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Dr. Baldev Singh, Neurologist Thornwood

By Martin Wilbur

It might be unusual to find anyone these days who has spent their entire career with one company or organization.

Dr. Baldev Singh, the longtime director of adult neurology at the Westchester Institute for Human Development (WIHD) in Valhalla, has for 40 years been affiliated with the institute that provides education and research as well as services to people with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

Singh said that her husband, Avtar, also a neurologist, told her that some of his colleagues have asked him whether she's still at WIHD, which in the past three years was transformed into a nonprofit organization after having been founded at New York Medical College in 1950.

As long as there are patients and their families that can be helped, Singh said there is no reason for her to leave.

"This place has made a difference in our patients' lives and that's why they wanted me to come," said Singh, who also served seven years as WIHD's medical director.

For much of her career, Singh has dedicated her efforts to caring for developmentally disabled patients with

long-term seizure disorders, allowing her to lead pioneering advances in medication management. As a resident at Flower-Fifth Hospital in New York City and early on her career, Singh saw a variety of patients. But her focus on helping those with developmental disabilities and epileptic seizures quickly became her most gratifying work, she said.

As a young neurologist, she was looking for anything to raise the quality of life for those patients.

"Every time I had the opportunity I'd ask 'How can I improve the patient care? What can I do that other people are not doing yet?'" Singh recalled.

In 2016, Singh was recognized as a fellow by the American Epilepsy Society for her work. On Apr. 26, at its inaugural fundraising gala, WIHD will honor Singh as one of five people on its staff or among its legion of volunteers who have made powerful contributions to the lives of the developmentally disabled.

Singh's modesty forces her to quickly deflect credit, praising WIHD and its staff and administrators for allowing her to follow her passion.

"It's been everybody's effort, really," she said. "It's not just me. I've reached this point with all the help of the administrators, colleagues and the staff with which I work."

Dr. Susan Fox, WIHD's president and CEO, said Singh's unwavering dedication to her patients is perfectly aligned with the organization's mission.

"I think she really embodies what this is all about," Fox said. "It's about the competence of the people who work here, that the caring, compassionate, heart that they bring to the work."

Singh, 69, has been following her passion from the time she was growing up in Patiala, Punjab, India, a city that she compared to Boston for its reputation as an educational center.

Helping others in need was a common trait in her family. She saw her mother dedicating herself to feeding the homeless at a local temple.

"No matter what, any time during the day, if people were hungry, they would be served food and she made things in the morning," Singh said. "We would go to the temple as a little girl, we would walk to the temple and feed homeless people."

Her father, who served in the Indian Army's engineer corps and would open his own business, stressed education for her



and her sister, who became a registered nurse. Singh said in the family's Sikh tradition education is as essential for girls as it is for boys.

"He was the one who always said that you should do something where you look forward getting up in the morning and going there and working," she said.

After graduating from Government Medical

College at Punjabi University in 1970, Singh married and came to the United States for the first time in 1972. The couple had two children. She fulfilled her residency requirements by 1977. While their sons were going to school they lived in Edgemont so they could attend Scarsdale schools. Singh and her husband now live in Thornwood.

She also is an associate professor of clinical neurology at New York Medical College, and since 1982, has been an assistant attending at Westchester Medical Center.

Singh has countless stories helping patients. She has discovered brain tumors that in some cases were causing seizures and she has made sure patients with milder forms of epilepsy receive the care they need to lead a normal life.

"So many, many stories and we made a tremendous difference for many patients," she said.