



SIWEC *Insight*

March 2017

Sikh Welfare Council, Singapore

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SikhWelfareCouncil

SIWEC moving into 2017

Happy
New
Year

SIWEC's staff and management committee
wish all a fulfilling 2017 ahead

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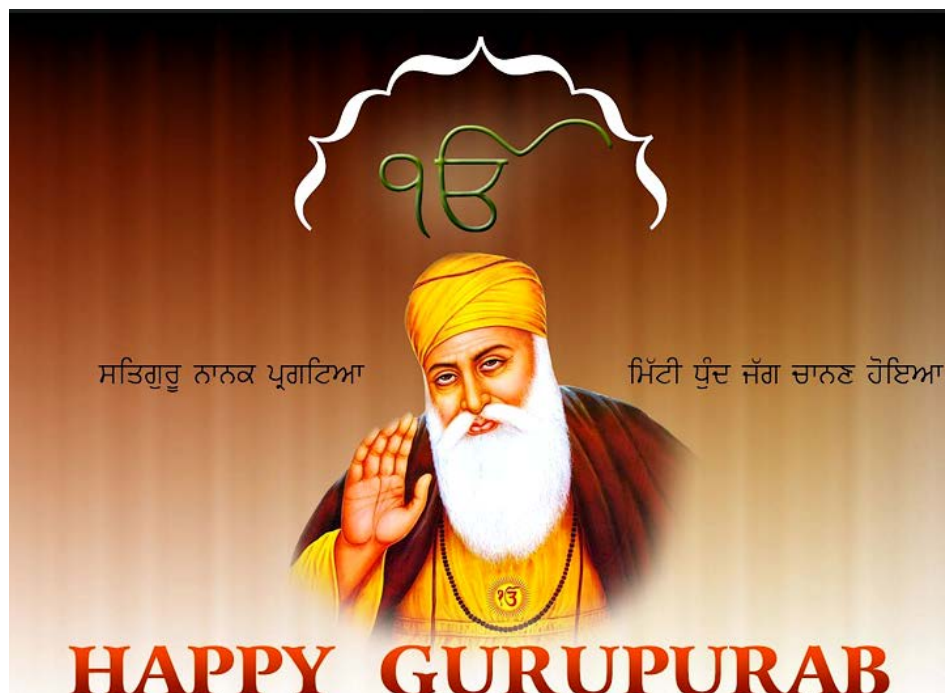
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Gurpurab Celebrations at Singapore Prisons in November 2016



In the last quarter of 2016, SIWEC volunteers and staff celebrated Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Birthday with inmates attending our counseling programme in Changi Prisons.

Priests from Sikh temples engaged the inmates on the significance of the occasion and performed kirtan and ardaas. The inmates had the opportunity to participate in prayers and reflect with the priests, after which they consumed *karha parshad* (sweet semolina pudding served at the end of any worship) with a modest langgar of *chana* prepared at the Gurdwara.

The inmates were highly appreciative of the visit and the support that SIWEC provides through its counselors' guidance to inmates in their journey towards rehabilitation and reconciliation with their families. Our volunteers were equally appreciative for the chance to perform this Sewa in conjunction with Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Birthday Gurpurab, thus embodying Guru Nanak Dev Ji's teachings of universal brotherhood and Vand Ke Chakna.

SIWEC will continue this initiative in 2017 as it is an integral part of our support for the rehabilitation and subsequent reintegration of the inmates in society.

All of us at SIWEC thank our volunteers and all Sikh institutions for their valuable Sewa and hope that many more well-wishers will continue to be inspired to step forward and perform Sewa in the years ahead.

LOSS AND GRIEF MANAGEMENT

There is no pain so great as the memory of joy in present grief – Aeschylus

Grieving is a deeply personal and highly stressful experience. How one grieves depends on many factors including personality and coping style, life experience, faith, and the nature of the loss.

There is no right or wrong way of dealing with grief, but it is necessary to understand loss and the accompanying pain. Many think that they have overcome a loss in their lives but unknown to them, that may not actually be the case. Unresolved grief can lead to health and social issues.

SIWEC organised a talk on loss and grief management at the Central Sikh Temple on 27 September 2016. 33 participants attended the session conducted by certified Reality therapists Mr. Peter Ho and Ms. Rita Bay. The talk centered on understanding why individuals grieve, dealing with grief and sorrow as a result of the loss of something or someone dear, and the eventual recovery journey. Participants also took away tips and advice on helping grieving family members and friends identify and deal with their grief and loss.

Some participants expressed that the talk was a much-needed eye opener which made them better understand the concept of grief and how to actually deal with it. Some attendees were moved to tears during the talk – as the discussion reminded of their own loss. They confessed to feeling as if a weight had been lifted off their hearts after the session.



Given the challenges of family caregiving for family members looking after their elderly loved ones diagnosed with dementia or chronic and terminal illnesses, there have been many requests for more such talks to better equip families with coping skills. Recognising this demand, SIWEC will continue to organise more such talks in 2017, to better prepare the community to deal with emotions, stress and family conflict experienced when caring for their loved ones.



“How do we help those with addiction issues? How can we as a community, be better equipped to deal with the families of those affected?”

These concerns have been raised by many in our community. To address such concerns, SIWEC tied up with the National Addictions Management Service (NAMS) to hold a talk on 13 November 2016 at the Central Sikh Temple.

NAMS was set up in the Institute of Mental Health in 2008 with the support of the Ministry of Health, to provide outpatient treatment for a broad range of addictions including drugs, alcohol, gambling and other addictions. It has an inpatient facility as well for rehabilitation and runs two satellite clinics in IMH Community Wellness clinics in Queenstown and Geylang.

The talk was given by Mr. Anil Singh Sona from NAMS, MA Social Sciences (Sociology) from NUS,

Manager of the Addiction Recovery College (ARC) in NAMS. He was previously the Executive Director (2010 – 2015) of a residential facility where he worked in the field of rehabilitating ex-drug offenders.

The objective of the talk was to build awareness and equip those attending with tips to effectively help those afflicted with addiction problems and to assist their family members to cope with the situation and work hand in hand in rehabilitating their loved ones. The attendees found the talk informative, eye opening and helpful.

SIWEC will continue to work hand in hand with NAMS to generate higher awareness about different addictions by organizing more talks and workshops in 2017.





In 2015,
SIWEC

embarked on a new program to address the concerns of the community over the declining performance of our Sikh students at the national examinations in Singapore.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE PROGRAMME

A task force was then formed to profile students attending our Punjabi Schools to see how the students were fairing in subjects like English, Mathematics and Science. SIWEC engaged an Academic Officer with the requisite training and background in 2015 to lead this program to look holistically into improving the academic performance of our Sikh Students who were not doing well. The exercise initially focused on students attending the Primary 1 and 2 levels at the three Punjabi Centres. Since then the program has been successfully running and initial results are quite encouraging.

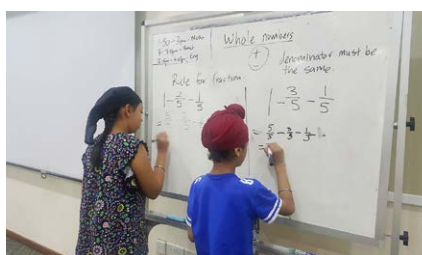
SIWEC's Academic Officer, Sebastian Ng has been a teacher for 12 years. He has been working hand in hand with SSEF and parents of the students to holistically review the reasons for each identified student's under-performance. Customized support, coaching, mentoring and counselling was provided to guide these students towards improving their grades and overall performance. This was achieved by matching suitable tutors, monitoring students' day to day performance in their schools, liaising with their school teachers, conducting house visits, review of tutors, attending

parent teacher meetings with parents when needed and supplying educational resources. SIWEC also provides financial assistance for some families where there is a compelling need.

Since 2015, 21 students have benefited from this program. Parents of the identified students have been very supportive and are grateful to SIWEC and SSEF for spearheading this initiative. They recognize the efforts of the community to help our Sikh students and have been fully cooperative with the Academic Officer. One parent said, "My wife and I are happy to know that SIWEC and SSEF are helping our daughter and we hope that they can help my other children too and guide them to do well".

We are looking for more dedicated and experienced tutors to assist in the program. Interested individuals are encouraged to email your resume to Sebastian Ng at epo@ssef.edu.sg.

In 2017, SIWEC and SSEF will continue to build on the initial momentum gained in this initiative in our effort to help our Sikh students perform better at the national examinations in Singapore.



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E-mail: info@siwec.org or contact our 24-hour Helpline @ 6299 9234