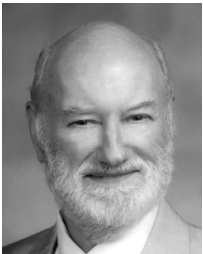


BagOfLife

The Kapurs and Rotary vs. a Malnourished USA

By John Loofbourou, MD



GOPAL KAPUR HAS BEEN WIDELY regarded for his Center for Project Management (www.center4pm.com). But in recent years, he and his wife, Darlene, who live in Roseville, have devoted much of their energy to problems of malnutrition, and to Light1Candle, a program that supported a girls' orphanage for a decade and now focuses on tuition for poor, bright children in Patiala, Punjab, India.

Gopal's hobby is cooking, dating back to a Punjabi childhood where his mother introduced him to an extensive variety of healthy vegetarian dishes. His food columns have appeared in three California newspapers. He and Darlene created www.familygreensurvival.com which has been featured in numerous newspaper and TV programs. They are working now with Roseville Rotary to begin a BagOfLife program, as reported recently in *The Sacramento Bee*¹ and on *Fox 40 News*.²

Gopal graduated from Thapar University, Patiala, India with a diploma in civil engineering. He and Darlene, who is originally from Arkansas, met at CSU Fresno where he was pursuing engineering studies. But his fortune and name were ultimately made in management consulting. He has lectured at Harvard University, The Commonwealth Club, The National Press Club, UC Berkeley, UC Riverside, UC Davis, and The Brookings Institution.

He received the Distinguished Achievement Award for his contributions to education by the president of India. He is a member of the Harvard Policy Group, and served as a trustee for the Charles Babbage Foundation, and much more. Gopal is a man of action, and when I email him, he responds immediately.

We agree to meet in the Roseville Library on Pleasant Grove Blvd. When I arrive he is the only person in the elegant rotunda, seated at a small table, wearing a navy blue cap bearing the Rotary emblem. After polite introductions and the exchange of some personal history, I ask about the current project. He instantly morphs into the bigger-than-life man of worldwide interests, dynamic ideas, and the skills of an experienced executive.

We waste little time on the well-known statistics of worldwide and U.S. problems of nutrition. There is clear evidence for at least two major kinds of malnutrition:

— The malnourished people of the Third World who are thin, and calorie- and protein-starved.

— The malnourished people of the U.S. who are generally obese.

Kapur enjoys a laugh even when dead serious, and speaks of one of those 4x4 ft. European hotel elevators where an adulterated sign reads: **Occupancy 5, or 3 Americans!**

He holds that a spoonful of humor helps with children, as well as a forkful of persistence. On a family car ride, when a "Fastfat" restaurant is passed, all the car windows are rolled up and breath is held to avoid breathing the surrounding toxic gasses.

In the malnutrition of famine, almost any food that can be made available is helpful. Yet the malnutrition of obesity is not so easy to reverse. While common among the poor, it is found along the entire socio-economic spectrum, including the shut-in or elderly. Kapur makes a number of points:

1. The most convenient, most advertised, most familiar foods are not nourishing;

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they promote obesity, and related chronic diseases like hypertension, diabetes, and atherosclerosis.

2. For both the young and for busy and productive people, fast and convenient food has an obvious attraction.
3. Contrary to popular belief, high-quality, tasteful, nourishing food can be eminently affordable to anyone.
4. Taste is largely learned, so diet is largely habit; our national taste favors food high in sugar, salt, and fat. The food industry simply responds to our demands. To view a Gopal video effort to promote a healthier kind of demand, go to <http://vimeo.com/35242209>.
5. To address malnourishment obesity, we have to change our thinking, taste, and habit.

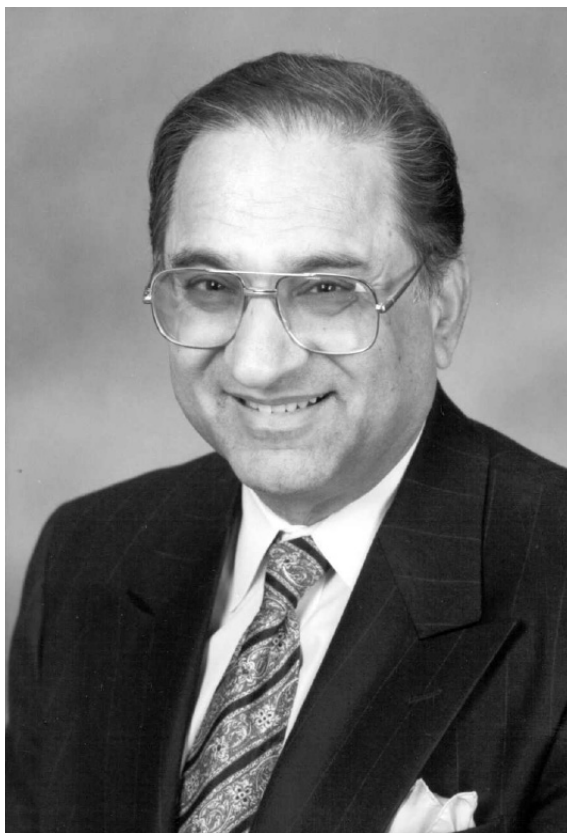
He and Darlene have created a series of tasty, healthy and reasonable meals to meet the needs of various people in various circumstances, and they hope to address the following problems:

1. The elderly or shut-in often can't travel easily to a store where healthy food is readily available.
2. Healthy foods are sometimes expensive, or thought to be so.
3. There are not often places where affordable small amounts of food can be purchased. (Local exceptions are the WinCo Foods with stores in Folsom, Elk Grove, and Roseville, where food and condiments can be bought by the ounce if desired.)
4. Some handicapped people have difficulty preparing meals.

These considerations led the Kapurs to develop BagOfLife: packets of carefully-crafted, pre-mixed meals that can be simply cooked and eaten. Sutter Hospital provided nutrition advice and Roseville Rotary supports the effort.

The recipes offer:

1. No refined carbohydrates
2. Primarily plant-based protein from whole grains, legumes, and raw nuts
3. Plentiful fiber from whole grains, legumes, dry vegetables, and raw nuts
4. Antioxidants from herbs and spices
5. Less than 8 grams of added sugar per day



Nutrition
Consultant
Gopal Kapur

6. Less than 1500 mg of sodium per day
 7. No added oil
- Each bag holds 16 ready-to-cook servings, or four each of the following:

Grand Hot Cereal

- Dried milk and cinnamon
- Flax seed, Oat bran, Quinoa, Rolled oats
- Turbinado sugar
- Sunflower seeds, Wheat bran
- Whey protein
- Textured Vegetable Protein

Soup Of Life

- Dried onion, mushroom, bell pepper, tomato, and garlic
- Italian seasonings, Salt, Paprika and cayenne
- Fennel seeds
- Great northern beans

Lean Mean Bean Cuisine

- Dried carrots, milk, mushrooms, bell pepper, tomato, and garlic

- Lentils, Flax and fennel seed
- Soy protein, Textured Vegetable protein, Whey protein
- Turmeric, salt, pizza seasoning, paprika

Nutty Quinoa

- Almond meal
- Dried onion, bell pepper
- Flax seed, Quinoa
- Salt, turmeric, pizza seasoning, paprika, and cinnamon

Each of the meals above costs about 75 cents.

Will people eat these meals? Will children eat them? Apparently. They were market-tested in children and adults, and were well received. Gopal doesn't hold hope for legislation about food; you simply cannot legislate behavior or nutrition successfully. But he believes we would all eat better if that became a priority for parents, for the average citizen, for schools, for business which profits by offering what people want.

I was as impressed with the presentation, the ideas, and the man, and used BagOfLife meals frequently during January. They are nutritious and easily prepared. Some ingredients and flavors were new to me, but nothing was too spicy. Favorite vegetables or fruits can be added readily. A crock pot is handy for the soups and hot dishes. The meals microwave nicely.

The BagOfLife program is still in its very early stages, but Kapur Project Management principles apply: the plan is to donate 100,000 bags (1,600,000 meals) in 2012 to low-income families through social service organizations. Roseville Rotary is the first local sponsor. For information contact gkapur@familygreensurvival.com.

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- 1 www.sacbee.com/2011/12/11/4112774/healthy-meals-are-in-the-bag.html#storylink=misearch
- 2 <http://www.fox40.com/videogallery/66919024/News/Bag-of-Life-for-Needy-Families-Gopal-Kapur-FamilyGreenSurvival>.

Your care
makes all
the difference.



Roberta Reid, BloodSource employee, head-trauma survivor and grateful platelet recipient.



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For every patient, like Roberta, who gratefully receives the gift of blood — and another day to be with family and friends — there are countless medical professionals whose care and support make all the difference. Thank you for the care you give to every man, woman and child whose life depends on the precious gift of blood. Yes, you do save lives.