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A resource for skilled immigrants.
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Upwardly Global Honors Two Immigrant Americans for Outstanding Leadership

Deven Sharma and Mariam Assefa Recognized for Accomplishments at Upwardly Global's Passport to Possibilities Awards Gala

New York, November 8, 2010 - Upwardly Global, an internationally recognized nonprofit organization with a mission to eliminate barriers to professional workplace entry for foreign-educated immigrants and refugees in the United States, announced today the names of two influential immigrant Americans it will recognize at its annual 2010 Passport to Possibilities Gala, on Tuesday, November 16, 2010 at the Edison Ballroom. Deven Sharma, President of Standard & Poor's, and Mariam Assefa, Executive Director of World Education Services will receive the organization's prestigious Outstanding Leadership award for their personal and professional accomplishments elevating the profile of immigrant Americans as well as supporting diversity in the workplace.

Mr. Sharma, whose firm, is a division of the McGraw-Hill Companies and has over 11,000 employees located in 24 countries and markets, was born and educated in India. He first came to the U.S. as a graduate student at the University of WI – Madison before embarking on a career that included 14 years leading strategy, operations, sales and global expansion with Booz Allen Hamilton. Today he presides over one of the world's foremost sources of financial market intelligence, offering independent credit ratings, indices, risk evaluation, investment research and data. Upwardly Global will recognize him for his corporate leadership, as well as for Standard & Poor's innovative support of and commitment to immigrant inclusiveness and diversity in the US workforce.

"Deven Sharma and Standard & Poor's have demonstrated over and over again that immigrant integration is an important element in the success of US companies," said Martha Gallo, Executive Vice President, Chief Auditor, JPMorgan Chase and Board Co-Chair, Upwardly Global. "They understand very well that successful enterprises welcome diversity, including people with different skill sets and different life experiences. "

With Mr. Sharma's support and encouragement S&P employees have volunteered their time and professional expertise as mentors and job search coaches to support Upwardly Global jobseekers in rebuilding their careers in the U.S.

Mariam Assefa is the Executive Director and CEO of World Education Services (WES) since 1982. WES is a not-for-profit credential evaluation organization headquartered in New York and with offices in five other U.S. cities and in Toronto, Canada. Born and raised in Ethiopia, Ms. Assefa built WES from 3 employees to what is now considered the world's leading credential-evaluation service.

Upwardly Global will recognize her for her vision and leadership in building an invaluable resource for immigrant professionals that opens up access to workforce and academic inclusion.

“Mariam Assefa recognizes that Immigrants have a much greater chance of getting their credentials recognized than they did 20 years ago, and Upwardly Global has been an important partner for WES unlocking the potential of foreign-born professionals.” Said Nikki Cicerani, Executive Director of Upwardly Global. “She shares with us the goal of creating a labor market system that supports the exponential growth in the number of people moving and pursuing international study and careers.”

WES has partnered with Upwardly Global for more than four years to dismantle barriers to workforce inclusion for newcomers and to educate employers about the foreign-born professional workforce.

Mr. Sharma and Ms. Assefa will be honored before more than 400 attendees at Upwardly Global’s 2010 Passport to Possibilities Awards & Gala Event at the Edison Ballroom on Tuesday, November 16, 2010 in New York City. The event also marks Upwardly Global’s 10th Anniversary, which is being celebrated with events in San Francisco, Chicago, and New York.

About Upwardly Global

Upwardly Global, founded in 2000, is a national, award-winning nonprofit organization with offices in San Francisco, New York, and Chicago. Upwardly Global helps work-authorized, skilled immigrants rebuild their professional careers in the U.S. by providing professional job-search training and access to employers with global talent needs. To date, the organization has coached 2,400 skilled immigrants and has assisted over 800 professionals back into their career field. For more information about the organization, please visit www.upwardlyglobal.org.

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