

Press Release Jan 29, 2009

## Sikh Human Development Foundation receives Record number of Applications for Financial Assistance from Needy Students. Over \$120,000 to be dispersed.

Washington D.C., January 29: Sikh Human Development Foundation (SHDF) received nearly 400 scholarship applications from needy students from Punjab and other Northern Indian states for the academic year 2008-2009. The Foundation expects to approve over 300 applications out of this lot. This will be the highest number of yearly scholarships in the history of the ten years' old organization. The scholarship scheme has been gaining wide attention among the students from families with poor financial support and without which these students can not pursue professional studies.



*Students from Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Tarn Taran, Jammu and other adjoining areas at the Khalsa College, Amritsar to take the exam to qualify for the scholarship program of SHDF this past summer*

SHDF Secretary General, Gajinder Singh Ahuja, said "We expect to grant close to 300 scholarships this year. This clearly means that we need to redouble our fund raising efforts to fulfill our need for financing 40 to 50 percent higher number of scholarships compared to last year. The Foundation needs over \$120,000 to cover the cost of this year's scholarships. All of the scholarship recipients are selected from low-income families. More than 60% of the students are from rural areas with incomes of less than a dollar a day per person."

This year, four different centers were created for students to take moral exam. to qualify for the SHDF scholarship. Besides this test, students must fulfil the criteria of maintaining a good grade point average, proof of admission to a recognized institution and financial need. Students are required to appear for an interview for selection. Over 100 students showed up at each interview center in Chandigarh, Ludhiana, Amritsar and Faridkot. Some of the students travelled as far as from Jammu. These exams and all the details related to this program are facilitated by the Delhi based Nishkam Sikh Welfare Council on behalf of the SHDF. The Foundation has awarded over 800 scholarships since its inception.



*Large number of female students expressed interest in becoming IT professionals and in the medical field*



*Dr. Rajwant Singh (far right standing) with Nishkam officials talking to the potential scholarship recipients at the Khalsa College, Amritsar.*

Dr. Rajwant Singh, founding member of SHDF, was present at Khalsa College in Amritsar this past summer when he spoke to many students, who were preparing for the moral exam. for SHDF scholarships. Sharing his experiences, he said, "It was quite inspirational to see that at least four students in the group wanted to go to IIT in Delhi and many others wanting to become successful engineers, doctors and IT experts. Each one of them wanted to succeed despite being from financially poor households. This is a true asset for us and we must extend our whole-hearted support to these young people with high dreams."

Amar Jit Singh Sodhi, Chairman of SHDF, said, "While reviewing and approving scholarship applications, we are making sure that each candidate has clearly demonstrated the need for a scholarship. We expect to approve these scholarships fairly quickly and that means that the need for the funds is immediate. We hope our donors will persuade their friends and family members to join in this worthy endeavor. Let us all make SHDF our preferred charity."



*Amar Jit Singh Sodhi (standing far right) with the past beneficiaries of the scholarships in Punjab last year.*

SHDF mission is to financially assist meritorious and needy students in selected parts of India in order to improve their access to higher professional education, and thus help them grow to their full potential. The term 'professional education' includes disciplines like medicine, engineering, agriculture, nursing, information technology, business administration, architecture and the like.

To donate or to participate in this worthy cause, visit [www.sikhhumandevlopment.org](http://www.sikhhumandevlopment.org)



*Some more students at the Khalsa College, Amritsar*



*SHDF officials with Chief Guest Gurvendra Singh Suri (2nd from right) and Singer Satinder Satti (4th from left) at the fundraising dinner for the scholarship program in Washington last year.*

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