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New Punjabi School Building Breaks Ground at SW Gurudwara



The volunteer teachers of the Punjabi School with the ceremonial shovels.

By Jawahar Malhotra

HOUSTON: Under aquamarine skies and bright sunshine that belied the downpour of the week before, many early morning members of the congregation of the Gurudwara Sahib of Southwest Houston borne witness to the groundbreaking ceremony for the new school building for children to be built to the west of the main temple building.

The Building Committee members and the volunteer teachers were joined in by young kids in their dark blue t-shirts emblazoned with the school's name this past Sunday morning, September 21, as they posed for pictures with the ceremonial stainless steel shovels in hand. The architect Hardeepak "Harry" S. Munday was at hand, with a poster of the school rendering.



The Building Committee members and major donors pose with the ceremonial shovels at the groundbreaking ceremony.

On the opposite side of the temple building is the temporary classroom building set on blocks, just to the other side of the fountains. It was set there when the Punjabi School of GSSWH was launched in August 2011. Classes are held every Sunday for the 48 students who range in age from 6 years to 15 and are taught by 8 to 9 volunteer teachers, most of whom are women.

Munday was the architect for the main Gurudwara and has once again donated his time to design the new single-story, 2,700 sq ft school and administrative building, at a cost of \$375,000, most of it collected from donations by Paul and Manmeet Likhari, Pashant and Nidhika Mehta, Jai and Deepa Dhodhi and Sanjay and Anjali Khanna, although the remaining funds are still to be solicited.

The modern Gurudwara building with the clean, crisp lines, fountains and extra wide porte d'cochere is set on a 2.5 acre tract just west of Highway 6, north of Beechnut and next to the newer Vedanta Society building. Munday designed the GSSWH to be built in three phases, with the main building and structures completed in April 2009. The adjoining 2 acre parcel of land was recently purchased and the hope is for a recreational facility and access from Beechnut itself.



The architect of the Gurudwara and the Punjabi School, Hardeepak Munday poses with a rendering of the building.

Munday moved down nine years ago from Baltimore where he designed and built the renovation and expansion to the city's Gurudwara. He is also designing the first Gurudwara in San Antonio, a 6,000 sq ft structure to be set on 11 acres near the UTSA campus and slated to open by Vaisakhi 2015.