



## Neighbor Stories: Dr. Kevin Valadares

Picture this— A family immigrates from India to a rural dairy farm area of Ottawa, Canada. The first thing the father of the family notices about the community is that nearly everyone plays hockey. So, to connect with local families, the father builds a hockey rink in the backyard.

This was Kevin Valadares' dad. His father, a teacher, asked, "What can our family do to help our community in Canada come together and grow?" The hockey rink brought children and their families, including the farmers and immigrants, from Vietnam, China, and India, to his backyard and into his home. Next, the family entered the life of a local church. Kevin said these two steps were their "entryway" into the community. Today, Kevin, son of this Indian family by way of Canada, has followed in his father's footsteps as a connector and an educator. Kevin asked and continues to ask the same question in Evansville, Indiana, since he arrived here in 2001: "How can we help our community come together and grow?"



As professor and chairperson of the Department of Health Care Administration at USI, Kevin works with and teaches students from Boonville to Ukraine. He brings his students together over their coursework and career directions. He also gathers them and gives growth opportunities through leading health administration students on learning expeditions to places such as Germany and Ghana. Then he hosts students and professors from these countries at USI, along with continuing interactions online. His faith in the potential of the younger generation of our community shines through his teaching. Along with building our local, national, and global community through his work as an educator, Kevin Valadares also connects and grows within the Evansville area through his non-profit work. He sits on the boards of Ascension St. Vincent, the Red Cross, and the Immigrant Welcome and Resource Center, and he is an active member of his church's local outreach. Through these organizations he helps to educate, galvanize, and challenge our broader community to work together and to grow together in our caring for one another. He says, "My heartbeat is to connect people from the many diverse communities in our area and beyond so they can build flourishing relationships."

Kevin grew up the son of a teacher from India who came to Canada and started his work by building a small hockey rink. Look at Kevin and see how big the "hockey rink" is now.