

FALL / WINTER 2013

FOCUS

NTID

National Technical Institute for the Deaf • Rochester Institute of Technology



NTID's 45th Anniversary Reunion

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR



KEN A. HUTH '88

ANGELA OFFICER

RIT/NTID alumna Angela Donnell Officer, SVP '83, '88, received RIT's Volunteer of the Year Award at the Presidents' Alumni Ball during Brick City Homecoming Weekend and NTID's 45th Anniversary Reunion. Officer is the first RIT/NTID graduate to receive the honor. She is the immediate past chairperson of the NTID Alumni Association Board of Directors.

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ABOUT THE COVER

NTID celebrated its 45th anniversary with an alumni reunion during Brick City Homecoming October 11–13, 2013. The grand opening of NTID's newest building, Sebastian and Lenore Rosica Hall, took place on Friday, October 11. See the article on p. 3. Cover photos by Mark Benjamin and Stephen Wille.

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FOCUS

NTID

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MARK BENJAMIN

Milestones

The 2013-2014 academic year marks a milestone in NTID's history as we celebrate 45 years of educating deaf and hard-of-hearing students. Since we opened our doors in 1968, we have graduated more than 7,000 students. Our alumni are pursuing successful careers in business, industry, education, government and many other sectors (see pp. 12-14). They are contributing to the economy and to the communities in which they live, and they are changing the world.

We are very proud of our alumni and pleased to recognize milestones achieved by two of them who are featured in this issue of *FOCUS*. The first is Angela Donnell Officer, SVP '83, '88, who is the first RIT/NTID graduate to receive the RIT Volunteer of the Year Award (see inside front cover). The second is Amber Stanton Zion, '04, who was selected to perform the National Anthem in

American Sign Language for Super Bowl XLVIII (see back cover).

In October, we welcomed our alumni back to campus for NTID's 45th Anniversary Reunion and RIT's Brick City Homecoming and Family Weekend (see pp. 3-5). It was a wonderful opportunity to catch up with old friends and share fond memories. A highlight of the weekend was the grand opening of Sebastian and Lenore Rosica Hall, a first-of-its-kind facility that has quickly become a hub of innovation and creativity on campus (see pp. 6-7).

This academic year marks another milestone in RIT/NTID history as well: our first year operating on a semester-based calendar. As the year progresses, we remain focused on our mission to provide a top-quality, career-focused education for students. We continue to offer multiple pathways for students to earn degrees and achieve success (see pp. 10-11). Students come to RIT/NTID from all over the United States and around the world to take advantage of the opportunities that we provide (see p. 15).

As an RIT/NTID alumnus, I look back at our college's history with a deep sense of pride in all that we have accomplished in our first 45 years. There is, however, much more that we can and will do. I look forward to all of the exciting milestones ahead as we continue to help our students pursue their dreams and achieve their goals.

Dr. Gerard J. Buckley
NTID President
RIT Vice President and Dean

GREETINGS FROM REUNION

NTID's 45th
ANNIVERSARY



MARK BENJAMIN

Loriann Macko, alumna and interim director of NTID Alumni Relations, thanks reunion sponsors Sprint Relay, ZVRS, Purple Communications and Sorenson Communications at the Opening Welcome.



Celebrating NTID's 45th Anniversary

by Susan L. Murad

More than 500 RIT/NTID alumni, parents, family and friends came to campus for NTID's 45th Anniversary Reunion during Brick City Homecoming and Family Weekend to reconnect with friends, remember their college days and see what life is like for current students on campus.

"NTID celebrates the anniversary of its founding every five years," says Loriann Macko, NTID's interim director of Alumni Relations, and an RIT/NTID alumna. "This year's celebration was scheduled as part of Brick City

Homecoming and Family Weekend, and there were lots of activities for alumni to enjoy."

"NTID currently has more than 7,000 graduates," NTID President Gerry Buckley said during a welcoming ceremony in the Robert F. Panara Theatre. "That's more than 7,000 of you who have proven that deaf people can change the world."

Among the many events taking place were the grand opening of Sebastian and Lenore Rosica Hall (see pp. 6-7); a presentation by former CIA operative Tony Mendez, author of the book *ARGO*,

which became an Academy Award-winning film starring Ben Affleck; campus tours; and "Tiger Talks"—a series of brief demonstrations and presentations on topics of interest to alumni. Alumna and past chairperson of the NTID Alumni Association Board of Directors Angela Officer received RIT's Volunteer of the Year Award at the annual Presidents' Alumni Ball, which also featured a tribute in honor of NTID's 45th anniversary. And thousands of alumni and fans packed Rochester's Blue Cross Arena to cheer on the RIT Men's Hockey Team as they took on the University of Michigan.

Dr. Gerry Buckley,
President and Dean
National Technical Institute for



RIT/NTID Alumnus and President Gerry Buckley welcomes alumni back to campus.



Tony Mendez recalls his time with the CIA that was the basis for the movie *ARGO* as Ben Cavaletto interprets for a sold-out crowd in Panara Theatre.



Alumnus "JJ Mime" performs a tribute to the late artist and alumnus Chuck Baird during the Opening Welcome.

Dr. Jim DeCaro, NTID President Gerry Buckley and members of the McGowan Charitable Fund and Rosica family cut the ribbon to signify the official opening of Sebastian and Lenore Rosica Hall.



Alumni visit the NTID history timeline and recall members of NTID's charter class.

STEPHEN WILLE



Dangerous Signs, a group made up of students and alumni, performs during "Tiger Talks."

MARK BENJAMIN



Alumni visited information tables at reunion.

MARK BENJAMIN



Catching up Alumni and friends enjoyed chatting and catching up with one another.

STEPHEN WILLE



At one of the "Tiger Talks" presentations, alumnae-artists Jackie Schertz, Ellen Mansfield, Hinda Kashur, Nancy Rourke and Janna Dahl create art in real time.

STEPHEN WILLE



RIT/NTID alumnus Sean Forbes puts on a rocking concert for a full Ingle Auditorium.

MARK BENJAMIN



The NTID Alumni Association Board of Directors gathers with **NTID President Gerry Buckley** at the opening of Sebastian and Lenore Rosica Hall.



“Coded Spectrum” (background of photo), by internationally renowned artist Leo Villareal, was purchased with a grant from Sprint Relay and a donation from Dr. Jim DeCaro and his wife, Patricia Mudgett-DeCaro. Representing Sprint Relay are, left to right: Arthur Moore, Angie Officer, Andrew Brenneman, Kris Shipley and Michael Ellis.

An Artful Opening to Rosica Hall

by Susan L. Murad & Greg Livadas

RIT/NTID celebrated the grand opening of Sebastian and Lenore Rosica Hall in October as part of NTID’s 45th Anniversary Reunion and RIT’s Brick City Homecoming and Family Weekend.

“Rosica Hall affirms RIT as a world leader in postsecondary education and enterprise development for deaf and hard-of-hearing students,” says Diana Spencer, executive director of the William G. McGowan Charitable Fund, which donated \$1.75 million to help construct

the building. “It will foster important research and nurture creative entrepreneurs in the deaf and hard-of-hearing community.”

The design of the building is intended to be deaf-friendly, incorporating a maximum use of natural light, open line-of-sight paths, safety features such as strobe lights, and minimizing vibrations from the building’s air conditioning and heating units. Philip Rubin, RIT/NTID alumnus and architect, gave recommendations on the building

design prior to construction and attended the ribbon cutting.

“Rosica Hall will be the hub for important work that will benefit generations of deaf and hard-of-hearing people, and I’m proud that this dream has become a reality,” NTID President Gerry Buckley says.

Mark Rosica, chair of NTID’s Counseling and Academic Advising Services Department and a son of Sebastian and Lenore Rosica, is looking forward to the research and future discoveries that will happen in Rosica Hall.

“Let’s see what we all can do with this wonderful facility,” he says.

Rosica Hall also is home to five commissioned works of art as well as pieces from the college’s collection of works by deaf artists that add to the creative atmosphere that permeates the building.

◀ **“Metamorphosis,”** by Scott Grove, represents the career development of an individual from student to professional. Three monoliths of blue stone, mined in New York, have perfectly aligned openings, representing the core of humanity around which a life is built and the limitless potential of an RIT graduate. It was donated by the DeCaros. Grove graduated from RIT with a degree in Interior & Industrial Design.





STEPHEN WILLE

▲ **“Finding the Rosicas,”** a large portrait of Sebastian and Lenore Rosica, using more than 600 Rosica family photographs from the past 90 years, was created by RIT/NTID alumnus and artist Leon Lim (at left in photo). Up close, one sees the family photographs that constitute pixels of Sebastian and Lenore’s portrait. It’s not until the viewer moves away that the larger portrait can be seen. The family photographs represent the life of Sebastian and Lenore from their childhood through retirement.



MARK BENJAMIN

▲ **“The Three Sisters,”** by Gary Mayers, hangs from the lobby ceiling. It is a visual nod to the Iroquois Confederation’s “three sisters” that nourish the people: corn, squash and beans. The stainless steel sculptures were created by Mayers while he was an artist-in-residence at NTID and represent the innovation, imagination and integrity within Rosica Hall.



MARK BENJAMIN

▲ **“Imagination,”** by stained-glass artist Jacqueline Schertz, practicum coordinator with NTID’s ASL & Interpreting Education Department. The design represents the emergence of a kernel of an idea that spreads into something much larger, much like the students and faculty collaborating on research in the building. Various glass textures represent the diverse personalities of individuals involved in team projects.

▼ **“Coded Spectrum,”** by internationally renowned artist Leo Villareal. It was purchased with a grant from Sprint Relay and a donation from Dr. Jim DeCaro and his wife, Patricia Mudgett-DeCaro, and is found on the walkway to the Dining Commons—a fitting location representing the way Sprint serves as a “communication bridge” between those who are hearing and those who are deaf, hard of hearing or with speech difficulties. It is a panel of light-emitting diodes that change colors into calming, subtle and mesmerizing imagery.



MARK BENJAMIN



MARK BENJAMIN

SEVERAL SPACES IN ROSICA HALL ARE NAMED TO HONOR THE GENEROSITY OF THE DONORS. THEY INCLUDE:

- Crane Family Atrium
- Delta Sigma Phi Experimental Teaching and Learning Laboratory
- Hearst Foundations Imaginarium
- Andrew Jacobson, '90BS, '96MS Lobby
- Pulver-Ratcliffe Bridge
- Rosica Conference Room
- Rosica DeCaro Meditation Garden
- Webb Family Portico
- Weintraub Family Conference Room

Ashleen Evans

by Kathy A. Johncox



A. SUE WEISLER

Ashleen Evans is enthusiastic about numbers and intends to apply her love of math to a career that follows this passion.

Evans, 23, from Lebanon, Ind., is the only deaf person in her family and the only one of her siblings to go to college. Evans hadn't thought she would get into college, but became motivated when an instructor for deaf and hard-of-hearing students told about her deaf brother who graduated from RIT. Not only was Evans accepted at RIT/NTID, but she has embraced all aspects of college life.

"I love math and my Accounting major," says Evans. "My personality matches the field of accounting. I enjoy recording and figuring transactions, and learning about financial reporting, analysis and tax accounting."

Evans gained valuable work experience during a cooperative work experience last

summer as a clerk-treasurer intern for the City of Elwood in Elwood, Indiana.

"I loved that job," she says. "It required me to learn about local politics, human resources, and how the community faced issues related to the mayor's decisions about water sewage resources."

Evans enjoys her extracurricular activities on campus as well. She currently is president of the NTID Student Congress.

"The best part about RIT/NTID for me is that there are lots of opportunities to increase your leadership skills and to discover who you are," says Evans.

After receiving a bachelor's degree this spring, she wants to get some work experience in accounting and build up her knowledge—and resume.

"I'll probably want to get a CPA in five to 10 years," says Evans, "and I'm open to moving to any location."

Graham Forsey

by Kathy A. Johncox



A. SUE WEISLER

Graham Forsey believes in being busy. He also believes in taking advantage of opportunities.

A fourth-year student from St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, Forsey participates in a wide array of extracurricular activities. He is a business manager for an innovation project that a team of Industrial Design students are working on and is the financial director for the NTID Student Congress as well as for the Global Union, the largest multicultural student organization on campus. He's a tutor for accounting, math, statistics and physics; a student justice on RIT's Institute Appeals Board; and chairman of the Budget and Finance Committee for his fraternity. And when RIT's Saunders College of Business arranged a trip to Dubai as part of its honors program, Forsey was one of the students to go. In addition, he's won several awards for academic excellence

and leadership and maintains a 4.0 grade-point average.

The many opportunities for deaf and hard-of-hearing students to shine in academics and in extracurricular activities are what made RIT Forsey's choice for college. The 20-year-old started his college career at RIT as an Accounting major in Saunders College of Business, but wanted to add technology because that's where he sees the world going, so he switched majors to pursue a bachelor's degree in Management Information Systems.

"Essentially I work with computer information systems and databases, including systems analysis and being a liaison between business users and software developers," he says. "MIS gives me a wide range of options, and I can choose how technical I want my job to be."

David Tawil

by Ilene J. Avallone

“I didn’t really fit in during high school,” says David Tawil, a second-year student from Eatontown, N.J. Tawil, whose parents moved their whole family from the city of Bethlehem in Palestine to the United States for better opportunities, was the only deaf person in his high school, so he was excited to learn about RIT/NTID from a teacher.

“I wanted the opportunity to interact with many hard-of-hearing and deaf students and get access services in the classroom,” he says.

Tawil enrolled in NTID’s Associate+ Bachelor’s Degree program in Business, pursuing a double major in Accounting and Management—taking classes in RIT’s Saunders College of Business. He’s also minoring in Deaf Studies.

“My dream is to work in corporate accounting for 10 years and then open my own business,” he says.

Tawil is a member of NTID’s Masquers Drama Club and the Pi Kappa Phi fraternity. He also is a volunteer instructor for the No Voice Zone (where students learn American Sign Language and Deaf culture from other students) and serves as an orientation assistant for NTID’s New Signers Program. His involvement with so many activities on campus stems from his interest in meeting new people and trying new things.

“It’s been so easy to make friends here because they understand what I’ve been through,” he says. “I feel like I belong here. The toughest part for me now is balancing my social activities with my studies, but I prioritize to put my academics first.”

The 20-year-old follows this motto: “When you get knocked down, get back up and keep moving forward.”



A. SUE WEISER

Leah Murray

by Ilene J. Avallone

Leah Murray, a 20-year-old from Levittown, Pa., will graduate in the spring with an associate degree from NTID’s Arts & Imaging Studies program, but she doesn’t think that will be the end of her academic career. She is considering pursuing a bachelor’s degree.

Murray’s passion for art began as a young girl when her family would go to church, and she would sit and draw to pass the time.

“I always had so many design ideas in my head, and I constantly was drawing them on paper,” she says. “It wasn’t until I got to RIT that I learned to design using the computer, so I’m learning new skills and challenging myself every day. I enjoy it.”

As part of an assignment for a Publication Design course she took last year, Murray designed a cover for a book, *The Passionate Lives of Deaf and Hard of Hearing People*. Her cover design was selected as the winning entry by the author.

Last summer, Murray worked as a graphic designer during a cooperative work experience at Advancing Opportunities in Ewing, N.J., where she designed fliers, business cards and brochures.

“I learned new software programs on the job that I now can add to my resume,” she says.

When Murray is not drawing, she likes to read books, hang out with friends and attend events hosted by NTID’s Spectrum Club. She also is a member of the Deaf Volleyball Association.

Murray is determined to accomplish her dream of working as a graphic or fashion designer.

“I’ve always loved fashion and drawing clothes, and my passion for clothing has never stopped growing,” Murray says. “My goal someday is to work in both fields and maybe own my own business,” she says. “I’m up to the challenge.”



MARK BENJAMIN

Building Pathways for Successful STEM Careers

by Ilene J. Avallone

Biological Sciences. Computer Integrated Machining Technology. Software Engineering. Deaf and hard-of-hearing students at RIT/NTID are finding success in these and other exciting STEM- (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and health care-related majors. Some plan to work as researchers, lab technicians or engineers; others, directly with patients as physicians; and still others as medical illustrators. And while their choices of careers may differ, they would agree the keys to their success are education and access.

“RIT/NTID has been the perfect place for my undergraduate studies,” says Victoria MacPherson, a Biomedical Sciences major from Doylestown, Pa.

“The opportunities offered here for deaf students—from studying abroad and collaborating on research to working side by side in the laboratory with professors—are not easily found in other colleges and universities. RIT/NTID has prepared me well for the next step in my career—studying for the MCATS and applying to medical school,” says MacPherson, who looks forward to becoming a physician and working with Doctors Without Borders.

NTID continues to lead the way in preparing deaf and hard-of-hearing students for careers in STEM- and health care-related fields via three different academic pathways: career-focused associate degrees, associate+bachelor's degrees and bachelor's/master's degrees. With these options, students, no matter what their career aspirations may be, have an opportunity to pursue their goals.

Career-Focused Associate Degrees

These NTID programs are designed to lead to immediate placement in careers at the paraprofessional or technician level, and include a required cooperative education



The Right Combination Sophie Phillips, a second-year student from Sleepy Hollow, N.Y., chose to major in Medical Illustration to combine her interest in biology and medicine with her talent in and love of creating art. She hopes to put her skills to work for a medical research center or a medical school.

component closely tied to high-demand employment opportunities.

Chris Kennedy, a third-year student from Newport, Tenn., will graduate in the spring from the Computer Integrated Machining Technology program. The hands-on technical skills he has learned in the classroom and the real-world learning he got on a co-op have prepared him for success.

“Last summer I completed a co-op at GE Aviation in Cincinnati, Ohio, and I was able to adapt the skills I learned in class to help me do testing of engine components,” says Kennedy.

Kennedy so impressed his co-op employer with his critical and analytical thinking skills that he was offered a full-time job after he graduates.

“NTID associate degree programs follow curricula that represent current industry trends, and classrooms and laboratories are equipped with the latest technology,” says Dr. Stephen Aldersley, NTID associate vice president of Academic Affairs. “When students

complete their associate program and their cooperative education experience, they have the hands-on skills to enter the labor force and begin work immediately.”

Another student pursuing this path is Cierra Cotton from Bowie, Md. Like her mom, who is a science teacher, Cotton has a passion for science and working with her hands, so she chose to major in NTID's Laboratory Science Technology program.

“LST is a perfect fit for me,” says Cotton, who would like to work in a lab for a government agency when she graduates.

Arooj Ajaz also is pursuing an associate degree in LST, prompted by her interest in the biomedical field and RIT's reputation in technology.

“I like listening to lectures and then doing hand-on activities in the lab that are closely related to the concepts we learn,” says the St. Louis native. “It helps me pinpoint the areas where I want to work in the future.”

Associate+Bachelor's Degrees

Associate+Bachelor's degree programs offer deaf and hard-of-hearing students the opportunity to complete an NTID associate degree and then continue on for a bachelor's degree in some of RIT's most challenging STEM- and health care-related programs.

Samuel Sandoval, an Information Technology major from Fairfax, Va., says this option allowed him to make a smooth transition from NTID's Applied Computer Technology program into the Information Technology program in RIT's B. Thomas Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences.

"By starting out in the NTID program, I felt I was better prepared when I enrolled into a bachelor's degree program because I had benefited from NTID faculty who signed and used lots of visual aids that helped me learn the material more easily," he says.

Sandoval has since completed three co-op experiences at Cisco Systems, the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Dow Chemical Company. These work experiences helped land him a job with Sorenson Communications, where he will start after he graduates.

"The Associate+Bachelor's degree option allows deaf and hard-of-hearing students to prepare for a bachelor's degree with ample support from NTID, so they are prepared for the rigors of the higher-level program when the time comes," says Aldersley.

Ryan Spector started in NTID's LST program, graduated and now is enrolled in the Biomedical Sciences program in RIT's College of Science.

"Starting in the LST program allowed me to become adjusted to the college atmosphere," says Spector. "The courses I was taught in the LST program set the foundation for the concepts that I'm currently learning in my bachelor's degree program. This boosted my confidence in my abilities to succeed in the Biomedical Sciences program."

A co-op last summer at Columbia University gave Spector the opportunity to develop his lab research skills and get an in-depth taste of what scientific research is like.

"It helped me realize my career goal is to work in a research lab and to someday become a principal investigator of my own lab where I can advance scientific knowledge related to immunology/virology," he says.

Bachelor's/Master's Degrees

NTID has a solid track record of helping deaf and hard-of-hearing students successfully graduate from the other colleges of RIT. Forty-five percent of RIT/NTID students are enrolled in bachelor's and master's degree programs, and many of them are pursuing majors from RIT's colleges of Health Sciences and Technology, Science, Computing and Information Sciences, Engineering, Applied Science and Technology, and Imaging Arts and Sciences. Each of these colleges has NTID instructional/support faculty who provide support services for deaf and hard-of-hearing students, including tutoring and personal and career counseling. Access services also are provided, which many students identify as being an important component to their success in a bachelor's degree program.

Daniel Latimer, from Montclair, N.J., is one such student.

"I chose RIT/NTID because I can easily participate in class and lectures/labs with the help of notetaking and real-time captioning services," he says. "These services have been really important to my academic success."

The third-year student says his natural ability in science and his family's strong background in medicine—his father and both grandfathers are physicians—make Biomedical Science the perfect major for him.

Latimer has completed two co-ops doing biomedical research at Columbia University in New York City and in the Department of Microbiology at the University of Georgia. He plans to get a Ph.D. and do medical research at a hospital, pharmaceutical company or university.

Computer Science major Robert Dooling is enrolled in a bachelor's degree program, but when he first entered RIT's Golisano College, he had

no idea which major he wanted to pursue.

"Over the years, RIT/NTID faculty helped me discover and cultivate my passion for creating software, and the NTID tutors who support me within Golisano College have been an essential part of my success," says the Omaha, Neb., native.

A co-op experience last summer at NASA's Kennedy Space Center gave Dooling an interest in space exploration and a passion to work as a software engineer.

"Our goal is to provide programs that put each and every one of our students on the pathway to success," says Dr. Gerry Buckley, NTID president and RIT vice president and dean. "Designed to fit students' individual needs, our unique programs are helping deaf and hard-of-hearing students pursue their dreams and attain their goals. Most importantly, once they graduate, they are using their RIT/NTID education to make a difference in the world."



The Sky's the Limit Robb Dooling, a Computer Science major, completed a co-op last summer at Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla., where he developed a script generator application to help NASA test future spacecraft. His dream job is to work for NASA as a software engineer.

After Dow, Where are They Now?

by Kathy A. Johncox

The result of NTID's relationship with The Dow Chemical Company has given 20 students in majors as varied as Advertising and Public Relations, Biochemistry, Business, Electrical Engineering, Environmental Management and Technology, Information Technology, and Mechanical Engineering the opportunity to travel to Dow headquarters.

FALL 2010

Melody Frink – Biochemistry
(co-op at Dow in Pennsylvania)

Alexandra Johnson – Mechanical Engineering
Chelsea Bruha Nichols – Advertising and
Public Relations

Greg Pollock – Professional and Technical
Communication (co-op at Dow in Michigan)

SPRING 2011

Adriana Gaylord – Manufacturing
Engineering Technology
(co-op at Dow in Texas)

Rachel Mosefick – Environmental
Management & Technology

Naoko Ohno – International Business

Jason Schwebke – Information Technology

FALL 2011

Tyler Afferbach – Information Security
and Forensics

Maya Ariel – Business
(co-op at Dow in Indiana)

Anna Bracilano – Advertising and
Public Relations

Josh Wilson – Science

SPRING 2012

Jerrin George – Mechanical
Engineering Technology

Jonathan Ricks – Master's degree in
Multidisciplinary Studies with concentrations
in Marketing and Communication

Sam Sandoval – Information Technology
(co-op at Dow in Pennsylvania)

Helen Yu – Business

FALL 2013

Lakeishia Brown – Electrical Engineering

Ashleen Evans – Accounting

Graham Forsey – Management
Information Systems

Olu Coker – Bioinformatics



Award-winning Partners The Dow Chemical Company contingent to the Job Fair poses with NTID President Gerry Buckley (center) and NCE Director John Macko (at right in back row). Dow received an NCE Outstanding Employer Partner Award for their sustained record of hiring RIT/NTID co-op students and graduates.

Forging relationships with potential employers is vital to providing students and graduates a “foot in the door” for cooperative work experiences and permanent jobs. It’s a strategy that the NTID Center on Employment has used successfully for years, but took to a new level in fall 2010, when a unique relationship was forged with The Dow Chemical Company. That’s when four RIT/NTID students boarded a plane for Dow’s corporate headquarters in Midland, Mich., to participate in sessions of Dow’s Senior Management Potential Program, which includes leaders from Dow facilities all over the world. The students were to share information about deafness, the challenges they have faced, their education and their goals. Dow’s goal was, and continues to be, to help its leaders see diversity in the workplace not just as bringing different people together, but as enriching the workplace as well.

The program is in its fourth year, and so far, 20 RIT/NTID students have had the opportunity to travel to Dow headquarters to reinforce the idea that diverse talent brings something unique

to the table. Feedback from Dow and the attendees of the management program has been overwhelmingly positive. Feedback from the students who participated is positive as well and is reflected in what they are doing now, and how their visit to Dow has had an impact on their lives.

RIT/NTID alumni Chelsea Bruha Nichols and Greg Pollock were two of the original four students invited to participate in 2010.

Originally from Denver, Colo., Bruha Nichols works for BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York in Buffalo as a billing analyst. She graduated in 2013 with a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration and an MBA with a concentration in Marketing and Human Resource Development.

“When I learned about the Dow training event, it seemed like an amazing opportunity that not only others could benefit from, but I could benefit from as well,” says Bruha Nichols. “Since we were the first group to participate, I remember not really knowing what to expect walking into the office building, and I remember walking out with a new perspective on



MARK BENJAMIN

From Student to Staff RIT/NTID graduate Greg Pollock (center), now a Dow Chemical Company employee and representative at the Job Fair, enjoys his current role providing information and interacting with students.

life, knowing not only that I changed the outlook of some of the executives, but also that I learned a lot about myself. I learned how to be more self-aware and to advocate for the accommodations I might need in the workplace.”

Greg Pollock, a Professional and Technical Communication alumnus from Pittsburgh, Pa., who landed a

lasting impact on a company that had the potential to really change the way employers view deaf people.

“While I was in Midland, I realized that the company valued growth and professional development, and I decided I wanted to work there. This opportunity helped me get my foot in the door with a co-op, and then I was hired permanently to work as a communications manager in Public Affairs at Dow’s Louisiana Operations site. I do a lot of work in employee communications, community success, strategic development, and social media management.”

As some of the Dow project alumni make their way into the world of work, current students continue to benefit from this program.

Jerrin George, a Mechanical Engineering Technology major from Westbury, N.Y., attended the Dow leadership training event in spring 2012.

“I went because it was an opportunity to meet with Dow employees for future possible job connections. And contributing to this leadership event helped me brush up on my presentation skills. I remember the tour they gave us where we saw a project to develop a net-zero energy home, one that can sustain itself energy-wise. With a project like that, they are paving the path to a better future. I had a chance to talk with a number of employees, and I was impressed with how much effort Dow had expended to make their workforce as diverse as possible.”

Business Management major Helen Yu, from Sunnyvale, Calif., was one of the most recent attendees.



PROVIDED PHOTO

Now a Professional Chelsea Bruha Nichols says that through her experience at Dow while at RIT/NTID, she learned to be more self-aware and be a better self-advocate.

“I went to Dow because I wanted to know what the company was all about,” she says. “I learned that they hire people from all over the world, all different backgrounds, that they are open to all majors and to hiring people with disabilities. They provide wonderful opportunities for job seekers, something I may look into.”

Since the program began, three graduates have found full-time employment at Dow, and 14 students have completed 10-week co-ops.

“This has been a great opportunity for Dow,” said Scott Wills, a Dow research scientist who worked directly with several RIT/NTID co-op students. “I’ve watched the students grow and seen my co-workers grow. It’s been fantastic.”

“The fact that RIT/NTID continues to be invited back to Dow demonstrates the lasting impression that our first group made there,” says Pollock. “It feels good knowing that we were able to create opportunities for more students to be exposed to leaders of this Fortune 500 Company and for Dow to have the chance to see the best RIT/NTID has to offer.”



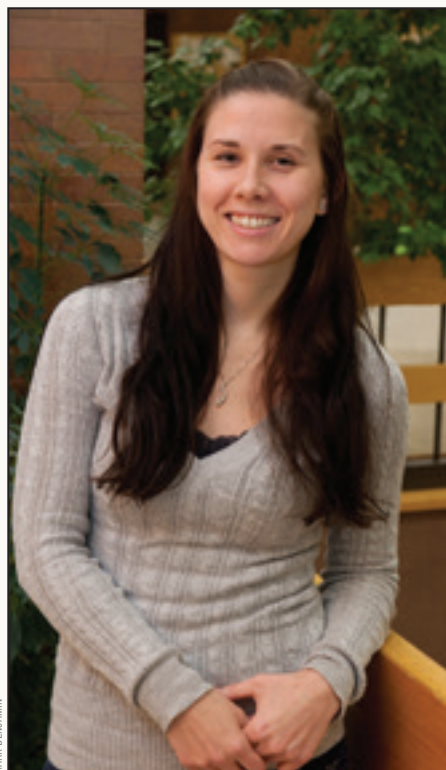
MARK BENJAMIN

Exploring Options Greg Pollock (left) as a student at the 2011 Job Fair, asking Dow employee Dr. Catherine (“Katie”) Hunt (now retired) questions about qualifications and jobs.

permanent job at Dow as a result of this experience, says, “I remember stepping into a room filled with Dow’s world leaders. Almost everyone was in a suit and tie. It was slightly overwhelming, but their smiles and hospitality made us feel so comfortable. I knew that these were people we needed to impress, and this was our opportunity to make a

Tiffany Panko

by Susan L. Murad



MARK BELJAMIN

Persistence is at the heart of what drives Tiffany Panko to succeed in medical school and in life.

The Webster, N.Y., native earned a bachelor's degree in Multidisciplinary Studies, with concentrations in Psychology and Premedical Studies, as well as an MBA at RIT. Before entering medical school, she also became a certified nurse assistant at BOCES #1. She now is in her second year of studies at the University of Rochester School of Medicine.

"I really enjoy medicine because it combines hard science—biology, anatomy, etc.—with the soft science of caring for people," she says. "While there are a lot of ways to help people, I really enjoy medicine. That's what ignites my fire to do what I do, and it's what has gotten me this far."

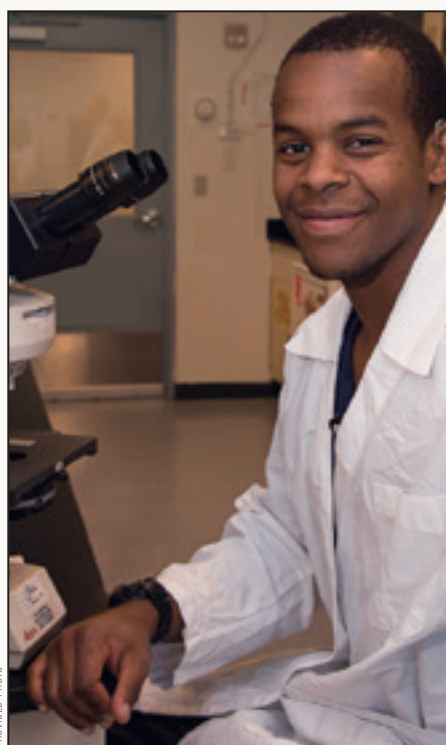
Panko cites skilled interpreters who are a good fit for her needs and for the course content, and the use of transcription services in science lectures as keys to her success. Another key is advocacy.

"I learned to self-advocate early in my life," she says. "I have very supportive parents who are great examples of what deaf people can accomplish. They worked hard to make sure that I had all the support services I needed in high school. I'm very fortunate that the University of Rochester Medical Center has a team of interpreters who make sure that my experience is as close to smooth as it can possibly be—it is still medical school, after all!"

The future Dr. Panko's advice to others reflects the way she lives: "Be persistent! If you know you want something, don't stop chasing your dreams. Volunteer along the way—for things both related and unrelated to your career goals—to make sure you want to pursue medicine and to show the applications committee that you know what you want, and also to give back to the community!"

Jibril Jaha

by Susan L. Murad



PROVIDED PHOTO

One of RIT/NTID alumnus Jibril Jaha's favorite quotes is by an unknown author: "Work hard in silence; let success make the noise."

The 2012 Multidisciplinary Studies graduate is a biological science technician at the U.S. Department of Agriculture in the Animal Plant Health Inspection Services' Mycobacteria and Brucella Laboratory in Ames, Iowa.

"My responsibilities are to conduct diagnostic tests, and to obtain and maintain training and accreditation on equipment and standard operating procedures to perform testing," he says. "Also I work as a laboratory safety rep, and maintain adequate inventory of supplies, reagents and media for performing routine diagnostic testing."

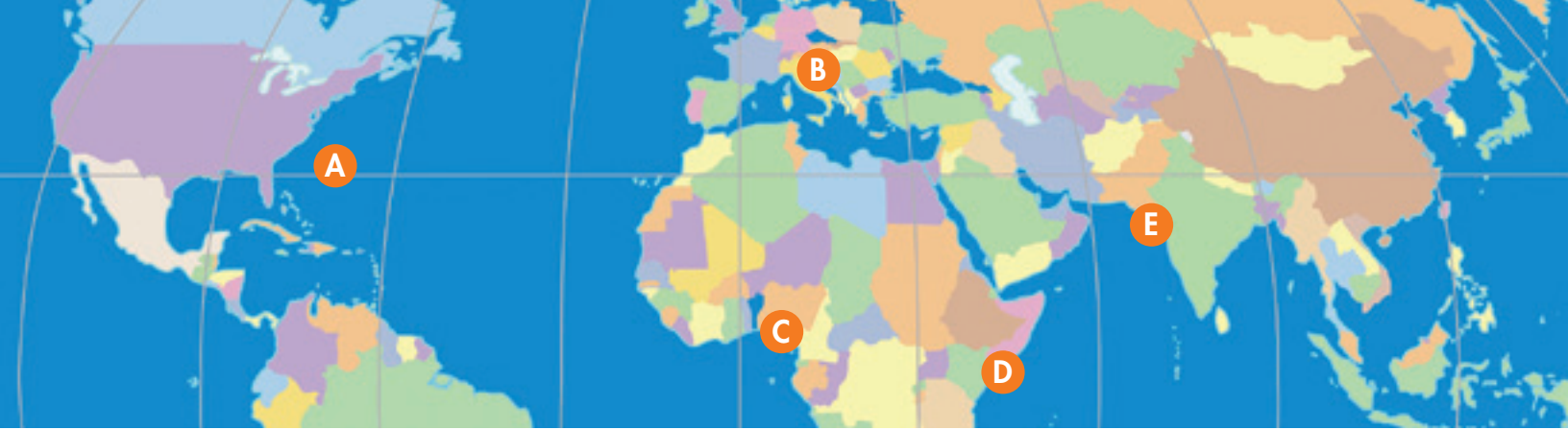
Prior to earning his bachelor's degree, Jaha graduated from NTID's Laboratory Science Technology program. In 2009 he completed a 10-week co-op at the National Institute for Medical Research

in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania. In 2010, he completed a second co-op at Johns Hopkins University, School of Medicine. While at RIT/NTID, Jaha participated in Delta Sigma Phi, the Deaf Basketball Association, and the National Collegiate Inventors and Innovators Alliance.

"RIT/NTID was a good fit for me because it allowed me to be socially interactive with my peers," the St. Louis, Mo., native says. "I had a great experience in NTID's LST program, and that allowed me to bridge my laboratory skills to become a biological science technician."

Jaha advises students that it's never too early to prepare to find their dream job.

"Relentlessly apply," says Jaha, who is considering returning to RIT for graduate school. "Given the economic and employment hardships today, it is best to get work experience every summer before you graduate."



Traveling to Prepare for the Future

by Kathy A. Johncox

Deaf and hard-of-hearing students come from more than 100 countries and often travel thousands of miles for the life-changing educational opportunities offered at RIT/NTID. Some move to the United States with their families for the express purpose of getting an education that will prepare them for a good life.

The students featured here each have their reasons for choosing RIT/NTID, but there are some commonalities. They all chose RIT for the support services, which in their home countries are limited or, in some cases, nonexistent. Exposure to a mix of deaf, hard-of-hearing and hearing students is another reason they came,

because in their home countries there may have been a lack of other deaf students to interact with, or a lack of respect for deaf people and others with disabilities. All of them express a wish to take something back to improve the lives of deaf people in their home countries.



PHOTOS BY MARK BENJAMIN

A

Megan Claire Burgess
Pembroke, Bermuda
Master of Science in Teaching,
Visual Arts Education

RIT in one word: Vibrant

"Without RIT/NTID, my life would definitely be different. The island where I'm from is small, as is the local community college. There I would not have experienced the world I have experienced here, nor learned what I have learned. I have challenged myself, and I have succeeded. I hope to teach art at a deaf school and become a recognized artist both in the United States and back home."



B

Gergely Horvath
Budapest, Hungary
Mechanical Engineering
Technology

RIT in one word: Opportunity

"I came to RIT/NTID because it has the kind of accessibility for deaf students that colleges in my country don't have. My life is completely different from the lives of my Hungarian friends. I was the first person to enter college among my former elementary classmates in Hungary. The program of deaf institutes there is still weak; many kids back home do not reach their maximum potential. My goal is to get an engineering degree and perhaps pursue an MBA in the future. This is the opportunity of a lifetime. I wish it could be there for all deaf Hungarian students."



C

Kehinde Ogunbayo
Nigeria, West Africa
Civil Engineering
Technology

RIT in one word: Experience

"I grew up in a hearing world not knowing much about Deaf culture. I attended a mainstream high school with my twin sister, who is hearing, and who acted as my interpreter. I chose RIT/NTID because I wanted to meet other deaf and hard-of-hearing people and experience Deaf culture. I also wanted to go to a technological college with lots of diversity, and RIT/NTID offered it all. Someday I hope to work in the construction field and help design buildings, or return to Nigeria and teach deaf students. I may go on for a master's degree in architecture with a foreign studies concentration because I would be interested in working in different countries and in my hometown as well."



D

Abubakar Ali Mogadishu
Mogadishu, Somalia
Urban and Community
Studies, International Studies

RIT in one word: Empowering

"RIT/NTID is a unique place where I can experience both deaf and hearing worlds and the diversity of students from other countries. Being able to learn about Deaf culture has enabled me to connect with the Deaf community. The friendliness of the administration, staff and faculty is one thing that I always will remember. From here, I plan to get a master's degree and maybe a degree in law."



E

Salman Ahmed Shahid
Karachi, Pakistan
Business Management

RIT in one word: Diversity

"I chose to come to RIT/NTID because of the resources to train deaf and hard-of-hearing people for the real competitive world. There is no bias, no deaf racism and the college offers a peaceful environment and tutoring help, C-print®, notetaking and cool professors. I am much more organized and motivated than I was in Pakistan. My goal is to get a job and settle in the United States, so I intend to do a one-year accelerated MBA program, as that may improve my prospects for getting a job here. My other goal is to set up a school with dorms and a campus that will be free to all deaf people in Pakistan so that they can have positive, meaningful lives."

Erin Kane

by Ilene J. Avallone



A. SUE WEISLER

Erin Kane, assistant director of Admissions & Visitation at NTID, understands the importance of getting prospective deaf and hard-of-hearing students to visit campus. Many current students tell her it was the campus visit that most influenced their decision to choose RIT/NTID.

“While students can find out what they need to know about college via the Internet, until they visit our unique campus, they truly won’t understand how they see themselves fitting in,” says Kane, who holds a bachelor’s degree in Psychology and a master’s degree in Education and Human Development.

After graduate school, Kane worked for several different employment agencies, helping people with disabilities find jobs. It was at a work conference that she met her husband, Mike, married, moved to South Dakota, and then followed him to Rochester when he accepted a job as a lecturer in

NTID’s Business Studies Department. One year later, Kane accepted a position as an admissions counselor at NTID and three years later transitioned to her current role.

“Prospective deaf and hard-of-hearing students come from a variety of backgrounds from all over the country, so I work hard at giving each of the visitors an individualized campus experience,” she says.

Kane is most proud of the new student ambassador program she established. She manages 12 student ambassadors who give campus tours, blog about their college experiences and participate in open house events throughout the year. She says it’s been an important addition in efforts to connect with prospective students.

Kane is a proud and busy mother of two daughters who are deaf and were adopted from China when they were toddlers. She enjoys crafting and reading, and also is on the national board of the American Society for Deaf Children.

Gil Beverly

by Kathy A. Johncox



A. SUE WEISLER

By his senior year in high school, Chicago native Gil Beverly knew that he wanted to be involved with print graphics.

“I loved the skills needed and the challenges of doing graphics work,” says Beverly, assistant professor in NTID’s Arts & Imaging Studies Department.

After high school, he enrolled at Western Illinois University and lasted one year.

“I wasn’t yet ready for the rigors of college,” he explains.

Beverly got a full-time job as an offset duplicate press operator and began taking night classes at The National College of Education in Evanston, Ill. He also started teaching part time at a junior college.

He earned a bachelor’s degree in Applied Behavioral Management, and a few years later saw an RIT job posting and applied. When he was contacted for an interview, he realized that the job was at NTID and involved teaching deaf students.

“I wondered, briefly, if I would be able to teach someone who was deaf,” Beverly says. “But my next thought was, ‘A student is a student. If the college provides me with the right skills, why couldn’t I teach deaf students?’”

Now, 21 years and thousands of students later, Beverly says that what he likes best about working at RIT/NTID are the people—students, faculty and staff.

“That’s what impressed me about RIT/NTID during my job interview,” he says. “And it still impresses me to this day.”

Beverly, who earned a master’s degree in RIT’s College of Imaging Arts and Sciences School of Print Management, also says he enjoys teaching and feels fortunate to be able to teach what he loves.

“My students motivate me,” he says. “I know how tough it can be out there, and I want to give my students every skill and advantage possible to be successful in their career and in life. My proudest achievement at work every year is graduation. It’s the best!”



NTID Job Fair 2013



MARK BENJAMIN

Outstanding Partners Each year, the NTID Center on Employment presents the Outstanding Employer Partner Awards to employers who consistently have provided job opportunities and experiences for students. The 2013 awards went to The Dow Chemical Company, ZVRS and The Kresge Hearing Research Institute. Left to right, Scott Wills, research scientist at The Dow Chemical Company; NTID President Gerry Buckley; Chris Wagner, senior vice president, Business Operations and Marketing at ZVRS; and John Macko, director, NTID Center on Employment.



STEPHEN WILLE

Health Careers on the Upswing

Representatives from employers in health-related fields talked about job possibilities in the health care marketplace.

Alumni Recruiters Come Home

Alumnus Scott Van Nice (right) from Procter & Gamble met with students, reviewed resumes and discussed his company's future needs for workers.



MARK BENJAMIN



MARK BENJAMIN

From Far and Wide Twenty-two employers from all over the United States met with more than 250 RIT/NTID students and alumni.



MARK BENJAMIN

Advice for the Future (Left to right) Alumni Greg Pollock and Bradley Frank, both employees of The Dow Chemical Company, reviewed resumes and talked to students about opportunities for jobs at Dow.

R·I·T

Rochester Institute of Technology
National Technical Institute for the Deaf
Lyndon Baines Johnson Hall
52 Lomb Memorial Drive
Rochester, NY 14623-5604

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



Super Signer RIT/NTID alumna Amber (Stanton) Zion was selected to perform the National Anthem in American Sign Language for Super Bowl XLVIII on February 2. Zion was chosen for the event after she submitted an audition video to the National Association of the Deaf last fall. NAD has worked

with the Super Bowl since 2008.

A native of Pittsburgh, Pa., Zion graduated from RIT/NTID in 2004 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. During her time at RIT/NTID, she was involved in many NTID Performing Arts productions.

Zion has appeared in several films, was featured

in a Kay Jewelers Christmas commercial for several years and had a starring role on CBS's *CSI:NY* episode, *Silent Night*. She and her husband, Ari Zion, a 2004 RIT/NTID graduate, live in Los Angeles.

Zion is pictured here at the Super Bowl with Seattle Seahawks player Derrick Coleman, who is deaf.