

Program: The SnapLink - staying in touch with family in times of dementia

Speaker: Rahil Thanawala, Hamilton County student and app creator

Introduced by: Alison Brown

Attendance: 101

Guests: Rupal Thanawala, David Roy

Scribe: Bill Dick

Editor: Bonnie Carter

(Ed. note: see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ub6K9M1A1Q0> and <http://thesnaplink.com/>)

Rahil was born in Indianapolis and now lives in Fishers. He will be a Junior at Hamilton South Eastern this fall. He is an Eagle Scout and will play second doubles in tennis next fall. His mother, Rupal, who assisted him at the talk, is a bio-medical engineer. His father is an employee of Eli Lilly. Rahil's grandmother, who lived in India with his four aunts, was brought to Indiana because of declining health due to Alzheimer's. She is now 87 years old. He got the idea four years ago to design an electronic device to assist his grandmother with her therapy. Alzheimer's is a common disease; it is the sixth leading cause of death in the USA. More people die with Alzheimer's than breast and prostate cancer combined.

Rahil began with showing photos to his grandmother. They brought back the memory of a person and she could tell a story about them. The sections of The SnapLink are: Memory Games, Story Teller, Photo Album, Daily Schedule and Personal Profile.

Current tests for Alzheimer's patients can be intimidating and can also be inaccurate. The SnapLink is a real-time digital biomarker, is non-invasive, has ease of access – it can be done in the home and the technology is readily available. Rahil informed us that his grandmother, despite not having any technology skills, was able to learn to use The SnapLink quite easily.

Rahil founded the SnapLink in 2014. In that year, he and a few sponsors won a Sundance Audience Award for the screening of the film "Alive Inside." It demonstrated non-prescription assistance for Alzheimer's patients and focused on the powerful use of music. In 2015 he focused on fund raising for his not-for-profit company, raising \$2,000 for research and development. In 2016 the mobile app was launched with the picture therapy. In 2017-18 there will hopefully be a clinical trial and IRB approval.

Rahil Thanawala was selected as one of the recipients for the 2016 National Power of Children Award. It was begun in 2004 by the Children's Museum of Indianapolis and includes a \$2,000 grant from the Kroger Foundation as well as a partial scholarship from IUPUI, University of Indianapolis or Butler University.

The SnapLink mobile app was launched in October 2016 at the Ruth Lilly Learning Center at IUPUI. The keynote speaker was Dr. Aarti Shah, who is Eli Lilly's new CIO. Future goals are to attract investment, launch an Android version, enhance functionality, start clinical trials, use SnapLink as a biomarker for disease progression, use photo therapy-based intervention and partner with institutions pursuing Alzheimer's disease.

With an aging population, the U.S. will see more cases of Alzheimer's disease. Caregivers are needed and health care is expensive. The SnapLink can help with the therapy: the cost is low, it can be easily used by patients and progress in care may be measured.



Rahil Thanawala