Recipients of Dr. Chirag Shah International Resident Award

2021-2022

Postgraduate Medical Education is pleased to announce the winners of the Dr. Chirag Shah International Resident award. The $2,000 award was established in 2012 by Dr. Shah to assist international medical graduates who are adjusting to life in Canada and to inspire them to give back to their community and contribute to making Canada a better place.

I grew up in a small village and I understand health care challenges faced by remote areas. My desire to help people with medicine became my dream when I volunteered during the devastating earthquake in Pakistan (2005), raised funds for medicines, food, and clothes for earthquake victims.

I was involved in various volunteer positions to support rural community services (2013 – 2018), during and before my medical education. I used to travel hundreds of kilometers in various communities, to volunteer in medical camps. I led a team of my colleagues and advocated for health promotion and disease prevention. We focused on educating people about vaccination, maternal & child health. Also, during an outbreak of gastroenteritis in one community (Northern Pakistan), I advocated for the need for clean drinking water. I consider it to be my moral obligation and a prime duty as a physician.

Since resettling Canada in 2018, I have focused on community involvement. I volunteered as a Patient Experience Friendly Visitor; spending time with socially isolated patients at Peter Lougheed Hospital (2019 – 2020). Since 2020, I am a member of University of Calgary IMRP Charity Committee and Resident Wellness Committee.

My lifetime career goal is to be instrumental in the field of medicine through research, dedication, and teaching. I have ensured the combination of academic excellence, research, leadership in student life, and contribution to community by volunteering as outlined in my attached Resume. Moreover, I have been demonstrating collegiality and compassion by performing extra duties in emergencies whenever needed by the program in this era of Covid-19 pandemic.

My aim is to improve health care standards for the present as well as the coming generations, such as to make advancements in the field of transplant, cancer prevention & management, and mental health. This is my ambition and to me, worth investing my life for!
I was born and raised in a middle-class family in Iran. Despite our humble means my parents persevered to ensure they provided the best education they could afford. At an early age my parents learned the values of hard work, dedication to family and determination to achieve one’s goals.

As a young boy of 8, my father had to step up for the family when he lost his father. He earned his own way through postgraduate education to become a teacher. I remember him reminding us when we were growing up that we should never take things for granted and that we must find ways to give back to the community.

I believe this deep sense of altruism was my main motivation to become a doctor and serve my country. But when I followed my husband to Canada, I struggled to reconcile staying in Canada to ensure a better and safer life for my children, which meant leaving my beloved homeland whom I vowed to serve. I felt that a piece of my heart was left behind, but it was a painful choice I had to make. I coped with the guilt and frustration by constantly monitoring the political and social situation back home.

In 2016 by partnering with 2 of my friends, we started a public channel in Telegram called “Koodak-OmidFarda” meaning “child, the hope for the future”. One is a child psychiatrist, based in England and the other an Internist, practicing in Germany; they both share their knowledge and expertise in discussions about parenting and child mental health and wellness.

“Koodak-OmidFarda” also collaborates with a non-profit organization, named “Baran-e-Mehr” that is run by a group of our medical school classmates in Iran. Through this partnership we have built schools in remote villages, with a third one currently under construction.