The Sikh Research Institute (SikhRI) concluded its twelfth annual summer program, Sidak – Faith. Courage, Discipline, on 9th August 2014. The program commenced on 27 July 2014 at the Khalsa Center in Miracle Valley, British Columbia, Canada. This two-week program was attended by 40 participants from all over the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. The participants included high school and college students, as well as young professionals.

According to Mandeep Singh, Sidak Coordinator, “Three separate programs were offered simultaneously: Sikh 101, Sikh 201, and Gurmukhi 201. All three tracks explored Sikh through the confluence of bani (scripture), tvarikh (history), and rahit (discipline) by participating in lectures, presentations, workshops, and group discussions.” Sikh 101 participants studied an overview of Sikh history and theology through structured learning, while Sikh 201 students delved deeper into the same subjects through rigorous reading and discussion. Gurmukhi 201 focused solely on language, grammar, and lexicon of Guru Granth Sahib as well as the secondary texts.

Ravneet Kaur from Altadena, CA shares her experience: “Sikh 101 provides a holistic view of gurbani, history, and rahit. Sidak has provided a concrete framework for me to critically analyze history, use gurbani for inspiration, and apply it to my lifestyle. It’s a great program for anyone that is interested in either developing or strengthening their foundation in Sikh.”
Sikhi 201 was taught in an approach comparable to college seminars. Each day, participants were assigned extensive readings on topics such as Gurus and Revolution, Guru Granth Sahib, Guru Khalsa Panth, Sikhi via Poetry, 1984 and Beyond, Panjab issues and Diaspora today.

“I learnt so much over these last 2 weeks!!! I began the retreat in Sikhi 201, unsure of what I was getting myself into. However, by the end of this time, I have acquired such a great deal of knowledge, and I know that I still have so much more to learn, because we’ve barely scraped the surface of our complex and ever-evolving history/diaspora. I now know to question all that I read or hear because it may come from a questionable source or have a hidden motive/underlying message. Each piece of information must be completely analyzed through a Sikhi lens … I have gained so much from this experience, and I’ve only just begun to unlock my full potential as a member of the Sikh diaspora,” writes Simrun Kaur Hundal, Shawnee, KS.

Morning divans, consisted of singing Asa ki Var and the interpretation and singing of Gurbani, followed by collectively interpreting the hukam of the day. Some notable features of Sidak and the requirements of the program include speeches, sabads, and a Degh making lab. On speech night, each participant delivered a 5 minute speech on the topic of their choice. Every participant was required to perform a sabad and to discuss their interpretation of the sabad in divan. Each participant learned how to make and distribute Degh to the sangat.

“I have learnt so much, from my Gurmukhi 201 classes and from my fellow Sidakers. From these 2 weeks I have learnt to take gurbani and go into depth with the meaning of it - taking the translation and connecting it to my life, and to history. I would recommend this to everyone,” says Jasdeep Kaur from British Columbia.

Jagdeep Singh Mahoon from London, England highlighted the ambience at camp by saying, “I was expecting an intense only learning atmosphere at the camp. The activities were a very welcome addition, at the beautiful Khalsa Centre. This was nothing like what I have ever been to, an eye opening experience of how we can implement learning into an environment where Sikh is put into practice.”

Baljinder Kaur Narang, President of SikhRI Canada was delighted that Sidak had come to Canada for the first time since its inception. She attributed the success of Sidak to the hard work and dedication of the many volunteers who put in tireless hours ensuring the retreat ran well and was fun. She also appreciated the hard work of SikhRI staff who were on hand at all the times offering advice, support and assistance to all attendees.

Anu Kaur Bal, a high school teacher in the Surrey School district, BC wrote: “This has been a great experience! I’ve learnt an incredible amount not only about Sikhi but also how I could potentially fit into the greater Panthic picture.”

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**About the Sikh Research Institute**

The Sikh Research Institute (SikhRI) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a mission to provide educational resources to Sikhs to lead a Guru-inspired life. All donations are tax deductible.