heard about RFC 2014 at Katong Gurudwara. This was an opportune moment for us to be part of and bond with the larger community. My husband registered himself as a rider (despite the fact that he had not ever done any serious cycling in his life) and I joined in as an event marshal.

Jennifer Oh, Cyclist:

In early 2014, Manjit Sevea asked me to help him out with the training for a group of Sikhs. The group I cycled with during trainings are a bunch of warm people. Naturally I agreed to join the ride when I was invited.

Q2. What was your role in the event?

Ramesh Nath, Master Trainer:

As a Master Trainer, together with my team of trusted trainers and my Safety Officer, Captain Avtar Singh, we planned the training schedule every Saturday, taking into account the skills of the cyclist, route, rest points and instilling a culture of “Work hard play hard”.

Ramnik Ahuja, Resident Doctor:

While I was the official resident doctor for the event, I was also an event marshal, providing cyclists with refreshments, directions and cheering them on, giving them motivation. There was superb camaraderie between marshals and cyclistsa perfect HARMONY ON WHEELS and community building.



Ramesh

Jennifer Oh, Cyclist:

Unfortunately due to an injury I could not join the ride this year and I was rather disappointed. I was really touched, when the team was prepared to accommodate me if I was able to stand and walk during the ride. I was very much in touch with the ride as I part of the group chat and I was there at Central Sikh Temple to welcome everyone home.

Q3. Would you recommend this event to your friends and why?

Ramesh Nath, Master Trainer:

Yes, I would strongly recommend this event to my friends. We are a group of individuals from different walks of life coming together for a greater cause; to benefit those who are less privileged than us, not to mention to challenge ourselves physically and mentally in the process.



Ramnik

Ramnik Ahuja, Resident Doctor:

A big YES! First and foremost, it is a ride for charity and not to mention an exciting, amazing experience to cherish through life.

Jennifer Oh, Cyclist:

RFC 2014 had a very good ending. When we arrived at Central Sikh Temple, the welcome we received was simply amazing. That feeling lasted for a very long time, which is one of the many reasons I invited my non-Sikh friends to join the 2015 event.

On 28th May 2016, Harmony On Wheels (HOW) hosted an appreciation dinner for the riders, support crew, sponsors and well wishers. These individuals made possible and were instrumental in the success of the Ride for Charity in March 2016 that achieved its goal to raise money for SIWEC for it to continue to assist its beneficiaries. The RFC 2015 helped to raise funds amounting to \$200,000 for SIWEC. A cheque was presented by the organizing committee of RFC to SIWEC at the dinner. Thus far, HOW through RFC 2014 and 2015 has raised nearly \$400,000. With all the funds raised by HOW, SIWEC has been able to sustain existing programmes and develop newer initiatives.

SIWEC would also like to thank all the individual riders, officials, individual donors, corporate sponsors, SIWEC Staff and everyone else who contributed one way or the other (in cash or in kind) in making RFC 2015 a big success! Siwec would also like to Congratulate Harmony on Wheels in its very noble cause of raising funds for the less fortunate and wish them all the success in their future programs. SIWEC hopes to continue to collaborate with HOW in future.



@ SIWEC

"The best way to find yourself
Is to lose yourself in the service of others."

- Mahatma Gandhi

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SIWEC is here to help.

If you or someone you know requires assistance or is interested in our services,
please come down to meet us at:

SIKH WELFARE COUNCIL

2 Towner Road, #06-02, Singapore 327804

Opening Hours:

Monday- Friday, 9am-6pm

Email: info@siwec.org

or

contact out 24-hour helpline @ 6299 9234