The 2009 recipient of the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award from Duke University is Ms. Annapurna Deo. This award seeks to perpetuate the excellence of character and humanitarian service of Algernon Sydney Sullivan by recognizing and honoring such qualities in others. A recipient of this award is known to her colleagues and peers as someone who exemplifies the qualities of generosity, service, integrity, and deep spirituality, as well as “nobility of character,” which the Sullivan Foundation defines as “when one goes outside the narrow circle of self-interest and begins to spend oneself for the interests of humankind.”

Annapurna Deo has been the staff assistant in the office of Infrastructure Operations at Duke University Health Technology Solutions in Duke University Health System since July of 2001. Prior to this, she served briefly as a substitute teaching staff, teaching Hindi in the Department of Anthropology, and also for two years as an Assistant Librarian in Perkins Library. Currently she is pursuing a Masters Degree in Public Administration.

A former teacher at St. Mary’s and St. Xavier’s High Schools in Katmandu, Nepal, Ms. Deo came to Durham, North Carolina in 1981, where she established a preschool and was its director for eleven years. She is dedicated to improving educational opportunities and attainment among women of Nepali descent.

Ms. Deo has a long history of community involvement. An outspoken advocate for women’s rights, she is the founding president of the Nepali Women’s Global Network (NWGN), and co-founder and former president of the Nepali Center of North Carolina (NCNC), two organizations dedicated to improving the lives of Nepali women across the US and the world. In her work with NWGN, she has arranged scholarship programs for Nepali women, and has raised funds for the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to support Tsunami relief. In 2008, Captive Daughters, an international organization dedicated to ending sex trafficking, collaborated with NWGN to establish the Annapurna Activist Prize in honor of her lifetime of work on behalf of Nepali women and children.

Currently she is serving for a second term on the Advisory Committee for the Nepal Americas Council (NAC) as the Vice President and the representative for the Southeast Region. She is the Vice President of College Against Cancer (CAC), and works to prevent breast cancer through awareness and to support survivors of cancer. And she is also a former Advisory Board member and an active participant for 20 years in the Hindu Society of North Carolina.

Ms. Deo’s colleagues and friends describe her as a person of great faith who is friendly, gentle, kind, and sincere to all with whom she comes in contact, and who always goes “above and beyond” as an employee, friend, and world citizen. Duke University is proud to present Ms. Annapurna Deo with the 2009 Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award.