

Harry Sidhu Calls for Action: Empowering the Next Generation of Entrepreneurs and Community Leaders

Former Anaheim Mayor Encourages Hard Work, Resilience, and Local Mentorship as Tools for Economic and Civic Renewal

Anaheim, California Jun 26, 2025 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Former Anaheim Mayor and entrepreneur [Harry Sidhu](#) is calling on communities to do more than watch from the sidelines. Drawing on his personal journey—from immigrant janitor to mayor, engineer to business owner—Sidhu is raising awareness about the importance of local support, mentoring, and resilience in helping new entrepreneurs and civic leaders emerge.

“We talk a lot about opportunity in America,” Sidhu says. “But opportunity doesn’t knock for everyone—you have to build your own door. And sometimes, someone needs to hand you the tools.”

Sidhu is urging individuals, business owners, and civic groups to take more active roles in shaping their communities—not just through donations or elections, but by mentoring, sharing experience, and encouraging second chances.

A Journey Built on Grit

Harry Sidhu arrived in the U.S. in 1974 with six dollars in his pocket. He worked nights as a janitor and went to community college during the day. “I’d sleep a few hours and then go back to class,” he recalls. “I just knew if I worked hard enough, I could build something.”

He eventually became a mechanical engineer, working at aerospace giants like General Dynamics and Rockwell. But it was in the fast food world where Sidhu made his entrepreneurial mark—building a portfolio of 28 franchises including Burger King, Papa John’s, and El Pollo Loco.

Still, breaking into business wasn’t easy. “Getting the loan was the hardest part,” Sidhu says. “I got rejected more than once. But I didn’t stop.”

Today, access to capital remains a barrier for many. According to the Federal Reserve’s 2023 Small Business Credit Survey, only 45% of small business applicants received all the financing they sought, with underserved communities facing the biggest gaps.

From Boardroom to City Hall

Sidhu also spent over a decade in public service, including eight years on the Anaheim City Council and four as mayor. His administration tackled homelessness and COVID-19 response head-on—distributing \$70+ million in relief, setting up emergency shelters, and aiding local businesses.

“We opened the city’s first emergency shelter within weeks,” he says. “We didn’t just move people—we gave them support.”

But for Sidhu, public service isn’t just about titles. “What you do after the title matters even more,” he says. “Being available. Showing up. That’s how change happens.”

Why Mentorship Matters Now

With 33 million small businesses in the U.S. and a new wave of first-time entrepreneurs post-COVID, the need for mentorship has never been greater. Yet 67% of small business owners say they've never had a mentor, according to a report from SCORE, a resource partner of the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Sidhu sees this as a missed opportunity: "If you've been through the struggle, share it. If you've failed and learned, pass that on. That's how we build stronger communities."

He volunteers with the YMCA and Boys & Girls Club, and continues to mentor local entrepreneurs. "I get energy from helping someone take their first step," he says.

Give Back by Showing Up

Sidhu isn't asking for donations or politics—he's asking people to take action in their own circles.

"If you own a business, talk to the kid stocking shelves. Share your story. If you're retired, volunteer. If you've failed, tell someone what you learned. That's how we build opportunity."

He encourages others to remember that success is rarely smooth: "Set goals. Take smart risks. And when you fail—and you might—don't give up. Learn. Get back up."

About Harry Sidhu

Harry Sidhu is a retired engineer, entrepreneur, and former Mayor of Anaheim. Born in India, he immigrated to the U.S. in 1974 and worked his way from janitor to city leader. He holds a mechanical engineering degree from Drexel University, built a successful fast-food franchise business, and served the city of Anaheim for over a decade in public office.

Take Action Today

Mentor someone. Volunteer. Share your experience. You never know who's waiting for a chance to rise.

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