

I have always reflected on my purpose in this world and I think that is because I consider myself one of the luckiest people alive and have always had this sense of wanting to give back. Here is my origin story so to speak. I was abandoned on a train in Calcutta, India when I was days old. The story goes that a woman sat with me for a period of time and my birth parents never came back, so she took me to Mother Teresa's orphanage. I was quarantined from all the kids because I was sick and so young that if I caught any other diseases I could die. Within a week or so of me being brought to the orphanage, my adopted parents (my father who is Indian and my mother who is American) came to India to visit relatives and adopt a baby, which just happened to me. I think it's important to share this story because one, I think it is a pretty remarkable story and two, it helps explain my desire and need to give back.

So how did I go from Calcutta, India to Keene, NH? Well, I grew up in Somers, NY and did my undergrad in Albany, NY which is where I met my wife. Once I graduated I wanted to be a rock star, so we moved to a suburb of Atlanta called Duluth, GA. After a few years of **not** being a rock star, we wanted to move back north and I wanted to get my MBA. So we moved to Manchester CT and I got my MBA at UCONN, which is where I was introduced to C&S and how we got to Keene. I remember driving into Keene for the first time and there was a "feel" you could get just driving through Main Street. My wife and I fell in love with this area instantly. There was a closeness and kindness that we had not experienced in any other place we had lived before. We have lived in Keene for about 17 years and we have fallen in love with the spirit and real sense of community of this town.

I am currently on the board for the Community Kitchen (for the 2nd time), did Allocations for the United Way, was on the board for the United Way and served on the board for Cheshire Medical Center. Along with my board work, I support several other nonprofits in the area like the Colonial, the public library, the Humane Society, 100 hundred nights and the Child Advocacy center. I believe sitting on these boards and spending time with some of these organizations has given me a unique perspective and appreciation for the different needs within the community.

Why am I telling you all of this? Well, because I would love to be your at large representative for City Council. I would love to hear from you on what your concerns are related to this community and also what you love about this community to help me learn more about the issues that are top of mind to you. You can email me at abisrunning@gmail.com or find me at facebook @ashokmrbaht. I will also be out in the town meeting as many people as I can, so I look forward to meeting you.

Thank you for your time,

Ashok Bahl