

REAL STORIES 2011



Chaltu and Kaalid It takes a village

It takes a village to raise a child—that expression rings true across the globe. But it’s more than apparent to Chaltu (18) and Kaalid (17), the daughter and son of Omar and his wife Ismahan. The children were born and raised in America and have been a part of **CommonBond** youth programs their whole lives. The CommonBond Advantage Center is conveniently located right in the CommonBond housing development where Omar and his family live. Offering supportive services to both adults and children, it was the perfect place to assure Kaalid and Chaltu were successful.

“My mom dragged me into the room at age six,” Chaltu says smiling. “I was really scared. I had never been left alone and here she was leaving me all alone with my new mentor, Helen. I did not even look at Helen at first.” But the two formed a strong bond and remained a “Study Buddy pair” for eight years. Chaltu graduated from high school and is now starting her second year of college, working on a health care degree. But her home and family are still the most important things in her life. “Home is the place where I can create happiness,” she says.

Her brother Kaalid has one year left of high school. “I am going into politics, business, or economics in college,” he says. “But I also like medicine, so I want to find something that combines all my interests.” Kaalid and his youngest brother Ahmed still live at home. Kaalid takes a great deal of responsibility for his brother as their parents both work overtime to make ends meet. Kaalid’s final year of the Study Buddies program starts this fall and then he is off to college. He too has taken advantage of dozens of Advantage Center programs over the years. Most recently, he completed a photography project called *Reflections: Health and My Community* funded by a Minneapolis Healthy Housing grant. Kaalid wants to attend Hamline University or the University of Minnesota.

Their proud father summarizes the value of raising his family in a stable home, “Home is where you lay down and rest. It is a place filled with laughter where no one will turn off the lights on you. Home sweet home.”

CommonBond Communities

Twin Cities LISC’s total investment to date in CommonBond: **\$1,877,993**

Photo of Chaltu, courtesy of CommonBond Communities. Story written by Deb Sakry Lande.