

Monica Mahajan



16 years ago, Dr. Mukund and Rama Ben Thakar came to America with their three children. Life was not easy for them in the beginning. They strived hard to give the best to their kids. Mukund Bhai as he is fondly called and Ramaben are not only husband and wife but also partners in life's many endeavors. Today with their kids well settled and life a lot easier, they want to give back to the community, which has given them so much. This doctor of alternative medicine from India and a certified nurse has realized their dream of caring for their parents in India by caring and serving 'Indian parents right here in the USA'. The 3rd floor of the Alameda Center For Rehabilitation and Care In Perth Amboy, NJ is something like a "little India". The picture of Indian gods and goddesses adorns the walls and Ramaben reads Ramayana to a rapt audience of 20 elderly people with an intoxicating aroma of Desi Masala Chai, she makes for them.



For over six months, Mukund Bhai and Rama Ben toiled with the idea of having a nursing and care home for Physiotherapist Ms. Pahane the elderly Indians in the US. They spoke to Mr. Michael Neiman, LNHA, the administrator of Alameda Center For Rehabilitation and Care, who along with Mr. Sindney Greenberger the CEO readily and enthusiastically agreed to let the third floor of the nursing home be used for the noble purpose. Mr. Neiman later informed us that Mukund Bhai and Rama Ben had worked with so much devotion and dedication for the Alameda Center for 16 yrs, that he was very happy, he



could help them realize their dream. With her colleagues and patients just 5 weeks old, this project already has 20 residents and 74 more in the waiting. All its residents and their families are extremely happy with this project. We had the opportunity to speak with some of them. When Pratibha Patel first heard of this, she knew this is what she wanted her dad Mr. N.C. Patel to be. Pratibha went to the takers home and spoke to them about her father's condition. N.C. Patel is suffering from dementia, a condition where one does not know or recollect his past and pretty much his present life. N.C. Patel is the first resident of this project. Pratibha says "With the Indian staff, food and environment, it becomes much easier for the patients to communicate and identify with the surroundings. There has been a marked change in my dad's mental and physical health". We also met with Mr. Nagindas and Savita Ben Shah, a couple who have many blessings to give to Mukund Bhai and Rama Ben for their care. The one-time Deputy Mayor and now President of the Senior Citizens Association of Hudson Area Mr. Vinod Bhai was also all praises for the Thakar couple for taking such good care of his ailing wife. Dr. Swarnalatha Agarwal a Ph.D in Rajasthani Folk Songs, a linguist, an author and an educationist has recently joined this family, is also happy to be there. But the one person who evidently is the happiest person is 88-year-old Pushpalatha Shah, who sang the "bhole shanker" bhajan for us, in a loud voice and an enthusiasm to match it. All the residents, as a part of their daily routine are given morning care, physiotherapy, Indian breakfast and meal, which include chapati, subzi, rice, dal and an Indian sweet. They also get a different Indian snack everyday, like dhokla, ganthiya, etc. Mukund Bhai and Ramaben themselves feed the residents sometimes. The Ram katha session is in the afternoon, after which they do recreational



activities like painting, playing some games or simply chatting with each other. They are also taken occasionally on an outdoor tour, like to a temple. Mukund Bhai and Rama Ben say that this project is very close to their heart, and want more and more people to know about it with the hope that someone else would also be inspired by their work and would do the same. The Thakars are a fascinating couple, and Desi Match hopes that their message is heard and followed by all humanity.



Pre-requisites for Admission:

The person should be 65 and above, should have lived in the USA for the preceding 5 yrs and should be dependant on other for his/ her physical care. Medicare and Medicaid do the entire funding for the patients.

For further details, please contact

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