

FALL/WINTER 2011

# FOCUS

NTID

National Technical Institute for the Deaf • Rochester Institute of Technology



**Sebastian and Lenore Rosica Hall**



PHOTOS BY MARK BENJAMIN AND STEPHEN WILLIE

# NTID's 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Job Fair

**Success by the Numbers** Forty-two employers from all over the country sent nearly 100 representatives to meet, assess the skills of and interview more than 325 RIT/NTID students and alumni for co-ops and permanent jobs. Job Fair participants, dressed for success, were lined up and ready with

resumes and personal marketing pitches to get the attention of prospective employers. As an employer representative from Delphi, in Troy, Mich., said, "The caliber of the students here is outstanding. We'll definitely be back."

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RENDERING BY HBT ARCHITECTS

### ABOUT THE COVER

Architect's rendering of Sebastian and Lenore Rosica Hall, a state-of-the-art facility promoting innovation, entrepreneurship and research among deaf and hard-of-hearing students and their hearing peers. Construction is slated to begin in spring 2012. A groundbreaking ceremony was held in October as part of Brick City Homecoming weekend, and included members of the Rosica family and the William G. McGowan Charitable Fund, who provided a \$1.75 million grant for construction of the building. See p. 3 for more information about Rosica Hall.

RIT/NTID 2008 *FOCUS* magazines are printed on a paper that has 10-percent postconsumer recycled fiber, which results in a total environmental savings of 10.02 trees; 28.96 pounds waterborne waste; 4,260 gallons wastewater flow; 472 pounds solid waste; 928 pounds net greenhouse gases and 7,103,110 BTUs.



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# FOCUS

NTID

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MARK BENJAMIN

## A Federal Investment That Works

This academic year got off to an excellent start. We are experiencing record enrollment again as more students recognize the importance and value of a career education, especially in today's economy. A total of 1,547 students from 49 states and beyond are enrolled at RIT/NTID this year (see inside back cover of this issue).

We broke ground this fall on Sebastian and Lenore Rosica Hall (see p. 3). We are deeply grateful to the William G. McGowan Charitable Fund for making a lead grant of \$1.75 million—which includes a matching grant challenge of \$250,000—to help construct this exciting new facility.

In October, which is National Disability Employment Awareness Month, I had the honor of testifying before the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions on the topic of “Leveraging Higher Education to Improve Employment Outcomes for People Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.”

When Congress created NTID nearly 50 years ago, it did so to provide technological education and

employment opportunities for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. Today, we have more than 7,000 graduates, and on average, more than 90 percent of our students seeking jobs upon graduation find one within a year.

It's clear that education is a key factor in enhancing employment outcomes for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Not only is RIT/NTID creating positive outcomes for our students and their families, we're providing a positive return on investment.

Research conducted by the Social Security Administration proves that our graduates earn more in their lifetimes than their peers who are not admitted to RIT/NTID.

Additionally, at age 50, our deaf and hard-of-hearing graduates earn significantly more than students who were accepted by RIT/NTID, but chose not to attend. With higher earnings, our graduates pay more in federal tax and are less reliant on federal assistance programs.

Simply stated, NTID is a federal investment that works and that helps put deaf and hard-of-hearing people to work.

We saw that in action at our 11<sup>th</sup> annual Job Fair when representatives from 42 companies and organizations came to campus to interview our students and graduates (see inside front cover of this issue).

Providing education and employment opportunities for deaf and hard-of-hearing students has been NTID's mission for nearly 50 years. With the government, employers and donors working with us, we will continue to provide the opportunities that help our students achieve their dreams.

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

# A Groundbreaking Facility

by Susan L. Murad

**M**ore than 100 RIT/NTID students, faculty, staff, alumni and members of the community gathered on Oct. 14 under a large tent for the ceremonial groundbreaking of the college's newest facility, Sebastian and Lenore Rosica Hall.

"The importance of innovation and entrepreneurship on the RIT campus and throughout the nation cannot be overstated," said RIT President Bill Destler. "Sebastian and Lenore Rosica Hall is an extension of the engine of innovation, bringing deaf, hard-of-hearing and hearing students into the process of creating and researching to make life better for all."

The Chicago-based William G. McGowan Charitable Fund made a lead investment grant of \$1.75 million—which includes a matching funds challenge of \$250,000—to RIT/NTID to help construct the two-story building devoted to research.

The building's namesakes, Sebastian and Lenore Rosica of Buffalo, N.Y., were lifelong advocates for deaf and hard-of-hearing people. Lenore Rosica, who worked as a speech pathologist, was the sister of William G. McGowan, CEO of MCI Communications Corporation. Her husband, Sebastian, worked as an audiologist for 40 years at St. Mary's School for the Deaf, and was a trustee of the McGowan Charitable Fund. One of their sons, Mark Rosica, is chairperson of NTID's Counseling and Academic Services Department.

Rosica Hall is the first facility in the world that specifically will engage deaf and hard-of-hearing students and their hearing peers, along with faculty and corporate partners, in the innovation process.

"Rosica Hall will amplify national and international knowledge and research in the field," said Sue Gin McGowan, widow of William McGowan, at the groundbreaking ceremony. "It will



**Shovels Ready** Members of the William G. McGowan Charitable Fund and Rosica Family join RIT President Bill Destler, NTID President Gerry Buckley and former NTID Interim President Jim DeCaro in the groundbreaking ceremony. From left to right are Dan Rosica, Keeley Rosica, Destler, Diana Spencer, Sue Gin McGowan, Buckley, Marianne Rosica-Brand, NTID Student Congress President Gerilee Cristina, Mark Rosica and DeCaro.

nurture a new generation of entrepreneurs, scientists, physicians and technology gurus—contributors and leaders who just happen to be deaf or hard of hearing."

"Sebastian and Lenore Rosica Hall will transform the lives of those students who invent, research and grow within its walls," said NTID President Gerry Buckley. "I extend my deepest appreciation to the McGowan Fund for passing along the innovative spirit of Bill McGowan to countless deaf, hard-of-hearing and hearing students who may one day change the world, as he did."

Sebastian and Lenore Rosica Hall will be designed with maximum flexibility to house a variety of innovative projects, including health care technologies and services; development and adaptation of access and instructional technologies; and innovative cross-disciplinary projects involving science-, engineering-, imaging-, and business-related fields.

RIT/NTID alumnus and architect Phil Rubin is working as a consultant on the project to ensure that the space within Rosica Hall will be accommodating to deaf and hard-of-hearing students, faculty and staff who will work there.

While it is still in schematic design,

Rosica Hall already is beginning to spark the imagination of the students in one of NTID faculty member Jim Fugate's Engineering Studies classes, as they develop a 3D model of the existing site.

"Right now, they're working on a computer model," says Fugate. "Then we'll construct a physical model of the existing site."

## Matching Funds Challenge

As part of the grant, the William G. McGowan Charitable Fund has issued a matching funds challenge of \$250,000 for Sebastian and Lenore Rosica Hall. Gifts in any amount will help meet this challenge and strengthen opportunities for students to become the inventors, business owners and researchers of tomorrow.

Gifts of \$1,000 or more will be recognized on a one-of-a-kind "Window of Supporters" created by RIT/NTID alumna and stained-glass artist Jackie Schertz, a member of NTID's American Sign Language and Interpreting Education Department. Gifts can be made through monthly electronic funds transfer (EFT) automatically from a checking or savings account. Visit [www.rit.edu/NTID/rosica-hall](http://www.rit.edu/NTID/rosica-hall) to learn more.

# The Dow Connection

by Kathy A. Johncox

“Chemistry” can refer to a strong mutual attraction or attachment. It also can describe a chemical attraction like that of sodium and chloride combining to make salt. Or it can describe the chemistry that exists between The Dow Chemical Company and RIT/NTID, resulting in a partnership that has benefited both. The synergy created by this relationship has given Dow access to a diverse talent base that they are confident will contribute to business success. For RIT/NTID, it has resulted in job opportunities for students and graduates, and an opportunity to set the stage for integrating more deaf and hard-of-hearing people into the workplace.

## How the Chemistry Began

At a 2006 American Chemical Society awards luncheon, ACS President-elect Dr. Catherine Hunt, R&D director, Innovation Sourcing & Sustainable Technology at The Dow Chemical Company, met and chatted with Grace Kennedy, an RIT/NTID student who just had received the ACS “Overcoming Challenges Award” and delivered a moving acceptance speech about succeeding in the face of her personal challenges. Kennedy invited Hunt to come to RIT/NTID, and Kennedy’s mentor, Dr. Todd Pagano, associate professor in NTID’s Lab Science Technology Program, arranged a campus visit for Hunt that left her amazed and impressed by the students’ knowledge and skills.

Five years later, Hunt is a member of NTID’s National Advisory Group, bringing with her a particular interest and belief in the notion that diverse talent brings something unique to the table. She and several colleagues have staffed an employer table at the NTID Job Fair for the past two years, interviewing students and discussing job opportunities at Dow.

“To solve the world’s biggest challenges, we must reflect the world,” says Hunt. “Our employee base must reflect the places we do business, today and tomorrow, to give us the community and market insights needed to succeed. At Dow, we realize that a diverse workforce, coming together in an inclusive environment, is an essential element to innovation and, therefore, to business success. Hiring deaf and hard-of-hearing students and graduates helps us get new insight.”

## A Powerful Experience

Forging relationships with potential employers is vital to paving the way

Potential Program, which includes leaders from Dow facilities all over the world. The first group of students, Greg Pollock, Melody Frink, Chelsea Bruha and Alexandra Johnson, visited last fall. Their charge was to share information about deafness, the challenges they’ve faced, their education and their goals, and to help leaders see and work with diversity as not just bringing difference to the workplace, but bringing richness to the workplace as well.

John Macko, NCE director, attended the meeting and says, “I could see that meeting our students was a powerful experience for the international group and others at Dow. From this



**Exploring Opportunities** Dr. Catherine Hunt (right), R & D director, Innovation Sourcing & Sustainable Technology at The Dow Chemical Company, and NTID National Advisory Group member, reviewed resumes and advised students about job opportunities at the NTID Job Fair.

for students and graduates seeking co-ops and permanent jobs. The relationship between the NTID Center on Employment and Dow has led to invitations for several groups of RIT/NTID students to visit Dow’s Midland, Mich., headquarters to participate in sessions of Dow’s Senior Management

experience, Dow made a commitment to hire more of our students.”

Last summer Frink, a Biochemistry major from Columbus, Ohio, and Mary Sporman, a Lab Science Technology major from Bay City, Mich., accepted co-ops in labs in Dow’s Spring House, Pa., facility, and Pollock, a Professional

and Technical Communication major from Pittsburgh, Pa., accepted a co-op in communications at Dow's corporate headquarters in Michigan.

### Working Together

After hiring Frink and Sporman, Dow supervisors prepared by requesting that NCE staff present the workshop, *Working Together: Deaf and Hearing People* to employees at the Spring House facility. The presentation gives employers and co-workers a snapshot of what it's like to be deaf or hard-of-hearing, and offers strategies for communication and working with deaf or hard-of-hearing employees.

"Presenting this workshop at Dow just as the students were starting their co-ops was the ideal situation," says Shyrl Scalice, presenter and NCE senior employment advisor. "The students participated in the workshop and answered questions their co-workers had."

According to Macko, Dow employees described the workshop as "awesome" and "eye opening." They learned that deaf people have different communication styles, and that many employers hiring deaf or hard-of-hearing people for the first time are unsure about how to communicate. The presenters make it clear that technology such as email, instant messaging, texting and videophones have made workplace communication much easier to manage.

### On the Job

Frink's summer co-op experience gave her valuable experience for the future.

"My co-workers at Dow made my job fun and enjoyable, and there were a number of benefits that will help me in the future," says Frink. "I learned the importance of providing progress reports and meeting deadlines. I also learned how to run elutions for my samples, which is the process of extracting one material from another by washing with a solvent. To do that, I used various instruments that currently are being used industry-wide, so I now have this knowledge and training to offer my future employers."

"Working at The Dow Chemical



**Happy Reunion** Mary Sporman, (second from left) an RIT/NTID biochemistry major who completed a co-op last summer in a lab at Dow's Spring House, Pa., facility, was happy to reunite with Dow representatives (left to right) Scott Wills, Dr. Catherine Hunt and Martin Deetz, during the NTID Job Fair.

Company was a phenomenal experience, and an incredible opportunity," says Pollock. "Everyone was so personable and friendly. This experience equipped me with the skills and knowledge I need to survive in the working world."

### DeafTEC

DeafTEC: Technological Education Center for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students, an NTID initiative funded by the National Science Foundation (see p. 6), is creating partnerships among high schools, community colleges and industry in targeted areas of the country to improve access to technological education and integrate more deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals into the workplace. Dow has signed on as one of the initial regional DeafTEC partners and, among other activities, will offer the *Working Together* workshop for Dow employees in Texas, California and other major locations throughout the country.

### The Future

"Dow is a role model for other companies that want to diversify their workforce," says Macko. "If Dow, one of the world's most respected businesses, can make this kind of commitment, so can other Fortune 500 companies, and small and mid-sized businesses as well."

"Hiring deaf or hard-of-hearing co-op students or graduates makes good business sense," says Hunt. "We need the best talent—and the world's talent pool is increasingly diverse. Dow's goal is to go beyond understanding and awareness, to embracing and valuing what diverse talent brings to the table."

The chemistry is alive and well, and the mutual attraction is strong between RIT/NTID and The Dow Chemical Company.

"It's a wonderful partnership, so full of potential," says Hunt. "The power of diversity to drive innovation and growth definitely is demonstrated here."

# DeafTEC: A National Center of Excellence

by Greg Livadas

The National Science Foundation has awarded more than \$4.45 million over four years to RIT/NTID to establish DeafTEC: Technological Education Center for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students, an Advanced Technological Education (ATE) National Center of Excellence.

It is the single largest NSF award in RIT's history.

There are approximately 40 ATE centers across the country, and DeafTEC will be the first ever established to serve individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

"The goal of this national center is to successfully integrate more deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals into the workplace, especially in highly skilled technician jobs where deaf and hard-of-hearing workers currently are underrepresented and underutilized," says NTID President Gerry Buckley.

DeafTEC will be a resource for high schools and community colleges across the country that educate deaf and hard-of-hearing students in science-, technology-, engineering-, and mathematics- (STEM) related programs, and for employers hiring deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals. Through its comprehensive website, DeafTEC will serve as a clearinghouse for information related to technical education and technician careers for deaf and hard-of-hearing students, including career awareness materials, teaching strategies for improving student access to learning, developmental math and English curricula and information for employers to help them provide a more accessible workplace. The website also will feature best practices for instructors of deaf and hard-of-hearing students taking technical courses in high schools and community colleges.

The website is expected to go live in 2012.

"DeafTEC will impact the knowledge and attitudes of high school teachers, community college faculty, employers and deaf and hard-of-hearing students themselves in terms of educational and employment opportunities and options available," says Donna Lange, associate professor in NTID's



**Donna Lange**

Information and Computing Studies Department, who will be leading the grant and serving as the center director.

DeafTEC will establish a model within targeted regions of the country—California, Texas and Florida—that will create partnerships among high schools, community colleges and industry to improve access to technological education and employment for deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

"It's exciting to get in on the ground level, to be part of this pilot and to show that leadership," says



## DeafTEC

Technological Education Center for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students

Dr. Catherine Hunt, R&D director, Innovation Sourcing & Sustainable Technology at The Dow Chemical Company, an industry partner in the grant. Hunt also is a member of NTID's National Advisory Group.

Co-principals of the grant are Dr. Gary Long, associate professor in NTID's Department of Research and Teacher Education, and Myra Pelz, associate professor in NTID's Information and Computing Studies

Department.

Plans also eventually will include developing English and math curricula that address special needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing students.



**Myra Pelz**

The center also will offer professional development experiences and workshops to improve the instructional expertise of high school and community college teachers in STEM subjects.

Students already are learning as a result of DeafTEC. The graphic seen above was created by Kjerstin Kantola, a third-year RIT/NTID graphic design major from Juneau, Alaska, who created the design for the center as part of a class contest.



**Dr. Gary Long**





STEPHEN WILLE

**Exploring the Options** “Mission Commander” Matthew Hart leads a virtual voyage of discovery to the planet Mars at the Challenger Learning Center of Greater Rochester, a high-tech, hands-on facility for space flight simulations located at the Strasenburgh Planetarium.

# TechBoyz: Getting an Early Start

by Kathy A. Johncox

Since RIT/NTID’s outreach programs began in 2006, hundreds of deaf and hard-of-hearing students in 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade have enjoyed the opportunity to visit the campus and participate in camps and competitions that start them thinking about where their interests lie, and how those interests may translate into college and a career.

TechGirlz is a summer camp for middle school girls interested in science, technology, engineering and math. It was established to provide an opportunity for girls to experiment in science and technology, fields where females have been underrepresented. The camp has filled each year since its start, and it became apparent that a similar camp for boys would be popular as well. So this summer, with 12 boys attending from all over the country, RIT/NTID began offering TechBoyz.

“The next several decades will be an era of technological innovation and scientific discovery in order to solve the natural resource challenges that we will be facing,” says Heather Emerson Jeremy, assistant director of NTID Pre-College Outreach. “There already is an increasing demand for young professionals from STEM- (science, technology, engineering and math)

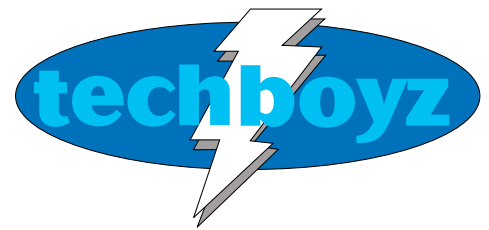
related fields to address serious challenges society is facing even now. Colleges will play an important part in training the next generation of scientists and other professionals, but even more important might be outreach programs developed by colleges to engage middle and high school students in STEM fields to get them thinking about pursuing careers in those fields.”

Matthew Hart, an eighth-grader from Carol Stream, Ill., won third place in the middle school division of RIT’s National Science Fair for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students last spring.

“The Science Fair was a great experience, and we learned about TechBoyz while we were there,” says his father, Charles Hart. “When we looked over the TechBoyz agenda, Matthew was interested in just about everything on it.”

TechBoyz participants built their own personal computer, designed a web page and used animation, created a 3D design using computer-assisted drafting, visited the Rochester Museum and Science Center and interacted with animals from Rochester’s ZooMobile.

“The week was filled with fun and excitement, and I made friends from different states,” says Matthew. “What I most enjoyed was building the



computer. I’m looking to pursue a technology career.”

“A successful outreach program must take into account the specific needs of all the stakeholders—middle and high school students, parents, teachers, future graduates in STEM education fields and the scientific community,” says Mark Sommer, senior director, NTID Pre-College Outreach. “Bottom line, adding the TechBoyz program encourages bright, young deaf and hard-of-hearing boys to develop and pursue their interests in STEM-related fields and to understand the importance of college as the way to achieve success in that arena.”

“Matthew benefited greatly from this experience,” says Hart. “He made new friends, experienced some newfound independence, and enjoyed some different educational experiences. TechBoyz increased his confidence both academically and socially and opened his eyes to the opportunities college can provide.”

# Kaela Mangiaracina

by Susan L. Murad



MARK BENJAMIN

**K**aela Mangiaracina never stops creating. The 20-year-old from Livingston, N.J., graduated last spring with an associate degree from NTID's Art & Imaging Studies program, but that wasn't the end of her academic pursuits. She was accepted into the BFA programs at the New York Film Academy in California, the Chicago Art Institute and the highly selective program at RIT's School of Film and Animation. She decided to stay at RIT.

Last year, she completed a co-op with ASLFilms, which produced a movie called *Black Sand* in Costa Rica.

"It was such a wonderful experience," she says. "I was an editor's assistant, and would transfer files into the computer and organize them so the editors could find them easily. I also assisted the cameramen, and even did makeup."

The experience taught Mangiaracina much about the pursuit of work-life balance, and what areas of filmmaking she most—and least—enjoys.

"It's difficult to keep personal life and work life separated when you are all on

location and living in one house," she says. "And I learned that lighting effects are not my favorite things to work on. I did, however, realize I like organizing things, so if I had a job offer with that as part of the work, I think I would take it."

Mangiaracina's entrepreneurial and creative spirit matches well with her interests in editing, directing, creating trailers for movies, establishing a film business and, in an interesting twist, perhaps opening her own pastry business.

"I know it's different from filmmaking, but I just love to create both with a camera and in the kitchen, and I love the idea of starting my own business," she says. "I enjoy cooking so much that at one point I thought of majoring in culinary arts. I have thought about opening a pastry business with my mom. I asked her if she wanted to do that with me, and she said she is definitely up for it."

Whether her business future leads to movies or pastry—or both—Mangiaracina's creations will no doubt please her audiences.

# Helen Yu

by Ilene J. Avallone



MARK BENJAMIN

**"T**he purpose of our lives is to be happy; it is the greatest gift we can give to those around us," says Helen Yu, 19, about how she chooses to live her life.

A native of Sunnyvale, Calif., Yu became hard of hearing at age five. She attended mainstream schools, and a high school with a small program for deaf students.

"I chose RIT/NTID because it offers me a great opportunity to receive a good education," she says. "It has an outstanding reputation, and the support services and the huge deaf community on campus are great. I like the friendly environment with the blended community of deaf, hard-of-hearing and hearing students, and I love the cultural diversity here. It's amazing to socialize and interact with so many different people!"

A second-year student in NTID's Associate+Bachelor's Degree Program in Business, Yu plans to pursue a bachelor's degree in Business Management in RIT's E. Philip Saunders College of Business.

Yu is serving a second term as NTID's Student Government senator, is editor of RIT's Circle K International newsletter, a member of the Asian Deaf Club and NTID Business Club, and a mentor in the Big Brother/Big Sister program. She also is on the Dean's List, and most recently was recognized as an NTID student ambassador.

"My involvement at RIT/NTID has helped me in so many ways, including developing my leadership skills, and understanding how to work with different people," says Yu.

In her free time, Yu enjoys socializing with friends, playing billiards, hiking and ice skating.

After graduation, her goal is to volunteer and travel to places where she can assist in the education of deaf students.

"My passion is helping people in need," she says. "Eventually I'd like to work for the federal government or own a non-profit business where I can continue service to others."

# The Three Musketeers

by Greg Livadas



A. SUE WEISLER

**Clay Amos, Casey Schneider, and Kevin Toh**

Three RIT/NTID Industrial Design students came to college with varied backgrounds, communication preferences and from opposite ends of the country. And they found a home in Rochester.

Clay Amos, of Ocala, Fla.; Casey Schneider, of Grandville, Mich.; and Kevin Toh, of Irvine, Calif., became such good friends that they share an apartment near RIT and plan to go into business together after graduation this spring.

Their first counselor, Anne Van Ginkel, started calling them “The Three Musketeers,” and their teachers followed suit.

“We act like we’re brothers,” Schneider says.

“We help each other,” Amos says. “It’s easy because we chat together all of the time.”

“Our goal is to prove we can succeed,” Toh says.

Van Ginkel recalls meeting them their first year at NTID. “They didn’t know each other and had wildly different communication preferences,” she says. “But the one thing they had in common, other than their strong art skills, was a drive for excellence.”

She says they spotted each other as similarly motivated students and learned to

communicate with each other so they could work together. That support grew with each passing year.

“They realized they all wanted to major in Industrial Design, a very tough major in the College of Imaging Arts & Sciences. It really became ‘all for one and one for all,’” Van Ginkel says. “I love and admire these guys. They’re just really nice people.”

Toh is known for his drawing and detail work. Van Ginkel calls him a genius in math as well as a talented artist. Toh says he’s inspired to create designs with the advent of new technology, especially designing furniture that is eco-friendly and can help individuals with disabilities.

Amos, who enjoys photography and traveling, loves creating things and specializes in model making.

Schneider, a former award-winner on the RIT swim team, says his specialty is conceiving projects. His inspiration comes from famous architects, such as Frank Lloyd Wright.

“I’ve always been interested in architecture and very interested in furniture,” he says. “I want to make cool designs that make people comfortable.”

They have taken several road trips together, to New York City, Toronto and

Buffalo, to attend design shows, and visit museums, state parks and car shows. They also enjoy watching animated or action movies.

“We like exploring new things together,” Amos says.

The trio often makes the Dean’s List and has taken several Industrial Design classes from Alan Reddig, senior lecturer in CIAS.

“Each has a great sense of humor and can dish it out and take it with the best of them,” Reddig says. “They’re conscientious students, hard workers, funny and good designers. And they share the initiative, focus and eagerness to learn. I love working with these guys.”

The three will carry more than their Industrial Design knowledge with them when they graduate this spring. And each would say the others have helped him grow.

Schneider learned sign language while at RIT. Toh says he used to be shy, but now is more social. And Amos says he became more independent as a college student.

“When I was a freshman, I was nervous about everything,” Amos says. “Now, I’m not afraid of anything.”

After all, he’s got two buddies watching his back.

# American Sign Language in Demand

by Greg Livadas

**W**ith more than 1,350 deaf and hard-of-hearing students at Rochester Institute of Technology, you expect to see American Sign Language used on campus.

But it's not just deaf and hard-of-hearing students who are signing. Like many other universities, RIT is seeing an increased demand in ASL classes by hearing students who want to learn sign language for foreign language credit or simply to better communicate with those on campus who use ASL.

The Modern Language Association says enrollment in American Sign Language has risen more than 16 percent in the past five years on college campuses across the country, making it the fourth most-popular language studied in the United States, behind Spanish, French and German.

More than 90,000 U.S. college students were enrolled in sign language classes in 2009, compared to only 4,304 in 1995.

At NTID, more than 160 hearing students are studying to become sign language interpreters. NTID also offers ASL classes for faculty and staff, as well as the growing number of NTID-supported students who don't know sign language but are interested in learning it. In total, the number of ASL classes at RIT/NTID has tripled over the past four years. In 2006-07, 650 students signed up for classes—including fall, winter, spring and summer sessions. This past year, 2,193 students enrolled in ASL classes in the fall, winter and spring quarters.

Last spring, 284 hearing RIT students took ASL for college credit. Only 20 hearing RIT students were taking an

ASL course in the spring four years ago.

The demand is so great, sign language classes offered to hearing RIT students for Intermediate ASL I this fall were filled the first day students could register. Additional and more advanced courses in sign language are being offered, and students are asking to have a minor in ASL.

as many deaf and hard-of-hearing students interacting with thousands of hearing students.

"This is the perfect place to interact and appreciate the diversity we have here at RIT/NTID," says Kurz.

There are numerous opportunities on campus to learn and practice ASL. Several events such as "ASL at Lunch"



**A Chance to Chat** Sam Holcomb (standing, center), an American Sign Language instructor at NTID, leads a discussion during ASL Coffee Chat at Ellie's Place in NTID's CSD Student Development Center.

Of the 10 foreign languages offered to RIT students last spring, ASL was the most popular—followed by Japanese, says Dr. Hiroko Yamashita, chair of the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures. She says there is a demand for all languages, but funding to expand programs is limited. ASL classes are funded by NTID, which means more ASL classes can be offered, she says.

Dr. Kim Kurz, chair of NTID's Department of American Sign Language and Interpreting Education, says she can't think of a better place than RIT to provide ASL and Deaf Culture classes. After all, no other college campus has

and "ASL Coffee Chat" are scheduled to enable people to have conversations in sign language regardless of their skill level.

Last year, the RIT ASL & Deaf Studies Community Center opened near the center of campus. Sign language classes are offered there, and anyone—hearing or deaf—is encouraged to drop in to chat, ask questions about sign language or learn more about Deaf culture.

"Currently we offer three ASL classes for College of Liberal Arts students as well as three classes for faculty/staff sign language program participants," says Jeanne Behm, the center's coordinator. "We are certainly growing as we go."



MARK BENJAMIN

**Eager to Learn** RIT students learn sign language from an RIT/NTID student during the No Voice Zone, held Wednesday evenings on campus.

One recent Wednesday evening, more than 100 students gathered at 10 p.m. for the free weekly drop-in session at the No Voice Zone, held in NTID's CSD Student Development Center. They were divided into groups according to skill level, including those who knew no sign language. They learned to fingerspell the alphabet and some basic signs. They laughed when they saw the signs for "turtle" and "cow."

One of the teachers was Anthony Dixon, a second-year NTID Business major from Chambersburg, Pa.

"I like teaching hearing people ASL," he said.

An organizer of the No Voice Zone, Rich Rockelmann, 21, a hearing fourth-year student majoring in Information Security and Forensics, as well as American Sign Language interpreting, from Atlantic City, N.J.

"I started signing my second year, learning from friends," Rockelmann says. "I had some communication frustration because I wanted to communicate with my fellow classmates who were deaf."

Jacob Daniels, a first-year mechanical engineering student from Beaver Meadows, Pa., enjoyed his first lessons in sign language while attending a No Voice Zone event.

"I think American Sign Language is very interesting to learn," he says. "It's a beneficial thing to know. I'll absolutely come again."

Guerin Gagliastri, a second-year student in RIT's Physician Assistant program from Saratoga Springs, N.Y.,

"There is always something new you can learn, and it surprises me how fast and easy it was to pick up when I tried to immerse myself into the culture and language."

Another bonus: he's dating the girl from the track team he first saw using sign language.

"She teaches me a lot each day and still gives me the desire to learn more," he says.



MARK BENJAMIN

**No Voice Zone** Rich Rockelmann, an NTID interpreting student, greets RIT students eager to learn sign language at the No Voice Zone, in NTID's CSD Student Development Center. It's just one venue where students can learn and use American Sign Language on campus.

# Global Outreach

by Ilene J. Avallone

Immersion in other cultures gives NTID students, faculty and staff learning opportunities and a broader view of the world. Recent travel and cultural exchanges have not only resulted in new knowledge and enhanced skills for all participants, but also have enabled NTID to share its knowledge and expertise in deaf education with people all over the world.

## Bridging Communication

In the Dominican Republic this summer, four students in NTID's American Sign Language-English Interpretation program worked with deaf and hard-of-hearing children to facilitate communication for one week at Campamento Manos de Alegria (Camp Hands of Joy).

"The camp brings together deaf and hard-of-hearing children from the Santo Domingo area who are, for the most part, often ignored, being viewed as unteachable because of the language barrier from the surrounding Spanish-speaking world," explains Corina Scarinzi, a third-year interpreting student from Binghamton, N.Y.

About 80 children ranging in age from 5 to 18 years old attended the camp, and enjoyed sharing a week with other deaf youth, deaf adult role models and hearing people who know and love their language.

"For an interpreting student like me with a passion for travel, having the opportunity to work with deaf children in a foreign country, and learn about their culture and sign language, was a chance I couldn't pass up," says Kevin Gallagher, a second-year interpreting student from Corning, N.Y.

"My duties involved planning and implementing activities for the children, and voicing sermons," says Anna-Marie Lee, a third-year interpreting student from New Castle, Maine. "On a previous trip to the



**Camp Hands of Joy** Interpreting students facilitate communication at a camp for deaf and hard-of-hearing youth in the Dominican Republic. (Standing) Kevin Gallagher (left), Anna-Marie Lee (second from left), Kara Collings-Meiss (second from right) and Corina Scarinzi (right) along with several of the campers.

Dominican Republic, I met a deaf girl who didn't have access to sign language. That sparked my interest in an interpreting career, so I was excited to return with the skills to facilitate communication."

Because the Dominican Republic uses an indigenous sign language that is different from ASL, interpreters learned to incorporate more gestures with their signing.

Says Scarinzi, "Camp organizers were grateful for our interpreting services, and we were appreciative of the training experience we received. We'll be better interpreters because of this opportunity."

## Providing Tools for Skill Development

Geoff Poor, NTID professor and coordinator of NTID's Office of Communication Assessment Services, is coordinator of the national Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI): ASL Leadership Board. He became an international consultant for the SLPI, a

tool used to assess how well people are able to use sign language for communication, as he traveled to several countries recently to provide training.

Last winter, Poor visited the University of Applied Sciences-Hogeschool Utrecht in the Netherlands to show how the SLPI can assist with sign language assessment. He also worked with interpreting teachers to provide strategies for measuring the skills of their interpreting students.

This summer, he spent two weeks in South Africa, a country, which according to Poor, offers a unique sign language environment.

"Sign language in South Africa is mostly undocumented, and comes from different influences," explains Poor. "It includes sign languages from Europe, some from widely scattered schools in which signing evolved independently and some from indigenous tribal signing."

Poor conducted SLPI training at the National Institute for the Deaf in

Worcester, South Africa, to help the institute think through the complexities of using the SLPI in a country that has no official sign language.

Next, he traveled to Johannesburg to consult on sign language grammar, sign language in education and language standardization with a teacher/researcher who uses sign language to support teaching English to hearing Zulu children and adults in several African schools.

Poor also visited England this year to help develop a new ASL dictionary, one of three he has authored.

“I enjoy working with people around the world and providing tools and resources they can use to assist them in learning and communicating in ASL,” says Poor.

### Interpreting Student Exchange Program

“Learning how to interact with people from other cultures is a valuable skill that will help me to prepare to be the best interpreter I can,” says Holly O’Neill, a fourth-year interpreting student from Port Gibson, N.Y.

O’Neill participated in a new exchange program, established by NTID and the University of Applied Sciences-Hogeschool Utrecht in the Netherlands. Last fall, five interpreting students from Hogeschool Utrecht attended RIT for 10 weeks, and last summer, eight NTID interpreting

students studied at Hogeschool Utrecht for five weeks.

“It was exciting to experience Deaf culture in another country,” says interpreting student Caitlin Zambito, from Smithtown, N.Y.

“The exposure I received from other styles of teaching, coupled with the opportunity to meet new people, converse in a new language, and learn about cultural norms, enhances my skills as a future interpreter,” says third-year interpreting student Kyla Ciranni, from Columbus, Ohio.

Charlotte McGrath, a third-year interpreting student from Reseda, Calif., agrees. “Being exposed to two new cultures opened my eyes,” she says. “I’m thankful for the study abroad experience.”

### New Training Program

This summer, staff from NTID’s American Sign Language and Interpreting Education Department conducted a training workshop for interpreting students, ASL teachers and deaf and hearing professionals from Czechoslovakia who were interested in broadening their skills in ASL.

“Charles University in the Czech Republic asked PEN-International (an RIT/NTID grant-funded program that encourages and supports cultural exchanges among its partner institutions) for in-depth sign language training, and as a result of the

partnership we developed the summer ASL training program,” says Dr. Cynthia Sanders, associate professor and director of NTID’s ASL program.

The three-week program included instruction designed to help participants communicate in ASL with deaf co-workers in the workplace, and provided curriculum on Deaf culture and issues affecting the interpreting field.

“The bond we developed with the

participants was what I enjoyed the most,” says Debra Teesdale, ASL lecturer at NTID.

Lecturer Ronald Rood, Jr., agrees. “Learning didn’t stop in the classroom. Every evening we socialized and learned about our cultural differences and similarities. Special relationships developed, and by the end of the training program we felt like one family.”

### A Model for Deaf Education

“The current education system for deaf students in Mali, West Africa, is inadequate,” says Dr. Sara Schley, associate professor at NTID. “The teachers at the schools for the deaf are hired without any experience in teaching deaf students. There also are no certified sign language interpreters in Mali or any interpreting training programs in place.”

To find concrete, practical solutions to the gaps in educational and access services deaf Malians face, the U.S. Department of State asked Schley to give a presentation about best practices used in deaf education to members of Mali’s Ministry of Education.

This spring, Schley spoke to the Ministry and the World Education Group within the Bamako Mali Office of the United States Agency for International Development about best practices used in deaf and special education in the United States. She was selected based on her credentials in deaf education, and her fluency in both ASL and French, the official language in Mali.

“My goal was to share NTID’s expertise in deaf education so Malian officials could begin to provide a productive learning environment for deaf Malian children—allowing them the opportunity to earn a living and contribute to society,” says Schley.

NTID faculty, staff and students who have spent time abroad have benefited from the experiences. Sharing NTID’s knowledge and expertise with others not only is part of advancing NTID’s mission, but often results in new learning and thinking that benefits everyone.



**Exploring Historic Sites** Interpreting students visit Alkmaar, the world-famous cheese market in the Netherlands. (Seated left to right) Charlotte McGrath, Holly O’Neill, Kyla Ciranni, Caitlin Zambito, Jackie McOmber, and Heather Sparkman. (Back row left to right) Chad Edmonds, Dutch friend Suzanne Middellie and Kathleen Holcombe.

# Cochlear Implants on Campus 2011

by Kathy A. Johncox

**A**t the start of fall quarter, a record 330 deaf and hard-of-hearing students arrived on the RIT campus with cochlear implants, a significant increase from 1984 when only one student with a cochlear implant was enrolled.

When the number of CI users on campus began to increase, members of NTID's Communication Studies and Services (CSS) Department established a plan to provide specialized services and support.

"The CI services we offer contribute to a student's choice to enroll," says Dr. Catherine Clark, audiologist and NTID associate professor. "CI support has become one of our competitive advantages."

Students who use Med-EL, Advance Bionics and Cochlear America CIs can get assistance from NTID audiologists trained in each technology. Services include extensive mapping (reprogramming of the cochlear implant), repairs and replacements, product updates, walk-in hours and speechreading, listening practice and other speech therapy services. The department also has opened a CI Center where students can come for one-to-one instruction, additional training for a new implant or an upgrade to an existing unit, or to participate in a CI mentorship program and CI social club.

"Parents and students know about our services," says Lawrence Scott, CSS chairperson and NTID associate professor, "but still they are amazed at the depth of support that's available here."

Ranjan Maitra, 21, a fourth-year Finance major from Leesburg, Va., received a CI for his right ear in 2009 and for the left in 2011. Born in New Delhi, Maitra arrived in the United State at age 9. Upon his arrival at RIT, he enjoyed the exposure to Deaf Culture and wanted to get the most out of his education here. That led him to discuss



**Information Sharing** Dr. Catherine Clark, audiologist in RIT/NTID's Communication Studies and Services Department and Ranjan (R.J.) Maitra, a Finance major from Leesburg, Va., discuss new features on Maitra's cochlear implant equipment.

CI use with CSS audiologists and the decision to get his first implant.

"My first year of mappings was handled at home—it seemed best and was something I was familiar with; however, it wasn't exactly practical. I tried out a mapping at RIT and was thrilled with how much easier and cost effective it was and how much more involved I was in the process. The audiologists have adjusted my implant to make it work optimally for my needs in all situations," says Maitra.

Now Maitra enjoys the close proximity; ease of scheduling; and helpfulness, openness and expertise of the NTID staff. And the success he is having in and out of the classroom.

"I really feel that now I'm getting the most of my education both academically and socially," Maitra adds. "Thanks to the wide range of support for my CI, I feel independent and have a wide mix of hearing and deaf friends. The door is open to any possibility in the world."

## Communication Studies and Services: An array of services for RIT/NTID Students

Audiologists support students with cochlear implant mapping, programming, equipment repair, etc. Speech-language professionals support students' CI use by offering instruction to improve spoken communication skills as well as general job-related communication skills. Services available include:

- Spoken communication instruction
- Conversation practice
- Job interview practice
- Practice in making a presentation
- Pronunciation and vocabulary instruction

CSS faculty also teach communication-focused courses which cover such content as

- group dynamics and effective teamwork
- critical thinking, which involves examining issues and problem solving
- organizational communication and the deaf employee which focuses on climbing the corporate ladder and entrepreneurial efforts as a strategy for employment
- interpersonal communication skills



# Mark Feder

by Susan L. Murad



MARK BENJAMIN

One of the nice things about being a college that has been around for 43 years is that the stories of the “early days” are still being told by those who were there.

One of those NTID pioneers is Mark Feder. The recipient of NTID’s 2011 Distinguished Alumni Award clearly remembers visiting RIT as a junior in high school, and the impact that visit had on him.

“I fell in love with RIT/NTID,” says Feder, a Chicago, Ill., native. “[NTID Founding Director] Dr. Frisina spoke to us, and told us that we would be in a ‘fish bowl’—meaning that we’d be watched very carefully to see if we would succeed. We all knew that coming to RIT/NTID would change our lives. I was reborn here.”

Growing up in a hearing family and attending mainstream schools, Feder was used to the interaction between deaf and hearing people, and quickly took on leadership positions in the new college, becoming the first vice-president of the NTID Student Congress in 1971, and the second president of NSC in 1972. He also was president of the NTID Drama Club

in 1975, NTID liaison for NSC to the RIT Student Association and served as a resident advisor.

“Those leadership experiences gave me confidence,” he says. “I learned how to be approachable and to be fearless, and I learned how to keep my deaf identity in a hearing world.”

Those skills, along with associate and bachelor’s degrees in Business Administration – Accounting, helped Feder become the owner/controller of B.E. Atlas Company; a family-owned wholesale hardware distributor that sells to more than 2,500 independent retailers, plumbers and electrical and construction contractors in the Chicago area. He is responsible for the finance department and has 30 years of experience.

Feder offers the following advice for current students and newly minted alumni:

“You cannot be isolated and have success,” he says. “Don’t hold back—break out! Get involved, meet lots of people, join groups, clubs, stretch yourself and take leadership roles. You will earn the respect of those around you.”

# Christine Sun Kim

by Susan L. Murad



MARK BENJAMIN

Christine Sun Kim’s inspiring presence makes her someone you instantly want to know. She was excited to be invited back to RIT/NTID to share her experiences with current students as part of the NTID Student Life Team’s Alumni Speaker Series.

“It’s surreal to be back here after so many years,” she says. “There’s so much growth and change at RIT/NTID, but still a lot that is familiar, which makes me nostalgic.”

Born in Orange County, Calif., Sun Kim attended University High School in Irvine, then came to RIT/NTID, where she graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Interdisciplinary Studies from RIT’s College of Applied Science and Technology in 2002. She went on to earn a Master of Fine Arts from the School of Visual Arts in New York City, and currently is attending Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y., earning a second MFA in Sound and Music. She lives and works in New York City.

Sun Kim was a member of the NTID Student Congress, Student Life Team, and was a resident advisor. “My experience here has helped me on many levels and

solidified my independence, interpersonal communication, and self-identity,” she says. “And the package came with many lasting friendships.”

Sun Kim currently is a freelance educator at the Whitney Museum in New York and a digital archivist at a publishing company. Aside from her jobs, she exhibits and performs at various galleries and venues in Vermont; New York; Berlin, Germany; and Seoul, South Korea.

With works that combine performance, installation, and video, and have names like “face opera,” “seismic calligraphy” and “subwoofers and bedshakers,” Sun Kim’s art attempts to visualize sound. She hopes to find new ways to bring art to the deaf community such as a video blog project at the Whitney Museum.

Her advice to students is simple: “Take advantage of all that is available to you here at RIT, and seek advice from professors,” she says. “Be open to new things as life is full of detours, and you never know where they’ll lead.”

To view some of her works and learn about upcoming performances, visit [www.christinesunkim.com](http://www.christinesunkim.com).

# Regina Kiperman-Kiselgof

by Kathleen S. Smith



MARK BENJAMIN

Regina Kiperman-Kiselgof, a senior employment advisor in NTID's Center on Employment, was born in Leningrad (now Saint Petersburg) Russia, and in 1994 emigrated with her parents to Buffalo, N.Y., where her extended family lived.

Her dream was to attend NTID, but she didn't know enough English or American Sign Language. After six months of studying both languages a remarkable 16 hours per day—reading books, watching television and studying videos—she was accepted as a first-year student.

Kiperman-Kiselgof approached her studies with no-nonsense determination.

"NTID had faith in me that I would succeed, so I knew I must."

She earned a bachelor's degree in Social Work in 2000 and a master's degree in Career Training and Human Resources Management one year later. Soon after, she was hired at RIT/NTID.

"The first time I met Regina, she was very shy and respectful...and eager to become a student," recalls Patricia Billies,

former NTID admissions counselor who now teaches in NTID's Science and Mathematics Department. "Years later, when I needed someone to manage a project for PEPNet [the Postsecondary Education Programs Network, an RIT/NTID grant project], I thought of her, and found that my shy student had blossomed into a creative, energetic and innovative professional."

Kiperman-Kiselgof spent five years with PEPNet before moving to NCE in 2006. She teaches a Job Search Process course, helps students prepare for co-ops and permanent jobs, conducts employer training workshops and advises students about employment trends. She willingly accepts new projects and challenges, citing her favorite quotation from Theodore Roosevelt: "Whenever you are asked if you can do a job, tell 'em, 'Certainly!' Then get busy and find out how to do it."

"I try not to miss any opportunities," she says, "because you cannot turn back the clock."

# John "JT" Reid

by Kathleen S. Smith



A. SUE WEISLER

Former RIT wrestling champion John "JT" Reid, now in his 10<sup>th</sup> year as an admissions counselor, knows how to pin down prospective students. Last year, 54 students from high schools he visited—from Maryland south to Florida and west to Louisiana—enrolled at NTID. This was a 14 percent increase from the previous year, prompting Admissions Director Scott Hooker to call Reid "a shining star."

His recruiting success is almost as impressive as the 59-35 overall record he strung together on his way to a New York State Intercollegiate Wrestling Championship in 1978. He also won silver and bronze medals in wrestling at the World Games for the Deaf in the 1970s and '80s, and was inducted into the RIT Athletic Hall of Fame in 1999.

The Cincinnati native, who received a bachelor's degree in Social Work from RIT in 1979, also has a master's degree in Counseling and Guidance from the University of Arizona. He returned to RIT/NTID in the early 1990s and worked in various departments before settling on

admissions work in 2001.

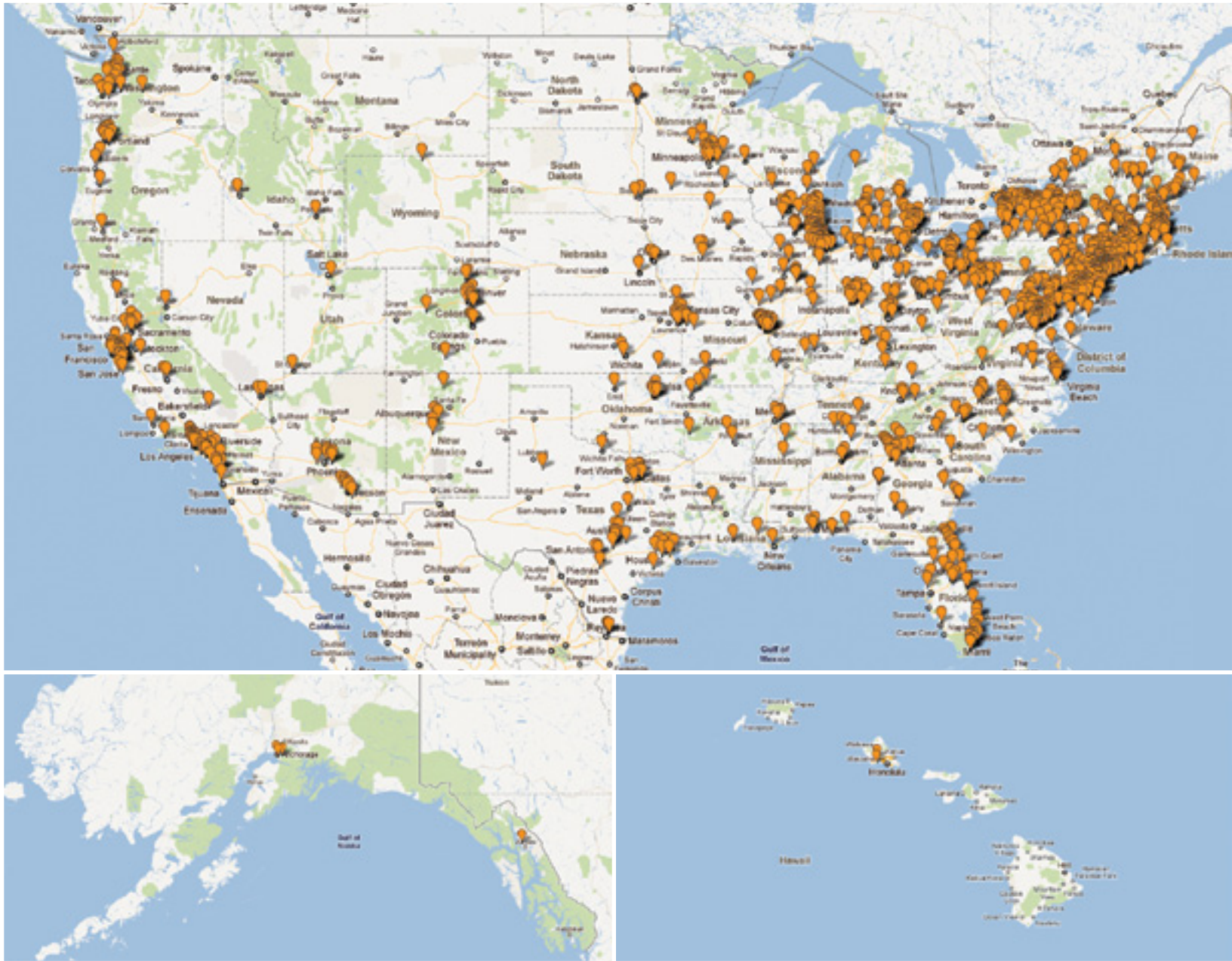
"I love to travel, and I like helping young people see how many opportunities they will have in college," he says. "I tell them: 'Come to NTID. It will open up your world.'"

Reid is a member of the National Black Deaf Advocates and is president of the Rochester Deaf Rotary Club. A lifelong fitness buff interested in health issues for individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing, he also is a member of the Deaf Health Community Committee, which is a partnership with the National Center for Deaf Health Research.

His lifelong dream of joining the Peace Corps, which would combine Reid's interests in travel and community service, is "on the back burner" while he focuses on showing prospective students why NTID is the right choice for them.

"I love being there at the beginning of a student's experience at NTID," he says. "It's great to see their self-confidence grow and know that I played a small part in their success."

# Record Enrollment



MAP DATA ©2011 EUROPA TECHNOLOGIES, GOOGLE, INEGI

**Going the Distance for Success** For the fourth consecutive year, NTID has welcomed a record number of enrolled students—1,547, up from 1,521 the previous year.

NTID President Gerry Buckley attributed the recent increases to applicants' interest in the employment success of RIT/NTID graduates, recruitment and marketing efforts, outreach initiatives and higher retention rates among existing students.

"Today, more than ever before, deaf and hard-of-hearing students recognize the importance of an education that will lead them to a

successful career," Buckley says. "We are proud to provide the education and experience that lead to career opportunities."

This map represents the hometowns for all U.S. students at RIT/NTID in 2011-2012. There are an additional 42 international students attending RIT/NTID from 19 foreign countries: Bangladesh, Bermuda, Canada, Cameroon, China, Ghana, Holland, Honduras, Hungary, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Korea, Norway, Pakistan, Taiwan, Thailand, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

**view the interactive map online at [www.ntid.rit.edu/hometowns](http://www.ntid.rit.edu/hometowns)**

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MARK BENJAMIN

**Bringing a Legend to Life** The NTID Performing Arts program's production of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, written by Aaron Kelstone based on a story by Washington Irving, and directed by Luane Davis Haggerty, offered some twists on a timeless classic. The production was performed in American Sign Language and voice and used the deaf performance traditions of storytelling and shadowgraphy—the art of performing a story using images made by hand shadows—to show that the shadows that inhabit Ichabod Crane's mind reflect the fears we all have. This psychological study, and the accompanying music, dance and life-sized puppets, engaged spectators in the delightful scariness of Halloween.