

DISCOVER®

2010 Discover Scholarship Winner



Govil Gupta
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In the true sense of a leader, Govil uses his love of writing to benefit others. What started out as an idea for a creative writing contest resulted in worldwide writing contests, workshops and the organization Wonder Writers. Wonder Writers gives students around the world the opportunity to write and submit their work online, have it evaluated by professionals, be published and even win prizes. Ensuring that all students everywhere could participate, Govil developed the website portal www.wonderwriters.com to allow them to submit and publish their work. With the pieces in place to launch Wonder Writers, he developed and executed his business plan to raise money to pay for the book publishing and prizes. Through presentations, meetings, and media outreach the launch became a reality. Govil reached out to English teachers and professors and even Nickelodeon screenwriters to donate their time to judge the submitted pieces - all of them eagerly jumped on board. He struck a deal with a publisher and the first edition rolled out complete with a contest award ceremony. To make the program truly unique, 100% of the proceeds from the sales of the books are donated to the writers' charity of choice. Five contests and \$10,000 donated later, his leadership has made the program a success.

When he is not leading Wonder Writers, Govil acts as Board President for Nestle's Very Best in Youth Foundation. Through his role, he developed goals, visions and objectives for the board including the upcoming "20 Events for 20/20 Vision" to be launched during World Sight Day on October 14. The program will collect donated glasses and raise money for organizations that distribute eyeglasses to impoverished individuals. Twenty events across the county will help make this happen through concerts, bake sales, walk-a-thons etc.

On a local level, Govil helped homeowners by working directly with lending institutions to prevent foreclosures. He helped the homeowners with paperwork and documentation for submitting lending request packages and with the help of other real estate professionals, he secured revised monthly payments and extended sale dates on homes so that mortgage payments could be met and home ownership could remain a reality. To complete the process he reviewed individuals' financial statements and helped them make budgets so that they could continue make ends meet. "The good feeling that I get from saving the homes of those in need is incomparable to anything that I have felt before."

Govil developed his leadership and independent thinking as a result of having to depend on himself and his family in new surroundings. Moving more than eight times before the third grade with some even between countries, he found himself consistently learning new languages and cultures. At five years old, he and his family finally came to America from India with only a few suitcases. Again, in a new county surrounded by a new language, he worked hard to adapt to a new culture and language. He spent countless hours in the library to learn English and American culture. Continuing to move in America, Govil found himself trying to make new friends in each new town and learn new school systems. This experience sparked the creative writer inside as he wrote to express his feelings. "Although I did not enjoy moving back then, today I believe that it has made me very resilient and flexible."

His resiliency helped Govil make his visions a reality in spite of his biggest obstacle of being at risk for retinal detachment and blindness. During a trip to the optometrist at six for headaches while reading, it was revealed he had an unusual myopia for his age. His vision worsened each year, leaving him at high risk of blindness. The most disheartening news is there is no cure for the myopia and his retinas have to detach before laser surgery can be done to reattach them. Not letting this get in his way, Govil set out to learn how he may be able to improve the myopia and his retinas on his own. With a significant increase in vitamin A in his diet he has been able to stabilize the myopia and his retinas, although he will always be at risk for retinal detachment.

"I have used my own problems as motivation to help others in multiple ways, to ease their pain and better their lives." In the future, Govil looks forward to pursuing a degree in business and entrepreneurship, and continuing to help others by giving back to the community.