Through their volunteerism and philanthropy, Doctors Jay and Mona Kang are an inspiration for our community as well as role models who teach their children the importance of “giving back” as a family, and in finding their own causes to support.

As dedicated patrons of the arts, Jay and Mona have been the primary sponsors for the Barber National Institute Art Show since 2016. Their support has helped keep the show open to adult and youth artists, including students from the Neighborhood Art House and families in underserved areas.

Mona also serves on the boards of Erie Arts and Culture and the Erie Philharmonic, and the couple have provided philanthropic support to the Hamot Health Foundation and other organizations in the community.

The couple is also enriching our community by fostering religious and cultural diversity as they worked to open a Sikh Temple in Erie. Every Sunday, the family works together at the Temple cooking and serving breakfast and lunch for nearly 200 persons, including residents around the West Seventh Street location, recent immigrants and students at area colleges.

Last year, Genelia Kang, age 13, coordinated a fundraising effort at the Temple that brought in $5,000 to purchase oxygen and medical supplies for areas of India particularly hard hit by Covid 19. Genelia donated a $350 prize won in a computer science competition to help fund the cause.

Following the example of her parents, Genelia also donated proceeds from an arts competition to purchase art supplies at her school, and made masks and hand sanitizer during the height of the Covid pandemic to send to Bethany Outreach and other local and national organizations.

For his part, Jared, age 9, holds a neighborhood lemonade stand with a group of friends and donates the proceeds to the Barber National Institute.

Every fall, the family also organizes a neighborhood drive to collect coats, blankets and other winter items to give to the Upper Room and other organizations serving the needy.

This Thanksgiving, the Kang family will be where they have spent the holiday for many years – preparing and serving food at the Sisters of Saint Joseph dinner. The children, who have been attending the dinner since birth, now work alongside their parents serving the homeless.

For their commitment to many philanthropic causes, the Barber National Institute is honored to nominate the Kang Family as Outstanding Philanthropists of the Year.