

## Parth Patel

RMHC Family Room Volunteer

Parth Patel has a very personal motivation for volunteering at the Ronald McDonald Family Room® at University Medical Center in Lubbock.

"I took a trip to India right before I started volunteering in Austin, and I got really sick," Patel explained. His grandfather took him to the hospital with a food-borne illness. "I had no idea what was going on. A doctor gave me an injection and I couldn't communicate that I'm allergic to penicillin."

It was at that point he began to understand how confusing and stressful it can be when you or your child is in the hospital.

He started volunteering at St. David's Medical Center in Austin when he was a sophomore in high school and then in the Ronald McDonald Family Room at University Medical Center when he began his studies at Texas Tech University. This will be his sixth year of volunteering.

Ronald McDonald Family Rooms are designed to give families of children undergoing medical treatment in the hospital a respite in the medical center. Whether home is 2 miles away or two thousand miles away, families can remain only a heartbeat away from their sick child.

Volunteering has developed his empathetic skills, Patel said. "I've done this for so long I have an idea of whether they need to talk or have some peace and quiet to process", Patel said.

Patel, 19, is studying microbiology and hopes to enter the TTUHSC School of Medicine next year. "I've had many opportunities to do research and I've seen amazing doctors that walk families through treatment step by step" Patel said, "but the Ronald McDonald Family Room has shown me the other side of the white coat."

