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**Captions**

**(W10C)**

**Achieving Goals! Career Stories of  
Individuals Who are Deaf or Hard of  
Hearing**

**Pat Billies**

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ROUGH EDITED COPY

Achieving Goals! Career Stories of Individuals Who are  
Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Pat Billies

June 29, 2005

10:00 A.M.

CAPTIONING PROVIDED BY: CAPTION FIRST, INC.

PO BOX 1924

LOMBARD, IL 60148

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the proceedings.

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>> good morning and welcome.

Thank you for coming to our presentation.

We hope it will be very exciting for you.

My name is Pat Billies and I'm the project coordinator of NETAC.

The Northeast technical assistance center, one of the four regional centers of PEPNet.

This is my colleague regina Kipperman KISSELGOFF, and I will spell the last name for our captionist.

KISELGOF.

Regina has a lovely second name which I'm not even going to attempt to spell.

Regina is the project associate at NETAC and has worked closely with me on this project.

I would like to start by telling you a little bit about achieving goals.

Then regina will demo the website for you live.

I will come back and talk to you a little bit about the videotape project and then the best of all, we'll let you see a couple of segments of the brand-new DVD.

That is our plan for the next 40 minutes or so.

I'm going to scoot back here so I can get to my computer.

Thank you.

In our grant, we committed to make a set of videotapes.

About 15 years ago, I spent 6 or 7 years working in the NTID admissions office, and during that time I met many, many deaf and hard of hearing students from all across the world who have never known another deaf person, who were completely alone in their school district, receiving a wide variety of services to support them and basically these poor students no role models,

no one to look up to, and often times listened to adults in their lives who told them that they couldn't, they couldn't do this, they couldn't become that.

So we wanted to develop a set of videotapes to showcase successful people out there in the workplace.

It was never our plan to do a website.

Early on, we went to our site coordinators, our state representatives in each one of the northeastern states, and asked them to scout around in their state and find some successful deaf people, especially those people from underserved groups.

Because we were deeply committed to showcasing latinos and African Americans, especially.

What we got back from them was overwhelming.

We knew we could never, ever take all of these individuals and showcase them on videotape.

We didn't have time or money to do that.

So that was when the idea of a website was born.

Our goals were simple: To provide role models in the hopes that those role models would raise the expectations of people who were out there in the community.

We designed these web tapes for a variety of audiences, all of whom work with individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing.

And now I'm going to hand this over to regina who will show you the fine job she's done with our website.

>> good morning, everybody.

Pat mentioned about there's many deaf students, many students in mainstream programs, in deaf schools that

have really low expectations for themselves.

Really feel like they're blocking them from achieving success.

They met a lot of deaf students in schools and it really just broke my heart.

And they really didn't have any idea that there were so many deaf people out there that were very successful all over the world, so when I told them that there are deaf lawyers and there are deaf vets, it really -- it really shocked them.

They had no idea.

Their parents tend to have a low expectation for their own deaf children.

I was born into a deaf family.

I was very lucky, because my mom was a very good role model for me.

And in my classroom in school, and all of my classmates, you know, it seemed that my mom was kind of a very good role model for them as well.

And it's funny because some of them actually saw me as a role model, and I was their peer, I thought that was very interesting.

My mom taught me how to be successful and how to actually pass on that knowledge and that support and that success on to other people as I -- as I grew up, so very grateful for this opportunity to present this website to you.

NETAC, the NETAC center... this is the first page of the website, it's the first page you will see, called achieving goals.

Career stories of individuals who are deaf and hard of

hearing.

So then you hit the enter button and you go into the website.

You will see at the top of the Web page -- okay -- a deaf person, whether it's a child or an adult.

Whether their field is in science or whether their field is in government or whatever -- when you go meet the deaf person, you want to find out what that career is.

So we offered a option for browsing so you could search for the person.

Underneath their field of expertise, so you'll see here there's many different fields of expertise.

There's accounting, there's the finance, so you can go ahead and you can pick the topic that you're interested, for example, you could pick art and entertainment, so you would click on that link right there.

And so when you go into that website you will see all the different profiles of all of those individuals who are in that field in art and entertainment and media fields.

You see a picture of the person that is there along with their profile.

Now, if you asked me the question of how we got that information, we went to a conference, we walked around and would meet a deaf person and find out what their specialty is, what they do, what their line of work is, and so we asked them to fill out some type of a questionnaire, and so the person would fill it out and then we would take their picture.

So we would go -- I would go back to my office with this information, I would type it up and then I would contact that person again and then ask them for more detailed information, more of an in-depth profile, as we collected all of this information of all of the different people, this is what we came up with and this is what we have to

present to those of you coming to the website.

You'll see the picture, you'll see the name of the person.

You'll see the occupation, their line of work, also what company that they work for, and then this last part you'll see, you see the comments in red and what this is is that their little advice for young people, their little bits of which Dom, what they have -- wisdom, what they have, so this would be good for all people, doesn't matter whether who you are, whether you're a teacher, whoever, if you work with deaf children, these are all bits of wisdom that are from them to the children and it's very powerful.

It has a strong impact on the deaf children and really makes an impression on them and gives them a sense of pride.

And this isn't just for children, but this is also for adults as well.

I work with adults every day out in the world.

And I always enjoy reading their advice and their comments that they have.

I really enjoy that.

So say for example, you want to know more about a specific person.

What you can do is go and click on the word "more."

So this person, they filled out questionnaire and they talked about their jobs, their background, different achievements that they have, what schools they went to, what school they graduated from, what degrees that they have.

Also types of accommodations that they use in school.

You know, because accommodations are used not only in

the deaf schools but also in mainstream schools as well.

You know, what kinds of services did they get while they were in school?

So maybe they received speech therapy, maybe they received note taking services or an interpreter or maybe they didn't have any services at all.

So I wanted to include accommodations because I wanted deaf people to read that and realize this person has the same experience that I had.

I had note takers and this person used note takers and they're very successful.

It means I can be successful as well, and I can achieve my goals.

You know, and maybe, you know, my goals, that deaf person, their goals are the same as the goals of the person they're reading about, they can see that this person is successful, so therefore they can use that person as a role model and achieve their goals and become successful.

One of the other things I included, I wanted to include work responsibility.

What kind of things do they do in their field of work?

Also I wanted to include the unique aspects of their job.

Some of the things maybe they like about their job and also the achievements they have received in regards to their work.

This person is a very successful actress.

Also, there's an option here, as you can see on the Web page, [www.TerryLEAN.com](http://www.TerryLEAN.com), is she can include her own Web page, they can contact this person through their own Web page, or maybe some people don't put down their contact information or their Web page or anything

like that.

They say that, you know, they don't want their personal information to be posted because they want it confidential.

In that instance, I play the middle person. If the person doesn't want their personal information posted, then whoever wants to get ahold of, let's say Terry, they would go through me, they would tell me what it is they want to contact that person about, I would go to that person, I would go to Terry, for example, and I would get permission from her to give their -- they're information to those people that are looking to come in contact with her, so if she approves, then I would give that contact information to that person that is speaking to get in -- seeking to get in contact with her and then they can just set up a meeting.

Maybe they can get together and do whatever they need to get that taken care of or whatever information that person wants to get.

There's a variety of different profiles.

There's a variety of different occupations listed here.

There's no picture listed.

Some people didn't want their pictures taken, so... you know, I -- I chased them several times begging and pleading to see if they would allow us to put their picture on the internet but they preferred not to have it posted.

So and it's information probably the most important to me.

Some of the other categories that we have offered are things like in the medical field.

You see up here at the top there is a list of 27 total profiles that are in that field.

In woman here is a deaf vet.

She's a veterinarian.

I believe that Samuel is hard of hearing.

He's an audiologist.

I was confused about that, he wanted to prove that some people are skeptical he could be an audiologist, he wanted to prove he could an become successful.

This person down here, Barbara, she's a psychologist.

This is just an example of all of the different fields that people have to choose from.

Some people may want to look at who is a deaf lawyer, so we have that option available.

Also law enforcement, maybe someone is looking into getting into the field of law enforcement, wants to know what is involved in that.

There's a legal option where they're all deaf lawyers.

And now we're going to move on to... let's say for example, you meet a deaf person, and you think that person should be involved with this website.

So you can give them our website address and they can add a profile on their own.

So they type in all of this information and they send the form to me.

So I review it, I check the language and the grammar, I look at the picture, maybe make some adjustments there, and I have to authorize it and then I go ahead and I post it on the website.

So that goes out to the whole world.

I mean it's internet.

The internet is open and available to all who come to it.

Many people after they have something posted, maybe they move away, maybe they move to another state, I mean for some other reason they want to make is some type of change or update their profile, so you can access that option, if you look where the cursor is pointed, it says update profile, you can click on that, and all you do is fill out your last name and your e-mail address, and then it gives you the option to edit your own profile and the information.

So we have a lot of people that end up updating the information on their own.

They got married, they changed their names, or maybe they had some other achievements they wanted to add or maybe they graduated from, you know, PC, or a master's degree program, they would like to put that information on there and update it on their own.

You can also have a search option.

You know, there's so many options that are out there available.

Let's say, you know, you met a deaf vet or you want a lawyer, or one day you want to be teacher, you can type in the word vet, I'll show you here.

So what that does is that pulls all the profiles of all that are in our database.

So that makes it easier for you, the person looking for someone who is a vet to find a listing of all the people.

So I want that specific person who is a vet, not just in the medical fields, but who is a vet, and that shows the listings of all of those people that come underneath that field of occupation.

If we look up here at the top, we had all sorts of website

information.

At the bottom we have options for viewing videos.

And it's -- it's all the same, all comes under the same heading, achieving goals.

So far we have four videotapes, we're fixing to have five.

Some of them are still copping out.

These are what we have available right now, so we have four videotapes.

Pat Billies is the one who contacted the people, went and traveled all over and met with those individuals and filmed them so I would like her to come up here and maybe explain some of her experiences in regards to the videotape.

>> what a job I have.

I get to travel all over and meet exciting people.

It's just a fabulous, fabulous personal growth opportunity for me to see all of these young people out there working in these exciting careers.

We've had some very interesting experiences along the way.

I've learned a lot.

We generally shoot 8 or 9 hours of tape for 7 or 8 minutes that the videos end up becoming.

I've worked with a producer and a videographer to do all of the editing.

It's just a fabulous, fabulous process, but it's so inspiring to me personally to see these young individuals out there doing great, great stuff.

I wanted to share just one very quick story with you.

One morning on "Good Morning America" Diane Sawyer had her dream fulfilled.

She wanted to perform with CIRC DU sew SOLEIL.

They dressed her up and lowered her down to the perfect performance and she was on stage doing this, and I was thinking I wonder if a deaf person could do that, I wonder if there's a deaf person doing that.

I found the headquarters and found them and they said, oh, no, that is impossible because everything with CIRC DU SOLEIL is timed with the music and an individual who is deaf could never do that.

That made sense, I accepted it.

Guess what, folks, there's a Russian man in Orlando, Florida, performing with CIRC DU SOLEIL.

Nothing is impossible.

Regina, would you like, before I forget, one of the stars on our video three is attending this conference, so hopefully we'll get -- we'll be able to show you her video clip and when you see her travelling around at the conference, you can say I saw you on TV this morning.

Thank you.

>> okay.

We have four videotapes and these are the titles of the tapes.

The first one is phenomenal professional.

That's related to pediatrics and medicine.

We have one woman who is an African American and she's a lawyer.

We have a deaf obstetrician from Puerto Rico.

Optician.

And we have a woman who is a vet.

Very powerful and very inspiring to hear about all of their -- how they've been able to overcome barriers and interact and connect with the hearing world and also their interactions and their achievements in the workplace.

Our next one is brilliant at business.

These are all people that own their own business.

One person owns a finance business.

All the people that are in this are deaf or hard of hearing.

This one is definitely dynamic.

One of them is a deaf minister.

Marilyn, this woman, she's an advocate for victims of abuse -- excuse me, abused victims, a support organization, she's the head of that.

This person is a teacher.

She worked with children.

And the next one is Tech savvy.

There's one -- there's a deaf robot or... there's a person, excuse me, this is the interpreter.

This is a person who works with robots who is deaf, and the other three people they work with computers, they work with different sorts of high Tech gear.

And I've really enjoyed watching that, it's been such an

inspiration to me.

It's been very -- just a phenomenal experience.

I hope that as you go ahead and you watch these that you will enjoy them as well, and also my hopes is that children as they watch these that they will be able to see how many wonderful role models there are out there and how much success deaf people have had and are continuing to have in that goal for themselves.

You can get these videotapes by ordering-- I'll show you how you can do that.

You can click on a link that says "ordering information."

It's really simple how you can get the videotapes.

All you have to do is contact -- if you look over here on the right-hand side, there's a website also you can go to for getting the information.

You can go to PEPNet resource center and get the information through there.

You can contact a guy named Tony... Tony Evanderveck.

The cost for the videotapes is \$10 and you can get it either through PEPNet or you can get it through Tony.

And the format will be changing the order from currently VHS, will be changing that over to DVD and the total is \$10.

A very minimal charge, especially for all of the information that you're able to get, that is absolutely phenomenal for only \$10.

There's such a variety and diversity that we're able to show to people, that is really phenomenal.

All together we have about 300 -- we have about 300 people that are in our database that are in this website.

300 are small in comparison to how many people that are out there.

Sometimes you have a hard time contacting people, they're very far away, maybe out west, maybe in south America, very hard to contact these people, they're very busy, some time, you know, time gets away from them, they don't have enough time to fill out the form or whatever.

But right now what I want to do is take the opportunity to show you some video clips.

Only show them one because of our time limit.

>> okay.

>> thank you I want to show you how you can get a taste of the videotapes from the website.

I'll show you our star who happens to be here at this conference, she's on videotape number 3, so I'm going to select that, I think.

Her name is Yolanda.

I don't know if quick time is installed on this.

Is quick time on this?

Yes, good.

Okay, here is Yolanda.

>> my mother noticed I wasn't speaking.

After the evaluation, the diagnosis was that I was mentally retarded and my father said, no, I don't believe that my daughter is mentally retarded.

We will get a second opinion.

So they took me to the second doctor and went through the same evaluation process and the second doctor

concluded with the first, saying that I have a mental disability.

My father again said, no, that can't be true, so they went to a third doctor.

Again, I had an evaluation and that doctor told my father that I wasn't mentally retarded, that I was deaf, and that made sense to my father and he accepted it quite readily.

When I was 18 I went to a deaf club and I went up to someone and said that I was just learning sign and that I was deaf and they started explaining to me the history of deaf education and of sign language and I learned from that person about my heritage and the more I learned the more I realized I wanted to become a leader.

I started a program of mentoring.

>> because of time I stopped that video clip, but all of the videos on the web have brief video clips associated with them so you can get a taste of the individual's lives.

For the next ten minutes or so, I'm going to show you the first two videos of our fourth set called Tech savvy.

The first individual is Ben McGee, the second van NGYUEN, then we will stop and take some questions if we have some.

I'm going to cross my fingers and hope that we can figure out how to do this.

>> it takes creative people to make this technology work.

Many of those people are deaf or hard of hearing, including the four professionals featured in this video.

Each of them have discovered early in their lives they had a knack for technology that allows them to be

creative and inspirational to others.

One is a college instructor.

One designs websites.

One works in information technology.

And another works in satellite technology for a nationally known pharmaceutical company.

Each has a unique and compelling story to share.

[indiscernible] I had some low grades but that didn't stop me from pursuing my degree.

>> Ben McGee became deaf when he was four years old from spinal meningitis, he attended a mainstream school.

There he learned sign language and developed his speech reading skills.

In high school he discovered his interests.

>> in high school I was very [indiscernible] I always get some A's, that kind of skill that led me to...

After I graduate from high school, I had to go to summer program, I was going to RIT, during that summer program I met a lot of deaf people there who are very much like me.

My world was so small, that's what it felt like.

But at NTID that's when I became to understand myself a lot better.

I didn't really know much about other people and about deaf culture, so that's how I started to feel more comfortable with myself as a deaf person.

>> Ben decided to attend the national technical institute for the deaf, at Rochester institute of technology, and

soon joined a special interest club for deaf African American students.

>> I just [indiscernible] I started to meet more people who are even more like me through the same club or same experience and everything.

So eventually that became my second home.

The issue of one of the top hardest managers to pick.

I was spending less time studying and more and more time with my friends, it kind of affected my performance.

I wasn't very seriously doing it, for awhile, until I learned that one day I was going to become a father of twin girls and I thought about it again.

During this time I need to get more serious with school.

>> after graduation Ben found a job of robotics in his home town.

>> I was working... [indiscernible] semiconductor wafers that look like this.

Very thin.

This will go inside between the wafers, pick up -- pick it up, on a microscope.

[indiscernible]

... program those robots to do.

Pick up a part away from... not just limited to wafers.

Work in the environment where humans cannot do the job.

>> after several years of working in the field, Ben decided to change his career path and pursue teaching

robotics at the college level.

>> the program I'm teaching right now is called elementary technology.

It's brand-new.

I'm one of three new faculty to learn [indiscernible] it's a challenge.

I get to meet all of the students, the new students, have a relationship with me, because I like them to have a good time.

I like to share with them my specific experience because they want to know what it's like outside in the real world.

[indiscernible]

[indiscernible] I'm happy to explain my experience.

Being able to solve problems, something new is always out there, but the trick is to learn about it, figure out how to get around that problem, whether it be -- just believe in yourself.

Don't give up.

□

>> there's no dream, I never had a dream to become a computer specialist or a technologist or anything.

Nothing, just like the other people who work in Vietnam with no education, they don't have dreams.

>> there is little hope for a young deaf person in Vietnam.

Van NGYUEN was born in Vietnam and was one of two deaf children in her family of 6.

When she was a youngster her family moved to the

United States to escape the educational, social and language barriers faced by deaf people in her native country.

In America she attended mainstream schools and learned two languages.

English and American sign.

After van graduated from college, she took a job at a California university where she works as an information technology consultant.

>> my goal at my job is always to make each individual person as comfortable as I possibly can with their technology.

My feeling is that technology is a cool thing and a really interesting thing to work with, so I want to use technology to make that their most effective.

If I have to teach someone one on one or teach someone slowly or repeat myself over and over again until the person finally feels comfortable, that's what I'm willing to do, whatever it take, so sometimes I have to illustrate my method in different way, whatever it takes to make the students or the staff or the faculty understand how it is they can use their technology most effectively and I'm happy to elaborate however I need to make sure that they understand.

.

I want to share with people that technology is a wonderful thing.

It's not just something that you can, you know, kind of ignore and go ahead and do your job without it, and, you know, think things would be okay.

I want people to feel like it's a really important part of their job and I think it's very important that what I learned in the classroom I'm able to pass on and share with the staff here, and in turn that makes their job

much more efficient.

My family and I moved to America 17 years ago.

The reason that we came here is because we lived in a communist country and we realized there would be better opportunities for their deaf children here in America.

Asian culture often is not very accepting of deaf people.

I felt like I was an animal.

They always looked at us like there was something wrong with us, that maybe we should just go work on a farm or something. There was no real future for us as deaf people in Asia.

Teachers, people everywhere, everyone looked down on us, and I felt very unimportant.

Like I wasn't allowed to have any dreams or any future, that I would just become more and more withdrawn and I would never really know who I was.

Nobody would ever really accept me for who I was.

I was constantly shunned from society, and almost like I had a disease that might spread to other people or cause them to become deaf as well, and so out of fear their reaction was to oppress us.

I wanted to be, you know, very close and communicate with other people and feel like a part of that country, and feel like that was my home, and have natural communication and interaction with people, but I had none of that.

I was pretty much on my own in my own little world and very isolated.

I didn't even know before I came to America that I could use my hands to communicate.

I thought we were the only deaf people in the world.

I had no idea that there was such a large community here.

There was so many deaf people with different skin colors and the adults were also deaf, not just the kids.

My house in Vietnam before I moved here to America was thatched.

If there were high winds or something, our house could easily fall down.

It wasn't built very well, or very strong.

I did go to school for two years, kindergarten, first, second grade, and then I left school.

To be honest with you, I hated school, because the kids made fun of me all the time.

I was very oppressed when I was in school and I didn't know anything.

The Vietnamese language is very, very difficult to lip read and I had a very hard time learning any kind of communication.

There was no sign language in individual nam.

There weren't any teachers for the deaf.

I remember at that time I didn't have a hearing I'd either.

I had no support whatsoever for the little hearing that I had, so I really relied on my mom and dad to mouth for me what people were saying or we were to write back and forth and people would get very frustrate and give up very easily and try to communicate with me.

My mom tried to teach us Vietnamese, and that is my

first language.

Then when we moved to America, I really started my education in 6th grade.

I was already at that point, and you can't go back.

You know, I can't go back to second grade at age 11, so you just have to kind of go in where you are and make the best of it, 7th and 8th grade, I had more and more home work, a lot of writing.

I did have a friend in high school and from that friend I was able to pick up a lot of vocabulary, and my own dictionary too, I had an English to Vietnamese dictionary which had a lot of pictures which helped me a lot.

I think the dictionary was my best friend at that point.

It really helped me to catch up with everybody else.

I really didn't want to go to college.

I was worried about how much home work there would be and my teachers really pushed me to go to college, and when I look back now at those teachers who were so supportive and pushed me so hard, I know now that they wanted to see me succeed.

They knew I had a lot of potential, and that college would really be good for me.

I really couldn't see that.

But they could, they knew what could happen in my future, so today I really feel very grateful to those teachers.

I think teachers are...

>> unfortunately we cannot finish the tape for you because of time, but I hope it's whetted your appetite to see more.

They're wonderful and we really appreciate you coming and enjoying them with us.

Thank you very much.

Remember to fill out your evaluation.

I assume this is session W-10-C.

If you could hand those evaluations in at the end, we would appreciate that.

Thank you for coming.

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