

Dilip and Vibha Patel

Helping Those Less Fortunate

As children growing up in India, both Dilip Patel and his wife, Vibha, witnessed their parents helping those less fortunate and treating others with respect.

Now citizens of the United States, the Patels are applying their parents' philosophy through grants they recommend from an advised fund at the Oklahoma City Community Foundation. In addition to their fund, the couple has also established several charitable gift annuities. Dilip says their approach to charitable giving is driven by two strong beliefs.

"To help young people get a good education so they can improve their lives and help others in the future," he explains. "And, we want to help people in our community or anywhere who are less fortunate than us due to various circumstances."

Education is very important to the couple. Dilip has an undergraduate degree in electrical engineering and a master's degree in mechanical engineering while Vibha has her Ph.D. in mathematics. "Good education and hard work is the key to success," Dilip says.

Since creating their advised fund, the Patels have recommended grants to nonprofits such as the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma that sponsors Kids Café, an afterschool and summer program that provides food, mentoring, tutoring and activities to at-risk children at 16 sites in central and western Oklahoma. For one Kids Café location, the food provided by the Food Bank is making a real difference in the study habits of the children, says Alyson Geister, volunteer director at Britton Christian Church in Oklahoma City. Prior to their tutoring, the children receive a filling, nutritious meal that helps them to concentrate on their lessons.

"All of the children arrive hungry in the afternoon," she explains. "For many, the meal they receive through the Kids Café is the only meal they'll eat for the rest of the day. We couldn't have a successful tutoring program if we didn't provide a meal."

The Kids Café at the Britton Christian Church in Oklahoma City serves students from Britton Elementary School. The site is one of 16 supported by the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma. Through the afterschool program, students receive food, mentoring and tutoring. Dilip and Vibha Patel support the activities of the Food Bank through their advised fund at the Oklahoma City Community Foundation. *Photograph by Brandon Snider Photography*

