

Teen honors her slain father with foundation that aids youths

By **DAPHNE DURET**

Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

Posted: 10:42 a.m. Wednesday, Nov. 18, 2009

The gunshots that rang out at the A&M Discount Beverage early Sept. 4 shattered 16-year-old Nidhi Patel's entire world. They took away the man that was her biggest fan, her father, Parag Patel.

"It took me awhile to wake up from the shock," said Patel, 16.

But when she did wake up, Patel didn't respond with anger toward the three young people arrested in connection with his murder.

Instead, the Lincoln Park Academy senior has worked to rebuild her life using the principles of benevolence and generosity she said her father taught her. She sees the alleged assailants as youths who were victims of troubled upbringings that left them with few options as adults.

In the two short months since the death of her father, who emigrated from India and owned the store where he was killed, Patel and her family have founded Parag Patel Foundation to promote his wish for a safer community. Nidhi Patel personally chose the Children's Home Society of Florida Youth Transition Center as a beneficiary. The center provides transitional housing for foster children when they turn 18 and gives them life skills and emotional support.

It's not that Patel doesn't still cry for her father. She does.

"This is really hard. I wouldn't wish this on anyone," she said through tears.

She remembers the things he told her — how she could be anything she wanted, how she should be patient and kind, how she has so much potential.

And when she remembers, she blinks past the tears, pushes through tennis practice, Beta Club meetings and college interviews, and still manages to smile and laugh.

"I think my dad is proud of me," she said. "I hope he's looking down on me and smiling."

Find this article at:

[Print this page](#) [Close](#)

<http://www.palmbeachpost.com/news/teen-honors-her-slain-father-with-foundation-that-68958.html>