



# World Sikh Council – America Region (WSC-AR)

*A representative body of Sikh institutions of America founded under the patronage of Siri Akal Takhat Sahib*

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Member Gurdwaras:

1. Gurdwara Sahib Fremont, Fremont, CA
2. Guru Nanak Sikh Mission, Livingston, CA
3. Sikh Gurdwara of LA, North Hollywood, CA
4. Sikh Gurdwara Riverside, Riverside, CA
5. Colorado Singh Sabha, Denver, CO
6. Guru Singh Sabha of Augusta, Augusta, GA
7. Sikh Study Circle of Atlanta, Atlanta, GA
8. Sikh Religious Society of Chicago, Palatine, IL
9. Sikh Society of South, New Orleans, LA
10. Sikh Gurdwara of Michigan, Rochester Hills, MI
11. Sikh Society of Michigan, Madison Heights, MI
12. Guru Nanak Foundation of Jackson, MS
13. Sikh Gurdwara of North Carolina, Durham, NC
14. Garden State Sikh Association, Bridgewater, NJ
15. Guru Nanak Sikh Society of Delaware Valley, Sewell, NJ
16. Siri Guru Singh Sabha, Glenrock, NJ
17. Sikh Sabha of New Jersey, Lawrenceville, NJ
18. Sikh Cultural Society Inc., Richmond Hills, NY
19. Sikh Cultural & Edu. Society of Western NY, Buffalo, NY
20. Sikh Religious Society of Dayton, Dayton, OH
21. Guru Nanak Found. of Greater Cleveland, Richfield, OH
22. Guru Gobind Singh Sikh Society, Bedford, OH
23. Guru Nanak Religious Soc. of Central Ohio, Columbus, OH
24. Philadelphia Sikh Society, Millbourne, PA
25. Tristate Sikh Cultural Society, Monroeville, PA
26. Mid South Sikh Sabha, Memphis, TN
27. Sikh Center of Gulf Coast, Houston, TX
28. Siri Guru Singh Sabha, Richardson, TX
29. Sikh Gurdwara of North Texas, Garland, TX
30. Singh Sabha Gurdwara, Fairfax, VA
31. Sikh Association of Central Virginia, VA
32. Sikh Religious Society of Wisconsin, Brookfield, WI

### Other Sikh Institution Members:

1. Siri Guru Granth Sahib Found., Anaheim, CA
2. Sikhs Serving America, Topeka, KS
3. Sikh Youth Federation of North America, White Plains, NY
4. Sikh Educational & Religious Foundation, Dublin, OH
5. Sikh Youth Federation of USA, Toledo, OH
6. Academy of Guru Granth Studies, Arlington, TX

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### WSC-AR Participates in Summit of North American Religious Youth Leaders

Dr. Amarpreet Singh Bains, representing the World Sikh Council – America Region (WSC-AR), participated in the Summit of North American Religious Youth Leaders held on November 1, 2005 at the Church Center for the United Nations in New York. The summit, with the theme “Confronting Violence and Advancing Shared Security,” was organized by Religions for Peace.

During the Summit, more than four dozen delegates representing youth from major religious traditions of the United States and Canada, agreed that they needed to exchange information and ideas back and forth between their religious communities and the interreligious network. As a result, the North American Interreligious Youth Network (NAIYN) was born at the Summit. Dr. Bains was invited to serve on the organizing committee of NAIYN.

The Summit was a regional meeting designed to create a sustainable inter-religious network for young people and to prepare North America’s young religious leaders (ages 18-35) for the Eighth World Youth Assembly, to be held in Kyoto and Hiroshima during August of 2006, directly before Religions for Peace’s World Assembly.

In a written message delivered to the delegates at the meeting, WSC-AR remarked, “We applaud the effort to create a North American Inter-religious Youth Network... WSC-AR is committed to working with young people and to fostering meaningful interfaith dialogue and relationships.... To today’s delegates, as you begin your work, we extend our warmest wishes of success for you. Our diverse and complex world has never been more in need of young leaders to take bold steps together across lines of faith and other boundaries. Our future depends on it.”

Citing the gathering as the first ever of its kind and noting that Generations X and Y were the first to live fully within the post-Nostra Aetate and post- 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act era, “this is an historic moment in interfaith relations,” said Reverend Bud Heckman, Executive Director of Religions for Peace (RFP) - USA, coining a phrase that would be repeated by speakers throughout the day.

During the Summit, the youth attendees were broken out into five working groups between sessions in order to share their best practices and brainstorm guidelines for the new youth network. At the end of the plenary sessions, each group presented its report. Oppression, ignorance and apathy were pointed out to be main causes of violence – education, service learning, and interaction across religious lines, among others, were offered as solutions.

WSC-AR is a member organization of RFP-USA and works with it to promote more just and peaceful communities of faith here in the US and abroad based on trust and respect. Recently, Faith and Values Media filmed a Public Service Announcement (PSA) on RFP-USA featuring Mr. Harpreet Singh Toor, member of WSC-AR Regional Committee and RFP-USA Executive Council, among religious leaders from several faith traditions. The PSA will be broadcast on the Hallmark Channel and local stations throughout the country at the end of this year. In addition, WSC-AR has been working with RFP-USA in hosting a “Gathering of National Religious Leaders” to be held in Chicago, January 23-25, 2006, to bring together senior US religious leaders so that they can develop deeper and more effective working relationships between their communities. The outcomes from this invited retreat of senior US religious leaders meeting will be made available to the general public by RFP-USA.

RFP-USA is a coalition comprised of leaders from over 50 U.S. religious communities and is one of the 55 national chapters of Religions for Peace International.

WSC-AR is a representative and elected body of Sikh Gurdwaras and institutions in the United States. Its members include 32 Gurdwaras (Sikh places of worship) and 6 other Sikh institutions across the nation.

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The following photos in jpeg format, suitable for publication, can be obtained by e-mailing <contact@worldsikhcouncil.org>:



Caption: Dr. Amarpreet Singh Bains, Sikh Youth Volunteer of WSC-AR, joins with more than four dozen religious youth leaders in participating in the Summit of North American Religious Youth Leaders (Photo courtesy of Kinza Ghaznavi of RFP-USA)



Caption: Dr. Amarpreet Singh Bains, Sikh Youth Volunteer of WSC-AR, shares thoughts with Father Francis Tiso, Associate Director of the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (Photo courtesy of Kinza Ghaznavi of RFP-USA)



Caption: Religious youth leaders listen to summit speakers (Photo courtesy of Kinza Ghaznavi of RFP-USA)



Caption: Summit delegates engage one another in a small working group in order to share their best practices and brainstorm ideas for the new youth network (Photo courtesy of Kinza Ghaznavi of RFP-USA)

