

Kids Kab celebrates 15 years in Downers Grove

Mick Swasko/Triblocal.com Staff Reporter 09/04/09

Since 1994, Dilip and Shilpee Desai have been making the wheels on the Kab go round. The Downers Grove based transportation company Kids Kab specializes in getting kids where they need to go when a big yellow bus can't take them there.

"I was sure there were other people out there like us," said Shilpee Desai, who said her own children spent too much time in front of the television because she and her husband, who both worked full time, were unable to take them to activities. So, cautiously, the couple tested the waters. They sent out surveys and called around to neighboring schools. Sure enough, there was a demand for a service that didn't yet exist: a transportation service just for school aged children. "The result was overwhelmingly saying that we need a service like this in the area," Shilpee Desai said.

So Shilpee and her husband Dilip, who was working in the pharmaceutical industry at the time, established Kids Kab. Their first customer, Avery Coonley School in Downers Grove, chose them after having problems using a taxi company for transportation. "We are different than local taxi companies," Dilip Desai said. "We drug test, do background and driving records checks for our drivers. Without them, we cannot survive."

Dilip Desai said safety and reliability are the most important aspects of his business. Because of this, he said something most business owners would never say. "We could expand, but I don't want to," he said, citing having to say no to some potential clients who live outside the area Kids Kab travels to. "We have to say no but we do not want to be late for a client we are committed to."

And safety is something the Desai's take very seriously. Each child carries an identification card at all times, and each driver knows exactly who they are picking up and dropping off each day. When receiving a child, a bus driver is instructed not to deliver them to anyone but a preauthorized guardian.

The Kids Kab isn't just for taking kids to and from school, either. The Desais take clients' kids to a variety of before, after and even during school activities. For example, Hinsdale District 181 uses the service to transport students from Hinsdale Middle School to Hinsdale Central High School for advanced math and language programs.

Currently, Shilpee and Dilip Desai are frantically compiling schedules and routes as the school year starts, a process both describe as chaotic. But their services don't come without praise. "We love Kids Kab," said Anna Perry, head of Seaton Montessori School in Clarendon Hills. The school has been using the Kids Kab for 14 years, and even Perry admits to using the service for her own children. "We give a nice reference whenever someone is having trouble getting transport."

For more information on Kids Kab, call 630-493-9543. The service covers the Downers Grove, Burr Ridge, Hinsdale, Naperville, Clarendon Hills, Willowbrook, Lisle, Oak Brook, Westmont, Darien, Woodridge, Lisle, Western Springs and surrounding area.



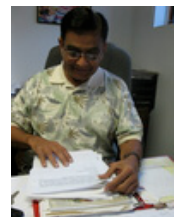
Shilpee, left, and Dilip Desai, right, hold safety awards received by Kids Kab.



In the background, Randy Martynowicz and Dilip Desai stand with Julia, left, Jonathan, middle and Nathan, right.



Kids Kab driver Randy Martynowicz helps Jonathan, Nathan and Jula Iso-niemi out of the cab to get to school at Seaton Montessori in Clarendon Hills.



Dilip Desai flips through a stack of letters he has received from parents and passengers over the last 15 years.