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For Immediate Release

Pacific Northwest Tour Sparks New Lights

Burnaby, BC— From 26 October to 1 November, the Sikh Research Institute in Canada worked closely with community groups, local media and the Lower Mainland's Gurdwaras to help build awareness of the Sikh heritage and history through a series of presentations, dialogues, and media appearances, including radio interviews and spots on Omni and Joy TV. You can [watch Harinder Singh on Omni TV](#) discussing the good that support of SikhRI can do in the local and global Sikh communities.



To start the tour Harinder Singh moderated a panel at the Our Journeys Conference organized by SAFAR. The panel he moderated was on "Ensaaf: Social Justice." The conference was held at the University of British Columbia and featured panels and addresses by dozens of writers, scholars, and activists.

On 28 October, SikhRI hosted its annual fundraising dinner for almost 300 guests at the Grand Taj Banquet Hall in Surrey. Bhupinder Singh Hundal of Omni TV was the master of ceremonies and Harinder Singh

delivered the keynote address of the evening, "Which Candle to Light?" which drew on the celebration of Diwali but with a Sikh perspective on the questions of allocating resources, energy and passion to projects vital to the Panth. Portions of the evening were sponsored by AllCare Medical Centre, Khalsa Credit Union and the Grand Taj Banquet Hall. [This video](#) offers a deeper overview of SikhRI as an organization as well as reflections from guests who attended the event and support SikhRI's plans for the future.

"The event was filled with analysis instead of dogma, dialogue was preferred over preaching, and the discourse was insightful and thought-provoking," said Mo Dhaliwal, a community activist and a cultural navigator, who also spoke at the event that evening. "I hope this organization gains the support they need to continue their work in reconnecting average people like me, with Sikh teachings and resources to help see themselves as Sikhs. That has a profound impact on individuals and their communities."

Prabhdeep K. Johal, a guest from Surrey, said, "This program allowed me to look at Sikhi from a different point of view and really challenged what I learned as a child. I would recommend this to others so that they can also see that Sikhi does not have one certain set of rules. It depends on how you perceive yourself and how you perceive Sikhi."

SikhRI also hosted an interactive dialogue on Parenting and Sikhi on 29 October at the Axio Business Centre in Surrey, which was attended by over 40 participants. Afterwards Yadwinder Singh said, "I learned new tools and simple, small changes in my daily life to help my children better understand our Sikh heritage and philosophy. I thoroughly enjoyed the evening and will share these ideas with my family and friends."



To close out the Canadian portion of the tour, Harinder Singh spoke as part of the Annual Shaheedi Smagam held in Abbotsford. "Through his engaging presentation, Harinder Singh gave the sangat a new perspective on 1984 by relating these events to Sikh history and Gurbani, while also encouraging people to embrace their history and to take action at a personal and social level," said Jatinder Singh, an administrator at the Gurmat Center, which hosted this event and also sponsored SikhRI's travel for this tour. Harnek Singh, Director of the Gurmat Center, also commented on the presentation: "His knowledge and passion are evident in the manner and quality of his presentation. This presentation really makes you think about your role and responsibility with-in the Sikh Panth; it makes you see Sikh history in a whole new way."

The first weekend of November, SikhRI headed into Washington for a two events in the Seattle area. On Saturday, a Saneha community development session, Asa Ki Var: Transcending Duality was held at Bellevue Community College. "The speaker was dynamic at activating me to consider myself, my mind, and my actions as a Sikh," said Harsimrit Kaur from Seattle. "As a Western-born Sikh still learning the basics I felt so engaged and included as a valuable member of the group." On Sunday Harinder Singh spoke at Gurdwaras in Renton and Bothell on the topic "1984 & I."

"I am so grateful to all the volunteers who give tirelessly of their time and effort and energy to make these events tours such successes," said Lali K. Pawa, BC Coordinator for SikhRI Canada. "I know that we are all looking forward to a strong and vital SikhRI in 2013 and beyond and it was inspiring and heartening to see so many people come out and support the organization, to show that they wanted that too."

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