

SPRING / SUMMER 2013

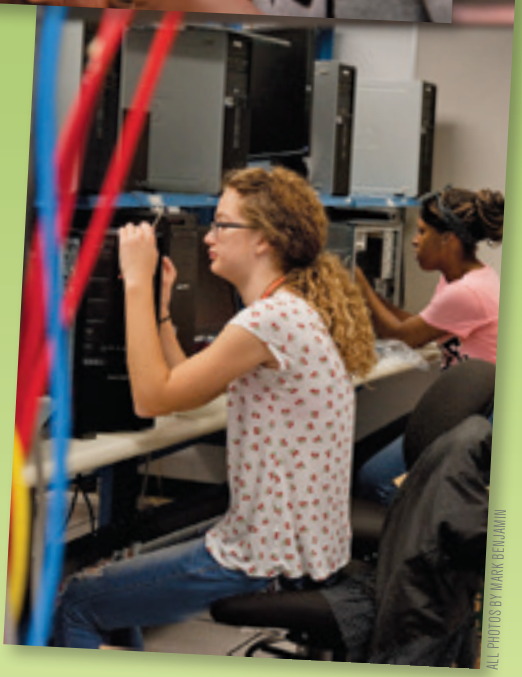
FOCUS

NTID

National Technical Institute for the Deaf • Rochester Institute of Technology



Preparing to Celebrate 45 Years and a Grand Opening



Career Exploration and Self-Discovery RIT/NTID summer camps attracted the interest of several hundred deaf and hard-of-hearing middle and high school students from 22 states and two other countries—Canada and Spain. Middle school boys and girls enjoyed TechBoyz and TechGirlz camps with a focus on STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and math). Steps to Success—a mini-camp for Latino, African American and Native American middle school students—offered the opportunity for students to think about career options. College-bound high school students came to RIT for NTID’s Explore Your Future Program, a career exploration program that gave them an opportunity to get hands-on experience in a variety of career areas.

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ABOUT THE COVER

NTID is preparing to celebrate its 45th anniversary with an alumni reunion to be held during Brick City Homecoming October 11 – 13, 2013. The grand opening of NTID's newest building, Sebastian and Lenore Rosica Hall, will be part of the celebration and will take place on Friday, October 11. See the article on p. 4 for more information about all of the events scheduled.

FEATURES

- 3** An RIT/NTID Education: A Worthwhile Investment
- 5** Student Ambassadors Share their Experiences
- 6** RIT/NTID Athletes Make the Team
- 10** Imagining the Future
- 11** New Signers Program Expands Options
- 12** Recognizing Outstanding Employer Partners
- 15** Parents Provide Essential Support

DEPARTMENTS

- 2** From the President: Looking Back and Moving Forward
- 4** Advancing the Mission: NTID Celebrates its 45th Anniversary
- 8** Profiles in College:
 - Tina Feng
 - Timothy Holmes
 - Joe Lingle
 - Ana Patricia Trujillo-Mendino
- 14** Alumni Profiles:
 - Arricka Nowland
 - Jeffrey McCaw
- 16** Faculty/Staff Profiles:
 - Astrid Jones
 - Heather L. Smith



FOCUS

NTID

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MARK BENJAMIN

Looking Back and Moving Forward

When the final spring quarter in RIT/NTID's history came to close in May, we celebrated one of our largest-ever groups of graduates. A total of 414 students crossed the stage, ready to hit the ground running and make their mark on the world.

As we send our graduates off into the future, we can say with confidence that the investment they made in their RIT/NTID education was a good one. Over the past five years, 91 percent of our graduates who have sought employment have found a job within a year of graduation. And, a recent study

completed by NTID in collaboration with Cornell University, the Internal Revenue Service, and the Social Security Administration shows that, over the past 30 years, our graduates have enjoyed substantially higher career earnings than deaf and hard-of-hearing graduates of other colleges around the country (see the article on the facing page).

The success of our graduates is a reflection of their hard work and determination. But it's also a result of the quality education and outstanding access and support services we provide. The staff in the NTID Center on Employment plays a significant role as well. They network with employers across the country to create co-op and career opportunities for our students and graduates (see p. 12-13).

As we prepare for our first-ever fall semester, we look forward to seeing our returning students and to welcoming a new class of freshmen. Plans are underway for NTID's 45th Anniversary Reunion and Brick City Homecoming and Family Weekend, scheduled for October 10-13 (see p. 4 for details).

We hope you will join us as we celebrate the grand opening of Rosica Hall, a new facility that will be a hub of student and faculty innovation. And, we look forward to welcoming back our alumni as we mark 45 years of fulfilling our mission to educate the best and brightest deaf and hard-of-hearing students and prepare them for success in their careers and in life.

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

An RIT/NTID Education: A Worthwhile Investment

by Greg Livadas

Deaf and hard-of-hearing graduates of RIT/NTID have higher career earnings and are less reliant on federal disability support than deaf or hard-of-hearing graduates from other colleges, according to a study tracking federal data for three decades.

The study, *Economic Benefits of Completing a Degree from RIT/NTID*, was done in partnership with Cornell University and the Social Security Administration. Individuals included in the research were those within the United States whose primary disability is deafness, and who hold either bachelor's or associate degrees.

“At age 50, deaf and hard-of-hearing RIT/NTID graduates with bachelor's degrees earn 178 percent more than deaf and hard-of-hearing graduates who earn degrees elsewhere, while those with associate degrees from RIT/NTID earn 95 percent more than deaf and hard-of-hearing graduates from other colleges,” says Richard Dirmyer, director of NTID Institutional Research and Assessment, and a co-author of the study.

Greater earnings mean less dependence on government sources of support such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI). The study shows that by age 40, deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals who graduated from other colleges collect SSI at more than twice the rate of those who graduated from RIT/NTID.

“RIT/NTID has demonstrated unequivocally the societal contributions of our graduates, and now also can point to the return on the investment made in our students,” says Dr. Gerry Buckley, NTID president and RIT vice president and dean. “This study has demonstrated that completing an RIT/NTID education has significant economic benefits for deaf and hard-of-hearing graduates, allowing them to contribute to society through taxes on wages earned and relying less

on federal assistance such as SSI.”

Buckley notes that over the past five years, 91 percent of graduating RIT/NTID students seeking employment have found a job within a year of graduation.

“There are many reasons that our graduates are so successful, including our outstanding access services, excellent classroom instruction and the efforts of our Center on Employment representatives who travel the country building successful relationships with employers like Microsoft, Boeing, Dow, IBM and many more,” says Buckley, himself an RIT/NTID alumnus.

RIT/NTID alumni such as Luke Faxon-St. Georges—who earned a bachelor's degree in Marketing in RIT's Saunders College of Business and now is a business manager with Discovery Communications—are prime examples of the benefits of an RIT/NTID education.

“RIT was instrumental in preparing me for my career,” he says. “If it weren't for the great faculty and terrific notetakers and tutors I had, I wouldn't be where I am today.”

The data for the report comes from a nearly 30-year collaboration with Cornell, the Internal Revenue Service, and the Social Security Administration to analyze employment status and earnings of RIT/NTID alumni. No personal information about individuals such as name or address was used in the analysis, and the results cannot be traced to specific individuals.

Tracking data over time between RIT/NTID and the federal government “is unique throughout higher education

and rehabilitation services,” says Dr. Richard Burkhauser, a professor of public policy at Cornell.

Other findings show that an RIT/NTID education results in higher rates of employment and longer careers. At age 50, 78 and 73 percent of deaf and hard-of-hearing RIT/NTID bachelor's and associate degree graduates, respectively, were still reporting earnings. This, compared to 69 percent of deaf and hard-of-hearing graduates from other colleges regardless of their degree level.

NTID was created by Congress and signed into law by President Lyndon Baines Johnson in 1965 to provide more technological postsecondary educational



Reaping the Rewards Luke Faxon-St. Georges is an example of a successful RIT/NTID alumnus whose education has led to career success.

opportunities for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. More than 6,600 deaf and hard-of-hearing students from every state and beyond have graduated from RIT/NTID in the past 45 years.

“We are proud that we continue to accomplish what Congress had originally envisioned: providing the best technological postsecondary education for deaf and hard-of-hearing students and helping them secure careers upon graduation,” says Buckley.

NTID Celebrates its 45th Anniversary

by Susan L. Murad



JONNA MENDEZ



PROVIDED PHOTO



MICHELLE LAPIDES, SPRINT RELAY

Highlights of NTID'S 45th Anniversary Reunion include a presentation by author Tony Mendez (left), a performance by Sean Forbes (center) and the recognition of alumna Angela Officer.

NTID's 45th Anniversary Reunion will take place October 11-13, 2013, as part of Brick City Homecoming Weekend.

"Events have been planned to provide something for everyone," says Loriann Macko, interim director of NTID Alumni Relations. "Whether you're a recent graduate or a long-time alumnus, there will be something entertaining and informative for you!"

The Reunion Committee, composed of Macko, SVP '88, '94, and fellow alumni Brian Doane, SVP '83, '86, '95; Stacy Lawrence, SVP '88, '93, '96; Mindy Mundt, '10; Adam Nadolski, '11; and Amy Stornello, '96, have developed a schedule of activities for all to enjoy.

In addition to annual RIT Brick City Homecoming events such as the Presidents' Alumni Ball, Horton Speaker Series and the RIT Tigers hockey game at Rochester's Blue Cross Arena, many events specific to NTID will be included.

The grand opening of Sebastian and Lenore Rosica Hall will take place on Friday afternoon, Oct. 11. Rosica Hall is a first-of-its-kind facility that will specifically engage deaf and hard-of-hearing students and their hearing peers, along with faculty and corporate partners, in the innovation process. Research centers in Rosica Hall will include students as integral members of project teams. The research centers

will be open for tours, with faculty and students there to answer questions about their work. In addition, the Imaginarium—a student innovation workspace—will be open with students on hand to share their enthusiasm about the innovative projects they are creating.

Also on Friday afternoon, as part of the revived Famous Speakers Series, RIT/NTID will feature a presentation by Tony Mendez, a former CIA officer and author. Mendez wrote the book *ARGO: How the CIA and Hollywood Pulled off the Most Audacious Rescue in History*. The book was turned into an Academy Award-winning film featuring actor Ben Affleck, who played the role of Mendez.

Alumnus Sean Forbes, '08, will perform his unique brand of hip-hop/sign music in Ingle Auditorium on Friday evening.

"Tiger Talks" (signed as "tiger-sign"), a series of short presentations that will feature alumni sharing their knowledge and experiences, will take place on Saturday afternoon in Panara Theater.

"Tiger Talks presentations will bring together alumni sharing a passion, an idea or a concept that will be of interest to other alumni," Macko says. "The idea is to bring together our amazing alumni and have them share the diverse and interesting things they do."

RIT/NTID alumna and immediate past chairperson of the NTID Alumni

Association Board of Directors, Angela Officer, SVP '83, '88, will be honored at Saturday evening's Presidents' Alumni Ball as RIT's Volunteer of the Year.

"Angie is one of the most positive and enthusiastic supporters of RIT/NTID," says NTID President Gerry Buckley. "We're so pleased that she is being recognized for her hard work on behalf of the college and the entire university."

While the schedule includes many activities, there is time built in for alumni to do what they love best: reunite with one another.

"Even though social media makes it easier than ever to stay connected with each other, there is nothing like having the opportunity to sit down face to face and catch up with classmates and old friends," says Macko. "We made sure to provide lots of time for those moments to happen during this busy weekend."

LEARN MORE

NTID's 45th Reunion Website

www.rit.edu/ntid/reunion

Brick City Homecoming and Reunion Registration

www.rit.edu/gcr/brickcity

Student Ambassadors Share their Experiences

by Ilene J. Avallone

One of the best assets that RIT/NTID has in attracting prospective students is its current students. That's why the NTID Office of Admissions recently launched a new program that invites current undergraduates to serve as college ambassadors and help share information about RIT/NTID. Currently, 10 student ambassadors serve as liaisons between the NTID Office of Admissions and prospective students and families. They are the faces of the college—leading tours, mingling with visiting students and their families, and enthusiastically sharing their own experiences to highlight the opportunities and benefits of an RIT/NTID education.

"The ambassadors are the experts on what it's like to be an RIT/NTID student," says Erin Kane, assistant director of admissions and visitation, and coordinator of NTID's ambassador program. "It's always our goal to put RIT/NTID's best foot forward, and we rely on current students to help us do that as they showcase and promote RIT/NTID to prospective students and families."

"As an ambassador, I provide one-on-one interaction, personal attention and encouragement that can make the difference between a student choosing RIT/NTID or another college," says New Media Design student Toby Fitch from Zanesville, Ohio. "I love meeting new people and sharing my love for RIT, and it's icing on the cake when I find out that prospective students I met with chose RIT."

Students become ambassadors for all kinds of reasons, but for many RIT/NTID ambassadors, it is the experience and skills they gain and the opportunities to meet a wide range of people.

NTID ambassador and Civil Engineering Technology student Stephen Sweet, from Adrian, Mich., says that he likes people and enjoys

traveling, so it's fun to meet prospective students from across the country.

"If I'm giving a tour to a student from a city I have visited, I use my knowledge of their hometown as an icebreaker to make a connection," he says. "I've learned to become an effective public speaker and answer questions efficiently. This directly affects my performance in the classroom because I've gained confidence in presenting in front of large audiences."

rewarding benefits of being an ambassador is knowing that you are helping students and family members gain a better understanding of life as an RIT/NTID undergraduate," says ambassador Stephanie Kiessling, from Jackson, N.J., who is studying International Hospitality and Service Management. "I may spark a new interest in the mind of a student or help someone finalize their college decision. I enjoy meeting new people and seeing



NTID Student Ambassadors (Front to back and left to right) Danica Metlay, Marissa Polvere, Ally Wu, Helen Yu, Michelle Chung, Stephen Sweet, Stephanie Kiessling, Taylor Yukaw, Elizabeth Pattison and Toby Fitch.

"As an ambassador I'm acquiring experiences and important skills, such as time management, presentation and leadership, that are valuable for my professional career," says NTID ambassador and Graphic Design student Ally Wu, from Jackson Heights, N.Y.

Whether they are meeting one-on-one with a prospective student, giving a campus tour, answering an email, or participating in a student panel at open house, NTID ambassadors are building on and enhancing their RIT/NTID learning experience.

"One of the most important and

that all of our visitors have a pleasant experience on campus—so much so that it influenced me to change my major from Sociology, so that I can continue to work with new people every day in providing satisfying experiences."

"College ambassadors can be some of the most influential people on campus," says Kane. "Sharing their enthusiasm and insights will help prospective students continue to choose RIT/NTID every year."

Meet all of NTID student ambassadors and check out their blogs at www.rit.edu/ntid/ambassadors.



Women's Crew (left to right) ASL-English Interpretation students Anna-Marie Lee, of Newcastle, Maine; Christina DiSalvo, of Derry, N.H.; and Brittany Dzugas-Smith, of West Babylon, N.Y.; and Packaging Science student Molly Mangarian, of Folsom, Calif.

RIT/NTID Athletes Make the Team

by Greg Livadas

The fans probably wouldn't know it unless they happened to see an interpreter working on the sidelines, but deaf and hard-of-hearing students are an integral part of many RIT varsity sports teams.

This past year, more than 20 RIT/NTID students swam or dove in the pool, wrestled, ran cross-country, rowed boats, played volleyball or lacrosse or were on the baseball field. Two RIT/NTID students were cheerleaders.

Deaf and hard-of-hearing student athletes and hearing students studying to become interpreters contributed to their teams. And some, like Erin LaFave, Scott Farrell and Skip Flanagan, were standouts.

Flanagan, a Psychology major from Framingham, Mass., led his team with 53 hits, 12 doubles and 35 RBIs. He recorded a team-best 69 total bases, scored 28 runs and stole nine bases. He was an All-Liberty League Honorable Mention selection last season and was named to the American Baseball Coaches Association/Rawlings All New York Region Third Team.

"I sign, and I also use some speech," Flanagan says. "I was told I enunciate words well, so I use that mode of

communication to converse with my coach and teammates. I read lips as well. I have an interpreter for practices and home games, but I don't find it necessary to have an interpreter on road trips. I communicate fine with the coaches and players when we travel."

His coach, Rob Grow, views Flanagan as one of his best players, not as someone who needs accommodations to play. Grow makes sure Flanagan understands instructions and has an interpreter present when there are meetings.

"Skip is one-of-a-kind, a great spirit and a tremendous player," Grow says. "When you are on the field, the language of baseball makes it easy to communicate. Skip is a great kid and leads our team by his actions. I'm sure he will be named captain sometime in the next two years."

Flanagan says some of his teammates have learned sign language, and he also communicates using social media in between games and practices.

Carly Schriver, a Business major from Dayton, Ohio, played basketball in high school, but communication was often difficult with her coach and teammates. She says it's much easier at RIT, where

she plays volleyball. "A sports interpreter helps me communicate with the coach, assistant coaches and my teammates," she says.

Erin York, an interpreting student from Honeoye Falls, N.Y., has played lacrosse for RIT's varsity team for three years. The experience has even taken her to play games in St. Croix, Virgin Islands.

"My first year, I had two deaf teammates, and there was an interpreter who came to practices and games," York says. "It was cool because I had never had deaf teammates before, and learning to work with them and the interpreters on a large field was an experience I enjoyed."

Erin LaFave, a member of the track team at RIT, usually has an interpreter nearby to help with communication. A Visual Media major from Troy, Mich., she broke a college record in the 6,000-meter race and competed in the Women's Cross Country Division III NCAA Finals in 2011.

"I'm lucky to have teammates who have learned sign language and one that is studying to be an interpreter," she says. "Also, one of my coaches has been studying sign language since my freshman year."

LaFave also uses texting if needed. “I have enjoyed my time at RIT/NTID. It has been a great five years. I have been blessed with great coaches,” she says. “I also have had the pleasure to compete with fantastic teammates during my running career at RIT. Anything that I achieved as a runner I owe in large part to those coaches and my teammates.”

LaFave also is very grateful for “the assistance of wonderful interpreters during my athletic career, especially Doni LaRock.”

LaRock has been interpreting for deaf athletes for 36 years in just about every varsity sport. He’s even accompanied athletes on an exchange trip to China.

It takes additional skills to keep up with quick athletes to interpret for them.

“We often will travel on bikes with the cross country athletes when they go out to do specific workouts to provide interpreting services on the trails,” he says. “In addition, at cross country meets, we bring bikes on the bus so we can ride along with the team as they do a warm up run of the course and then to follow the coach during the race as he runs to provide coaching comments to the runners as they run by specific points on the course.”

LaRock says the interpreter’s role on

the playing field is to level it—to give the deaf athlete the same advantage as the hearing athletes.

“When they have starts in swimming or running, for example, or plays are being called and need quick responses, we try to get that information to the deaf athlete as quickly as possible so he or she can respond immediately to the gun or starting horn or to the directions of the coach or to the play being set up,” LaRock says.

Scott Farrell of North Tonawanda, N.Y., is expecting to compete in his fourth and final year on the RIT swim team this fall. He’s helped break two RIT relay records in the pool.

“For a swimmer, it doesn’t require a lot of communication, only motivation,” he says.

Farrell uses an interpreter at times and has a personal strobe light if the pool doesn’t have one to signal the start.

“I’d like to tell other athletes, new or older, that they shouldn’t give up at all,” Farrell says. “Don’t let deafness affect their competitiveness, ever! Just do it and try your best with all your effort.”

Farrell, LaFave and Scott Matchett, another RIT/NTID swimmer from Brighton, N.Y., competed in the Deaflympics in Bulgaria this summer.

RIT Athletic Hall of Fame inductees from NTID include:

2012 – Mike Lawson (Soccer)

2008 – Marie Benson McKee (Tennis)
Tony Wallace (Wrestling)

2007 – Matt Hamill (Wrestling)

2004 – Len Williams (Hockey)

2003 – Ronald Rice (Swimming)

2001 – Gerald Isobe (Golf)

2000 – Gregory Coughlan (Cross Country, Track)
Kristine Gray (Softball, Volleyball)

1999 – John Reid (Wrestling)

When teams are competing at RIT, LaRock says it’s his role as an interpreter to make sure the officials are aware that the team has a deaf athlete and that his responsibilities require that he have access to the field of competition to provide services to the deaf athlete.

“I do many behind the scenes activities to make sure I can quickly and smoothly provide services in the moment they are needed,” LaRock says. “I have often been called ‘coach’ by coaches and officials who don’t exactly know how to address or interact with me, but I have never had any problem providing services to our deaf athletes because of the officials.”

Meredith Ray, another interpreter who has supported NTID athletes for 36 years, says it’s easy for deaf athletes to pick up visual cues.

“Audibles and visual signs are used in most sports. It is just kicked up a notch in American Sign Language,” she says. “Many coaches and teammates have become conversationally fluent in sign to really foster a great relationship. My hope is that more and more do over time.”

Ray says she’s impressed by the dedication of the parents of deaf athletes at RIT. “They have brought a rich experience and lessons in sports and life to their sons and daughters so they can compete at this level,” she says. “Many, although living away in New Jersey or Boston and the like, have never missed more than a game or two in all these years, driving back and forth in the same week.”



STEPHEN WILLE

Proud Tigers Front row, left to right: Erin LaFave, Visual Media major from Troy, Mich., women’s cross country; Wilma Dennis, Criminal Justice major from Tacoma, Wash., cheerleader; Felicia Boria, Computer-Aided Drafting Technology major from Riverside, Calif., cheerleader; Amanda Dole, ASL-English Interpretation major from Mantua, N.J., women’s cross country. Back row: Eddie McBride, Computer Integrated Machining Technology major from Germantown, Md., wrestling; Scott Farrell, Manufacturing Engineering Technology major from North Tonawanda, N.Y., swimming; Scott Matchett, Career Exploration Studies student from Brighton, N.Y., swimming.

Tina Feng

by Susan L. Murad



AUDIE LO

A passion for science has helped forge a path of success for Canadian Tina Feng.

That passion runs in Feng's family—her brother, who is hard of hearing, graduated from the University of Toronto with a bachelor's degree in Chemistry.

"My brother and I went to the same mainstream school in Toronto," she says. "Throughout college, he was my private tutor for chemistry."

Feng earned an associate degree in Laboratory Science Technology in May 2010, and a bachelor's degree in Biotechnology & Molecular Bioscience in February 2013. She now is planning to continue her graduate studies in Bioinformatics in RIT's B.Thomas Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences in the fall.

Feng has made the most of her time at RIT/NTID, completing four cooperative work experiences, first at the University of Rochester in the Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program. She also completed two co-ops with Merck—one as

a science intern in Rahway, N.J., and the second as a manufacturing science intern in West Point, Pa. Her final internship was as an Environmental Marine Biology Researcher at Gallaudet University.

"RIT is an extremely deaf-friendly environment," she says. "We have highly skilled ASL interpreters for classes and extracurricular activities. I've also been fortunate to go to conferences and present research projects with my professors."

Feng reminds students not to be afraid to ask for help.

"Take advantage of all the available resources such as the NTID support teams, who provide one-on-one tutoring to help you with homework, prepare for exams, clarify various scientific concepts and more."

She turns to another scientist, Albert Einstein, for inspiration: "Imagination is more powerful than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand."

Timothy Holmes

by Kathy A. Johncox



MARK BENJAMIN

"I really love to put a smile on everyone's face," says Timothy Holmes, a fourth-year Applied Arts and Science major from Stockbridge, Ga.

And he has done that many times during his involvement in the NTID Performing Arts program. Holmes, 23, has appeared in many plays and is a founding member and performer in *Dangerous Signs*, a popular NTID performance group. He also is president of the *Masquers' Drama Club*, and is a three-time recipient of an NTID Performing Arts Scholarship.

Holmes chose a minor in Human Resource Management as part of his degree program in the Center for Multidisciplinary Studies, which allows him to take courses in several of RIT's colleges in subjects that he enjoys and believes will help him in his career when he graduates with a bachelor's degree in spring 2014.

Holmes credits his mother with encouraging him to go to college. He is

the first son in his family to attend.

"I chose RIT because of the great opportunities the co-op program offers, and the support services as well," he says. "I already have had two great co-ops, one interning at the Department of Defense Education Activity in Virginia, and one at the Federal Communications Commission in Washington, D.C."

Holmes likes the social aspects and leadership opportunities offered by RIT/NTID student clubs and organizations, Greek life and student government. And he likes the diversity.

"There are many different cultures here, and there are many opportunities for me to learn more about them," he says.

Holmes is planning to continue on for a master's degree, and hopes to use that, plus his co-op work experience credentials, to find a job working for the government.

Joe Lingle

by Ilene J. Avallone

RIT has been a great fit, both inside and outside the classroom, for fourth-year student Joe Lingle, who found his calling as an Environmental Science major.

Lingle, 21, attended mainstream schools while growing up, and he went to two different deaf camps every summer. He liked being a part of both worlds, so when it was time for college, RIT was his first choice.

“RIT had my major and offered many extracurricular activities, and no place else could compare to the support here for deaf and hard-of-hearing students,” he says.

Lingle’s interest in environmental science stems from his enjoyment in learning about all science disciplines and the hands-on field work that he gets to do.

“In the future, I hope to work for an organization where I get to use Geographic Information Systems to generate data to map environmental concerns and issues,” he says.

The self-proclaimed “nerd” enjoys woodworking, building computers and playing with LEGOs. He also is the event

planner for Wolk, a deaf Jewish club at RIT.

But real fun for Lingle is hockey, a sport he’s been playing for nearly a decade. He played for his high school varsity team and attended hockey camp sponsored by the American Hearing Impaired Hockey Association, where he received several Most Valuable Player awards. In 2009, Lingle played on Team USA in the World Deaf Ice Hockey Championship in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, bringing home a bronze medal. This spring he traveled to Finland to compete in the 2013 World Deaf Ice Hockey Championships as part of the USA Deaf Olympic hockey team.

“The level of competition was the most challenging I ever played, and the opportunity to meet other deaf hockey players from all over the world was so rewarding,” he says.

At RIT, Lingle is the goalie on the club and intramural ice hockey teams, so for most of the academic year he is playing hockey every night. How does he do it?

“I do what’s fun and take one day at a time,” he says.



A. SUE WEISER

Ana Patricia Trujillo-Mendino

by Kathy A. Johncox

“I waited for 11 years to go to RIT,” says Ana Patricia Trujillo-Mendino. “I wanted to come after high school, but I couldn’t afford to live on my own.”

Trujillo-Mendino, age 30, was born in Mexico to hearing parents. Her family, including three siblings, two of whom are deaf, later moved to the U.S. She attended a mainstream high school in Los Angeles and became a citizen in 2008 while attending Glendale Community College. She worked for seven years for CLIMB, Inc., a center for independent living for visually impaired people.

At a workshop for the Latino community through RIT/NTID’s DeafTEC—a project designed to improve career awareness for deaf and hard-of-hearing high school and college students in STEM fields—she finally got the chance she’d been waiting for. There she met RIT/NTID faculty members Donna Lange, Elissa Olsen and Karen Beiter, who, after learning her story, convinced her that it’s never too late to go back to school and that she could, and should, pursue

her long-time dream and continue her education at RIT/NTID.

Trujillo-Mendino currently is a freshman transfer student studying for an associate degree in Applied Computer Technology. She hopes to continue her studies and graduate in 2017 with a bachelor’s degree in Information Technology and a minor in Engineering. She’d like to work in information technology, maybe with the FBI, CIA or a police department.

“I am very proud to be here,” says Trujillo-Mendino. “I want to be the first person in my family to receive a bachelor’s degree. I want my family to be proud of me.”

“The courses are challenging,” she says, “but I do not give up. I love math, and both computers and engineering have a math focus. I’ve always wanted to go to RIT because of the great education offered for deaf and hard-of-hearing people. This was my dream, and I am now living it.”



A. SUE WEISER

Imagining the Future

by Kathy A. Johncox

People of all ages from the Rochester community and beyond came to campus for a glimpse of the future, and exhibitors at the 2013 Imagine RIT: Innovation and Creativity Festival were only too happy to oblige.

“More than 30,000 visitors, many of whom make this an annual event with family and friends, enjoyed RIT/NTID’s enthusiasm for creativity and innovation,” says NTID President Gerry Buckley. “I was proud and impressed with the subjects our exhibitors chose and the quality of our exhibits.”

All nine RIT colleges had themes for their exhibits, and RIT/NTID’s exhibits focused on providing visitors creative, hands-on activities with an innovative edge, whether it was related to American Sign Language, the latest research from NTID’s Deaf Studies Laboratory or the newest technology in cochlear implants. There were many exciting RIT/NTID exhibits for visitors to see and try.

A demonstration of innovative methods for improving captioning in movie theaters, a product that uses GPS and a smart phone application for locating lost or misplaced hearing aids and other devices, and new software that allows a computer monitor to make communication more accessible by recognizing and processing American Sign Language were the projects and products that were created for The Next Big Idea, RIT/NTID’s Student Innovation Competition, sponsored by ZVRS. They were demonstrated at the festival by the three winning student teams.

Also exhibited was the See-Through, Life-sized Interactive Monitor (S.L.I.M)—currently in development by students and faculty from NTID’s Center on Access Technology Innovation Lab. It consists of two large monitors, positioned back-to-back, that allow students to see teachers’ faces even when they are writing on the board.

Creators of the Smart Cane for the Blind demonstrated an assistive

technology that can guide visually impaired people past obstacles, so they can safely maneuver their environment with greater speed and confidence than with a traditional white cane.

Festival visitors also enjoyed an innovative multimedia performance with a cast of deaf and hearing dancers who use movement to portray the properties of the universe.

AstroDance was created and choreographed by Thomas Warfield, assistant professor in NTID’s Cultural and Creative Studies Department, and featured galactic imagery produced in collaboration with computer science faculty from the B. Thomas Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences and astrophysicists from RIT’s College of Science. The project goal was to give audiences an appreciation for science and technology and leave them with an expanded perspective on how to see and understand both science and dance as a collaboration created from the interaction of the left and the right brain.

Visitors also printed their names in sign language handshapes, chatted with Deaf Studies Laboratory researchers and participated in research activities for which they received prizes, picked up free hearing protection, watched student-built printers create 3-D objects, and more.

What will we think of next? Come and see.



STEPHEN WILE



MARK BEQUAMIN



MARK BEQUAMIN

Something for Everyone Dancing, innovation, invention and learning about American Sign Language were just a few of the attractions at NTID’s exhibits during the 2013 Imagine RIT festival.

Save the date for the next Imagine RIT, May 3, 2014.

New Signers Program Expands Options

by Ilene J. Avallone



MARK BENJAMIN

Learning American Sign Language (Left to right) NSP students Daniel Vasilew and Joe Vengen practice ASL with instructor Jennifer Briggs.

A new program offered at RIT/NTID is expanding communication options for some of the college's newly accepted students.

The New Signers Program (NSP) was offered this past year as an optional one-week, pre-orientation program for deaf and hard-of-hearing students who have little or no prior skills in American Sign Language. NSP is designed to help students begin to learn basic sign skills before the start of NTID's week-long orientation known as the Summer Vestibule Program, so that they will be able to communicate more effectively with RIT/NTID peers, faculty and staff members who use sign language. In addition to sign language instruction, students receive an introduction to Deaf culture and awareness.

"I took one sign language class in high school, and I wanted to learn more,"

says NSP participant David Tawil, a first-year student from Eatontown, N.J. "It's a beautiful language. From the start of the program I really felt welcomed here and got to know people who are the same as I am."

RIT/NTID accepts and provides support for students of varying communication preferences, including those who use sign only, those who use speech only, and those who use both sign and speech.

Typically 10 to 15 percent of incoming deaf and hard-of-hearing first-year students use speech as their main mode for expressing information and do not know sign language. Many of these students decide to learn to sign once they begin their studies at RIT/NTID to help facilitate communication with those members of the community who primarily use sign language.

According to Dr. Kim Kurz, the American Sign Language and Interpreter Education Department chairperson who led the program, the pilot attracted 17 students, including students from Japan and Sudan, and was so successful that it is being offered again this year. Lisa DeWindt Sommer, NTID counselor/academic advisor, will continue to serve as program coordinator, and J. Matt Searls and Jennifer Briggs, NTID support faculty members, will lead the classroom instruction on ASL and Deaf culture.

"The students who attended the program have different reasons for wanting to know sign language, but all of them ultimately wanted to have more communication options while on campus," says Kurz.

Taylor Repetski, a first-year student from Fairless Hills, Pa., who was born deaf and received a cochlear implant as a young child, says, "I'm from a hearing family, and I went to a mainstream school. I was the only hard-of-hearing student in my grade. I enrolled in the program to be able to communicate with students who sign, and to learn about Deaf culture. Now I can sign whenever I need to, and I've maintained close friendships this year with several of my NSP classmates."

Tawil also says he learned a lot from the program.

"I not only learned sign language, but I got to familiarize myself with the RIT campus and that helped me feel more confident when SVP orientation began," he says. "I met some of my best friends during NSP week as well as getting to know some faculty and staff. I even got to have lunch with NTID President Gerry Buckley!"

For more information on NSP, visit www.rit.edu/ntid/nsp.

Recognizing Outstanding Employer Partners

by Kathy A. Johncox

For more than 35 years, the NTID Center on Employment has been developing and maintaining relationships with a wide variety of employers. These relationships foster employment opportunities for deaf and hard-of-hearing students and graduates. The value of such relationships for employers is the state-of-the-art skills and diversity that RIT/NTID students and graduates can add to their workforce.

To recognize these important partnerships, in 2010, NCE established the Outstanding Employer Partner Awards.

“Employer partnerships are key to our successful employment program for students and graduates,” says John Macko, NCE director. “Once employers see the caliber of our students, they tend to hire again and again. We created the Outstanding Employer Partner Award to recognize and thank employers who continue to hire our students and graduates, or who otherwise participate in the job-related programs NCE offers.”

The awards are presented during NTID’s annual October Job Fair to employers who have a sustained record of hiring RIT/NTID students or graduates. Partners often are supportive in other ways such as hosting workshops, participating in the NTID Job Fair and providing other employment-related services to RIT/NTID. Honors are presented in three categories: corporations and federal government; educational institutions/non-profit organizations and local/state governments; and small- to mid-sized companies.



Commending an Employer Partner NTID President Gerry Buckley (left) congratulates Phil Miller from Sorenson Communications.

Bender Consulting Services, Inc.

At a 2001 Business Leadership Network Conference in Iowa, Macko gave a “Working Together: Deaf and Hearing People” presentation and afterward was approached by three women who said, “We want to work with you.” Those six words have translated into 35 contracts to full-time hires since the Bender Consulting relationship began. One of the three women was Joyce Bender, founder and CEO of Bender Consulting Services, Inc., a firm that recruits and hires people with disabilities who are trained to work in public and private sectors in information technology, engineering, finance/accounting, human resources and general business areas.

“I consider it a great honor to receive an award from a university that provides excellent academic training for talented deaf and hard-of-hearing students from all over the country and the world,” Bender says. “In the workplace, we encourage employers to see hiring people with disabilities as a business solution

for their corporation or organization—it’s a good business decision that will pay dividends and is the right thing to do.”

Bender Consulting also has participated in the NTID Job Fair since it began and has hosted “Working Together” workshops in the Pittsburgh area.

Matt Martella, a 2010 graduate who studied Web and application development in the Information Technology program at RIT’s B. Thomas Golisano School of Computing and Information Sciences, is an example of a successful Bender Consulting Services, Inc., end-user.

He is an application developer at Highmark, a not-for-profit health care company based in Pittsburgh.

“I applied for this job through the Bender website,” says Martella. “Bender and Highmark have a very good relationship, and Bender referred me to Highmark for an interview. It turned out that Highmark was interested in mobile and Web development, and that was my area of interest. It was a great match.”



MARK BENJAMIN

Recognition and Appreciation (Left to right) NTID's Gerry Buckley and John Macko; Neil Lutz, Joyce Bender and Mary Brougher, Bender Consulting Services, Inc.; Phil Miller, Sorenson Communications; and Regina Kiperman-Kiselgof, NTID Center on Employment, participated in the third annual Outstanding Employer Partner Awards ceremony.



PROVIDED PHOTO

West Coast Presentation In Los Angeles, Dawn Lucas, associate director, NTID Center on Employment (second from left) presented the award to City of Los Angeles representatives (left to right) Gary Moore, Carl Horst, William Weeks and Mahmood Karimzadeh.

Sorenson Communications®

Sorenson Communications is a provider of communications products and services for deaf and hard-of-hearing people. These products include videophones, Sorenson Video Relay Service® and software applications, among others. The partnership between Sorenson and NCE began in 2005, and in the last five years, Sorenson has hired 18 full-time workers and provided work for 17 co-op students.

After receiving a bachelor's degree in Applied Arts and Sciences in 2011 and certification in computer graphics, Dolly Dalal applied online for a technical support position and was hired at Sorenson's Rochester office. She feels it's been a good fit for her.

"I brought good skills to my technical support position at Sorenson," says Dalal. "I feel comfortable in this work environment because my teams and managers are good communicators and they are fun to work with. I continue to

learn and that enables me to help the organization stay at the top of the field."

Lance Pickett, senior technical support advisor at Sorenson Communications, says, "We continue to hire RIT/NTID students for co-ops and permanent jobs because we want to contribute to the development of professionalism and business/technical skills among university students preparing to enter the workforce as well as identify potential employees who would be valuable for our department. Sorenson is honored to receive this recognition, and we look forward to continuing to work with RIT/NTID to maintain our valuable relationship."

City of Los Angeles

Since 2008, the City of Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering has hired 15 co-op students from the Computer Aided Drafting Technology, Arts & Imaging Studies and Graphic Design programs.

"This award affirms the City of Los Angeles' vision that investing in diversity not only is the right thing to do, but makes good business sense as well," says William Weeks, City of Los Angeles Personnel Department, personnel director.

Kehinde Ogunbayo, a Civil Engineering Technology student, was interviewed by videophone and got a job with the city.

"On my first day, my employer made me feel very welcome, introduced me to other workers, showed me the offices and other things to get me started," says Ogunbayo. "I was a little nervous and shy, but I became comfortable when I

Past recipients of the Outstanding Employer Partner Awards:

2011

American School for the Deaf,
West Hartford, Conn.

IBM, Austin, Texas

Crane Group of Companies,
Columbus, Ohio

2010

Defense Finance & Accounting
Service, Rome, N.Y.

BNY Mellon, Pittsburgh, Pa.



MARK BENJAMIN

At the Job Fair Representatives from Bender Consulting Services, Inc., match student skills with employer needs.

realized the people were all very friendly and communication was clear. I asked a lot of questions because I am curious, and that helped me learn a lot from my co-op. I learned that being an architect or civil engineer is not an easy job, and I am beginning to understand the relationship between the cost of a building, the strength of the structure and the building codes."

"Our employer partners know the training our students have and their skill level, and that is why they continue to hire," says Macko. "The partnerships we have developed with employers who know the caliber of our students and graduates really are invaluable. We are happy to have created RIT/NTID's Outstanding Employer Partner Awards to acknowledge the continuing relationships that benefit our students and graduates and are so important in the world of business today."

Arricka Nowland

by Susan L. Murad



ALLYSON GABRIELE

Volunteering leads to opportunities. And no one knows that better than RIT/NTID alumna Arricka Nowland, whose volunteer activities have led to interpreting opportunities both here and abroad.

The Portland, Maine, resident was homeschooled in Andover, Mass., and began learning ASL formally at age 16 at her local community college. “I knew I wanted to transfer to a more extensive interpreter training program, and I decided on RIT/NTID because of its diverse deaf community,” she says.

She developed an interest in ASL and Deaf culture at four or five years of age.

“I started learning ASL through a video curriculum my mom bought when I was seven,” she says.

As a student in RIT/NTID’s American Sign Language–English Interpretation program, Nowland was involved with the Student Interpreting Association and was a resident advisor. She became the ResLife representative on NTID’s Student Assembly, and was elected speaker. She also was involved with the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship.

It was through her involvement with the IVCF that Nowland traveled twice to Guyana, South America.

Nowland then spent two months in South Korea teaching ASL to Korean deaf students and learning Korean Sign Language from them.

She returned to the U.S., and became a volunteer interpreter at a conference on social justice, when a linguistics organization found out about her international experiences.

“They hired me—sometimes for a stipend and sometimes in exchange for travel, food and lodging—to interpret at conferences in Asia and Africa and domestically for one to two weeks at a time every few months,” she says. “One opportunity led to another, and I was invited to train interpreters in Fiji.”

Given her experiences, Nowland’s advice to others is not surprising.

“Immerse yourself in the deaf community and volunteer,” she says. “Not only is it giving back, it will lead to cool opportunities. You might not get paid, but the experiences will be priceless.”

Jeffrey McCaw

by Susan L. Murad



CLAY BLACKMORE

When he was an RIT/NTID student, Jeffrey McCaw followed the advice he now gives young people.

“Get involved,” says the 1989 graduate of RIT’s Saunders College of Business, who earned a bachelor’s degree in Accounting. “Follow your passion. Study hard and recognize that you always will be studying throughout your career to be successful in your field. Get all you can out of college and be ready to work.”

McCaw, a Certified Public Accountant, is Goodwill Industries International’s chief financial officer, and oversees all activities associated with finance, within a \$50 million annual budget.

Prior to joining Goodwill®, McCaw spent seven years as a controller for a leading Washington, D.C., metropolitan CPA firm, Baker & Tilly.

McCaw was promoted to CFO based on his direction in developing, growing and managing the accounting department at Goodwill®. The organization provides job preparation, skills training, education assistance and support services to 6.7 million people a year who are facing challenges to finding employment.

“I really enjoy working with people,” he says. “They bring new ideas and new initiatives. Everyone plays a role; we’re all part of the team.”

McCaw’s interest in creating a collaborative work environment may have started when he transferred to RIT/NTID from Babson College. He credits his time as a resident advisor and accounting tutor with helping him to develop socially.

“I have such fond memories of the support services I received from notetakers and tutors,” he says. “My co-op experiences provided valuable lessons that I still use in my work today, such as adapting to new technologies and effective time management.”

McCaw lives in Maryland, loves to read and golf, and enjoys spending time with his wife and 10-year-old twins.

He has served on the board of directors as treasurer at the Berks Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services and the Deaf Abused Women Network (DAWN), and is an active member of the American Institute of CPAs, the Greater Washington Society of CPAs and the Pennsylvania Institute of CPAs.

Parents Provide Essential Support

by Susan L. Murad

Parents of RIT/NTID students play an important role in their child's success. They provide the bridge between the student's home and college life, and have a unique vantage point to witness their growth.

"I am lucky enough to meet many of the parents of the students in my classes due to the nature of theater," says Dr. Luane Davis Haggerty, lecturer in NTID's Cultural and Creative Studies Department. "Many parents come in support of their sons/daughters when they are performing; some even come when we travel with the shows. The effort, attention and interest they show are an inspiration."

Sean and Sue Flanagan, parents of Sean "Skip" Flanagan, a Psychology major and a stand-out player on RIT's baseball team, are the embodiment of the supportive parent model. Although they live in Massachusetts, they attend many—if not all—of their son's baseball games, and are both members of the NTID Foundation Board of Directors.

"Skip applied only to RIT," says Sue Flanagan. "The school's outstanding academic program that is nationally recognized, combined with the outstanding employment record, really were impressive to all of us."

The Flanagans also list the access and support services for deaf students and the opportunity to play baseball for the RIT Tigers as deciding factors.

"Baseball is his passion," Sean Flanagan says. "When it came down to it, this was the only choice for him. The seamlessness between Deaf culture and the hearing world here is not something he would find anywhere else."

"You try to imagine what the future will be for your child, and when you have a deaf child you really wonder what the world has in store," Sue Flanagan says. "Everything we could imagine for Skip is here at RIT. You want happiness for your kid. And he's happy. That's priceless."

Steve Morse, father of Austin, a University Studies major, is another parent who provides the kind of support



Providing Roots and Wings Parent Steve Morse (right) feels that having Austin live on campus is beneficial to his son's growing independence.

that helps his child succeed. And even though he works at RIT as assistant vice president in Institute Audit, Compliance & Advisement, he wanted his son to explore his options.

"I wanted to go on tours of colleges," Morse says. "Austin wanted to come here

and applied only here. He was strong in science and math and figured he could get in here. Because he is deaf, he knew a lot of people here and liked the idea of a mainstream education as well as the deaf social aspect."

And while the family lives in commuting distance, both Austin and his parents agreed he should live on campus, citing the benefits for him to be independent.

"The three things that make RIT a fit for us and for Austin are: the deaf social community, the mainstream academic offerings and the support services," says Morse. "I know how important fit is."

Morse has watched his son grow in many ways.

"I have seen Austin start to really think about his future," he says. "He always was good in leadership and is pledging a fraternity now. He is very self-sufficient and has learned to take responsibility for what he needs to succeed and for his academic needs."



Tiger Pride Parents Sean and Sue Flanagan enjoy visiting son Skip and cheering him on at RIT baseball games.

Astrid Jones

by Ilene J. Avallone



MARK BENJAMIN

“Working with students in different settings and seeing them take on leadership positions, grow and thrive to be great community leaders and citizens, are reasons why my job is so rewarding,” says Astrid Jones, coordinator for student life programming at NTID.

Jones also is coordinator for NTID’s Step-Up Program, an organization for first-year deaf and hard-of-hearing African American, Latino, Asian and Native American students who are undecided on a major. He also serves as an instructor for the group’s freshman seminar.

The St. Croix, Virgin Islands, native, who was born deaf, has worked at RIT/NTID since 2004 and enjoys the fast-paced nature of his position.

“I’m not a person who likes to sit in an office all day, so this has been the perfect job for me,” he says. “I enjoy collaborating with different departments within NTID and RIT on student-centered projects, and planning and organizing cultural opportunities for deaf, hard-of-hearing

and hearing students to come together and work in harmony.

Jones currently is enrolled in the RIT College of Applied Science and Technology master’s degree program in Multidisciplinary Professional Studies, focusing on Secondary Education of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and Human Resource Management. This degree will serve him well in his current position.

“My job focuses on promoting and fostering students’ growth, advising student clubs and collaborating with key departments for students’ success,” he says.

What keeps him going? A motto posted outside his office door explains: “Our attitude towards life determines life’s attitude towards us.”

Jones strives to model this slogan for his students every day and show them that, with the right attitude, more opportunities will come their way.

Heather L. Smith

by Kathy A. Johncox



MARK BENJAMIN

After graduating in 1994 from RIT’s College of Imaging Arts and Sciences with a bachelor’s degree in Interior Design, Heather Smith went west. The Pensacola, Fla., native took a job in Phoenix, Ariz., working for an architectural firm where she created 3-D small-scale models of homes, hotels and even a football stadium from blueprints. When computers starting taking over the model design business, she was laid off.

“I had chosen RIT for the support services and the focus on design and state-of-the-art technology,” says Smith. “So, when I found myself out of a job, I decided to go back to RIT to study Information Technology. I knew that I belonged with art and that technology skills would be a bonus that could get me the kind of career I wanted. I soon found that Web design was the perfect way to combine my love of art and artistic skills with my desire to design and build things.”

While Smith was working as RIT/NTID’s Webmaster she was asked to teach one art history course as adjunct faculty, and after one quarter, she knew she had fallen in love with teaching.

“Who knew I had this teaching in me?” Smith says. “People had told me I’d be a good teacher, but it never occurred to me I would enjoy it this much.”

Smith continued to teach one course each quarter in NTID’s Arts & Imaging Studies Department as she worked on an MFA degree, and continued while working as an environmental graphic designer at SWBR Architects until she became a full-time lecturer in 2011.

She often shares stories about her work experiences with her students, and considers herself a role model for deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

“I work closely with RIT bachelor-level deaf and hard-of-hearing students majoring in Interior Design and Industrial Design,” she says. “I want students to learn that they can be successful, too, and that they need to be patient and persevere in spite of life’s challenges. And it’s a two-way street. I learn a lot from my students as well. I enjoy seeing them and praising their successes when they come back to visit me at RIT.”

Congratulations to the Class of 2013!



PROUD REPRESENTATIVE Scott Farrell, from North Tonawanda, N.Y., graduated with an associate degree in Computer Integrated Machining Technology. He is the recipient of the NTID Presidential and Marine Corps scholarships and is a member of the RIT men's varsity swim team. In 2011, Scott participated in the World Deaf Swimming Championship in Portugal and won a bronze medal, and this summer he participated in the 2013 Deaflympics in Sofia, Bulgaria. Scott completed a cooperative work experience at Optimax, Inc., making precision optics, and plans to pursue a bachelor's degree in Manufacturing Engineering Technology at RIT in the fall. His career goal is to work as a machinist.

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