

# SIKH RIDERS OF AMERICA

Aug 2016 - Dec 2017



# MESSAGE

## GURINDER SINGH BASRA, PRESIDENT

SROA is proud to report that it has brought communities together and raised awareness about the Sikh identity and beliefs. As 2017 comes to an end, we have diligently delivered our message of love and unity to further emancipate the Sikh American community.

Thanks to all our members and community support we receive, we are telling who Sikhs are, telling the Sikh American story, bringing awareness to Sikh identity and articles of faith, addressing hate crimes and profiling, and are further intensifying the Sikh community voice through our consistent outreach. Hopefully, through education and continued positive exposure, we will make a difference in how people view Sikhs and see a corresponding reduction in hate crimes.

In the last 5 years, Sikh Riders of America has donated \$116,150 to charities and expended another \$55,980 to organize those events. We seek all of your support to continue our awareness work in 2018 and beyond. Special thanks to all the members who donate from their own pockets for food, travel and accommodations every time they travel to support our events and make them successful.







## WHAT IS THE #SikhVaisakhi?

Sikhs celebrate Vaisakhi as the Birth of the Khalsa not as the Sikh new year or a harvest festival.

## WHAT IS THE KHALSA?

The Khalsa is a collective of committed Sikhs (male and female) who are the leaders and protectors of the Sikhs. The Khalsa was created to fight oppression and uphold freedom and basic needs (food, clothing, health and education) for all people. Every Sikh should aim to join the Khalsa one day.

## HOW WAS THE KHALSA CREATED?

In April 1699, the 10th Guru tested the Sikhs by asking for volunteers to sacrifice themselves. The first five who stepped forward, proved their devotion and formed the first Khalsa (Punj Plare). Anyone can join the Khalsa through an Initiation ceremony which is carried out by five exemplary members of the Khalsa.

## DID YOU KNOW?

The Punj Plare names give the ideal Khalsa qualities. When we have empathy (Daya) for others, we can give them justice (Dharam), but this requires courage (Himmat) to face up to evil-doers and commitment (Mohkam) to keep going through tough times, until the Khalsa is sovereign (Sahib).

## WHY LOOK DIFFERENT?

Guruj gave Khalsa a distinct form so people could ask them for help. The Khalsa is always be armed with a Kirpan (sword) and has royal surnames; Singh for men and Kaur for women. The Turban worn by Khalsa reflects their sovereign nature.


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## WHAT IS A NAGAR KIRTAN?

Sikh communities celebrate festivals by holding public processions and sharing their joy with other communities.

**Nagar = town**  
**Kirtan = singing of spiritual hymns**

Nagar Kirtans stems from 'Parbhaat Pheri' in Punjab when Sikhs would wake up before dawn and join in groups to sing Gods praises on the way to the Gurdwara.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Nagar Kirtans are led by the Sikh scriptural Guru Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji, and Five Khalsa representing the spirit and body of the Guru.

## WHY SING KIRTAN?

All of Guru's writings are in poetry. Singing these divine songs of love lets us see through Guru's enlightened eyes. We sing in groups as this is the fastest way to experience and fall in love with God. This is when our spiritual life begins. Deep down, our soul loves and thirsts for God. Temporarily, the world might distract us from this thirst but, without this divine experience, we remain unfulfilled.

## WHY ALL THE FREE FOOD (LANGAR)?

This is a form of selfless service (seva) that was actually instituted by Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the 1st Guru. All Gurdwaras must Serve Free Langar to all visitors regardless of race, religion or social status. It has 3 main reasons:

- Fight Hunger
- Equality in Action
- Teaching Compassion


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The Khalsa is the collective body of all initiated Sikhs, also called the "Guru Panth", the embodiment of the Guru and the final temporal leader of the Sikhs. The word Khalsa translates to "pure" or "genuine". The Khalsa was inaugurated on 13 April 1699, by Guru Gobind Singh, the 10th Sikh Guru at an event that coincided with the Vaisakhi day in the year 1699 A.D. at Kesgarh, in Anandpur Sahib (Punjab, India). The Sikhs of the Khalsa can be identified with the given Five K's and the titles of Singh (meaning "Lion") and Kaur (meaning "Princess"), granted after the disciple has been baptized into the order of the Khalsa (though, not all Singhs are Sikhs/Khalsa). The Khalsa is considered the pinnacle of Sikhism.



**Commitments : Members are obligated to**

- Participate in seva (community service)
- Actively educate others about sikhism
- Work together to help promote and grow the motorcycle group even Non-Motorcycle riders are Welcome



**SIKH RIDERS OF AMERICA" ( MOTORCYCLE GROUP) IS NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION**

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# 5TH ANNUAL RIDE BAKERSFIELD

On Saturday, October 14, 2017 Sikh Riders of America held their 5th Annual Ride. Funds raised from this event allowed us to donate \$6,000 to local charities - Kern River Blue Star Moms, Kern County Law Enforcement Association, and the Armed Forces Support Foundation. We would like to thank everyone who came out to support the event as well as all of our donors and sponsors. Save the date for next year's event - October 13 2018!









# 3RD ANNUAL RIDE TEXAS

On Saturday, April 29, 2017 Sikh Riders of America held their 3rd Annual Ride in Texas. Funds raised allowed us to donate \$3,000 to Irving PD Officer, Eric Clemens, and \$1,200 to the Irving Police Department who provided the escort for our ride. We hope to see you at next year's event - April 28, 2018! Next year's ride will benefit veterans, law enforcement and special needs children.





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# 4TH ANNUAL RIDE BAKERSFIELD



On Saturday, October 8, 2016 Sikh Riders of America held their 4th Annual Ride. We were fortunate to have such wonderful support from the community, sponsors and members. As a result, we were able to donate approximately \$18,000 to various charitable organizations and cancer patients in Kern County. All the money raised was donated to the 999 Foundation, the Armed Forces Support Foundation, Kern Law Enforcement Association, Bakersfield Homeless Center, No One Fights Alone Cancer Fund, and the Jaz McKay/Laura McKay Cancer Fund. All the participants, family and children, made this year's event a huge success. We encourage everyone to keep supporting us and help make our community a better place to live in diversity.







# RECOGNITION BY THE CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE

December 4, 2017. Extremely honored to have been presented with a Resolution from the Assembly of the California Legislature recognizing the impact being made by Sikh Riders of America. The resolution highlighted our accomplishments and acknowledged the valuable and positive contributions we continue to make in our local communities and beyond.





# BAKERSFIELD CITY COUNCIL DECLARES NOVEMBER SIKH AWARENESS & APPRECIATION MONTH

November 21, 2016. The City Council of Bakersfield declared November as Sikh Awareness & Appreciation Month. The Proclamation was presented to the Sikh Riders of America and community volunteers.





# SPECIAL SCREENING OF ACCLAIMED FILM 'WALKING IN OAK CREEK'

Stronger Communities Through Diversity and Understanding



Special screening of acclaimed film  
*"Waking in Oak Creek"*  
followed by panel discussion.

*In August 2012, the town of Oak Creek, Wisconsin was rocked by hate when six worshipers at a local Sikh Temple were killed by a white supremacist during prayer services. "Waking in Oak Creek" tells the inspiring story of how the community responded to one of the deadliest hate crimes in recent U.S. history and worked with law enforcement to overcome tragedy and stand up to hate (film length 33 min).*

Join law enforcement and community leaders in a discussion of Oak Creek's empowering response to the tragedy at the Sikh Temple of Wisconsin and ways in which law enforcement and the community can work together to create a united front against hate.

Representatives from the United States Attorney's Office, Bakersfield Sikh Community, Sikh Riders of America, Islamic Shoura Council of Bakersfield, CSU Bakersfield President's Office, School of Social Sciences and Education, including the Departments of Criminal Justice, Political Science, and Sociology, University Police Department, and the Kegley Institute of Ethics, Bakersfield Police Department, Kern County Sheriff's Office, Kern County District Attorney's Office, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation will be there.

There is no cost to participate in this important gathering of neighbors, community advocates, and law enforcement leadership and pre-registration is not required.

- **Location/Date/Time:** Dore Theater, CSU Bakersfield, 9001 Stockdale Hwy., Bakersfield, Tuesday September 19, 6:00pm – 8:00pm (visit [www.csub.edu/campusmap](http://www.csub.edu/campusmap) for a campus map, the Dore Theater, building 39 on the map, is next to parking lots A, B and C, off Don Hart Drive West.).
- Light snacks will be served courtesy of the Bakersfield Sikh Community.
- Questions, contact Sean Vassar at [Sean.Vassar@usdoj.gov](mailto:Sean.Vassar@usdoj.gov) or (916) 554-2907. Requests for disability-related accommodations must be received by September 1.





Thanks again to U.S Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of California and California State University, Bakersfield.



Honored to have our SROA Member, Mandeep Singh Chahal, speaking on the panel.







# HURRICANE HARVEY RELIEF

August 31, 2017. Southeastern Texas was slammed with what FEMA called a "landmark event". Hurricane Harvey brought unprecedented flooding leaving thousands of residents stranded and in dire need of help. We also saw unbelievable photos of untold devastation. According to Gurvinder Singh, Director of United Sikhs (and a Texas resident), *"this catastrophe is beyond anything experienced in the region; flooding continues to pound the city with no definitive end in sight."*

Sikh Riders of America gladly sent a \$1,500 contribution on behalf of all of its members to United Sikhs who are already on the ground assisting the flood victims. Other community members were encouraged to visit United Sikhs and make their donations directly.

# HURRICANE MATTHEW RELIEF EFFORTS

October 24 thru October 31, 2016. Sikh Riders of America sent help to families and individuals affected by Hurricane Matthew in North Carolina and the nearby vicinity. In collaboration with with KCLEF, CBCC and various other organizations collected items for evacuees in need and transported them to Lumberton, North Carolina. SROA donated \$1,100 to the efforts.

The community was encouraged to get together and help our brothers and sisters in need. The first Sikh Guru, Guru Nanak Dev Ji, taught us three fundamental principles:

- (1) **Kirat Karo** - work hard and honestly;
- (2) **Wand Ke Chhako** - share what you have with the needs;
- (3) **Naam Jappo** - always remember God throughout the day.



# Kern County Law Enforcement Foundation



## United We Stand Hurricane Matthew Relief Fund

10/24/2016 - 10/31/16

The public can donate between 11:30am and 6pm on the dates of 10/24/16-10/31/16.



We have partnered with Comprehensive Blood and Cancer Center located at **6501 Truxtun Ave, Bakersfield California 93309**, as our designated drop-off location for supplies.



Our plan is to fill up two 26-foot storage containers and personally see that they are delivered to Lumberton, North Carolina.

## EVACUEES ARE IN NEED OF:

- Diapers
- Wipes
- Cots
- Blankets
- Water — *(in desperate need)*
- Hygiene Care products
- Clothing
- Trash bags
- Over the counter medications
- Packaged Non-Perishable food: *(chips, nuts, dried fruit, snacks)*

Online cash donation can be made at:

Please note 100% of your donation will go to the victims of Hurricane Matthew

[www.KCLEF.COM](http://www.KCLEF.COM)

For more info please contact:

Angela Barton

KCLEF President

661-345-8091

[abarton@bakersfieldnow.com](mailto:abarton@bakersfieldnow.com)

88.3 Life FM



CBCC COMPREHENSIVE  
BLOOD & CANCER CENTER  
*Outsmarting Cancer*



Eyewitness  
News





# DONATIONS FOR OROVILLE DAM EVACUEES

February 14, 2017. Sikh Riders of America stood by their brothers and sisters affected by the Oroville Dam evacuation.

Eyewitness News:

*"The Sikh Riders of America are helping to secure donations, which they plan to bring up to evacuees in the next few days."*  
*"We're in touch with a lot of Sikh temples up there,"* said Mandeep Singh Chahal.

He said the temples have been sheltering hundreds of displaced people.





# LOCAL SIKHS PROUD OF MAN THAT FOUND NY SUSPECT, HOPE DISCRIMINATION STOPS

23ABC News BAKERSFIELD, Calif. - Mandeep Chahal and Gurdinder Basra are local members of the Sikh community.

They're speaking out after one of their own found the bombing suspect in New Jersey. The Good Samaritan is a Sikh business owner who saw the suspect in an alley behind his business. His call to the police led to the suspect's arrest.

Chahal and Basra are proud that someone from their faith was able to stop a criminal, when usually they say they're targeted when there's an attack that has any ties to Islamic extremists.

The Good Samaritan was identified as Harinder Bains. He echoed what Chahal and Gurinder told 23ABC saying that he did what any other American would have done regardless of his faith.

The men hope this can be a turning point for their community members and hope that they can stopped being judged by their appearance and want the community to know that they share the same values as everyone else.



# SROA AIMS TO EDUCATE WITH SELFLESS SERVICE



National Day of Seva, August 2017







# Facts About Sikhism

**Sikhism is the fifth largest religion in the World.**

## History of Sikh Origin

- ◆ Started by Guru Nanak in 1499 AD., when he received the word from God to spread his message of peace to all humanity. Guru Nanak was born in 1469 AD.
- ◆ The word Sikh means a disciple or a student.
- ◆ The Sikh faith was guided by 10 Gurus (enlightened teachers or prophets).

## Sikh Holy Book—Guru Granth Sahib

- ◆ Considered as the eternal living Guru of the Sikhs.
- ◆ Contains hymns and compositions from Sikh Gurus as well as Hindu and Muslim saints. Completed by Sikh Gurus themselves.
- ◆ In poetry and keyed to music, called ragas.
- ◆ Contains a Universal Message on how to connect with God.

## Sikh Core Beliefs

- ◆ The purpose of human life is to raise one's spiritual level to ultimately merge with God through meditation and service to humanity.
- ◆ Sikh faith pillars: honest living, meditation, service and sharing.
- ◆ A single Creator sustains people of all faiths. Sikhs believe in the sanctity and respect for all faiths; equality, justice, and dignity of all.
- ◆ Every human being is equal in the eyes of God. All positions of authority in Sikh faith and political life are open to both men and women.
- ◆ Sikhism considers no place, day, time or direction more holy than any other.

- ◆ Sikh faith does not have a clergy. Each individual is personally capable of experiencing the Creator—God.
- ◆ Sikhism seeks to create a just society. All Sikhs are required to contribute to the welfare of humanity.
- ◆ Sikhism rejects polytheism, idol worship, superstitions and blind rituals.

## Sikh Symbols and Identity

- ◆ Turban: worn by most Sikh men and some women, symbolizes equality, dignity and humility.
- ◆ Ek Onkar: Sikh symbol signifies 'One Universal God.'
- ◆ Khanda: Sikh Insignia signifies founding principles of Sikhism.



Ek Onkar



Khanda

## Sikh Place of Worship—Gurudwara

- ◆ Gurudwara, means a door to Guru or a place where Guru lives. All are welcome regardless of caste, social status & religion.
- ◆ Gurudwaras regularly serve free food to all.

## Sikh Sacred Articles of Faith—Five Ks

- ◆ Kesh—uncut hair (considered as an indispensable part of the human body)
- ◆ Kanga—a small wooden comb (to take care of the uncut hair)
- ◆ Kara—a steel bracelet (a reminder of dedication to the Guru)
- ◆ Kuchehra—a special cotton underwear (reminder of chastity)
- ◆ Kirpan—a small ceremonial sword (a reminder to protect the defenseless against injustice, honor, security and universal rights)

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## introduction to sikh americans



- ▶ 99%: Percent of all the people wearing Turbans in U.S. that are Sikhs
- ▶ 1: Sikhs believe in one God
- ▶ 5: Sikhism is the fifth largest religion in the world
- ▶ 100: Number of years Sikhs have been in the U.S.
- ▶ 700,000: Population of Sikhs in the U.S.
- ▶ 25,000,000: Population of Sikhs worldwide





# ST JUDE CHILDREN'S RESEARCH RIDE - FLORIDA 11/18/17







**4TH ANNUAL TEDDY BEAR  
TOY RUN - TEXAS  
11/18/17**

# TOY RUN - SAN JOSE

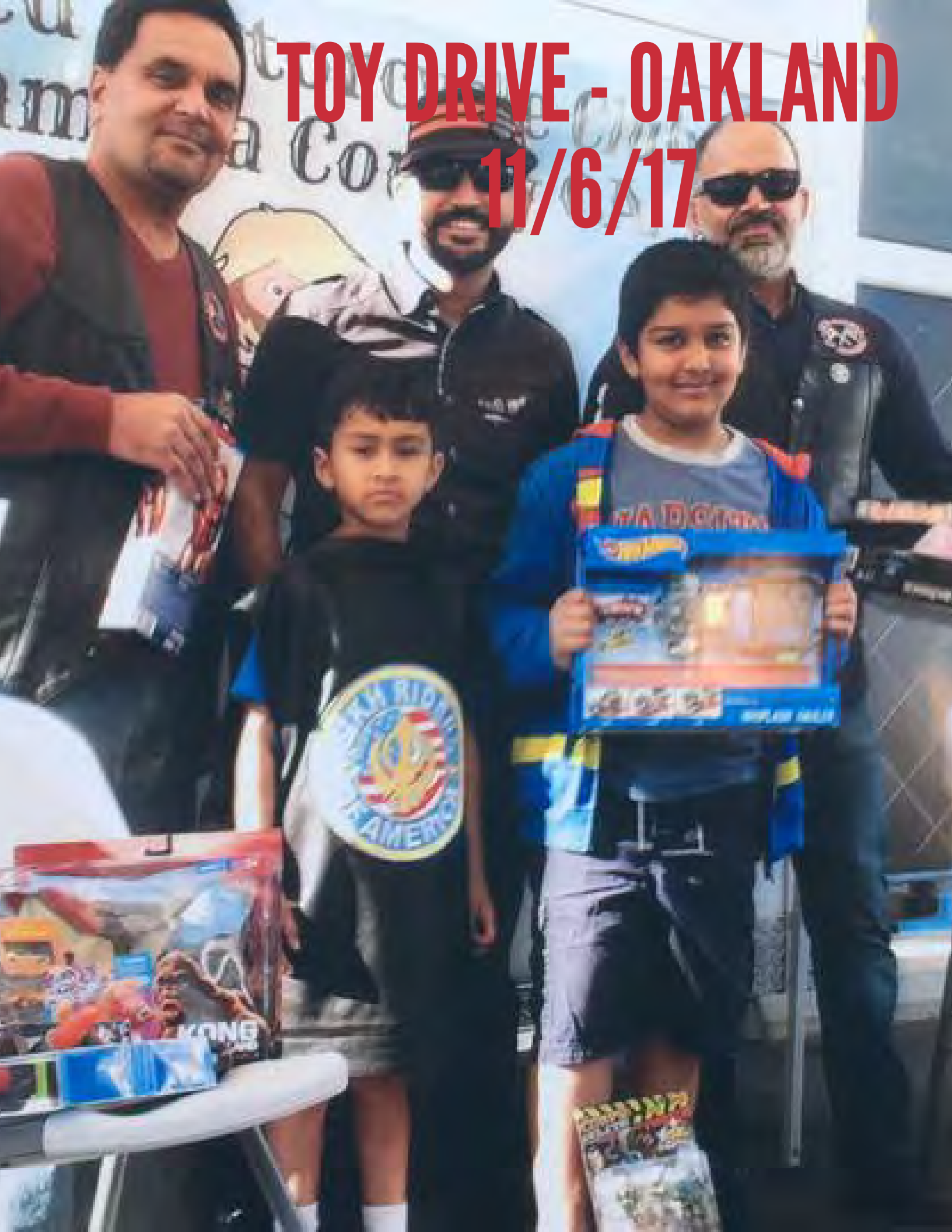
## 11/18/17





# TOY DRIVE - OAKLAND

## 11/6/17



# 11TH ANNUAL OFFICER DOWN RIDE - BAKERSFIELD



October 7, 2017

Sponsored by Kern County's 999 Foundation, this event served lunch to just over 600 people and raised approx. \$32,000. Sikh Riders showed its support by providing breakfast burritos, juice and coffee to everyone in the morning before the ride.



# 11TH ANNUAL 9-11 MEMORIAL RUN - BAKERSFIELD



Sponsored by the Armed Forces Support Foundation, approx. 200 bikers showed up to pay homage to those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our country. 9-11, Never Forget.



# BIKERS FOR HEROS POKER RUN - BAKERSFIELD 5/7/17





# 1ST ANNUAL VETERAN'S DAY POKER RUN - TEXAS

## 11/12/16



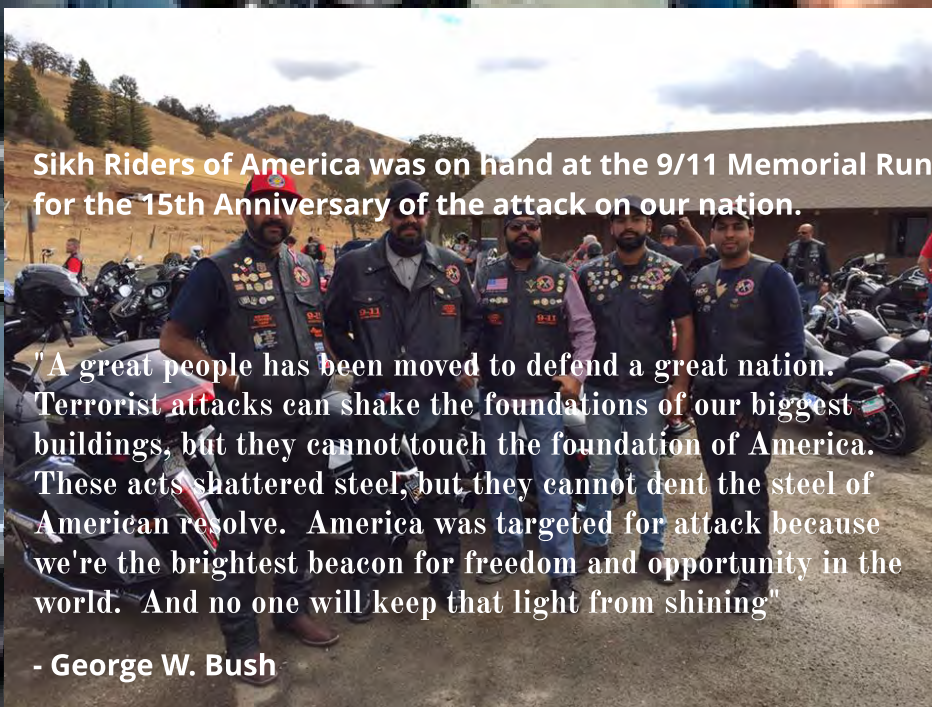


# 8TH ANNUAL VETERAN'S MEMORIAL POKER RUN - BAKERSFIELD 10/15/16





# 10TH ANNUAL 9-11 SUPPORT OUR TROOPS MEMORIAL RUN - BAKERSFIELD 9/11/16



Sikh Riders of America was on hand at the 9/11 Memorial Run for the 15th Anniversary of the attack on our nation.

"A great people has been moved to defend a great nation. Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America. These acts shattered steel, but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve. America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world. And no one will keep that light from shining"

- George W. Bush

# 335TH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARADE - BAKERSFIELD



Bakersfield Christmas Parade, December 7, 2017.



# 34TH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARADE - BAKERSFIELD



December 1, 2016.

Christmas is not as much about opening our presents as it is opening our hearts. We want to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the community for showering us always with love and support.



# 17TH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARADE - TEHACHAPI

6 Tehachapi News Wednesday, December 6, 2017

## 'Twas the night before Christmas' at annual parade

### TEHACHAPI NEWS

People of all ages delighted in the 17th Annual Christmas Parade and Tree Lighting event, hosted by the Greater Tehachapi Chamber of Commerce Saturday night.

The theme for this year's parade was "twas the night before Christmas."

Monday afternoon, the chamber announced that first-place awards go to:

Tehachapi High School Band; Girl Scouts of Tehachapi; Murry Family Farms; Mountain Bible Church; Sikh Riders of America; Miss Tehachapi Pageant; Mojave River Academy; Diamonds in the Rough Equestrian Drill Team; and Silver Paw Ranch.

The judges' overall favorite award goes to Tehachapi Pest Control.

Tehachapi Christmas Parade, December 2, 2017.



# 88TH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARADE - FRESNO



Fresno Christmas Parade, December 2, 2017.

# 2ND ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARADE - ARVIN



Arvin Christmas Parade, December 8, 2017.



# VETERAN'S PARADE - BAKERSFIELD



Veteran's Day Parade, November 11, 2017.

# 4TH OF JULY PARADE - ALAMEDA



Alameda 4th of July Parade, July 4, 2017.

**SROA members also attended the Coast Guard Festival that followed and received 1st Place in the Vehicles Category.**



# U.S. Department of Justice



## Common Sikh American Head Coverings

Sikhism is a religion that originated in South Asia during the 15th Century and is distinct from both Islam and Hinduism. For religious reasons, practicing Sikhs do not cut their hair. Sikh men wrap and knot their long hair with a turban or *pagri* (see photo a), a practice that typically takes 10-15 minutes. Sikh boys wrap their hair in a smaller under-turban or *patka*, with their hair knotted on top of their head (photo b). Some Sikh women also wear turbans (photo c); however, many opt for a cloth or *chunni* to cover their head (photo d).

### Points to Keep in Mind when searching someone wearing a Sikh Head Covering:

- Show Respect.
- Explain why you need to conduct search.
- Offer private room for search, if available.
- Searches should be done by members of the same sex.
- Review applicable policies and procedures for more information.



a. Man with pagri



b. Boy with patka



c. Woman with pagri



d. Woman with chunni

# Beliefs of the Sikhs

- ❑ One God/Creator
- ❑ All Humans Created Equal
- ❑ Human Life a Precious Blessing
- ❑ Service of Creator
- ❑ Warriors of Truth
- ❑ Salvation in This Life

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