

# Tinley Park PROGRESS

*Bringing the Community Together One Week at a Time*

Friday, January 15, 2021

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Top Left: Krunal's last day in India, Jan. 2008. Top Right: Farmers Market, June 2019, Bottom Left: Avocado Theory, Jan. 2021

## Inspiring Journey from India to Tinley Park

American writer Ralph Waldo Emerson said "The only person you are destined to become is the person you decide to be." How does a person from India end up deciding to open a one of kind restaurant in downtown Tinley Park? Krunal Patel's journey is one of faith, determination and perseverance. Along his journey, he learned to believe that anyone, regardless of where they were born or what class they were born into, can achieve success. Krunal's success didn't happen overnight, and it wasn't without sacrifice, hard work and calculated risks.

Krunal grew up in a middle-class family in India. He was fortunate enough to never have to work and became the first in his family to go to college. At the age of 21, he decided to come to America to earn a chemistry degree from Southern Illinois University. The year was 2009 and he came here with little understanding of

the culture and hardly speaking English. He soon realized that chemistry wasn't for him and changed his major to English. Because of his interest in entrepreneurship, Krunal also attended John A Logan Community College in Carbondale to study business administration and accounting.

Krunal has encountered many challenges on his journey. He recalls enduring laughter from people for his broken English and lack of knowledge about the American culture. For him, every aspect of life was new and different. He remembers parking his bike among the cars at Wal-Mart because he simply didn't know better. His first job to help pay for school was a dishwasher. While attending school, he worked 60+ hours per week while taking 15 credit hours. The owner of the restaurant helped pay for school, in advance, in return for working at his restaurant.



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The dream of starting his own business kicked into high gear when his father's factory in India went bankrupt. It was very humiliating for his family, with people in the close-knit community even laughing at them behind their backs. His father's uncle, a partner in the business, was spreading untrue accusations that Krunal's dad spent all the money sending him to America. Krunal witnessed his father work all his life, at times over 18 hours a day to provide and offer a good living for his family. All the turmoil bothered Krunal and shook him to his soul. Why? It was just about money. He went home to visit his family during this time. While there, he went for a walk and stopped on a corner and found himself talking to the universe. He was searching for answers on how he could he fix his family's money problem? Everyone in his family worked all their lives and he wanted to make it better for them. He knew he could make it better but he simply didn't know how. Two questions came to his mind that would carry him through the next leg of his journey.

First, "How does a person become successful?" and second, "How could one person be born poor, and then die poor, while another person be born poor and die at the top the world?"

He had always wanted to be an entrepreneur but now he made the decision to make it his life's work. Krunal quoted Ralph Waldo Emerson; "Once you make a decision, the universe conspires to make it happen."

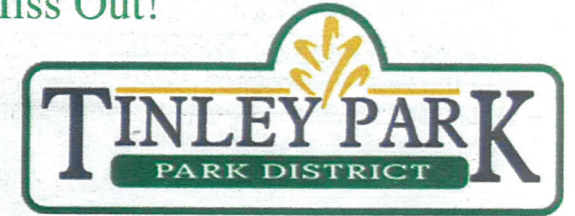
He started reading Indian Guru, Ram Sharma Acharya's book "Who I am?" to get a deeper sense of how the universe and subconscious works. That book was followed by "You can Win" by Shiv Khera. Krunal had an insatiable appetite for knowledge on how to succeed and how businesses work. He would listen to audio books while cooking meat at his job at a Mexican restaurant. He would wake up early to meditate to train his mind. He started to keep a journal about what he thought were the negatives and positives of his life. For the next five years, he carried on this routine; wake up and pray, go to work, after work he would study and then read books. Often, he'd read books until 3am before bed, then begin the routine once again.

After he graduated from college with three degrees, Krunal applied for an internship at Walmart. He was selected for the internship and moved to Joliet. He was later promoted to be the assistant manager and then a co-manager at the Walmart. After more than 5 years with Wal-Mart, Krunal was swept up in a round of corporate downsizing. Suddenly out of work, but newly inspired, Krunal doubled his work ethic and commitment to becoming an entrepreneur.

He accepted a job at Mariano's in Oak Lawn. This wasn't an easy time for Krunal. Frustration and doubt set in. He asked God, "what am I doing here?" When he needs clear his mind, Krunal goes to the library to read, pray and write his thoughts. On one particular visit to the library, he was praying to God to give him one chance. Just one chance to let him prove himself. When he opened his eyes and looked down the aisle. All of

## Tinley Park Park District Has Much To Offer Families For Fun. Don't Miss Out!

What do you get when you combine silly string and snowballs? Fun, of course. Join the Tinley Park-Park District *Silly String & Snowballs* games on January 29 from 4:30 – 6:00 pm. The event includes spoon ball races, speed snow angels, and of course silly string and snowballs. Registration ends on January 15 so don't delay! Fee includes 15 cans of silly string and one snowball baker for each participant. The event is outdoors, so please dress for the weather and bring protective eyewear. The no-snow reschedule date is February 5. Social distancing will be maintained.



the books were facing the same way, except for one. As he focused on that one, he saw a face looking back at him; it was Steve Jobs and the book was his self-titled autobiography.

He ended up getting the audio book and listened to it while driving Uber/Lyft after his job at Mariano's. That book changed his perception towards life. He learned that Steve Jobs was born to a middle-class family and had limited business knowledge. Even so, he started a business in his garage and then built it into a trillion-dollar company. Krunal was inspired. He reasoned that if Steve Jobs could rise to such success from modest beginnings to create Apple, he could also. He just needed to find his Apple and get started.

It's at Mariano's where the idea of using avocados started. Krunal was working late on a Superbowl Sunday in 2018 and was astounded to see the line for



guacamole. Krunal thought if Steve Jobs can do it with computers, he could do it with guacamole. Determination set in and he dreamed up, Grandma's Guacamole. He was certain he could make Grandma's Guacamole one of the best brands. He was going make fresh guacamole and create innovative ways to deliver it. He consulted with a culinary expert to create the menu and realized he didn't have

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### Restaurant Cheat Sheet

\*Quick Reference Phone Numbers for Local Chamber Member Restaurants with Carry-Out, Delivery or Curbside Pick-Up Options\*

<p>Arrenello's Pizza 708.532.2424            Blueberry Hill Café Tinley Park 708.928.8800            Chef Klaus Bierstube 815.469.0940            Cuzin's 708.633.1144            Culver's 708.444.0004            Dancing Marlin 815.464.6646            Durbin's Tinley Park 708.429.1000            Ed &amp; Joe's Restaurant 708.532.3051            Fat Ricky's 708.802.6900            Gatto's Restaurant &amp; Bar TP 708.444.7400            Hailstorm Brewing Co. 708.232.8072            Happy Bites Burger 708.620.8223            Hot N Juicy Crab 815.734.3378            Juicy Luzy Sangria 708.576.8521            Leeson's Cakes Leesoncakes@yahoo.com            Little Joe's Pizza &amp; Restaurant 708.532.2240            Los 3 Burritos 708.429.4195</p>	<p>Lou Malnati's TP 708.403.9700            Nothing Bundt Cakes OP 708.949.8885            Nothing Bundt Cakes M 815.642.5754            Pekoe &amp; Bean (708) 263-0098            Polonia Catering &amp; Market 815.464.8844            Salina's Catering &amp; Pizza 708.614.9100            Siam Marina 708.407.8825            Side Street American Tavern 708.928.8080            SIP Wine Bar 708.620.8300            Subway (Oak Park Ave) 708.532.8782            The Alley Grill &amp; Tap House 708.478.3610            The Great American Bagel 708.357.8905            The Station Pub &amp; Eatery 708.633.8240            The Primal Cut Steakhouse 708.407.8150            The Whistle Sports Bar &amp; Grill 708.904.4990            Tropical Smoothie 708.468.8456            Wingstop 708.286.6696            Winsten's/Ashford House 708.633.7500</p>
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Join our Facebook Group for Local Meal Options in the Tinley Park and Orland Park Area!  
 \*Orland Park & Tinley Park Area Take-Out and Delivery Options amid COVID-19\*



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enough money to go as big as he wanted. Krunal's research on guacamole was that most people tried only basic guacamole, but there are so many ingredients that can be added to guacamole. He found there was a huge demand for it.

Krunal believes that if

you put in your best, God will give you His best. He says he experienced it. He put \$15,000 in savings to buy a food trailer for his guacamole. And every day, he put his best to put out the best product. In 2019, he started selling his guacamole at farmers markets in Plainfield, Downers Grove, Naperville and Tinley Park. Tinley Park was the best one out of them all. Krunal set up all ingredients in cold tables connect with generators in farmers market and where customers could customize fresh guacamole to complement their own unique taste. The idea was a hit. This is what lead to the idea of creating an entire restaurant based on avocados where customers can have healthier and newer ways to enjoy them.

About a year prior, Krunal applied to be an Amazon Delivery Services Partner. One year later and out of the blue, while he

was working the Grandma's Guacamole business, Krunal said a miracle happened. Amazon contacted him for a final interview in Las Vegas. He was the youngest and least experienced candidate. He had no prior knowledge of logistics. The Amazon interviewers were blown away by his determination and loved how he introduced guacamole in a very unique way. He was chosen to be partner out 62 other candidates. His delivery business started out with four vans and with his best friend, wife and himself being the drivers. Krunal now runs one of the biggest and best fleets with 80 vans, 120 drivers delivering close to 300,000 packages for Amazon a month. Krunal genuinely cares about his employees. He gives them every opportunity to succeed. Krunal genuinely cares about his customers too. He wants to make sure his employees have the best experience because that translates into the best experience for his customers.

Krunal found great success through his delivery business, but that alone didn't bring internal happiness. He's very thankful for the business but now is the time to be an entrepreneur and not just a businessman. The success of the Amazon DSP business allowed him to move forward with the restaurant he wants to open called Avocado Theory.

During this time when starting and growing the delivery business, he was working to develop and perfect the recipes. He's using his newfound information on logistics to create a delivery system. Like Steve Job said, "it's all in the details." When Krunal goes to restaurants, he just doesn't go for the food, he goes to study how they run the business and what the employees say. He thinks about what works for the best customer experience and he's using that knowledge to create a high level of service for his restaurant. You get one chance to do it right and Krunal is digging into to every aspect of the restaurant business.

Because of the success at the Tinley Park farmers market, Krunal choose Tinley Park over Naperville and the other towns. He contacted a commercial realtor to help him find a great location. He ended up buying the building at 17302 Oak Park Ave. The busy downtown street, great neighborhood, next to the train station were reasons he liked the location.

This story isn't over. We're still in the middle of it. Krunal made sure it was known that he isn't alone in this journey. He met my wife at the Best Western in Carbondale. It was her first day at work and, as always, after closing restaurant he goes to study at the hotel's breakfast lobby area around 10:00 PM. She seemed very humble, kind and down the earth person. Their first date was at Steak & Shake and there Krunal told her his vision for the future and how he wanted to make a dent in the universe. She was the only and really the first girl to be impressed with my ambition and dreams. She worked as hard as him. She worked 2 jobs giving up her goals for me and helping me every step of the way! Krunal understands that he would not be here without her love and support. They have 2 daughters and 1 more on the way! Their oldest daughter Monica is 6 year old and Emma 4 years old.

The restaurant is set to open at the end of March. Part two of this series will focus on the process of opening a new restaurant in Tinley Park. It was a whole new learning experience for Krunal.

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## The Creative Life

years back, while walking the scenic winding path around Centennial Park lake, when she experienced the sunlight coming down to the water and spreading out to the land, enveloping her. "I couldn't even feel my breath anymore. Everything was connected." It was that night that she noticed the greater perceptiveness that led her into medium work.

She holds her work in a positive light, "I don't judge myself. If I made a mistake, it's only paint, I could paint over it. But sometimes mistakes are meant to be. Sometimes mistakes are perfect." She talks about how she surrenders to her creative process, "You have to trust what you're getting, not second guess it. That's the hardest part, to trust the process."

"People take life too seriously. I mean, you have to be serious, but always take time to do what you enjoy. Go back to what you loved as a child."

Caroline has never been back to England since leaving in her early twenties, "It always astounds people when they hear that." Her mother is alive and well there, but a fear of flying, shared by both of them, has prevented the reunion. Her mother tells her she wouldn't even recognize Cambridge with the changes over the last thirty-plus years. With all the angel wings though, Caroline has not lost out on the experience of flight.

And she has a lot to do here. She wishes, of course, that she had more time for her art. There are always competing demands. Also this year she hopes to go more deeply into journal writing. And some day move somewhere warm, "Maybe Mexico. I don't care," she laughs. "I just want hot."

