



Happy Vaisakhi



Dear SALDEF Friends and Family,

Vaheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Vaheguru Ji Ki Fateh!

As Vaisakhi dawns upon us, I find myself reflecting deeply on our shared history and feeling incredibly grateful. We are reminded not only of the rich tapestry of Sikh heritage and culture, but also of the fundamental principles upon which our community was built: equality, justice, and selfless service. These very values, enshrined in the creation of the Khalsa during Vaisakhi centuries ago, continue to guide our actions and inspire our aspirations.

We also see the spirit of these values reflected in the SikhLEAD program, where the last **13 years** have been dedicated to empowering Sikh American youth as future leaders. Through your unwavering support, **we have nurtured a program that has empowered over 450 young Sikhs** with the skills, knowledge, and networks they need to develop into agents of positive change. We must continue to invest in the future of our community by supporting programs like SikhLEAD that build up our youth.

As Vaisakhi's spirit of renewal inspires us, let us rededicate ourselves to the core values that drive SikhLEAD and guide our impactful work at SALDEF. This year, we have an urgent goal: to empower young Sikh Americans to rise as leaders in their communities and professions.

Imagine the impact of your donation: a young Sikh American, once overlooked, now leading change in their community. **Your generous donation will enable us to provide the resources and support needed to nurture these future leaders.** Together, we can amplify the impact of SikhLEAD and SALDEF, making a lasting difference in the lives of our community through its most precious resource: our youth. Join us in shaping a future where every young Sikh American has the opportunity to thrive and lead.

Your generous support will enable us to shape a brighter future for generations to come.



Sincerely,

Karneet Singh
Board Chair, SALDEF

Read about these paintings inside!



2011

SALDEF launches the SikhLEAD Program to encourage political and civic engagement amongst Sikh American youth.



From SikhLEAD Intern to the Supreme Court Law Clerk:

Harmann Singh's Journey to Breaking Barriers

Harmann Singh's story is not just an individual achievement; it's a testament to the transformative power of the SikhLEAD program.

450+ ALUMNI

A powerful network of SikhLEAD alum driving change in fields like:



GOVERNMENT—

From Capitol Hill to state legislatures, SikhLEAD alumni are shaping policy and advocating for their communities.

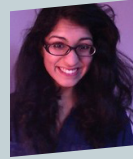
Dilpreet Sidhu, Deputy Chief of Staff, National Security Council at the White House



NON-PROFIT & SOCIAL WORK—

Leading the charge in education, healthcare, and community development.

Mandeep Singh, Fmr Executive Director Dasvandh Network



ARTS & MEDIA—

Sharing Sikh narratives and perspectives through creative expression.

Reshmi Oberoi, Freelance Writer-Reporter from Columbia Graduate School of Journalism



BUSINESS & TECH—

Demonstrating everyone can achieve success in technology regardless of background.

Dilpreet Sahota, CEO and Founder of Trek Health



LAW—

Fighting for justice and equality in courtrooms across the nation.

Jasleen Singh, Counsel in the Democracy Program at the Brennan Center for Justice and Fmr. DAG of California

SikhLEAD

As the first Sikh American to serve as a Supreme Court Judicial Law Clerk, Harmann's journey reflects the program's impact on shaping future leaders and leaving a lasting mark on the legal landscape.

Before his remarkable law school journey, Harmann's passion for justice was ignited by the SikhLEAD National Summer Internship Program. Working with SALDEF on issues like airport profiling and voting rights, he gained invaluable experience and witnessed firsthand the power of advocacy.

The SikhLEAD program recognized Harmann's potential

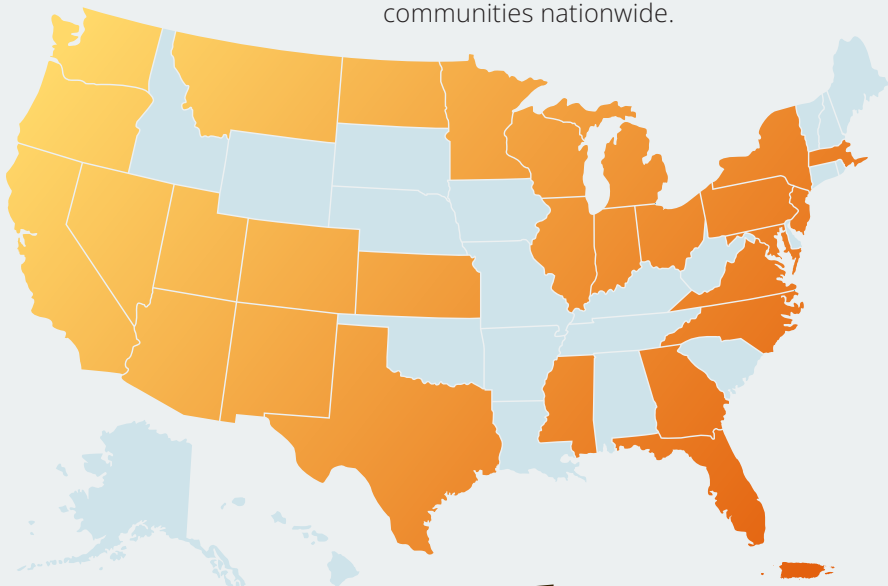
and nurtured it. He credits the program with "sparking his interest in the law" by connecting him with a vibrant community of engaging and inspiring young Sikh peers. This supportive network fostered confidence and fueled his aspirations.

Today, as a Supreme Court Law Clerk, Harmann stands as a symbol of hope and inspiration. His achievement shatters glass ceilings and opens doors for future generations of Sikh Americans in the legal field.

Harmann's story is just one example of the countless lives touched by the SikhLEAD program. By empowering young Sikh Americans, the program cultivates leadership, fosters civic engagement, and builds a brighter future for the community.

28+ STATES REPRESENTED

The SikhLEAD program boasts an impressive reach, with interns representing over 28 states throughout America. This national presence translates to diverse perspectives, a wider range of skills, and the potential to create a significant impact on Sikh communities nationwide.



Celebrating 13 Years of Impact



“Out of 11 interns in my office, I am one of two interns of color. Though my colleagues might not think twice about it, I am aware of it every day and forced to be an ambassador of my culture and faith. SALDEF's SikhLEAD internship helped me get this position, and gave me the confidence to stand up to any odds stacked against me. As an intern in Senator Durbin's Office, I [was] able to educate my colleagues and superiors on the Sikh religion, and bring to attention issues that Sikh-Americans like myself face. I am doing my part, but there is still a long way to go in diversifying the Hill.”

Avneet Kaur Chawla, SikhLEAD Intern Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL)



“SikhLEAD not only empowered me to find my voice but also equipped me with the tools and resources to effect meaningful change. Today, I can directly attribute my current government positions and involvement in local Colorado Sikh community projects to the transformative impact of my SikhLEAD journey.”

Naureen Singh, SikhLEAD Alum



“I joined the SikhLEAD Leadership Development Program during my third year of college and immediately felt a sense of community. My brilliant peers were changing the world and gave me such a fresh perspective on what it meant to be Sikh in America. I met policy makers, attorneys, learned about graduate school/law school options, and even learned how to tie a pagh! LDP instilled in me the confidence and skill set to navigate the world as a Sikh Sardar while knowing that I have a community of support behind me.”

Princepreet Singh, SikhLEAD LDP 4



What happens when a centuries-old tradition meets the heart of American politics?

Langar on the Hill, organized by National SikhLEAD participants, answers this question with a resounding success story. More than just a meal, Langar on the Hill embodies the Sikh tradition of langar, offering free vegetarian food to anyone regardless of background or belief. Organized by interns from the National SikhLEAD program, **Langar on the Hill has connected over 500 Congressional leaders, staff, and community members** to gather on Capitol Hill to learn about the Sikh faith, beliefs, and Sikh American contributions to this nation. This powerful event, garnering media attention from major outlets like Roll Call and NBC News, is just one example of how National SikhLEAD participants are making a tangible impact on Capitol Hill.



Glorious Balance, Ameet Kaur

Deconstructed miniature paintings in wood, oil and 23 carat gold

The paintings on the cover depict the SikhLEAD narrative through symbolic characters, Falcon and the five Falcon heads. The falcons symbolize the accomplishments of the SikhLEAD Alumni, who have made a mark in their respective fields and are continuing the efforts and harvesting the results.



The SikhLEAD program throws open the doors to a vibrant community of Sikh role models and trailblazers who share their journeys, insights, and experiences directly with the next generation. By meticulously curating a speakership series featuring accomplished Sikhs, the SikhLEAD program transcends traditional learning, offering face-to-face encounters with role models across diverse fields. These dynamic exchanges shatter glass ceilings, exposing young minds to tangible career paths and impactful initiatives, while fostering a supportive network that amplifies their own aspirations.

MENTOR FEATURE

By connecting aspiring Sikh youth with established Sikh professionals, SikhLEAD creates a powerful space for growth, guidance, and inspiration. This mentor-mentee dynamic goes beyond professional development. It cultivates a sense of identity, belonging, and shared purpose, ensuring the rich tapestry of the Sikh American community continues to thrive.

"As a SALDEF board member, mentoring these young minds fills me with hope for the future of our community."

From shy freshmen finding their voice to passionate seniors advocating for social justice, the program ignites a spark of leadership within them. They gain valuable skills, network with inspiring professionals, and build a strong sense of identity as Sikh Americans. **It's not just about leadership skills; it's about nurturing the next generation of Sikh Americans who will carry the torch of our faith and values with pride and purpose.**



Ammandeep Singh Seehra
SALDEF Board Vice Chair

Join us in continuing to make an impact in the next generation through the SikhLEAD Program.

This summer, our goal is to raise \$75k to support over 90 Sikh youth in the incoming SikhLEAD class. Imagine the profound impact of your gift: young Sikh Americans emerging as dynamic leaders driving change in their community.

\$10,000

Covers the cost of the 2-day personal development training for all the interns, delivered by a professional trainer.

\$5,000

A complete sponsorship supporting the cost of one intern in the program.

\$2,000

Covers the stipend paid to one intern.

\$500

Covers travel to and from DC for one participant.

DONATE NOW



SALDEF is solely funded by community members like you, all the highlights from SikhLEAD were made possible by your decision to donate to us. Your support allows us to make the coming years even more successful.

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