

Ishani Shah & James Lucey

WILTON HIGH SCHOOL

Many people dream of changing the world. But Ishani Shah, a senior at Wilton High School, is different. Isha, as she's commonly called, is actually doing it—she's well on her way to impacting the global community. And she started out close to home.

Ten years ago, when Isha was visiting an ailing relative in the

hospital over the holidays, she noticed the absence of cheer in the patients. So, she and her younger sister decided to change this by recruiting classmates to write holiday cards for the patients. The next holiday season, Isha hand-delivered over sixty cards to the patients of Norwalk Hospital.

"After delivering that first card, I realized how much I love seeing the direct positive impact of my actions," Isha says. "I loved seeing a smile on someone else's face, and the feeling of knowing that I put it there."

The sisters turned their project into a successful nonprofit organization called "Hearts and Crafts." They now visit ten hospitals in the tri-state area and work with their local public elementary and middle schools to write the letters. During the 2016 holiday season, they delivered over 1,800 cards.

Thinking even bigger, Isha hopes to use her love of science to impact the world. Fascinated with nature since she was a child, Isha wished to augment her high school science education and applied to Stanford University's highly selective Online High School (OHS) when she was a freshman. She was accepted and has had the opportunity to take challenging courses in real time with a global learning community. "I attend class with students who live on the other side of the globe," she explains. "I have the incredible opportunity to learn from professors educated at some of the best institutions in the world. What's all, I have the best, most unique

way to create an education for myself in which I can pursue my passion for science."

If all goes to plan, Isha will be using her scientific acuity to create real change. "I want to craft a career in which I can combine sciences like chemistry and biology with core skills like entrepreneurship and leadership," she says of her future. "I aspire to one day become an individual in our society similar to Elon Musk, leading the world to a cleaner, more efficient future." >

"She is always looking for connections and ways to apply past knowledge in new settings. Her active mind, curious nature and engaging personality help shift my class environment from covering to uncovering the intricate chemistry curriculum. Frequently her questioning or explanations organically spark interest from classmates who might have otherwise remained passive in the course."

James Lucey
Chemistry teacher

