

US Sikhs Join '9/11 Unity Walk'

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Sikhs of New York joined in a Unity Walk last October to demonstrate solidarity of faiths and to make a shared call for peace, while remembering the victims of 9-11. The one-mile walk from Battery Park to the World Trade Center, undertaken by more than 150 people, took place on Sunday September 14th, 2008, organized by Religions for Peace and co-sponsored by UNITED SIKHS and a number of other organizations. Speakers from various faith traditions and musicians were gathered together to create a memorial to remember.

The Unity Walk Mission Statement read, "We walk together as neighbors from many faiths and cultures. We gather in peace to demonstrate our unity, recalling the spirit of togetherness that grew out of 9/11. We commemorate this day because of concern for each other's welfare is the shared hope of us all."

Master of Ceremony Harpreet Singh Toor, a member of World Sikh Council, commented, "It's an honor to be able to stand as a representative from the Sikh Community and to know that all faiths have come together to bring peace at this Unity Walk. We need to educate those that are not aware of the Sikhs and to get involved as a community together as a Unity and Unite as a whole."

Raminder Kaur, UNITED SIKHS Operations Manager, sung the following shabad (hymn),

ਜਗਤੁ ਜਲੰਦਾ ਰਖਿ ਲੈ ਆਪਣੀ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਧਾਰਿ ॥

ਜਿਤੁ ਦੁਆਰੈ ਉਬਰੈ ਤਿਤੈ ਲੈਹੁ ਉਬਾਰਿ ॥

ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਸੁਖੁ ਵੇਖਾਲਿਆ ਸਚਾ ਸਬਦੁ ਬੀਚਾਰਿ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਸੁਝਈ ਹਰਿ ਬਿਨੁ ਬਖਸਣਹਾਰੁ ॥੧॥

Translation:

The world is going up in flames - shower it with Your Mercy, and save it!

Save it, and deliver it, by whatever method it takes. The True Guru has shown the way to peace, contemplating the True Word of the Shabad. Nanak knows no other than the Lord, the Forgiving Lord. ||1||

Dr William Vendley, Secretary General of Religions for Peace, gave the welcome address, followed by a speech of the Rev. Chloe Breyer, Executive Director, The Interfaith Center of New York.

"The Unity Walk seeks to build bridges of understanding and respect in a post September 11 world," said, Raminder Kaur, Operations Manager, UNITED SIKHS.

The concept of the Unity Walk was presented at a Points of Light leadership summit on Martin Luther King day 2005. The original idea was put forth by Embassy Row resident Kyle Poole, polished and delivered to Embassy Row worship houses by Erik Schwarz, and brought to reality by Dan Tutt, Meg Clifford (Poole) and hundreds of volunteers from every faith. From conception, it was known that the 9/11 Unity Walk was much more than a 'church open house', but a statement from Embassy Row in Washington, DC to the world. The true founders of the Walk, however, are all of congregations along the Embassy Row route who so quickly embraced the idea, putting aside hesitations within their own

communities, to satisfy the prescient need to come together, and in the process, making history.

