

HOW TO ORGANIZE A VIGIL IN HONOR OF THE VICTIMS OF THE OAK CREEK, WISCONSIN, SHOOTING

This guide lists suggestions, things to consider, and sample documents to help you organize your vigil in honor of the victims of the attacks on the Gurdwara in Oak Creek, Wisconsin.

1. Select a location

We encourage you to do this in an accessible location that is a community gathering place in your city/town so that people of all faiths can join the Sikh American community in a time of reflection. Be sure to check if you need a permit to hold the vigil at that location and notify local law enforcement.

Some suggested locations:

- Community park or town square
- Police station
- Gurdwara

2. Select a time

Pick a time that is convenient for people to come and will ensure broad participation.

3. Invite people

Invite members of the Sikh American and non-Sikh community. Send the sample invitation (example below) to your friends, neighbors, community leaders, politicians, police department, leaders and congregations of other churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples.

Post an “open event” on Facebook and send invites to your friends, and encourage them to invite others. Send out messages on Twitter and email people. Essentially, get the word out any way you can to your Sikh and non-Sikh neighbors!

Put up posters around the community and hand out flyers with the location, date, and time.

4. Contact your local media

Send the sample press release below to your local television stations, radio stations, and newspapers. You can find their phone numbers and contact forms on their websites.

Keep in mind, they will need some lead time to make sure they can cover it so notify them in advance, and follow up before the event again.

5. Decide what you will do

We encourage you to hold your event in a manner that is accessible to all attendees.

Suggestions:

- Give a statement like the “statement for the community” included in this packet
- Have community leaders who are not part of the Sikh American community share their thoughts
- Hold a moment of silence
- If you decide to share a piece of *gurbani*, please read a translation in English

6. Get your materials

Buy enough candles to distribute to all those who will attend

Some other suggested items:

- Water bottles to hand out to attendees
- Snacks or food to share with everyone
- Trash bags to make sure the venue is left the way it was found
- A bullhorn, microphone or some sort of PA system to ensure everyone can hear your speakers (make sure you do not need a permit to use this in a public space)
- Signs with phrases “United Against Hate”, “In Memory of the Victims”, and “Sikh Americans for Tolerance and Respect”

**STATEMENT FOR THE COMMUNITY
(EXAMPLE)**

The tragic events on Sunday shocked our community – the Sikh American community, the Wisconsin community, and Americans across the country. We come together to reflect on the attacks and pray for those who were killed and injured and their families. We come together to honor the memory of Paramjit Kaur, Sita Singh, Ranjit Singh, Satwant Singh Kaleka, Prakash Singh, and Suveg Singh Khattrra.

We are grateful for the brave and quick action of the police officers, who prevented the tragedy from being even greater, and hope for the quick recovery of Lt. Brian Murphy who was shot protecting his community.

We are grateful for the outpouring of support that has come to our community. The support you are all showing today is proof that we are all part of the same American fabric, the same American family. We know that together we will all heal as one America from this truly difficult American tragedy.



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SAMPLE INVITATION

Dear Neighbor,

Please join us as we honor the memory of those lost during the tragic attacks on Sunday, August 5, in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, and pray for the swift recovery of those injured.

We will be holding a candlelight vigil for all who live and work in our area to attend as a sign of support for the people of Oak Creek and to help our country heal from these shocking attacks.

Date: August 8, 2012

Time: INSERT TIME

Location: INSERT LOCATION

On behalf of the Sikh American community, we hope you will join us as we honor the victims and reflect on how we will move ahead a stronger nation.

Sincerely,

The Sikh American community of _____

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

Please fill in the information on this press release and send it to your local media – including newspapers, radio stations, and television stations. You can find their contact information on their websites.

Community Vigil on Wed. Aug. 8 for Wisconsin Shooting Victims

(FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – YOUR CITY, STATE)]

The Sikh American and interfaith community of INSERT YOUR REGION will hold a candlelight vigil honoring the victims of the tragic shooting in Oak Creek, Wisconsin.

DATE: Wednesday, August 8, 2012

TIME: INSERT THE TIME

LOCATION:

INSERT THE ADDRESS

On August 5, 2012, the nation was rocked by the tragic attack on the Sikh Temple of Wisconsin in Oak Creek. We will be gathering to reflect on the tragedy, show support for the victims, and demonstrate that all Americans stand united against hate.

OPTIONAL STATEMENT: Representatives from the local Sikh American community as well as (LIST OTHER ORGS AND REPRESENTATIVES IF APPROPRIATE)

CONTACT:

YOUR NAME; YOUR PHONE NUMBER; YOUR EMAIL

[List all the people who can provide information]

##END##