

## Why I Volunteer with RT by Vijay Venugopal, RT Volunteer and Donor



Three words come to mind when I think of Refugee Transitions: Opportunity, Gratitude, Dedication.

**Opportunity:** One of life's lessons I learned fairly early on is that opportunity is one of the biggest factors that makes us what we are. Working at RT has reinforced that lesson for me many, many times over. I look on in awe at all the interrupted lives that RT touches and convinces that here is another

opportunity at life. One of the greatest pleasures in life I've had since I started volunteering with RT, is bearing witness to the transformation in Tashi. He was a shy, withdrawn, frustrated and downcast teenager just struggling to understand the point of it all. Now I see before me a confident young man, first in his extended family to graduate from high school, and working really hard toward his goal of a career in the medical field so that he can do his bit to support his family that sacrificed so much for his well-being. All it took was convincing him that he had a chance in life.

**Gratitude:** My personal motivation in volunteering with an organization such as RT has been to pass on the numerous favors I've been the beneficiary of my whole life. Impressing upon someone like Tashi the importance of education is my way of saying thank you to all those people, especially my parents, who went out of their way to educate me, always with my best interests at heart, and who made me who I am today. It is especially heartwarming for me to see Tashi inspired by the same sentiment and wanting to help his family and community the same way when he gets to the stage where he can.

**Dedication:** More than 3 years after getting to know intimately how RT works, I maintain the greatest admiration at the nobility of their mission and how simple, transparent and effective an organization they are. This is all a result of the devotion of their staff and volunteers. I find myself always looking for additional ways to support such a dedicated organization engaged in so worthy a cause.