

# A YEAR IN REVIEW Investing in Potential

## UNITED SIKHS Annual Report for 2005



**Address:** JAF, POB 7203, New York, NY 10116, USA  
**Tel:** 1-646 338 5996 (Toll-free: 1-888-243-1690)  
**Fax:** 1-810-885-4264  
**E-mail:** [unitedsikhs-na@unitedsikhs.org](mailto:unitedsikhs-na@unitedsikhs.org)

# Dedication

As we reach the milestone of our 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we recognize that this has been accomplished by standing on the many stepping-stones of success laid by people in our history. We also recognize that accomplishing this goal requires an agency with a vision and passion. And it requires a staff and volunteers with tremendous passion, dedication, and professionalism.

All great accomplishments come at great expense. That's true for every UNITED SIKHS volunteer every day. The UNITED SIKHS family has paid, and continues to pay, great costs for what we do. But our passion keeps us to the task.

This special 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of our annual report is dedicated to those most familiar with those costs:  
the UNITED SIKHS volunteers who have paid the ultimate sacrifice every family member makes by giving up their time with their family lives to take part in the endeavor to assist in disaster affected areas or to stand up for the rights of people.

We honor your lives and efforts you put in.

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# Introduction

## About UNITED SIKHS

UNITED SIKHS is an international not-for-profit human development organisation aimed at empowering those in need, especially disadvantaged and minority communities across the world. UNITED SIKHS is registered: as a non-profit tax exempt organization pursuant to Section 501(c)(3) of the Inland Revenue Code in the US; as a Registered Charity in England and Wales under the Charities Act 1993, Charity Number 111 2055; under the Societies Registration Act 1860 in Panjab and under the French Association Law 1901.

## Our History

UNITED SIKHS began in 1999 when a group of Sikhs from the New York metropolitan area banded together to assist in the socio-economic development of immigrant communities in Queens, New York.

Today, UNITED SIKHS is a grass-roots organisation with chapters in America, Asia and Europe that pursue projects for the spiritual, social and economic empowerment of underprivileged and minority communities.

## Our Mission

To transform underprivileged and minority communities and individuals into informed and vibrant members of society through civic, educational and personal development programs, by fostering active participation in social and economic activity.

We at UNITED SIKHS believe that the development of enlightened and progressive societies can be made possible by socially conscious groups of people who make a commitment to develop and direct human potential. Our work, efforts and achievements stand as a testament to our faith in this vision.

Accordingly, UNITED SIKHS has sought to fulfil its mission not only by informing, educating and uplifting fellow beings but also by participating in cross-cultural and social dialogues to ensure that the promises and benefits of democracy are realised by all.

UNITED SIKHS is also an avenue for networking between like-minded organisations to establish and nurture meaningful projects and dialogues – whether social, cultural or spiritual– to promote harmony, understanding and reciprocity in our villages, towns and cities.

To achieve its objectives, UNITED SIKHS also participates in coalitions that share a common vision based on the belief that there is no greater endeavour than to serve, empower and uplift fellow beings. The core of our philosophy is an unwavering commitment to civic service and social progress on behalf of the common good.

# Potential



UNITED SIKHS volunteers distributing schoolbags to schoolchildren in Bagh, Pakistan, whose schools were demolished during the Asian quake, killing many students.

# M E S S A G E TO OUR SUPPORTERS

UNITED SIKHS has experienced explosive growth and massive change in the past decade, but one abiding principle has remained constant: our unshakable belief that every human can and should be able to achieve their God-given potential to the fullest. One person can make a difference, and they do so every day in UNITED SIKHS world.

We now live and serve in a very complex world: A world of international politics, profit, and power. A world in which technology often replaces people and success is measured more by the bottom line than by the number of those who have the dignity of taking home a paycheck. A modern society where computer chat rooms are increasingly replacing a community action, and partnerships with the poor are often tainted with self-interest. Non-government organizations are not immune to these powerful forces that shape and mould our global culture and sometimes even try to determine the very nature of our mission.

UNITED SIKHS is an agency that believes in people. It's an agency that still places people at the non-negotiable center and focus of our mission. Our success is not measured in terms of the amount of food we have delivered or the bricks and mortar we have laid, or by standing for the rights of minorities, but rather by the positive and sustainable impact made on individual and community livelihoods as a result of our partnerships with them. There can never be a higher fulfillment than that which ennoble the human spirit and brings dignity and justice to those who live at the social margins of justice of our world.

UNITED SIKHS is entering its 6<sup>th</sup> year in the face of many difficult challenges. But when history writes the final epitaph for this world, it will be seen that people had the power to change the world.

# Message From All UNITED SIKHS Volunteers

As volunteers of UNITED SIKHS we have found that Seva (self-less service) and Simran (prayers) are the 'wings that we need to fly home' to Anandpur Sahib – where we were born – free and without fear. Our actions are our Form. Everyday we find that the proof of the Khalsa is in his/her actions.

We battle to convince others that the Dastaar (Turban) is not a fetish. That the Kirpan is not an offensive weapon.

UNITED SIKHS volunteers serve in humanitarian relief, human development and advocacy projects throughout the world. Yesterday a UNITED SIKHS volunteer responded to a request for Sikh literature from a Sikh in a UK prison. Last week, a UNITED SIKHS volunteer helped a refugee center in the Netherlands deal with a Sikh family who was being forced to return to Afghanistan, where there is no guarantee of religious freedom. This week, a UNITED SIKHS advocacy volunteer wrote a letter to a postmaster in California to allow a Sikh postman to wear a Dastaar turban. The week before, our volunteers in Panjab delivered 200 Kakkars to Chati Singhpura a village in the Mattan district of Kashmir, where 133 Sikhs were initiated during an Amrit Sanchar ceremony. Community education classes run by UNITED SIKHS interns and volunteers will begin in New York next month. A teenage volunteer who completed an internship in Panjab this month says she has been humbled. Next week a weary volunteer returns to the UK after a pilot study for a Make Poverty History project in Panjab. UNITED SIKHS is now helping FBI trace a missing Sikh teenager whilst providing advocacy support to the family.

At UNITED SIKHS, we are proud and hopeful that many Vaisakhis like this will come. We are proud to be Sikhs and grateful to unite into a global Sadh Sangat. We stand together again in awe, grateful for the teachings of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib and the leadership of the Guru Panth. We marvel at the transcendent power that comes when humans leap selflessly into service and social justice activism. We pray to be simple, humble and brave.

We ask for the courage we need to address the suffering, fear, pain and horror we are called to overcome at this time, in ourselves and others. We ask for Divine guidance and we give sincere thanks for the resources and the volunteers needed to effectively defend and nurture the desperate.

At UNITED SIKHS, we feel at peace today, knowing that we are ready. We are ready to respond quickly and effectively to each call for help, small or large, Sikh or non-Sikh. We are excited with our successes, and we joyfully celebrate how UNITED SIKHS has joined in seva with humble volunteers from many countries, religions, cultures, and vocations.



At UNITED SIKHS, we are proud and peaceful people today, working as ONE, for the good of all, protecting the health, peace and freedom of life on this beautiful blue-green gem of a planet.

# M i l e s t o n e s

**1999:** Initiated as an organization that catered to health and education related projects under Sikh-Aid

**2000:** Initiated health and educational literacy camps in New York

**2001:** Started the Advocacy campaign in USA after 9/11 to educate the American community on Sikhism. After 9/11 a number of Sikhs became prime targets of discrimination because of their attire. Advocacy was the demand

**2002:** Expanded our projects to New Jersey, USA, Washington DC and to California.

**2003:** Added the Multifaith component to UNITED SIKHS as it serves as an important arm to educate the religious, governmental and non-governmental bodies on identity of Sikhs and how important it is for a Sikhs to preserve their identity

**2004-2005:** Expanded to Asia (Panjab), United Kingdom and France. Expanded Sikh-Aid to cater to natural disasters such as Tsunami, Katrina and the Asian Earthquake.

# Core Portfolios

## 1 ) International Civil and Human Rights Advocacy (ICHRA)

ICHRA helps advance the economic, social and spiritual empowerment of minorities and other marginalized groups and individuals in need, regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, social status, age or ability. We achieve this by protecting and enforcing the civil and human rights of minorities and marginalized groups in the Americas, Europe and Asian.

### Right to Turban

UNITED SIKHS advocated the rights of Sikhs living in France to be allowed to wear their turbans. For more information

Since September 11, the world has been gripped by fear such that many minority communities, including the Sikh community, have suffered a backlash through misinformation and ignorance. The first reprisal killing after Sept 11 was of a Turban wearing Sikh in Arizona, who was mistaken as belonging to the group which perpetrated the 9/11 incident. Sikhs due to their unique appearance have since been a target of hate and bias crime and discrimination. Every week, UNITED SIKHS receives reports from Sikh adults and children who are victims of race/biased/hate crimes and from those being denied their rights to practice their religion. A Sikh's right to wear his articles of faith has been challenged in schools, the workplace, Prisons and other public places. Sikhs suffer increased harassment at airports because they wear the Turban. UNITED SIKHS provides advice, counsel and legal representation to those whose legal rights are being denied by errant and misinformed authorities and the public. A critical aspect of UNITED SIKHS' advocacy work is to create an awareness of the issues amongst authorities and the public through talks, seminars and multifaith events.

Today the remit of the RTT campaign covers the Right To Turban issue in any country where Sikhs are denied their right to wear their Turban. If you, or anyone you know, have been denied the right to wear his/her turban, please do not hesitate to contact a UNITED SIKHS office nearest to you.

### Civil and Human Rights Awareness and Advocacy

UNITED SIKHS works with likeminded organizations to promote and protect civil and human rights through awareness and advocacy. We do this by setting up and/or participating in consultative forums to facilitate a dialogue between beneficiaries and governmental and non-governmental organizations at local, national and international

levels. The American Sikh Consultative Forum (ASCF) is an example of such an effort. The ASCF highlights Sikh issues, interalia, in the field of civil and human rights, employment, education, law enforcement, and commercial and public enterprise so that Sikh Americans may enjoy the rights and bear the responsibilities of being good American citizens.

ASCF uses the following processes to achieve the above -

INFORM to diagnose the external and internal environments

ENGAGE to agree the overall goals and desired outcomes

PARTICIPATE to create and select strategies to be deployed

EMPOWER to allocate resources to achieve the Forums goals

### **Objectives of ASCF**

1. To encourage Sikh organizations in the United States to participate in the Forum so as to pool their resources to work towards common goals in a concerted manner.
2. To facilitate the promulgation of a Sikh Agenda for the United States at a Federal, State and City level.
3. To undertake negotiations and advocacy to help achieve the Sikh Agenda for the United States at Federal and State level.
4. To represent within the public and private sectors the interests and concerns of the US Sikh community and to provide the Sikh community and the public and private sectors with better two-way consultation and flow of information in order to improve the making and execution of decisions and plans.

ASCF looks forward in working with various city agencies in implementing their agendas and looks forward to work with each of the agency officials, assisting them and guiding them to implement our rights for a stronger America. We look forward to work with each of you and setup up individual meetings with each of your groups to see how best the city agencies can assist in implementing their roles effectively.

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## UNITED SIKHS Bulletins

[American Sikh Consultative Forum Seeks Redress on Sikh Issues from NY City Agencies.](#)

The American Sikh Consultative Forum (ASCF) submitted on Wednesday a memorandum to New York City Agencies seeking redress on issues faced by Sikhs living in New York City.  
October 14, 2005

[UNITED SIKHS urges Bloomberg to Step-up awareness training](#)

UNITED SIKHS has urged Mayor Michael Bloomberg of New York City to step up awareness training for law enforcement and other public agencies to ensure that the humiliating experience of UK Sikh tourists is not repeated.  
July 28, 2005

[Hate/Race Crime/Incident](#)

The increase in unpredictable and indiscriminate terrorist acts around the world since 9/11 in the US and the London bombings in July 2005 has had severe implications for the global community, not least Sikhs and other minority communities, who have faced a sharp increase in hate-related crimes and incidents.

In response to this, UNITED SIKHS has undertaken to collate data on hate crimes and incidents against Sikhs to ensure that justice is properly served. UNITED SIKHS works in North America and in partnership with other organizations in the UK to raise awareness of hate-related incidents and crimes, and to promote the practice of reporting such incidents.

Please help us by reporting all such incidents, no matter how insignificant you may feel they were. Please also ensure that you do report hate-related incidents to the police, as they can only act if they are made aware of such incidents. For further information about what a hate-related incident or crime is, and what to do in such circumstances, please read our leaflet entitled "What is a Hate Crime?". This leaflet can be found at the bottom of the hate crime reporting forms.

PLEASE USE THE CORRECT FORM FOR YOUR REGION, AND PLEASE ENSURE YOU ARE REPORTING A HATE-RELATED INCIDENT/CRIME. We are currently creating forms to deal with other types of discrimination including employment issues, gender issues etc.



[Report Hate Crime in North America](#)



## [Report Hate Crime in United Kingdom](#)

### [Rights Under The Criminal Justice System \(e.g. rights of prisoners and victims\)](#)

Most of our work on prisoners' and victims' rights is in ensuring that fundamental human rights of victims and prisoners are upheld. For e.g. we bring lawsuits on behalf of prisoners so that their loss of liberty in prison is not equated with a loss of a right to practice their faith.

We seek to assist victims of crimes, who are especially vulnerable for e.g. victims of domestic violence, child abuse and hate or race crime or incidents. We are in the process of setting up telephone help-lines and face-to-face counseling services to ensure that victims can receive help expeditiously.

**Press Release:** Wednesday, 30 November 2005, (17th Maghar, Samvat 537 Nanakshahi)

### UNITED SIKHS Files Law Suit to End Sikh Religious Rights Violations in NY Prison



Navdeep Singh fighting for his religious rights in New York prison.

New York, NY—UNITED SIKHS and the law firm of O'Melveny & Myers LPP filed a lawsuit in the Federal Court a fortnight ago to enforce a Sikh prisoner's right to practise his religion and to ensure that Sikh prisoners have the same rights as other prisoners. The plaintiff, 24-year-old Navdeep Singh, a devout Amritdhari Sikh, who started serving a 5-year prison sentence in January, has been on a liquid diet since June 6, 2005 to protest the violations of his religious rights.

"In a rare display of interest in the rights of prisoners, Congress unanimously passed the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA), giving special protections to religious practices inside prison walls. Navdeep Singh's case shows that legal action is necessary to make sure that RLUIPA's protections are real", said Milton Zelermyer, an experienced prisoners' rights lawyer with the New York Legal Aid Society, which has supported this legal action.

"Imagine not having eaten for more than a month, being admitted into a hospital for malnutrition, and being on the verge of death's door...all in the fight for his religious rights. This is the story of Navdeep Singh," said UNITED SIKHS Attorney Steven Rubin, of Pannun The Firm.

The complaint, which was filed in the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York, challenges the practices of New York Department of Correctional Services' (DOCS) personnel as gross violations of Navdeep Singh's religious rights in prison. Along with the Commissioner Glenn S. Goord of DOCS and the acting Superintendent of Fishkill Correctional Facility, who are sued for injunctive relief to end the discrimination, the complaint seeks injunctive relief and damages from 15 other prison officials of Fishkill where Navdeep Singh is presently incarcerated and the Downstate Correctional Facility where he was previously. The damages are for severely restricting Navdeep Singh's ability to practice his religion and placing him in segregation for asserting his rights. Click [here](#) to read the complaint.

Fishkill personnel repeatedly tormented Navdeep Singh by their disrespectful handling of religious scriptures with unclean hands and deliberate destruction and desecration of the texts by bending and tearing the Sikh holy scriptures, which is considered a grave insult to a Sikh and his/her religious sentiments. "Navdeep was put in solitary confinement for refusing to shave his beard, his religious articles were confiscated and he was not allowed to wear his Kara, Kacchera or Turban, said Manwinder Singh, UNITED SIKHS Director for International Civil and Human Rights Advocacy.

"Navdeep seeks the right to practice his religion and an order requiring DOCS to grant all of his reasonable requests for religious accommodations, as required by RLUIPA, DOCS' own Directive, the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of the State of New York," he added.

"The lawsuit highlights the unfair practices in the Fishkill Correctional Facility. The burdens and limitations imposed by the defendants on Navdeep are particularly unjustified because they are inconsistent with accommodations which the New York State Department of Correctional Services has made for other incarcerated persons of other religious groups, including Christians, Muslims, Jews, Native Americans, and Rastafarians, to name a few," added Manwinder Singh, quoting the complaint.

"For example, DOCS permits a Native American inmate to possess several religious items including a medicine bag, an American Rosette on a fabric or leather cord, sacred herbs, smoking pipe and religious artifacts and symbols. In contrast, the defendants have prevented Navdeep from possessing essential religious items, including without limitation, the Kara, a thin iron or steel bracelet worn by Sikhs at all times. Similarly, DOCS permits a Christian inmate to wear a cross pendant, but refuses to permit Navdeep to wear a Khanda, the Sikh pendant," he continued.

Navdeep Singh requests in his complaint : (a) the right to possess his religious articles, books, and pendants; (b) that these items be treated with respect; and (c) that he be provided reasonable accommodations so that he can practice Sikhism, such as set times for prayer and a vegetarian diet.

To read previous Press Releases on UNITED SIKHS civil and human rights advocacy click [www.unitedsikhs.org/advocacy\\_issues.htm](http://www.unitedsikhs.org/advocacy_issues.htm)

### Minorities and Indigenous Rights

Violations of human rights against minority and indigenous peoples continue to be a common occurrence. In 1992, the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, the only United Nations instrument which addresses the special rights of minorities in a separate United Nations document. The establishment, in 1995, of the United Nations Working Group on Minorities, is another important achievement to date

However, it is up to organizations like UNITED SIKHS to respond to day-to-day human rights violations against minorities and indigenous groups.

Many such people have limited ability or means to challenge the discriminations and violations of human rights which they suffer, so it remains important for UNITED SIKHS to continue helping such people by raising awareness of the avenues of protection available and the possibilities of attaining one's rights.

UNITED SIKHS works to raise awareness of the plight of minorities across the world, specifically those who are suffering because of their religious convictions, or because they belong to a minority ethnic group. We make our knowledge of such minorities available to the societies in which minorities are currently suffering, and aim to educate the wider public about their plight to help improve their treatment. It is hoped that the two-pronged approach of educating the general public of minority issues, and providing minorities with means of challenging the problems they face, will lead to the full acceptance of minority and indigenous people by the world community.

## Reports

### Denmark Kirpan Case

UNITED SIKHS wrote to Lene Espersen Justitsministeriet (Justice Minister) of Holland regarding the concerns serious miscarriage of justice regarding Mr. Ripudaman Singh, a member of Sikh faith, who is facing criminal charges for carrying a Kirpan, an article of faith that members of the Sikh religion are required to wear on their person at all times. For more information see: <http://www.unitedsikhs.org/rtt/DenmarkKirpan.htm>



## Barcelona Kirpan Case

Council for Parliament of World's Religion (CPWR) is hosting "Parliament of World's Religion" (PWR) in Barcelona from July 7<sup>th</sup> to July 13<sup>th</sup>. Different religions and cultural groups are participating for inter-religious dialogues. Sikhs from various parts of the world have come to Barcelona to exchange ideas on the issues of peace. It was disappointing for the Amritdhari (Baptised) Sikhs on the opening day of the Forum when they were denied entry into the main building because they were carrying their swords "Kirpan". Director of the UNITED SIKHS for the North America Kuldip Singh, who was invited to speak in Barcelona for a presentation in PWR, took the initiative along with a group of Amritdhari Sikhs from Surrey, Canada to resolve the confusion. For more information see: <http://www.unitedsikhs.org/rtt/Kirpan%20Barcelona.htm>

UNITED SIKHS Helps Illinois Fitness Instructor Secure his Right To Wear a Turban at Work

**Darein, Illinois, USA** – UNITED SIKHS successfully intervened to ensure that a fitness instructor, Harmeet Singh, was able to wear his Turban at work after his employer told him last month that he would have to remove his Turban, a required article of the Sikh faith.

Harmeet Singh, a personal trainer at Darein X Sports Fitness Center in Illinois, was notified by his supervisor on the third day of his employment that according to company policy, no employee was allowed to wear a head covering.



Harmeet Singh: Illinois Fitness instructor who sought UNITED SIKHS' help to fight for his right to wear his turban at work

"This came as a shock to me as I had worn my Turban during XSport's training sessions and also during a National Personal Training Certification course offered by

NCSF (National Council for Strength and Fitness). Before signing up, I was assured that I would be hired to work as soon as I receive the study material from the NCSF,” said Harmeet Singh.

“On March 23, 2006 one of the XSport’s Director by the name of Bill approached me and told me that it is the company's policy that while at work one cannot wear any head covering including the Turban as XSport is not a religious organization,” he added.

Harmeet Singh explained the significance of the Turban to his supervisor who referred him to the Company’s handbook on the Dress Code.

“I contacted UNITED SIKHS as I felt unable to reason with my supervisor,” Harmeet Singh said.

“UNITED SIKHS was pleased to find that despite the supervisor’s stance, X Sports Fitness Center’s had a Corporate Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Policy that provided for an employee’s religious rights at the workplace as protected by the Illinois Human Rights Act,” said Tejinder Singh, UNITED SIKHS Legal Advisor.

“We helped Harmeet Singh draft a letter citing the law and company policy and a few days later Harmeet Singh got the good news from his supervisor that he will be allowed to wear his Turban at work,” Tejinder Singh added.

We have written to X Sports Fitness Center to applaud them for being quick to comply with their policy which is consistent within the state and federal laws. Click [here](#) to read letter.

If you or anyone you know has been discriminated against in the school, university or workplace, please contact UNITED SIKHS at [contact@unitedsikhs.org](mailto:contact@unitedsikhs.org) or call 1-888-243-1690 for assistance.

To read a previous Press Release on UNITED SIKHS’ advocacy for Sikh religious rights, click <http://unitedsikhs.org/PressReleases/PRSRLS-29-12-2005-00.htm>



UNITED SIKHS presents...

## Americans in Turbans An Inside Look at NYC SIKHS

*Recognize the Human Race as One*

During New York Immigrant History Week Celebrations  
Come Join and See the Rich Sikh Heritage in NYC



Photo Gallery of Sikh Immigrant History, Movies, Bhangra Traditional (Dance), Turban Extravaganza, Keertan (Spiritual Hymns), Gatka (Sikh Martial Arts), Sikh artifacts display, Q&A with NYC Sikhs

Saturday, April 22, 2006  
11 A.M - 4:40 P.M.

At  
Queens Central Library  
89-11 Merrick Blvd.  
Jamaica, NY 11432  
718-990-0700

Inquiries: [contact@unitedsikhs.org](mailto:contact@unitedsikhs.org)  
Tel: 1-646 338 5996 (Toll-free: 1-888-243-1690)  
[www.unitedsikhs.org](http://www.unitedsikhs.org)

Sponsored by:

Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor  
Guillermo Linares, Commissioner  
Mayors Office of Immigrant Affairs

## 2) Sikh Aid

In 2003, UNITED SIKHS established GHANAIA (Giving Humanitarian Aid Necessities and Assistance Impartially to All) as an international relief effort to provide non-partisan aid and assistance to victims in disaster situations. GHANAIA is providing much needed aid during the aftermath of the Tsunami in South Asia, and has expanded to include blood and health drives.

### [GHANAIA Asian Earthquake Relief](#)

More than 80,000 people are feared dead, many still lying in rubble, thousands injured and millions made homeless after a severe earthquake hit areas of Pakistan, India and Afghanistan early on 8 October.

The epicentre of the quake, which measured 7.6 on the Richter scale, was some 90 kilometres north of Pakistan's capital city Islamabad. Several remote villages have been completely reduced to rubble and countless others have been severely damaged. Aid agencies are facing difficulty getting to the remotest areas by road and air transport is in short supply. The cold weather in the highlands and the imminent winter has made the survivors vulnerable to the elements.

UNITED SIKHS volunteers assisted by nearby communities have arrived at the scene of the disaster, to provide high-altitude tents, woollen blankets and other supplies and to run langgar (community kitchen) camps on the Pakistani and Indian side of the affected areas.

For more information please see:

<http://unitedsikhs.org/asianeearthquake/>

### [GHANAIA Katrina Hurricane Relief](#)

Thousands were dead and the entire city of New Orleans is under water, amongst other cities, after Hurricane Katrina hit the south-eastern United States in what is being called one of the worst and most expensive natural disasters in American history. The police, armed guards, and medical

professionals are struggling to provide essential services with hundreds of thousands of people homeless, displaced and or injured.

UNITED SIKHS has started the GHANAIA Katrina Hurricane Relief project and is working together with US authorities to gather resources and build a team of volunteers, including medical professionals, who will aid the refugees in Louisiana. We need your support, through time, effort and money, to make this project successful.

For the work done and for more information see:  
<http://unitedsikhs.org/katrina/>

## Community Voice

Sunday, 11 December 2005

28th Maghar (Samvat 537 Nanakshahi)

### REMEDY Supplies Much Needed Medical Supplies for Katrina Survivors

**Baton Rouge, Louisiana:** The Mount Sinai Hospital REMEDY project partnered with UNITED SIKHS and provided much needed medical supplies to shelters housing hurricane survivors in Baton Rouge recently. REMEDY stands for “Recovered Medical Equipment for the Developing World”, and the project recovers recyclable medical supplies and equipment from the Mount Sinai Hospital in New York, sterilizes them and gives the supplies to the developing world or any other situation of need.

UNITED SIKHS volunteers distributed the supplies that included syringes, IV bags and medical masks, which were handed out to the delight of shelter organizers and evacuees who are still at risk from diseases such as tetanus and those stemming from the pollution left behind by the flood.

Gobind Singh, volunteer with the Mount Sinai REMEDY project said, “We are glad to assist UNITED SIKHS in this endeavor, who are trying to help humanity by providing medical assistance”.



Allen Chapel Evacuee Shelter organizer inspects medical supplies donated by REMEDY Doctors and medical supplies are much in demand as the health of many has been affected and the evacuees long for a sense of normalcy. Many evacuees flocked to receive the medicines and the UNITED SIKHS volunteers could feel the sense of relief. UNITED SIKHS and its work at the neighborhood shelters is ongoing. The volunteers are fervently committed to the betterment of the community and have shown that through their actions. Talisha Davis of the Northern Baton Rouge Womens Health Center was “struck with the dedication and commitment shown by the UNITED SIKHS volunteers. They came in ready to work and showed a desire to make an impact and it was reflective in the work done.”

Supplies are still being distributed to the shelters and help has also been given to the various food and supply distribution centers in the region. UNITED SIKHS continues to liaise with humanitarian organizations in the region, and continually implements best practice in this critical time of need.

#### **Katrina Hurricane Relief Links**

- [Updates](#)
- [Donate](#)
- [Volunteer](#)
- [Relief Supplies Currently Required](#)
- [Katrina Hurricane Relief Effort Gallery](#)

#### **Issued by:**

Gurvinder Singh

Director

UNITED SIKHS

[Katrina-project@unitedsikhs.org](mailto:Katrina-project@unitedsikhs.org)

Tel 1 469-222-6288 (Toll Free: 1-888-243-1690)

## Sikhs of New Orleans Unveil Plans for Children's Future

### **New Orleans, Louisiana:**

The Guru Nanak Missionary Society of Louisiana and UNITED SIKHS will run a Panjabi Academy, a partnership that emerged in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The educational institution will boost the New Orleans Sikh community's efforts to rebuild their future in the region, after the devastation wrecked by the hurricanes in August and September this year.

The need for such an institution has come about due to the growing demand in the Sikh community for their children to know their Panjabi heritage. Gurmeet Singh Sohi, President of the Guru Nanak Missionary Society, stated "The Panjabi Academy in New Orleans will help educate our children about the Panjabi language, culture and Sikh history".



Gurmeet Singh explaining his damage to UNITED SIKHS.

Gurmeet Singh's dream for the community remains even though his business and house suffered extensive damage due to the hurricane. He commended UNITED SIKHS, saying the organization "is doing a great job in helping the Sikh community in Louisiana and I understand the long process of recovery. " He said he hopes the international Sikh community will remain committed to helping the community of Louisiana.

"UNITED SIKHS does not only do humanitarian relief work. As a human development organization we ensure that after our relief work is over we provide developmental assistance to the community," said Gurvinder Singh, UNITED SIKHS director.

UNITED SIKHS will shortly release a report on the extent of damage suffered by the minority Sikh community and the details of help needed for them to rebuild their lives.



UNITED SIKHS volunteers Karj Singh, Narinder Singh, Sandhesa Singh, Kapil Singh and Gurdev Singh working hand in hand with Islamic Relief at a distribution center.

UNITED SIKHS volunteer, Kapil Singh, remarked that "there is a substantial need for help within the Sikh community of New Orleans and much work remains to be done." This is due to the unfortunate number of families that have been left with so little, and are not in a position to quickly rebuild what they had. UNITED SIKHS volunteer Karj Singh stated that due to the fluidity of the situation "we are taking things one day at a time."

UNITED SIKHS is continuing to help evacuee shelters in and around the New Orleans and Baton Rouge area. Supplies are still being distributed to the shelters and help has also been given to the various food and supply distribution centers in the region. "We were to fill one truck at the Family Values Institute, but they returned to find three truckloads completed," said UNITED SIKHS volunteer Gurdev Singh. UNITED SIKHS continues to liaise with humanitarian organizations in the region, and continually implements best practice in this critical time of need.

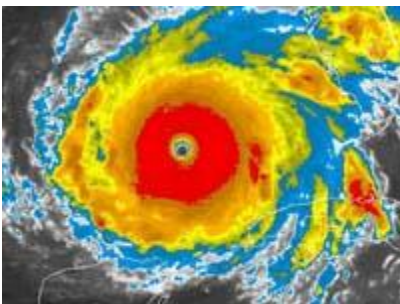
### **Katrina Hurricane Relief Links**

- [Updates](#)
- [Donate](#)
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- [Relief Supplies Currently Required](#)
- [Katrina Hurricane Relief Effort Gallery](#)

## UNITED SIKHS GHANAIA Team Prepares for Hurricane Rita

To donate go to [www.unitedsikhs.org/donate](http://www.unitedsikhs.org/donate)

To volunteer download and complete [volunteer application](#).



**Dallas, Texas, 22-Sep:** The UNITED SIKHS command centre in Dallas is closely monitoring the progress of category 5 Hurricane Rita moving with 165 mph speed



towards gulf coast states which is expected to make landfall on Saturday. According to the National Hurricane Center data Rita has become the third most intense hurricane on record.

Mandatory evacuations have been ordered for vulnerable cities like New Orleans, Galveston, Corpus Christi and Texas City. An evacuation warning has also been made for the East and South part of Houston. FEMA is pre-positioning rescue personnel and commodities and the UNITED SIKHS command centre is watching the situation closely.

"Highway 45 Houston to Dallas is packed with vehicles bumper to bumper as Texans flee deadly hurricane. UNITED SIKHS has arranged shelter for 40 Sikh families in Dallas.

We are expecting many families in the city" said Gurvinder Singh, in-charge of the Hurricane Rita command centre of UNITED SIKHS in Dallas.

UNITED SIKHS is working with the Sikh community of Dallas to prepare a relief response to Hurricane Rita. "Gurudwara Singh Sabha of Dallas is open for evacuees and the management committee and sangat (congregation) are ready to assist evacuees" said the Gurudwara secretary Surinder Singh.

Gurudwara Address:

**Gurudwara Singh Sabha**

**1201 Abrams Rd.**

**Richardson, TX 75081**

Contacts Details:

Gurudwara Phone: 972-235-3388

Surinder Singh: 214-282-2382,

UNITED SIKHS command centre: 1-888-243-1690

## **FEMA Guideline on Hurricane Information**

- [Guide—Hurricanes](#)
  - [Preparing a disaster kit](#)
  - [Hurricane Preparedness Tip Sheet \(pdf: 142KB\)](#)

## **Additional Flood and Flood Insurance Resources**

- [Tips for Filing Your Flood Insurance Claim](#)
- [Filed A Flood Insurance Claim? What Next?](#)
- [NFIP Flood Response Offices](#)
- [Floodsmart.gov](#)
- [Additional NFIP Information](#)
- [Recovering From and Coping with Flood Damaged Property](#)
- [Flood Hazard Mapping](#)
- [Floodplain Management](#)

## **Katrina Hurricane Relief Links**

- [Updates](#)
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- [Katrina Hurricane Relief Effort Gallery](#)

Issued by:  
Kuldip Singh  
Director  
UNITED SIKHS  
Katrina-project@unitedsikhs.org  
Tel: 1 404 5508356 (Toll Free: 1-888-243-1690)

## Community Voice

Tuesday, 06 September 2005

22nd Bhaadon (Samvat 537 Nanakshahi)

### UNITED SIKHS Distributes Hot Meals to 1300 Evacuees and Needs your Help to do More

Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA



UNITED SIKHS volunteers organising supplies brought in.

UNITED SIKHS volunteers today begin to serve hot meals to 1300 evacuees at the Dream Center at Donaldsonville, a temporary shelter which houses an influx of evacuees from its neighbouring New Orleans, and sets its hope to do the same in as many of the 13 evacuee centers, resources permitting.

Meanwhile, to facilitate its relief work, UNITED SIKHS, a global humanitarian and human development organization, has joined the national coalition of volunteering agencies working with FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) together with organizations such as the Red Cross, Salvation Army, United Methodist Church, Baptist Church, Catholic Charities, Episcopal Church, Church World Services and Adventist Community Services. Updates will be obtained by UNITED SIKHS through this coalition on a regular basis.

"We will feed these 1300 evacuees for weeks to come and longer if necessary, if resources permit. We are looking to extend this to as many of the 13 shelters across the nearby towns. At the moment, with the given resources, we will be extending our hot meals distribution to only one more shelter," said Gurvinder Singh, UNITED SIKHS



director and team leader at the base camp in Baton Rouge. UNITED SIKHS representative Gurvinder Singh with evacuees.

There is a dire shortage of volunteers at the relief centers. "Relief organizations are asking us if we could let them have our volunteers. There is a scramble for volunteers because of the sheer numbers to be catered for," said Jagsir Singh, a criminology student, who had taken turns with Ramandeep Singh, a computer consultant, to drive the first truck of supplies from Houston to Baton Rouge last week.

"We appeal to the public and the Sikh sangat to uphold a 500 year old Sikh tradition of running a community kitchen and to donate their resources in cash, kind and time. We need a relay of volunteers to keep the kitchen running. Catch a plane, drive down, whatever it takes just get here," he said.

Gurmail Singh, in charge of the UNITED SIKHS kitchen, said he needs help to prepare and serve the food. "Volunteers at community kitchens in Sikh Gurdwaras (place of worship) cook and serve hot food for thousands at a time all the time. Therefore it is not impossible for us to achieve this at the evacuee centers. But I need more volunteers from up and down the country to help us here." he said.

Providing hot meals is not the only concern of UNITED SIKHS. "We are still in need of 6,000 blankets, pillows, bed sheets and towels. Many of the evacuees have only the clothes on their backs and are yet to be given adequate sleeping material," said Hardayal Singh, UNITED SIKHS director who is spearheading the relief efforts.

For list of emergency supplies needed please go to [www.unitedsikhs.org/katrina/supplies.htm](http://www.unitedsikhs.org/katrina/supplies.htm)

"We still unfortunately have people sleeping on the concrete floor, as we simply don't have the resources to counteract this problem," said Mike Peeks, manager of the relief center set up at the River Center in New Orleans.

Yesterday when surveying the needs of evacuees, UNITED SIKHS volunteers distributed towels, pillows, loaves of bread and bed sheets to the evacuees at the Dream Center in Donaldsonville, LA.

"The 40 displaced Sikh families affected by Katrina in Louisiana have been provided for and they are temporarily housed with friends and family. We will work with UNITED SIKHS to look into the displaced families' future needs when they start rebuilding their homes and businesses," said Sumir Kaur, president of Gurudwara Sahib (place of worship) in New Orleans, who is co-ordinating UNITED SIKHS' relief efforts with local organizations.

'All efforts are being made with the help of UNITED SIKHS to remove Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji (Sikh scriptures) from the Gurudwara Sahib which is submerged in flood waters," she added.

### **Katrina Hurricane Relief Links**

- [Updates](#)
- [Donate](#)
- [Volunteer](#)
- [Relief Supplies Currently Required](#)
- [Katrina Hurricane Relief Effort Gallery](#)

Issued by  
Kuldip Singh  
Director  
UNITED SIKHS  
Katrina-project@unitedsikhs.org  
Tel: 1 404 5508356

- [GHANAIA Tsunami Relief](#)  
Volunteers of the GHANAIA Tsunami Relief Project are providing relief aid to tsunami victims in Banda Aceh. We are currently arranging volunteers and making strategic partnerships at ground level to maximize efficiency and effectiveness in the relief process. Our aim is to feed and support the victims of this disaster, especially those who have not yet been reached. Your financial contributions are immediately beneficial and very much needed. Please fundraise in at your community hall, church, gurdwara, etc. on holidays to support this project.



**UNITED  
SIKHS**

*Recognize the Human Race as One.*

## GHANAIA Tsunami Relief Project

[www.unitedsikhs.org](http://www.unitedsikhs.org)

UNITED SIKHS requires your immediate support and assistance to respond to the tragic tsunami disaster in Asia. More than 220,000 lives have been lost and humanitarian aid is desperately needed.

Under Project GHANAIA, UNITED SIKHS, a global non-profit, non-governmental human development organisation, will provide immediate hunger relief by setting up langar camps and distribute clothing to the victims of the tsunami disaster.

UNITED SIKHS will be doing relief work in Aceh, Indonesia, the epicentre of the disaster, as well as Sri Lanka and neighbouring affected areas.

In order to effectively help those who need it most, we require your:

- \* Physical volunteer efforts in those areas.
- \* Donations to support costs of relief efforts.
- \* Contributions of clothing, medicine and food.

Please offer help in any of these ways to improve the relief efforts. You can make a difference with your contribution.

For more details, e-mail [contact@unitedsikhs.org](mailto:contact@unitedsikhs.org) and visit the GHANAIA Tsunami Relief Project web page online at the UNITED SIKHS website: [www.unitedsikhs.org](http://www.unitedsikhs.org)



### Please Donate Today

UNITED SIKHS-EU  
PO BOX 7180,  
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Fax: (0044) (0) 871433 5655

UNITED SIKHS-NA  
28 Vesey Street, #2133,  
New York, NY 10007, USA.  
Tel: 1-646 338 5996 Fax: 1-810-885-4264

Donations can be made online, by wire transfer, direct deposit, or cheque/check. Please send checks to the following addresses payable to UNITED SIKHS. Your contribution will have a direct and positive impact on the victims of this tragedy. Please donate today.

UNITED SIKHS - Online  
[www.unitedsikhs.org](http://www.unitedsikhs.org)

UNITED SIKHS-Asia  
426-B, Industrial Focal Point,  
Amritsar 143 021, Punjab  
Tel: 0091 (0)9815-673-242



GHANAIA stands for Giving Humanitarian Aid Necessities Assistance Impartially to All and is inspired by the Sikh saint, Bhai Ghanaia Ji, who served in the army of the 10th Sikh Enlightener, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, and gave water and medicine to ailing war soldiers and victims without prejudice, seeing the same God in all beings.

## Press Release

Thursday, 28 July 2005 (13th Saawan 537 Nanaksahi)

### Long Term Relief for Tsunami Survivors at Nicobar Islands— UNITED SIKHS launches Tailoring Center and Computer Center

Campbell Bay, Nicobar Islands, Indian Ocean—

"Give a man a fish; you have fed him for today. Teach a man to fish; and you have fed him for a lifetime"—Anonymous.

After providing short term relief by supplying food, medical aid and spiritual upliftment to the Tsunami survivors , UNITED SIKHS' Tsunami GHANAIA team, one of the first International NGOs to gain access to Campbell Bay, continues to help the survivors by providing them alternative livelihood skills and resources for their long term rehabilitation - long after most relief organizations have wound up and left the area as the disaster lost its limelight.

UNITED SIKHS Tsunami GHANAIA team leader for South India, Bhai Esher Singh, who has continued to encourage people through his personal touch and dedication since the disaster struck in Dec, 2004, has deployed resources to provide financial and spiritual upliftment to the Tsunami survivors of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

A Tailoring center and Computer Center was recently launched by UNITED SIKHS in Campbell Bay, A&N islands. Assistant Commissioner Amit Kumar (IAS), along with Sr. Engineer (PWD), Tahsildar and Lt. Col Army, were the chief guests of the function organized by the Sikh community.



Students at the UNITED SIKHS Computer Center

The UNITED SIKHS Computer center is equipped with 10 Desktop computers, a printer, accessories, internet connection, two a/c, and furniture. A salaried staff of three people including an experienced computer instructor will run the classes. Two hundred students have enrolled at this institute.

"Students can visualize the world through the internet" said AC Amit Kumar during his inaugural speech at the UNITED SIKHS Computer Center.



AC Amit Kumar (IAS) with Bhai Esher Singh

Judge Singh Brar, a UNITED SIKHS GHANAIA Tsunami volunteer from California who has been at the forefront of this project, said "We will raise more funds to run the Computer Centre and provide better technology and training to students." He added that a plan of establishing a Satellite/Video conferencing centre is underway to provide people an advance communication channel with the rest of world.



Launch of Tailoring Center in Campbell Bay

The Campbell Bay Tailoring and Embroidery centre set up by UNITED SIKHS will provide vocational training to women in the area. "There are 30 students enrolled at this center," said Kuldeep Kaur, principal instructor for the vocational training center. The institute is equipped with 25 sewing machine workstations (machine, wheel and paddle set) and an electrical; embroidery machine. Tara Singh Toor, a local resident who has been appointed managing director of the center, said, "People will greatly benefit from this center."

On July 25th a distribution center was set up on the premises of Police Gurdwara at Port Blair to supply sewing machines to those individuals who have demonstrated the skills and need and had little or no other source of livelihood left.



Distribution of Sewing Machines at the Gurudwara Port Blair

"UNITED SIKHS has been in the forefront at extending a helping hand at all levels and we are truly touched by the thoughtfulness, hard work and care of the volunteers and the donors", said Jaspal Singh, Superintendent of Police, Port Blair.



Jaspal Singh, SP Port Blair with Bhai Esher Singh

UNITED SIKHS would like to thank the sangat (community) around the world for their donations and whose continued support will keep the long term support system going for the Tsunami survivors' economic and spiritual needs.

For more information on the GHANAIA tsunami project, e-mail us on: [contact@unitedsikhs.org](mailto:contact@unitedsikhs.org)

Please [donate](#), even if you cannot give a lot. Your contribution will help survivors directly. **Donations in USA Qualify for 501 (c) (3) Tax Exemption.**

To make a donation please visit: <http://www.unitedsikhs.org/donate/>

Issued by:

Kuldip Singh

Director

UNITED SIKHS



**Photograph.** The UNITED SIKHS team loads the shipment for Campbell Bay.



## Press Release

15 March 2005

2nd Chayt, Nanakshahi 537



## Donger Singh admitted to Apollo Hospital, Chennai - Gurudwara Sahib El Sobrante, California sponsors the treatment

Donger Singh, 35 and his mother, Charan Kaur, 65 were brought from Port Blair to Chennai by airplane at 2.40 pm, on March 10th. Bhai Esher Singh, Project Leader of GHANAIA Tsunami Relief Project, received them and moved Donger Singh from the waiting ambulance to the Apollo hospital.

Dr. Sridhar, a Specialist in Plastic Surgery at the Apollo Hospital, said it would take over a month to complete the surgery in different phases. The first operation for skin drafting on the lower back of Donger Singh was completed successfully on March 14th.



**Photograph.** Donger Singh with family.

Donger Singh on the phone with Kuldip Singh, New Jersey, USA said "I am very thankful to UNITED SIKHS and Sikhs in USA for making all the arrangements to help me, my family and other Sikhs in Campbell Bay". He added that he is concerned about his unmarried sister Parminder Kaur, 29, who has been supporting the family since he has been paralyzed. He further said that he and his family would like to settle in Punjab.

Donger Singh, an economics teacher in the Campbell Bay Higher Secondary School, moved to the Island with his family at the age of 4. The family migrated from Goliyan, Garh Sankar, Distt Hosiarpur, Punjab. His initial life at Campbell Bay was very tough with his family which included his mother and two sisters. Despite lots of hurdles, Donger Singh completed his graduation from Bhopal University as an Economics major and started teaching to support his family. An ebullient and effervescent Donger was left disabled and crippled by an improper optic neuritis eye treatment. Donger was only 32 at that time. As if that were not enough, he developed severe wounds when his abdomen was slashed by a barbed wire fence while he and his sister were swept by the Tsunami waves last December. He later developed serious bedsore wounds while being treated when the doctors recommended specialized surgeries.

Later Charan Kaur said in a telephone interview "Bhai Saheb ji jad tak hege ne sade kol, sara kuch hega." She was referring to Bhai Esher Singh of UNITED SIKHS, who is looking after the entire relief work in the Island.

The Apollo hospital assured UNITED SIKHS that they would give special consideration for this case keeping the charges to the minimal.

J P Singh from California is working with the Sangat and Gurudwara Sahib El Sobrante to sponsor the hospital expenses for Donger Singh. He has requested the Sangat to help UNITED SIKHS to help pay the expenses. In addition to the hospital expenses, Donger Singh would need a wheel chair, bed and mattress to support his back, an air conditioner, and a power generator.

UNITED SIKHS is also looking at different avenues of livelihood for Donger's family.

Kulwinder Kaur, 29, victim's sister needs a job to support her brother and mother.

UNITED SIKHS is seeking sponsors to purchase a Photocopier, Fax machine and a STD booth in Port Blair so that Donger Singh's family can run the booth as a means of livelihood. Please contact Kuldip Singh at [Kuldip.singh@unitedsikhs.com](mailto:Kuldip.singh@unitedsikhs.com) if you would like to help.

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UNITED SIKHS will update you as we receive reports. For Relief Team updates see:

<http://www.unitedsikhs.org/ghanaia/fieldreport.html>

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## Press Release

19 February 2005

Saturday, 8 Phalgun, Nanakshahi

### American Trauma Experts Join UNITED SIKHS in Sri Lanka Relief Effort to Help Tsunami Survivors Deal with Their Fears

Batticaloa, Sri Lanka, February 19, 2005: While financial aide has been pouring into the small island country of Sri Lanka after the Christmas-day tragic tsunami, and various international aid organizations are providing aid for basic needs of purified water, food, clothes and medical supplies, the emotional needs of thousands of people who lost loved ones, homes and livelihood is just beginning to be addressed.

UNITED SIKHS, a worldwide humanitarian organization is collaborating with the Mental Health Outreach Project (MHOP), a disaster relief organization of mental health professionals headquartered in New York and spearheaded by Dr. Anie Kalayjian, member of the United Nations Committee on Human Rights, to work with local Sri Lankan authorities and psychosocial workers to provide ongoing psychological support to the thousands of people affected by the disaster.



The first team arrived in Sri Lanka on February 9th. Successive teams will maintain the continuity of the efforts. After meeting with the Minister of Health and other officials from UNFPA in Colombo, the first team took a 10-hour journey to the northeastern side of the island to the town of Batticaloa, hard hit by the tidal wave and suffering from years of civil war.



The MHOP team is being hosted by the UNITED SIKHS team amongst whom is Vikram Singh, a psychology graduate from Malaysia, who brings to the group his experience of counseling Tsunami survivors in Aceh. Vickram who was a member of the UNITED SIKHS relief team operating in Aceh under a umbrella group, Global Sikhs, says, "The counseling experience o Batticaloa has been overwhelming. Yesterday we had a two hour session with a group of survivors including men, who broke down and cried. They said they were very happy that we are with them and asked us to visit them everyday."

"This joint effort came to fruition when Dr Kalayjian teamed up with UNITED SIKHS' to provide counseling services in the Sri Lanka's Tsunami hit areas where we are operating," says Harvinder Singh, UNITED SIKHS Team Leader in Batticaloa. "We wanted to provide something other than material supplies, which the survivors were receiving enough of. As other ai agencies begi to leave we will stay for another few months to ensure that counseling care is delivered to the survivors," he says.

Ananda Galappatti who coordinates the psycho-social services for survivors in Batticaloa says he appreciated the efforts that the UNITED SIKHS team has made to ensure that there is a longer term broad vision of rehabilitation for the survivors.

The team has been conducting group therapy sessions with children and adults living in selected camps. These shelters for displaced families are temporary living quarters set up in large buildings or colleges, the latter preventing students from resuming their studies and thereby requiring quick relocation.

"These people have been living under long-term trauma and now the tsunami has added acute trauma," says Kalayjian who is also adjunct professor of psychology at Fordham University in New York. "There is so much to be done to help heal the deep sadness of the people in this region over their unimaginably extensive losses. While no statistics are currently available about the amount of people in Sri Lanka currently suffering from the clinical syndrome of post-traumatic stress, it is clear that people can benefit from expressing feelings and getting emotional support."

"The outpouring of emotion has been intense," adds Kalayjian, who has provided mental health support after disasters like earthquakes in Armenia, Turkey and Japan and notes that despite any cultural differences, there are many commonalities in how people react after disasters and what helps. Even in cultures not used to talking about feelings, psychological first aid is effective in easing intense sadness and fears in order to prevent long-term suffering.

The team has been conducting group and individual support sessions for those in the camps affected by the tsunami.

The losses are profound. A mother, who survived when a wave catapulted her over a fence but lost her husband, three children, and her parents, cried about the loss and persistent thoughts of her son being ripped from her arms by the raging waters. A 30 year old man who lost 20 members of his family including his wife and two children said, "I was holding my two children one under each arm when the second wave hit and snatched them from me. I can still hear my daughter's voice calling on me, saying, 'Father, help me'."

Frequently expressed feelings were of fear, sadness, guilt, flashbacks, some anger and reoccurring nightmares. Preliminary findings revealed that 98 percent of the people from age eight to over sixty were afraid of the sea and that the tsunami will reoccur. Survivor

guilt was also common; 85 percent of people expressed feelings of guilt that they could not save their loved ones who died, many of whom were washed out to sea.

“In this culture, as in many others, physical complaints are more common, including headaches, stomachaches, chest pain and difficult breathing, but these are often expressions of sadness and emotional pain,” says Dr. Judy Kuriansky, team member who is an adjunct professor of psychology at Columbia University and representative to the United Nations on behalf of two international psychological associations. Kuriansky, who has provided mental health support after bombings in Jerusalem, SARS in China and post 9’11 at Ground Zero and the Family Assistance Center, and was featured in the Red Cross PSA campaign, encouraged one father whose eight-year old son is refusing to eat, to help him express sad feelings over losing his mother and siblings, since eating disorders are often a symptom of unexpressed unacceptable feelings.

Kuriansky adds, “Most of the people are impressively resilient, showing how strong they are in coping with such extreme unimaginable loss.” A focus of the group sessions has been on identifying strengths, finding new meaning in life and identifying what is being recognized as “post-traumatic growth.” Young children were congratulated for being able to survive, by running to safer ground, climbing houses, coconut or banyan trees, or hanging on to logs. Another young man was encouraged to be proud of how strong and heroic he was, despite his slight frame, to carry a heavy older woman to safety. “If you can survive this, know that you can face anything, and do anything,” they were told. “People’s faith has been tested,” notes Kalayjian. One man told the group that he could not pray since the tsunami because he had lost his faith in God, but that the exercise in the group where people stated their hopes was the first time he was able to pray again. To address children’s nightmares, Kuriansky led a group teaching them to change the ending of a dream. One little girl who kept dreaming about herself in a coconut tree watching her mother being washed out to sea crying for help, reframed the dream so that her mother was smiling at her saying, “Even if I die, know that I am okay and you must live and be happy.”

Children are taught simple breathing exercises to reduce their anxiety, and encouraged to allow themselves to express their feelings. One young girl whose grandmother told her not to cry role-played with the counselor to ask her grandmother to hold her while she cries, knowing that once the sad feelings are expressed, you can be happy and play again. To help the children feel safe, they are taught an exercise whereby they hold their hands to their heart and repeat, “I am safe,” and then turn to a friend and say, “you are safe.” Fears of going to the sea have been addressed by relaxation and imagery techniques including “in vivo desensitization.” A group of survivors, from age six to sixty were taught a relaxation routine and went together in a van to the ocean, where they practiced the techniques and played. All of the participants reported a reduction in their fear level, and an even lower level the next day. All but one later reported being able to sleep peacefully for the first time since the disaster.

The group thanked the counselor for the healing experience, and identified that going with her gave them strength to overcome their fear. Moved by their courage and beauty of soul, Kuriansky said, “It is not any technique that makes the difference, it is coming with an open heart and love, and sharing that love that makes people feel comfort and some joy again.”

Other mental health professionals working in this region include two Portuguese psychologists, who were particularly drawn to the Sri Lankan seaside community that has roots from Portugal.

Several other mental health workers from America and other countries who have come to the country have stayed in the western side of the island, and for a short time. The UNITED SIKHS/MHOP team is unique in establishing continuity with teams coming in shifts from the United States to the northeastern area of Batticaloa. The mental health team is coordinating with the few resources in the region that includes one psychiatrist, Dr. Ganeshan, who is responsible for over 1.7 million people, and local Sri Lankan counselors who are part of the psychosocial organization SHADE, assigned to the area for a six months period.

Other members of the first American team include Drs. Christine Hoven and Donald Mandel of Columbia University, Nicole Moore of Fordham University, Hishara Godakanda of University of Houston-Clear Lake, and Lousine Shamamian of BBC. Says Godakanda, a family therapist and Sri Lankan native, "I feel very blessed to be able to come back to my country to help my people in this terribly tragic time."

"This must be a long-term effort," says Kalayjian, "since the needs of the people will be long-term for generations to come, since while families have been fractured and entire generations of children or adults wiped out."

The team has assessed several needs besides psychological first aid, that includes funeral services, as a vast number of survivors have never located the bodies of their lost loved ones and therefore have not been able to go through mourning process. The team identified one group of six men, all of whom cried over losses of their wives and children during one group session, who all were enthusiastic about participating in a burial ceremony. Being that all of the men are Hindu, the team is organizing a burial ceremony following religious tradition. Other funeral arrangements are being worked out for other religious groups.

Another need is for public education, especially in the remote areas of the island. Given the pervasive fears and questions about what a tsunami is, and widespread rumors that circulate among the camps that another tsunami is coming, it has become obvious to the team that a countrywide education campaign would be helpful to reach the outlying remote communities to teach the people the facts, and also to deal with feelings.

Kuriansky, well known as "Dr. Judy" for her decades of advice-giving on radio and TV and in newspaper and magazines worldwide, and who has done many shows and written many articles in international newspapers about coping with the aftermath of disasters, recommends that electronic and print media be enlisted for such public educational purposes and is willing to work with local media in such a campaign. Prevention in terms of disaster preparedness should also be part of that effort.

Kalayjian adds, "We want to encourage people to donate funds to the mental health relief effort, and to alert the public and all relief organizations to the importance of including mental health support in the initial phases of the disaster."

The team is identifying local people, including translators, with good communication skills and innate sensitivity who can be trained to do support groups. One translator, a local basketball coach who has been doing an excellent job, congratulates the American team for their work. "You are making quite a difference for our people and the results are

almost 100 percent success. This type of work should have been started sooner.” Married to a school career guidance counselor, Malcolm says humorously, “I’m getting even better at helping people than my wife.”

Another translator, Sudhan, a 25-year old computer technician, who was living in one of the camps when he was identified as having the necessary skills, says, “My uncle and two cousins died in the tsunami and our whole house was washed away, even the 10 computers and laptops I was fixing for people, but I don’t care about any possessions. I don’t care if I have any money, any clothes or things. I only care that I am helping people.”

In a closing ritual in the group session, yarn or material creates a web of colors connecting the participants. “It shows that we are all one family,” said one ten year old girl. Another older man said, “The tsunami took us no matter what religion we are, and now we are one no matter who we are.”

## Press Release

27 January 2005

15th Magh, Nanakshahi

### UNITED SIKHS continues Its relief efforts in the devastated Thai island of Phi Phi

Bangkok, Thailand: The UNITED SIKHS Relief Team, along with two Thai counselors and members of the Hi Phi Phi organization, have been continuously providing medical assistance and counseling to survivors of Phi Phi Island. In the effort to serve the needs of the devastated community, base camp was setup with help of Hi Phi Phi to see patients daily 10 am to 4 pm. There are about 3000 survivors in Phi Phi, many of which are in need of the essential services that UNITED SIKHS and the accompanying volunteers are providing.

The UNITED SIKHS Relief team visited Phi Phi Island and found that the island had been evacuated after the Tsunami. There is a curfew being enforced against visiting the island. However, UNITED SIKHS and Hi Phi Phi have received special permission to visit the island and attend to the suffering island's inhabitants' needs. "Although some of the disaster has been clean up, it still looked like bombs destroyed the once most beautiful island in Thailand. The mess is still there, the liveliness has completely vanished," said Jasvir Kaur, Team Lead of the UNITED SIKHS Thailand Tsunami relief team.

"Most of the patients have just flu-like symptoms, as well as wounds that are infected or just need redressing and pain and anxiety complaints" said Dr Baljinder Singh and Dr Sagina Kaur.

UNITED SIKH bought medicines locally and dispensed many pain-killers, topical antibiotics, antihistamines, inhalers and blood pressure medications. Sadly, even the government of the Phi Phi Island has been unable to help but only been able to witness the wrath of the tsunami on Phi Phi Island and its people.



**Photograph 1.** Doctor seeing patients.

The UNITED SIKHS Tsunami relief and volunteers from Hi Phi Phi traveled to the affected islands by boat. First, they visited Khao Chum, where many of the poor residents of the islands reside, including the sea gypsies, which treated like third class citizens. They live in broken down wooden homes and no are no doctors are available to attend to their needs. While Hi Phi Phi collected information on the orphans, the UNITED SIKHS Relief Team saw about 40 patients in a matter of 2 hours, provided medications and served Langar to the suffering people.

In the Phi Phi Islands, there are still more than 950 people missing. The inhabitants of Hi Phi Phi are reluctant to return to the place where their family life was destroyed, their relatives missing or dead, their possessions gone, and to the nightmares they have of horrendous day. The Island has become a ghost town full of tragic memories and immense sadness.

"I am very glad to be given the opportunity to help those in immediate need...it is a once in a lifetime opportunity. Nothing is more fulfilling than creating a sense of hope and well-being in those that are in need," said Inder Kaur, an Industrial Designer from Chicago, Illinois.





**Photograph 2.** Volunteers serving Langar.

Along with the relief effort with Hi Phi Phi, UNITED SIKHS and "Mae Ta Tham", a Thailand based humanitarian Organization, represented the Sikhs in an "Inter religious" prayer organized by Thai government on Jan 19th, at Khao Lak. Thousands of people from various faiths including Buddhists, Christians, Sikhs, Muslims and Jews joined in the prayer service. 20,000 lanterns were lit and sent up into the sky as a sign of hope and prayer.

"It was beautiful to see the entire world gathered there irrespective of religion, caste or creed, all Communities joined together as ONE, in the "EK" spirit, to pray for each other and seek God's Blessings." said Amarjit Kaur, UNITED SIKHS Thailand.

The UNITED SIKHS Relief Team was overwhelmed by the generosity of local Sikhs in Thailand. The Relief Team was honored at the Bangkok Gurudwara with "saropas". Amarjit Kaur, Project Lead of the Tsunami Relief Team and Sardool Singh were instrumental in relief operation in Thailand.



**Photograph 3.** UNITED SIKHS volunteers at prayer ground.

Jasvir Kaur, the UNITED SIKHS team-lead for Thailand said "At least forty-five orphans have been identified on the island of Phi Phi. We are working with Hi Phi Phi to sponsor these orphans till the age of 18. Our objective is to encourage them to become educated individuals and give them a hope for their future. We came here as we had an opportunity to give medical aid and do seva as emphasized by our Guru and the desire to provide education. We hope to instill that into these youngster as well."

UNITED SIKHS has drafted long-term rehabilitation programs for Thai victims and sponsors children who have lost their family in ocean waves. It is the sincerest hope of UNITED SIKHS that the service being rendered to the devastated communities being together the people and help them rebuild their lives.

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UNITED SIKHS will update you as we receive reports. For Relief Team updates see:  
<http://www.unitedsikhs.org/ghanaia/fieldreport.html>

GHANAIA Blood and Health Drives

# Make Poverty History

The "Make Poverty History" campaign aims to tackle the root causes of poverty by changing international policies. The campaign is made up of organizations and individuals who are passionate about ending the misery which poverty inflicts on the poor people of the world. The three crucial and intrinsically linked areas of the campaign are:

Trade Justice

Drop the Debt

More and Better Aid

Trade Justice

Poor people are not hopeless victims but rather they are individuals with much knowledge and many skills and talents. They are an asset that is currently being under-utilised because the trading system currently in place favours those with money and power.

The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) have established policies aimed at liberalising economies, which do not always benefit poor countries. They often force poor countries to trade with rich countries, at the expense of the poor countries' own economies. They also ban poor countries from helping their farmers, so poor countries are forced to import subsidised products while neglecting their own commodities.

Some large and powerful companies are also guilty of using up the natural resources of poor countries, and problems such as illegal logging are taking their toll on the environment. Companies often use resources of poor countries because the lack of regulation and accountability in international trade means they will rarely be held accountable for their social and environmental impact.

What is being demanded? (Demands taken from [www.makepovertyhistory.org](http://www.makepovertyhistory.org))

Fight for rules that ensure governments, particularly in poor countries, can choose the best solutions to end poverty and protect the environment. These will not always be free trade policies.

End export subsidies that damage the livelihoods of poor rural communities around the world.

Make laws that stop big business profiting at the expense of people and the environment

Drop the Debt

For every \$1 received in grant aid, low-income countries pay \$2.30 in debt service (see [jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk](http://jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk)). This means countless people around the world are suffering due to unpayable and outrageous debts, often amassed by previous governments. For example, the current government of South Africa is repaying \$22 billion in loans that were given to the Apartheid regime (see [jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk](http://jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk)). But these unpayable debts are not just an African problem and have also led to the suffering of people living in other regions of the world.

Some governments spend more money on debt repayments than they do on essential areas such as education and health. This has dire consequences, meaning some countries cannot afford to provide their citizens with necessary utilities such as clean water, leading to high rates of cholera, dysentery and other such life-threatening illnesses. The UN estimates 7 million children die unnecessarily each year, from diseases that can be cured and from unclean water that could be made safe.

Diverting money away from education and towards paying off the interest on debts has also contributed to a lack of spending on education, making it both unaffordable and widely inaccessible, thereby creating a significantly illiterate future generation.

What is being demanded? (Demands taken from MPH Website)

The unpayable debts of the world's poorest countries should be cancelled in full, by fair and transparent means

More and Better Aid

More aid is needed now by poor countries to prevent the 50,000 deaths that occur daily due to poverty, and to better the lives of their citizens.

The countries and institutions that give aid should also stop deciding how it should be spent. Often conditions are attached to the aid that is given, which require poor countries to make economic sacrifices, privatise public utilities or decrease spending in crucial areas. These conditions mean aid is frequently not being spent where it is needed.

Aid is a crucial factor in improving peoples' access to education and health care. These two sectors are necessary in eradicating poverty. An educated population is more likely to understand how to prevent diseases such as AIDS, and will help make educated economic, social and political decisions for their country. A healthy population will help create and maintain the country by providing a strong workforce. 8 million lives could be saved every year if minimal healthcare was available in developing countries (MPH Website).

Poor countries and people are aware of where and how aid needs to be spent, and how to reduce poverty. They should be given the opportunity to follow their own paths out of poverty, thus helping prevent mispending of money on unneeded or misguided projects – something that has been widespread in the past.

In 1970, the UK promised to spend 0.7% of its gross national income (GNI) on international development, but to date this has not occurred. Such promises made by the UK and other countries throughout the world, now need to be fulfilled.

What is being demanded? (Demands taken from MPH Website)

- Donors must now deliver at least \$50 billion more in aid and set a binding timetable for spending 0.7% of national income on aid.
- Aid must be made to work more effectively for poor people.

# 3) Empowerment

UNITED SIKHS believes in empowering individuals and groups to help them attain their full potential and become active participants in society. Empowerment occurs largely through education, training and community development projects. UNITED SIKHS aims to encourage people to participate in the decision-making processes in their local community as well as taking their place in the international arena.

## CAOF and SarbLoh Camps

Community Voice

Sunday, 08 January 2006

26st Poh, Samvat 537 Nanakshahi

## English Flavour at Dallas Sikh Youth Camp

**Dallas, Texas:** At a Dallas Sikh youth camp last week, professional storyteller Roop Singh and UNITED SIKHS' youth empowerment programmes co-ordinator, Ravinderpal Singh, disproved the Shavian phrase that 'England and America were two countries divided by a common language'

Roop Singh from Yorkshire and Ravinderpal from London proved that accents don't matter if they are speaking the common language of Sikhi. They ran workshops for over 80 youths, aged 6 to 20, during a week long Sikh youth camp in Dallas, which was co-organized by the Singh Sabha Gurdwara Dallas and UNITED SIKHS.

This camp came about when Dallas-based UNITED SIKHS' director, Gurvinder Singh, was approached by the Singh Sabha Gurdwara Dallas to help run a camp with a difference.

"Ravinderpal Singh, UNITED SIKHS' Youth Empowerment Programmes co-ordinator, was due in New York for a 6-month stint to run youth programmes. I grabbed the opportunity to ask him to show us how differently camps are run in the UK. Roop Singh too was well known to UNITED SIKHS chapter in the UK. We put our heads together and came up with a camp that both the participants and organisers are still talking about," said Gurvinder Singh.

The campers had discussions on Sikh history and learned shabads, including the camp theme shabad, "Saajanarraa maeraa saajanarraa nikatt khaloeiarraa maeraa saajanarraa". Ravinderpal Singh led the UNITED SIKHS hazoori ragi jatha and soon all campers were card-carrying members of his Jetha.



The campers singing shabads with the UNITED SIKHS Hazoori Jetha

Bhai Roop Singh shared his vast knowledge of storytelling to capture the campers' imagination of Sikh history. Bhai Roop Singh was extremely pleased with the children's responses to this particular activity: "This is extremely wonderful. I asked the kids to write stories and all the kids were really responsive."

As well as focusing on the spiritual, the children also partook in leadership training, teamwork building, and physical fitness through a variety of interactive and innovative methods. They also participated in various ice-breaker activities and cooperation games, both fun and challenging, designed to allow the children to get to know each other better. Brain teasers were given to the children. In order to initiate Ravinderpal Singh into American society, the campers also taught him some phrases that they felt would increase his American street credibility. Again, the aim was to take the campers away from the school environment and allow them to engage on all levels with their leaders, breaking the barriers between the youths and the adults. The children were also encouraged to help out in the preparation of parshaad. The significance of Gurdwara practices was explained and myths exploded. Campers came to know their Guru first hand as they took the daily hukumnama and did the ardaas. Campers were taught to interact with Sri Guru Granth Sahib and to regard it as their eternal Guru. These activities were designed to make them feel part of the Gurudwara, to bring them closer into the hub of the daily routines of their local Gurudwara and to allow them to connect more closely with Sikhism.



Youth Empowerment Programmes Coordinator Ravinderpal Singh talking to the campers about Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji  
Meditation exercises were an important learning and calming device. The kids were made to lie down and meditate on Waheguru as they thought about their dreams and their aspirations in life.



Campers help to prepare parshaad at the camp

Guest speakers were invited to give campers an insight into how mainstream society worked. Christy Zawadzka a counsellor from Plano School District and Chris Gescheidle, a Richardson City Police Officer addressed the campers.

Through workshops, the campers were taught how to become integral and vibrant members of society. Some of the activities included taking part in problem solving activities which involved clearly defining a problem and finding solutions to enable them to deal with their lives as Sikhs in schools, stores, and other experiences they encountered in life, as young Sikhs. Camper Ramnik Kaur said “This has been a different experience as there was never a moment when I wasn’t learning something new.”



The management committee of the Gurdwara Singh Sabha was very helpful and ensured all materials and logistics were met. The Sangat made sure that langar and fruits were readily available for the campers. On New Years Day, Inderpal Singh, the chief organizer of the camp stated, "We thank UNITED SIKHS for the impacting and enlightening ways in which they came and interacted with the children."

The results from the camp were amazing. A few boys made an oath to wear a dastar when they go to the Gurdwara and many girls also made a decision to refrain from cutting their hair. A sense of pride could be felt as the children carried a confidence for being a Sikh, being the sons and daughters of Guru Gobind Singh. Ravinderpal Singh, who has co-ordinated many camps throughout the world explained how overwhelmed he was by the response of the children at the camp and also how active the Gurdwara was in the community. He said: "I have never encountered such a group of kids with so much potential. It was a fantastic week full of love, devotion and inspiration".

UNITED SIKHS has clearly left its mark as a Sikh Eagles group has been formed at the Gurdwara to continue the activism and to ensure that the spirit of Sikhi continues to inspire and encourage these children who are indeed the future of Sikhism.



Sikh Youth Camp, Dallas 2005

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- [CHIPSS](#) (Computers and Help In Providing Staff and Student Support)

UNITED SIKHS provides training in basic computer skills. Currently such training is provided in Richmond Hill, NY; Fremont, California; Dallas, Texas;

## 4) Community and Multifaith Awareness

The grounding principle of UNITED SIKHS' Multifaith work is "if you don't see God in all, you don't see God at all". The organization is committed to working with other faiths and traditions, to advance a just and peaceful world. UNITED SIKHS is an active participant in international dialogue on multifaith issues, and specifically strives to improve the understanding and treatment of minority religions, traditions and beliefs.

By the very nature of its inception, UNITED SIKHS is also able to provide expert insight into the Sikh religion. We therefore use our expertise to raise awareness of Sikhism through seminars, lectures and innovative methods. Essentially the aim is to help employers, law enforcement officers, public officials and anybody else understand the religion and break down barriers faced by Sikhs, by showing that they can fully participate in all avenues of daily life.

### [Faith Awareness](#)

UNITED SIKHS recognises that most of its challenges in advocating minority rights stem from the lack awareness of the culture and religions of minorities. We have responded to this challenge by proactively engaging in mainstream and minority community and multi-faith awareness projects.

We believe that communities should not stop at merely tolerating one another but that communities should understand each other. This understanding will come about if each community does not stand in judgement of another. Instead one community should try to understand and accept the beliefs and practices of the other. The answer does not lie in how one community views the practices of another community but in understanding or accepting how the other community views itself.

[UN Multifaith Event 2005](#)  
UN Multifaith Event 2005



## Related Press Release

[UNITED SIKHS Leads Sikh Delegation at Prayer for Opening of 60th Session of the United Nations General Assembly](#)

UNITED SIKHS led the Sikh delegation during the Interfaith Prayer Service at the St. Bartholomew Church at Park Avenue, New York, to mark the opening of United Nations General Assemblies 60th Session on...  
September 16, 2005

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## 5) Community Service

- [SWAN \(Sikh With A Need\)](#)

The SWAN project was born when UNITED SIKHS read Partap Singh's appeal asking for help because his life in Peru had become unbearable as he and his family tried to defend their Sikh identity. Post 9/11 he could not earn his livelihood as a Meditation teacher and tourist guide because he was referred to as 'Ben Laden'. His son was refused admission to school because he wore a headcovering. UNITED SIKHS responded by making inquiries about Partap Singh's situation in Peru and launched a public appeal to the Sikh community to donate towards helping Partap Singh overcome his difficulties. The Public's response was overwhelming and UNITED SIKHS felt that such help should be made available to other needy Sikhs under the SWAN project.

### Community Voice

Friday, 09 December 2005

26th Maghar (Samvat 537 Nanakshahi)

### Partap Singh and Family Leave Peru to Begin a New Life In India

**Cochin, Kerala, India** - After a 4-year lonely struggle fighting mistaken identity and ignorance and facing extreme difficulties, Partap Singh decided that enough was enough. After trying all possible honest means in providing for his family while not compromising Sikh principles, he turned to the Sikh community for help in September of 2005. He contacted UNITED SIKHS, which recognized his distressful situation and offered to come to his aid after thoroughly analyzing and verifying his circumstances. Three months after the initial plea for assistance, Partap Singh and his family has been relocated to Cochin, Kerala, where he envisions that his multilingual talent and experience within the tourism industry will fulfill his worldly needs and where the sizeable Sikh community will fulfill his and his family's spiritual needs.

Click below for the Community Voice describing Partap Singh's original situation:

[www.unitedsikhs.org/PressReleases/COMVCE-29-09-2005-00.htm](http://www.unitedsikhs.org/PressReleases/COMVCE-29-09-2005-00.htm)



Picture: Partap Singh and Family – A Ray of Hope

Partap Singh and family said goodbye to Peru and arrived in Mumbai on November 17, 2005. Three vans and several Sikhs stood in anticipation at the airport to transport the whole family to the Singh Sabha Gurdwara in Dadar. It had been over a decade since he had visited a Gurdwara and been with a Sikh congregation. It was also the first time his Peruvian-born family had seen a Gurdwara. After a few days stay, they moved on to the Singh Sabha Gurdwara in Cochin, where local Sangat is currently looking after them until a residence is found.

"I will always remember the sewa UNITED SIKHS has done for me," commented Partap Singh. "I was nervous and felt defeated but after being dejected after several pleas, suddenly UNITED SIKHS was there". "I still remember the words of Kuldip Singh when he said, 'Don't worry, Partap Singh Ji, you are not alone. The whole Sikh Kaum (community) is standing behind you.' Today I know that they made it possible for me, and the Kaum is truly standing behind me. As soon as I am capable, I will repay the Kaum several times back and dedicate my life to helping others in distress", he added. Partap Singh says that through his troubled times in Lima, Peru the only thing that kept him going was the thought of how Guru Gobind Singh spent his difficult days in the jungles of Macchiwada and how Guru Arjan stood the heat of a burning hot plate for five long days and nights without giving in to defeat. "Sikhism is so wonderful!" he exclaims. "It makes hardships go by without flinching and then the Guru does always take care of you eventually." His family thanks everyone who provided support; physically, emotionally, financially and psychologically. He says that the Sikh community will always be in his prayers, until his very last breath.

With the help of donations from the Sikh community, UNITED SIKHS was able to pay Partap Singh's expenses for three months before leaving Peru, for his wife's abdominal surgery, their nine months of unpaid rent, take care of the family's travel expenses to India, and settle the family in India including ample startup funds. Also, since the appeal went out, numerous people in the travel industry have contacted Partap Singh, providing him with many opportunities with his travel career.

UNITED SIKHS was overwhelmed by the caring response of the Sikh community since the original Community Appeal went out in late September. Sikhs from around the world opened their hearts. There were cash donations, frequent flier miles donations, personal

visits, moral encouragement, pro bono offers to assist in US Asylum, and offers to help him stay in Peru by taking care of his living expenses for life. UNITED SIKHS would like to express our sincere gratitude to all those who donated whatever resources they could to aid Partap Singh and his family.

Please contact us by email at [helppartapsingh@unitedsikhs.org](mailto:helppartapsingh@unitedsikhs.org) with the subject “Project Partap Singh” with any questions or comments.

Please visit our website [www.unitedsikhs.org](http://www.unitedsikhs.org) for details of current projects.

**Please join the [PR\\_UNITEDSIKHS-subscribe@yahogroups.com](mailto:PR_UNITEDSIKHS-subscribe@yahogroups.com) if you wish to receive regular updates on this and other issues raised by UNITED SIKHS.**

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## Donors, Partners, and Friends

UNITED SIKHS advocacy and relief efforts are funded with resources received from individuals and community organizations. In addition, corporations and other entities often donate material such as medicines, medical equipment and supplies and free transportation to disaster and development areas. Our partners in the field of advocacy are project based. Human and Civil Rights groups and advocacy groups, private law firms that do pro-bono works are friends and partners. To name a few, we partner with

- 1) Pannun, the Firm (Law Firm)
- 2) Steven Adam Rubin Associates (Law Firm)
- 3) O' Melvney and Myers, Law firm
- 4) Americal Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
- 5) Legal-Aid Society
- 6) Sekhon and Sekhon Law firm
- 7) Chugh and Chugh Associates
- 8) Patrick Clautz and Associates, Law firm
- 9) Oxfam
  
- 10) New York Interfaith Disaster Services (NYDIS)