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## **Centerville High School Senior Works to Combat COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy in Montgomery County**

*Grassroots efforts successful in reaching underprivileged populations, fighting misinformation*

COLUMBUS – Centerville High School senior Yash Agarwal has extensively and successfully worked to combat COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and address misinformation in Montgomery County through traditional communications and grassroots efforts in vulnerable communities.

To support his mission, Agarwal designed and distributed brochures on the COVID-19 vaccine to medical practices and businesses in many communities. He also presented and spoke about vaccines at churches, specifically ones in small Black communities.

This education and encouraging outreach were very impactful on the individuals in these vulnerable communities. After one of his presentations on vaccine hesitancy at a predominantly Black church in Trotwood, Agarwal was faced with answering many questions from the congregation pertaining to misinformation on the COVID-19 vaccine. This inspirational young Ohioan demonstrated a remarkable commitment to science and his community by successfully sharing the facts, which encouraged several members of the church congregation to later choose to be vaccinated.

When speaking with others, Agarwal often shares that the COVID-19 vaccine, the first mRNA vaccine, was developed in record time to the American ingenuity and prowess – similar to the unwavering dedication that enabled Ohioan Neil Armstrong to take the first step on the moon.

“My parents immigrated from India at the turn of the century, leaving behind a large family to start a new life here in America. With the onset of the pandemic, I developed a more global perspective on the COVID-19 crisis as I saw the resistance to universal masking and vaccination in both countries,” said Agarwal.

“The recent second wave which devastated India was caused by the lack of universal precautions taken and inadequate vaccination. COVID-19 vaccination is a privilege for many all across the world. I find the work I do extremely important because as Americans we still have that privilege. I believe getting the vaccine is not a partisan act, it’s a patriotic act,” said Agarwal.

Innovative Ideas is a feature from the Ohio Department of Health highlighting ways providers and organizations are encouraging COVID-19 vaccinations. You can find more featured examples on the Ohio Department of Health’s Innovative Ideas page at <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/healthcare-providers-and-local-health-districts/innovative-ideas>.

If you are interested in hosting a vaccination clinic, the Ohio Department of Health has a toolkit for businesses and organizations available at <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/covid-19-vaccination-program/businesses-and-organizations>. This toolkit contains a collection of resources vaccine providers and Ohio employers and organizations can consider using to build partnerships across the state to offer convenient vaccinations to their employees and members.

All Ohioans age 12 and older are currently eligible to be vaccinated. Ohioans can find additional vaccination opportunities and schedule appointments by visiting [gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov](http://gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov) or by calling 1-833-4-ASK-ODH

(1-833-427-5634). Walk-in appointments are available at many providers statewide. Anyone with questions regarding COVID-19 vaccination within the state of Ohio can learn more at [coronavirus.ohio.gov/vaccine](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/vaccine).

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