Meet Brenda Patel

Brenda Patel could have invented the term “people person.” She is the Jefferson Parish council aide to District 4 Councilman Dominick F. Impastato III. Her position, as the only full time aide to the District 4 councilman, can keep her busy from morning well into the evening. A typical day may involve—meetings with organizations or constituents, council meetings, civic association meetings, ribbon cuttings and lots of problem solving.

Clearly Patel enjoys her job having literally grown up in public service and local government. “Government service is in my blood,” says Patel. “Both of my parents were civil servants for Jefferson Parish while I was growing up and I worked for the parish during the summers while I attended school.”

A degree in political science from Loyola University and post graduate courses in public administration seemed like a logical career choice. From there, she began working in local government for the city of Kenner, becoming purchasing director for Mayor Ed Muniz. Later, she moved up to parish government as former Parish President John Young’s purchasing director and later for President Mike Yenni. It was from that position, that Impastato tapped her to be his aide.

Even though she enjoyed her stints as purchasing director, she had no direct interface with the community. “Being the council aide for District 4, has opened my eyes, ears, and heart to the community,” she says. “I’m able to have this same feeling serving on the East Jefferson YMCA board.” Patel says the YMCA is family based, with a deep sense of community. She said the YMCA helps the community in all the many programs available offered in a comfortable, inclusive setting. “Being on the YMCA board these past two years has made me more conscious of others’ needs. That is vital to the overall mission of both the YMCA and District 4.

A recent example where her YMCA board experience and her council position dovetailed is the improvements to the Y’s parking lot. “We had meetings with the Y’s neighbors to get their feedback,” she said. “The board listened to them and then any permit for work done will first come through our office, since the Y is in District 4.”
With all the different activities and requests coming through her District 4 office, Patel still finds time to volunteer with the Jefferson Parish Credit Union. She also takes the opportunity to volunteer for other short-term events that can use her help.

Patel says volunteering is important because you develop a sense of community, gaining a deeper understanding of people, helping you “to get out of your own shell.” The council aide says, “The East Jefferson YMCA helps reinforce the things I do on my job and both working together benefits our community.”

Among the benefits Patel is most excited about are the upcoming renovations to Lafreniere Park’s soccer complex, an actual restaurant in the park, developing the area by the former Kmart near Power Boulevard, and the new median with signalized turns on David Drive.

Brenda Patel, District 4 council aide, a “people person” who has a pulse of the community.