

## Brampton Father inspires Brampton Youth to innovate



As is commonly said, children are the future. Vinay Tailor, father of two boys and founder of Inspirely, is working to ensure that this future is full of innovative problem solvers. Through his organization, he provides a grassroots STEAM program for kids in grades 1 to 6. STEAM stands for science, technology, engineering, arts/aerospace, and math. The combination of these topic areas taught by elite educators provides students with fun, innovative, and educational virtual after-school programs. For example, **INSPIRELY** as one of the registered organizations with the Canadian Space Agency (CSA), conducts Junior Astronaut workshops that are out of this world. The addition of aerospace, world cultures, and arts in the syllabus makes the program a well-rounded learning experience that goes even beyond STEAM.

### The Inspiration behind the Idea

Growing up in Gujarat, India, Vinay focused on getting a good education and job to help stabilize his family. He has worked in the tech space at the cusp of cutting-edge technologies for companies such as Blackberry, Bosch, Essar Steel (now renamed to ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India) and currently with Schaeffler Canada Inc.

With more than 23 years in the industry, Vinay's passion is problem-solving using innovative tech solutions. When explaining his motivation for starting Inspirely, Vinay says, *"I wanted to build something that uses what I've learned in the corporate world to positively impact my community; especially considering [the] current pandemic time."* Raising his two boys, now ages 7 and 9 years, drove him to build a program that helps the new generation develop a purpose and growth mindset. As Vinay explains, *"INSPIRELY programs are designed by keeping children ages 6 to 12 years in focus and helping them build solid educational foundation. This includes hands-on engineering & invention based projects, digital skills building and Saturday family events. Our vision is inspiring children to develop grit and growth mindset through practical well-structured lesson plans; all by staying safe at home"*

### From Idea to Reality

The process of building Inspirely in January of 2018 was not easy. *"It was tough getting started because I work full time. I used late evenings and weekends to do the research and put everything together,"* Vinay explains. In need of business advice, he got in contact with the Brampton Entrepreneur Centre (BEC). *"I met Daniel and Lisa. They gave me practical tips to actually get things done, no sugar coating... they were super helpful, friendly & supportive,"* says Vinay.

In addition to finding a team of qualified experts and putting together a stellar curriculum, Vinay's biggest challenge was finding a space for his classes that did not break the bank. He approached the City of Brampton and used the Chris Gibson recreation centre as a meeting spot. Inspirely's Saturday STEAM classes ran from 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm, and as Vinay recounts, *"the kids had so much fun that they didn't want to leave!"* They learned computer basics, completed hands-on engineering projects, learned about 3D animation, app design, machine learning, artificial intelligence and so much more.



### Innovating through the Pandemic

COVID-19 and the inability for in-person gathering was a massive blow to Inspirely's operations. All their classes shutdown, but this did not mean a stop to innovative learning. Vinay has now managed to move everything online. As he explains, *"on our website and in classes, we say that we're all about inspiring the children to be problem solvers ... through this pandemic, I wanted to be an real example of a problem solver."*

The online classes use a lot of engaging visuals that make connections to real-life examples.

*"One good thing about the situation is that because the classes are now online, I can expand my reach outside the region,"* Vinay explains. Using digital tools as a new meeting space helped Vinay turn around a situation that could have devastated Inspirely and the kids who enjoyed learning something new each week. His problem solving has cultivated a dynamic learning space for existing members of the Inspirely community and has also opened up opportunities for more people to join the fun.

Vinay also took the time to participate in the Starter Company Plus program funded by the Province of Ontario and delivered by BEC. As he explains, *"the programs were in the evenings, [which] perfectly allowed me to attend without interfering with my full time job. It also provided me with practical business advice and taught me how to prepare an effective business plan."* Since completing Starter Company, he has gained traction with community organizations interested in his work. Inspirely is also now part of the Founder Institute, a pre-seed accelerator that helps businesses with funding and provides a supportive network of start-up experts.

The image features the Inspirely logo at the top left, which includes a circular icon with three stylized children and the text "INSPIRELY Preparing Youth 4 Tomorrow's Economy". Below the logo, the text "HANDS-ON & DIGITAL SKILLS SUPPLEMENT YOUR CHILD SCHOOL EDUCATION" is displayed. To the right of this text are two photographs: the top one shows two young girls painting on easels, and the bottom one shows a man interacting with a group of children wearing VR headsets and using tablets.

### **Hopes for the Future**

Vinay's advice for anyone looking to start their own business is to "***think about the problem you are solving, but also the people you're targeting because often times there's a gap between what we think we know and the reality of your client's problem.***" This is not a quote he pulled out of a business textbook; Vinay learned this lesson through his rich experience as an enterprise IT professional & through his involvement in other community initiatives. Inspirely was not his first try at building an impactful social solution. He used to have a mobile app that helped people visualize their career plan 5 - 10 years into the future. Unfortunately, he was not able to market the app in front of the right audience. Despite the app's inability to monetize, Vinay learned from the experience and applied it to his current endeavor. As Inspirely continues to grow, he hopes to make it the go-to platform for building a solid education foundation for kids ages 6-12 years. Vinay's overall goal is to "***help close the gap between education & industry. Making educational learning more of fun, fascinating and entertaining for children as well as for their family***"

To find out more about Inspirely you can head to their [website](#), or visit them on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), or [Twitter](#).