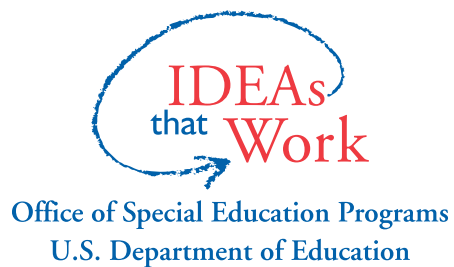

Careers



NDC
National Deaf Center
on Postsecondary Outcomes

Summary

This booklet is a collection of Pepnet 2's success stories in careers.



Portions of the enclosed content were developed during past cycles of Department of Education funding. In 1996, the Department of Education funded four regional centers collectively known as Postsecondary Educational Programs Network (PEPNet). In 2011, the Department of Education changed the model from the four regional centers to one national center known as pepnet2. Materials from either or both PEPNet and pepnet2 cycles may be included herein.

PEPNet



Believing...Achieving Creer...Conseguir

Hispanic
Latino
& Deaf

Hispano
Latino
y Sordo



Editor: Tammy Cate
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PEPNet, the Postsecondary Education Programs Network, is the national collaboration of the four Regional Postsecondary Education Centers for Individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The Centers are supported by contracts with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. The goal of PEPNet is to assist postsecondary institutions across the nation to attract and effectively serve individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Visit PEPNet online at <<http://www.pepnet.org>>. Located on this Website are a variety of training opportunities, resources, and information that will assist you with service provision to students and clients who are Deaf and Hard of hearing.

This publication is funded by the Postsecondary Education Consortium at The University of Tennessee College of Education, Health and Human Sciences: Research Center on Deafness, through an agreement with the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs Grant Number H324A010003. The University of Tennessee is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA institution in the provision of its education and employment programs and services.

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PEPNet, la Red de Programas de Educación Postsecundaria, es una colaboración a nivel nacional de los cuatro Centros de Educación Postsecundaria para Individuos que son Sordos e Hipoacústicos. Estos Centros están financiados por contratos con el Departamento de Educación de Estados Unidos, la Oficina de Educación Especial y Servicios de Rehabilitación. El objetivo de PEPNet es ayudar a las instituciones de toda la nación para que las personas que son Sordas e Hipoacústicas se interesen en la educación postsecundaria, y para que les proporcionen servicios eficaces. Visite PEPNet en la red en <<http://www.pepnet.org>>. En este sitio puede encontrar una variedad de oportunidades de adiestramiento, recursos e información que le ayudará a proporcionar servicios a los estudiantes y clientes que son sordos y los que tienen problemas de audición.

Esta publicación está financiada por el Consorcio de Educación Postsecundaria del Colegio de Educación, Salud y Ciencias Humanas de la Universidad de Tennessee, y el Centro de Investigación sobre la Sordera, por un acuerdo con la Oficina de Educación Especial del Departamento de Educación de Estados Unidos, Beca Número H324A010003. La Universidad de Tennessee es una institución que cumple EEO/AA/Título VI/ Título IX/Sección 504/ADA/ADEA en la provisión de educación y programas y servicios de empleo.

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**“Success doesn’t
come to you, you must
go to it!”**

**“¡El éxito no viene
a usted, usted
debe ir a él!”**

Introduction

Everything you can imagine is real.

—Pablo Picasso

Reading the personal stories of success in this book makes me believe that what Picasso wrote is true. Through imagination – asking “what if?” or “why not?” – many of the people featured here have achieved their goals. Maybe their imagination and inspiration will touch others, especially young adults who are thinking about their own futures and starting to make plans.

The Postsecondary Education Consortium has been publishing *Believing...Achieving* (formerly *The PEC Salutes*) since 1992. We send it to middle schools and high schools across the country because we want it in the hands of students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing as they think about plans for the future and possible career areas. By using role models to share information, our goal is that students might be able to identify with some of them. This connection may be based on hobbies/ interests, region of the country, type of school they attended, family background, or other things. We also hope that parents will read it to have a better understanding about the wide range of opportunities available for their children. Teachers and counselors may use it when discussing transition plans.

Our view is that *success* is setting a goal and reaching it. This may include success in college by completing a degree. It also may mean that someone has been working at a job for a long time and has a home and a family – not everyone immediately sees this as success, but it is! Success may also mean coming back to school to improve basic English and math skills because the student is also a parent and wants to help the children with homework. We believe that success includes many different life paths; some of these may interest one student, but not another. And that's ok.

PEC is one of the four federally-funded regional centers that comprise the Postsecondary Education Programs Network (PEPNet). Our goal is to provide outreach and technical assistance to enhance postsecondary educational opportunities for students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. This year, we made a very significant change – instead of featuring only people from the Southern region of the United States, we're very pleased to make this a PEPNet publication and include people from all over the country.

We also decided to create an issue that focused on successful Hispanic/ Latino individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Why? Because we noticed that previous volumes of this publication featured very few individuals with this heritage. By not including many individuals from Latino/Hispanic families, we wondered if we were sending a subtle message that there were no success stories from this community. And we know that's not true – there are many very successful Latino/Hispanic people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. We're very pleased to share some of their stories with you.

Marcia Kolvitz, Ph.D., Associate Director
Postsecondary Education Consortium
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Introducción

Todo lo que puedes imaginar es real.

—Pablo Picasso

Después de leer todas las historias personales en este libro, me parece que lo que Picasso escribió es cierto. La imaginación – el preguntarse ¿Que tal si...? o ¿Por qué no? – ha permitido que mucha gente que aparece en este volumen haya alcanzado sus metas. Quizá su imaginación y ejemplo inspire a otros, especialmente los jóvenes adultos que están pensando en sus propios futuros y comenzando a hacer planes.

El Consorcio de Educación Postsecundaria ha publicado *Creer...Conseguir* (previamente conocido El PEC Saluda) desde 1992. Se lo enviamos a las escuelas intermedias y secundarias de todo el país porque queremos que llegue a manos de los estudiantes que son sordos o con problemas de audición que están pensando en hacer planes para el futuro y en posibles carreras. Nuestro objetivo, al usar estas figuras ejemplares para compartir su información, es que los estudiantes puedan identificarse con alguna de ellas. Esta conexión quizá sea por los pasatiempos o intereses, la región del país, el tipo de escuela a que asistieron, el trasfondo familiar u otras cosas. También esperamos que los padres lo lean para comprender mejor la gran variedad de oportunidades disponibles para sus hijos. Los maestros y consejeros pueden usarlo cuando discutan planes de transición.

Nuestro punto de vista es que el EXITO es fijar una meta y alcanzarla. Quizás esto incluya el éxito en la universidad al conseguir un título. También puede significar que alguien se ha dedicado por

largo tiempo a su trabajo y ha logrado comprar una casa y formar una familia – no todo el mundo ve esto inmediatamente como un éxito, ¡pero lo es! El éxito también puede ser volver a la escuela para mejorar el inglés y matemáticas básicas si es que el estudiante es un padre que quiere ayudar a sus hijos a hacer la tarea. Creemos que el éxito puede tomar diferentes rumbos en la vida; algunos pueden ser de interés a un estudiante, pero a otro no. Y es normal que así sea.

PEC es uno de los cuatro centros regionales con fondos federales que forman la Red de Programas de Educación Postsecundaria (PEPNet). Nuestro objetivo es proporcionar información y ayuda técnica para mejorar las oportunidades en las escuelas postsecundarias de los estudiantes que son sordos o tienen dificultades de audición. Este año, hemos hecho un cambio significativo – en lugar de incluir sólo gente de la región sur de los Estados Unidos, tenemos el placer de hacer esta publicación de la PEPNet incluyendo gente de todo el país.

También decidimos crear un número enfocado en individuos hispanos/latinos exitosos que son sordos o con problemas de audición. ¿Por qué? Porque hemos notado que varios volúmenes previos de esta publicación mostraban muy pocos individuos de este origen. Al no incluir muchas personas de familias hispanas/latinas, nos preguntamos si estábamos enviando el mensaje de que no hay historias de éxito en esta comunidad. Y sabemos que no es cierto – hay muchas personas latinas/hispanas que son sordas o tienen problemas de audición y tienen mucho éxito. Es un placer compartir algunas de estas historias con ustedes.

Marcia Kolvitz, Ph. D, Directora Asociada
Consorcio de Educación Postsecundaria
La Universidad de Tennessee, Knoxville

Foreword: *Ramon Rodriguez*

Several years ago, Gallaudet College (now Gallaudet University's) Department of Teacher Education asked its graduate students to talk about their perceptions of Hispanic/Latino culture. Having participated in a number of National Hispanic Month events, I searched in my files for ideas and information from some of those presentations. After going through the files, I noticed several questions that were most frequently asked, such as "What do Hispanic/Latinos look like?" "Why aren't there many Hispanic/Latinos in colleges or universities?" and "Why don't they stay and earn their degrees?" For those who earn their degrees, "What kind of jobs did they find?" and "How did they find their jobs?"

Instead of lecturing, I recruited Hispanic/Latino students from the University to serve on a panel. I asked myself, "Who am I to be talking about Hispanics? I'm a second-generation of Mexican decent. Hispanic/Latinos come in all shapes and colors of the 'rainbow.'" I admit that students of Hispanic or Latino heritage were hard to find, and when I found them, they were very reluctant to participate on the panel. After several days, I was able to convince five Hispanic/Latino students in their sophomore and junior years—three females and two males—to join me on the panel.

The day of our panel presentation, 60 graduate students showed up. The professor introduced me and I in turn said, "This is our Hispanic/Latino panel!" There was silence in the lecture hall because only one or two appeared to be Hispanic/Latino. Two female students of Mexican and Costa Rican descent had light to dark complexions. The other female student was from Cuba and was blonde and blue-eyed. A male student from Argentina had reddish hair and green eyes; the fifth student was from Puerto Rico and was a tall, handsome black male.

All of the Hispanic/Latino students were born in the United States. One by one, each of them talked about their culture, their families and their experiences in their schools and their communities as Hispanics/Latinos. The graduate students asked many questions because each one's family was from a Hispanic/Latino country; they found their cultures and their individual experiences to be so diverse. Almost without exception, each panelist was not surprised that there were so few students of Hispanic or Latino heritage in their respective colleges and universities. Except for one panelist, all of them were the first in their families to complete high school and attend college. They said



Ramon Rodriguez

that college was very challenging and they had to study intensively. Although there were a few Hispanic/Latinos represented in their schools, it was difficult to get together with them. They felt that they were being avoided, and believed that this was because of their hearing loss. They learned from their families and by their own unique experiences that success is possible only through completing their postsecondary education, through which they could take advantage of many opportunities that would become available to them.

Ten years passed, and I kept in touch with these students off and on. Four panelists graduated from college. One transferred to a small college in Ohio and earned her degree. One might be curious to find out what types of jobs these students found. The Cuban student was employed as a Head Resident in the Student Housing Office at Gallaudet University in Washington, DC. She was later promoted to assistant director, and eventually, director, in less than five years. Through department reorganization, she lost her job on a Friday. The following Monday, she applied for a position as Director of Housing at a major university. She obtained this position, and as part of her compensation package, she is provided with a 3-bedroom apartment and other benefits.

The Mexican student is teaching in the elementary education department in a residential/day school in Ohio. The student from Costa Rica is a physical education teacher in a middle school and teaches science and math in an integrated school in southern California. The Puerto Rican student graduated *cum laude* and subsequently enrolled in New York University Law School. He now works as an attorney in New York. For several years, the student of Argentinean descent worked at various service jobs while attending graduate school off and on. He finally graduated with a degree in computer science and is working for a contractor that provides technical support to the U.S. government.

**“The future is NOW!
You must be ready.”**

**“¡El futuro ya está
Aquí! Debes estar
listo.”**

As I look back to my years in college, there were only three Hispanic/Latino students. My roommate was from California and I was from Missouri. Our sister student was from Arizona. Our opportunities were somewhat limited so we made the best of them. Today we are amazed at the educational and job opportunities that are open to Hispanic/Latino students if they

are prepared to take advantage of them. There is no substitute for academic preparation. They must take advanced-placement courses in high school and work hard in their major area of study.

In this PEPNet-PEC resource guide you will find that you share many of the same experiences of trying to complete your education and the challenges you faced in finding employment that matches your education and interest. You will find that your education is just beginning after you earn your degree or certificate. You will learn that education is life-long learning.

The future is NOW! You must be ready.

Prólogo: Ramon Rodriguez

Hace varios años, el Departamento de Magisterio de Colegio Gallaudet (ahora la Universidad Gallaudet) pidió a sus estudiantes graduados que hablaran de sus percepciones de la cultura hispana/latina. Habiendo participado en numerosos eventos de Mes de la Herencia Hispana, busqué en mis archivos para encontrar ideas e información de alguna de estas presentaciones. Después de estudiarlos, noté que había varias preguntas que se hacían con frecuencia, por ejemplo “¿Cómo son físicamente los hispanos/latinos?” “¿Por qué no hay muchos hispanos/latinos en los colegios e universidades?” y “¿Por qué no continúan hasta conseguir sus títulos?” Para los que consiguen un título, “¿Qué clase de trabajo encuentran?” y “¿Cómo encontraron trabajo?”

En lugar de dar una conferencia, recluté algunos estudiantes hispanos/latinos de la universidad para formar un panel. Me pregunté, “¿Quién soy yo para hablar de los hispanos? Soy de origen mexicano de segunda generación. Hay hispanos/latinos de todas las clases y colores del arco iris.” Admito que los estudiantes de origen hispano o latino eran difíciles de encontrar, y cuando los encontré, se resistieron a participar en un panel. Después de varios días, fui capaz de convencer a cinco estudiantes hispanos/latinos de segundo o tercer año – tres mujeres y dos hombres - para unirse a mí en el panel.

El día de la presentación del panel, aparecieron 60 estudiantes graduados. El profesor me presentó y cuando me tocó el turno, dije “¡Este es nuestro panel hispano/latino!” Dos mujeres estudiantes de origen mexicano y costarricense tenían la tez de blanca a oscura. La otra mujer era de Cuba y era rubia con ojos azules. Un hombre estudiante de Argentina tenía el pelo rojizo y los ojos verdes; el quinto estudiante era de Puerto Rico y era un hombre negro, alto y atractivo.

Todos estos estudiantes hispanos/latinos habían nacido en los Estados Unidos. De uno en uno, todos hablaron de su cultura, sus familias y sus experiencias en la escuela y la comunidad como hispanos/latinos. Los estudiantes graduados preguntaron muchas cosas ya que como la familia de cada uno de ellos era de un país hispano/latino, encontraron que sus culturas y experiencias individuales eran muy diversas. Casi ninguno de los panelistas sin excepción se sorprendía de que hubiera tan pocos estudiantes hispanos o latinos en sus respectivos colegios y universidades. Excepto un panelista, todos los demás eran la primera persona en sus familias en completar la escuela secundaria e ir a la universidad. Dijeron que la universidad es muy difícil, y que tenían que estudiar mucho. Aunque había unos pocos estudiantes hispanos/latinos en sus escuelas, era difícil reunirse con ellos. Se sentían que eran eludidos, y todos pensaban que era por su pérdida auditiva. Sabían por sus familias, y por sus experiencias propias, que sólo se consigue el éxito completando la educación universitaria, a través de

la cual tendrían oportunidad de aprovechar las oportunidades que se les brindaran.

Han pasado diez años, y sigo en contacto con esos estudiantes de vez en cuando. Cuatro de los panelistas se graduaron de la universidad. Una se mudó a un colegio pequeño en Ohio y consiguió su título. Quizás tengas curiosidad en saber qué tipo de trabajo encontraron estos estudiantes. La estudiante cubana fue empleada como Residente Jefe de una Oficina de Vivienda para Estudiantes en la Universidad Gallaudet de Washington, D.C. Más tarde fue ascendida a Directora Asistente, y eventualmente a Directora, en menos de cinco años. En una reorganización del departamento, perdió su empleo un viernes. El lunes siguiente, solicitó un puesto como Directora de Vivienda en una gran universidad. Obtuvo el empleo, y parte de su paquete de compensación, tiene un apartamento de 3 cuartos y otros beneficios.

La estudiante mexicana enseña en el departamento de educación primaria en una escuela residencia diurna en Ohio. La estudiante de Costa Rica es maestra de educación física en una escuela intermedia y enseña ciencias y matemáticas en una escuela integrada en el sur de California. El estudiante de Puerto Rico se graduó *cum laude* y posteriormente entró en la Escuela de Derecho de la Universidad de Nueva York. Ahora trabaja como abogado en Nueva York. Durante varios años, el estudiante de origen argentino tuvo varios trabajos de servicio mientras asistía de vez en cuando la escuela de postgrado. Finalmente se graduó con un título en Ciencias de la Computación y está trabajando para un contratista que proporciona apoyo técnico al gobierno de los Estados Unidos.

Cuando recuerdo mis años en la universidad, había solamente tres estudiantes hispanos/latinos. Mi compañero de cuarto era de California y yo era de Missouri. Nuestra hermana estudiante era de Arizona. Teníamos oportunidades hasta cierto punto limitadas, así que nos asegurábamos de aprovecharlas. Hoy nos sorprendemos de las oportunidades educativas y laborales que hay disponibles para los estudiantes hispanos/latinos si

están preparados para aprovecharlas. No hay nada que sustituya una buena preparación académica. Los estudiantes deben de tomar cursos avanzados en la escuela secundaria y trabajar duro en su área de especialización en los estudios.

En esta guía de recursos del PEPNet-PEC encontrarás que tú has tenido muchas experiencias similares tratando de completar tu educación y el

reto al que uno se enfrenta para encontrar un empleo que corresponda con su educación e interés. Te darás cuenta, después de conseguir tu diploma o certificado, que la educación recibida es sólo el principio. Aprenderás que la educación es una tarea para toda la vida.

¡El futuro ya está AQUÍ! Debes estar listo.

Robert Davila

Few life stories are as compelling as that of Robert Davila. His journey from the migrant fields of central California to the marbled floors of Washington, D.C., is an incredible tale of family heartache, gritty determination, and single-minded perseverance. What makes the story even more compelling is the fact that its central figure is Deaf.

Robert Davila, one of eight children of a struggling Mexican family in San Diego county, learned early in life that not much is handed to one not willing to work—and in this case, make great personal sacrifices—for it. The untimely death of his father, who died of a heart attack in a fruit orchard where the entire family was working, shaped the course of his life in a way he could not possibly have imagined. Davila was 6 years old at the time. To lose his hearing two years later after a bout with spinal meningitis made the future even cloudier. But thanks to the wisdom of a determined mother who saw a future for her son through education, Davila found himself standing one day at a train station preparing to journey 500 miles away from home to attend a residential school for Deaf students.

Raised in a Spanish-speaking family, Davila now had to learn both English and American Sign



Robert Davila

Language, all the while focusing on realizing his mother's goal for him—graduation from high school. By the time that milestone had been reached, Davila had discovered in himself a passion for learning and an emerging gift for teaching. He went on to earn a bachelor's degree from Gallaudet University, followed by a master's degree in Special Education from Hunter College and a doctorate in Educational Technology from Syracuse University.

He got his first post-doctoral professional job in higher education—a teaching position at Gallaudet—after literally bumping into a vice president of the college while doing some research a few months before graduation. His success as a teacher soon led to his appointment as a vice president of the college. In 1989 he was selected by President George H. Bush to become Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services in the U.S. Department of Education. He was the first person with a disability ever appointed to this position and quickly won admiration for his ability to bring consensus and unity among diverse special interest groups.

Over the course of his professional career, many other national organizations knocked on Davila's door. He was the first Deaf person chosen to serve on the Board of Trustees of the New York School for the Deaf in White Plains as well as the first to serve as the school's Headmaster. He was elected the first Deaf president of the Convention of American Instructors of the Deaf and also was the first Deaf president of the Conference of Educational Administrators Serving the Deaf and the Council on Education of the Deaf. Only one other person, a hearing person, has ever been president of these three organizations.

In 1996, he became Vice President of RIT and Chief Executive Officer of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID), a college of Rochester (New York) Institute of Technology, where 1,100 Deaf students study and live with 14,000 hearing students. In seven years, Davila has led the drive to more than double the college's endowment and obtain other vital support from private sources. He also has significantly strengthened the college's reputation as an international leader in postsecondary education for Deaf students.

**“The dream of
obtaining an
education proved to
be the pathway to a
better life.”**

**“El sueño de obtener
una educación
demostró ser el
camino a una vida
mejor.”**

Not surprisingly, Davila's “retirement plan” is anything but traditional. He has been appointed by President George W. Bush to serve on the National Council on Disability, a 15-member group that advises the President and Congress on matters affecting the education, rehabilitation, employment, and independent status of the country's 52 million persons with disabilities. Davila also is the first person invited to sit in the Jerry C. Lee Chair of Studies in Technology and the Adult Learner at National University in California.

It's fitting that this latter position will take him full circle, back to his southern California roots. He returns as one of the country's foremost Latino leaders, and one who never has forgotten the reasons for his success.

“My heritage, upbringing, and determination all helped define who I am,” he says. “From my early years, I developed deep interests in reading and learning, interests that served me well throughout my academic experiences.”

“I leave NTID satisfied that I have contributed in a small way to this college's mission—to help young Deaf people acquire knowledge and develop the skills they'll need to face life's many challenges. For me, as for countless others, the dream of

obtaining an education proved to be the pathway to a better life, for which I'm eternally grateful."

Today's students, and tomorrow's as well, need look no further than this respected administrator's own life to know just how fulfilling that dream can be.

Robert Davila

Hay pocas historias que inspiren tanto como la de Robert Davila. Su trayecto desde los campos migratorios del centro de California a los suelos de mármol de Washington, DC, es un relato increíble de dolor en la familia, obstinada determinación y firme perseverancia. Lo que hace la historia aún más fascinante es el hecho que la figura central es una persona sorda.

Robert Davila, uno de los ocho hijos de una apurada familia mexicana en el condado de San Diego, aprendió a corta edad que en la vida hay muy poco que se le da a alguien que no esté dispuesto a trabajar por ello - y en este caso, a hacer grandes sacrificios personales. La prematura muerte de su padre, que falleció de un ataque al corazón en una huerta de fruta donde la familia entera estaba trabajando, marcó el curso de su vida de una forma que él no podía haber imaginado. Davila tenía 6 años entonces. Al perder la audición dos años más tarde después de un ataque de meningitis medular, se ensombreció un poco más su futuro. Pero gracias a la sabiduría de una madre resuelta que vio en la educación el futuro de su hijo, Davila se encontró un día parado en una estación de tren, a punto de viajar para asistir a una escuela residencial para estudiantes sordos a 500 millas de su casa.

Habiendo crecido en una familia que hablaba español, Davila ahora tenía que aprender ambos inglés y ASL (lengua de señas americana), mientras se enfocaba en cumplir el sueño de su madre para él – graduarse de la escuela secundaria. Para cuando alcanzó esta meta, Davila había descubierto en sí mismo la pasión por aprender y un talento para la enseñanza. Consiguió título de bachiller de la Universidad Gallaudet, seguido de una maestría en Educación Especial del

Colegio Hunter y un doctorado en Tecnología Educativa de la Universidad de Syracuse.

Obtuvo su primer trabajo de postgrado en educación superior – un puesto de enseñanza en Gallaudet – después de tropezarse literalmente con un vicepresidente del colegio mientras estaba haciendo investigación unos pocos meses antes de graduarse. Su éxito como maestro le llevó pronto a la vicepresidencia del colegio. En 1989 el presidente George H. Bush le nombró Secretario Auxiliar de Educación Especial y Servicios de Rehabilitación del Departamento de Educación de los Estados Unidos. Fue la primera persona con una discapacidad en ser nombrada en este cargo y ganó rápidamente admiración por su habilidad para traer consenso y unidad entre los diversos grupos especiales.

En el curso de su carrera profesional, muchas otras organizaciones nacionales llamaron a su puerta. Fue la primera persona sorda escogida para servir en la Junta de Regentes de la Escuela para Sordos de Nueva York en White Plains, y también fue el primero en servir como director de la escuela. Fue el primer presidente sordo elegido de la Convención de Instructores para Sordos Americanos y fue el primer presidente sordo de la Conferencia de Administradores Educativos para los Sordos y del Consejo para la Educación de Sordos. Solamente hay otra persona, un oyente, que ha sido presidente de estas tres organizaciones.

En 1996, llegó a ser vicepresidente de RIT y Oficial Ejecutivo Jefe del Instituto Técnico Nacional para Sordos (NTID), un colegio del Instituto de Tecnología de Rochester (Nueva York), donde estudian 1,100 estudiantes sordos y viven con 14,000 estudiantes oyentes. En siete años, Davila ha guiado el impulso que llevó a aumentar la dote del colegio a más del doble y obtener el apoyo vital de fuentes privadas. También ha fortalecido significativamente la reputación del colegio como una institución con liderazgo internacional en la educación postsecundaria de estudiantes sordos.

No nos sorprende que los "planes de jubilación" de Davila sean tan poco tradicionales. Ha sido

nombrado por el Presidente George W. Bush para servir en el Consejo Nacional de Discapacidad, un grupo de 15 miembros que aconseja al presidente y al congreso en asuntos relacionados con la educación, rehabilitación, empleo y estado independiente de los 52 millones de personas en Estados Unidos con discapacidades. Davila es también la primera persona que ha sido invitada a tomar la cátedra de Jerry C. Lee de Estudios en Tecnología y el Estudiante Adulto en la Universidad Nacional de California.

El cumplir con este último puesto le llevará a completar el círculo, de vuelta a sus raíces en el sur de California. Regresa como uno de los líderes latinos más prominentes, y uno que no ha olvidado nunca las razones de su éxito.

“Mi herencia, mi educación y determinación, todos ayudaron a definir quien soy”, dice.

“Desde mis primeros años, desarrollé un gran interés en leer y aprender, intereses que me han servido bien a través de mis experiencias académicas”.

“Dejo NTID satisfecho de haber contribuido de alguna forma a la misión del colegio – ayudar a las personas sordas jóvenes a adquirir conocimientos y desarrollar habilidades que necesitarán en los muchos retos de la vida. Para mí, y para muchos otros, el sueño de obtener una educación demostró ser el camino a una vida mejor, por la cual estoy eternamente agradecido”.

Los estudiantes de hoy, y los de mañana también, no necesitan buscar más allá de la propia vida de este respetado administrador para conocer la satisfacción de realizar este sueño.

Suzette Garay, PhD, CDI-P

A variety of experiences affected Dr. Suzette Garay's educational and career choices. Growing up as a Deaf child in a large Latino family, living in poverty and being a minority are all aspects that shaped her decisions. The fields of Psychology and Education seemed like natural choices to her as she made her way through numerous degrees. She holds a BA, MA, PSY.S and a Ph.D., and her major areas of study were Psychology, Developmental Psychology, School Psychology and Special Education- Learning Disabilities.

Dr. Garay is a Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee, and teaches undergraduate/graduate courses in the Interpreter Training Program and graduate courses in Exceptional Education. When asked to provide some advice for high school and college students

who are Deaf, she offered the following as her first piece of advice: “Believe in yourself: Never let someone decide your path or journey.” She also gives the following advice regarding work experiences: “In the world of work, I have learned that people will often try to put you in your place. Labels become powerful and your sense of identity becomes challenged often. People will try to shape and mold who you are and what you can or cannot do. Whether it is being Deaf or being a minority, I have to remind people that I have a name and to respect me for who I am and not what I have overcome.”

Participation in numerous sports was one of the ways that Dr. Garay gained confidence, leadership skills and knowledge of teamwork. Her list of sports during her college years included softball, rugby,



Suzette Garay

basketball and indoor hockey. Golf is currently one of the ways she relaxes.

Dr. Garay attended several institutions, including the University of California-Santa Cruz, Gallaudet University, Wisconsin School of Professional Psychology and the University Of Kansas- Medical Center. While at these institutions, she took advantage of virtually every type of assistance available, and she encourages all students to look into services on their campuses. She said that the programs provided her with the financial, disability related services and the social/emotional supports that helped her reach each degree she pursued. Her second piece of advice about the educational experience is to “Have patience: All great things come in small packages and overcoming adversity does not happen overnight.”

When asked how being Latino has affected her education and career, Dr. Garay pointed out that sometimes she has a clash between finding time to be with family versus moving up the career ladder. Sometimes she had to let opportunities go, because she knows they would take time away from visiting and being with her family. In her family, she is usually the one they depend on for assistance. As she stated, “...it is important that I put aside a certain amount of financial resources in case of emergencies. This is sometimes the expected role you have when you are the educated and more successful one in the family.”

In thinking about the future, Dr. Garay would like to publish a book related to ASL/Spanish sign language and/or mentoring or working with culturally diverse students/interpreters. At the same time, she plans to be busy developing online distance education courses related to working/teaching interpreting in culturally diverse settings.

Another final piece of advice includes remembering not to always please others, but to make the choices you want. In closing, Garay states, “Be open to opportunities you might not have thought of or explored before because the more you explore and experience, the more doors will open for you.”

Suzette Garay, PhD, CDI-P

Las preferencias educativas y de carrera de la Dra. Suzette Garay han venido influenciadas por una variedad de experiencias. Crecer como una niña sorda en una gran familia latina, vivir en la pobreza y ser miembro de una minoría, son todos aspectos que moldearon sus decisiones. El campo de la Psicología y la Educación parecía la elección más natural para ella mientras conseguía sus numerosos diplomas. Tiene un BA, MA, Psy. S y Doctorado, siendo sus mayores áreas de estudio la Psicología, Psicología del Desarrollo, Psicología Escolar y Educación Especial-Problemas de Aprendizaje.

La Dra. Garay es una Profesora Auxiliar Clínica en la Universidad de Wisconsin-Milwaukee, y enseña cursos graduados y básicos en el Programa de

Entrenamiento de Intérpretes, y cursos graduados en Educación Excepcional. Cuando le piden que aconseje a estudiantes de secundaria que son sordos, ofrece lo siguiente como su primer consejo: “Cree en ti mismo: Nunca dejes que otra persona decida tu camino o tu senda”. También da el siguiente consejo con respecto a experiencias laborales: “En el mundo del trabajo, he aprendido que la gente frecuentemente quiere ponerte en tu sitio. Las etiquetas tienen mucho poder y se reta tu sentido de identidad con frecuencia. La gente tratará de dar forma y moldear quién eres y qué puedes o no puedes hacer. Tanto si soy sorda o miembro de una minoría, tengo que recordarle a la gente que tengo un nombre y pedir que me respeten por quién soy y no por las dificultades que he vencido”.

La participación en numerosos deportes fue una de las formas en que la Dra. Garay ganó confianza, capacidad para el liderazgo y la ayudó a comprender el trabajo en equipo. Su lista de deportes durante los años universitarios incluyen softball, rugby, baloncesto y hockey de pista. El golf es una de las formas en las que se relaja en la actualidad.

La Dra. Garay asistió a varias instituciones, incluyendo la Universidad de California – Santa Cruz, la Universidad Gallaudet, La Escuela de Psicología Profesional de Wisconsin, y la Universidad de Kansas – Centro Médico. Mientras estaba en estas instituciones, se aprovechó virtualmente de todos los tipos de asistencia disponibles, y ella anima a todos los estudiantes a que busquen servicios en sus universidades. Dijo que estos programas la proporcionaron servicios financieros relativos a discapacidad y el apoyo social/emocional que la ayudó a conseguir todos los títulos que se propuso. Su segundo consejo

“Be open to opportunities you might not have thought of or explored before because the more you explore and experience, the more doors will open for you.”

“Estén abiertos a opciones que no hayan pensado o explorado antes porque cuanto más exploren y experimenten, más puertas se les abrirán.”

sobre la experiencia educativa es “Tengan paciencia: Todas las cosas grandes vienen en paquetes pequeños y no se vence la adversidad de la noche a la mañana”.

Cuando le preguntan cómo ha influenciado su educación y su carrera el ser latina, la Dra. Garay señala que a veces ella tiene conflictos entre encontrar tiempo de estar con la familia y subir la “escala laboral”. A veces ella ha tenido que dejar pasar oportunidades, porque sabía que le quitarían tiempo de visitar y estar con la familia. En su familia, ella la persona con la que se puede contar para que le saque a uno de apuros. Como ella dice: “... Es importante reservar una cierta cantidad de recursos financieros en caso de emergencias. Esto es a veces lo que se espera de ti cuando eres

la persona más educada y afluente de la familia”.

Cuando piensa en el futuro, a la Dra. Garay le gustaría publicar un libro relativo al ASL/lengua de señas española y/o ser mentora o trabajar con estudiantes/intérpretes culturalmente diversos. Al mismo tiempo, tiene planes de mantenerse ocupada desarrollando cursos de educación a distancia relativos a trabajar/enseñar interpretación en ambientes culturales diversos.

Su consejo final es el recordar que no debes darle gusto a los demás, sino escoger lo que tú quieras. Para terminar, Garay dice: “Estén abiertos a opciones que no hayan pensado o explorado antes porque cuanto más exploren y experimenten, más puertas se les abrirán”.

Yolanda Rodriguez

Yolanda Rodriguez is the first Deaf woman from Puerto Rico to earn both a master's degree and a doctorate. This is not the first time that Rodriguez has achieved a "first"—she has been a trailblazer most of her life. As the third of five children raised by a proud, independent mother left widowed when her U.S. Army husband died, Yolanda grew up bolstered by her mother's unflagging confidence in her, a nurturing attitude that made a lasting impression she is now ready to share with another generation of young Deaf women from her native land.

The Yauco, Puerto Rico, native attended the San Gabriel School for the Deaf for four years and then was mainstreamed into a private secondary school. She graduated from the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras, in 1985 with a bachelor's degree in Special Education. She spent the next two years teaching at the Deaf Center, Vocational Rehabilitation, in San Juan, before taking a position at the Rafael Hernandez School in Rio Piedras, where she taught for the next 17 years.



Yolanda Rodriguez

One of her biggest thrills came when she was named National Teacher of the Year in 1998, which earned a trip to the Oval Office to accept congratulations from President Bill Clinton. In December 2002, she received her Ed.D. in Deaf Studies/Deaf Education from Lamar University in Texas. She now is supervisor of Deaf education for Puerto Rico's Department of Education, where her goal is to help advance the country's programs for Deaf students and to serve as a visible role model to Deaf youngsters everywhere. She also is working as a teacher at a pre-school for Deaf youngsters at the University Elementary School, University of Puerto Rico, at the Isaac Gonzalez Elementary School and at the Pachin Marin Intermediate School.

Rodriguez co-founded Sordos de Puerto Rico, an advocacy group for Deaf people on the island, in 1994. She hopes that her position will allow her to influence and foster both education and change for teachers, parents, and all members of the community.

"It will be a big challenge to change the way people from Puerto Rico view the Deaf community," Rodriguez admits. "Many people think that Deaf people can't do anything. I'm working to change that attitude."

Yolanda Rodriguez

Yolanda Rodriguez es la primera mujer hispana sorda en conseguir un doctorado en Educación para Sordos en los Estados Unidos. No es la primera vez que Rodriguez ha sido "la primera" – ha ido abriendo paso toda su vida. Siendo la tercera de cinco hijos de una madre orgullosa e independiente que se quedó viuda cuando murió su esposo en el ejército de los Estados Unidos, Yolanda creció con el respaldo de la incansable confianza de su madre en ella, una cariñosa actitud

que le grabó una fuerte impresión que ahora está dispuesta a compartir con otra generación de jóvenes mujeres sordas de su tierra natal.

Nacida en Yauco, Puerto Rico, Yolanda asistió a la escuela San Gabriel para Sordos durante cuatro años y luego fue integrada en una escuela secundaria privada. Se graduó de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, Río Piedras, en 1985 con un título de bachiller en Educación Especial. Pasó los dos años siguientes enseñando en el Centro para Sordos, Rehabilitación Vocacional, en San Juan, antes de tomar un puesto en la Escuela Rafael Hernandez en Río Piedras, donde enseñó durante los 17 años siguientes.

Una de las cosas más emocionantes para ella fue el ser nombrada la Maestra del Año Nacional en 1998, con lo que ganó un viaje a la Oficina Oval para aceptar las felicitaciones del presidente Bill Clinton. En diciembre del 2002, recibió su Doctorado en Educación en Estudios para Sordos/Educación de

“Many people think that deaf people can’t do anything. I’m working to change that attitude.”

“Mucha gente piensa que la gente sorda no puede hacer nada. Estoy luchando para cambiar esta actitud.”

Sordos de la universidad de Texas. Ahora es la supervisora de educación para sordos del Departamento de Educación de Puerto Rico, donde tiene como objetivo el mejorar los programas del país y servir como un modelo visible para jóvenes sordos por todas partes. También está trabajando como maestra de preescolar para niños sordos en la Universidad de Escuela Elemental, de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, en la Escuela Elemental Isaac Gonzalez y la Escuela Intermedia Pachin Marin.

Rodriguez es co-fundadora de Sordos de Puerto Rico, un grupo de defensa para gente sorda de la isla, desde 1994. Espera que este puesto la permitirá influenciar y promover tanto la educación como el cambio entre los maestros, los padres y todos los miembros de la comunidad.

“Será un gran reto el cambiar la manera en que la gente de Puerto Rico percibe a la comunidad sorda”, admite Rodriguez. “Mucha gente piensa que la gente sorda no puede hacer nada. Estoy luchando para cambiar esta actitud”.

Lizzette Arellano

Lizzette Arellano currently attends California State Northridge as a full time student. She has had unilateral Deafness since she was little, and hears with her left ear. Lizzette attended John Muir high school located in Pasadena, CA. At present, she is a student in the Art department, is a ceramic major and endeavors to teach art to children. She would like to work in an art gallery in the near future. Her extra-curricular activities include participating in the air force program called ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps), and she received a military award for her hard work on training, discipline and community services. She is an active member of her church, and teams with a group of eighty other girls on missions. Her responsibility includes encouraging and inspiring them with the Bible, and helping them to learn to do better things at school, and with family and friends.

Lizzette has been a self-proclaimed artist since she was a little girl. Her art is inspired by reading literature and viewing various pictures of animals and people. Though she professes to be a ceramic artist, she likes to dabble in various mediums, including oil painting and drawing with charcoal. She especially enjoys creating human figures with



Lizzette Arellano

soft pastels. Lizzette likes to blend abstraction with realism, and her favorite artist is Leonard da Vinci.

Lizzette's other interest is music. With her unilateral hearing, she enjoys an occasional diet of Spanish Music, more precisely, Ana Gabriel. She also enjoys country music and her favorite singer is Garth Brooks.

Lizzette's advice to Deaf Latino/Hispanic students echoes her mother's, which is this: "Don't worry about other people, keep going." She adds, "What helped me is perseverance. No matter what people say, keep going with your dreams. Sometimes we get discouraged with what people say about us. People used to tell me, "You're a Deaf girl, you can't hear." It was hard and didn't help me a lot. Persevere; don't listen to what people say. Just keep going."

Lizzette is acutely aware that America can be a difficult place for Latino/Hispanic students, since they come from a different country with different values. Coming from a disagreeable background, she emphasizes the importance of establishing a vision; always have a dream of being a better person. "I have seen how I have improved my communication with people, by not letting things get in my way, even things like bad comments." Above all, she believes that one's experience can always help someone else.

Lizzette Arellano

Lizzette Arellano es estudiante a tiempo completo en la Universidad del Estado de California en Northridge. Tiene sordera unilateral, desde que era pequeña, y oye con su oído izquierdo. Lizzette asistió la escuela secundaria John Muir, que está en Pasadena, CA. En el presente, está en el departamento de Arte especializándose en cerámica y piensa enseñar arte a niños y trabajar en una galería de arte en el futuro próximo. Entre sus actividades extracurriculares se encuentra el

participar en un programa de las fuerzas aéreas llamado ROTC, y recibió un premio militar por su duro esfuerzo en el entrenamiento, su disciplina y servicio comunitario. Es una miembro activo de su iglesia, con un grupo de ochenta muchachas en un misionario, y sus responsabilidades incluyen animarlas e inspirarlas con la biblia, ayudándolas a aprender a mejorar las cosas en la escuela, con la familia y los amigos.

Lizzette se autoproclamó artista desde que era una niña chica, y se inspira leyendo literatura, viendo varias pinturas de animales y gente. Aunque ella profesa ser una artista ceramista, es aficionada a probar varios medios, como la pintura al óleo, el dibujo con carboncillo, y especialmente dibujar figuras humanas en colores pastel. Le gusta mezclar lo abstracto con el realismo, y entre sus ídolos está Leonardo da Vinci.

El otro interés de Lizzette es la música. Con su audición unilateral, disfruta de vez en cuando escuchando música en español, en particular, Ana Gabriel. También le apetece la música country y su cantante preferido es Garth Brooks.

“Persevere; don’t listen to what people say. Just keep going.”

“Persiste; no escuches lo que diga la gente. Simplemente continúa.”

El consejo de Lizzette a los estudiantes latinos/hispanos es un eco del que su madre le dio, que es: “No te preocupes de la otra gente, continúa hacia adelante”. Añade, “Lo que me ayudó fue mi persistencia. No importa lo que diga la gente, sigue tus sueños. A veces nos desanimamos por lo que la gente dice de nosotros. La gente solía decirme, eres una chica sorda, no puedes oír. Esto era muy duro y no me ayudaba mucho. Persiste; no escuches lo que diga la gente. Simplemente continúa”.

Lizzette se da cuenta perfectamente de que America es un lugar difícil para los estudiantes latinos/hispanos, ya que vienen de un país distinto, con distintos valores. Por sus experiencias desagradables, enfatiza la importancia de tener una visión; tener siempre el sueño de ser una mejor persona. “He visto como he mejorado mi comunicación con la gente, no dejando que nada se interponga en mi camino, incluso pequeñas cosas como malos comentarios”. Por encima de todo, ella cree que la experiencia de cada uno siempre puede ayudar a otra persona.

Katrina Aristy

A full-time student at Florida International University majoring in Business Administration and Management, Katrina Aristy plans to own her own business one day. Katrina began her education at Pasadena Lakes Elementary school. Following her elementary education, she attended high school. Her elementary and high school education occurred primarily in mainstreamed classrooms. As Katrina states, “It is OK to be mainstreamed.”

Following high school, Katrina went to Florida International University (FIU). Currently she is a full time student at FIU. Her father has a business where she has been working with him. Therefore, majoring in Business Administration and Management was a logical choice.

Katrina chose FIU for their good business program and due to the campus location close to home. The



Katrina Aristy

Office of Disability Services also provides accommodations helpful to students who are Deaf or Hard- of -Hearing. This office is very important and helpful in finding qualified interpreters and providing testing accommodations.

Due to devoting her time to studies, Katrina does not have much free time. However, in those rare occasions, she enjoys reading. Additionally, she volunteers to feed homeless people during the holidays, and she likes to spend time with her friends. She plans to consider joining the Student Government Association and the Swimming team later in her college education. As for now, she states, "There is no time right now for any extracurricular activities. All the time is dedicated for school." In the future, she plans to open a small business and hopes that it will grow. She has not decided on the type of business yet, but that will come with time.

In relation to her preparation for college, Katrina found that high school helped prepare her the most for postsecondary education. High school prepared

Katrina with the ACT, SAT, and ensuring the correct forms and documentation were in place for her application to college. Moreover, the high school helped her identify financial assistance available such as scholarships. In addition to the financial assistance, the high school business classes helped prepare her for the business classes she now faces in college.

Katrina's brother is also Deaf and both of her parents sign. Her parents are from the Dominican Republic. At home, the family speaks ASL, English, and Spanish. Katrina enjoys spending time with other friends who share a similar cultural Hispanic background.

Katrina Aristy

Katrina Aristy es una estudiante a tiempo completo en la Universidad Internacional de Florida, especializándose en Administración de Empresas y Gerencia, y tiene planes algún día de ser dueña de su propio negocio. Katrina comenzó su educación en la Escuela Elemental Pasadena Lakes. Después de la educación primaria, asistió a la escuela secundaria. Su educación primaria y secundaria fueron en gran parte en clases integradas. Como dice Katrina, "Es bueno estar integrada." Después de la secundaria, Katrina fue a la Universidad Internacional de Florida (FIU). En la actualidad es estudiante a tiempo completo en FIU. Su padre tiene un negocio y ella trabaja con él. Por lo tanto, es lógico que su especialización sea en Administración de Empresas y Gerencia.

Katrina escogió FIU por su buen programa de negocios y porque el campus estaba cerca de su casa. La Oficina de Servicios para Discapacitados también la proporciona acomodaciones que son útiles para estudiantes que son Sordos o Personas con Dificultades de Audición. Esta oficina es muy importante y útil para encontrar intérpretes cualificados y proporcionarle acomodaciones en las pruebas.

Debido al tiempo que dedica a sus estudios, Katrina no tiene mucho tiempo libre. Sin embargo, en esas raras ocasiones, le gusta leer. Además, es

voluntaria para llevar alimentos a personas sin hogar en las festividades, y le gusta pasar tiempo con sus amigos. Más adelante en sus años universitarios, piensa unirse a la Asociación de Gobierno Estudiantil y el equipo de natación. Ahora mismo, dice, “no hay tiempo para actividades extracurriculares. Todo el tiempo es para la escuela”. En el futuro, piensa abrir un pequeño negocio y espera que crezca. Todavía no ha decidido que tipo de negocio, el tiempo lo dirá.

En relación a su preparación para la universidad, Katrina descubrió que la escuela secundaria fue lo que más la ayudó a prepararse para la educación postsecundaria. La escuela secundaria la ayudó con los exámenes de ACT,

Katrina volunteers to feed homeless people during the holidays, and she likes to spend time with her friends.

Katrina es voluntaria para llevar alimentos a personas sin hogar en las festividades, y le gusta pasar tiempo con sus amigos.

SAT y para asegurarse de tener los formularios correctos y toda la documentación necesaria para entrar en la universidad. Además la escuela secundaria la ayudó a encontrar ayuda financiera disponible, como becas. Además de la ayuda financiera, las clases de negocios en la secundaria la prepararon para las clases de negocios que tiene hoy en la universidad.

El hermano de Katrina también es sordo y sus dos padres hablan por señas. Sus padres son de la República Dominicana. En casa, la familia habla ASL, inglés y español. A Katrina le

gusta pasar tiempo con otros amigos que tienen un similar trasfondo cultural hispano.

Jeannice Blazquez

Born hard-of-hearing, Jeannice grew up as an Oral Deaf person. According to her, “my parents believed that it was imperative that I learned to speak. This is a hearing world.” At the time, she had no knowledge of the ADA or her rights. Jeannice began school at the early age of 3 ½. She attended several schools including Little Castle, Berkshire, and Clarke School for the Deaf just to name a few. After attending the Clarke School for the Deaf, she went to Atlantis Academy where she graduated with honors. Throughout high school, she never had an interpreter. Therefore, she had to make the professor look at her so she could follow the class. Following high school, she attended Miami- Dade Community College where she graduated with honors in 1997 with her major study in Special Education. When she arrived at Miami Dade Community College, people led her to believe

that she needed an oral interpreter to follow the class. After a couple of semesters, she realized that the oral interpreting was not meeting her needs. Jeannice decided she needed an ASL interpreter, and she began learning ASL. A private Deaf tutor taught Jeannice ASL. She learned very quickly. Her parents were opposed to her decision to learn ASL until they saw the impact it had on their daughter. They began to understand and later supported her decision. At Miami-Dade, the services were very good including interpreting and note taking services.

After graduation from Miami-Dade, she went on to attend several Universities including the University Of North Florida (UNF). While at the UNF, her major was Deaf Education. Jeannice was very pleased with the service she experienced at UNF,



Jeannice Blazquez

and she had a very nice advisor to help whenever she needed assistance. Additionally, she had services she needed. She attended UNF from 1997-1998 majoring in Computer Programming and Psychology. Following UNF, she attended Florida International University (FIU). At FIU, the services were not yet adequate for her needs. Therefore, she went on to Barry University from 1998-1999 with her major in Psychology. Due to poor communications, she then transferred back to FIU. By this time in 1999, she was very pleased with FIU and their new coordinator of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing services. She will graduate in the fall of 2002 from FIU with a degree in Psychology. Following that degree, she plans to continue her education with a master's in Psychology and later a doctorate.

Aside from her education, Jeannice spends her time volunteering at various schools volunteering to tutor Deaf children, assist the teachers, and working with the learning-disabled students. As well, she interns for the Jackson Memorial Hospital in the Mental Health Deaf Program. As she states, "I think this is very interesting and it gives me a lot of perspective on Deaf life."

Jeannice has a distinctive cultural background with each parent from a different area. Her father is Cuban, and he arrived in the United States with little to his name. As Jeannice states, "He came to the US with only \$5.00 in his pocket. He did not speak any English when he came to this country. He is now the owner of Gilda Industries Inc." Her mother is Dominican, and she arrived in the US at the age of nine. Her parents and sister have been encouraging to Jeannice to see her become the best she can be. Due to the varying backgrounds of her family, Jeannice knows several languages. She speaks ASL, English and Spanish. For the most part, she speaks Spanish with her father and English with her mother. As Jeannice states, "I have proved to all my family and friends that one can be very successful as a Deaf person."

Although she will have to work on English vocabulary throughout her life, she has many successes in her experiences. She has received several awards throughout her educational career. These include graduating with honors from Miami-Dade, receiving the "most outstanding person" award, appearing on the Dean's List, and receiving a plaque for the "magnificent person" award. In addition to these awards, she also worked with the Counsel for Exceptional Children and was involved with those activities. As Jeannice advises, "I survived College, and I have proved everyone wrong. I am on my way to a doctoral degree." With her degrees, she plans to work with Deaf children. She confirms her goal by stating, "I want to make a difference in the lives of Deaf children, and I can relate to their specific situation."

Jeannice Blazquez

Jannice nació con dificultades de audición, y creció como una persona sorda oral. De acuerdo a lo que dice, "Mis padres creían que era imperativo que aprendiera a hablar. Este es un mundo oyente." Entonces, no sabía nada del ADA (Acta de los Americanos con Discapacidades) o sus derechos. Jannice empezó la escuela a los 3 años y medio. Asistió a varias escuelas, incluyendo Little Castle, Berkshire, y la escuela Clarke School para Sordos, sólo por nombrar unas cuantas. Después de ir a Clarke, fue a la Academia Atlantis, donde se

graduó con honores. En la escuela secundaria nunca tuvo un intérprete. Así que tenía que hacer que el profesor la mirara para poder seguir la clase. Después de la secundaria, asistió el Colegio Comunitario de Miami-Dade donde se graduó con honores y se especializó en Educación Especial. Cuando llegó a Miami-Dade, la gente la empujó a creer que necesitaba un intérprete para seguir la clase. Después de un par de semestres, se dio cuenta que el intérprete oral no estaba cubriendo sus necesidades. Jeannice decidió que necesitaba un intérprete de ASL, y empezó a estudiar ASL. Un tutor sordo privado la enseñó ASL, y ella lo aprendió muy rápidamente. Sus padres se oponían a su decisión de aprender ASL hasta que vieron el impacto en su hija. Empezaron a comprenderla y después apoyaron su decisión. En Miami-Dade, los servicios eran muy buenos, incluyendo intérpretes y servicios de toma de notas.

Después de graduarse de Miami-Dade fue a varias universidades, como la Universidad del Norte de Florida (UNF). Cuando estaba allí, su especialización era Educación para Sordos. Jeannice estaba muy contenta con los servicios en UNF, y tenía un consejero muy bueno que la ayudaba en cuanto necesitaba asistencia. Además, tenía los servicios que necesitaba. Asistió a UNF de 1997 a 1998, especializándose en Programación de Computadoras y Psicología. Después de UNF, asistió a la Universidad Internacional de Florida (FIU). En FIU, los servicios no eran adecuados a sus necesidades. Así que se cambió a la Universidad Barry de 1998 a 1999, con su especialización en Psicología. Debido a la comunicación deficiente, después se transfirió de nuevo a FIU. Esta vez, en 1999, estuvo muy contenta con FIU y su nuevo coordinador para servicios de Sordos y Personas con Dificultades de

“I want to make a difference in the lives of deaf children, and I can relate to their specific situation.”

“Quiero tener una influencia positiva en las vidas de niños sordos, y yo me puedo identificar con su situación específica.”

Audición. Se graduó en el otoño del 2002 de FIU con un título en Psicología. Tiene planes de continuar su educación con una maestría en Psicología, y después un doctorado.

Además de su educación, Jeannice pasa tiempo siendo tutora voluntaria de niños sordos, ayudando a los maestros y trabajando con estudiantes con dificultades para el aprendizaje. Además, es interna en el Hospital Jackson Memorial, en el programa de Salud Mental para Sordos. Como dice, “Pienso que es muy interesante y me da una gran perspectiva de la vida sorda.”

Jeannice tiene un trasfondo cultural diferente, por ser sus padres de distintas áreas. Su padre es cubano, y llegó a los

Estados Unidos con muy pocos recursos. Como dice Jeannice, “Él vino a US con sólo \$5 en el bolsillo. No hablaba inglés cuando llegó a este país. Ahora es el dueño de Industrias Gilda, S.A.” Su madre es dominicana y llegó a US cuando tenía nueve años. Sus padres y su hermana han animado siempre a Jeannice a ser lo máximo que pueda. Debido a los distintos orígenes en su familia, habla varios idiomas. Habla ASL, inglés y español. En su mayor parte habla español con su padre e inglés con su madre. Como dice Jeannice, “He probado a toda mi familia y amigos que uno puede ser una persona sorda con éxito.”

Aunque tendrá que trabajar en vocabulario inglés toda su vida, ha tenido muchos éxitos en sus experiencias. Ha recibido varios premios durante su carrera educativa. Entre éstos está el graduarse con honores de Miami-Dade, recibir el premio “a la persona más sobresaliente”, aparecer en la Lista del Decano, y recibir una placa por el premio a “la persona magnífica”. Además de estos premios, también trabajó con el Consejo para Niños Excepcionales y estuvo muy envuelta en sus

actividades. Como Jeannice aconseja, “Sobreviví la universidad, y probé que estaban todos equivocados. Voy en camino de conseguir un doctorado”. Con sus títulos, piensa trabajar con

niños sordos. Confirma su objetivo diciendo “Quiero tener una influencia positiva en las vidas de niños sordos, y yo me puedo identificar con su situación específica.”

Jazmin Bravo

Jazmin Bravo is from Puerto Rico, where she is the only Deaf person in her family. Her family moved to Florida when she was 14 years old. They decided to move to Florida for a better education and more opportunities. She began attending school at the age of 1 ½, and attended the same school until age 14. When her family moved to Florida, she attended Florida School for the Deaf and Blind. During her time at that school, she had to work very hard. She was learning English and Spanish. She graduated in 2000; however, she continues to study English and Spanish. Therefore, she communicates in English, Spanish, and American Sign Language depending on whom she is talking with.

She currently works at Wal-Mart as a stocker. Wal-Mart provides several benefits to her in this position including, a scholarship program, insurance coverage, and bonuses. While working at Wal-Mart, she attends St. Petersburg College. Although she has not declared a major yet, she is considering Elementary Education, teaching Spanish, social work, or becoming an Actress. According to Jazmin, she chose St. Petersburg College because, “their Deaf program is wonderful and the best in the state.” The college has a good relationship with the faculty and students. Additionally, the college provides note takers. Jazmin is thankful for hearing people who volunteer to become note takers.

During her free time, Jazmin likes to read, study English, dance, watch movies, or visit her family. She still struggles with English, so she continues to practice that skill. Sometimes she will visit family or friends on the weekends as well. Since her family lives about 4 hours away, she only visits

them once a month. As she adds, “I really love my family.”

Her goals for the future include finishing her A.A. Degree, finding a job, and continuing her education by pursuing a Bachelor’s Degree. She also desires to attend some acting classes. If her acting career proves unsuccessful, she wants to have a degree to fall back on.

As a graduate from high school in the top five of her class, she has some advice to pass on to high



Jazmin Bravo

school students. A high GPA is the first advice she gives students as well as being involved with a sports team or a club. With a high GPA and involvement in other programs, students should have a good chance at a scholarship. Jazmin states, "If the college likes what they see, they will accept you. I graduated in the top five of my class and that is how I got my scholarship to attend S.P.C."

**"I believe I will
be successful in
life."**

**"Creo que
tendré éxito en
la vida."**

Jazmin comes from a strong Hispanic family. Although she is the only Deaf person in her family, they communicate easily by speaking in Spanish. Her family is supportive and encouraging to her academic career. She is also thankful to her family for moving to Florida. In closing, she states, "I am glad we moved to Florida to get a better education because I see a lot of opportunities in this state. I believe I will be successful in life."

Jazmin Bravo

Jazmin Bravo es de Puerto Rico, siendo la única persona sorda en su familia. Su familia se mudó a Florida cuando tenía 14 años. Decidieron mudarse a Florida para tener una mejor educación y mejores oportunidades. Empezó a asistir a la escuela de la edad de 1 año y medio, y asistió a esa misma escuela hasta los 14 años. Cuando su familia se mudó a Florida, asistió a la Escuela para Sordos y Ciegos de Florida. Durante su tiempo en esta escuela, tuvo que trabajar muy duro. Estaba aprendiendo inglés y español. Se graduó en 2000; sin embargo continúa estudiando inglés y español. Por lo tanto, se comunica en inglés, español, o la lengua de señas americana, dependiendo de con quién esté hablando.

En la actualidad trabaja en Wal-Mart como almacénista. Wal-Mart le proporciona varios beneficios en este puesto, entre los que se encuentra un programa de becas, aseguranza médica y bonificaciones. Al mismo tiempo que trabaja en Wal-Mart, asiste al Colegio St. Petersburg. Aunque no ha declarado aún su

especialidad, está considerando Educación Elemental, enseñar español, trabajo social o convertirse en actriz. De acuerdo con Jazmin, escogió el Colegio St. Petersburg porque "Su programa para sordos es maravilloso, el mejor del estado." La universidad tiene una buena relación con el profesorado y los estudiantes. Además, el colegio le proporciona tomadores de notas. Jazmin está agradecida a los

oyentes que son voluntarios para tomar notas.

En su tiempo libre, a Jazmin le gusta leer, estudiar inglés, bailar, mirar películas o visitar a su familia. Todavía tiene dificultades con el inglés, así que continúa practicándolo. A veces también visita a su familia o amigos en los fines de semana. Como su familia vive a 4 horas de distancia, sólo les visita una vez al mes. Añade, "De verdad que quiero mucho a mi familia".

Entre sus planes para el futuro está el completar su título AA, encontrar trabajo y continuar su educación para conseguir un título de bachiller. También desea asistir a clases de teatro. Si su carrera de actriz no funciona, quiere tener un título universitario que la respalde.

Al haberse graduado de la escuela secundaria entre los cinco primeros puestos de su clase, tiene consejos que pasar a los estudiantes de secundaria. Un promedio GPA alto es el primer consejo que les da a los estudiantes, y también que estén envueltos en algún equipo deportivo o club. Con un GPA alto y estando involucrado en otros programas, los estudiantes tendrán una mejor oportunidad de conseguir becas. Jazmin dice, "Si a la universidad le gusta lo que ve, te aceptarán. Yo me gradué entre los 5 primeros de mi clase y así es como conseguí mi beca para asistir a SPC".

Jazmin viene de una fuerte familia hispana. Aunque es la única persona sorda de la familia, se puede comunicar con ellos fácilmente hablando español. Su familia la ayuda y la anima en su carrera académica. También está agradecida a su

familia por haberse mudado a Florida. Para terminar, añado “Estoy contenta de haberme

mudado a Florida para tener una mejor educación porque veo un montón de oportunidades en este estado. Creo que tendré éxito en la vida”.

Samuel Garcia, Jr.

At the time he was born two months premature, Samuel's family was living in Chicago, Illinois. A year later they returned to Mexico City, Mexico. When he was four, his parents learned that he was Deaf. A premature birth caused him to be Deaf and to have learning disabilities. His parents made the decision to move back to the United States permanently, so Samuel could get a good education and have a better opportunity for a more successful life.

As Samuel states, “I've had to work very hard and fight my way through my educational experiences, but it was worth it. I have learned a lot and feel that I've been successful in my education.” He attended day schools for the Deaf in Chicago. In high school, he thought of becoming a dentist. However, in college He encountered difficulty in finding the right career.

He attended Gallaudet, for one semester, and five community colleges before he discovered a dental lab training at The American Institute of Medical/ Dental Technology in Provo, Utah. With assistance from the Division of Rehabilitation Services and an employment specialist, he completed the training that made it possible for him to gain a good job. He attended the training full-time for nine months from June 2001 to April 2002. For Samuel, this was better than spending two to six years in college.

He currently works for Becden Dental Laboratory in Draper, Utah. In his current job, he works with crowns in the specialty of ‘model and die,’ which means he bases, pins, trims and mounts the model, posts it in the triple tray, and checks to make sure that the bite is right. As he states, “I'm happy to have found a career that matches my talents.”

Samuel understands the importance of knowledge and skills for a career. These skills can help support his future family. Samuel and Camille were married in December 2002. His wife, Camille, is also Deaf and works full-time as a trainer for Utah Schools for the Deaf and Blind.

While in school, he continued his involvement in Deaf sports. He has enjoyed participating in Utah Deaf Volleyball and lifting weights at Gold's Gym. Last year, he earned votes for MVP in the Volleyball Tournament. He also spent two years as a volunteer for his church, serving in New York and Arizona.

When asked to give advice for high school Deaf students, Samuel has some great insights. His advice to high school Deaf students includes making goals for the future, working hard, and having determination and discipline in education. According to Samuel, “with the right education and training, you can do anything you really want to do.



Samuel and Camille Garcia

Be patient with yourself and do not give up. You can do anything you can dream. Making the right decisions means finding the right friends, joining the right groups, and deciding what you really want to be in the future.”

Samuel’s parents were very poor, but their dream was to come to America. They worked hard, and raised the family with strict discipline. Good discipline kept the family away from gangs and drugs. As Samuel contends, “my parents wanted their children to be involved in education, sports, and religion. They wanted us to have happy, successful lives and to enjoy freedom in the United States of America.”

Samuel Garcia, Jr.

Cuando él nació (dos meses antes de tiempo) la familia de Samuel vivía en Chicago, Illinois. Un año más tarde volvieron a la ciudad de México, México. Cuando tenía cuatro años, sus padres se enteraron que era sordo. El nacimiento prematuro le dejó sordo y le causó problemas de aprendizaje. Sus padres tomaron la decisión de mudarse a los Estados Unidos permanentemente, para que Samuel pudiera tener una buena educación y mejores oportunidades de tener éxito en la vida.

Como dice Samuel, “He tenido que trabajar muy duro y luchar durante mi experiencia educativa, pero mereció la pena. He aprendido mucho y siento que he tenido éxito en mi educación”. Asistió escuelas diurnas para sordos en Chicago. En la escuela secundaria, pensaba que iba a ser dentista. Sin embargo, en la universidad tuvo dificultad en encontrar la carrera perfecta.

Asistió a Gallaudet, durante un semestre, y a otros cinco colegios comunitarios antes de descubrir un laboratorio de entrenamiento dental en el

Instituto Americano de Tecnología Médica/Dental en Provo, Utah. Con ayuda de la División de Servicios de Rehabilitación y de un especialista en empleo, completó el adiestramiento que hizo posible que obtuviera un buen empleo. Asistió al adiestramiento a tiempo completo durante nueve meses de junio 2001 a abril 2002. Para Samuel, esto fue mejor que pasar de dos a seis años en la universidad.

Consiguió trabajo en el Laboratorio Dental de Becden, Utah. En su trabajo actual, trabaja con coronas en la especialidad de “modelo y troquel” lo que significa que rellena las bases del modelo, pone los pines de retención, las recorta, y las monta en el modelo y posiciona para la toma de impresión, y verifica que la mordida sea correcta. Como dice, “Me alegro de haber encontrado una carrera de acuerdo a mis talentos”.

Samuel entiende la importancia de los conocimientos y la destreza para una carrera. Estas habilidades le pueden ayudar a mantener a su futura familia, está deseando casarse en diciembre del 2002. Su prometida, Camille, también es sorda y trabaja a tiempo completo como entrenadora en las Escuelas de Utah para Sordos y Ciegos.

Mientras estaba en la escuela, él siguió envuelto en deportes para Sordos. Ha participado en voleibol Sordo de Utah, y levanta pesas en el Gimnasio Gold. El año pasado, ganó votos para el torneo MVP de voleibol. También pasó dos años sirviendo en Nueva York y Arizona como voluntario en su iglesia.

Cuando le piden consejo para estudiantes sordos de secundaria, Samuel ofrece una buena perspectiva. Su consejo es que tengan objetivos para el futuro, trabajar duro, y tener determinación y disciplina en la educación. De acuerdo con

“Be patient with yourself and do not give up. You can do anything you can dream.”

“Tengan paciencia con ustedes mismos y no se rindan. Pueden realizar sus sueños.”

Samuel, “Con una buena educación y adiestramiento, puedes hacer cualquier cosa que quieras. Tengan paciencia con ustedes mismos y no se rindan. Pueden realizar sus sueños. El tomar las decisiones correctas significa encontrar los amigos y grupos apropiados, y decidir lo que realmente quieren ser en el futuro.”

Los padres de Samuel eran muy pobres, pero su sueño era venir a América. Trabajaron duro,

sacaron adelante a su familia con estricta disciplina. La buena disciplina mantuvo a la familia lejos de las pandillas y las drogas. Como dice Samuel, “Mis padres querían que sus hijos estuvieran envueltos en educación, deportes y religión. Querían que tuviéramos vidas felices y con éxito y que disfrutáramos libertad en los Estados Unidos de América.”

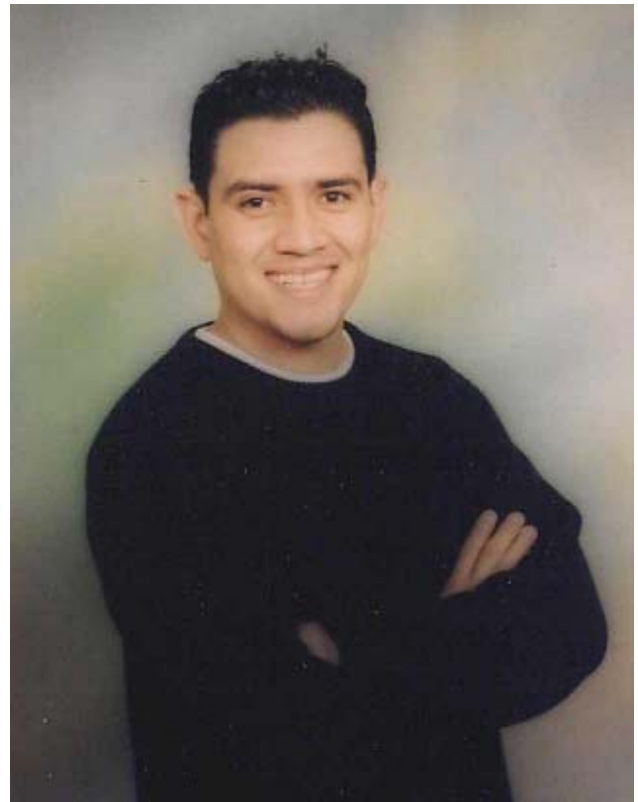
Ignacio Ponce Gaytan

Ignacio Ponce Gaytan grew up in a family with eight siblings in Mexico. He became Deaf at the age of 18 through unknown causes. He came to the U.S. to go to the House Ear Institute in Los Angeles to get hearing aids. At that time he found out he had a type of nerve Deafness.

Ignacio planned to attend a university in his native Mexico. However, after becoming Deaf at the age of 18, he found that he could not get the support services he needed to attend the university he wanted. He decided to move to the U.S. to pursue his education. After coming to the United States from Gomez Palacio, Durango, Mexico, Ignacio began his schooling at Abram Friedman Occupational Center in Los Angeles. He left as the class was geared to people who needed independent living skills. From there he moved on to Garfield Adult School where he received his GED. Next, he graduated from Los Angeles Trade Technical College with an AA in Liberal Studies. Since spring 2002, he has attended California State University Northridge (CSUN) majoring in Deaf Studies. He decided to major in Deaf Studies because it will enable him to better understand himself as a Deaf person and to move freely in the Deaf community.

Throughout his school career, he has worked full-time. He is a stocking supervisor at Los Angeles Air Force Base Commissary. Because of his job, he has varied his school schedule from full to part-time. With a full-time job and classes at CSUN, he

has very little free time. Recently, however, he joined JASK (Just ASK), a group that plans and conducts Deaf awareness activities at CSUN. He was thrilled to be part of these events which took place from February 21 to March 15, 2003, at



Ignacio Ponce Gaytan

California State University in Northridge. Ignacio coordinated the presentations and workshops.

Ignacio selected CSUN for his education for several reasons. One of the major reasons was the large number of Deaf people attending and working at CSUN. These people provide a constant source of inspiration because of their successes. The large number of professional support service providers, interpreters and notetakers, make his education easier as well. The counselors working in the National Center on Deafness have also provided him with guidance and leadership.

Ignacio has very little free time with a full time job and full time college. However, he does enjoy playing tennis, and jogging when he can squeeze it in. Reading is something he enjoys as well. He particularly enjoys books about psychology. Reading on this subject takes him one step closer to his goal of possibly attending Gallaudet for graduate work in psychology. After that, he would like to work in the Deaf community as a Vocational Rehabilitation counselor or as a psychologist.

Many young people, especially of Hispanic background, do not see college as an option. They think it is too expensive or just not for them. Ignacio wants them to face that “monster”! Start taking college prep classes now. “Realize that nothing in life is easy. Life is mountain that must be climbed and everyday brings new struggles. Sure, you may fall while trying, he adds, but you have to get up, get used to it, get over it, and try again. And the bigger mistake you can possible make in your life is not trying again.” The best advice he received about education was from his father who did not graduate from high school, but sent all of his 9 children to college, “Education is like a tree with bitter roots –but the fruit is sweet!”

In his work as a supervisor now, he does not use his skills from Deaf studies major at CSUN but sees that his work will benefit him in the end. By working at a branch of Goodwill Industries he is able to work with people who have various disabilities, including Deafness, and he is able to understand more about what they need to succeed in life.

Ignacio Ponce Gaytan

Ignacio Ponce Gaytan creció en una familia de ocho hermanos en México. Se quedó sordo a la edad de 18 años por causas desconocidas. Vino a los Estados Unidos para ir al Instituto Casa del Oído en Los Angeles, para obtener un audífono. Entonces descubrió que tenía un tipo de sordera nerviosa.

Ignacio tenía planes de ir a la universidad en su México nativo. Sin embargo, después de quedarse sordo a los 18 años, descubrió que no podía obtener los servicios de ayuda necesarios para asistir a la universidad que él quería. Así que se mudó a los Estados Unidos para proseguir su educación. Después de venir a los Estados Unidos desde Gomez Palacio, Durango, México, Ignacio comenzó a ir a la escuela en el Centro Ocupacional

Abram Friedman de los Los Angeles. Dejó la clase, porque estaba enfocada a gente que necesitaba desarrollar habilidades para vivir independientemente. De ahí se cambió a la Escuela de Adultos Garfield, donde recibió su GED. Después, se graduó del Colegio Técnico de Oficios de Los Angeles con un AA en Estudios Liberales. Desde la primavera del 2002, ha asistido a la Universidad del Estado de California en Northridge (CSUN) especializándose en Estudios sobre Sordos. Decidió especializarse en Estudios sobre Sordos porque esto le ayudaría a comprenderse mejor como una

**“Education is
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**“La educación
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persona Sorda y a moverse más libremente en la comunidad Sorda.

Ha trabajado a tiempo completo durante toda su carrera educativa. Es supervisor de surtidos en la Comisaría de la Base de las Fuerzas Aéreas de Los Ángeles. Por su trabajo, ha tenido que cambiar su horario en la escuela de tiempo completo a parcial. Con su trabajo a tiempo completo y las clases en CSUN, tiene muy poco tiempo libre. Sin embargo, recientemente se unió a JASK (Simplemente Pregunte), un grupo que planifica y hace actividades para la difusión de información sobre la sordera en CSUN. Está encantado de tomar parte en el evento que ocurrirá próximamente del 21 de febrero al 15 de marzo de 2003, en la Universidad del Estado de California en Northridge, y donde él se encargará de coordinar las presentaciones y los talleres.

Ignacio escogió CSUN para su educación por diversos motivos. Una de las mayores razones fue la gran cantidad de personas sordas que asisten y trabajan en CSUN. Estas personas le proporcionan una constante fuente de inspiración por sus éxitos. La gran cantidad de profesionales que proporcionan servicios de apoyo, intérpretes y tomadores de notas, también facilitan su educación. Los consejeros que trabajan en el Centro Nacional de Sordera le han ofrecido buen asesoramiento y liderazgo.

Ignacio tiene muy poco tiempo libre con su trabajo a tiempo completo y la universidad. Sin embargo, le gusta jugar al tenis, y correr cuando puede encontrar el tiempo. Leer es algo que también

disfruta. Particularmente le gustan los libros sobre psicología. Leer sobre esta materia le acerca un poco a su objetivo de posiblemente asistir a Gallaudet para hacer trabajo graduado en psicología. Después de eso, le gustaría trabajar con la comunidad Sorda como un consejero en Rehabilitación Vocacional o como psicólogo.

Mucha gente joven, especialmente de origen hispano, no ve la universidad como una opción. Piensan que es demasiado cara o simplemente que no es para ellos. ¡Ignacio quiere que se enfrenten con ese “monstruo”! Que comiencen ahora con clases de preparación a la universidad. “Que se den cuenta de que no hay nada fácil en la vida. La vida es una montaña que se debe escalar y cada día nos trae contiendas. Seguro, puede que te caigas mientras lo intentas, añade, pero tienes que volverte a levantar, acostumbrarte, superarlo, e intentarlo de nuevo.” El mejor consejo que recibió sobre educación vino de su padre, que no se graduó de secundaria, pero envió a cada uno de sus 9 hijos a la universidad: “La educación es como un árbol que tiene raíces amargas – ¡pero el fruto es dulce!”

En su trabajo de ahora como supervisor, no usa sus conocimientos de la especialización de estudios para sordos de CSUN, pero ve que su trabajo le beneficiará al final. Trabajando en una rama de Industrias Goodwill, puede tratar con gente que tiene diversas discapacidades, incluyendo la sordera, y es capaz de comprender mejor lo que estas personas necesitan para tener éxito en la vida.

Beatrice Hernandez

“Reach for the stars, and don’t let Deafness hold you back from your dreams,” is some great advice from Beatrice Hernandez. At the age of five, she was diagnosed as Hard of Hearing. She attended a self-contained classroom at a hearing school in New Jersey until sixth grade. After the sixth grade, she moved into a mainstreamed environment until graduation from school in 1988. In 1995, she attended Bergen Community College in New Jersey. Following several years after Bergen, she began studying at Greenville Technical College (Greenville Tech) in South Carolina.

Currently, Beatrice is a student at Greenville Tech, and she has a passion for working with children who are Deaf. She began her studies in Early Childhood development in 2002, and she is a full-time student. In addition to her full-time student status, she also works at Greenville Tech. She tutors children who are in the second through fifth grades in her work study position twenty hours a week. In high school, she learned that she wanted to work with children after some experience at a local daycare. Therefore, her decision to study Early Childhood Development came as no surprise. While attending Greenville Tech, the staff has helped her excel in the program. Beatrice gives Greenville Tech applause for the skilled interpreters, tutors, and excellent counseling. She chose Greenville Tech due to their services for Deaf students, and she knew they could provide an excellent education for her. After graduation, she hopes to work with Deaf children in an elementary school setting.

Aside from classroom studies, Beatrice is a wife and a mother of two. Her son Alex is six years old, and her daughter Emely is eleven years old. Emely is a proficient signer. While with her family, she is assisting her husband in his studies as he prepares for the GED. In addition to her family responsibility, she also serves in the community. Her service to

the community includes volunteering for church and volunteering in the school systems. When she has time alone, she enjoys reading mystery novels, fantasy and fiction.

Her Hispanic Deaf background provides her with the knowledge of English, Sign Language, and Spanish. Therefore, she has a desire to help Deaf Hispanic children understand the connection to



Beatrice Hernandez

English. Having similar experiences, she can assist them in learning the language. Knowing multiple languages will also aid her in communicating with students of differing backgrounds.

When asked to give advice to other students who have similar experiences, Beatrice has some thoughts to share. She believes that Deaf students need to expand their vocabulary and English, and she knows the benefits of this. Additionally, she states, “If you want something bad enough, you can succeed. We have successful Deaf in all occupations.”

Beatrice Hernandez

“Sueña con las estrellas, y no dejes que te pare la sordera”, es un buen consejo de Beatrice Hernandez. A la edad de cinco años, la diagnosticaron con dificultad de audición. Asistió a una clase especial en una escuela oyente en Nueva Jersey hasta el sexto grado. Después del sexto, la cambiaron a un ambiente integrado hasta su graduación en 1988. En 1995, asistió al Colegio Comunitario Bergen en Nueva Jersey. Después de varios años ahí, comenzó a estudiar en el Colegio Comunitario Técnico de Greenville (Greenville Tech) de Carolina del Sur.

En la actualidad, Beatrice estudia en Greenville Tech, y tiene pasión por trabajar con niños que son sordos. Comenzó sus estudios de Desarrollo Temprano en la Niñez en 2002, y es estudiante a tiempo completo. Es tutora de niños en el segundo hasta el quinto grado en su puesto de estudio trabajo de veinte horas a la semana. Sabía que quería trabajar con niños después de una experiencia en una guardería local cuando estaba en secundaria. De ahí que su decisión de estudiar Desarrollo Temprano en la Niñez no fue ninguna

“If you want something bad enough, you can succeed. We have successful deaf in all occupations.”

“Si te esfuerzas en algo lo suficiente, lo conseguirás. Tenemos personas sordas con éxito en todos los empleos”.

sorpresa. En Greenville Tech, el personal la ha ayudado a sobresalir en el programa. Beatrice felicita a Greenville Tech por los habilidosos intérpretes, tutores y el excelente asesoramiento. Después de su graduación, espera trabajar con niños sordos en una escuela elemental.

Aparte de sus estudios, Beatrice es también esposa y madre de dos niños. Su hijo Alex tiene seis años y su hija Emely tiene once. Emely habla por señas estupendamente. Cuando está con su familia, ayuda a su esposo con sus estudios para prepararse para el GED. Además de sus responsabilidades familiares,

también sirve en la comunidad. Entre sus servicios comunitarios están el ser voluntaria en la iglesia y las escuelas. Cuando está sola, le gusta leer novelas de misterio, fantasía y ficción.

Su trasfondo de hispana sorda la ha proporcionado el conocimiento del inglés, la lengua de señas y el castellano. Por lo tanto, desea que los niños hispanos sordos entiendan la conexión con el inglés. Puede ayudarles a aprender el idioma, porque ella ha tenido experiencias similares. El saber varios idiomas también la facilitará el comunicarse con estudiantes de diferentes orígenes.

Cuando la piden que les dé consejo a otros estudiantes con experiencias semejantes, Beatrice comparte algunas ideas. Cree que los estudiantes sordos necesitan expandir su vocabulario y el inglés, y ella sabe lo bueno que es. Además, dice, “Si te esfuerzas en algo lo suficiente, lo conseguirás. Tenemos personas sordas con éxito en todos los empleos”.

Kelly Patricia Lenis

Kelly Patricia Lenis is a tenacious young woman whose love of learning is contagious. Kelly, 25, is from Brooklyn, New York. Despite some hardships that she faced growing up, Kelly and her 16-year-old brother, Jairo, enjoyed the unconditional love and support of their devoted single mother, Patricia Orejuela, who always made sure that the family had food on the table and clothes to wear.

“She sacrificed her life for my brother and me,” Kelly says, “and our dream now is to pay her back because we think she deserves the best. She is the best mom in the world.”

Kelly attended the New York School for the Deaf for 14 years, and it was here that she bloomed both academically and socially. She was involved in cheerleading, basketball, student government, class yearbook, and other activities, all of which combined to form “many great memories” of her years at the New York School.

She also discovered the joy of living with a large “extended family” of classmates, teachers, and counselors, all of whom took an active interest in her success. One in particular, headmaster Dr. Robert Davila, would later become CEO of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID), a college of Rochester (N.Y.) Institute of Technology, where Kelly enrolled after high school.

Kelly soon found that her outgoing personality and eagerness to learn allowed her many opportunities to become a leader among students at NTID. She was president of the campus Hispanic Deaf Club, worked as a public relations director for a video firm, and was a peer mentor for a student group. She also was a Dean’s List student several semesters, and worked as an office clerk for the New York League for the Hard of Hearing in New

York City one summer. She did another summer internship at the National Aeronautical Charting Office in Washington, D.C.

Kelly received her associate degree in digital imaging and publishing technology in 2002 and is now enrolled in a bachelor’s degree program at RIT. She is working as a student assistant at NTID’s Career Resource and Testing Center. She is thinking of studying social work and psychology so that she can pursue her dream of teaching.

“I want to be the best leader possible for the Deaf Hispanic community,” she says firmly. “I have learned that I must never let anything or anyone stop me from my goals and dreams.”



Kelly Patricia Lenis

Kelly Patricia Lenis

Kelly Patricia Lenis es una joven tenaz cuya pasión por aprender es contagiosa. Kelly, ¿edad?, es de Brooklyn, Nueva York. A pesar de algunas dificultades que sufrió mientras crecía, Kelly y su hermano de 16 años, Jairo, disfrutaron del amor incondicional y el apoyo de su dedicada madre soltera, Patricia Orejuela, que siempre se aseguró que la familia tuviera comida en la mesa y ropa que ponerse.

“Ella sacrificó su vida por mi hermano y por mí” dice Kelly, “y nuestros sueños ahora es pagárselo porque pensamos que se merece lo mejor. Es la mejor madre del mundo.”

Kelly asistió a la Escuela para Sordos de Nueva York durante 14 años, y fue aquí donde destacó tanto académica como socialmente. Descubrió que le encantaban las matemáticas, en parte porque su maestra se había graduado de un colegio para sordos también.

Kelly disfrutó participando en el grupo de animadoras, en baloncesto, en el gobierno de estudiantes, el libro del año de la clase, y otras actividades, las cuales ha combinado para formar “los recuerdos maravillosos” de sus años en la Escuela de Nueva York.

También descubrió la alegría de vivir con una gran “familia extendida” de compañeros de clase, maestros, y consejeros, todos los cuales se

tomaron gran interés en su éxito. Uno en particular, el director Dr. Robert Davila, el cual sería después CEO del Instituto Técnico para Sordos Nacional (NTID), un colegio del Instituto de Tecnología de Rochester (NY), donde Kelly se inscribió después de la secundaria.

“I want to be the best leader possible for the Deaf Hispanic community.”

“Quiero ser la mejor líder posible en la comunidad sorda hispana.”

Escogió NTID “sin ningún motivo en particular”, pero pronto se dio cuenta que su abierta personalidad y avidez de aprender le permitieron muchas oportunidades de ser líder entre los estudiantes. Fue presidente del Club Hispano de Sordos, trabajó como directora de relaciones públicas para una compañía de videos, y fue mentora en un grupo estudiantil. También estuvo en la Lista del Decano varios semestres, y trabajó como oficinista para la Liga de Nueva York for las Personas con Dificultades de Audición un verano en la ciudad de Nueva York.

Kelly recibió su título asociado en imagen digital y tecnología de publicación en 2002 y ahora está matriculada en un programa de bachiller en RIT. Trabaja como estudiante auxiliar en el Centro de Recursos de Carrera y de NTID. Está inscrita en un programa de maestría en ? y ya está hablando de obtener un doctorado.

“Quiero ser la mejor líder posible en la comunidad sorda hispana” afirma con firmeza. “He aprendido que nunca debo dejar que nada ni nadie me detenga en mis objetivos y sueños”.

Giselle Christina Lopez

“I think it is important to get a good education,” says Giselle Christina Lopez. She works at Barnes and Noble Bookstore while attending Florida International University (FIU). At Barnes and Noble, she is a bookseller. Her responsibilities include, helping people find books, shelving books, and being a cashier. She has worked at Barnes and Noble for more than two years. In the two years, she has convinced the company that she can do everything in the store.

Her education began at age 4 ½ at Debbie school. She continued her education by graduating from Coral Reef High School. Now she attends FIU full time and studies Education. With a love of Deaf children, she plans to become a teacher for 1st or 2nd grade students. She also dances on a team called the Dazzlers. In the dance team, she performs at the games of the various teams at FIU. Supporting the school is something she really enjoys. She chose FIU to receive a good education and have people to support her endeavor. According to her, most of the teachers are great. English is one of her favorite subjects. In addition, she is appreciative of the staff at the Deaf/HH program. As she states, “The Deaf/HH program in the Office of Disability Services has been most helpful in finding qualified interpreters and supporting me throughout my time at FIU.”

When not in class, Giselle finds enjoyment just spending time with her friends. Additionally, she loves dancing with the Dazzlers and cheering for the university’s sports teams. Her family is from the Dominican Republic, and only her mother and grandparents live in Florida. Before becoming Deaf, she spoke Spanish. However, now she signs with her mother and cousin.

In the future, Giselle has plans for more education and a way to give back to the community. She

intends to graduate and continue her education until she receives her Master’s Degree. Following her Master’s Degree, she would like to work with Deaf kids. As she states, “I like to give back to the community.”

Giselle Christina Lopez

“Creo que es importante tener una buena educación”, dice Giselle Christina Lopez. Trabaja en la librería Barnes and Noble mientras asiste a la



Giselle Christina Lopez

Universidad Internacional de Florida (FIU). En Barnes and Noble, es una vendedora de libros. Entre sus responsabilidades se encuentran ayudar a la gente a encontrar libros, poner libros en las estanterías, y ser cajera. Ha trabajado en Barnes and Noble durante más de dos años. En estos dos años ha convencido a la compañía que puede hacer de todo en el negocio.

Su educación comenzó a la edad de 4 años y medio en la escuela Debbie. Continuó su educación hasta graduarse de la Escuela Secundaria Coral Reef. Ahora asiste a FIU a tiempo completo y estudia Educación. También baila en un grupo que se llama las Dazzlers. Con este grupo de baile, actúa en varios de los juegos de los equipos de FIU. Ayudar a la escuela es algo que verdaderamente disfruta. Escogió FIU para tener una buena educación y tener gente que la apoye en su empeño. Por lo que dice, la mayoría de los maestros son buenísimos. El inglés es una de sus materias preferidas. También agradece mucho al

In two years, she has convinced the company that she can do everything in the store.

En dos años ha convencido a la compañía que puede hacer de todo en el negocio.

personal del programa de Sordos/Dificultades de Audición. Como dice, “El programa de Sordos/Dificultades de Audición de la Oficina de Servicios de Discapacidad me ha ayudado mucho a encontrar intérpretes cualificados y me ha ayudado durante mi estancia en FIU”.

Cuando no está en clase, Giselle se divierte pasando el rato con sus amigos. Además, le encanta bailar con las Dazzlers y animar a los equipos deportivos de la universidad. Su familia es de la República Dominicana, y sólo su madre y abuelos viven en Florida. Antes de quedarse sorda, hablaba español. Sin

embargo, ahora habla por señas con su madre y su primo.

En el futuro, Giselle tiene planes de continuar su educación y de contribuir a la comunidad. Tiene intención de graduarse y continuar con una maestría. Después de la maestría, le gustaría trabajar con chicos sordos. Como dice, “Me gusta contribuir a la comunidad”.

Juan Lopez

“It is important to study in High School, states Juan Lopez, so that you don’t have a gap in your academic arena that is too broad so you can’t bridge it when you go to college.” Juan was born Hard of Hearing, and he attended an elementary school with a special program for the Deaf. He was not allowed to sign until his speaking was proficient. Once he finished elementary school, he

transferred to a middle school where they had special classes for the Deaf. He later obtained an A. A. degree from Miami Dade Community College. Currently he is pursuing a degree in Civil Engineering at Florida International University. He attends the University on a part time basis while he works on a special project designing a bridge. The Engineering program is one that he enjoys.



Juan Lopez

Additionally, the Deaf/HH program in the Office of Disability Services provides helpful accommodations and interpreting services. In order to focus on his studies, Juan currently does not have a job. However, he previously held jobs at Eckerd's, U.P.S., and Burdines department store.

Aside from his studies, Juan enjoys going to the gym. He likes to stay in good physical shape. In addition, he enjoys spending time with his friends and family. His goals for the future include a good career, getting married, having two kids and a decent life.

Juan has some good advice for high school students who are interested in going to college or

some postsecondary education. Students who want to pursue college should understand the responsibility involved. As opposed to high school, college students are by themselves. College students must keep up with the work and stay on track. In college, learning will also differ from high school. As Juan states, "You will learn to do more sophisticated writing, reading and spend more time on creative problem solving in college than in High School."

Born in Cuba, his parents decided to move to Spain to help provide for their daughter. Juan was born in Spain, and later he and the family moved to America to gain economic improvements. Due to Juan going to speech therapy daily, his mom did not work outside the home. Juan is proud of his family and the lives they lead. As he states, "I am happy and fortunate to have the parents I do. I want to show my family that I can be successful, and I want to be a successful engineer."

Juan Lopez

"Es muy importante estudiar en la Escuela Secundaria," dice Juan Lopez, "para no tener lagunas en el campo académico tan grandes que no se puedan llenar cuando vas a la universidad." Juan nació con dificultad de audición, y asistió a una escuela elemental con un programa especial para sordos. No le permitieron hablar por señas hasta que tuvo destreza con el habla. Una vez que terminó la escuela elemental, se cambió a una escuela intermedia donde tenían clases especiales para sordos. Después obtuvo un título de A.A. del Colegio Comunitario Dade de Miami. En la actualidad, aspira a un título en Ingeniería Civil de la Universidad Internacional de Florida. Asiste a la universidad a tiempo parcial mientras trabaja en un proyecto especial de diseño de un puente. El programa de Ingeniería es uno que realmente disfruta. Además, el Programa para Sordos/ Dificultades de Audición de la Oficina de Servicios para Discapacitados le proporciona acomodaciones útiles y servicios de interpretación. Para poder enfocarse en sus estudios, Juan no trabaja en la actualidad. Sin embargo,

anteriormente tuvo trabajos en Eckerd's, UPS y el almacén Burdines.

Además de sus estudios, Juan disfruta yendo al gimnasio. Le gusta tener buena forma física. Además, le gusta pasar el tiempo con sus amigos y familia. Sus objetivos para el futuro son terminar una buena carrera, casarse y tener dos hijos y una vida decente.

**"It is very
important to
study."**

**"Es muy
importante
estudia."**

Juan tiene buenos consejos para los estudiantes de secundaria que están interesados en ir a la universidad o en la educación postsecundaria. Los estudiantes que quieren ir a la universidad deben de comprender la responsabilidad que conlleva. Al contrario que en la secundaria, los estudiantes universitarios son independientes. Deben de mantenerse al día con la tarea y no perder el ritmo.

En la universidad, también se aprende de forma distinta a la escuela secundaria. Como dice Juan, "Vas a aprender a escribir, a leer cosas más sofisticadas y vas a pasar bastante más tiempo resolviendo problemas creativos que en la secundaria".

Habiendo nacido en Cuba, sus padres decidieron mudarse a España para ayudar a su hija. Juan nació en España, y después él y su familia se

mudaron a América para mejorar su situación económica. Debido a que Juan iba a terapia del habla todos los días, su mamá no pudo trabajar nunca fuera de la casa. Juan está orgulloso de su familia y las vidas que llevan. Como dice, "Estoy contento y soy afortunado de tener los padres que tengo. Quiero demostrar a mi familia que puedo tener éxito, y quiero ser un ingeniero con éxito".

Arlene Negrón

Arlene Negrón was born Deaf in Puerto Rico. She began her educational experience in Puerto Rico without support services. At the age of nine, she and her family moved to New Jersey to seek better education for the future. She attended a school for the Deaf until 7th grade. From 8th grade until graduating in 2001, she attended a High School that had a Deaf program with eight other Deaf students.

She works at Espiritu Santo Catholic School as a janitor. Her sister, Mary, was instrumental in assisting Arlene obtaining employment. She cleans eight classrooms, including bathrooms.

Currently, she attends Saint Petersburg College where she plans to finish an A. A. degree in Social work. Following her A. A. degree, she anticipates seeking her Bachelor's degree in Social work as well. Her desire to major in Social works stems from a love of the major while in high school. As she states, "I like to help people when they have problems." While attending college, she also tutors ASL students and maintains a high GPA. At Saint Petersburg College, she enjoys the support services for Deaf students. The staff provides interpreters and note takers. These services she finds very helpful, and she appreciates the time they give to the Deaf students. According to her, she chose



Arlene Negron

Saint Petersburg College (SPC), “because SPC has wonderful programs for Deaf students to meet their needs.”

Aside from her studies, she enjoys spending time with her family and friends. She also enjoys reading books and magazines. When not reading, she also enjoys shopping. She also makes crafts such as necklaces, bracelets, and much more. Following her A. A. degree and her Bachelor’s degree, she also seeks a master’s degree in the future. She has high ambitions for the future. These ambitions include owning a jewelry and clothing business, having a husband, and having three children. Her advice for Deaf students in high school involves taking advantage of as many opportunities as possible.

Her cultural background is Puerto Rico. She and her mostly Deaf family members were born in Puerto Rico. No other family members have graduated college, and she hopes to be the first to receive a degree. Because her parents brought her to America for a better education, she honors the possibility to be the first person in her family to obtain a degree. She also wants her family to see that moving to America was a good decision for

them to make. No matter what trials she encounters in school, she states, “No matter what, I will keep trying...”

Arlene Negron

Arlene Negron nació sorda en Puerto Rico. Comenzó su educación en Puerto Rico sin servicios de ayuda. A la edad de nueve años, su familia y ella se mudaron a Nueva Jersey para buscar una mejor educación para el futuro. Asistió a una escuela para sordos hasta el 7° grado. Desde el 8° hasta su graduación en 2001 asistió, con otros ocho estudiantes sordos, a una escuela secundaria que tenía un programa para sordos.

Arlene trabaja en la Escuela Católica del Espíritu Santo como conserje. Su hermana Mary la ayudó a encontrar este trabajo. Limpia ocho clases, incluyendo los baños.

Ahora asiste al Colegio Saint Petersburg, donde tiene planes de terminar con un título AA en Trabajo Social. Después de su AA, anticipa que continuará para conseguir un BA también en Trabajo Social. Su deseo de especializarse en Trabajo Social surgió de su interés por esta materia cuanto estaba en la escuela secundaria. Como ella dice, “Me gusta ayudar a la gente que tiene problemas.” Mientras asiste a la universidad, también es tutora de estudiantes de ASL, y mantiene un promedio GPA alto. En el Colegio Saint Petersburg, recibe servicios de ayuda para estudiantes sordos. El personal proporciona intérpretes y tomadores de notas. Ella encuentra que estos servicios son muy útiles y también aprecia el tiempo que puede dar a los estudiantes sordos. Según dice, escogió el Colegio de Saint Petersburg (SPC) “porque SPC tiene magníficos programas para cubrir las necesidades de los estudiantes sordos.”

Además de sus estudios, disfruta pasando tiempo con su familia y amigos. Le encanta leer libros y revistas. Cuando no está leyendo, le gusta ir de compras. También hace manualidades como collares, pulseras, y muchas cosas más. Después de su título asociado y de bachiller, quiere conseguir una maestría en el futuro. Tiene muchas

ambiciones para el futuro, como tener un negocio de ropa y joyería, tener un marido y tres hijos. Su consejo para los estudiantes sordos de secundaria es que se aprovechen de tantas oportunidades como puedan.

Su trasfondo cultural es de Puerto Rico. Sus familiares, que en su mayoría son sordos, y ella nacieron en Puerto Rico. No hay nadie en su familia se haya

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trying...”**

**“A pesar de
todo, seguiré
intentándolo...”**

graduado de la universidad, y ella espera ser la primera. Por haberla traído sus padres a América para recibir una mejor educación, estima la posibilidad de ser la primera persona en su familia que consiga un título universitario. Quiere hacer saber a su familia que el traslado a América fue una buena decisión. A pesar de los retos que encuentre en la universidad, ella afirma, “A pesar de todo, seguiré intentándolo...”

David Rivera

Born Deaf with a Deaf sister and Deaf brother, David Rivera lives in the Bronx of New York. He attended the Lexington School for the Deaf in Queens, NY, from the age of three until graduation. During his education, he lived at home. Following graduation, he attended Gallaudet University to gain his undergraduate degree in ASL Studies (1994-1999). As a full-time student, David chose Gallaudet University, because it is the only university for primarily students who are Deaf. He wanted to study ASL there. At Gallaudet University, David was involved in the student body government and devoted time and support to his Kappa Gamma fraternity. He also participated in many sport activities. Gallaudet University helped him to develop his ASL, personal and social skills. In 2000, he began graduate work at Western Maryland College. Spring 2003, he will graduate with a master's degree in Deaf Education. He wanted to attend Western Maryland University because of its good reputation. He enrolled in their Bilingual (ASL/English) Program- Deaf Education graduate program. Western Maryland helped him develop his teaching skills. David chose the field of ASL and teaching, because of his experiences as a



David Rivera

Deaf child. He did not have language models in his school or community. He wanted to develop a solid language base for himself and serve as a language model for Deaf children. Elementary school was not a positive experience for him; however, in high school he learned how to develop his leadership skills and developed a positive self-identity. At Lexington, he received an SBG award and made the Dean's list several times.

Currently David teaches 1st grade with a class of children where three of them are Deaf and eight are hearing children. The eight hearing children are all siblings of Deaf people or children of Deaf adults (CODA). All of the students are fluent in ASL. David found this job with the help of his nephews (one Deaf, one hearing), and niece (hearing) who attend school at the same location. The Assistant Principal, Rebecca Marshall, asked him to work at J47 ASL/English School as a substitute for a gym teacher.

As for the future, David may continue his education and pursue a doctorate degree to allow him the opportunity to teach at a University. He is also considering work in the real estate field. David likes to socialize and is very involved in playing sports. He exercises regularly, but unfortunately, does not have much free time.

When asked to give advice to Deaf high school students, he provides some helpful information. His advice is, "Believe in yourself! You have to remember that life is hard. Going to school or training is one of the greatest ways to help you succeed." David's education taught him that delaying language development can be very harmful to Deaf children. He can appreciate improvement in language skills, especially in younger children. His family was a big influence on his life. As David states, "My family was always there to remind me that I could become anything I want. My parents taught me to believe in myself."

David Rivera

David Rivera, que nació Sordo, con una hermana Sorda y un hermano Sordo, vive en el Bronx de Nueva York. Asistió a la Escuela Lexington para Sordos en Queens, NY, desde la edad de tres años hasta su graduación. Durante su educación, vivió en casa. Después de graduarse, asistió a la Universidad Gallaudet para conseguir su título en Estudios en la Lengua de Señas Americana (1994-1999). Cuando estudiaba a tiempo completo, David escogió la Universidad Gallaudet, primordialmente porque es la única universidad para estudiantes que son Sordos. Quería estudiar ASL allí. En la Universidad Gallaudet, David se envolvió en el gobierno del cuerpo de estudiantes y dio su tiempo y apoyo a la fraternidad Kappa Gamma. También participó en muchas actividades deportivas. La Universidad Gallaudet le ayudó a mejorar su ASL, y sus habilidades sociales y personales. En 2000, comenzó su trabajo graduado en el Colegio de Western Maryland. En la primavera de 2003 se graduará con una maestría

en Educación de Sordos. Quería asistir a la Universidad Western Maryland por su buena reputación. Se matriculó en el Programa Bilingüe (ASL/Inglés) de Educación de Sordos de postgrado. Western Maryland le ayudó a mejorar su habilidad para enseñar. David escogió el campo de ASL y la enseñanza, por sus experiencias de niño Sordo. Él no tuvo modelos para el lenguaje ni en su escuela ni en su comunidad. Quería desarrollar una sólida base de lenguaje para sí mismo y ser un modelo para otros niños sordos. La escuela elemental no fue una

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experiencia positiva para él; sin embargo, en la secundaria aprendió a incrementar su capacidad de liderazgo y desarrolló una identidad positiva. En Lexington, recibió un premio SBG y estuvo en la Lista del Decano varias veces.

En la actualidad David enseña una clase de niños de primer grado donde tres de ellos son sordos y

ocho son oyentes. Los ocho niños oyentes son hermanos de gente sorda o hijos de adultos sordos (CODA en inglés). Todos los estudiantes hablan ASL con fluidez. David encontró este trabajo con la ayuda de sus sobrinos (uno es Sordo, el otro oyente), y una sobrina (oyente) que asistieron a esta escuela. La Directora Auxiliar, Rebecca Marshall, le pidió que trabajara en la Escuela J47 ASL/Inglés como sustituto del profesor de gimnasia.

En el futuro, David quizá continúe su educación para conseguir un doctorado que le permita enseñar en la universidad. También está considerando trabajar en el campo de bienes raíces. A David le gusta socializar y está muy envuelto en deportes. Hace ejercicio regularmente,

pero desafortunadamente, no tiene mucho tiempo libre.

Cuando le piden que de consejo a los estudiantes de secundaria sordos, les proporciona buena información. Su consejo es “¡Cree en ti mismo! Tienes que recordar que la vida es dura. Para tener éxito, una de las mejores cosas es ir a la escuela o adiestrarse”. La educación de David le enseñó que el retraso en el desarrollo del lenguaje puede ser malo para los niños Sordos. Nota que, en especial en los niños más pequeños, hay grandes avances en habilidad para el lenguaje. Su familia fue una gran influencia en su vida. Como dice David, “Mi familia siempre estaba ahí para recordarme que yo podía ser lo que yo quisiera. Mis padres me enseñaron a creer en mí mismo”.

Jessica Sanchez

Jessica Sanchez is a sophomore at California State University Northridge (CSUN). She became Deaf at the age of 18 months. She went to a school for the Deaf until third grade. She has been in mainstream programs since that time. It was in third grade that she knew she wanted to become a teacher.

At CSUN, her major is in liberal arts. After getting her BA, she plans to continue at CSUN to get Masters Degree and teaching credentials. She loves children and knows that teachers play an important role in the lives of children. She would like to have that role. While in high school she received scholarships from various organizations in Central California that helped her to realize her dream of going to college. Originally Jessica dreamt of going to the University of California Los Angeles. Then the supervisor of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing program told her about CSUN. She then decided to attend CSUN, since a large number of Deaf students attend there. Being the only Deaf person in her classes made her want to have the experience



Jessica Sanchez

of being around lots of Deaf people. In her classes she uses interpreters and note takers. About once each semester there is a real time captionist in one of her classes as well.

As a full time student Jessica devotes her time to school and studying. She does not have a job at this time. Studying also limits her free time. However, when she has some time she likes to hang out with friends, go to the mall, dinner or movies. She would like to join the Deaf sorority on campus. Because the sorority sisters do so much, she is afraid her studies might suffer. So that is on hold for now.

Growing up as the youngest of four girls and the only Deaf person in her family, she did not learn much Spanish. Her mother's family all speak both Spanish and English. Jessica also credits her Catholic upbringing with instilling in her a strong moral code.

Her advice to kids in high school now is what her oldest sister told her about college, "You have to study and be prepared for all your courses." Jessica agrees 100 per cent. "When you are in college you have to shop for your food, cook for yourself, use time management skills and leave time to study! Your mom is not there to take care of all of that for you!"

Jessica Sanchez

Jessica Sanchez es una estudiante de segundo año en la Universidad Northridge del Estado de California. Se quedó sorda a los 18 meses. Fue a una escuela para sordos hasta el tercer grado. Ha estado en programas integrados desde entonces. Estaba en el tercer grado cuando decidió que quería ser maestra.

**"You have to
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En CSUN, su especialización es en Artes Liberales. Después de graduarse, piensa continuar en CSUN para conseguir su maestría y acreditación para enseñar. Le encantan los niños y sabe que las maestras juegan un papel importante en las vidas de los niños. Le gustaría tener ese papel. En la escuela secundaria recibió becas de varias organizaciones en California Central que la ayudaron a cumplir su sueño de ir a la universidad. Al principio Jessica soñaba con ir a la Universidad de California en Los Ángeles. Pero luego el supervisor del programa para Sordos y Personas con Dificultad de

Audición le dijo sobre CSUN. Entonces decidió ir a CSUN, donde hay muchos estudiantes sordos. Ser la única estudiante sorda en sus clases hizo que deseara la experiencia de estar con otros estudiantes sordos. En las clases, usa intérpretes y tomadores de notas. Y una vez al semestre también hay en una de sus clases escriben subtítulos en tiempo real.

Como es una estudiante a tiempo completo, Jessica dedica todo su tiempo a la escuela y a estudiar. No trabaja por el momento. Sin embargo, cuando tiene algo de tiempo, le gusta salir con los amigos, ir al centro comercial, salir a cenar o al cine. Le gustaría unirse a la sororidad sorda en la universidad. Pero como las hermanas de la sororidad tienen tantas actividades, tiene miedo de perjudicar sus estudios. Así que eso está en los planes para el futuro.

Como creció en una familia de cuatro hijas, de las cuales ella es la menor y la única sorda, Jessica no aprendió mucho español. Todos en la familia de su madre hablan español e inglés. Jessica también da crédito a su educación católica de su fuerte código moral.

Su consejo a los chicos de secundaria es lo que su hermana mayor le dijo sobre la universidad, “Tienes que estudiar y estar preparada para todos los cursos.” Jessica está de acuerdo al 100%.

“Cuando estás en la universidad tienes que ir de compras, cocinar, organizar bien tu tiempo y dejar tiempo para estudiar! ¡Tu mamá no está ahí para hacértelo todo!”

Mark Valbuena

Mark is Hard of Hearing. He is a junior at California State University, Northridge (CSUN) majoring in Mathematics. He has Deaf parents. Growing up his older brother did most of the interpreting in the family. He attended hearing schools all his life. CSUN is the first school he has attended with other Deaf students. He is of Columbian ancestry.

He works now as a Resident Assistant in the dormitories at CSUN. This is his second year in this position. He works supervising hearing students in the dorm this year. Last year he worked in the dorm that had primarily Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. In his job he is responsible for developing programs such as social activities that promote a sense of community among the students. He also develops educational programs such as awareness of alcohol and drug abuse and safer sex. Other responsibilities include enforcing policy, acting as a mediator in resident's problems and counseling. A former RA of his suggested he apply for the job.

He is majoring in math at CSUN with a goal of teaching math at the secondary level. Math has always come easy to him. He became inspired to teach math by an algebra teacher in high school. He feels that becoming an accountant would be boring, but working with kids would be much more fulfilling. Because of his full time course work and job as an RA he has very little time for extra curricular activities. He has a GPA of 3.41 and is striving to improve that so he can graduate cum



Mark Valbuena

laude. When he was a sophomore he was consistently in the top 10% of his class. He received a scholarship from the Winnetka Women's Club.

Mark says CSUN was his only choice for a college. He wanted to come to CSUN to improve his signing skills and to take advantage of the note taking services offered at the National Center on Deafness. He uses note takers as his primary

support service in the classroom. He also feels that the priority registration Deaf and hard of students receive is an asset.

Outside of school he likes to play volleyball and work out. During the summers he goes back to his high school in Mission Viejo, California to coach the volleyball team. He would like to coach volleyball as well as teach math after he gets his teaching credentials.

Mark would advise students who are in high school to realize they are going to have hard times but it is not the end. "When you get to college you are going to be faced with a lot of freedom. Don't let that freedom detract from school work. High school is easy compared to college. In college you have to WORK!"

As an RA, Mark feels he is preparing for his future job as a teacher. He is learning to deal with diverse people and how to communicate with them. This will assist him to better work with his students when he teaches.

Mark Valbuena

Mark tiene dificultad para la audición. Es un estudiante de tercer año en CSUN, especializándose en Matemáticas. Tiene padres sordos. Cuando crecía, su hermano mayor hacía la mayoría de la interpretación en la familia. Asistió a escuelas oyentes toda su vida. CSUN es la primera escuela a la que ha asistido con otros estudiantes sordos. Es de origen colombiano.

Trabaja como Asistente de Residentes en las residencias estudiantiles de CSUN. Este es su segundo año en este puesto. Este año trabaja supervisando estudiantes oyentes en la residencia.

"When you get to college you are going to be faced with a lot of freedom. Don't let that freedom detract from school work."

"Cuando vas a la universidad vas a enfrentarte con mucha libertad. No dejes que la libertad te distraiga del trabajo de estudiante."

El año pasado trabajó en una residencia que tenía principalmente estudiantes sordos y con problemas de audición. En este puesto es responsable de desarrollar programas tales como actividades sociales que promueven un sentido de comunidad entre los estudiantes. También desarrolla programas educativos como difusión de información sobre el alcohol, el abuso de drogas y sexo más seguro. Otras responsabilidades incluyen el hacer cumplir la política, actuar como mediador en problemas entre residentes y consejería. Un Asistente anterior le sugirió que solicitara este puesto de empleo.

Se está especializando en matemáticas en CSUN con el

objetivo de enseñar matemáticas a nivel secundario. Las matemáticas siempre le han resultado fáciles. Un profesor de álgebra en la escuela secundaria le animó a enseñar matemáticas. Piensa que ser contable sería aburrido, pero trabajar con muchachos le daría mucha más satisfacción. Por sus estudios en los cursos a tiempo completo y su trabajo como Asistente de Residentes, tiene poco tiempo para actividades extracurriculares. Tiene un promedio GPA de 3.41 y se está esforzando para graduarse *cum laude*. Cuando estaba en el segundo año, estaba de forma consistente en el 10% más alto de su clase. Recibió una beca del Club de Mujeres de Winnetka.

Mark dice que CSUN fue su única elección de universidad. Quería venir a CSUN para mejorar su habilidad de hablar por señas y poder aprovechar los servicios de tomar notas que se ofrecían en el Centro Nacional de Sordos. Usa tomadores de notas como su servicio primario de ayuda en la clase. También piensa que la registración prioritaria que reciben los estudiantes sordos y con dificultades de audición es una ventaja.

Aparte de estudiar, le gusta jugar voleibol y hacer ejercicio. Durante los veranos, vuelve a su escuela secundaria en Mission Viejo, California, para ser entrenador del equipo de voleibol. Le gustaría entrenar voleibol y también enseñar matemáticas después de conseguir sus credenciales para la enseñanza.

Mark le aconseja a los estudiantes que están en la escuela secundaria a que se den cuenta que van a tener dificultades, pero no es el fin. “Cuando vas a

la universidad vas a enfrentarte con mucha libertad. No dejes que la libertad te distraiga del trabajo de estudiante. La escuela secundaria es fácil comparada con la universidad. En la universidad tienes que TRABAJAR!”

En su trabajo de Asistente, Mark piensa que se está preparando para su futuro como maestro. Está aprendiendo a trabajar con gente diversa y cómo comunicarse con ellos. Esto le ayudará a trabajar mejor con los estudiantes a los que enseñe.

Luis Valles, Jr.

“Descending from a Hispanic background and also being hearing impaired has not obstructed my desire to succeed,” states Luis Valles. He is a first-generation American Puerto Rican born in the United States. His family can trace their heritage as far back as 1800. Luis became Deaf at the age of three from pneumonia and a high fever. This resulted in “cooked” nerves in the ears. According to Luis, “Being a Deaf minority has helped me see the true colors of the people around me and always motivated me to exceed expectations.”

He graduated in 1991 from the Florida School for the Deaf. Following his graduation, he began school at St. Petersburg Junior College. However, he only stayed for one semester before beginning work. He states, “Unfortunately, I strayed from the importance of furthering my education and almost immediately, after one semester, entered the workforce to accumulate monetary funds. None of my skills and capabilities was of significant value within the jobs that I have held, resulting in an almost nomadic existence in the employment circle.”



Luis Valles, Jr.

Five years prior to returning to St. Petersburg College, he worked at a printing business in Tampa. Following the events of September 11, 2001, his position ended with a lay off as the company prepared for the unexpected. Currently he is unemployed as he focuses on his studies. Additionally, he enjoys the support his parents provide for his new direction in life.

Now he attends St. Petersburg College full-time as he pursues a degree in Computer Science. While pursuing a Computer Science degree, he also “flirts with the possibility of entering the field of Law with a predilection towards research.” When asked about St. Petersburg College, he states that this school “was a logical choice for my quest for higher learning due to the quality of the services and assistance provided by the college’s Offices for Students with Disabilities.” His experience with reentering Academia has been a positive one due to the assistance of the Staff at S. P.C in the disability department. As he states, “It is reassuring to know that the faculty at St. Petersburg College is highly capable of accomplishing any request for accommodations, allowing students to enjoy an appropriate platform to improve their knowledge. The quality of the interpreters on hand is consistently professional and motivates my enthusiasm to return the next day.”

Aside from his studies, Luis participates in the National Association for the Deaf softball league. His team, Greater Tampa Bay Association for the Deaf, recently enjoyed a championship finish at the 2002 South Eastern Athletic Association for the Deaf softball tournament. After overcoming much adversity, the team learned some valuable lessons. As Luis states, “This experience was valuable in a sense of what a person can accomplish by keeping

an open mind and encouraging the person next to you to strive for their best effort by using positive feedback with the absence of negativity. It provided me with an insight to the strength and importance of respect.” Softball is the only activity Luis is involved with currently. He is concentrating on

achieving the highest grades possible and sustaining commitment to his coursework. However, he does desire to participate in the Project Vote Smart. In this, he hopes to promote the value of education with its foundation in childhood and show the potential for education to solve many contemporary issues. As he contends, “It seems today that we as a society have deviated from the value of education and we need to get back on track so that every child can experience the most out of life.”

In his closing thoughts, Luis has some advice for students to pursue a postsecondary education. He suggests attending postsecondary training for a few years after high school, because that is just a small portion of

your life. Then you can get a better job when you finish school. According to Luis, “It is important not to lose focus and aim for your goal of what you want most and not what you want for the moment.” Education also has importance in the sense of breeding tolerance and in helping the student make decisions. He also encourages students to “remember that the ability to make your own decisions is the greatest power anyone can wield. All that information that you learn after high school will succeed in making you more confident in your ability to decide. Why settle for a \$20,000 a year salary when you know you can make more after you graduate from college?”

**“Remember that
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**“Recuerden que la
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ejercer.”**

Luis Valles, Jr.

“Ser de origen hispano y tener impedimento en la audición no ha disminuido mi deseo de tener éxito”, dice Luis Valles. Es un americano puertorriqueño de primera generación nacido en los Estados Unidos. Su familia puede trazar su historia desde 1800. Luis se quedó sordo a los 3 años de una neumonía y fiebre alta. Esto le “frió” los nervios de los oídos. De acuerdo a Luis, “Ser parte de una minoría y sordo me ha ayudado a verdaderamente llegar a conocer a fondo a la gente a mi alrededor y me ha motivado siempre a superar expectativas”.

Se graduó en 1991 de la Escuela para Sordos de Florida. Después de su graduación, comenzó en St. Petersburg Junior College. Sin embargo, solamente estuvo ahí un semestre, antes de empezar a trabajar. Dice, “Desafortunadamente, me desvié de la importancia de mejorar mi educación y casi inmediatamente, después de un semestre, entré en el cuerpo laboral para acumular fondos monetarios. En los trabajos que he tenido ninguna de mis habilidades y capacidades tenía valor significativo, resultando, casi como un nómada, en saltos de un empleo a otro en el círculo laboral.”

Cinco años antes de volver al Colegio St. Petersburg, trabajó en una imprenta en Tampa. Después de los eventos del 11 de septiembre, 2001, perdió su empleo cuando la compañía eliminó su puesto mientras se preparaba para lo inesperado. En la actualidad está desempleado mientras que se enfoca en sus estudios. Además, disfruta del apoyo que sus padres le proporcionan para este nuevo camino en la vida.

Ahora asiste al Colegio St. Petersburg a tiempo completo para conseguir un título en Ciencias de Computadoras. Mientras estudia, también “coquetea con la posibilidad de entrar en el campo del Derecho con una predilección por la investigación.” Cuando le preguntan sobre el Colegio St. Petersburg, dice que esta escuela “era la elección lógica en mi búsqueda de una educación superior por la calidad de los servicios y la asistencia que proporciona la Oficina para Estudiantes con Discapacidades”. Su experiencia

reincorporándose al mundo académico ha sido positiva con la asistencia del personal del Departamento de Discapacidades de S. P. C. Como él dice, “Es un consuelo saber que los profesores en St. Petersburg College son capaces de acomodar las necesidades de cualquier estudiante que lo necesite, permitiéndoles disfrutar de una plataforma adecuada para mejorar sus conocimientos. Los intérpretes disponibles son consistentemente de calidad profesional y me motivan a volver al día siguiente con entusiasmo”.

Además de los estudios, Luis participa en la Asociación Nacional de los Sordos, y recientemente disfrutó ser finalista el torneo de softball en el campeonato de 2002 de Asociación Atlética para Sordos del Sureste. Después de vencer muchas adversidades, el equipo aprendió algunas lecciones importantes. Como dice Luis “Esta experiencia valió mucho en el sentido de lo que una persona puede conseguir si mantiene una mente abierta y anima al compañero a intentar hacerlo lo mejor posible usando comentarios positivos y extinguiendo el negativismo. Me dio una idea de la fortaleza y la importancia del respeto”. El softball es la única actividad en la que está envuelto en la actualidad. Se está concentrando en obtener las mejores calificaciones posibles y mantener su compromiso con sus estudios. Sin embargo, desea participar en el Proyecto Votar Inteligentemente. En éste, espera promocionar el valor de la educación con fundamento en la niñez y mostrar el potencial de la educación para resolver muchos problemas contemporáneos. Como afirma, “Parece que nosotros, como sociedad, nos hemos desviado del valor de la educación y que necesitamos encarrilarnos de nuevo, para que todos los niños puedan sacar lo mejor de la vida”.

Para terminar, Luis tiene consejos para los estudiantes que aspiran a una educación postsecundaria. Les sugiere obtener adiestramiento después de la escuela secundaria, porque es una pequeña porción de la vida de uno. Entonces, uno puede conseguir un mejor empleo después de terminar los estudios. De acuerdo con Luis, “Es importante no perder el enfoque y aspirar al objetivo de lo que más desees, no a lo que quieres por el momento”. La educación también tiene

importancia en el sentido de incrementar la tolerancia y de ayudar al estudiante a tomar decisiones. También anima a los estudiantes a que “recuerden que la habilidad de tomar sus propias decisiones es el mayor poder que cualquiera puede

ejercer. Toda la información que aprendan después de la escuela secundaria les dará más confianza en su habilidad de decidir. ¿Por qué limitarse a un salario de \$20,000 cuando pueden conseguir mucho más cuando terminen la universidad?

Ana Flávia Vianna-Balzano

An Administrative Assistant at LaGuardia Community College, Ana Flávia Vianna- Balzano is unique and helpful to the Program for Deaf Adults. She is fluent in many different languages. These languages include Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, American Sign Language, and Portuguese Sign Language. Since she has this fluency in these languages, she communicates effectively with the diverse population the program serves. Her duties include counseling students related to registration, evaluating students for placement in continuing education programs, answering TTY calls, assisting in publicity, completing income/expense reports, and general office assistant work.

Ana was born Deaf due to her mother contracting Rubella when she was pregnant. She attended hearing schools from elementary to high school, in Brasilia, Brazil. In Brazil, no note takers or interpreters were available. In 1995, Ana decided to study at Gallaudet University. Since Ana had never learned English or American Sign Language (ASL), she attended the English Language Institute at Gallaudet. Gallaudet (Gally) helped Ana to learn basic English. Gally also helped her to learn sign language, as she lived in a dormitory. After a year and a half, she had attained fluency in both languages. In 1997, Ana was ready for new challenges, and she decided to move to NY where her brother recently moved from Brazil. In NY, she attended LaGuardia Community College for one year. LaGuardia Community College helped Ana

build her English skills. She attributes much to Professor Sue Livingston, who taught her how to construct her ideas, essays, and correct her grammar. After LaGuardia, Ana transferred to Hunter College. She will earn her BA degree in Sociology in January 2003 (1999-2002). Ana



Ana Flávia Vianna-Balzano

decided to major in Sociology due to her outgoing nature and that she likes people. Sociology has many options to branch out to counseling, social work, psychology, etc. Hunter College helped Ana find her career path. Hunter also helped her read more advanced English.

At Gallaudet, Ana became fascinated with learning new languages. Ana also realized that she had grown isolated from the hearing world, which was at odds with her upbringing amidst the hearing. She has come to terms with the diversity of her life experiences and realizes that she belongs to both Deaf and hearing worlds. After attending LaGuardia and Hunter, Ana has become even more fascinated with learning English and ASL. She additionally applies herself by studying other languages such as Italian and Spanish. Ana's hobbies include reading different languages Portuguese (her mother tongue), English, Italian, and Spanish.

Last July, Ana was married to an Italian-American, hard-of-hearing man. She is currently very busy studying at Hunter and working at LaGuardia part-time. She enjoys the times when she attends the meetings of the New York City Civic Association, where political discussions are a priority. In the future, Ana plans to pursue a master's degree in Deafness Rehabilitation at New York University.

Ana has some good advice for high school Deaf students. She encourages them "to continue studying and never give up your education and have patience to finish your BA or BS degree. You will find a great relief and will be prepared for a better job. All of us are capable to do anything if we have a high self-esteem and believe in ourselves. Never listen to people who tell you that you CAN'T DO IT!" Additionally she comments on her family. She states, "My family helped me to achieve my goals because they always believed in me and did not treat me differently because I am Deaf. My family is very positive."

Ana Flávia Vianna-Balzano

Ana Flávia Vianna-Balzano, auxiliar administrativa en el Colegio Comunitario LaGuardia, es una persona incomparablemente útil en el Programa de Adultos Sordos. Habla varios idiomas con fluidez, incluyendo el portugués, español, italiano, ASL (lengua de señas americana) y la lengua de señas portuguesa. Como ella tiene esta facilidad para los idiomas, se comunica de forma eficiente con la diversa población a la que sirve el programa. Entre sus responsabilidades se encuentran el aconsejar a los estudiantes en asuntos relacionados con la registración, la evaluación de los estudiantes para su entrada en los programas de continuación de la educación, responder llamadas en TTY, ayudar con la publicidad, completar informes de ingresos/gastos y trabajo normal administrativo de oficina.

Ana nació con sordera debido a que su madre contrajo la rubeola cuando estaba embarazada. Desde la escuela elemental al término de la secundaria, asistió a escuelas oyentes en Brasilia, Brasil. No había intérpretes ni personas para tomar

notas en Brasil. En 1995, Ana decidió estudiar en la Universidad Gallaudet. Como Ana no había aprendido inglés ni ASL, asistió al Instituto del Idioma Inglés de Gallaudet. Gallaudet (Gally) ayudó a Ana a aprender inglés. Gally también la ayudó a aprender la lengua de señas, ya que vivía en la residencia de estudiantes. Después de un año y medio, hablaba fluidamente los dos idiomas. En 1997, Ana estaba lista para nuevos retos, y decidió mudarse a NY, donde su hermano acababa de llegar de Brasil. En NY, estudió en el Colegio Comunitario LaGuardia

por un año. En LaGuardia, Ana mejoró su destreza en inglés. Ana le atribuye mucho a la profesora Sue Livingston, que la enseñó a elaborar sus ideas, sus ensayos y a corregir su gramática. Después de LaGuardia, Ana se cambió al Colegio Hunter. Allí consiguió su grado de BA en Sociología en enero

**"Never listen to
people who tell you
that you CAN'T DO
IT!"**

**"Nunca escuchen a
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de 2003 (1999-2002). Ana decidió especializarse en Sociología debido a su naturaleza extrovertida y a que le gusta la gente. La Sociología tiene muchas salidas en consejería, trabajo social, psicología, etc. El Colegio Hunter ayudó a Ana a encontrar su carrera. En Hunter también aprendió a leer inglés más avanzado.

En Gallaudet, Ana se fascinó con aprender otros idiomas. Se dio cuenta que había crecido aislada de los mundos oyentes, lo que se contradice con su educación entre los oyentes.

Ella ha asumido la diversidad de las experiencias de su vida y se da cuenta que pertenece a ambos el mundo de los sordos y el de los oyentes. Después de asistir a LaGuardia y Hunter, Ana está aún más entusiasmada con aprender inglés y ASL. Se esfuerza mucho estudiando otros idiomas como italiano y español. Entre los pasatiempos de Ana se encuentra leer en los diferentes idiomas, portugués (su lengua materna), inglés, italiano y español.

El pasado julio, Ana se casó con un hombre con dificultad de audición, de origen italiano-americano. En la actualidad está muy ocupada estudiando en Hunter y trabajando a tiempo parcial en LaGuardia. Le divierte asistir a las reuniones de la Asociación Cívica de la Ciudad de Nueva York, donde la prioridad es la discusión política. En el futuro, Ana planea estudiar para una maestría en Rehabilitación de Sordos, en la Universidad de Nueva York.

Ana tiene buenos consejos para los estudiantes de secundaria sordos. Ella les anima a que “Continúen estudiando y no abandonen nunca su educación y tengan paciencia para terminar con un título BA o BS. Entonces encontrarán un gran alivio y estarán preparados para un mejor puesto de trabajo. Todos nosotros somos capaces de hacer cualquier cosa si tenemos autoestima y creemos en nosotros mismos. Nunca escuchen a la gente que dice ¡NO PUEDES HACER ESO!” Además, ella habla de su familia, diciendo, “Mi familia me ayudó a llevar a cabo todos mis objetivos porque ellos siempre creyeron en mí y no me trataron de forma diferente por ser sorda. Mi familia es muy positiva.”

Believing... Achieving

Success Stories
from Individuals
Who are Deaf and
Hard of Hearing

2005



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Welcome!

Welcome to the 2005 edition of *Believing . . . Achieving*. This book showcases 32 individuals from across the nation who are deaf and hard of hearing. These featured success stories show us a glimpse into the lives of a group of individuals who are inspiring, full of hope, and determined to succeed.

These are people from a variety of backgrounds, talents and interests as well as from diverse cultures, but all have a common outlook. Each one has continued to pursue a goal. Each one has faced difficult obstacles and barriers. Each one has continued in spite of failures and defeats. And in continuing, each one has succeeded.

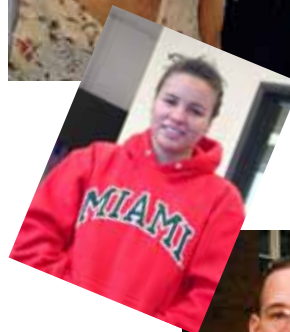
Our hope is that the stories included here will encourage other individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing, in their personal lives as well as their professional lives, to believe and to achieve.

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Foreword: Annette Reichman

Reading the personal stories of success from all walks of life and ethnic/cultural backgrounds, you will see that the people featured here are true role models for all of us to emulate. They show us the way in how we, ourselves, may be able to think about the future and to make plans for possible careers, families, and personal hobbies or interests.

Success is defined as setting a goal and reaching it. Interestingly enough, this is also the definition of leadership. Leadership is stepping in front of others and showing them the way. Max DePree once wrote: "Leadership is much more an art, a belief, a condition of the heart, than a set of things to do. The visible signs of artful leadership are expressed, ultimately, in its practice." The personal stories included in this *Believing ... Achieving* publication demonstrate both the capacity and the "practice" of leadership.

Many, for one reason or another, don't achieve their personal and professional goals. Usually, the stated reasons for not becoming a success, is "not enough time,"

"limited resources," "lack of opportunity," or "don't understand how my work or contribution fits into the grand scheme." Ultimately, these individuals do not lead within the workplace, with their families, and within the community. Clearly the deaf and hard of hearing leaders in this publication, who have been successful even with limited time, limited resources, lack of opportunities, lack of knowledge, and the added challenges of being Hispanic, African-American, Asian-American and other ethnic or cultural backgrounds, indicate that the above statements are not true reasons.

What then, is the REAL reason, for not achieving personal goals and becoming a leader? The real reason for not achieving all we can be is the fear of making decisions and acting accordingly. It's as simple and as difficult as that. Even when we do have well-defined goals and the necessary knowledge available to achieve those goals, many of us waste time and are unproductive, both in the workplace and at home.

You ask, "how can I emulate the success stories given in this publication?" Begin by committing yourself to life long learning and to continuous improvement of your knowledge and skills. This may mean



Annette Reichman

returning to school to improve basic English and math skills, or it may mean learning a new software program, or it may mean taking a parenting skills class.

Second, don't be afraid to take risks both personally and professionally. Be honest with yourself, about your skills and abilities, and what you need to improve. Talk with your friends, teachers, parents, and others to solicit their opinions and

ideas about your goals. Listen carefully to their feedback and be open to new ideas.

Third, as a leader, you'll need to manage demands on your time and energy, by carefully setting your personal priorities. Trust in your own judgment, be purposeful with your life, and adopt long-term, big-picture vision of your career and home lives. Work towards your goals, slowly, steadily and strategically. Be flexible with the changes that occur in your environment, by recognizing and exploiting alternatives as they present themselves to you.

Finally, the stories included in this issue demonstrate that there are many different paths in life to personal and professional success. Hopefully you'll find a story that inspires you to find your own path in achieving your personal goals and in showing others the way on how to succeed; that is, becoming a leader.

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"There are many different paths in life to personal and professional success."

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Nakia Brinson



Nakia Brinson

Nakia Brinson is on schedule to be the first graduate who is deaf from Floyd College in more than five years. He is working on an Associates degree in General Studies. He mostly has enjoyed and concentrated in classes of art. Nakia is a talented artist and enjoys learning about art history and drawing. Nakia also enjoys working with computers and at

one point wanted to become a computer programmer, but changed his mind after he experienced his first Micro-Networking class. He plans to continue at a four-year college after his graduation in the spring of 2004.

Nakia was born in Alma, Georgia. At the age of five, he moved with his family to Riviera Beach, Florida and attended a mainstream elementary school. He moved back to Alma, Georgia in the fourth grade and attended mainstream schools for all of his education. They accommodated him mostly as an oral deaf student with amplification systems, but he found little use in it so he just went to school without anything. "I learned American Sign Language in first grade but my classes were never interpreted

and my teachers did not sign so I mostly taught myself to speechread to get my education. When I arrived at Floyd College and they provided me with sign language interpreters, learning was so much easier." Nakia played basketball in high school for four years and won the sub-region during his senior year. He was also voted best dancer in his high school.

Nakia graduated high school in 1995 and began college at Brewton-Parker College in 1997. He transferred to Floyd College in the spring semester of 2000. Nakia is a dedicated student and never misses a day or a class. His attendance is always perfect. Nakia uses sign language interpreters for all of his college courses. Nakia has wonderful speech and a very masculine voice. Although he is very quiet and reserved, he speaks up when he needs to.

Nakia has been active in the Black Awareness Society at Floyd College. He has also been active in the Cultural Awareness Society. Nakia is involved in many diversity awareness activities at Floyd College. He was involved in bringing the HIV/Aids Awareness Symposium to Floyd College's campus. Nakia was also instrumental in the planning of Floyd College's first and second annual Deaf Extreme events. Serving as a group leader for Deaf and Hard of Hearing high school students in Deaf Extreme,

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Nakia is a talented artist and enjoys learning about art history and drawing.

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Nakia encouraged these 8th – 12th grade students to continue their educational careers.

Although he is six hours away from his home and family, Nakia has remained very family oriented through out his time at Floyd

College. Nakia loves to get back home to enjoy his grandmother's home cooking. His hobbies are playing basketball, hanging out with his family and friends, playing video games, going to parties, driving around, and of course,...studying.

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Sylma Alvarado Carrasquillo

Born Deaf, Sylma Alvarado Carrasquillo grew up in Puerto Rico where she resides currently. As a child, she learned lip reading with the enthusiastic help from her mother. She remembers standing in front of a mirror and observing her lips while she produced sounds. She provides information on how growing up deaf was for her. She states, "As a deaf person I had a very difficult childhood, not because I would not make myself understood, but because in general it seems to be hard for some people to accept handicaps in others." Because of her deafness, many people would avoid her and not invite her into the group. Therefore, she spent most of her time with adults rather than with children. The children her age ignored her, because they were unable to understand her. They saw her as different from them. However, being with adults helped her develop into the person she is today. She states, "Being with adults

helped me to develop my character and the ability to understand others. Even more, I learned how important gaining knowledge was."

Her formal education began at Fray Pedro Ponce de Leon College in Ponce. Following this school, she attended a school for the deaf in Coamo, PR. In addition to these educational experiences, she graduated from a business high school and had her practice at a Westinghouse plant in 1989. She graduated in 1990 and began working for the municipality of Coamo. She continued working for the municipality for five additional years doing secretarial tasks such as filing, typing, photocopying, faxing, document checking and purchase orders.

While working from 1996 to 2000, she decided to continue her studies as a Computer Resource Teacher at the University of Puerto

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"Demonstrate real interest, devotion, endurance, and enough patience. . . prepare yourself the best you can."
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*Sylma Alvarado
Carrasquillo*

Rico at Ponce. Now she is pursuing a certificate as a Special Education Teacher at the Catholic University in Ponce. This certificate is required to teach in the area of Special Education. With this certificate, she will have the ability to help others, which she has a

strong desire to do. She shows this desire by stating, "The above {experiences in childhood} and many other reasons gave me the certainty and strong desire to do something real to help others like me who consider themselves useful but maybe have handicaps or barriers." She continues by stating, "I want to contribute to their acceptance by others, to help them avoid difficult situations, to help them cope with handicaps which might leave them behind." Sylma remembers people in her life who helped her along the way, and she wants to help others in the same way. She is grateful for the help that so many have provided. To show her appreciation, she states, "I am indebted to so many wonderful people such as my professors, my tutors, my friends, and most of all the special and caring mother God gave me."

Although Sylma has many people to be thankful for, she also has many accomplishments that are meaningful to her. These accomplishments include an award in mathematics, the Governor's Office Medal for youth, and trophy for reciting a poem at a

deaf convention in Puerto Rico. In addition to these awards, she has received several other honors. She was on the Roster of Honor at the Interamerican University, participated in a TV program to present sign language, interviewed by La Perla Newspaper as a "Courageous Puerto Rican Young Woman", and she was honored at the "Fiestas Patronales" in her hometown. The "Fiestas Patronales" is dedicated to special people who have done outstanding deeds on behalf of others.

Aside from academics, Sylma enjoys several activities including going to church, working with the community, and exercising. In addition, she is a part-time cashier at a hardware store and a deacon at an evangelist church. She also participates in an educational committee at a co-op organization and practices karate when time permits.

When asked to provide advice for other deaf students, Sylma has some good recommendations. She states, "I recommend deaf students attending high school to demonstrate real interest, devotion, endurance, and enough patience. Prepare yourself the best you can so that you can have a good job and are able to keep it." Overall, Sylma provides a great role model for other students and recognizes the many people who have had a role in her success. One important influence on her life has been her mother. She concludes by saying, "I consider myself a simple person. I am lucky because I have excellent friends and a wonderful mother."

Jerry Carver

Two years ago, Jerry Carver literally “walked into” his current job. A student at Pellissippi State Technical Community College, he heard about a sign language class that was being offered for credit on campus and decided to check it out. The instructor was thrilled to meet him, and she offered him a job as a teaching assistant on the spot. He became a lab instructor for 25-28 students, and he continues to teach every semester.

Taking chances and meeting new people are not new experiences for this nontraditional student. Jerry, who became deaf at age four, moved around a great deal as a child. His father served in the military, which meant Jerry had to change schools every few years. He attended a variety of schools, including MSSD, before graduating from the Eastern North Carolina School for the Deaf. He then attended NTID, but decided to pursue other options before completing his degree.

Jerry married his high school sweetheart, Mary, and began raising a family. He and his wife have three children, ages twelve, ten, and four. He put his educational goals on hold while he began a career working with computers and technical equipment. After being laid off from his job, Jerry decided to once again start working on his degree.

Pellissippi State Technical Community College (PSTCC) seemed like

a perfect fit for this busy family man. Jerry says, “I chose Pellissippi because it’s close to home, and the staff and students are willing to work with deaf students. Also, the education and activities offered there are accessible.” He first thought he wanted to become a computer programmer, but after taking some classes in that discipline, he decided that a General Technology degree would better satisfy his career goals.

Although his classes and his job teaching sign language keep Jerry busy, he still finds time to fish, travel, and work with his wife and her home-based business. He also enjoys coaching his kids’ sports teams, and he has coached everything from girls’ basketball to his son’s football team. Jerry says that his family is his top priority, and it would be impossible to achieve his educational goals without their help. He tells other deaf students to “always make sure you have good family support” when pursuing an education.

Jerry and his family have become closer

“Get a good education. Make careful plans for your future after high school. Have faith in the people who love you, but follow your heart and not only what other people say you can do.”

Jerry Carver



after rallying to assist his youngest son, who was diagnosed with Neuroblastoma at only four weeks of age. Neuroblastoma is a rare type of cancer with a very small survival rate. His son had surgery to remove the tumor when he was only five weeks old. He is now four years old and in remission. Jerry and his family are thankful, and they are looking forward to taking a trip to Disneyworld sponsored by the Dream Connection.

According to Jerry, planning for future goals is a critical step for every deaf student. He advises, "Get a good education. Make careful plans for your future after high school. Have faith in the people who love you, but follow your heart and not only what other people say you can do."

Patricia Roberts Clincy

Patricia Roberts Clincy believes in taking advantage of all opportunities to improve her skills. Her employer is currently sponsoring her in English training for employees who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing at Georgia Perimeter College. This training is an opportunity to improve reading and writing skills for the workplace as well as for one's personal life.

As a well-established citizen in the community, it is important to Pat that people see her as "no different than anyone else without a disability. I own my own home; I drive and spend my spare time with my family and friends. I enjoy exercising, watching television, and spending time with my children." Pat has two daughters, Vontressa Alise Clincy, who is fourteen years old, and Alexandria Shalise Clincy, who is six years old. They live in Lithonia, Georgia. Pat Clincy is a successful federal employee and mother.

Pat has worked for a federal agency for the last twenty-four years. She began her career in December of 1979. As a mail clerk, Pat's job requires that she have a knowledge of administrative services in her department. She is involved with the management of supplies and mail. Her responsibilities include examining, verifying, and comparing data for accuracy.

"I like my job because of the support from my co-workers. I always have someone to talk and laugh with; however, I wish that more people at work would learn sign language."

"I am bilingual. I take advantage of all training opportunities to become an effective communicator on the job. I always try to improve my English skills in reading and writing."

Pat consistently takes advantage of training opportunities and education in the community. She took ten English workshops for Employees who were Deaf and Hard of Hearing in 2001. These workshops were offered by Georgia's State Outreach and Technical Assistance Center. Her employer is sponsoring her in additional training at Georgia Perimeter College. The individualized English course for people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing meets twice a week for six hours a week. Even though that number of training hours is a big commitment, Pat is determined to complete the training and maintain her job. She is a dedicated worker. She cares about the quality of her work, and she believes it is important to continue to improve no matter how long you have been working at your job.

"I would like people to know that people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing are caring people. I have been Deaf since I was born. I attended the Georgia School for the Deaf, and I got my diploma in 1971."

It is clear, however, that Pat's education did not stop in 1971! Her commitment to continuing education in her life has contributed to her success as an employee for many years.



Patricia Roberts Clincy

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"I would like people to know that people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing are caring people."
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..... *Sheri Farinha*

"The learning never stops." That statement is certainly true for Sheri Farinha, the CEO of NorCal Center on Deafness, a social service organization in Sacramento, California. She oversees the day-to-day operations of the company, providing direct social services to deaf and hard of hearing individuals in twenty-four northeastern counties of California.

In the mid-sixties, Sheri was the first deaf student to be mainstreamed in San Juan Unified School District. Her parents chose this placement because the special day school focused on Oral Education, which was not the right fit for her. Mainstreamed throughout school,

Sheri Farinha with friend Alice McGill



she graduated from La Sierra High School in 1977.

She believes the key to her success during her school years was support from family. "Because of my experience living in a hearing world, often I would feel dissatisfied with the way things were, and how my role as a deaf student fit in society. I was never content, and knew then that things could be done better." She noticed that lead actors on television were mostly men, and decided that when she grew up she would be a doctor, a lawyer, or maybe Superwoman! School life without any role models then caused her to think that she couldn't do those things because she was Deaf. Her family would challenge those thoughts by saying, "You can be whatever you wish, don't let it stop you!"

After high school, Sheri took classes at American River Community College (ARC) for two years, to 'search' for the right field. During high school, and through her courses at ARC, she was uncomfortable with the teaching tools used for deaf kids. She then decided to become a teacher, and began her studies at California State University, Northridge (CSUN). She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies, and a Master of Arts in Special Education.

While attending CSUN, she received the Graduate Student of

the Year award from the National Center on Deafness. Sheri also became the first deaf person to serve as Senator, School of Education, for the General CSUN Student Body Government. When she decided to pursue that office, she was overwhelmed by the support and encouragement she was given. This type of support was something that was missing during her K-12 years. The variety of activities and leadership experiences at CSUN provided training in conference planning that would help in later years, as well as helping Sheri develop good leadership skills.

Sheri states that the diversity among the deaf and hard of hearing population attending CSUN was unforgettable. "The ability to still interact with hearing students and activities was prevalent throughout, so I never lost touch with that community while I was 'finding' myself as a deaf person in the deaf world. Leaders and role models who worked at NCOD were primarily who shaped who I am today."

By the time she graduated with her Master's degree, Sheri had developed a role of advocacy, and was introduced to the Greater Los Angeles Agency on Deafness (GLAD). Her career at GLAD was reinforced with the support she received from the CEO and Founder. Sheri served as Chief Administrative officer for that organization for ten years, before moving into her current position at NorCal Center on Deafness.

Throughout her academic challenges, there was always an expectation of "You will do it, Sheri" from former professors, colleagues, mentors or friends. She says, "Support was the key word that stayed in my mind throughout. Support for me, and I in turn gave this same support to others. This is what inspires me. It's what all leaders need when they tackle hard issues." Sheri believes that mentoring and role-modeling can't be emphasized enough, especially in high school.

In her involvement with co-workers and interested individuals in leadership and management, Sheri constantly asks questions. This method helps target the problem presented and ultimately find the right fit for the solution. She believes that problems arise in the workplace no matter who you are and where you work. Asking for help is always a sign of strength and good leadership.

Sheri advises, "Nothing is going to happen unless you make it happen with, of, by, and for the people you are serving!"

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"Nothing is going to happen unless you make it happen."
.....

Steve Farmer

“Never, ever,
ever give up!”

Steve Farmer believes that in order to be successful, one must be willing to risk failure. This philosophy has helped Steve achieve much in both his educational and professional careers. He has obtained two college degrees, and has accomplished his lifetime goal of working as an administrator at a school or program for the deaf.

Currently, Steve, who resides in Knoxville, Tennessee, works as the Director of Student Living at the Tennessee School for the Deaf. He supervises approximately eighty staff members and is responsible for twenty- four buildings on campus. Steve's duties also include coordinating after- school activities including a recreational program, and managing transportation for the students' weekly trips home.

Steve was born deaf. He began his education at the age of eighteen months, when his parents enrolled him in a pre- school program. At the age of four, his parents enrolled him in a residential school program, where he attended for seven years. Unfortunately, Steve did not progress much academically during these years at the residential school. Steve says, “In those seven years, my reading level only increased by two grade levels. My mother was not satisfied with this lack of progress, so she enrolled me in a private school.” His mother served as his interpreter until he began high school.

After graduating from high school, Steve attended Tennessee Temple University, where he originally planned to prepare to become a missionary to the deaf. However, he soon felt a different calling. He explains, “Many of my deaf friends were asking me for help with their writing. I started to tutor them, and realized that I might want to become a teacher.” Based on these experiences, Steve decided to double major in Deaf Education and Bible.

When Steve completed his studies at Tennessee Temple, he moved to Knoxville to work as a cottage counselor at the Tennessee School for the Deaf. After working as a counselor for one year, Steve was offered a job teaching at Red Bank High School in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He taught at Red Bank for four and a half years and supervised 17 interpreters in 9 schools before being offered the opportunity to apply for the Director of Student Living position at TSD.

A chance meeting at the Southeastern Regional Institute on Deafness (SERID) helped Steve find his current job. He was introduced to Alan Mealka, the current superintendent at TSD, at the conference. Mr. Mealka informed Steve of the job possibility. Approximately one year after that first meeting, the opportunity opened up and he applied for the position and accepted the job offer. Steve was excited about the challenge of working as

the Director of Student Living. He says, "I've always wanted to be an administrator."

It was the dream of working as an administrator that led Steve to pursue a Master's degree in Educational Administration and Policy Studies at the University of Tennessee. This program is designed to promote the "cohort concept", which Steve says was the most helpful aspect of his educational program. "The cohort philosophy encourages networking," he says, "and I used networking to develop relationships with other school administrators." At graduation, Steve was recognized as the top student in the Educational Administration Program.

Although his academic and professional careers have been fulfilling, Steve is most proud of his family. He and his wife have three children, and he is involved in a variety of activities with them. He also enjoys participating in church activities, traveling, reading, and turkey hunting.

Recently, Steve has embarked on another educational journey. He has started working on an Ed.D. in Educational Administration and Policy Studies at the University of Tennessee. He believes this degree coupled with his experience as an educational administrator will help him achieve his future goal of becoming, "the next superintendent of the Tennessee School for the Deaf."



Steve Farmer

Steve advises other students who are deaf to remember that experience is the best teacher, and to not be afraid to pursue their dreams. He states, "Never, ever, ever give up!"

Eve "Laney" Fox

Eve "Laney" Fox credited her parents for giving her the support and encouragement she needed to set and to reach her goals. Laney's parents held high expectations for her, giving her confidence to strive to fulfill her potential. In May 2003, Laney will graduate from Trinity University with a major in classical studies and minors in anthropology and psychology.

Laney became profoundly deaf at the age of nine months after an illness with a high fever. She attended a school for the deaf, an oral school, until age nine. There she learned to read lips and talk. Laney attended public schools for grades 4-6, and a private school for grades 7-12. In both settings, she was mainstreamed. Laney relied on lip-reading, board work and friend's

notes to get what she missed. Her senior year in high school, Laney started American Sign Language (ASL) classes at a community college.

When Laney arrived at Trinity University, she requested an oral interpreter for one class and note-takers for the rest. (Oral interpreters soundlessly repeat or reword what the speaker is saying for

lip readers.) Soon, however, she discovered that Trinity courses were more challenging than her high school classes. The material was more complex. Professors talked faster and moved around the room more. She had trouble reading lips and following class discussion. Laney had particular problems in her Latin class where slight differences in wording proved significant.

The Trinity disability service provider recognized an opportunity to use computer assisted real time captioning (CART). She arranged for a transcriber to sit next to Laney in Latin class and record, word for word, the professor's comments and classmates' contributions. Laney read the transcript as it appeared on a laptop computer screen in front of her. For the first time, Laney knew what was being said as it was being said! This service allowed Laney to participate in class more fully than before.

As Laney became familiar with oral interpreting and CART, she requested services in more and more classes. By spring semester of her sophomore year, Laney was using either interpreting or CART in every class. Laney continued her ASL classes and began to benefit from oral interpreting with "sign support." Now Laney uses ASL for conversations with friends, but prefers oral interpreting or CART for classes and scholarly lectures.

Eve "Laney" Fox



In addition to her success at Trinity, Laney made a name for herself on the San Antonio scene. Laney won the Miss Deaf San Antonio contest and was first-runner up for the Miss Deaf Texas title. Laney has used her title to help educate individuals in both the deaf and hearing communities about what people who are deaf can achieve.

For life after graduation, Laney is considering service in the Peace Corps. She is also interested in continuing her education, perhaps a doctoral program in anthropology. Ultimately, her goal is to teach

educators in other countries how to communicate with children who are deaf. Laney said, "I want to give something back. A lot of people helped me when I was a child, and I want to help children in other countries who don't have as many options as children who are deaf in America."

What advice does Laney give high school students who are deaf? "Talk with someone in Disability Services at each college you are considering before you decide. Make sure they will provide the services you need." Laney encourages students who are deaf to tackle college. "You can do it!"

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Laney encourages students who are deaf to tackle college. "You can do it!"
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..... *Rhonda Fung*

Rhonda Fung is an alumnus of Louisiana School for the Deaf (LSD), and returned to LSD on January 27, 2003, as Residential Therapeutic Specialist of the after school program. Rhonda holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Communication Arts and a Master of Arts in Mental Health Counseling from Gallaudet University, as well as an extensive history of working with deaf children.

Before returning to LSD, Ms. Fung worked at St. Elizabeth Hospital in Washington, D.C. as a Mental Health Intern, then with the National Mental Health Institute on Deafness as a Psychotherapist. After approxi-

mately five years, Rhonda accepted a position at Deaf Networks, Inc., which is now known as National Deaf Academy.

As part of her responsibilities, Ms. Fung not only conducts one-on-one therapy sessions with students in the after-school program, but she also organizes group therapy sessions and



Rhonda Fung

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Rhonda is a
wonderful role
model for our
students.

workshops that revolve around monthly themes that Rhonda has established for different topics, such as bullying, self-discovery, appropriate conduct, etc. She additionally coordinates the use of the PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) program in the After School Behavioral Center and administers weekly Student Review Team meetings in each dormitory, which may involve Team Leaders, Student Development Specialists, Residential Advisors, and the School Counselor.

Although Rhonda has only been back to LSD for less than one year, she has already demonstrated her ability to develop a strong rapport

with our students that facilitates their ability to internalize techniques and develop the ability to utilize self-control. Several of these students were previously considered "hopeless" cases and had confounded our systems and attempts to improve their behavior. However, thanks to Ms. Fung, these students are now well on their way to improvement.

Rhonda Fung is a wonderful role model for our students. Our students will surely benefit from working with someone with such an extensive background in mental health counseling and a desire to do anything necessary to help a student in need.

.....
Nicol Gautreau

Be willing to take any risk, and don't be afraid of failure. Do not let anyone hinder you from achieving your goals. You need to be happy with your life and live your life to the fullest. Take opportunities to be involved in different schools and in the community to see what you want to do with your life. These are just a few words of wisdom from Nicol Gautreau.

Nicol became deaf from meningitis at eight months old. She attended the Louisiana School for the Deaf (LSD) in Baton Rouge and

graduated in 1992. During that time she also was mainstreamed at two different public schools while attending LSD. She enjoyed attending both schools since using interpreters in the classroom was different than having signing teachers. After she graduated from high school, she attended Lenoir Rhyne College in North Carolina, Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., and Hinds Community College, where she completed her A.A. degree in General Studies. She then attended the University of Southern Mississippi, where she graduated with a

B.A. Degree in Deaf Education. Through her college years, Nicol participated in the video leadership teleconference, was founder of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Connection (student recruiters), student leader for Summer Orientation Program, secretary for the Deaf Club, student worker, member of Associate Student Government, Student Advisory Board, Signing Eagles, and a member of the American Instructors of the Deaf. She was also named Who's Who in the American Junior and Community Colleges and on the Dean's List.

Currently, Nicol is employed at the Louisiana Career Development Center (LCDC) in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Her job title is Instructor/Recruiter. She teaches communication skills, independent living skills, and work ethic to people who are deaf-blind. Before working there, she had no experience working with people who are deaf-blind, but was willing to take a risk and try something different. Wow, what a challenge! It is a challenge since different types of people who are deaf-blind exist. Some of the types include those with tunnel vision, Ushers Syndrome, and those who are totally deaf-blind and use tactile communication. Nicol enjoys learning new communication methods such as Visual Signing, Tracking, Tactile, Print- on- Palm, and Fingerspelling on Palm. She is fascinated with her job, and is learning something new everyday. LCDC is definitely special to her, and she continues to enjoy her job working the deaf-blind.

Nicol also travels on business



Nicol Gautreau (left) with Jackie Broussard.

trips to the American Association of the Deaf- Blind Conferences in San Diego, California, and the Helen Keller National Center in Sands Point, New York. She enjoys meeting the various exhibitors, collecting their business cards so she can keep in touch with them, and exchange new ideas.

In her free time, Nicol enjoys traveling, surfing the web, reading books, doing indoor/outdoor activities, exercising, sightseeing, shopping, and spending time with friends, family, and especially her four nieces. Sometimes, she volunteers as a Support Service Provider with deaf-blind individuals. Her goal is to travel the United States, foreign countries and islands to explore and learn about the other cultures, foods, clothes, and history. Nicol is a very adventurous person who wants to know all that she can and be all that she can be.

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Nicol is a very adventurous person who wants to know all that she can and be all that she can be.

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Kelli Gavin

“Success comes from making wise decisions, being yourself, following your heart, staying away from drugs and bad influence and resisting peer pressure.”

Kelli Gavin is a 19 year old female who was born deaf and raised in Palatine, Illinois. As a child, Kelli was mainstreamed part time at a school that has support services for deaf students. In ninth grade, she briefly attended Illinois School for the Deaf for three months, but decided to return to John Hersey High School in Arlington Heights, IL. Kelli felt she would benefit most from education by being mainstreamed in classrooms in addition of support services such as sign language interpreters and notetakers. John Hersey High school is one of the few public high schools that is well known for its excellent services for students who are deaf and hard of hearing. Kelli graduated from high school in 2003.

Kelli Gavin



Currently, Kelli is a full-time student at a two-year community college, Harper College in Palatine. After Kelli graduates from Harper College, she would like to transfer to a four-year university, such as Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) in Rochester, NY or Arizona State University (ASU) in Phoenix, AZ. Kelli is interested in earning a bachelor's degree in social work. She decided that social work would best fit her interests and needs because she had seen how much she liked to help her friends with personal issues and had seen how her mother was actively involved in her home neighborhood and community.

Kelli chose to attend Harper College for many reasons; she knew that Harper has a great reputation for its support services for deaf and hard of hearing students, Harper as a community college offers great quality education at a low cost, and finally, its close location to her home. Kelli states she has great confidence in Harper due to its low college dropout rate compared to many four-year universities. Kelli expects Harper's support services will help her to improve on her writing and reading skills to prepare for college-level courses.

She participates in many extra-curricular activities at Harper College such as Deaf Club, Big/Little Brother/Sister club, and a variety of workshops specifically for the deaf and hard of hearing. Kelli is interested in joining and playing basketball

and volleyball next semester. During her free time, Kelli enjoys playing in sports-basketball and volleyball, reading books, and being with her friends. Currently, Kelli volunteers for a church by encouraging deaf people to attend church.

Kelli believes that success comes from making wise decisions, being yourself, following your heart, staying away from drugs and bad influence and resisting peer pressure. Kelli also believes happiness comes from expressing, not suppressing, one's feelings, sharing experiences with others, and being a good listener.

Daniel Girard

Daniel Girard's decision to major in Psychology was due to the encouragement of his high school counselor, who was also his role model. Now he is a strong advocate in making a difference in students' lives.

Born Deaf, Daniel was raised by supportive parents. "My parents are like my best friends in terms that I share all my experiences with them and I rely on them for their opinions and advices. They believed in me and I am grateful for having them as my parents."

Daniel began his education at age three, where he attended Boston School for the Deaf (BSD), a residential school in Randolph, Massachusetts. From fifth to eighth grade, he started taking classes at Randolph Public Schools with his peers from BSD. After eighth grade, he decided to transfer to Newton North High School, where they have

a program that serves deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

Daniel attended California State University, Northridge (CSUN), as a full-time student and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. The National Center of Deafness (NCOD), located at CSUN, provided interpreting, notetaking, and real-time captioning services. Daniel chose to attend CSUN because he enjoyed having the experience of both deaf and hearing worlds, and believes that "having experienced both worlds helped me get perspectives from both sides (deaf and hearing)."

While attending CSUN, Daniel was very involved in several organizations. He was active in Lambda Sigma Pi Fraternity and Deaf CSU-Nians, holding offices in both groups. He was also involved with the Multicultural Psychology Association, as well as the National

Center on Deafness Student-Staff
Cross Cutting Team.

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Daniel
encourages
students to work
hard
academically.
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In addition to awards received from his fraternity, he was also given the President's Award from University Ambassadors, and several National Center on Deafness Outstanding Leadership Awards.

Daniel is now a full time graduate student at Gallaudet University, working on his Master of Arts in School Counseling and Guidance. He is also working part time as a Student Development Advisor for the Campus Activities Department at Gallaudet. His duties include advising and assisting six student organizations, as well as serving as a staff leader for many events planned by the department. Daniel also serves as a co-leader of Student Leadership Lecture Series, whose purpose is to create workshops that benefit students while they are at Gallaudet.

"Communication is convenient." That's one reason Daniel chose Gallaudet. He felt he could benefit from having class taught by profes-

sors who know sign language, which would also allow him to participate fully in class. By working in the Campus Activities Department, he also gains experience in working with students, organizations, and promoting leadership.

Next year, Daniel will be doing his practicum at Maryland School for the Deaf in Frederick, working twice a week as a counselor. "I have decided to continue my interest in investing my time with student organizations, camps, and leadership."

When he has free time, Daniel loves to travel, and has driven across the United States three times. Last summer he worked at Aspen Camp School for the Deaf, and participated in backpacking trips, horseback riding, and kayaking. His volunteer experiences include working for the Collegiate National Association for the Deaf and the Miss Deaf America pageant.

Daniel advises anyone interested in pursuing postsecondary education and training to take full advantage of the time at their community college, college, or university. He encourages students to work hard academically, because it does make a difference if they want to pursue a higher degree.



Daniel Girard

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Brad Hermes

Deafness should never hold you back from your dreams. That's the belief of Brad Hermes, former University of Texas football player and current auditor at KPMG LLP.

Brad was born hearing, but high fever with chicken pox resulted in deafness. Mainstreamed since the 2nd grade, Brad became interested in accounting after his junior year of high school when he took an accounting class and became involved with UIL – Accounting, an academic competition. He also participated in a summer program that gave students the opportunity to meet and talk with accountants and learn more about the field. At that time, Brad decided accounting was his future.

Brad chose to attend the University of Texas because of their Professional Program in Accounting (PPA), which allows students to get a BBA and MPA in a combined 5-year program. This program is ranked number one in the nation. Brad credits this program with helping him get a good job and in preparing him to take the CPA exam.

Brad was successful in school, being awarded with the Dean's Dozen Award in 2003 and the Athletic Director's Honor Roll in 1999 and 2001. He was also involved with the student organization, Students Advocating Deaf Awareness, in 2002.

While at UT, Brad played on the UT Longhorn Football team as both a walk-on member and as a defensive back. He was fortunate enough to play in one Cotton Bowl and two Holiday Bowl games. He passed on his experience as an assistant coach for JV and Varsity football at the Texas School for the Deaf.

His educational experiences led him to his current job. Brad worked as an intern at KPMG in Austin during the summer of 2002, and at the end of the internship, the firm offered him a full-time position. Brad works as an Associate in the Business Measurement Process division. He audits a variety of types of clients, doing financial statement audits and single audits.

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"It is important to remember who you are. Being Deaf is just part of you and should never hold you back from your dreams."

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Brad Hermes

KPMG is involved with a variety of community service, which Brad is beginning to become involved with, such as the 2003 People4People Events. He also enjoys watching sports (especially football!) and playing sports such as handball and golf.

Brad emphasizes that it important to have an education that matches your career goals. "It is

important not to take the easy track and challenge yourself to improve. Don't let other people put you down and look up high for success." He says not to feel intimidated about requesting services that you need.

"It is important to remember who you are. Being Deaf is just part of you and should never hold you back from your dreams."

Ben Hollingsworth

Ben Hollingsworth says that the best aspect of his job as an advocate for the Tennessee Protection and Advocacy is that he "is able to help clients empower themselves to ask for what they want from Vocational Rehabilitation." Ben, who lives in Knoxville, Tennessee, began working for Tennessee Protection and Advocacy in May, 2003. His primary job responsibility is to advocate for persons with disabilities under the guidelines of federal disability law.

Ben was born deaf, and he attended Tennessee School for the Deaf for one year. He then transferred to a mainstream program in Morristown, Tennessee, for his elementary and secondary education. After graduating from high school, Ben moved to Washington, D.C., to attend Gallaudet University.

At Gallaudet, Ben enjoyed the opportunity to socialize with deaf

peers. He joined a fraternity, and received a scholarship for new students. The accessibility of all programs and services was an aspect of Gallaudet that Ben particularly appreciated. Ben took a variety of interesting Deaf Studies courses at Gallaudet, but after three years, he says he became "disenchanted" with the university.

Ben decided to leave Gallaudet and explore a different academic program. He transferred to the University of Maryland, where he completed a Bachelor's Degree in American Studies. Ben says the "person-centered" teaching approach used by the University of Maryland was very beneficial to him.

After graduating from the University of Maryland, Ben returned to Knoxville. He decided to pursue a degree in Rehabilitation

Counseling at the University of Tennessee. After a discussion with one of the professors in that program, Ben realized he could use the knowledge he gained in his American Studies program and apply it to the field of rehabilitation.

Ben appreciates the support services that he has been able to utilize during his educational career. He adds that the interpreting services provided by the Office of Disability Services at the University of

Ben Hollingsworth



Tennessee were the “best services of any of my postsecondary programs.” He also appreciates the assistance of his family. He states, “A lot of support I got while going through school came from my parents, Bob and Karen.” In December 2003, he graduated from the University of Tennessee with a Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling. He hopes to continue his education by going to law school in the future.

Whether the decision is to pursue a career or a degree, Ben recommends that individuals be allowed to make their own choices. He says, “When I started my first year at Gallaudet University, I went to see my academic advisor. At that time, I wanted to take 17 or 18 hours the first semester. She said that perhaps I should take 12 or 15 hours instead. That experience set the standard of the school telling me what to do with my education. With that story, this is my advice for students: Don’t let people tell you what to do with your education. They can advise you, but the decision is ultimately yours. Do whatever you want to do, because you are the only one who knows your potential.”

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“Do whatever you want to do, because you are the only one who knows your potential.”
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..... *Timothy Kuyrkendall*

Mr. Kuyrkendall is an alumnus of Louisiana School for the Deaf (LSD) and graduated from Gallaudet University. Before returning to LSD, he was employed as a student development advisor at Gallaudet from August 1991 to May 1993. In the summer of 1993, Timothy worked at Courage North Camp in Minnesota as a Camp Counselor. He was then employed as Residence Counselor Relief at the Family Service Foundation from August 1993 to December 1994. He was later employed as a Senior Student Development Advisor at Gallaudet University from August 1993 to November 1995. From August 1995 to November 1995, Mr. Kuyrkendall worked at the Texas School for the Deaf as a Residence Counselor.



Timothy Kuyrkendall

Timothy finally returned to LSD in November 1995 when he was recruited for a teaching position for LSD's after-school program. Tim's performance as an instructor from 1995-1999 was exemplary. He was responsible for providing social and recreational activities for dormitory students, conducted artist and residence programs, and provided daily tutoring services for students in the Junior High and High School dormitories. As Mr. Kuyrkendall is an alumnus of the school, and experienced both residential and non-residential life as a student, he is able to relate exceptionally well with the students.

In addition to Mr. Kuyrkendall's work experience in the dormitory program, he has worked successfully as a teacher of General Science and Mathematics, and then as Communication Specialist. He was promoted to Residential Team Leader of High School Student Life in January of 2002, and now oversees High School Student Life. Timothy is known throughout the campus as the "king" of American Sign Language. Numerous students and staff members often turn to him for guidance.

Mr. Kuyrkendall has extensive expertise working with deaf students. He served as co-coordinator at Youth Leadership Camp in the summers of 1998, 1999, and 2000. He has presented AIDS workshops to high school students since 1997, in addition to art workshops, for

which he is very well known. Due to his experience and rapport with all the students, he was selected to develop a new curriculum for the junior high and high school levels in July 2000. Mr. Kurykendall has also served as Youth Drama Director since 1998, and is now the Miss LSD Pageant Director. The students are very fortunate to have him as a role model!

While not working at LSD, Mr. Kurykendall spends time with his cat Nina and his dog Belle. He enjoys watching movies and making stained glass, sewing, drawing, painting, or carving. He has plans to obtain a master's degree in School Administration/Deaf Education in

order to further his career working with Deaf children.

When asked to give advice to other students, he has many words of wisdom. He states, "In my thirteen years of working with high school students and Gallaudet prep students, I have always encouraged young people to believe in their own abilities and challenge themselves in life, as this will prepare them for success..." He continues his advice by discussing his notions on the idea of the students' value. Tim says, "I strongly believe that all youth who are deaf and hard of hearing are valuable to our society as future teachers, leaders and citizens."

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"I strongly believe that all youth who are deaf and hard of hearing are valuable to our society as future teachers, leaders and citizens."
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Jonathan Leach

As an adjunct faculty member, Jonathan currently teaches at North Harris College in Houston, Texas. He teaches a class on Deaf Culture for the Interpreter Training Program.

Jonathan was born deaf and began attending school at the age of seven months at the TSD East Campus. Following TSD, he moved to Houston and attended Hancock Elementary. He attended a mainstream program until graduating from Langram Creek High School with an Honor's Degree.

Following high school, Jonathan continued his education by attending the University of Houston. He graduated the University of Houston with a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering (Aviation Mechanic). Following his bachelor's degree, he attended Gallaudet University for one year before moving onto North Harris College. Once there, he received his Master's degree in the field of general studies. Each school had interpreters and various accommodations. During his years in school,



Jonathan Leach

Jonathan received many honors. Some of them include: Who's Who at Gallaudet, a \$500 reward for writing, Deans List, and graduated Summa Cum Laude from the University of Houston.

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"Make the most of your life. Focus on what you have instead of what you don't have."

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In his spare time, Jonathan enjoys flying. He has a private pilot's license for a single engine plane, which he has maintained for four years. In addition, he is a member of a Deaf Pilot's Association. When he is not flying, he helps out at church and school. Jonathan enjoys spend-

ing time with his family. He and his family are very close, so he enjoys every opportunity to see them.

Jonathan works hard pursuing his goals and encourages other students to do the same. His goal is to obtain a good paying job that will be satisfying to him. He provides some great advice for upcoming students. He encourages good studying habits and paying close attention to teachers. "Teachers are there for you to listen to the valuable information they provide". Additionally, he reminds students to keep activities to a minimum in order to focus on studying.

Not only does he have advice for students, but also for Deaf people in general. He encourages Deaf people to focus on their capabilities. Jonathan states, "What Deaf people can do far outweighs what they can't." He enjoys surprising people by telling them he is a pilot. Their awkward responses give him the satisfaction of proving himself. He concludes by exclaiming, "Make the most of your life. Focus on what you have instead of what you don't have."

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Craig Lemak

Craig Lemak comes from a family where both parents have a college education. He believes that foundation helped him to be self-determined to receive his own college education.

Hard of hearing since 18 months old, Craig spent his elementary school years at Tennessee School for the Deaf. He was then mainstreamed into South Knoxville Middle School and Bearden High School.

Craig continued his education at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, Tennessee. There he earned a Bachelor of Science in Human Ecology with a Recreational Therapy emphasis. He then earned a Masters degree in Counseling, concentrating in Rehabilitation

Counseling. While he was a full time student, he also stayed active working in the deaf community.

As an Academic Facilitator at Jefferson Tech College in Louisville, Kentucky, Craig works primarily with deaf and hard of hearing college students. By helping them to fill in gaps they may have in math, English, and other subjects, Craig teaches them how to become more effective students.

In his free time, Craig enjoys mountain biking, socializing with friends, and teaching in a second job. He says, "Work and study hard. Admit that you need help and ask for help from appropriate professionals. Be prepared ahead of time for anything."

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"Admit that you need help and ask for help from appropriate professionals. Be prepared ahead of time for anything."

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Craig Lemak

Frank Levine

From a simple cleaning to a major overhaul, "Doctor Brailier" can fix what's wrong with his customers' ailing Braillewriters.

When you are born deaf, and then go blind later in life, it's kind of like getting the "double whammy" of disabilities. But Atlanta, Georgia resident, Frank Levine, hasn't let it get in his way too much or keep him from ultimately going back to work.

Frank was born in South Africa and moved to the U.S. when he became an adult. He worked as an auto mechanic until his loss of vision from the progressive eye disease Retinitis Pigmentosa became too severe. As he came close to becoming totally blind, Frank began to learn Braille, knowing that it would eventually become his only method of reading.

Two years ago, with the encouragement from his Department of Labor Vocational Rehabilitation counselor, Diane Conley, Frank embarked on a new career. He decided to apply his years of me-

chanical experience and become a repairperson of Perkins Braillewriters, the standard Braille "typewriter" for people who read and write Braille.

The first step to starting this cottage industry was to receive training. Susan Lascek, the Southeast U.S. representative of the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Adults in New York, arranged for Frank to receive Perkins repair training at their center. Following this training, Dr. Robert Crouse, the executive director of the Blind and Low Vision Services of North Georgia in Smyrna, found space and administrative support for Frank's new business at his center.

Frank uses standard tools and hundreds of small parts. He keeps the small parts in empty styrofoam egg cartons. For his internet access, the Department of Labor's Assistive Work Technology Unit recommended special screen reader software to drive a paperless Braille display device with mechanical Braille dots magically changing to allow him access to the text on the screen.

Today, Frank is the only Perkins Braille writer repairperson in Georgia. By advertising at conferences, over the internet, and through friends, the word has spread about Frank's new career and business. From a simple cleaning to a major overhaul, "Doctor Brailier" can fix what's wrong with his customers' ailing Braillewriters.

Frank Levine



..... *Natalie (Nikki) Maxwell*

Natalie (Nikki) Maxwell is currently a student at Floyd College in Rome, Georgia. Nikki is in her last semester before graduating with an Associates degree in Human Services. She is planning to transfer to Savannah State University in the fall of 2004 and earn her bachelor's degree in social work. "I have always wanted to help other people, particularly other people who are deaf, so my goal has been to get the education I need to be able to make a difference in other people's lives." This has been Nikki's motivation to excel in college.

Nikki, at the age of four, had spinal meningitis. She was left with a bilateral sensory neural hearing loss. Her family placed her in the Hope School for the Deaf from pre-school through the middle of fourth grade, where she learned American Sign Language and met other children who are deaf. She mostly received a mainstream education for elementary through high school with some accommodations. She used sign language interpreters in her classes. Her favorite class during this time was history classes.

Nikki began her college studies at Floyd College in the summer of 1999. She had to begin Learning Support classes in reading, English, and math. Math was the most difficult for her. "I have never liked math, and math doesn't like me." She originally wanted to become a nurse, but later changed her mind and decided to become a social

worker. Nikki chose Floyd College because she liked the idea of attending a small college where faculty and staff really get to know their students and are concerned about them. Once she started taking psychology and sociology classes, she was hooked and knew for sure that her major should be in social work.

While a student, she has also worked part time and given a lot of her free time to activities at Floyd College. As a student worker on campus Nikki has served as the American Sign Language Interpreter Training Program office assistant for two and a half years. Nikki has served as Vice president of Public Relations for the Floyd College Student Government Association in 2002-2003. She was elected to this position by her peers. While serving out this duty, she participated in

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"My advice for any student who is deaf and wanting to go to college, is to get started."
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Natalie Maxwell

the University System of Georgia's Student Advisory Council to the Georgia Board of Regents. Nikki was the only voting delegate to the Student Advisory Council from Floyd College. During her time at Floyd College Nikki has been very active in the Cultural Awareness Society. Nikki helped raise funds for and participated in the first annual cruise to the Bahamas sponsored by the Cultural Awareness Society.

While finishing her studies, Nikki also served as an intern at the Open Door Home for girls in Rome, Georgia. In this capacity Nikki served as a mentor for young girls while working closely with a licensed Social Worker.

"My advice for any student who is deaf and wanting to go to college, is to get started. You may have to start in developmental classes, but everything you learn helps to make you a better person."

R. Dale McPherson

Dale McPherson had a passion for fish (and fishing) since before the age of three, which is when he was diagnosed with a hereditary sensorineural hearing loss. Dale reports, "As a child my parents used to take my sister and me to Lake Allatoona for a week vacation each summer. I can remember sitting in my elementary school classrooms and daydreaming about the one week out of the year I would get to fish non-stop." His passion continued and by the age of fifteen, he was fishing in a bass club where he soon received second place "Angler of the Year Award".

Fish are still a focal point for this determined young man. Currently, Dale is a full time graduate student and works as a graduate assistant at the University of Georgia (UGA),

Warnell School of Forest Resources and the Institute of Ecology. Of course his major is in fisheries. Dale explains, "It seemed only reasonable to combine my passion with learning." He certainly does just that. His primary responsibilities as a research assistant are to collect and analyze data that he gathers at six study sites that he visits seasonally. His research project is entitled, "An evaluation of fish community structure and seasonal habitat use in wetland and headwater streams of the lower Flint River Basin, southwest Georgia." Friends tease him about his many "field trips" and wonder if Dale has simply gone fishing again.

Dale was interested in the fisheries program at UGA because it is the top program in the state. The



relatively small classes allow more student- professor interactions. Because UGA is such a large institution, Dale states, “I also receive the benefit of having world-class scientists and instructors.” Having a large Disabilities Services department was also a benefit. His interactions with his own disability specialist as well as other staff members have always been extremely positive and helpful. “I’ve always been a DAWG,” he explains, referring to the UGA Bulldogs, “I would’ve wanted to come to this university even if I had chosen a different major.”

Most of Dale’s interests revolve around outdoor activities such as his beloved fishing, golfing, hiking, camping, and traveling. He also enjoys photography, chess, billiards, and bowling. “When time permits,” he adds, “I enjoy spending time with my family and friends. I still speak to and see many of my friends from elementary, middle, and high

school.” Because of his varied interests, Dale is actively involved in several UGA organizations. Since transferring to UGA, he has been a member of Sound Off, a networking organization of students who are deaf and hard of hearing, serving in the capacity of Co-President and Vice-President. As a charter member of Leadership, Education and Advocacy for Disabilities (LEAD), he has participated in presentations given to department heads, Graduate Teaching Assistants, and university health care professionals. The presentations focused on effectively communicating and accommodating people with disabilities. He is currently the Vice-President of the UGA Fisheries society, an organization he has been involved with for the past several years.

“My primary goal for the future is to be successful. For me success is doing a job I really enjoy and

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“For me, success is doing a job I really enjoy and doing it well.”
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doing it well. I want to positively impact as many people as I can during my lifetime.” Dale is working to become a state fisheries biologist and foresees the possibility of working with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources as a career option. He maintains a balance of recreation, hard work, and plans to continue working to improve the good relationships he has with his family and his girl friend’s family. When asked about his plans for a family of his own in the future, he reflected on having a child with a hearing impairment. “If I have a hearing-impaired child, I expect to relate to the child in a manner that my hearing parents were unable to relate to me.” Having a hearing loss gives him a perspective that his family did not have.

Dale suggests that students come to terms with their disability as quickly as possible, even though that may be easier said than done. He shares his thoughts by stating:

“Personally, I have only come to terms with my hearing loss in the past few years. I never requested the academic assistance that was available to me through the first four years of my college career. Currently

having notetakers in every class is the only assistance I consistently receive. In addition, I communicate to my professors that I have a hearing loss and will therefore miss material, especially in classes with a discussion format or in labs, where students are scattered throughout the room. Getting these accommodations has made a tremendous impact on my transcript and on my self-esteem. I used to make B’s and C’s with the occasional A, though I have done much worse. After receiving the accommodations, I have consistently made mostly A’s. I finally understand I’ve always had the ability to learn, I’ve just never had the ability to hear all the information presented to me.”

Another suggestion Dale shares is in relation to social interactions. Never one to ask for things, it was always difficult to meet someone for the first time and ask them to repeat something three times. Dale now believes, “It is my responsibility to educate those around me. No one understands my hearing loss the way I do. So, to effectively communicate, I must say ‘I have a hearing loss, can you...repeat...that please...speak slower...look at me when speaking.’”

..... *Mathew Molinder*

As a teenager Mathew Molinder, known as Matt, often drove past a group of buildings in Greenfield, Indiana, but he didn't know what they were. Some of the buildings seemed a bit exotic, almost as if they were from Spain. He had no idea that he would work in one of these buildings for more than 20 years.

Matt was born deaf. The rest of his family, with the exception of his older brother, is hearing. As a young boy, he attended mainstreamed classes in Valparaiso, Indiana for a few years, but transferred to the Indiana School for the Deaf in Indianapolis for the remainder of elementary school and high school. His family moved to Greenfield so they could be closer to the school.

After high school, Matt worked for Captioned Films for the Deaf until he decided to go to college. When Matt was a young man during the 1970s, there were fewer opportunities for deaf students than there are today. His older brother went to Gallaudet University, but that didn't interest Matt. He decided to go to St. Paul Technical-Vocational Institute, known as TVI, to study graphic arts. After completing the program, he worked as a printer for First Bank of Minneapolis.

Missing his friends and family in the Indianapolis area, Matt decided to return home. He accepted a new job at AFNB, which is now known as

Bank One, but he didn't feel challenged by the responsibilities. "My friends told me that there were good opportunities at Eli Lilly and Company, a pharmaceutical company based in Indianapolis" said Matt. In fact, the Lilly Greenfield research laboratory was hiring new workers. Greenfield? That was Matt's hometown, and the Spanish-looking buildings were part of the Lilly Greenfield laboratory. He finally found out what they were! Pharmaceutical companies develop and manufacture medicines to treat diseases in people and animals. It sounded like an interesting place to work.

After working for a while in laboratory production making medications, Matt transferred to the histology department and learned to be a histology technician. Histology is the microscopic study of tissues, and Lilly scientists use histology to better understand how the medications they're developing might affect people. Even though he has worked in this department for a long time, Matt still participates in regular training to learn new skills. He works with very sophisticated laboratory equipment, and "I need to be very precise," said Matt.

Histology technicians work with a team of scientists as they study the effects of compounds on animals for medications under development. The studies usually involve samples of tissues from many

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"Part-time jobs might help you figure out what you'd like to do. Stay in school so you can learn skills to get a good job."
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Mathew Molinder

animals, and must be able to be replicated exactly. Matt must follow very specific procedures and document his work very carefully. Histology technicians work with large numbers of very small samples of animal tissues from necropsy and process them so the pathologists can study them. This process includes trimming the tissues to fit into cassettes. The cassettes containing tissues are placed in a tissue processor which dehydrates (removes the water) the tissue through several changes of alcohol, and then impregnates them with paraffin (wax). Tissues are removed from the processor by the technician and placed in the embedding station to be blocked in paraffin to allow sectioning on a microtome. Matt uses a microtome to prepare very thin slices of tissue. He attaches the

tissue slices to glass microscope slides and stains them so their characteristics are more visible. The pathologists look for changes in the tissue cells to determine the effect of the compound on the animal.

When Matt started working at Eli Lilly and Company in 1977, there were quite a few other deaf workers at various locations in the Indianapolis area. Over the years, many of them have retired. Matt is now only one of a few remaining, and he is the only deaf worker at the Lilly Greenfield research laboratory. Some of his co-workers have learned to sign a bit. "I'm a pretty good lipreader, so I can communicate well with most of my co-workers," reported Matt. However, he uses interpreters during training sessions and during discussions with his supervisor. For several years, Matt was also responsible for ordering supplies for his group. There is a TTY near his cubicle, and Matt regularly uses email to communicate with his co-workers.

Working at the Lilly Greenfield research laboratory has given Matt many benefits, and not all of them were related to work. Early in his career, he met a young hearing woman named Pat who also worked there. Pat didn't know sign language, but she learned quickly. Soon they were married. They are the proud parents of four hearing children: Anna, Brett, Chad, and Danessa. Their daughter Anna is married to Zach who's in the military; the rest of their children are still in school. Pat now works as an educational interpreter, and they're both involved in community activities.

"I always encourage my children to try things that are interesting," said Matt. As high school students, his sons participated in a student exchange program and traveled to Japan. Several years ago, the family hosted an exchange student from Japan. Because of their interest and involvement in the exchange program, Matt and Pat were also able to travel to Japan for six days. While on the trip, Matt visited a school for Japanese deaf children.

"We really enjoy traveling," reported Matt. The family has a

camper and has visited many states while on vacation each year. "It's our dream to go to Alaska someday," shared Matt.

Matt reflected that things are very different now than when he was a young man who had just finished high school. "Students today have so many opportunities. Your family and other people you trust can give help you make plans for the future. Part-time jobs might help you figure out what you'd like to do. Stay in school so you can learn skills to get a good job."

Janice Diane Morgan

Janice Diane Morgan - or Dee as she's known by her friends - is a firm believer in continually learning throughout life. At 55, she currently teaches at the college level and is furthering her own education. Currently working at the University of Arkansas — Monticello College of Technology - Crossett, Dee is an instructor of Industrial Instrumentation, Electricity and Electromechanical Skills. Among her many responsibilities include preparing syllabi, lesson plans, labs, testing, and teaching both through lecture and demonstration. Standing tall at four feet and eleven inches, many have been amazed at what this part Native American woman can and will do. She has been a woman in a man's world for quite some time

and has taken a lot of harassment over the years. But she and God always knew her purpose.

Born with a profound hearing loss, she had surgery at age fourteen to remove growths which had caused nerve damage. As a result, she regained a little of her hearing. Her mother, ashamed of Dee's hearing loss, would not allow her to be "handicapped". Dee's father repeatedly told her she could do anything that she wanted to do. As she grew up, her father and her older sister were very persistent in helping her develop good speaking skills. Because of her good speech, throughout her life, people often do not realize the extent of her hearing loss. Dee was a shy girl with a



*Janice Diane
Morgan*

carbuncle hunch on her back and would sometimes hide behind the bushes at the public school she attended. Her teachers realized she had a hearing loss and were willing to work with her. She was never embarrassed about her hearing loss and, at times, she would get up and go look at the teacher's lips if his or her back were to her. Dee worked hard at becoming proficient at reading lips.

Originally majoring in Business Administration, Dee attended college in Hattiesburg, Mississippi full-time for a couple years. Then she went to work setting up central filing systems in medical facilities. Soon the job offers started coming in. She worked in the medical facilities for a time. But as a single mother with three children, she needed to find a job that would pay her enough money to help get her children through college. Having topped out in the medical records field in regards to pay, she decided to go back to school at Baton Rouge Technical College to gain instrumentation and electromechanical skills. Throughout college, Dee let her instructors know about her hearing loss and what she needed in order to succeed in her studies. There were always students and instructors willing or more than willing to help her when needed.

She was hired by Dow Chemical as a field instrument technician. As far as Dee is aware, she is the first and only female instrumentation technician in the state of Louisiana to do actual field work - including climbing down manholes and hanging from the sides of ships! Female technicians typically do analytical work with a computer. Because of her diligence, good work ethics and ability to stand up for herself, she was promoted to coordinate new instrumentation installations for new plants. Dee was determined to do what needed to be done so she could help her children. One important lesson she learned from a co-worker was to watch what he did and learn to do the work neatly so that those who worked on a system later would not have problems. Throughout her teaching career, she has endeavored to pass this same lesson on to her students.

Her teaching experiences have taken her to Texas State Technical College and Louisiana Technical College. After moving to Crossett, Arkansas (population approximately 6,100), she approached the university to see if they had a need for an instructor with her skills. After all, it never hurts to ask. Soon after, she was hired by the College of Technology. Currently she is also taking classes. Her goal is to earn a Bachelors and eventually a Masters degree in engineering.

In her spare time Dee enjoys a myriad of activities including remodeling her home (naturally she does her own electrical work) and

landscaping, gardening, home decorating projects and crafts. She also enjoys teaching her 13-year-old granddaughter how to sew. As a person who attends church regularly, she hopes to join the choir. How can a woman who can't hear her own voice sing in a choir? While in college, she minored in music. By sitting cheek to cheek with an instrument to learn the notes, Dee learned how to sing. She also now owns new digital hearing aides which she believes will be helpful.

Dee has three successful children: a son who is a superintendent at Georgia Pacific Plywood in Crossett, Arkansas, a son who is a

missionary in Peru, and a daughter who teaches 4th grade in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Dee has several thoughts to pass along to other students who are deaf. "Don't let anyone tell you that you can't. Just because you can't hear, doesn't mean you can't learn." "Don't use hearing loss as a crutch, use it as a stepping stone." She also believes that students should let instructors and support service personnel know as soon as possible about one's hearing loss as it is easier to get support services. And whatever you do, "do it to the best of your ability."

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"Whatever you do, do it to the best of your ability."
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Leslie Mossholder

Leslie Mossholder is an Occupational Therapist (OT) who lives in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She was born with a severe hearing loss in bilateral ears. She was born in Auburn, Alabama. From her very first attending school, she has been mainstreamed in hearing classrooms. She used an auditory trainer/FM system during classes and had weekly and monthly visits with a resource teacher all through elementary and middle school. In 1991, she moved to Baton Rouge, LA. There, she finished middle school, and then graduated from St. Joseph's Academy with honors.

Currently, she works at Hamond Development Center (HDC), a home for adults with developmental disabilities. She is responsible for a caseload of fifty-five people (assessments, equipment, sensory, nutritional, and physical support issues.) and followed them on a monthly basis. However, recently she has given up that caseload with the intention of focusing on developing an assistive technology (AT) department. The goal of the AT department is to address all equipment fittings and modifications, evaluate and fabricate therapeutic positioning equipment, and assess



Leslie Mossholder

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“You can accomplish anything that you set your mind and sights on to achieve. “

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and provide augmentative communication devices for all the individuals at HDC. Additionally, she is working toward becoming certified as an Assistive Technology Provider (ATP) for this new department. Her first year of employment was completed in mid – October 2003.

In August 1997, Mossholder went to school as

a full-time student, completing three years of prerequisite courses before applying to OT school. She was assisted by a captionist, provided by LSU, for real-time captioning (transcribed note taking like the closed captioning on TV) during classes. This service helped Leslie tremendously. She was able to take her own notes from the computer screen as the captionist typed what the professor was saying. Additionally, Leslie was involved in some extra-curricular activities and organizations, as well as holding a job as swim coach with the Bengal Tiger Aquatics Club for children ages twelve and under. Although she originally considered studying athletic training or physical therapy, Leslie decided during her senior year of high school that she preferred OT as a career. She met with an OT director while looking at various colleges, and she decided that OT

was much more “life-focused” and would allow her the personal interaction and job satisfaction that she was searching for in a career. Therefore, in May of 2000, she moved to New Orleans to begin her OT program at Louisiana State University. In August 2002, she graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy with a cumulative GPA of 3.4.

In her spare time, Leslie enjoys spending time with family, friends, and her chocolate Labrador retriever. Additionally, she plays tennis weekly in a USTA adult league and enjoys various forms of outdoor activities. Currently, she is in the process of obtaining certification as a coach so she can volunteer as a Special Olympics swim coach. Her future plans are to enhance her professional development and community involvement, and eventually marry and have a family.

Her advice to other deaf students considering postsecondary education and training is, “Absolutely go for it. Work hard in school to do the best you can and find a program that will support you in your college or training experience.” She additionally provides advice to deaf students regarding gaining the types of services needed. Leslie states, “Take advantage of the services to which you are entitled! You don’t have to go at it alone, don’t be afraid to ask for help or use the support services provided.” She concludes her advice by showing the importance of a enjoyable job and the limitless potential each person has. Leslie advises:

"...you will spend too much time at your job to be doing something you do not like or are not motivated to do. You can accomplish anything that you set your mind and sights

on to achieve. Look at me, I'm living my dreams both personally and professionally, and feel blessed that I've been able to accomplish such things thus far."

Lucy E. Mossholder

Lucy Mossholder was born in Auburn, AL. Approximately one year after she was born, she was diagnosed with a severe hearing loss. She states, "Growing up with a hearing impairment is something you must become accustomed to." However, she adapted well with the help of friends, family, and technology. For her, lip-reading has been a great help. She cannot understand words unless she is looking directly at the speaker. Throughout elementary school in hearing classrooms, she wore an auditory trainer to amplify her teacher's voice in the classroom. In 1991, her family moved to Baton Rouge, LA where she continued to utilize the auditory trainer until the fifth grade. Additionally, she visited a speech therapist once or twice a week. In high school, she had no assistance in her classes with technology or resource teachers. Instead, she worked on her own and had support from her parents and friends.

In August 2001, she entered Louisiana University (LSU), and she currently is in her third year majoring in dietetics. Most of her fresh-

man year, she was undecided and considered several career options. In the end, she decided to follow in her mother's footsteps and enter the field of nutrition. Sometimes, her classes are a struggle with the material to be learned. Usually, she has no problem obtaining the notes to prepare her for the tests. The Disability Services office at LSU provides special services for people with hearing disabilities, and she was given three choices of assistance for her classes. These options were a paid student note taker, a supplied recorder to record the professor's lecture and have the tape captioned, or have a team of captionists in the classroom captioning the lecture. She chose the option of having a team of captionists in the classroom. The captioning service is just as it sounds; a laptop is used for typing the professor's lectures. Sitting next to the captionist, she can read off the laptop screen which gives her the benefit of being able to follow the lecture and take notes at the same time. She is fortunate and appreciative of the services available, because she would not have been

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 “Like you and me, most people need some help every now and then. Never feel embarrassed or afraid to ask someone for help. That is part of what being human is all about.”

Lucy Mossholder (left) with sister Leslie.



able to perform as well in her classes without them.

Her hearing disability does not slow her down. She has been socially active at LSU in several ways. For two years, she was a member of the Delta Zeta (DZ) sorority. Through DZ, she met several wonderful people and formed some life long friendships. Additionally, she volunteered for many projects with the Baton Rouge Speech and Hearing school, Canned Food drives, American Heart Association Heart Walk, Alzheimer’s walk, and many more. For the 2003-2004 school year, she is the secretary of the Student Dietetics Association (SDA). Through SDA, she does additional volunteer work. Not only is she involved in SDA, but also with the Agriculture Student Council. LSU provides countless opportunities for her to get involved and meet new people.

After class, she baby-sits for three boys varying in age from nine months to five years. This job keeps her busy for two hours a day, five days a week. For close to a year she has been babysitting the boys, and she considers it a joy to be with them as they grow bigger. The first time

she babysat the boys, the oldest one, Jake, asked why she sounded different. She explained to Jake that she had a problem and could not hear as well as him. Being a kid, he quickly accepted her and since then no problems have arisen. She knows she does not sound the same as other people, but that does not bother her as long as she knows she is intelligible to others. Lucy appreciates the incredible help Jake provides in the house with his two younger brothers. Additionally, she considers the middle child Sion a delight, and appreciates being around the infant at such an early age. Neither Sion nor the infant have noticed a difference in her and others. Lucy states, “Kids seem to adapt the easiest.”

When not in school or baby sitting, Lucy enjoys spending time with her friends. They go out to eat, watch movies, or just hang out. Her friends look past her disability and are there any time she needs help.

Her future plans involve having a career she loves, marrying when she finds the right man, and having kids. When she has kids, she will teach them about kids who are “different” from them, but they will see and know that down deep they really are quite similar.

When asked to give advice for other students who are D/deaf or Hard of Hearing, Lucy has some great truths to share. First, she reminds students not to allow anyone to make them feel inferior. She states, “Having a better hearing does not make someone superior to you.” Additionally, she reminds

students they can do anything, and always ask help when they need it. She concludes by stating:

“I have come across many people who overlook me and prefer not to take the time to get to know me or understand my hearing impairment. That is okay. There will

be a time in their life when they meet another person with some form of disability and will then want to learn more about them. Like you and me, most people need some help every now and then. Never feel embarrassed or afraid to ask someone for help. That is part of what being human is all about.”

..... *Shelley Oishi*

Shelley Oishi began her education early in life. She was only three years old when she began school. Since she was born Deaf, her mother wanted Shelley to begin school early to learn sign language and to be able to develop social skills with her peers. When the time came for kindergarten, she was the only deaf student in her school and her primary mode of communication was Signed Exact English (SEE). She attended kindergarten in the mornings and a deaf program in the afternoons. This continued until she was in the third grade.

When she entered fifth grade, all of the deaf students in the deaf program went to Vancouver, BC to attend the deaf institution. This left Shelley as the only deaf pupil at her elementary school. While her teacher encouraged Shelley to go with the other deaf students, Shelley stayed in the mainstream school. Her parents felt the mainstreamed program would be more beneficial

for her, and the distance to the school for the deaf was also a factor in their decision.

Shelley had the same interpreter from kindergarten through elementary school, and then had several interpreters during her junior high and high school years. In ninth grade, Shelley had an interpreter who was only a few years older than her. At first, it was a struggle because Michelle didn't know the role of an interpreter, and didn't have a teacher for the Deaf to guide her. But by the end of the year, they developed a better working relationship, and Michelle interpreted for her during all but two months of her high school years.

During high school, Shelley learned from Michelle about Gallaudet University in Washington, DC. Shelley realized she wanted to go to a school that had other deaf students like her. After visiting



Shelley Oishi

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“It’s important to discover what one really wants to do and pursue it to their heart’s content.”

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other schools, she finally decided to enroll at Rochester Institute of Technology, in New York. She was excited because she finally found Deaf people who were just like her, and had experienced mainstreamed programs. She was also thrilled to move away from her family in order to become more independent.

Shelley received her BFA in graphic design, and AAS in interior design. She was also participated in the skiing and snowboarding club, Sigma Sigma Sigma Sorority, and the Panhellenic Council. Due to interests in art in high school, she majored in graphic design. Later she discovered other career options and continued her education by taking courses at Arizona State University, and then moving to Western Oregon University. She is currently working on her masters in Rehabilitation Counseling for the Deaf. Shelley hopes her masters degree will open even more doors for her in the future.

Currently, Shelley works for Northwest Human Services, in the Connection Program. She is a case manager/interning counselor, and provides mental health counseling, advocacy, and case management for deaf and hard of hearing clients. She also works for Pacific Vocational Services in Oregon, as a job developer. In this role, she provides job development as well as workshops for deaf and hard of hearing clients.

At first, Shelley thought it would be a tough challenge to juggle family, work, and school. It was also a challenge having her husband in the same classes, and trying to maintain her perspective as a student.

Shelley believes she is lucky to have another chance in deciding a career path. She states that, “it’s important to discover what one really wants to do and pursue it to their heart’s content. Most importantly, follow your true instincts. If someone told me that I had choices to choose from, it would have been beneficial for me to sample different majors instead of graduating with a bachelors degree that I did not like. Regardless of the choices I made, I do not regret it because I see it as a learning experience. It has made me be who I am today.”

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Richard "RJ" Oxenham

Richard Oxenham has worked at Louisiana School for the Deaf for three years. He began his employment as a Dorm Counselor in the High School Boys' dormitory in October of 1999 and worked his way up the ladder to his current position. While working as a Dorm Counselor, Richard took child development courses at Louisiana Technical Community College, mastered the Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI), and obtained a CEASD (Conference of Educational Administrators Serving the Deaf, Inc) Class A certification. In August 2001, Richard was promoted to Student Development Specialist of the Middle School Dormitories, and after only a few months in this position, he was again promoted in the same department. He became the Residential Team Leader. In this position, Mr. Oxenham reports to the Dean of students and manages the work and performance of twenty employees. Additionally, he oversees and coordinates the care and education of fifty students in the after-school program.

As a prime example of an innovative self-starter, Mr. Oxenham has exceeded everyone's expectations. He grew up hard-of-hearing in the United Kingdom. However, because he had the ability to function in a hearing society, his parents placed him in an all-boys' school with other hearing children. After completing secondary school, he pursued a

career within the field of Electrical Engineering, earning an Associate Degree in this discipline, and then worked for approximately eight years before the company closed. He held several odd jobs before deciding to return to college to major in Philosophy at the University of Wales, Swansea. This course was extremely challenging. He had to turn to his textbooks instead of attending lectures. This paid off, as he graduated with honors.

After obtaining his Bachelors Degree, Mr. Oxenham decided to look into the field of Social Work. He worked with a Spina Bifida client for several months and took British Sign Language classes before deciding to pursue a Masters degree in Social Work at Oxford University. While waiting to begin

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He is a model of a dedicated employee doing whatever it takes to help a child in need.
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Richard Oxenham

his Masters program, in the fall of 1997, Mr. Oxenham visited the United States and met an American woman, whom he married in 1998. Instead of returning to the UK to pursue his Masters in Social Work, Richard remained in the USA, awaiting his work permit.

Upon receiving his work permit approximately one year later, Richard obtained temporary employment at a swimming pool manufacturing company while looking for a permanent job. It was during this time that Mr. Oxenham learned of a position at LSD, and the rest is, as they say, history!

In the time that Mr. Oxenham has served at LSD, he has distinguished himself as a conscientious and energetic leader working with the Deaf. Not only has Richard mastered the SCPI and obtained a

CEASD Class A Certification, but also he is a certified Crisis Prevention Intervention Instructor. In addition, Mr. Oxenham serves on several committees at LSD, including the Safety Committee, Literacy Committee, and has instituted many impressive programs for the after-school program, such as the TARGET behavior program for the Middle School Dormitories and PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies).

Richard's continued interest in programs and opportunities related to the social and emotional development of Deaf children has served not only him but LSD as well. He is a model of a dedicated employee doing whatever it takes to help a child in need. LSD is honored to have Mr. Oxenham as part of the team. He certainly employs the LSD motto: "At LSD, Kids Come First."

..... *Yakov Shifrin*

Yakov grew up in the Ukraine, in a deaf family. His parents, aunt, and twin sister are deaf. When Yakov was six years old, he began his education at a special school for the hard-of-hearing in Kiev, Ukraine. He lived in a dorm until he graduated from high school.

Yakov currently works as an Administrative Assistant in the Program for Deaf Adults (PDA), a program within the Division of Adult

and Continuing Education, at LaGuardia Community College in Queens, New York. LaGuardia is one of the 19 City University of New York (CUNY) campuses. His responsibilities include providing necessary information concerning education programs at LaGuardia; coordinating communication between students, teachers and associates, and student sponsors; administering academic placement tests, collecting payments, summa-

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"Don't delay
getting your
education.
It is impossible to
have a successful
life without an
education."
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rizing statistical data reports, and maintaining the program's student database and others.

In his job, Yakov enjoys meeting and assisting people, also taking care of accounting matters. As a valuable staff member, he often shares with students the struggles he has overcome as being a foreigner and coming to the United States without knowledge of English or ASL, as well as American culture. He also serves as a Russian translator, translating from Russian spoken and sign language.

Throughout this time, Yakov always maintained a strong connection with LaGuardia. He began his education at LaGuardia learning English and American Sign Language when he first came to the United States in 1993. He soon registered into LaGuardia's credit program, and later to Baruch College. In spring 2002, Yakov obtained a BBA degree in Accounting from Baruch College. It was PDA's Assistant Director who asked Yakov if he would like to work as a staff member, beginning in fall 2002.

Yakov always attended school as a full-time student. Deciding on a major was easy for him since he always had a love for numbers and number games. The study of businesses had always been an interest to him. His goal is to build a business career. Yakov received numerous awards while in school including the Berman Award, the Award for Achievement from the Accounting and Management Department at LaGuardia Community College, and the Astoria Federal Bank

Award. Yakov was on the Dean's list from 1998-99.

In addition to studying, Yakov tutored many students in mathematics and accounting courses. Outside of college, with his sister and another individual, created the first Russian Deaf Club in New York City, working as a treasurer of the club. During his free time, Yakov likes to spend time with his 13-year-old daughter, his wife, and his extended family. A goal of Yakov's is "to support and help the Deaf community in order that they may achieve their goals in life."

Yakov was pleased with the accommodations provided at both LaGuardia Community College and Baruch College. He was provided with interpreters and notetakers, and was assisted during registration.

When asked what advice Yakov had for deaf students in high school he said, "Don't delay getting your education. If you have the opportunity, aim at least for an Associates degree – it is impossible to have a successful life without an education." Yakov stresses the importance of having an open mind, "We live in two worlds – Deaf and hearing – It is important to reduce the barriers and welcome each other."



Yakov Shifrin

Chiquita Simmons

“Go to college and don’t give up until you get your degree.”

Chiquita Simmons followed her dreams as a young girl and now is a teacher for the deaf at the Mississippi School for the Deaf. As a young girl sitting in her classes, Chiquita said she dreamed of one day becoming a teacher for the deaf. She had great, inspiring teachers who were good role models for her. She wanted to be a part of assisting other deaf and hard of hearing students in becoming successful adults with an excellent education, and she is doing just that.

Chiquita became deaf at age three from a very high fever. She attended Magnolia Speech School for two years and then mainstreamed into the public school system. In high school Chiquita ran track, participated on the drill team, and was a member of the student council and a cheerleader.

After graduating from high school, Chiquita attended Hinds Community College and majored in Deaf Education. She later attended the University of Southern Mississippi and Jackson State University, where she received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Special Education. Chiquita attributes her success in college to all the

teachers who were always so willing to work with her on a one-on-one basis. She also found having note takers and interpreters in every class very beneficial to her. While attending college, Chiquita was on the Dean’s Scholar List for four straight semesters, and was a member of the HCC Deaf Club.

While attending Jackson State University, she worked as a dorm supervisor at the Mississippi School for the Deaf. She also did her student teaching there and was hired as a second grade teacher upon finishing her degree. She has worked at MSD as a teacher for the past three years and really enjoys her work. She plans to stay there until she retires!

In her spare time, she mainly enjoys spending time with her son, who is very involved in sports, Boy Scouts, and horse events. She also enjoys reading, walking, shopping, and “surfing” the computer. She is active in the local Central Chapter of the Mississippi Association for the Deaf and enjoys teaching sign language to individuals who are interested.

Her advice to other students would be to go to college and don’t give up until you get your degree. In the future, Chiquita plans to go back to college and complete her Masters degree in Education.

Chiquita Simmons



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Mahala Slone

Mahala Slone is currently a graduate student at Western Oregon University, pursuing a Masters degree in Rehabilitation Counseling for the Deaf. She believes that high school students should attend college or training to pursue their interests. She says that "it is worth their time and they will benefit from the education."

Mahala was born Deaf and attended mainstream schools in California, Hawaii and Oregon. She attended a community college for two years and then transferred to Western Oregon University, receiving a Bachelors degree in psychology in June 2003. Her major was psychology with a minor in Special Education. Mahala chose psychology as her major out of a desire to work with people. She learned a great deal about human behavior, cognitive behavior, motivation, research methods, experimental studies, and variety disorders.

In her free time, Mahala enjoys quilting, hiking, rafting, running, scrapbooking, visiting her husband's home in Alaska, and being involved in church activities. She was a student staff Young Life leader in Deaf Young Life ministry, but had to resign the position due to becoming a mother and a full time graduate student.

Her future plans include completing her Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling for the Deaf, and becoming a great mother

to her soon-to-be-born child. After graduation, she hopes to find a career position in Alaska, since that is where she and her husband would like to settle down.

Mahala believes that "when high school students continue their education it provides them a greater chance to get a career that they want." She is excited about the program she is in, and uses her opportunities to teach other classmates about deaf culture. "I take the opportunity whenever I can. This program will train me to become a Vocational Counselor for the Deaf and I am learning so much."

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"When high school students continue their education it provides them a greater chance to get a career that they want."

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Mahala Slone



Kathy Smith

Kathy Smith began school at Ben Haggard Elementary School in a self-contained program. In second grade, she began a mainstream program and continued in that program through high school. While in the mainstreaming environment, Kathy had interpreters in every class. Growing up as an only deaf child of hearing parents, Kathy had a mother who worked very hard to learn sign language. Her mother communicated with the teachers and school principals to ensure Kathy had the best education possible.

Following high school, Kathy attended Greenville Technical Community College in Greenville South Carolina. While she changed her major several times from 1997 until graduating in 2002, her final deci-

sion was in the field of human services. She wanted to use this degree to help people. Throughout her college experience, Kathy utilized note takers and interpreters. To her, these services were the most important part of getting an education.

Currently, Kathy is employed at the Charlie McKinney House. She began working for the company while going to school at Greenville Technical Community College. Her employment began with a 125 hour internship. Following graduation, she applied to the company and was hired quickly. The Charlie McKinney House is operated by the Department of Mental Health and is especially for Deaf clients. She works with mentally ill people who are also deaf. Since Kathy is deaf, has a degree in human services and a special certificate in Mental Health, she is an ideal employee for this position. She states, "Being deaf myself has been an asset in this job since I can understand the language as well as the culture." Additionally, she adds "Having a degree in human services with a specialized certificate in Mental Health has helped me understand how people who are mentally ill need special help."

In addition to her employment responsibilities, Kathy is also a newlywed. Therefore, she remains busy trying to start a new home. Her new husband is hearing, so she strives to blend living in both the

Kathy Smith



hearing culture and deaf culture. This task is also one she deals with at work. While her clients are deaf or hard of hearing, she works with hearing professionals who need to learn about deaf culture as well. When she has spare time, she enjoys reading, working on the computer, and playing with their dog. Currently she is considering going back to school. This time she would like to pursue a major in occupational therapy. She sees this as an important need in her job. She states, "Since working at the McKinney House I know and see how

important occupational therapy is so I am looking at that to add to my skills of helping people become more independent."

In closing, Kathy has some good advice for other students. To her, doing what you enjoy is a good measure of success. She concludes, "Be patient, try different things. You do not have to get stuck with something just because someone says a deaf person has to do that one thing. If you don't know what you want to do just start classes and explore and ask questions."

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"Be patient, try different things. You do not have to get stuck with something just because someone says a deaf person has to do that one thing."

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Andrew White

Andrew White is a twenty-one year old student at Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, North Carolina. He is originally from York, Pennsylvania, but moved with his family to Charlotte when he was in the sixth grade. Andrew attended a pre-kindergarten class for deaf children in Pennsylvania and was then mainstreamed into regular kindergarten in the public school system where he received interpreting services throughout his elementary grades. After moving to Charlotte, Andrew attended Cotswold Elementary, Piedmont Middle School, and Myers Park High School. Always having interpreting services available made it possible for him to participate in school clubs and activities. He ran cross country and was a member of the Outdoor Adventure Club. He was provided an interpreter for a skiing

trip the club arranged and he also was active in missionary work and community work. Andrew is a firm believer that "no matter what, deaf persons should have equal opportunity and the support services to participate in anything they want."

After graduating high school, Andrew enrolled at NTID in Rochester, NY. He decided after one year to come back to NC and his family and friends. He then enrolled at CPCC in the Physical Therapy program. Going to school and working part-time jobs in local restaurants kept him busy. Soon he realized that the food industry jobs were where he really wanted to be, so he changed his major to Culinary Arts. Since then, things have been falling into place for Andrew. He is now able to work with food in

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"We can and
will succeed."
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Andrew White

hands- on classes, entertain family and friends with his skills, and has become engaged to his long- time girlfriend, Allison Elliott.

When Andrew finishes the program at CPCC, settles into a job, and marries Allison, he hopes to continue his education by getting a four-year degree in Culinary Arts from Johnson & Wales University. He wants to become an executive chef for a major restaurant or hotel and eventually own his own restaurant. Although working and going to school is not an easy task, Andrew keeps a positive attitude. He says, "I realize that often students have to struggle to make the grade, but to me an "F" is not a failure. It is an encouragement to try harder and not give up. We can and will succeed."

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Amy Wong

If you visit the movie theater this year, you might see some of Amy's artwork on the big screen. Amy Wong works as a Compositor and Visual Effects Artist for The World of Tomorrow, Inc.

She was born hard-of-hearing, but Amy has studied several languages. She learned English as her first language, Indonesian as her second, and French as her third.

In her elementary years, Amy went to a private international

school in Indonesia. She had teachers from a variety of countries, including England, Australia, and the United States. At that time, she had no outside support services, but relied on her parents to help with homework.

During sixth and seventh grades, she lived in Quebec, Canada. She attended an English-French school, and had weekly meetings with an outside tutor from Montreal Oral School for the Deaf. Amy went back to Indonesia for eighth and ninth grade, and then moved to

California for her tenth through twelfth grades. She attended a public school in California, and had a sign language interpreter for only one class – history.

After high school, Amy attended California State University, Northridge (CSUN), where she majored in Fine Arts with an emphasis on Film and Animation. She had always wanted to be involved with films.

Amy especially liked CSUN because of their ability to provide interpreters and real-time captionists for most classes. She also appreciated that it was affordable and close to home. Amy feels she “received a wonderful well-rounded education from CSUN.” Later, Amy also studied graphic design at the Art Center College of Design.

During college, Amy was involved in several extra-curricular activities, such as the Rose Parade Committee and College Bowl. She also participated in the Miss Deaf CSUN pageant, Miss Deaf California pageant, and Miss Deaf America pageant.

In the summer of 1999, she interned at Disney Feature Animation. This was a fantastic experience for Amy, and she was able to meet people and make connections. Upon graduation from CSUN, Disney hired her as a regular, full-time employee. That position gave her a chance to showcase her portfolio, as well as meet directors and supervisors of the digital team.



Amy Wong

Those contacts led to her current job at The World of Tomorrow, Inc., where Amy recently worked on feature film project containing over 1000 digital shots with special effects. She is a member of a digital crew that adds the special effects, which includes computer-generated imagery (CGI), backgrounds, characters, and elements. Amy does animation and compositing in order to make the interaction between the actors and CGI elements convincing. The movie is a Paramount Pictures feature film, and will be distributed to theaters in 2004.

Apart from work, Amy is also busy with many projects. She is currently working on a comic book of her own, enjoys running, and plans to participate in a half-marathon someday. And next year will be even more exciting - she will be getting married!

.....
Disney hired her as a regular, full-time employee. That position gave her a chance to showcase her portfolio, as well as meet directors and supervisors of the digital team.
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Gates to Adventure

Am I ready for a job or employment training?

What are my options after I finish high school?

What kind of job would be best for me?

What about college?

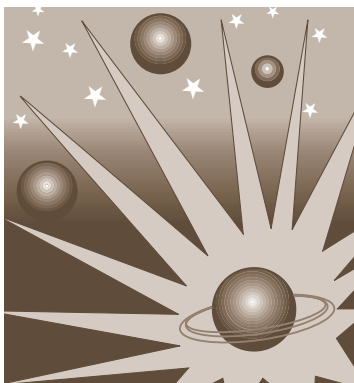
Can I describe my hearing loss?

How is college different from high school?

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The Impact of Emerging Technology: A Deaf Experience

**Don Ashmore,
Associate Professor and Director of the Center on Deafness
The University of Tennessee**

I was looking for a miracle. The sign in the big glass window was talking to me. It shouted at my eyes: “Wake up and smell the coffee.” Although the necessary pieces were not assembled yet, intuitively it was obvious that this device was the key to the miracle.

As a thirteen-year old, my heart was fixed on taking over a morning paper route. The paperboy was graduating from high school and was quitting the route in a few days. The application required a parent’s signature. Mom deferred the authority—and the decision—to Dad.

Dad’s facial expression told me what I already knew. He was weary from making countless trips to wake me up at 6:30 a.m. every morning for school. How was I going to wake up at 3 a.m.? Under the circumstances, I feared the worst. He was going to muster the courage and the tact to say “No.” However, he did not. The suspense was making my hands sweat. Finally, Dad took a deep breath and searched for the right words. His lips began to form his response: “If you want this paper route, then you need to learn how to wake up on time on your own.”

I jumped on the bus and headed to downtown Seattle. I had no particular destination in mind. It just seemed like it was the right thing to do to begin my search for this mysterious miracle.

After reading the sign, I stepped into an appliance store. The device on display was a dead ringer for an alarm clock. A timer occupied the space normally housing the alarm components. One could plug in any electrically operated device and, in turn, this clock would turn on and shut off the electricity that would power the device at predestinated times. After burning out Dad’s expensive photo lamps, my

electric shaver became my faithful “alarm clock” until I got married about ten years later.

It required another decade before teletypewriters for the deaf (TTYs) hit the “underground” market. Deaf technicians installed an acoustic coupler modified for Baudot (invented by Robert Weitbrecht, a deaf scientist) into discarded Western Union teletypewriters and distributed them on a limited basis to deaf consumers and interpreters. TTYs provided telephone access for individuals with special hearing, speech, and language needs. A few years later a captioned decoder enabled television to become intelligible via closed captioning for individuals with hearing impairments. These two magnificent technological advances allowed deaf people to gain a sense of autonomy, independence and self-reliance. Today, some thirty years later, *both* hearing and deaf people use e-mail and Internet technology as a major mode for communication access and information.

Emerging technology has been an exciting ride for me. Some of the stories you will read throughout these pages confirm that it still is exciting, perhaps more so. You will see as you read further that many of the students are grateful for the technologies available to them today. You will also see how it plays a role for many of them in enabling them to make a difference in our communities of today. The Postsecondary Education Consortium is indeed grateful for the students, graduates and employees who use and benefit from the amazing technologies of today; those who make emerging technology possible and meaningful; and parents—like my father—who challenge us to find answers to our unique needs.



Students Making a Difference Through Technology

Jerome Ethan Artis

Jerome Ethan Artis, who prefers to be called Ethan, was born prematurely. He has learned many lessons in his life, especially as a college student. "Life can be so devastating when people don't do what they are supposed to do," he shares. "People have to constantly strive everyday to make things right in their lives."

Throughout his childhood, Ethan attended public elementary and middle schools and also attended the Atlanta Area School for the Deaf for a short period of about three years. In the tenth grade he was transferred to the Model Secondary School for the Deaf (MSSD) in Washington, D.C. "for a better educational program," he says. "I was a student at MSSD for three years. I had a lot of independence and a lot of fun there."

Ethan was proud to be accepted to the **National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID)** after graduation. He studied Applied Computer Technology as a full-time student. "The reason I chose Applied Computer Technology as my field of study is that it involves a lot of 'hands-on' work, and I like to work with machines. I am good with my hands." Ethan was also pleased to be at a school with other deaf students. "At NTID," he says, "I could get help any time of the day. My grades fell, however, because I slept late, missed classes, and chose to be with friends rather than doing homework first. I didn't do what I was supposed to do, and I had to leave NTID. I was devastated when I had to go home."

Ethan has a second chance, though. He is now a part-time student at **Georgia Perimeter College (GPC)**. "I am now taking a 'Reasonable Accommodation' class to help improve my reading and writing skills and help prepare me to become a better student at NTID." Ethan is enjoying Georgia Perimeter College and par-



"No matter how devastated you may feel, always try to make the best of your life, even though it is hard."

ticularly appreciates this class that teaches deaf and hard of hearing students the basic foundations of reading and writing English. "This is very important for everyday life and also in the business world," he says.

Ethan plans to return to NTID soon. "I came to GPC after one year at NTID, because I need to improve my GPA and my study habits before I return to NTID," he admits.

One of Ethan's passions is wrestling. He was on the wrestling team at MSSD for a year. He also enjoys weightlifting, rollerblading, fixing electronic devices, surfing on the Internet, reading, Shakespeare, and poetry.

"My advice for anybody who wants to attend college or do anything in life is this: No matter how devastated you may feel, always try to make the best of your life, even though it is hard. All people should strive everyday to be in control of their lives. You can't always do what you want to do; you have to do what you need to do to stay stable. It is easy to let go and let life slip through your fingers. College students need to stay focused and look to the future to get the life they wish for and dream of."

Bridget Bondurant

Bridget Bondurant grew up in Lynchburg, Virginia. She became deaf at the age of two due to complications related to spinal meningitis. Mainstreamed at R.S. Payne Elementary School, Bridget did not have a sign language interpreter until the fourth grade. In the middle of her fourth grade year, Bridget transferred to a program for deaf and hard of hearing students at Lynchburg Christian Academy (LCA). "The other deaf students attending LCA were either much older or much younger than I was," Bridget explains, "and I preferred to be in classes with students my own age, so by the seventh and eighth grades, I was attending fully mainstreamed classes with hearing students. In ninth grade, I transferred back to the local public school system and attended Jefferson Forest High School." Bridget graduated from Jefferson Forest in 1994.

Bridget attended **Shenandoah University** for two years but left because of a lack of services for deaf and hard of hearing students. "I was their first deaf student," she says. **New River Community College** was her next stop; there she enjoyed the support of the staff and programs available to deaf students. "The smaller size of the school gave me more opportunities for one-on-one help."

In 1998 Bridget transferred to **Radford University** where she pursued a major in graphic design. Originally a business major, taking art classes in college renewed an interest in art that Bridget had in high school. Through her classes at Radford, facilitated by sign language interpreters, she learned the design principles and computer skills necessary to work in her field of choice. In addition to interpreting, she received other support services such as note-taking, academic advising, and individualized attention offered by the Disability Resource Office. In the spring of 2000,

Bridget graduated from Radford University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Art.

Bridget is employed by Recognition Research Incorporated (RRI) in Blacksburg, Virginia. Her academic and personal training with computers enabled her to secure this job as a data entry operator where she keys medical information into RRI's proprietary database software.

During her free time, Bridget likes to read and collect books on animals. She is also writing a book—a collection of short stories about animals based upon her personal experiences. For the future, Bridget hopes to be a published author as well as a professional in the field of graphic design.

When asked to offer advice to deaf students considering attending college, she suggests that students take a variety of courses to help them decide upon a major. "Also, I advise deaf and hard of hearing students to take advantage of all of the resources available to them and to not feel intimidated by those resources," she concludes.



"I advise deaf and hard of hearing students to take advantage of all the resources available to them and to not feel intimidated by those resources."

Jason Boyd

Jason Boyd received a cochlear implant about three years ago, and it has helped him be more involved in his work environment and interact with customers on a daily basis. "I have really been a deaf person all my life; however, the hearing aids helped a lot until I could no longer hear out of them. As for now, I function as a hard of hearing person. I am really happy to have a cochlear implant."

Jason resides in Jackson, Mississippi. He attended school without an interpreter or notetaker. He played in the band for six years. Having had a lot of after school sessions with the band director to learn pitch and balance of the instrument, Jason was heavily involved in this extra-curricular activity.

He attended **Hinds Community College** (HCC) for three years (1992–1995) and transferred to **Mississippi State University** for three additional years (1995–1998) to complete his major in Meteorology. While attending Hinds, Jason was a member of the American Student Government Body and HCC Deaf Club. He was also on the Dean's List. He was chosen to attend the Postsecondary Education Consortium (PEC) Leadership Training for one week in Knoxville, Tennessee, in April 1994.

At Mississippi State University, Jason attended the Baptist Student Union and Wesley Foundation. He also attended several off-campus meetings of the National Weather Association and some on-campus meetings of the local Chapter of American Meteorological Society and Northeast Mississippi Storm Chaser.

Hinds Community College helped Jason adjust to the transition from high school to college and to all the new responsibilities that come with this transition. Hinds offered interpreters and notetakers, services that Jason needed but did not think about during his mainstream years.

"As a Generation D (digital) person, I grew up on the World Wide Web," he says. "In college I studied web-related disciplines and worked part-time designing IP sites." Jason is currently em-



"Don't let others' influences make you do what they want you to do. Listen to their words, and make judgments of your own."

ployed as a Web Developer with TPI Internet Incorporated, located in Jackson. TPI Internet, Inc. is one of the largest independent telecommunications companies in the Southeastern United States. Jason works with all the latest software development packages and hardware technologies. In December of 2000 Jason was promoted to Senior Web Developer.

During Jason's free time, he does freelance work on media, graphic design, and publication designs. He is a member of the State Outreach and Technical Assistance Center's (SOTAC) Advisory Board Committee, and he is also a member of the Office on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advisory Board. He is a member of the Rankin County Junior Chamber of Commerce (Jaycees). He enjoys attending all the home games of the Jackson Bandit Hockey Team. He also attends the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra, Mississippi Chorus, and Mississippi Opera.

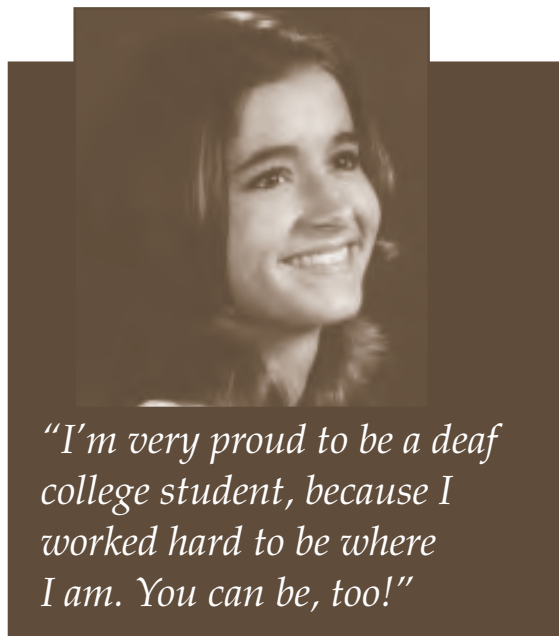
Jason advises deaf and hard of hearing students to follow their hearts and let them lead in the direction they need to go. "Don't let others' influences make you do what they want you to do. Listen to their words, and make judgments of your own." Jason's future plan is to go up each step of the ladder as far as he can go. "I let time and God decide the future for my life," he says.

Diana G. Carraway

Diana G. Carraway has little pity for those who think that school is too hard. "Get over it! School is hard for everybody," she says. "Life is hard for everybody, doubly so for deaf people. People respect education and individuals who work hard. A lot of people respect deaf people, because things come harder for us, and we have to work harder. I'm very proud to be a deaf college student, because I worked hard to be where I am. You can be, too!"

Diana's parents believe that her and her brother's deafness were either caused by incompatible chromosomes (side effects of a medicine taken by their mother during her pregnancies) or caused by genetics. Her family has no knowledge of any deaf people in their family's past.

Diana was mainstreamed in public schools from kindergarten until her senior year in high school. The school system provided her with an interpreter for every class. "I was given the choice to go the school for the deaf and blind, but I did not have a real desire to go there and leave my family," she says.



"I'm very proud to be a deaf college student, because I worked hard to be where I am. You can be, too!"

Currently, she works at Wakulla Bank in Crawfordville, Florida—twenty miles south of Tallahassee—as Quality Control Manager for the Customer Service Department. Diana explains, "I have many job duties, and my main responsibility is to make sure all documents pertaining to customer service pass bank policies." Diana heard about the job two years ago when a friend, who worked in the bank, told her about a job opening working for a bank Vice President. The job was already filled by the time Diana had her interview with the Vice President; however, at that time the Customer Service department was creating a Quality Control position. "It was a part-time job," Diana states, "and perfect for a college student like me. I was given the position!"

Diana's job requires that she contact employees of all branches. "I can't talk on the phone," she explains, "and Wakulla Bank cannot allow the use of the relay service, since it violates the confidentiality policy. How did I solve the problem? Fax. We fax notes back and forth. When something needs to be explained in depth, I simply go to my boss and let her take care of it. This whole system works out well."

Diana adds, "This job really brings out my organizational skills. I'm proud of the efficiency I bring to the department. I communicate well with my coworkers and my boss. I worked hard to learn everything so that I can perform anything my boss asks me to do." Diana's favorite part of the job is the independence it provides. "I work at my own pace, set my own hours, and develop my own system of doing my job," she says. "I can now use my own judgment about the quality of the documents that I receive."

Diana's postsecondary educational experience included attendance at three different institutions, including **Auburn University** in Alabama, **Tallahassee Community College**, and now **Florida State University**. She is presently a full-time student, majoring in Management of Information Systems (MIS), which is a business degree with an emphasis on computers. "I will graduate in either the Fall of 2001 or the Spring of 2002," she states. (cont'd.)

Originally, Diana majored in Forestry. She attended Auburn University her freshman year, and—after deciding to change majors—she went home to Florida and finished her core requirements at Tallahassee Community College. After starting her job at the bank and developing an interest in finance and business, she decided on a major in Business and chose MIS as her specialty.” The MIS program at FSU is very good,” she says. “I am not involved in any extracurricular activities at this time, although at Auburn I joined a worship group and played intramural sports. Now I am too busy working, going to school, and studying!”

“Auburn,” Diana shares, “was very good about offering transcription services. My sign language interpreter once had to miss class, and I was given a tape-recorder. After turning in the tape, I got transcribed lecture notes a few days later. I really liked this service.” At Tallahassee Community College (TCC), the office serving students who are disabled contracted with an independent company of freelancing interpreters to provide interpreters for Diana’s classes and now has a full-time staff interpreter. “Florida State has given me unlimited freedom in scheduling my classes,” Diana says. “They have been consistent in providing notetakers, interpreters, priority registration, use of computer labs, and anything else they have to offer. The Student Resource Disability Center is very helpful. The professors are understanding and accommodating. I enjoy taking classes at FSU.”

Diana’s older brother is also deaf. He attended the same schools as Diana, but he now attends The University of Florida in Gainesville. “He and I can talk and lipread,” she shares. “No other family members know any sign language. My parents were encouraged to raise us orally, but by going to school with other deaf children we learned sign language. We both rely on interpreters in our classes.” Diana has a large extended family. “I believe I can speak for my brother when I say that we owe our successes to them. Our parents encouraged us to go to college. They supported us playing team sports. They gave us the opportunity to go to a camp nearby for Deaf Week every year as we

were growing up. They’ve always told us that they believed in us and nothing was impossible for us. Was it ever said that nothing counts in life but family? Okay, I’m getting a little sappy here!”

Over the years, Diana has benefited greatly from many technological advances. “Digital hearing aids have been a great help. I have partial hearing, helpful for reading lips,” she says. “The digital hearing aids really improve my communication skills. I am able to lipread with more accuracy. I am completely lost without them.”

Diana is quick to add that she would be lost without TTYs and closed captioning as well. “I didn’t have closed captioning growing up and missed out on some great TV shows. I was not familiar with ‘Sesame Street’ and ‘Mister Rogers,’” she says. “You know what absolutely ticks me off? The Discovery Channel and The Learning Channel are supposed to be educational channels, but half the programs they air do not have closed captions!”

When Diana was living in a dorm at Auburn, the Housing Department provided her with a door knocker and a fire alarm with a light. “I also depend on my vibrating alarm clock and my gadget thing that turns lamps on and off when the phone is ringing!” she says. “I love the independence I have now.” She adds that she thinks the Internet is fantastic. “There are no barriers for the deaf in the world of the Internet. We don’t have to worry about communication.”

Diana’s advice to middle school and high school students who are deaf is simply the following: “Go to school! I cannot stress that enough. Learning written English skills is very important,” she believes. “It does matter. College requires a lot of research papers. They are very strict about how well the papers are written. Also, many jobs require reports, proposals, projects, etc. Well-written resumes or job applications can land you jobs. And, you will want jobs that are interesting, challenging, and not an insult to your intelligence. Who wants to spend the rest of their lives flipping hamburgers? Flipping hamburgers doesn’t require good English grammar skills. Good jobs do.”

Phyllis Charlene Dority

“College is not just about having fun,” says Phyllis Charlene Dority. “I learned my lesson my first few years here. College life is to help high school deaf students learn to be independent and to explore their interests in order to decide a major. It is important to study and keep studying.”

Phyllis, who goes by the name Charlie, lives in Raleigh, North Carolina. She was pronounced profoundly deaf at the age of five, due to spinal meningitis at thirteen months of age. She learned how to speak and lipread while a child. “I was in kindergarten for two years,” she shares, “to give me more time to learn vocabulary skills.” Charlie was also home schooled for four years. She graduated high school from Wake Christian Academy.

Charlie now works part-time at Eismann & Associates as a Computer Graphics Designer. She interned last summer at Eismann & Associates as a student at **Gardner-Webb University** (GWU). At GWU, Charlie is studying Communication Studies and specializing in Electronic Publishing. “I changed my major,” she explains, “from Biology to Electronic Publishing, because I believe that I have a lot of artistic and creative talents. In fact, I was involved in Joyful Hands Sign Choir and received two awards for my involvement.” Charlie was also involved in the deaf club and made the honor roll last year.

Charlie enjoys her job at Eismann & Associates. “When I first met her, I told Suzanne Eismann about my disability,” Charlie says, recounting her struggles to find a job. “I was very honest and determined. She was very patient with me and worked with me one-on-one. She made sure that I understood everything.”

“I find the services to deaf students at GWU very beneficial,” Charlie adds, “such as tutors, notetakers, interpreters, and C-print™. As an oral deaf person, I cannot always understand teachers as they walk around the classroom. Interpreters are a wonderful assistance. Since I also cannot listen and write notes at the same



“College is not just about having fun.”

time, I’m lucky the school provided notetakers and C-print™. I’m still not used to American Sign Language, and that’s why I really appreciate the C-print™.”

Charlie appreciates the role technology plays in her life; however, she did have one negative experience because of TTYs and relay services. “When I sent my resume and cover letter to different companies, I heard nothing from them,” she explains. “So, I made myself call them. Since I have a TTY, I had to go through a relay operator. They must have known at that point that I am hearing-impaired, and they seemed as if they were afraid to hire me because of my disability. I did get frustrated, but Eismann & Associates—as I said—was open to hiring someone with a disability.”

Charlie has little free time for extracurricular activities, as she stays very busy. When she does have free time, she enjoys “hanging out with my friends and watching movies. I also go jogging to help relieve my test anxieties and stress.” Charlie also enjoys seeing her family and spending quality time with them.

After graduation, Charlie will start looking for a full-time job. “I’m not sure what I’ll do,” she says. “Maybe I will do deaf missions work or something like that to explore other things. I may look into wildlife photography, since I took a photography course.”

Abbey Drigot



"Think positively."

Abbey Drigot was born profoundly deaf to hearing parents and has an older, hearing sister and a twin sister who is deaf. She has lived in several different states throughout her life, beginning in Wisconsin and now in Florida.

Abbey and her family learned sign language when she was two years old. She attended mainstream schools during her elementary and middle school years. Upon entering high school, she attended the Model Secondary School for the Deaf (MSSD) in Washington, D.C. While she studied there, she and her twin sister met a genetics doctor and inquired about the cause of their deafness. Both sisters were surprised to discover that they have Waardenburg Syndrome, which is more than likely the cause of their hearing loss.

After graduating from MSSD in 1995, Abbey entered college at **Jacksonville State University** (JSU) in Jacksonville, Alabama. She majored in Criminal Justice with a concentra-

tion in Forensic Investigation. Her participation in the Judicial Board program for three years in high school sparked her interest in this major; Abbey knew that forensics would be an interesting field of study. In addition, she is fascinated with photography and took two photography courses as electives while in college.

Throughout college, Abbey was very involved in the Student Organization for Deaf Awareness (SODA). Occasionally, she would go to Disability Support Services (DSS) for assistance with minor problems, such as classes, interpreters, etc. She remained a full-time student during school and graduated with pride in the Spring of 1999.

"My search for a job was challenging," she says. Searching nationwide via the Internet, she applied for approximately fifty job openings. Most of the openings on which she focused were in the southeastern area of the United States. She interviewed with four different potential employ-

ers and found success with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) within about fourteen months after graduating. After being hired as the Photography Forensic Technologist (FT) with the FDLE, she and her fiancé moved to Fort Myers, Florida.

As a Photography FT, Abbey primarily photographs latent fingerprints from evidence and maintains equipment. She will soon be providing assistance at crime scenes as well. "One of the many things I've been very grateful for and impressed with after coming to work at FDLE," she says, "is the high motivation of the department and the co-workers I work closely with."

In Abbey's free time, she can be found relaxing at home. Occasionally, she and her fiancé enjoy taking their dogs for a run on their bicycles or rollerblades. They also enjoy swimming at the pool and the beach.

Abbey is grateful for the growing technology in her life and uses the computer and a pager most often. "The computer is very helpful," she explains. "I can do almost anything on it." At her job she can communicate with her co-workers within the Department using online chat rooms. She also gets a lot of benefit from her pager, which she describes as the best and quickest way to reach her.

Abbey's advice to high school students who are deaf is to first decide what interests them. Then, she suggests, go to the very school that offers such courses. "In my situation I stayed focused in school, but each individual will have different goals, which is normal. When it comes to looking for a job, for some people it may take little time, but for others it takes longer and may be more difficult. In my opinion, continuing to think positively and having patience are the best pieces of advice." She further reminds students that there are many places to look for a job, such as the Internet, newspapers, posted advertisements, connections

through friends and acquaintances, and much more.

Abbey thanks Vocational Rehabilitation in Fort Walton Beach, Florida, for working hard in supporting her by providing interpreters, sign language class, equipment, and much more. She is also grateful to the Deaf Service Center in Fort Myers, which has also worked hard to provide interpreters for her and requested funds to provide sign language classes for her co-workers.

When asked about her future plans, Abbey is clearly taking it easy and enjoying life. "I don't have my whole future planned, but I would like to remain employed at the FDLE for a long time and get married in the near future."



Duane Hymes

Duane Hymes has a congenital bilateral hearing loss that ranges from severe to profound. He attended programs for hard of hearing and deaf students at Seminole Elementary and Sligh Junior High Schools—both oral programs in Tampa—and eventually graduated from Tampa’s Chamberlain High School, a total communication program.

After graduating from Chamberlain, Duane enrolled in **Erwin Technical Center**, a public technical school in Tampa. Duane first attended the SAIL remediation classes for basic math, reading, and English. Upon completion of his remediation, Duane entered the Printing and Graphics program where he excelled. He contributed to the school newspaper, *The Erwin Times*, and he was a member of the National Vocational Technical Honor Society, graduating with a 3.83 GPA in January 1995.

“Following graduation,” Duane explains, “I was hired almost immediately by Great Western Finance (now Washington Mutual Finance) to work in the Print and Distribution Depart-

ment. I was informed of the job opening by my instructor, Vernon Wynn, who highly recommended me for the job.”

His job entails a variety of duties, including distributing incoming mail for the corporate headquarters; preparing outgoing packages for pickup and delivery by FedEx, UPS, and Airborne; printing memos and manuals for over five hundred branches nationwide; and, printing all documents needed by the company.

On July 14, 2000, Duane received “Team Member of the Month” from Washington Mutual Finance’s Print and Distribution Department for his willingness to work through his lunch break and after hours to complete projects and meet deadlines in addition to his punctuality, dependability, easy-going personality, and hard work. Along with a statuette, he received a generous monetary bonus.

In his free time, Duane enjoys working on his computer, playing video games, listening to music, reading poetry, and lifting weights.

When asked about any advice for deaf/hard of hearing high school students, Duane says, “You need to go to some type of postsecondary school to get a certificate, diploma, or degree to help prepare you for a job and your future.”



“You need to go to some type of postsecondary school to get a certificate, diploma, or degree to help prepare you for a job and your future.”

Chris Kisling

Chris Kisling is a full-time student at **North Harris College** in Texas. He plans to transfer to a University and major in Engineering with a minor in Marketing. "My father is a pilot, and that field always interested me," Chris explains. "However, my deafness prevents me from being a professional pilot. The engineering interest was spawned by my love of space engineering."

Chris lives in Montgomery, Texas. He was born hearing and became deaf at the age of one, due to meningitis. He grew up and attended schools in Colorado. His elementary education was in mainstreamed classrooms. However, his junior and high school years were spent in a School for the Deaf. "I always loved a challenge," Chris says, "and the more challenging, the better. My favorite subjects were the sciences, including Physics, Chemistry, and Biology." Chris won several awards during his years at school. "The two I'm the most proud of were in Science and a statewide recognition for top sportsmanship; I also played football in school."

Chris is able to take advantage of Interactive Television (ITV) at North Harris College. ITV is similar to teleconferencing. Two individuals at any distance from one another can communicate and see each other simultaneously via cameras. It is an extremely beneficial way of communicating between deaf and hearing individuals, as both auditory and visual communication is provided.

In his free time, Chris enjoys radio planes and driving his 4x4 in the mud! He also describes himself as a computer geek. He adds, "I

want to be a high-powered executive in the engineering field or the first deaf man in space."

"I would advise students," Chris says, "to accept challenge as a positive thing. I like a challenge, and I like that I have never felt that people were looking down on me. Students need to remember—when faced with obstacles—to accept them as challenges and never give up."



*"Accept
challenge
as a
positive
thing."*

William E. Koch, Sr.

William E. Koch, Sr. is a Graphic Technician for Exxon Mobil in Texas. "I was a former Mobil employee," he explains. "After Exxon and Mobil merged, I was offered this position and accepted."

William has been deaf since the age of five. At nine months, he was diagnosed with spinal meningitis. His hearing progressively deteriorated to the point of total hearing loss at five years of age.

He majored in Electrical Engineering at **Lee College** in Baytown, Texas. "I have an interest in the Internet," he says, "and wish to become proficient in web design and development."

William is also grateful for the technology that makes his life a little easier. "E-mail makes communication easy as well as Texas Relay. I also have a cell phone with a TTY connection that is handy."

As a part-time student at **North Harris College**, William is grateful for the services he receives as a student who is deaf. "The instruc-

tors, too, understand the special needs of the deaf students and the fellowship of the students," he says. "The overall attention given by the program to the special needs of all deaf students is nice."

William has little time for extracurricular activities due to working full-time. When he has the free time, however, he enjoys helping out with Deaf Awareness Week; scuba diving; photography; bowling; traveling; and participating in the Houston deaf community. "Although I'm divorced," he says, "I maintain an active relationship with my married son, and I enjoy my two grandchildren. My second son is away at college, but he keeps in touch. I also maintain a close bond with my elderly parents."

"Education is so important in today's society," says William. "Simply graduating from high school is not enough. Continuing education not only helps you in a career, but it continues to enrich your mind."

As for his future plans, William hopes that the skills gained from the classes he is currently taking will some day help him start his own business.



"Continuing education not only helps you in a career, but it continues to enrich your mind."

Darby Lambert

Darby Lambert grew up in Ascension Parish, Louisiana. He attended St. Amant Elementary and graduated from St. Amant High School. He has a severe bilateral hearing loss and received resource assistance as a primary student and speech therapy throughout his years in elementary school. In high school he was on the tennis team and baseball team, and he was also involved in the Science Club. At his church, he was part of the retreat team and was active in the church youth group.

His college career began in 1991 at **Southeastern Louisiana University** in Hammond, Louisiana. Shortly thereafter, he transferred to **Louisiana State University** in Baton Rouge to further his studies in Information Systems and Decision Sciences. "I spent all of my time studying!" he says.

After earning his Bachelor's degree in 1996,

he worked as a lab technician at Pioneer Chlor Alkali in St. Gabriel, Louisiana, for two years before deciding to make a career change. In 1998, he decided to move into the computer industry by becoming a Microsoft Certified Professional. "This enabled me to obtain a position as a PC Technician/Business Systems Analyst at Turner Industries in Baton Rouge," he states.

Currently, Darby works for the Ascension Parish School Board in Donaldsonville, Louisiana, as a Programmer / Analyst / Applications Specialist. He helps administer and maintain a piece of software called JD Edwards.

"I have been married to Carla Cedotal for four years," he adds, "and I am still active in my church in a small faith group. I enjoy playing golf and working with computers. I am a big collector of recipes and hope to create a recipe book in the near future. I enjoy spending time with my family and my wife. We hope to have a family of our own soon."



Darby Lambert with wife Carla

"I spent all of my time studying!"

Wesley Moore

*"You
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Wesley Moore lives in Lyons, Georgia. He was born deaf and had years of speech therapy to learn how to talk.

Wesley attended Robert Toombs Christian Academy, a private school, in Lyons. He was involved in football, basketball, baseball, and track.

During his senior year, Wesley was a full-time center on the football team. "This position requires the player to be able to hear the quarterback's cadence," he explains, "so it is an unlikely position for someone who is deaf. But, my quarterback and I had a touch system so that I knew when to snap the ball. The quarterback cupped his hands to receive the ball and bumped me with his top hand while yelling 'hit' to the other players as a signal to start the play." The football team became state runner-up in the Georgia Independent School Association. Wesley received All-Region, All-State Honorable Men-

tion, and Coach Award in football.

Wesley also played right field in baseball, and the baseball team won two state championships. Wesley was named the Christian Athlete of the year for Robert Toombs Christian Academy's 1998-1999 school year. He graduated in 1999.

Currently, Wesley attends **Brewton-Parker College** in Mt. Vernon, Georgia, and is a full-time student. He works part-time at his father's business, Lark Builder, Inc. He is still undecided about his major but is leaning towards getting a degree in Business.

"The most beneficial aspect of attending Brewton-Parker College," he says, "is the support I receive from students, faculty, and the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities."

"You can do the same things anyone else can," Wesley tells high school deaf students.

Kenneth J. Myers

Kenneth J. Myers's passion for his major is evident. "Architecture is something that the deaf can appreciate and understand, perhaps more so than hearing people, because the architectural experience is entirely visual," Ken believes. "A good architect must have an acute sense of geometry beyond what most people learn in school. For many deaf individuals, an exceptional sense of space and geometry is developed through the deaf language. Likewise, sign language is much like that of the language of architecture."

Kenneth grew up in Westminster, Maryland. He lost his hearing late in his freshman year of high school at fifteen years of age because of an ear infection and/or virus and other undetermined causes. He is considered profoundly deaf and does not use hearing aids.

Ken attended Westminster High School from 1990 until his graduation in 1994. While in

high school, he was active in several clubs and extra-curricular activities including Key Club, National Honor Society, and Varsity Tennis. He was on the Homecoming Court and the Prom Court during his senior year.

Ken is currently an Intern Architect at Morris and Ritchie Associates (MRA) in Baltimore, Maryland. He works with others to develop designs for clients in constructing new buildings and renovations of existing buildings. Ken is responsible for making decisions that directly affect the outcome of the finished building. He spends most of his time drawing construction documents that are used to assemble the building. As most Intern Architects in their first year, Ken feels he learns more every day from working with people that have more experience than he.

After Ken graduated with a Bachelor of Architecture degree from **Virginia Tech** in May 2000, he sent out resumes to prospective employers and decided MRA was a company that would allow him to play an active role in the design process. "I feel my experience at Virginia



"It is important to find a school that is willing to meet your needs."

Tech has proven valuable for preparing me for my internship,” he says. “However, I feel I have other, inherent qualities that are also important to my success.”

Ken began his academic studies at Virginia Tech during the Fall semester of 1994 as an Engineering major. After almost two years he made the decision to change his major to Architecture. During college, Ken encouraged students and community members to learn sign language by establishing and maintaining a sign language club. He feels the most helpful thing for him about Virginia Tech was the willingness they had to accommodate his needs. Initially, he chose Virginia Tech because of its academic record. He was the only deaf person using an interpreter on campus for several years until others became aware that Tech had an interpreting program. “I think Virginia Tech struggled in the beginning to get things right,” he says, “but I left with good feelings about the new interpreting program that has, since it’s inception, attracted more students.”

What he liked the most about the program—especially during the last few years—was that the interpreters were very flexible and easy to contact. “Faculty members were also very helpful, willingly providing notes when asked and agreeing to allow all reasonable accommodations without resistance,” Ken explains.

Ken enjoys playing tennis, participating in church activities, spending time with his family, fooling around with the computer, and playing

with his cat in his free time. He married his girlfriend from high school a little over two years ago and hopes to have children one day. Ken also has the goal of designing and building a house for his family.

With respect to technology, Ken thinks the TTY is the most useful for him. Although he does not use one right now, he feels the new cellular TTY will be especially helpful to him in the future when he becomes an accredited architect and is responsible for keeping in contact with others when he is out of the office. Ken also feels, when it becomes a little easier, using off-site interpreters via satellite would be much easier than trying to recruit an interpreter for every meeting.

Ken offers the following advice for high school deaf students: “First of all, be open minded to all reasonable accommodations. Those who are deaf and are not using an interpreter will find it very difficult to keep up with everyone else, much more so in college than in high school. I know of several people who fell behind because of communication problems and failed out of school, simply because they refused to use an interpreter. That’s not to say that it’s impossible for a deaf person to graduate without an interpreter, but it’s important to know what it will take for you to succeed in the academic environment inherent to your major. It is also important to find a school that is willing to meet your needs.”

William Ostheimer

William Ostheimer is currently completing his second semester of college at **The University of Louisiana at Lafayette** (ULL). He advises deaf and hard-of-hearing students to study hard. "Learn all you can in high school," he says, "to prepare for college or work and life after graduation."

He has been deaf since he was two years old as the result of a high fever. He attended private schools and graduated from Edward Douglas White Catholic High School in 1996 where he participated in a variety of sports, including football, baseball, and track and field. He was involved in Key Club and the Letterman's Club as well. He did not learn sign language until he attended **Hinds Community College**. He used oral communication and lipreading as his means of communication. "It was difficult for me," he says, "because I had no interpreter or notetakers in high school."

William decided to attend Hinds Community College in Raymond, Mississippi, because there was an excellent program for deaf and hard of hearing students. At Hinds, William served as President and Vice-president of the Deaf Club, a student representative of the Association of Student Government, and a member of the track team. Not long after being at Hinds, William realized that he needed to learn sign language, and he took two American Sign Language classes to be able to communicate with the other deaf students. He graduated from Hinds with an Associate of Arts degree in 1999.

He now attends The University of Louisiana at Lafayette and is majoring in Business Systems, Analysis and Technology. "The notetakers, tutors, and interpreters have helped me, and I am making good grades. The first semester I was here my grades were very good. I made a 2.8."

When William has free time, he enjoys fishing, working on his farm, and spending time with his family and friends. His future plans are to continue his education and receive a Bachelor's degree.



*"Learn all you can
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Hollie Parker

A lot of people in this world," says Hollie Parker of Gillsville, Georgia, "think that people with disabilities have limits as far as education and careers. I not only had to prove it to myself but also to those who thought I would not go far. I have to deal with ignorant people all the time. We need to show these people that we can succeed."

Hollie, who is hard of hearing and attended mainstreamed classes throughout her education, is now attending **Georgia Perimeter College** in Clarkston, Georgia, and is considering a major in Accounting. "I am a returning student after seven years, and I'm currently taking three classes," she says. "I've been working in the accounting field for the past four years. I have enjoyed it."

The job Hollie speaks of is her Data Entry position with Mansfield Oil Company in Gainesville. "I work in the Accounts Payable department. This summer I plan to take some computer courses on the side to increase my knowledge of computers."

"The reason I chose Georgia Perimeter College," she explains, "is because they provide services for the hard of hearing and deaf. The service I am most in need of is notetaking. The program is great, and—because of it—I can do better in my classes."

Hollie is the single mother of a four-year old son, Meleech (pictured with her, above right). "He is the love of my life!" she says. "I want to set a good example for him. I go to school two days a week and work eleven hours three days a week. I plan to get my four-year degree so that I can provide a financially secure life for me and my son."

Hollie believes very strongly in having goals. "It is very important to increase your



"Go after your goals, and don't let anyone take them away from you."

education so that you can better yourself and your family. Everyone has goals. If college isn't one of them, that's okay. But, go after your goals, and don't let anyone take them away from you."

"Many people," she adds, "think that once you leave college, you never return. Yes, it is hard to go back, but you can do it! I am full-time employee, full-time student, and a full-time single mother. People can do anything they set their minds to. My family is very supportive and encouraging, and—with that—I am doing what I want to do."

Chris Partain

Chris Partain lives in Maryville, Tennessee, and works full-time for Remotec, Inc., in Oak Ridge as an Electrical Assembler. “I build circuit boards,” he explains, “for robotics.”

Chris, who was born deaf, began his education at the Tennessee School for the Deaf where he stayed until graduation in 1994. “I studied in their general academic program and took some vocational classes as well, such as art, print editor, typing, and home economics classes.”

In 1995, Chris enrolled at **Pellissippi State Technical Community College** (PSTCC) and majored in Electrical Engineering. He completed his Associate of Science degree in May 2000. “I decided to go in this field,” he explains,



“You need an education and work experience to get through all that our modern lives demand and to ensure a good future.”

“because when I was young, I always took things apart and put them back together! Also, I enjoyed helping my friends install and repair their car stereos. In addition, I like to work with computers.”

“PSTCC,” Chris adds, “has very helpful instructors. They make sure that the students understand what they are teaching. I also got a lot of hands-on experience with various projects there. Of course, they also provided me interpreters and tutors for classes. They met all my needs.”

In his free time, Chris enjoys outdoor activities, such as fishing, hiking, and camping. He also greatly enjoys basketball and volleyball. Chris participates in the Knoxville chapter of the Tennessee Association for the Deaf as well, and—most importantly—he enjoys spending time with his family. “We are there for one another when we need help. I love to help my mom clean the house and the yard.”

Chris advises young deaf and hard of hearing students to consider a postsecondary education. “College helps,” he says, “to build a broader knowledge of what life is really like. You need an education and work experience to get through all that our modern lives demand and to ensure a good future.” Chris also encourages good study habits and time management. “Don’t forget to go see your instructors, too, when you need help.”

Chris is looking forward to the future. “I want to be successful with my career and have a family, and I’d like to settle down in a nice home.”

Jonathan Eric Rice



"Check out the school you are thinking about {attending}, and make sure they provide good support services that you will need in order to succeed."

Jonathan Eric Rice, who goes by Eric, lives in Dayton, Tennessee, and is twenty-five years old. He currently works for Tennessee Rand Automation in Red Bank, Tennessee, as an assembler of robotic cells and automation accessories.

"I became deaf," he explains, "when I was one year old as the result of having measles and ear infections." Eric began elementary school at Frazier Elementary in Dayton and then transferred to White Oak Elementary in Chattanooga. He played football for Red Bank High School and graduated in 1994.

Eric began taking classes at **Chattanooga State Technical Community College (CSTCC)** in the Fall of 1994. He took a break from school and re-entered as a part-time student. Once becoming a full-time student at CSTCC, Eric knew that he wanted to study in the Industrial Technology Division. He completed his Machine Tool Technology Certificate in May of 2000.

Eric attended both part-time and full-time at various times during his education. His initial

interest was electricity, but he soon became interested in pursuing work as a machinist as well. While a full-time student at CSTCC, Eric was also an active member with the Deaf Student Association. He participated in the Deaf Club at Oktoberfest, Fun in the Sun, and Mud Volleyball.

With the guidance of his brother, Eric found a job in 1995 at Lawson Electric Company. His former boss at Lawson told Eric about a job at Tennessee Rand Automation. In 1997, Eric was hired as a part-time employee there, and in 1998 he switched to full-time work. "My former boss at Lawson Electric," Eric says, "became my boss at Tennessee Rand!"

Although he is working full-time now for Tennessee Rand Automation, he has returned to school to complete a certificate program in electricity in order to learn more about it. "I am learning more about PLC (programmable logic controllers) that are used in my work environment," he says. As a full-time employee, Eric pays for his own tuition and is not receiving any financial aid. "What I learn at Chattanooga State in my program helps me to be more skilled at my job," Eric says.

"Chattanooga State," he adds, "is able to provide interpreters for my classes. When I need them, notetakers are also provided. Chattanooga State is able to work with me and my work hours by providing classes and services in the evening when needed. The college works very well with deaf and hard of hearing students to provide whatever services they need to succeed."

Eric has very little free time. "I seem to work most of the time," Eric explains, "putting in lots of over time and travel out of state with my job. I do find time to associate with my former deaf and hard of hearing classmates. I also have strong family ties and enjoy the loving support of my family in what I do with my life."

Eric would like to encourage other deaf and hard of hearing students to go to college or a technical school and take classes in order to get a full-time job in the future and become self-sufficient. "Check out the school you are thinking about," he says, "and make sure they provide good support services that you will need in order to succeed."

Lee Trevathan

Lee Trevathan, who was born deaf, lives in Brandon, Mississippi. He attended Magnolia Speech School and later transferred to Clinton High School.

Lee attended **Hinds Community College** where he learned sign language and met many new friends. He also served as President for the Hinds Community College Deaf Club for the 1994–1995 school year.

All his life, Lee has enjoyed working with various plants and flowers, and he enjoys different areas within landscaping. “I was born with a green thumb,” he says. He wanted a job he would enjoy going to every day, and that is why he chose Landscape Management Technology as his major at Hinds. He served as the Treasurer for the Landscape Management Club for the 1999–2000 school year and won second place in wood construction at the National Landscape Contrac-

tors of America’s Student Career Day in Lexington, Kentucky, in March of 1999.

Having graduated in May of 2000, Lee started his own business, Perennial Lawn Care. He attributes much of his success to modern technology. “I use a digital pager and TTY car phone to communicate with clients at work,” he explains. “I use the Mississippi Relay Service at home. Modern technology enables me to communicate freely with my clients at any given time.”

Lee believes the Hinds Community College Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program is unmatched. “My teacher in Landscape Management,” he explains, “showed a genuine concern for me. She guided me towards the best possible route for what I wanted to do and constantly encouraged personal excellence.”

“I encourage other students,” Lee says, “to pursue their dreams and not to give up until they come true. I believe students should enroll in college as soon as they finish high school and study as much as they can.”



“I encourage other students to pursue their dreams and not to give up until they come true.”

David Volper

David Volper enrolled in four classes at **St. Petersburg Junior College (SPJC)** in the Fall of 1997. "This was the beginning," he says, "of a fruitful relationship between myself and my chosen institution of higher learning." David would go on to maintain at least a 3.6 GPA or better and benefit from modern technology that was imperative to his continued academic success during his tenure at the school.

"The technology that SPJC has available to deaf students on campus," he explains, "includes TDDs, e-mail for establishing correspondence with our teachers, a plethora of computers available to all SPJC students on campus at the Learning Support Center, and a wonderful library that provides an expansive collection of educational materials that proves invaluable to students at this school."

David believes that his decision to enroll at SPJC is one of the best he has ever made. "The re-introduction to an institution of higher learning," he says, "was critical to gaining the proper perspective and appreciation for the trials and tribulations of college level courses. I knew that I would leave college in a state of mind where I felt confident and capable of handling a 'real' job in the 'real' world. The education that SPJC provided for me was worth every penny of tuition, books, and supplies. SPJC was a bridge from the past to the future, and I'm proud to say that—as a deaf student—I crossed that bridge!"

When asked about advice to young, deaf students, it is evident that David gives it a great deal of thought. In fact, he stresses that he has three pieces of advice for deaf or hard of hearing students considering a postsecondary education. "This is for deaf students everywhere—all deaf students that are considering a college education after completing high school and all deaf middle school students who are thinking about college for the first time," he says. "Read, read, and read some more! This



*"Enjoy
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They are
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will foster an understanding of English that will benefit all prospective college students as they go through tougher levels of college courses throughout their collegiate careers."

"Secondly," he adds, "all classes are difficult! There is no such thing as an easy class. Prospective college students should prepare for every class as if it were the most demanding and most time-consuming class on the schedule. It is very common for first-time college students to assume that classes will be easy and that they can always make up work that is missed or late. This may be true in high school or middle school, but not in college. College professors will not be as flexible, as all college students are treated like adults who are responsible for themselves."

David's third piece of advice is to study hard. "Don't overstudy, and don't understudy! Find a balance that is comfortable and stick with it. Make time to study and relax. Make time to have fun, but stick with that schedule. Never let the desire to have fun override the responsibilities of class work. Also, handle peer pressure by staying committed to your goals. Enjoy your college years. They are short!"

Felix Werner, Jr.

Felix Werner, Jr., resides in Picayune, Mississippi, a small community located just a short distance from the Mississippi Gulf Coast. He spends much of his spare time with his wife and both of their families. The farm life is as much a part of him and who he is as anything else he has ever known. His eyes sparkle as he shares the recent birth of his new colt, Ginger. He follows with a chuckle as he is reminded of how his friends tease him about how he named the mare Baby Doll. He continues to describe Ginger's disposition: "Even as a newborn colt, she knew her likes and dislikes; she was stubborn from the beginning. She is amazing!"

Reflecting on his earliest recollection of his hearing loss, Felix shares that his parents noticed when he was two that he was not responding as most toddlers should. Local physicians assured

them that nothing was wrong with his hearing. In time, however, Felix was referred to an audiologist who confirmed what his parents had concluded long before.

Felix's early elementary years were spent at Crescent Academy in New Orleans, Louisiana. Crescent Academy specifically addressed the needs of students with disabilities. He recalls the small classes, the focused teachers, and lots of individualized attention. Felix spent his junior and senior high school years in the public school system. During the summer months, he worked at a local grocery store as a bag boy. He recalls how he was teased by his working peers because of his small stature and his disability. In May 1995, Felix graduated from Bay High School in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi.

Felix's career goals were established early in his life. A formal education was of utmost importance in his family. He reflects on his mother's "realistic" approach on choosing a career. Felix explains, "Get skilled in something

Felix Werner, Jr. (left) with instructor Robert Bourdin



"{Employee} training would help people understand that they don't have to feel sorry for someone with a disability."

everyone in this area needs,' my mother told me, 'something that will provide continuous work and job security, something you enjoy doing.'" Felix took his mother's advice to heart and was hired for summer employment by a family friend who managed an air-conditioning repair company. His experiences that summer set the stage for what would become his future employment.

In the year that followed, Felix enrolled in community college classes. He subsequently transferred to **Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College/Jefferson Davis Campus** (MGCCC) and enrolled in the Heating and Air-Conditioning Technology Program. When asked about his college experiences and his success at MGCCC, Felix responds, "Knowing that the Special Support Services for Students with Disabilities was available assured me that an interpreter would always be by my side during classes. I also knew where to go if I experienced difficulties in my academics or with classroom instructors and accommodations." He continues, "I also attribute my success to Mr. Robert Bourdin, the Heating and Air-Conditioning second-year instructor at MGCCC. He was patient and paid close attention to individual students. With the most updated equipment, he taught me an understanding of how jobs should be completed in the 'real' work world." Felix's pride is evident as he shares that he was an MGCCC honor graduate in May 2000.

After reflecting on his college experiences, Felix turns his attention to his new career with Geiger Heating and Air in Gulfport, Mississippi. "I like everything about my job." He explains further, "When I drive up to a job and see a customer's old air-conditioning unit, I know that when the job is completed and a new unit is in place, the whole appearance of the house will change—inside and out. This makes

the customer smile. That's the best part of the whole job! Geiger is top-rated, very recognizable, and permanent. They make sure that all jobs are completed promptly. I am proud to be an employee of Geiger."

Rarely does Felix focus on his disability, but he does share the difficulties he sometimes faces on the job. "It's difficult at times when I can't hear my co-workers. I have to read lips. Sometimes it is dark in the attics, and those around me get real frustrated. Sometimes they suggest that I shouldn't drive the company trucks, because I can't hear. I tell them, 'Just because I can't hear doesn't mean I can't see.'" Felix laughs at himself with this comment. Through this story he would like to express his concerns about employers providing more training and experiences in the workplace regarding individuals with disabilities. "It would help everyone understand what the disability means. I think it would improve cooperation among workers, and people with disabilities would be treated equally all of the time. Training would help people understand that they don't have to feel sorry for someone with a disability."

Felix offers his advice to high school deaf students about postsecondary education and future work: "First, find something you really like to do. Then work at that job for a summer, and see if it is really something you enjoy doing. If you do, go to college for two or four years. Then you will be happy for the rest of your life. You must have college. Some people discouraged me from going to college. They said it didn't make a difference. But, I felt differently and knew that it was important to pursue my education. I had some experience... but, at college I gained book knowledge, rules, and the proper way to do things on the job. Experience is good, but book knowledge is as important."

Samuel James Woodard

As an infant, Samuel James Woodard experienced many ear infections, which may have caused the nerve damage he now has in his ears. The doctors could not determine how much hearing loss was due to that or how much was hereditary.

Samuel grew up with hearing children and learned to read lips from his sister. He could also hear loud sounds with certain frequencies. Dr. Charles Berlin of the Ear, Nose, and Throat Hospital in New Orleans was the first to do a hearing test and determine that Samuel needed hearing aids as a toddler. "He also suggested to my parents that I be put in surroundings with a lot of children my age, so I could learn language from them," Samuel explains. "When I was around three years old, some professionals from the parish school system thought my parents should put me on a bus and send me about forty miles down the road to be in a handicapped school. Dr. Berlin was against this." Samuel's parents then enrolled him in a

pre-school in Kentwood, Louisiana, with a lot of children his age with no hearing losses.

"They accepted me," Samuel says, "and some were curious about the 'things in my ears.'"

Samuel played baseball from age six to sixteen with the Kentwood Baseball League and also played basketball in the Amite Bitty Basketball League from an early age. "Just because I could not hear as well as the other boys and girls, I wanted to do things that they did," he says. "I did not let my hearing loss stop me. This has followed me through elementary on up through high school. I played baseball and basketball for Independence High School, even lettering in baseball for two years."

As for academics, Samuel took the same courses as the other students, using an interpreter occasionally. "I had to take the LEAP Graduation Exit Exams in order to obtain my high school diploma just like the other students," he says. "I had made up my mind that I would not be satisfied with just a Certificate of Achievement but only with a high school diploma. My parents were so happy and proud the night I walked down the aisle and received my high school diploma. Another student and I were the first hearing impaired students in Tangipahoa Parish that received their high school diploma."

Samuel's parents always encouraged him to study hard in school so that he could find a good job. "At first, I wanted to find a job right out of high school and not go to school, but I found that this was almost impossible. So, in the Fall I decided to go to **Louisiana Technical College** in Greensburg and enroll in Automotive Technology. I have learned so much, and I enjoy attending school there. I like doing things with my hands and enjoy being around people."

Samuel said he hates to think what would have happened had his parents not given him all the love and encouragement that they did to help him succeed in life. "My advice to other students with a hearing loss is to stay in school, get your high school diploma, and attend some type of postsecondary school. You may not be able to hear as well as some other people, but that shouldn't be the handicap that stops you from following your dreams and succeeding in life."

"You may not be able to hear as well as some other people, but that shouldn't be the handicap that stops you from following your dreams and succeeding in life."





Students Making a Difference Through Cultural Diversity

Sam Boyd

Sam Boyd has had to adapt to many changes since his arrival in the United States. "This is a new challenge for me," he says. "I never dreamed I would get this opportunity."

Sam is an international deaf student from Edinburgh, Scotland, at **Central Piedmont Community College**. He was born deaf and has two hearing sisters and one hearing brother; there are no other deaf people in his family.

At age three, Sam attended an all deaf pre-school. He transferred at the age of five to St. Giles School for the Hearing Impaired in Edinburgh. This school was oral, and sign language was prohibited. Sam continued in school there until the age of sixteen. He then went to a public school, Stevenson College, for one year. "There were no support services offered to the deaf," Sam explains, "except an assisted listening device. This provided some help, but I still had to sit in the front of the class and try to lip read the instructor." He received vocational training as a care giver for the young, the handicapped, and the elderly. The next year he joined a youth training team that provided continuing education in this field and was then offered a job working with the elderly in a nursing home facility. Sam accepted and continued to work there for fifteen years. The last seven years of his employment there was as a Staff Trainer.

Sam had been thinking of changing career paths, and one evening while talking with a friend about his ideas, he was encouraged to make the change. "My friend had given me the push I needed to take a chance," Sam explains. "It just so happened that the friend was living in Charlotte, North Carolina, at the time and was only visiting in Edinburgh. He told me about Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) and offered to help sponsor me and provide me a place to live if I would come to

the United States." Sam accepted and is in the United States on an educational Visa. He plans to major in Interior Design.

Sam speaks Scottish English, not American English. The differences in the two have made it necessary for him to take some classes in English and Math before starting his core classes in Interior Design. "At age thirty-three," he adds, "I only wish I had gotten an earlier start on my education. I do appreciate being able to have an oral interpreter, tutoring, and notetaking services available here at CPCC."

When Sam finishes the program at CPCC, he plans to return to Scotland and take another year of Creative Design. While in Charlotte, he is leading a quiet life, concentrating on his studies. He likes to watch comedy programs, garden, go canoeing, and socialize.

His ultimate goal is to one day be as well known in Scotland as Martha Stewart is in the States.



"This is a new challenge for me; I never dreamed I would get this opportunity."

Joshua Seth Dowling

Joshua Seth Dowling, who became deaf at the age of six months and primarily attended mainstreamed programs as a child, is a full-time student at **The University of Oklahoma** where he has been named into the National Junior Honor Society and the National Honor Society. He initially chose French as his major. "I found the language beautiful and interesting," he explains.

Joshua read a brochure describing an exchange program to France, became very interested, and decided to apply. The interview process for studying abroad was long. "The process of preparing myself for it was even longer," he explains. "I was originally to stay in France for a year—until June 2001. The University of Oklahoma had secured an interpreter for me in the town of Clermont-Ferrand, situated approximately two-hundred and forty miles south of Paris."

"I was the first deaf person to be accepted in any abroad program at the University, and I was very proud," Joshua explains. In addition, he received the Sy Fielder Scholarship for his studies abroad. "I got onto the plane, flew to Europe, and I enjoyed Paris so much, because it was a dream come true."

The University of Blaise Pascal in France, however, posed a different picture than Joshua had envisioned. "The services for deaf students over there, if you can call it that, lacked many things I took for granted in the United States. The services were very slow, and interpreters often were not certified. In addition, classes were not well-structured, and I often found myself sad and lonely. Anyone who goes overseas for a long period of time will experience culture shock, homesickness, etc. In my case, though, the problems were more serious. I had no way of communicating with my family on my own. I had to rely



"Be open-minded, and accept change in order to make yourself a better person."

on hearing people to place a phone call for me. There are no TTYs in France, and there are no relay services. Deaf people in France, based on what I observed, seem to lack many writing and mathematical skills and are less independent than American deaf people."

For these reasons, Joshua decided to return to the United States much earlier than he had expected. "Do not get me wrong," he says. "I loved France, and it is a beautiful country. However, do think twice before studying in another country for more than a semester, because it is very difficult overseas, especially if you are deaf or hard of hearing."

"I strongly encourage foreign travel, because it is an exciting experience. Just be prepared to face the cultural differences as well as differences in the governmental structure and how they view deaf/hard of hearing people," Joshua advises.

Because Joshua returned from France unexpectedly early, he was not in school during Fall 2000 and stayed with his parents in Virginia upon his return. He expects to graduate in May of 2002 or 2003, depending on his major. "I have not really decided what to major in," he says.

"Originally, I wanted to major in Business Administration with a track in Accounting, but I changed to French and Spanish. I am technically still in that major now, but I do predict a change soon. I want to choose a major that is practical and will bring me a high income. I am looking into Business again and even at Architecture, and I also know I'd like to be in the education field or the international field."

"At The University of Oklahoma," he adds, "I find the services for students with hearing impairments impressive. The interpreters are wonderful. I like most the high level of service that the Office of Students with Disabilities provides to their students."

"My advice to any deaf or hard of hearing students considering a postsecondary education

would be to remind them that they will encounter a different world, one different than the protected, well-cushioned bubble of high school. There will be hard decisions to make. People will try to influence the decisions you make, and you must stand strong and stick with your goals. Be open-minded, and accept change in order to make yourself a better person. Strive for excellence, and do not settle for second best. Be positive about yourself and your future. You owe it to yourself to have the best possible life. You come before everyone else, and never forget that."

Joshua is at an exciting point in his life when he is considering many career possibilities. "There are so many things I am capable of," he says, "and it is interesting to explore many fields."

Jigar Patel

Jigar Patel was born in Bombay, Maharashtra, India. "I was born with hearing," he states. "However, about one week later I lost my hearing. I had jaundice, and the doctors gave me a high dose of antibiotics."

Soon after that Jigar's family moved to a different city, Baroda, in the state of Gujarat. "My family members know Gujarati Sign Language, and that's what we used to communicate. My mom and dad co-founded a school for deaf individuals in Baroda." Jigar was admitted to the school at age five and stayed there for eight years. "I learned Gujarat, Math, Hindi, Art, and a little English there."

Jigar and his family moved to the United States in 1995. Initially, they lived in a north-west suburb of Chicago. "My father and uncle got me admitted to the John Hearsay High School. There were about thirty-five deaf and hard of hearing students at this mainstreamed high school," Jigar explains. "I was sort of scared in the beginning, because I was unfamiliar with the language and culture of this country. I picked up American Sign Language by myself through observation and with some help from my friends in school."

While attending high school, Jigar worked part-time. He also worked in the school library and helped develop notes for blind individuals. He graduated from high school in Fall 1999. He also attended NIU (**Northern Illinois University**) for a six week summer program.

"Because my brother started his graduate studies at Georgia Tech, I moved with my family to Atlanta in the fall of 1999," he says. Jigar was soon attending classes at **Georgia Perimeter College**. He started school as a part-time student and full-time employee in a chemical lab. "As soon as I get a very strong command over English," he explains, "I'll put all of my efforts into school. I am studying hard, and in the future I want to work with computer programs."

Jigar has lots of advice for deaf and hard of hearing high school students considering

postsecondary education. "Make sure you're committed to studying and are serious about educational achievements," he says. "Going to college doesn't just mean freedom from home. Finding a balance between school work and fun is a must. If you are really not sure if you want to go to college, go to work for a while until you decide what you want for your future. If you want to go to college but are undecided on a major, take some core classes and maybe a few courses will spark an interest for you and will help you decide on a major."



"Going to college doesn't just mean freedom from home. Finding a balance between school work and fun is a must."

Dora Rodila

Dora Rodila was born in Romania. She came to the United States in 1991 just after the fall of the communist government. Her younger hearing brother was already in the United States and told Dora to come here. "He felt there was a future for me in America," she says. "Living conditions were deteriorating in Romania at that time, and the unemployment rate was fifty percent. It was almost impossible for anyone to find work. It was even worse for a person who was deaf. The country did not provide a lot of support services for us." In fact, Dora explains, at that time there were not many opportunities in Romania for anyone with a disability.



"It is wonderful that most of my family is together in the United States."

Dora's mother and father have since come to the United States in order to be close to the rest of the family. She also has a second brother here in the States. Her brothers are married and have children as well. "It is wonderful that most of my family is together in the United States," Dora says.

Dora lost her hearing when she was ten months old. She merely had a cold, but doctors insisted that her mother keep her in the hospital. "There was a shortage of patients. The hospital needed to show the government that there were patients." The physicians gave Dora doses of Streptomycin, doses too high for an infant, and Dora almost died. "I was dying in my mother's arms," she explains, "and the doctors would not pay any attention to my mother's pleas." Finally, with the help of an ambulance driver, Dora's mother ran away from that hospital to a larger hospital in another city. After hours of intensive medical intervention, Dora's life was saved. The nerves in her ears were, however, completely destroyed.

"No one was ever charged with any crime for my suffering," Dora says. "It was impossible to do anything about it because of the government. Those doctors continued their practice, and they killed and destroyed many other lives."

At the age of four, Dora started school at an oral residential school. She attended high school at another residential school for an additional sixteen years. "At that school some sign language was used in the dorm, but the school emphasized oral communication," she explains. "The teachers communicated orally in the classroom, but in the dorms the students used sign language." At home Dora communicated with her family orally.

"Conditions in the schools in Romania were terrible, and students were not treated well," Dora says. Despite these conditions, Dora received a high school diploma. "Students who were deaf were not, however, permitted to attend college in Romania. They were required to train and then get a job," she explains. Dora trained for three years at a technical school and became a professional wood sculptor. She both sculpted

and created decorative designs on furniture. Unfortunately, though, the economic conditions in Romania worsened, and Dora lost her job.

“In Romania, being a wood sculptor was okay, but I want something different in America,” Dora shares. “I want to improve my English and see what opportunities become available to me.” She is currently studying English, her fourth language, at **Georgia Perimeter College** (GPC). She is a serious English student who is very motivated and enjoys understanding and improving her English. Dora has an intense desire for people to understand her written English. She has learned American Sign Language, which she found very difficult and very different from the sign language used in Romania. She learned ASL

from other people who are deaf at clubs and events and in her English class at GPC.

Dora has been working at a laboratory here in the U.S. for two years, a job that provides her with an income while she is going to school. “I am interested in psychology and helping people solve their problems,” she says. Becoming a CDI (Certified Deaf Interpreter) is also something that interests Dora. She adds that she would enjoy being a part of the Shared Reading Program as well; reading to children who are deaf and encouraging them to learn to read is something she believes would bring her a lot of satisfaction.

Dora came to the United States for a better life. She is making the most of her opportunities in a new country. She is studying on a college campus, succeeding, and building a future.

Regena Williams

Regena Williams grew up in Bermuda, the only deaf child in a family of five children. She was born two months premature, and it was not until the age of two until her mother realized that her daughter was deaf.

Regena learned Signing Exact English (SEE) at the age of five from her teachers. "I didn't learn British Sign Language (BSL)," she explains, "but I wish I had learned that instead of SEE. Bermuda is dependent on England, and many deaf people want to use BSL, but they have not been taught." Regena's mother and grandmother are the only family members that know a little sign language. "I was not comfortable with my family using signs," she says. "I only sign to my deaf friends."

She attended Friendship Vale School in Bermuda where all her teachers, most from England, knew sign language. She then attended a mainstreamed high school for five years and used interpreters in the classroom.

After high school, Regena's mother encouraged her to go to college. "One year before I graduated," Regena shares, "I decided I wanted to do that, and I set my goals for college." For two years, Regena worked in order to save money to attend college. During this time, she also worked on her English skills so that she could improve her chances to get into the college of her choice.

She moved to Texas to attend **The Southwest Collegiate Institute for the Deaf (SWCID)** in Big Springs and started to learn American Sign Language." Moving to America was a major

culture shock for me," she shares, "because America is extremely big compared to Bermuda. I wasn't used to signing every day either. But, I like America, because things are inexpensive here. During college, my friends thought I was rich, because I could buy many things cheap."

Regena found the services for deaf students in college, such as interpreters, notetakers, and tutors, extremely helpful. She received an Associate of Arts degree in General Studies from SWCID and transferred to **East Central University (ECU)** in Ada, Oklahoma. At ECU she received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Counseling Services for the Deaf and her Master's degree in Human Services Administration.

Regena sets her goals high, always knowing that an education is valuable if a person wants to get a good job and make a difference. She has moved back to Bermuda and hopes to find a position working in Human Services Administration. She would rather work for the government, she says, than a private agency. "If I can't find a job or if I'm not satisfied, I plan to move back to England for two years," she says.

Regena hopes to "change the minds of hearing people about people who are deaf. I want hearing people to stop being so close-minded and to realize that deaf people can do anything hearing people can." Furthermore, she wants people in Bermuda to see that deaf people can succeed. "In Bermuda," she adds, "there are not many services for deaf people. There are no relay services or close-captioned movies. Even though the deaf population in Bermuda is small, those people need services."



"An education is valuable if a person wants to get a good job and make a difference!"



Students Making a Difference Through Education

Martha Causey

Martha Causey is a junior at **Southeastern University** in Hammond, Louisiana, studying Elementary Education. She has been severely deaf since birth.

She graduated from Central High School in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in 1974. "I was accepted," she says, "into **Louisiana Tech University**, and I did not do well. The next semester I transferred to **Nicholls State University** in Thibodaux, Louisiana, and I did a little better but not well enough to feel confident to continue." Martha explains that—at that time—her professors were generally neither helpful nor understanding towards her as a student.

Years later in August of 1998, Martha re-entered college after she went to Vocational Rehabilitation and learned that accommodations

were provided "through the Disability Act," she says, "for people like me. I was fearful and full of anxiety when I met with Dr. Williams at Southeastern. She spoke words of wisdom and encouragement, though, that helped build my confidence to go back to college."

Martha describes her experiences at Southeastern as trying, exciting, and very challenging. "I am excited, because I feel I am achieving for myself what I did not think twenty-five years ago that I could do. I am nervous and anxious when I enter a new class, and I am afraid of the unknown. But, my college educational challenges are making me stronger and more confident in myself daily and each semester. I have achieved much higher grades than I did twenty-five years ago, and I am SARTE status now, meaning I can take all my major education classes and become prepared for my 'professional knowledge' exam before I graduate." Martha is very much looking forward to graduating with a degree in Education, and she is excited about future opportunities to apply what she has learned and become a great teacher.

"At Southeastern," she says, "I have not allowed my deafness to stop me from getting an education. I encourage deaf students to seek challenges in order to better themselves with a college education." Martha advises students to not be shy or afraid to ask for help while getting an education. "Communicate well with your professors, and make friends with your colleagues. I also encourage universities to better interact with their clients. For example, hold monthly group meetings, and hold professors accountable for teaching students the material."

Martha thanks Dr. Williams for supporting her during her college experience.



Martha Causey (right) with her sister Lisa Chase

"I encourage deaf students to seek challenges in order to better themselves with a college education."

Lisa Chase

“**I** am very thankful for the Americans with Disabilities Act that strongly advises all public colleges to accommodate people with disabilities,” says Lisa Chase. “I am thankful that Louisiana State University (LSU) has provided me an education so that I can achieve to my best ability, and I am grateful that LSU has a disability services Coordinator that understands Deaf Culture and meets the needs of each student. I want to commend LSU for providing these services.”

Lisa has been deaf since she was an infant. She attended the Louisiana School for the Deaf most of her life but also attended classes in the public school system for three years. “I was in a normal classroom setting without an interpreter,” she says, “and I struggled to lipread the teachers all day. I could not function well. I had to work and study extra hard in order to pass those classes.” Lisa decided to go back to the school for the deaf. “I had felt isolated from hearing friends in the public school system and also became tired of having to struggle to read lips all day,” she says. “I felt that I would function better using sign language as my mode of communication and being around other people that were like me. I was happy after going back to the deaf school, and I remained there until after I completed the tenth grade.”

Lisa married at the age of sixteen. She graduated with a GED from the public school system after being married for fourteen months.

“I then worked different jobs. I was a para-professional (teacher’s aide), distribution clerk (post office clerk), mail clerk, typist clerk, editorial assistant, and computer clerk. I worked mostly for the government. I taught sign language in the community, and that’s when I decided I wanted to go to college. I had never been in college and wanted that experience.”

Lisa decided to apply for vocational rehabilitation. She had been out of school for twenty



“We can do anything when we strive to work for it.”

years, so she took a placement test at **Delgado Community College** and discovered that she had to take remedial English and Math. “I enhanced my skills tremendously at Delgado,” she adds. “I learned so much and had some very fine interpreters that really made a difference for me in my competency as a student. I could not have done as well without them.” Lisa is grateful that she was able to attend a “normal college” that accommodated deaf students. She majored in Early Childhood Education and was the only deaf student in this major. “My teaching supervisor had never had a deaf student do a practicum at a deaf school!”

Lisa graduated with honors with a 3.57 GPA. She is a lifetime member of Phi Theta Kappa and was told that she was the first deaf student at Delgado to both graduate with honors and make Phi Theta Kappa.

After graduating from Delgado, she transferred to **Louisiana State University** (LSU) and has been at LSU for over a year. "I love the challenge of learning," she says, "and I really love how the disability services office provides me with whatever suits me in the classroom setting. I am able to have an interpreter or a captionist." Lisa chose LSU for its disability services office; getting the services she needs is her first priority in order to function well in school. "I can't excel without being accommodated with an interpreter. I am grateful that LSU provides a variety of services. I commend Jennie Bourgeois for an excellent service. She deserves such loud applause for her work!"

Lisa's experience at LSU has been a challenge, but she enjoys learning. She is still majoring in Elementary Education and has accumulated over one hundred and twenty hours with a GPA of 3.44.

Lisa is involved in many community services. She serves as a deaf volunteer hospice worker at Hospice of Baton Rouge; she is a Governor-appointed member of Early Identification of Infants and Newborns; she is a member of Deaf Women of Baton Rouge, the Baton Rouge Asso-

ciation of the Deaf, the Louisiana Association of the Deaf (LAD), the Registry Interpreters for the Deaf, and First Baptist Deaf Church; she performs solo in sign language at her church; she is a Sunday school teacher, deaf-blind interpreter coordinator, and volunteer at her deaf church; and, she serves as a Big Sister to a deaf girl in the Big Sister/Little Sister program.

Her past community services include: Secretary for LAD, junior board member for LAD, Secretary for Greater New Orleans Association of the Deaf, volunteer for different deaf organizations, queen for Krewe of Dauphine (deaf ball), support services provider for individuals who are deaf-blind in New Orleans, and member of the National Fraternal Society of the Deaf, Division #33.

She was also recognized as being the Handicapped Employee of the Year by the Department of Defense. Lisa is also a certified deaf interpreter for the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.

"My advice to deaf and hard of hearing students," Lisa says, "is to never say 'I can't do it!' We can do anything when we strive to work for it. I would advise older adults to go back to school and learn. It is the greatest thing to learn new things and share it with others."

Cherri Duhon

Cherri Duhon refuses to give up. “I have a goal and will not let anything crash my goal,” she says. “I would advise younger students to not let anything change their dream. Work hard, and dreams will come true.”

Cherri has been deaf since birth. In high school, she was very involved in extracurricular activities. She was chosen to attend Girls State, “which is a wonderful experience for anyone,” she says. “I was the only deaf person to ever complete Girls State. It was a great experience for me.” Cherri also served on the staff for the school year book. “I had some struggles in high school,” she states, “but I also learned a lot from all the different activities I was involved in.”

Presently, Cherri is attending **The University of Louisiana at Lafayette**. “I am working

toward an Elementary Education major, but I kept getting blocked from finishing this major because of the NTE (National Teacher Exam). I have received tutoring to help me prepare for the exam, but I feel that the tutoring I have received is not specific to my needs. All tutoring is geared for hearing students, and I need specific help for my disability of deafness so that I can understand.”

Cherri attended a weekend workshop but still felt left out, as she needed more focus on English. “I have felt so frustrated all year, and I don’t have any more courses left. I am now stuck, and I have no choice but to change to General Studies, which I really don’t want. College has had so many obstacles for me. I have experienced lots of struggles and frustrations.”

However, Cherri is persistent. “You may struggle at the beginning, but success will come at the end,” she believes.



“Work hard, and dreams will come true.”

Jean Eichelberger

Recalling the words of I. King Jordan of Gallaudet University, Jean Eichelberger encourages students that are hard of hearing or deaf to follow their dreams: "You can do anything but hear." Jean adds: "Go for it! Don't be lazy. Don't wait until you become older. Start working toward your career while you are young."

A native of Baltimore, Maryland, Jean was born hard of hearing. She was also born prematurely and was not diagnosed with a hearing loss until the age of two. In addition, she was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy at that time. Jean's mother knew she had a disability but could not get a proper diagnosis until she took her to Johns Hopkins.

Jean went to public school and was in Special Education Classes. In 1971, her family moved to St. Petersburg, Florida. Jean worked as a teacher assistant in preschool for two years. Later, she attended **St. Petersburg Junior**



"Go for it! Don't be lazy . . . Start working toward your career while you are young."

College. She graduated from **Mirror Lake Community College**, having studied floral arranging, and she owned a florist business and provided floral arrangements for more than five hundred weddings, funerals, and other activities. Jean was invited to the White House to visit their floral arranging department during former President Carter's term. "I thoroughly enjoyed that visit," she shares.

Later, deciding to return to college, Jean attended **Hillsborough Community College** to become an interpreter. She had a 3.0 GPA but was unable to continue her major because of her hearing loss. In 1995, she enrolled in **Gallaudet University**. She wanted to learn more about Deaf Culture and improve her sign language skills. During the two years she attended the University, she had a 3.57 GPA. She made friends with many students there and continues to keep in touch with them through e-mail.

Jean moved back to Florida in 1998 to help her mother care for her ailing father. While attending **The University of South Florida**, she learned about the Deaf Education Program at **Converse College**. Jean and her family moved to Spartanburg in September 2000, and she enrolled at Converse College as a part-time student and plans to become a full-time student soon.

Jean's goal is to become an elementary teacher at the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind. She is a junior and is looking forward to a new career and working with children. When asked what she liked about the colleges she has attended, she applauds Gallaudet for the computer skills she learned while attending. "The University of South Florida," she adds, "had wonderful advisors. Converse College has an outstanding Deaf Education Program."

In her free time, Jean enjoys studying and keeping in touch with her deaf friends through e-mail. An animal lover and advocate for her animal friends, she has found homes for thirty-two stray kittens for "Save our Strays" while living in Florida. She has two Cocker Spaniels, a cat, and a bird. She had a Cocker Spaniel that she taught sign language and entered in dog shows. She wants to become a volunteer at the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind.

Christopher Flint Fears

Christopher Flint Fears strongly believes in encouraging all students who are deaf to be anything they dream to be. "Don't let anyone ever tell you that you can't," he says. "You have to undo the *can't* to *can*. Once you fix the can't, you will be able to do anything you want to do. If you look for the answer, follow your heart, because your heart has your answer. Deaf is *beautiful*, and you should be proud of who you are!"

Christopher was born deaf. The rest of his family, with the exception of his sister, is hearing. He attended the Arkansas School for the Deaf for his primary and secondary education and graduated in 1993. After high school, he attended **Gallaudet University** in Washington, D.C. He majored in Psychology and received his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1998.

While a student at Gallaudet, Christopher worked as a residential advisor, was involved in Class of '97 activities, worked for the Student Body Government as Student Affairs Director, was a student assistant for the Office of the President, and was involved in various other volunteer services. Christopher was also a member of Alpha Sigma Pi. He worked as Activities Director at Camp Endeavor, a summer camp for young, deaf children, in Dundee, Florida, for two years as well.

After graduating from Gallaudet, Christopher considered becoming a school counselor, but a friend, Jessica Courtright, encouraged him to go into teaching. He finally decided to invest in the education of young, deaf students. "I had been frustrated," he says, "by the lack of deaf adult role models for deaf students, especially in the field of education." Christopher knew he wanted to work closely with children.

He was led back to his hometown to pursue a Master's degree in Deaf Education at **The University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR)** because of this strong commitment to the education of deaf people. He studied full-time



"Deaf is beautiful, and you should be proud of who you are!"

and eventually received the National Education Award and the Excellence Award at UALR. During his graduate studies, he worked as a student assistant for the University's Disability Support Services. He was also a peer advisor for deaf and hard of hearing students and helped them plan and implement their first year studies at UALR. During his course work, Christopher did his practicum at the Arkansas School for the Deaf. He also did a practicum at the Otter Creek Elementary School for Summer Reading. In the spring of 2000, he finished his student internship at the Arizona School for the Deaf in Tucson, having taught in the middle and elementary schools for fifteen weeks.

Christopher's experience as a co-chaperone for Pee Wee Jr. National Association of the Deaf, helping elementary students build their leadership skills, was so rewarding that he decided to return to the Arizona School for the Deaf to become a teacher for a self-contained class for the 2000-2001 school year. He is proud to say that his hard work has paid off. "Ever since I started my teaching career," he shares, "I have wanted to challenge deaf children and encourage them to reach for their dreams. I enjoy working with students outside of my work hours and joining them in extracurricular activities," he adds.

Ella Irby



"After you graduate, go to college, study hard, go to class every day, and be the best you can be."

Ella Irby, a strong role model for the black deaf community, was born hearing in Sherrill, Arkansas, but became deaf at the age of nine from scarlet fever. She spent four years of her life in a hearing elementary school in Wabbaseka Public Schools, but after the onset of deafness, she became a student at the Madison School for Black Deaf Students in Little Rock, Arkansas. "The teachers did not sign," Ella shares, "but the other students taught me." Eventually, Ella received her GED.

Several years later, Ella became a full-time student at **The University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR)**, where she received her Associate of Arts in General Studies. During her years at

UALR, Ella was an active member in several clubs and organizations, which included UALR Deaf Trojans, Sigma Lambda Kappa, the sign language club at UALR, and Little Rock Black Deaf Advocates for which Ella served as president for five years. She is currently serving as their Chapter Representative.

Ella worked for Timex for ten years, at Deaf Access as a Peer Partner, and as a specialist dormitory house parent for fifteen years. She also attended the National Black Deaf Advocates midterm meeting at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. in March 1999 and attended the National Black Deaf Conference in Jamaica in August 1999.

She has three children, and all of them use American Sign Language.

Ella is now working toward getting her Bachelor of Arts degree at UALR. She also works as a lab assistant in the Interpreter Education Program, tutoring and serving as a sign language model for students in the program.

Having worked hard in her postsecondary career, Ella understands the rewards of a postsecondary degree. "My advice to high school students who are deaf is that after you graduate, you should go to college, study hard, go to class everyday, and be the best you can be."

April Kirby

“**I** have overcome a lot of barriers while pursuing my dream field,” shares April Kirby, “which is teaching for the deaf. I feel that deaf students need a role model and someone willing to teach them, someone who will not put up barriers.”

April currently lives in Knoxville, Tennessee. Her family assumes she was born deaf; her parents were not aware that she was deaf until the age of two. She attended the Tennessee School for the Deaf (TSD) for her elementary and secondary education and graduated in 1991.

After high school, April went to **Chattanooga State Community College** in Chattanooga, Tennessee, for two years and then transferred to **Gallaudet University** in Washington, D.C. She majored in Psychology and received her Bachelor of Arts degree in 1996. While at Gallaudet, April was a residential advisor for two years. She was also a member of Delta Phi Epsilon.

After graduating from Gallaudet, April knew she wanted to pursue a degree in Educational Psychology. She chose **The University of Tennessee**, because it was less expensive to attend a local university instead of opting for an

out-of-state school, and April knew that her vocational rehabilitation counselor would not be able to provide support during her graduate studies. April received her Master of Science in 1998. She then worked for two and a half years at TSD as a supervisor of the Alternative Program Cottage. Currently, April is working at The University of Tennessee as Outreach Specialist for the Postsecondary Education Consortium. She is also studying part-time for her second Master’s degree in Deaf Education.

This past year April battled cancer, but “I did not give up,” she adds. “I continued with full-time school and work. I have completed chemotherapy and radiation. I am now healthy and doing well.”

April enjoys spending time with her friends and family. She also enjoys camping, hiking, and mountain biking. April’s new dream is to volunteer her time in supporting other deaf women, especially those who have been diagnosed with cancer.

“I want to challenge deaf youngsters to pursue their dreams, even if they’ve been told that they cannot,” April says. “Go after your dreams, and do not let anything stop you! Fight for your dreams, no matter what they are for—your life, your family, your education, or your career.”



“I want to challenge deaf youngsters to pursue their dreams, even if they’ve been told that they cannot.”

Martha Knowles

Martha Knowles, who lives in Orlando, Florida, encourages high school students who are deaf to do the best they can to master reading and writing English. “Do take ESL (English as a Second Language) classes if you can,” she says. “ASL is the natural language of many deaf individuals and is a wonderful language, but—unfortunately—we live in a hearing world and an English-speaking country where in order to succeed at all, we must be able to read and write fluently in English.”

Martha places a great deal of importance on education. “I believe that the greatest hindrance to a child’s educational achievement is not whether there is a disability but whether that child has the proper opportunities to learn,” she shares.

Born in Indianapolis, Indiana, she had normal hearing but became profoundly deaf at age seven from encephalitis. “My mom said I was a chatterbox until I became deaf and that then I became a bookworm!” Martha shares. “My love of reading has become a valuable asset not only academically but in many other areas of my life.”

After Martha became deaf, her parents enrolled her in an oral school, but her hearing loss was so severe that after one semester her teacher advised that she be transferred to the Indiana School for the Deaf (ISD) where sign language is incorporated into instruction. Martha attended ISD from January 1961 to May 1968. While at ISD, where total communication was used, Martha was encouraged to continue using her speech skills but was also encouraged to learn sign language.

“I now sign using a mixture of about twenty-five percent ASL and seventy-five percent English,” says Martha. By the following Fall, her family had moved to south central Indiana, and Martha transferred to a public high school in that area. “This was before IDEA and ADA laws, so I had no interpreters or notetakers in classes,” she adds. “It was not easy. I often had to check with teachers or



“The greatest hindrance to a child’s educational achievement is not whether there is a disability but whether that child has the proper opportunities to learn.”

classmates to make sure I got all of my assignments. But I did it, graduating in May 1971, twelfth out of thirty-seven students, and the only deaf student there!” Martha’s Vocational Rehabilitation counselors talked with her about attending Gallaudet University, but—though Martha was interested in college—she was not ready to go just then.

In 1972 she moved to Shreveport, Louisiana, and held various jobs until 1976 when she got a job with the United States Postal Service (USPS)

and worked there until late 1991. “I still hoped to go to college but was unsure of what to choose as a major,” she says. “In 1988 while working at USPS and also working part-time in my church office, I took two classes at **Louisiana State University** but found it all too much, and after one semester I put college on hold again. A couple of years later we moved to Orlando to help care for my aging mother-in-law until she passed away in 1995. The following year my father passed away. After my youngest stepson graduated from high school, my husband encouraged me (twenty-six years after my high school graduation) to enroll at **Valencia Community College (VCC)** in August 1997.”

Martha states that—for several reasons—she had already developed an interest in the field of Education. “I had noticed that many deaf high school graduates had trouble with reading and writing, and I wondered why. I had wanted to help my stepson, who had struggled through his school years with a learning disability, but I didn’t know how.” Martha became friends with an interpreter who happened to be a learning disabilities therapist. By Fall 1998 she had decided that she wanted to work with deaf students who had learning disabilities and chose Elementary Education as her major, taking electives in Exceptional Education and focusing on learning disabilities.

“While attending Valencia Community College, I had access to notetakers and excellent interpreters. Preparation time with interpreters and/or tutors was also available, but because I already had good study skills, enjoyed reading, and had above average English skills, I rarely needed those services. I was honored to be the first deaf student to enter VCC’s Honors Program.” Martha also became an active member of the Phi Theta Kappa Society (PTK) and the American Sign Language (ASL) Club, earning several PTK awards for volunteer work. She was selected to be in the 1998-99 “Who’s Who In American Junior Colleges” as well as on the National Dean’s List. She received an Associate of Arts degree from VCC in December 1999, and her high grade point average earned her the privilege of wearing a red stole in addition to her gold PTK and Honors stoles at commencement ceremonies.

Martha is currently a Junior in **The University of Central Florida’s (UCF) College of Education** and was recently inducted into the Kappa Delta Pi Society. “Because both VCC and UCF share the same team of interpreters, I continue to benefit from their valuable skills and services,” she says.

After completing her BS in Elementary Education at UCF, Martha hopes to earn a MA degree in Deaf Education at a Florida university and to eventually work with deaf students in central Florida.

Chad Ruffin

Chad Ruffin describes most of his life as an “oral deaf person” as being very lonely. “I became tired of it,” he shares. “Three and a half years of my life as a student at **Centenary College of Louisiana** had gone by, and—though I did well academically as a mainstreamed student—I had no stable social life to speak of. Being isolated from both my hearing and deaf counterparts, I was afforded little social interaction, and—as a result—I was highly frustrated.”

Chad opted for a cochlear implant in February 1999. “Though I was told to keep expectations low,” he says, “my hopes were nearly shattered when the implant was ‘activated.’ Voices sounded like birds, syllables were tough to discriminate, and sounds I was receiving were inordinately loud. Even worse, the actual ‘hearing’ was initially a felt sensation. Some of the most important words in my life came at this time: ‘hang in there.’ ‘Hang in there’ I did.” Over the weeks—with subsequent programming sessions—Chad’s hearing gradually improved. “I flew through the initial take-home exercises and slaved through 25 hours of summer auditory therapy,” he shares.

The effort paid off. When school started the following fall, Chad was able to participate in

group discussions as opposed to the one-on-one conversations to which he was previously limited. “With my improved hearing, my social life took off. I had more friends and was finally beginning to find a niche on campus,” he says. “My ‘breakthrough’ came six months to the day of my implantation. I was able to listen to a college lecture without taking notes, and I was barely able to contain myself!”

“Now I have come full circle,” Chad says. He describes the experiences he had in the previous year as “incredible.” He graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in Biology and proudly joined the faculty at Logansport High School for the 2000-01 school year. With great anticipation, he looks forward to what life will bring him and the future he will make of it.

Chad encourages all readers, especially those who are deaf, to follow the advice of Winston Churchill: Never give up. “Give your weakness strength,” he says, “and learn as much as you can about the communication between hearing persons. Do not be afraid to speak up for your needs. Give your absolute best in college, and form close relationships with your professors, and choose friends who will challenge you to reach new horizons rather than accept mediocrity. In short, make lemonade out of those lemons and give your best. Hard work always pays off!”



“Choose friends who will challenge you to reach new horizons rather than accept mediocrity.”

Justine Turner

Justine Turner believes strongly in the power of education. "I encourage deaf and hard of hearing children to get a good education and good literacy skills" she says. "After receiving an education at the secondary level, deaf and hard of hearing students need to use their literacy skills to get into college or to get a job in the real world."

Justine's family discovered that she was deaf when she was sixteen months old. She attended the Tennessee School for the Deaf (TSD) from age three until her graduation in May 1994. There she was taught by instructors using Pidgin Signed English.

Currently, Justine is a Youth Service Worker at TSD. "Because I was a student at TSD," she says, "I want to experience what it is like to work with the children there. I also want to develop my leadership skills and be a good role model for deaf and hard of hearing children."

In 1994, Justine started attending classes at **Pellissippi State Technical Community College** (PSTCC). "I got an academic scholarship," she explains, "and studied there for two years. As a full-time student at PSTCC, I was undecided about my major, so I took courses in General Studies." In the Spring of 1996, Justine decided to major in American Sign Language (ASL) and Deaf Studies. "I searched programs for ASL/Deaf Studies at different colleges and universities, and then I received some information about **Maryville College**. I then decided to transfer to Maryville to pursue my Bachelor's in ASL/Deaf Studies."

Justine received two academic scholarships to attend Maryville College. While a student, Justine was involved in Intervarsity, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and Sigma Lambda Kappa, the Sign Language Club. She also worked as a Resident Assistant, an ASL tutor for the Maryville College Study Tables, and a Teacher Assistant for the Upward Bound Program during the Summer of 1998. She was listed twice on the Dean's List and graduated from Maryville College with her Bachelor of Arts degree in June 1999.



"I want deaf and hard of hearing children to receive a good education."

"College was a real challenge for me," Justine shares. "I was lucky in that I was provided an interpreter, tutor, and notetakers. I was also able to take tests with extended time in the Learning Center. Maryville College is not PEC-affiliated, but the Learning Center there met the needs of students like me."

When she has the time, Justine enjoys reading biographies, autobiographies, Christian books, and books about Deaf heritage. "I also enjoy watching football, hanging out with my good friends, and crafts, such as cross-stitching and crocheting," she adds. Since 1994, Justine has also been involved with the Knoxville Chapter of the Tennessee Association of the Deaf.

Addressing the issue of technology today, Justine remembers that at TSD she learned to read and write manually without the aid of a computer. "During my teenage years," she says, "I tried to learn how to use the computer, and it really frustrated me, because it was really complex and difficult to comprehend. Finally, at Maryville College I took some computer science classes, and they really helped me. I finally understood the computer system and how to use Microsoft Word or Works for my term papers, research papers, and classes. My documents were well-organized on the computer, and it really benefited me. There is so much technology out there, and we will have to use the computer for so many different things in the business world."

Justine is planning to attend graduate school to study for her Master's degree in Deaf Education. "I want deaf and hard of hearing children to receive a good education," she says.

Reinaldo J. Vega

If you work hard," says Reinaldo J. Vega, "and do the best you can, not letting deafness get in your way, you can accomplish anything in your life." Reinaldo, who prefers to be called Rey, is profoundly deaf. He was born and raised in West Palm Beach, Florida, and now lives in Kissimmee.

His parents found out that he was deaf when he was about two years old, and the cause of his deafness is unknown. "I first learned sign language at about the age of four," he says, "when a teacher from the public school system's pre-K Program for the Deaf came to my family's home to work with me before I started elementary school."

In elementary school, Rey was in classes with other deaf children most of the day. He also received speech therapy, which included lipreading and speech and auditory training. When he was in the fifth grade, he was declared gifted and started taking advanced classes offered within the Gifted Program.

In middle school, Rey attended mainstreamed classes alone half of the day with no interpreters. "During those times," he says, "I depended on the teacher to write on the board, or I borrowed notes from the teacher or a classmate. The rest of the day I went to the deaf classes." By the time Rey reached high school, he was nearly fully mainstreamed alone with an interpreter. "I took advanced Math and Science classes and graduated third in a class of over four hundred students," he shares.

Rey then decided to attend the **Rochester Institute of Technology** (RIT) for four years to get his Bachelor's degree in Applied Mathematics. "It was my first time outside of Florida," he says. "I graduated with Honors."

After completing school, Rey went to Florida to work at the Motorola Paging Company in Boynton Beach and also became a substitute teacher. He later went back to **The University of North Florida** to get his Master's degree in Deaf Education and his teaching certificates in Mathematics (6-12) and Hearing Impaired (K-12).



"If you work hard and do the best you can, not letting deafness get in your way, you can accomplish anything in your life."

In September 1997, Rey applied for a teaching position as a teacher of the deaf/hard of hearing at St. Cloud High School. "I have been there ever since!" he states. "Currently, I have eleven students, grades nine to twelve. I am also the President of the Deaf Experience Association, Inc., which is a nonprofit community organization that serves the deaf/hard of hearing community as well as the general community in the Central Florida area. Our goal is to function as a deaf service center with services that include client assistance, advocacy, and community outreach."

Even though Rey is profoundly deaf, he has been wearing both hearing aids since childhood. These enable him, he explains, to hear certain sounds and voices but without clarification. "As for other technologies," he adds, "I have found e-mail and the Internet very helpful, as they help me to maintain communication with both deaf and hearing people at work, home, and in the community. I would not be able to communicate as comfortably without these technologies. I also have used the TTY since late in elementary school. Not only does it allow for communication, but it also helps improve my typing and written communication skills, skills that I stress to my students these days."

Rey believes that technology today has it pros and cons. "Deaf people have become more dependent on technology, and it makes them stay home more and lose more actual, physical contact with the deaf community/deaf culture and what's out there in the real world," he says. "On the other hand, we have relied on such technology designed for the deaf to make our lives more convenient and independent."

Michelle Weaver

Michelle Weaver teaches at the Atlanta Area School for the Deaf (AASD) in Clarkston, Georgia. She gets a great deal of satisfaction out of teaching and has faced many challenges. “Even though I work with children who are like me, their limited abilities are way beyond belief for me,” she says. “It was amazing to find that they do not have the opportunities and family support that I had.”

Michelle is motivated to find ways to give her students the opportunities in life that they deserve. “AASD gave me the opportunity to teach three different kinds of classes during my first year of teaching. It was a rough but good experience. I discovered my weaknesses as a teacher,” she shares. “Once I discovered them, I worked twice as hard. I always thought that being a teacher would be an easy job, but now I

know it is not. I feel more responsibility to make sure that my students learn what I teach them.” Michelle feels inclined to give her students more work, but most of the work they have now, she says, is not finished due to lack of parental support or encouragement. “It saddens me, but I will always try my best.” She is currently teaching students with behavior problems and has discovered that behavior difficulties interfere with learning abilities, despite the student’s intelligence level.

Michelle’s family discovered that she was deaf at the age of three. She attended an oral school for the deaf in Jamaica and learned to speak through an early intervention program. She then attended oral schools in Florida, including the Fort Lauderdale Oral School, St. Jerome’s Catholic School, and Nova High School of Nova University in Sunrise. She received constant speech therapy and



“I want {my students} to see that they can accomplish anything they desire.”

remediation as a student. At Griffin High School, she used lipreading in all of her courses and graduated with honors.

Michelle received her Bachelor of Science in Finance and Bachelor of Arts in Deaf Education at **Jacksonville State University (JSU)**. “Originally,” she says, “I wanted to major in Statistics, but this university did not have that program. I decided to major in Accounting, because I have always loved helping my mother with accounting.” After struggling with those courses, however, Michelle decided to switch to Finance. She then decided to go back to school to major in Deaf Education after having worked in a dormitory for two years. She knew that she wanted to give deaf students the same opportunities that she had in the past, and she wanted to serve as a good role model for future students. “I want them to see that they can accomplish anything they desire,” she says.

As a student at JSU, Michelle received a great deal of friendly support from Disability Student Services (DSS). Through DSS, she secured interpreters for all of her classes. “They provided for all my needs,” she states. “If it were not for them, I would have missed out on a lot.” She heard about their program from her guidance counselor in high school. “I knew,” she says, “that it was really important that I have that kind of support.” Speaking of college in general, she adds, “having come from a sheltered world, I thought it would be a place where I could start a new life and meet new friends who were just like me.”

While a student at JSU, Michelle benefited greatly from the technology available to her, such as e-mail, Internet access, and computers in general. “The computer and typing skills I learned in the classroom actually enhanced my job of today,” she says. “If it were not for those courses, I would have to go back to school and learn how to use a computer.” She is grateful for the Excel and PowerPoint skills she learned while in college. “I think all of these skills should be a requirement for a student’s general core, since almost every company is depending on technology these days. At my job, we use e-mail, look for information or ways to teach the

kids through the Internet, and type work sheets on the computer on a daily basis.” Of course, Michelle is grateful for her hearing aids, tele-typewriter, and alarm signals as well.

In her free time, Michelle enjoys reading, walking, and roller blading. “I am currently not really involved in the community, since I just moved to Atlanta this year,” she says. “Hopefully, in a few months time, I will be volunteering in some kind of organization.” Michelle also enjoys spending time with her two beautiful daughters “who want to grow up to be like me!” she adds. “They love learning and reading, and I try to set those good examples for them.”

Since Michelle changed majors to finally discover in which field she wanted to work, she advises high school students who are deaf to work at various jobs before deciding on a major. “Deaf youth,” she says, “need to explore and find out what communication skills are required from different companies. Don’t get me wrong. There are many opportunities, and we all need to overcome obstacles. I wanted to work in a bank. However, there was a communication barrier. Even though I can read lips and talk all right, it was hard for me to communicate clearly and effectively with people that I did not know.”

Michelle also encourages students to truly consider college in order to ensure that is what they really want to do. “{College} is not the way to get out of a sheltered world,” she says. “Deaf people going to college have to work twice as hard as hearing students.” Michelle also believes that students who are deaf and taking college preparatory courses should not be ashamed. “Those courses will help you prepare better for college.”

Michelle is looking forward to her future plans. “I want to go back to school for my Master’s in Business Administration, even though I am not planning on becoming a principal,” she says. “I also hope to be involved in a committee for a program that addresses deaf issues.” For her distant future, Michelle simply looks forward to retiring and—after her girls are grown—traveling the world (with a little cross-stitching included as well!).

Bonnie Wicks



*"Always
have a
yearning
for
learning!"*

Bonnie Wicks lives in Gainesville, Florida, and currently works in her husband's business. Her past job experiences range from volunteer work to delivery work to working as an American Sign Language teacher's aide.

She was born deaf, and her parents and mother's sister are deaf as well. She has hearing siblings and two deaf cousins. "My mother, aunt, and I all went to the same school and had the same teacher and bus driver," she shares. "The bus driver must have been at least seventy-five years old by the time I went there!"

Bonnie attended public school as a kindergarten and first grader. "When I was in first grade," she says, "the teacher was concerned about me, because I was not paying attention. I only liked to read and did not like doing other subjects." Her teacher reported this to the office. The office staff told Bonnie's parents that the only way they would keep Bonnie at the school was if she wore hearing aids. "My parents could not afford them at that time," she explains. "So, the school required my parents to send me to another school where they had deaf and hard of hearing children. I went there when I was seven years old. The school had all kinds of handicapped children along with non-handicapped children. This was 1960, and it wasn't like mainstream education is now."

Bonnie attended a school in New York that only tolerated the oralism method of teaching deaf and hard of hearing children. "It was frustrating for many of the deaf children to learn how to speak. We were not allowed to use our hands or gestures to talk. But," Bonnie adds, "when we went out for recess, we would communicate with some form of 'homemade' signing and gestures." She also received speech lessons. "It wasn't too bad for me, because I could read lips well, and it made it a lot easier for the speech teacher to teach me."

When Bonnie entered Clary Junior High School in Syracuse, it was a scary experience for her; she was the only deaf student in all of her classes. "I had to remind the teachers that they had to stay in front of the class so that I could read their lips," she explains. "Sometimes one of the teachers would forget that and would walk all around the room. I had to turn my head around the room like the girl in 'The Exorcist' just so I could keep reading her lips!"

When she switched to Corcoran High School in Syracuse, learning was not as much of a struggle. Bonnie explains that she would teach herself whenever she couldn't understand what her teachers had said in the classroom. "I just read and did my work at home. It was like having a longer school day for me." Bonnie graduated from Corcoran High in 1972.

Bonnie always wanted to go to college and was not satisfied with her previous education. In September of 1997, she attended **Santa Fe Community College** to study in the Medical Records Specialist program. "I had never had an interpreter for my classes before," she explains, "and someone told me that I ought to have one so I could have a complete understanding of the instructors' lectures. I was used to being independent through reading lips and using my hearing aids." Eventually, Bonnie agreed to secure interpreters for her classes, and it helped her a great deal. "I didn't realize how much information I could receive through the help of my interpreters." Bonnie found the Medical Terminology, Anatomy and Physiology, Principles of Disease, and Medical Coding classes very challenging, but her love of reading benefited her. She made the

Dean's list and graduated on April 28, 1999, receiving a Medical Records Coding certification.

When Bonnie moved to St. Petersburg, she was asked if she wanted to attend a sign language class at a St. Petersburg school. She agreed to go. "I learned more signing," she says, "and ended up being a teacher's aide there for about a year and a half."

Bonnie's preferred mode of communication is oral, as that is what she was taught growing up. Her parents always used American Sign Language, but they only signed to each other and to their deaf friends. Her parents lipread Bonnie and her siblings and used gestures with them as well. "My father would pretend that he was hearing when we went out so that people would not think of us as 'dumb.'" Bonnie believes that her natural language is sign language. "My speech is a trained speech, so that means it is a learned speech, which is not my natural language. I can read lips very well, sign and read sign language well, and speak well. I can communicate with both the hearing and the deaf," she says.

Bonnie enjoys reading, working out, traveling, swimming, and fishing in her spare time.

She also enjoys spending time with her husband to whom she has been married for almost thirty years. They have four children—"all grown up and out of the house," she adds—and a sixteen-month old granddaughter.

Although Bonnie is not presently working in the medical field, she is pleased to have an education. "It is good to know that I have a 'safety net' should my husband's business slow down," she believes. She hopes to get a medical coding job and teach sign language as well. "I want to help the Florida education system," she says, "and help improve education for the deaf and hard of hearing."

Bonnie has a great deal of advice for young deaf and hard of hearing students. "Don't let your hearing loss be a handicap to you," she says. "You need to focus on your skills, and don't let anybody tell you that you can't do it. Just be yourself, and concentrate on your education, because it is very valuable and no one can take it from you. Keep learning no matter how old you are! It begins with you having a positive attitude. Don't be ashamed to ask for help, and always have a yearning for learning!"



Students Making a Difference Through Holistic Professions

Carolyn Crowe

Carolyn Crowe lives in Montgomery, Alabama, where she is a Case Manager and Employment Specialist at the Janice Capilouto Center for the Deaf. She also serves on the Board of Directors for the State Independent Living Council and works as a mentor in the Christian Women's Job Corp. A former client of the Janice Capilouto Center for the Deaf, she realized that providing case management services, support services, job readiness training, and job placement for individuals who are deaf is what she wanted to do for a living. She is also working on her certificate in Community Employment Services and is planning on studying for her Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling.

"I'd like a doctorate eventually," she says. "I'm beginning to see a need for day care reform and possible earlier intervention for children with ADD {Attention Deficit Disorder} and ADHD {Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder} prior to elementary school." Carolyn would also like to see American Sign Language offered as a second language to more students in the school systems. She has many interests in the area of deaf advocacy and hopes to help bridge the gap between the hearing and deaf worlds through education and seminars. Also, she shares, "we need tax credits for the deaf like those the blind receive."

Carolyn, who has had a progressive, nerve-related hearing loss for the past eight years, received her Bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts from **Auburn University at Montgomery**. During her years in school, she was both a full-time and part-time student. "I had studied so many different things," she explains, "not actually knowing what to do with my life." The degree she received in Liberal Arts, though,

proved to be a course of study she enjoyed. "It is a well-rounded degree for people with varied interests."

While in school, Carolyn juggled not only her classes, but she also worked full-time and took care of her family. She enjoyed school and found the Center for Special Services very accommodating. "My professors helped me," she adds, "whenever I needed extra accommodations. My advisor was understanding of my situation and worked my classes around professors he knew I could understand."

She briefly attended **The University of West Alabama at Livingston** in the late 1970s



"Nothing is free. Hard work and persistence are the ultimate pay offs."

and early '80s as well, and while there she was on the Dean's List. She is also proud of the fact that while she was a client and a student at Auburn, she was asked to be a guest speaker at the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Center for the Deaf where she now works. She is dedicated and diligent, because, she says, "nothing is free. Hard work and persistence are the ultimate pay offs."

Carolyn describes herself as someone who lived in the hearing world but who is now crossing over to the Deaf Culture. "I know both worlds are unique, and I can relate to both," she explains. "Quality of life is a major concern for me. I don't want to see discrimination just because of a lack of hearing. I'd like for hearing people to step out into the deaf world and not

be afraid of it." She also explains that it is important for people to be sensitive to the needs of those with a hearing loss by speaking slowly and face to face and by not becoming frustrated or angry if they have to repeat something said.

Carolyn prefers using an FM System and describes it as her "best friend." She adds, "I don't feel like I'm missing anything when I use it."

Carolyn Crowe believes that high school deaf students ready to embark on a postsecondary education or the world of work should remember that nothing is impossible if you strive for your goal. She also believes it is important to remain open-minded in order to continue growing as a person. "In everything you do, do it right."

Lisa Harris

Lisa Harris believes it is important for high school deaf and hard of hearing students to surround themselves with positive people. "Whether you realize it or not," she says, "the decisions you make in life will be severely impacted by the company that you keep. Also, remember that the only thing that stands in front of you and success is an excuse, and if you think you can't, you won't. Know that your disability is a perception; we are all ultimately different, and learning to be comfortable with yourself is a powerful tool. Remember to believe in yourself, and others are sure to follow."

Lisa is from Brooklyn, New York. She experienced a slow and progressive hearing loss that started at age fifteen due to a severe infection from the common cold, although hearing loss is also hereditary in her family.

She is currently employed at Quest Diagnostics as a Data Entry Typist and has been there for four years. Before moving to Atlanta, Lisa researched a good place to work, and Quest Diagnostics (formerly SmithKline Beecham Clinical Labs) seemed to her like a good place to be.

After moving to Atlanta in 1992, Lisa was fitted with hearing aids. Almost fifteen years and two children later, she decided to attend **Georgia Perimeter College**. "I was very apprehensive about school because of my hearing loss, and I didn't think I could do the work," she says. Thanks to her advisor, Mavis Clarke, at the Disabilities Center at school, Lisa began to relax and realize that there were other students like herself there. Lisa started as a part-time student, uncertain of a program of study. Since she explored different classes, switched majors, and had a family to raise, she felt as if she had taken longer than necessary in her first years of school. However, finally on track, she decided to major in Psychology and will be getting her Associate of Science degree the Summer of 2001.

"After attending my first, few remedial classes, I realized my studying paid off and that I was just as smart as the hearing students," she says. During her third remedial class, Lisa received a "Student of the Quarter" award. Later in an English class, Lisa wrote a paper on mandatory testing for women with HIV that was later entered into a school publication, *The Polishing Cloth*, to honor students with good writing skills.

Lisa likes to spend quality time with her two daughters who are both hearing. She is an avid reader and also enjoys weekend trips away from home with her fiancé in order to get away from the daily stress created by her busy schedule. Lisa loves flowers and fish tanks and hopes to someday have a miniature greenhouse in her back yard and learn more about exotic fish.

Lisa's goal is to pursue a Master's degree in Psychology. She would like to be a professional counselor and teach in her spare time. Having already been accepted to **Georgia State University**, she plans to attend in the Fall of 2001 to complete her Bachelor's degree.



"Know that your disability is a perception; we are all ultimately different, and learning to be comfortable with yourself is a powerful tool."

Jon Hepner

Jon Hepner is currently a graduate student at **East Tennessee State University** and at the end of his first year of studying for his Master's in Physical Therapy. "Graduate school is great," he says. "I have probably learned as much in one year here than I did in my last two years in undergraduate school. It is much more intense."

Jon, deaf since birth, received a mostly mainstreamed education while growing up. "From kindergarten to fourth grade," he says, "I spent half the day in a resource classroom in Moorestown, New Jersey, with approximately eight other deaf students and two teachers that signed. In the afternoon, I was mainstreamed with a hearing class for basic classes, such as Math, English, and P.E. In the fifth grade, I was fully mainstreamed with full-time interpreters all day in school. From the sixth grade to high school, when we lived in Atlanta, I was also fully mainstreamed with full-time interpreters for normal and advanced classes."

Jon received his undergraduate education at **The University of Tennessee** in Knoxville from 1993 to 1997 and received a Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science. "I chose to study Exercise Science as an undergraduate because of my strong interest in medicine and sports," Jon says. "I thought I would combine the two." He made the Dean's List for four semesters and graduated with a 3.3 GPA. While a student, he also worked as a student athletic trainer for the UT Men's Athletic Department. "I chose UT," he explains, "for many reasons—the strength of Disability Services, the interpreting services that office provides, the awareness of deafness in the community, its proximity to my home in Atlanta, the Exercise Science program, the deaf population in Knoxville, and the fact that the University is close to the Tennessee School for the Deaf."

When Jon is able to find free time, he enjoys working out, running, biking, and physical activities in general. "I hope to graduate from Physical Therapy school," he says, "and work in acute care with patients who have had



*"Be sure of yourself, and
be sure you want to go to college."*

strokes, heart attacks, neurological pathologies, and paralysis. In the future, I would like to open a Wellness Center, incorporating all kinds of sports and medicine, such as weight training, aerobics, physical therapy, medical services, massage therapy, and more. I hope to have the option of moving to a location where it is warm and there is a strong deaf community so that I can then become more involved with the deaf and community activities."

Speaking to younger deaf and hard of hearing students considering a postsecondary education, Jon shares: "My advice to ya'll? First of all, you need to be sure of yourself, and be sure you want to go to college. Take your time making a decision about where you want to go and what you want to major in. Make sure it is really what you want to do. Also, make sure that the school you attend has a good support team or disability services to assist you with interpreting, notetaking, and so forth. If they have it, use it. Follow your dreams and your heart, and hang in there!"

Victor L. Kelsey

Victor L. Kelsey receives comfort from repeating the words of his late father: "There is no unimportant task to be done, just as there are no unimportant people to do those tasks."

Victor has been deaf since birth. He completed his elementary education in the public school systems in New York and Virginia after a brief stay at a regional school for the deaf in New York. At West Point High School in West Point, Virginia, Victor was an active member of Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) and a member of the Key Club for one year; he played football, track, and soccer (lettering in all three sports) and was a volunteer coach for one year in football and soccer.

Victor received a postsecondary education at **New River Community College** (NRCC) from 1984 to 1989 where he received an A.A.S. in Business Management; **Ferrum College** from 1989 to 1991 where he received a B.S. in Business Administration: Administrated Services; and, **Roanoke Bible College** from 1996 to 1999



"There is no unimportant task to be done, just as there are no unimportant people to do those tasks."

where he received a B.A. in Bible Studies, having minored in Preaching. Currently, he is studying for his MAPM in Family Life Studies at **Cincinnati Bible College and Seminary**.

"I was a full-time student at each school," Victor says. "At NRCC and Ferrum, I followed in my father's footsteps. I wanted to own my own business in the future. However, I found that the business world was different than what my father taught me, so I decided to look elsewhere."

Victor explains his decision to enter Bible college. "I felt the Lord calling me into the ministry. I was also encouraged by my friends, and an old friend came calling for my assistance as well. In her deepest need at a church camp where she had known both ministers since childhood, she turned to me for comfort and prayer. God can be very powerful. Now I am using my talent and skills to reach the deaf for Christ while I work full-time and attend graduate school."

Victor is proud of his achievements in both school and church. He served as the Student Government Senator, Secretary, and President; Co-founder of the Computer Club; Sign Language Club member and Vice-President; Deaf Awareness Chairman for two years; and, member of the softball team for two years. He also served as the Assistant Sunday School teacher for college-age youth at his church; a teacher for Sunday night classes for fourth to sixth graders; a Youth Sponsor for twelve years; and, a substitute preacher for two and a half years as he completed his degree.

Victor appreciates the support he received at NRCC. "Their emotional and academic support was outstanding," he says. "My weak spot was notetaking. But, the school's notetaking service allowed me to attend to the discussion in the classroom."

Currently, Victor works as a Medical Transport Driver, Preacher, and missions representative to Wesley Community Services, Christ Church of the Deaf, and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Institute for Christian Education—all

in Cincinnati. He is active as a representative for missions groups and as a volunteer for church camps. "I travel for missions to churches," he explains. "I am in the people business, so technology has little to do with my job." Victor, however, is grateful for new digital hearing aids, captioning, and his TTY.

"In the future, I plan to work in the church as a minister of the deaf and in the family ministry. I'd like to write material that can be used by others to teach deaf families to better understand how to work as a family. That would include discussions of stress management, communication skills, listening skills, and problem solving. My overall goal is to give back

to the deaf community, because they have given me some inspiring people to look up to, such as Cecil Prilliman, Lucy Howlett, Gary Olsen, Ben Show, and Bob Biggs. All these people either are deaf or have people in their family who are deaf, and they've given and continue to give of themselves. Most of all, I want to lead as many deaf people to the Lord as I can. This is the greatest gift I can give to my deaf friends."

"You are important," Victor tells high school deaf students, "and with determination, hard work, and being led by God, anything is possible." Victor concludes his advice with a Bible verse, Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ, because He gives me strength."

Tim King

Tim King found out he was hard of hearing in 1973 from a hearing evaluation in the first grade conducted at the elementary school he attended. “It is a day that is quite vivid in my memory, an unfortunate memory, but not because of my hearing,” Tim explains.

The students in his class had mastered the task of lining up in orderly elementary school fashion. Tim was positive they were all on their way to the buses for a field trip or a visit to the playground. Little did he know that they were headed to the principal’s office for a brief hearing evaluation. “I, like my classmates, stood in line patiently and wondered what in the heck was going on,” he says.

As the line inched forward, Tim discovered that what was happening was in an office near the principal’s domain. He watched as some of his classmates entered the mysterious room, but none of them returned. Tim thought nothing of



“{My parents} let me cry, but they did not let me quit.”

it at the time, and he actually looked forward to his opportunity to enter the unknown.

“My fateful turn came quickly,” Tim says. “I was ushered into the office where a nice, young lady sat behind a desk and wore a friendly smile. Four of my classmates sat on a couch that faced my left side. The nice lady said she was going to give me a hearing test, and when I heard a ‘beep,’ I was to wave to my classmates on the couch. The test sounded simple enough.”

It seemed like an eternity, though, before Tim heard that first beep. He waved to his classmates on the couch excitedly. He heard another beep and waved even harder. He thought it was fun, and—apparently—his classmates did as well. They were laughing hysterically and uncontrollably with him, “or at least I thought they were,” he says.

His exam ended abruptly. He turned to face the nice lady with the friendly smile, and it was at that point, he believes, that his life changed forever. “The nice lady with the smile was no longer smiling; she looked stern and concerned. My classmates stopped giggling, and—as far as I could tell—they were looking at me. The first words from the formerly nice lady with a smile were, ‘You have a hearing problem, and you need hearing aids and ear plugs.’ It was as simple as that,” Tim shares.

“Those words live on in my mind, replaying repeatedly throughout my life. I was devastated, to say the least. What I thought was a game turned into the most traumatic event of my life, and all I could do was cry for mama. It is a terrible feeling . . . Trauma is unforgettable when one experiences it without one’s mama.”

There Tim was as a seven year old—all by himself with a “hearing problem,” surrounded by strangers. “I continued to cry without interruption until my mama arrived. Her soothing touch eased my pain then and for years to come as I tried to come to grips with being a person with a disability.”

Tim says that from that point forward his educational experiences were nothing special. He was an average to below average student, he explains, in most areas. “There were times when I

cried home to mama, because someone made fun of my hearing aids. I had a very low self-esteem and thought I was stupid because of my disability." Tim, though, was very good at sports, and that outlet kept him from completely giving up. He also had a few, close friends that enjoyed his company regardless of how many times they had to repeat a whispered secret so no one else would hear. He had very supportive parents as well that refused to treat him any differently than their other children. "They let me cry, but they did not let me quit," he says.

In high school, Tim decided he was old enough to go without hearing aids, "as if I could outgrow my disability," he explains. "I paid a heavy price for taking that course, because I missed more information than most of my friends." His parents and the supportive faculty at Montgomery Catholic High School did not challenge this decision. "They had seen me struggle with accepting myself for so long that quite possibly they felt compelled to let me make a mistake."

He struggled through high school but did fairly well in athletics. He also had a few, good friends to "hang out with and cruise the strip!" His self-esteem, however, was still low. Tim believes that this was not a result of adolescence but rather his perception of what it meant to be a person with a disability. Tim graduated but as a very low second-quartile graduate.

"I was accepted by a local college based on where I went to high school and not for my grades nor my ACT scores," he explains. He played baseball and made it through the year with average grades. He remained steadfast in his refusal to wear hearing aids. "I did not acknowledge my disability to anyone or myself," he adds. He transferred to a smaller college in his second year and gave up organized sports altogether. "It was a blessing in disguise for me, because I excelled academically at the smaller college, although I still refused to wear hearing aids."

After completing his baccalaureate degree, he made the decision to eventually pursue a Ph.D. "I wanted to prove to myself that I could do it, but I knew deep down that I would have to come to terms with my disability at some

point. I excelled at the undergraduate level only because I went beyond what an 'average' student would do to succeed."

Tim explains that the most influential person in his young adult life was his future spouse, Beth. "She convinced me that it was okay to be a person with a disability, and she gave me an impetus to seek assistance. At the time, I told her I would seek a hearing evaluation, but only for her, not for me."

Ten years after he decided to stop wearing hearing aids, Tim received what he describes as the best hearing aid evaluation of his life from Dr. Pat Klienztle at Auburn University at Montgomery. "Dr. Pat was warm, receptive, and attentive. She took time with me; the way she conducted herself made me feel important. For the first time in my life, since I found out I had a 'hearing problem,' I made a step toward accepting myself as a person with a disability." Dr. Pat was instrumental in introducing Tim to Jim Owens, his first rehabilitation counselor contact. "Jim took a chance with me and provided me with hearing aids. From that point forward my experiences with vocational rehabilitation flourished."

As Tim was coming to terms with himself as a person with a disability, he was still determined to pursue a Ph.D. "Because I still struggled with my self-esteem and confidence, I did not know where to start." He was put in touch with Rachel Beasley Hughes, who at the time was a counselor at the Janice Capiluto Center for the Deaf in Montgomery, Alabama. Rachel assisted Tim with formulating a plan of action to pursue his Ph.D. "I had to have some experience first, and Rachel was instrumental in setting off a chain of events that led me to where I am today," he explains.

He received a job at East Alabama Mental Health in Opelika, Alabama, "because of Rachel," Tim adds. "I took off afterwards. I enrolled at **Troy State University-Phenix City** and completed a Master's degree in Counseling and Human Development. I wore my hearing aids with pride, and it was quite strange, because I no longer felt like an outcast. I felt more confidence than ever."

Dr. Andrew Cox and his dearest friend, Dr. Dianne Gossett, were instrumental with Tim's development as a counselor. Both encouraged him to pursue a Ph.D., and—with their support—he entered **The University of Alabama** (UA) in the summer of 1994 to begin doctoral studies in Counselor Education.

"I wasted no time scheduling an appointment with the UA Speech and Hearing Center where I continue to go for hearing evaluations," Tim explains. "Dr. Becca Brooks and Dr. Carmen Taylor are simply fantastic." The Speech and Hearing Center also put him in touch with Jamie Glass, a vocational rehabilitation counselor for the deaf and hard of hearing. Like Jim Owens, Jamie took a chance with Tim. "I was the first doctoral student he had worked with, and he indeed did me much justice. Jamie acquired new hearing aids for me, and they are a godsend."

Tim then began an assistantship with Student Support Services at the University. That experience led him to a full-time position as Manager of Physical and Psychiatric Disability Services with The University of Alabama in 1997. In 1999, he was given an opportunity to join The University of Alabama at Birmingham as Director of Disability Support Services where he remains today.

"If you are deaf or hard of hearing, give yourself an opportunity to succeed. Take advantage of services available to you, and do your best to make the most of it," Tim says. He believes that students in high school who are deaf and hard of hearing should find an institution where they feel most comfortable. "Visit, visit, visit! Ask appropriate officials about services for students who are deaf/hard of hearing. Make sure you investigate as many aspects of an institution as you can," Tim suggests. For instance, he explains, find out if tutoring is available, ask about what degree programs are offered, look into living arrangements and financial aid, etc.

Tim believes that with the advent of

assistive technology, the market for persons with disabilities has improved. Today, he states, individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing have unlimited possibilities in the technology industry. Also, when asked about technology in the classroom, he says, "I believe that C-print™ and realtime captioning are the wave of the future for higher education. Students who use ASL or another form of transliteration should become very familiar with written English in order to succeed at the postsecondary level." Higher education, Tim believes, measures one's ability to demonstrate mastery of English in nearly every academic course. C-print™ and realtime, he says, offer needed exposure to linguistic styles with spoken English. "All of us who are deaf/hard of hearing should use these formats regardless of one's educational goals."

In Tim's office, he uses an amplifier for his phone, but he prefers e-mail or visiting with a student, staff, or faculty member in person. Phone communications are difficult, he says, even with an amplifier. "Thank goodness for e-mail," he adds.

Tim is still pursuing his goal of a Ph.D. and is almost there. "My free time is spent with my wonderful wife, Beth, and my two boys, Alex and Davis. With their support, I am working harder than ever to complete my dissertation. Who knows, maybe next year folks will refer to me as Dr. Tim King. I cannot wait!"

Tim is very grateful to the many folks who have helped him on his journey. "Without the assistance of VRS and timely interventions from friends and family," he says, "I would not be here."

He further adds, "Without a commitment from persons dedicated to the Postsecondary Education Consortium (PEC), we may never know how many Dr. Tim Kings are out there. Please keep up the good work. Each of you has value. Believe me when I say we all appreciate PEC without question, hesitation, or reservation."

“Michael McKee

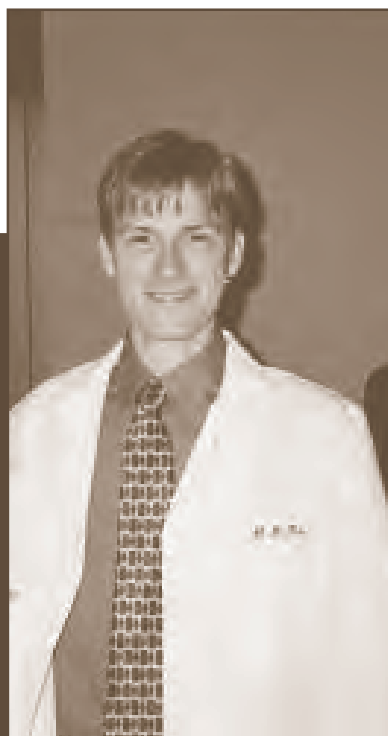
I love this quote from John Locke,” shares Michael McKee, “since it epitomizes what I believe in life: ‘The best defense against this world is a thorough knowledge of it.’”

Michael, who is twenty-four years old and profoundly deaf, is well on his way towards a thorough knowledge of many things. He is a fourth year medical student at **The University of Florida College of Medicine**. By telling PEC a little bit about himself, he hopes to be able to help others growing up in the same situation as his.

At a young age, his family knew something was wrong, since he never learned speech. Unfortunately, the physicians and audiologists he and his family consulted did not diagnose him with profound deafness. To the dismay and shock of his parents, many of them gave him an even worse diagnosis of mental retardation, language aphasia, and other severe neurological impairments. It wasn't until his parents returned yet again to another audiologist to get his ears checked that they learned of his very profound bilateral sensorineural deafness. “The audiologist reported the news to my parents,” Michael says, “and they were elated to finally find the cause. The true cause of my deafness is unknown, although many theories exist. My hearing loss was found to be in the 90 dB range across all frequencies in both ears.”

Soon after the diagnosis of deafness at almost age three, Michael was fitted with hearing aids and started speech therapy. “At that time,” he explains, “there existed a very strained relationship between the deaf community who supported American Sign Language and the oral therapists who espoused oral communication for the deaf child. My parents were hungry for information from both sides, but they had great difficulty obtaining information and finding members from the deaf community. Since we live in a predominantly hearing world where English is spoken, my parents chose the oral method for me.”

With the devotion of his speech therapist



“Take advantage of the technology and accommodations that are available to succeed in every aspect of life.”

and his mother, Michael learned how to talk, lipread, write, and read at age three. “For those of you out there with deaf hyperactive children, there is hope,” he shares. “Keep in mind that if your child is deaf, his or her hyperactivity might stem from a frustration of not being able to communicate easily with others.” At around age five, Michael started calming down from his own bouts of hyperactivity, since his communication skills improved dramatically. “It allowed me to get out of the shell that I had previously lived in,” he adds.

“Today both sides supporting either sign or oral communication have come closer to agreeing to allow the best decision to be made for the deaf child,” Michael explains. “Many people

have asked me what I would have done. I am still thankful that my parents decided on the oral communication route, since it allowed me to interact with the hearing world without difficulty. However, I sincerely believe that the method of communication and education should be decided on an individual basis for each deaf child. A child can succeed today with either the oral communication route or the American Sign Language route. What is absolutely crucial is the parental involvement in the child's education. There is no substitute for that, especially in the child's early formative years."

In addition to allowing future parents of deaf children to have all the information that they need to make the best decision for their child, Michael believes that deaf people need to make themselves more accessible to children who are deaf and their parents. "I try to be accessible to them to give them advice and to answer their many questions," he says. "Even more important is the role of education for deaf people. I sincerely believe that education at the highest level is essential for each and every deaf person to be able to succeed in life. Let me also add that education is not solely the responsibility of others, but it is the responsibility of the deaf student himself or herself. I believe in being curious about my surroundings and learning more about them through hands-on experience, library reading, web surfing, and socializing with interesting people."

Michael's interests are quite varied, but he enjoys all sports (especially basketball), hiking/canoeing, gardening, weight lifting, and reading/writing. These hobbies add balance to his life and provide a much-needed reprieve from the rigors of medical school.

Michael attended **Lynn University** on an academic scholarship and graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science in Political Science. He also attended **Florida Atlantic University** to study Chemistry. "At this time," he says, "it was difficult for me to pinpoint a career that I wanted to pursue, due to my varied interests. I thought about pursuing a career in agronomy, veterinary medicine, hydrology, the

teaching of history, and medicine. It wasn't until I got a chance to spend time with physicians in their medical offices that I finally decided to pursue a career in medicine." After quickly taking the MCAT and completing his application, he interviewed at his first choice of medical schools, The University of Florida College of Medicine, and was accepted there.

Currently, he is a fourth year medical student planning to become a family medicine physician. Next May, he will graduate with a medical degree and enter a residency program. "I hope to be able to incorporate many deaf families among my regular patients," he says. "Through the usage of American Sign Language, I hope to be able to improve patient/physician relationships and improve health awareness among deaf patients."

Michael grew up in a mainstreamed educational environment and depended on speechreading skills to communicate with others. However, at the late age of 18, he started learning American Sign Language from friends in the deaf community. "At this age," he says, "I had become curious about others with the same hearing impairment as me. I am proud to have many friends, both hearing and deaf. By having friends from varied backgrounds, it has allowed me to learn about and appreciate life. At the same time, my deaf friends have taught me and allowed me to become fluent in American Sign Language."

During his studies at The University of Florida, Michael has become very involved with the deaf community. This year he became president of the North Central Florida Association of the Deaf and also a board member of the North Central Florida Deaf Service Center. "I am excited to be able to be a part of the deaf community on a local and statewide level and to passionately fight for our deaf rights," Michael says.

In the last two years of medical school, Michael has requested interpreting services. "It is difficult to lipread in a clinical setting since many medical staff members and patients turn their faces away. They forget that I need to see their lips to lipread them," he shares. "This makes lipreading them impossible. By having an interpreter

there with me, I feel like I have the ability to capture all of the information being conveyed, which is the primary goal of a deaf student. Prior to that, I relied on transcription note services and sitting in the front row to lipread the professor for all of my educational needs. However, interpreting services allow me to be greatly involved with discussions, which I really enjoy.”

Since he is deaf, Michael explains, he has also accommodated himself with diagnostic tools in medicine. “I currently use a graphic auscultation system to ‘listen’ to the heart. This new device allows someone like myself to be able to interpret the heart sounds in a visual way. In addition, I use a very strong amplified stethoscope to listen to the lungs and abdomen.”

Michael believes that deaf people are fortu-

nate to have the boon of technology; never before, he says, have doors been opened this wide for individuals who are deaf. “The advent of e-mail, instant messaging, and telecommunication relay systems were a great blessing for me and many others from a communication standpoint. Since my hearing loss is too severe, I need to use the TTY and utilize alphanumeric pagers to accommodate myself with phone usage. Like many others, I am anxiously awaiting the day when we will be able to utilize palm held computers equipped with voice recognition systems so that I will be able to use the phone like any other hearing individual.” Michael feels that all individuals who are deaf should take advantage of the technology and accommodations that are available to them to succeed in every aspect of life.

Tamara Payne

Tamara Payne graduated Summer 2000 from **Central Piedmont Community College** (CPCC) in Charlotte, North Carolina. She majored in Dance and hopes to one day have her own dance studio to provide a place for other disabled people to take classes in art, mime, dance, and sign language. Tamara feels lucky to have had the support of her family, her church, and school to help her realize her potential and teach her that she can succeed in anything she puts her mind to.

Tamara was born and raised in Charlotte. She was mainstreamed through public school using a sign language interpreter. She lives at home with her parents. Her mother and sister are fluent signers. Tamara participated in many activities during high school, which included three years as a cheerleader and an active membership in the DECA Club. During her junior year, she was recognized in a magazine about deaf children in America.

Tamara started classes at CPCC in 1995. At first, she was undecided as to what she wanted to study. After some classes in College Transfer and Fashion Merchandising, she finally found her niche in Dance. "This curriculum," she says, "has satisfied my love of the arts. It also goes hand in hand with my other interests." At the age of fifteen, she joined a church mime group, "The Silent Message," and later led the group. For six years she was a member of a youth missionary group that went to New York during Spring Break to present their message through mime to children and homeless people in the Battery. She has traveled to countries such as England and Croatia to do mission work. Tamara has also participated in the leadership training provided by PEC, the Postsecondary Education Consortium.

Tamara has great plans for the future. She



"No matter what their disability, everyone has the opportunity to reach their potential."

was married December 16, 2000, and she and her new husband are staying in Charlotte. She hopes to work for the King David Conservatory in order to prepare for opening her own studio for the fine and performing arts.

"No matter what their disability," Tamara says, "everyone has the opportunity to reach their potential. If people want to try something, they should do it and never think, 'I can't!'"

Joseph J. Ryan

Joseph J. Ryan (“everyone calls me JJ”), originally from Memphis, Tennessee, is currently a graduate student in Community Counseling at **Gallaudet University**. As an undergraduate student at **The University of Tennessee**, JJ majored in psychology. “My step dad is a psychologist,” JJ says, “and he influenced me a lot with his stories and his work with youth. It fascinated me, and I was encouraged to explore that field.”

As a student at UT, JJ joined a fraternity and served as the Assistant Pledge Trainer. “I played intramural football with them,” he says. “I also served on the disability office committee.” JJ’s favorite activity while a student was attending the football games.

“The disability office at UT was awesome,” JJ says. “They provided great support, and I could go there anytime just to hang or talk with anyone. The interpreters were very professional and helpful, too. I liked the fact that the services the office provided were easily accessible. I’m grateful to the disability office for what they did for me as an undergraduate.”

JJ was born deaf and received an oral education while growing up. “I went to St. Joseph’s Institute for the Deaf in St. Louis from grade one to eight,” he explains. “It was an oral deaf private boarding school. I was then mainstreamed at a private high school in Memphis.” It was not until he arrived at The University of Tennessee that he learned American Sign Language from his deaf friends.

JJ had a life-long dream of attending The University of Tennessee. “Once I got there,” he shares, “the reason for going there got better! I learned a lot about myself and got to meet many deaf individuals who are now my life-long friends. If not for them, I would not have learned sign language or Deaf Culture. Going to UT was the best thing I’ve done.”

JJ also considers his decision to attend

Gallaudet for his Master’s degree a good one as well. “After graduation,” he says, “I would like to work for a non-profit foundation or for the government.”

“My advice to high school students is to pick the school where you feel most comfortable. Do as much as you can while you are there, because you only get to do it once in your life. The college years will always be memorable.”



“Do as much as you can while you are {in college}, because you only get to do it once in your life.”

Zachary Shay

Zachary Shay is an accomplished artist. He graduated from high school in 2000 and currently lives with his mother, father, and two sisters in Douglasville, Georgia. Everyone in the Shay family uses sign language.

Any obstacles that Zachary may face now or in the future would seem like a breeze compared to the medical adversities he has had to overcome in the past. Despite his mother's happy and uneventful pregnancy, Zachary was born weighing only five pounds and had

numerous defects. His parents and doctors were surprised to find that he was missing thumbs and radius bones in his arms, resulting in short arms and in hands that turned in on his body. On one side his ear was smaller, but more devastating were the defects inside his body. Although he had kidney problems, most life threatening were the three holes in his heart. The doctors told his parents that if he did not have heart surgery he would die. Physicians agreed to do immediate surgery. Zachary's family, however, is Jehovah's Witness and would not allow him to receive a blood transfusion. The doctors received a court order to give Zachary blood for surgery, believing that



"Be good, work hard, and don't give up on your goals!"

surgery was impossible without a blood transfusion. His parents researched other ways to help Zachary, and they got permission to take him to Houston, Texas, where Dr. Denton Cooley had performed many successful surgeries on other patients without giving blood transfusions. Zachary, a very sick boy, was sent by Lear jet from Atlanta to Houston.

When Zachary arrived in Houston, he was examined by Dr. Cooley's team. When the family informed the team of doctors that they were told that Zachary would die without heart surgery, the doctors stated that with or without blood he would die in surgery at his size. He was simply too small, the doctors said. They adjusted his medicine and informed the family that he needed to grow more and then be brought back for the surgery.

But, a wonderful thing happened. As Zachary grew, the holes in his heart closed and can barely be detected today.

Due to his numerous medical problems, Zachary's family was unsure if he could hear. "My heart also had to work so hard that I had difficulty eating and breathing," Zachary says. Later, because he was so alert and inquisitive, he was diagnosed with only a moderate hearing loss, and he was given a hearing aid. In school he wore an auditory trainer. According to his elementary teacher, however, he was her only student who did not respond to the auditory trainer, and over the years it became apparent that Zachary was profoundly deaf. "I had the choice of going to the school for the

deaf about an hour from my home," Zachary says. "My parents chose to keep me near home. They felt that Douglas County Schools had an excellent hearing impaired program." Zachary continued from elementary school to high school in the Douglas County School System and graduated in the year 2000.

Taking advantage of being able to continue his education in the **Douglas County Schools** until age twenty-one, Zachary is continuing to study art. His high school teacher suggested that Zachary go to school for half days to continue his art education. In high school, Zachary had taken all the art classes available and found himself very skilled in clay pottery and oil painting. He is now very accomplished, and his artwork is selling. "My art teacher, Mrs. Coward, is teaching me some things that are taught in college art classes," Zachary shares. He is also doing examples of art projects to help Mrs. Coward teach other students. When he turns twenty-one, however, Zachary will search for the right place to study art with other artists of his caliber. "I have a hard time getting my art work home from school without selling it first!" Zachary says.

Zachary, who also loves flowers and plants, would love to set up his own art studio and is seeking funds in order to do so. Zachary's teachers and friends constantly comment on his happy, positive attitude. He advises others "to be good, work hard, and don't give up on your goals!"

Zachary has brought joy to many lives. The person he is and his unique story have enhanced many lives.

Charlie Weir

Charlie Weir is a student at **Lenoir Rhyne College (LRC)**, studying Sports Medicine / Athletic Training. "My first few majors were pharmacy, engineering, and business," he shares. "I didn't enjoy any of these majors. I went to see the career counselor, and she suggested I take the career assessment test, so I took it, and the test showed that my first option should be serving in the military, the second was a career in sports, and the third was a career in medicine. I looked at the combination of sports and medicine." Charlie took a few classes in this major and observed others work in the training room for a semester. "I fell in love with this major and could easily imagine myself working as an athletic trainer."

Charlie received the Moretz Student Athletic Trainer Award following his second year in the program, and in the Fall of 2000 he worked with the LRC football team. He is also very involved as a brother of Theta Xi fraternity, in H.A.N.D.S. (Hearing and Deaf Signers), and in intramurals.

Before transferring to LRC in 1996, Charlie attended **The University of Massachusetts-Amherst**. "I didn't feel comfortable," he shares, "attending such a big school and did not feel like I had a close relationship with any of the professors." He decided to transfer to a smaller school and had heard about LRC. After visiting for a weekend and talking to a few professors and several students, he felt very welcomed and made the decision to transfer. "Now," he says, "LRC is my second home. It has a great atmosphere, and I feel comfortable hanging out with either deaf or hearing friends."

Charlie is grateful for the staff in both Support Services for Deaf / Hard-of-Hearing Students and the Sports Medicine Department. "The Support Services office provides full-time, comprehensive services, including interpreters,

notetakers, tutors, or anything you could ask for. Also, they were available to interpret for me during my internship that required over 1,000 hours for a degree in Sports Medicine / Athletic Training. The staff in both departments has been behind me all the way."

Charlie also speaks highly of the types of technology that he uses most often. "I usually use e-mail," he says, "to communicate with professors. It seems to save a lot of time compared to trying to communicate over the phone. E-mail has helped break down some of the communication barriers that I used to have with hearing people." Also, in classes, Charlie describes, the school offers closed caption videos whenever possible. Professors also use Power Point presentations to help students understand complicated vocabulary and clarify their lectures. "And, within the major of Sports Medicine / Athletic Training, there is a lot of specialized equipment used when working with athletes, such as Ultrasound, electrical stimulation, and an Isokinetic dynamometer. Without technology, I would not be able to accomplish what I have set out to do."

As an athletic trainer, Charlie's responsibility is to apply his specialized knowledge and skills to provide service to athletes of all ages and abilities. He will also have to take the National Athletic Trainers Association Board of Certification exam. Charlie is enthusiastic about his field of study and even encourages others wanting to learn more about it to look at www.lrc.edu or www.lrc.edu/hlss.

Charlie also knows how to take a break from too much work and enjoy life. "I like doing many, different things and gaining more experiences in life," he says. "I have so many hobbies, such as fishing, camping, golfing, and swimming. And, I like to try different kinds of foreign beer once in a while!"

"I tell high school deaf students to follow their dreams," Charlie says. "If you do not know your dream, keep searching. Find a career that

will make you happy and that you will enjoy for the rest of your life. Don't let any negative aspects stop you, and don't ever give up!"

Charlie's plans after graduation are to go to graduate school to earn a Master's degree and get

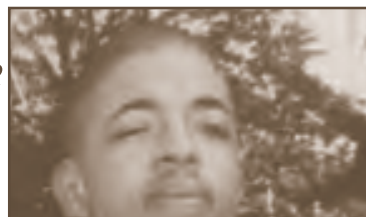
a job he enjoys. "My dream is to work with a professional sports team in football, baseball, or any College Division I football team. I hope to have a family right after graduate school as well. In whatever direction God leads me, I'll go."

"Find a career that will make you happy and that you will enjoy for the rest of your life."





Students Making a Difference Through Children and Youth



Rickie T. Bradley II

Rickie T. Bradley II attributes his success in life to two, main factors. "My motivation and interest are inspired by my Christian faith and my parents who taught me that God requires us to love and help one another. Helping others makes the world a better place."

Rickie lives in Boiling Springs, North Carolina, and has been hard of hearing since birth. All the schools he attended while growing up were North Carolina approved programs for the deaf and hard of hearing. He attended Cary Elementary School and Martin Middle School, a magnet school for gifted children in Raleigh, North Carolina. He graduated from Athens High School.

Currently, Rickie works as a Resident Advisor at **Gardner-Webb University (GWU)**. "I help students with emotional and spiritual problems," he explains. "I solve disputes between roommates and enforce the school rules for the residents." He is also a full-time student at GWU, majoring in Biology with a double minor in Chemistry and Business Management. Rickie decided on a major in Biology while in high school. "Despite my hearing loss," he explains, "I've always been successful in science classes."

As a student at Gardner-Webb, Rickie has been involved in many extracurricular activities. He was a member of Gospel Choir and the President of his sophomore class. Before that, he was involved in Christian Ministries United and FOCUS, Fellowship of Christians United in Service. He was also involved in the Senate and received a Senate award.

Rickie chose Gardner-Webb because of their deaf program. "I'll always need effective notetakers and tutors to help me understand should I fail to comprehend what went on in the lecture," he says. Rickie commends GWU's successful program for deaf and hard of hearing

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students. "I also enjoy the small classes at GWU and the close relationship with professors."

Rickie is grateful for the technology available to him today. "The TTY aids me in talking to the deaf residents in other dorms," he says. "My doorbell lights help me recognize when I have a visitor, too. Of course, I am grateful for my hearing aids as well."

In his free time, Rickie is a member of Palmer Grove Baptist Church, and he holds Bible study on a weekly basis on campus. He ministers at his church as well. "My goal," he explains, "is to get licensed to minister some time this year after graduation." He speaks at local churches in addition to his own. He also adores Myrtle Beach and vacations there twice a year.

"I am also interested in health care," he states. "I'm going to graduate school to pursue a Master's degree in Public Health Administration. I would like to live and study here in Raleigh to continue to be close to my family and friends."

Eager to give advice to high school deaf and hard of hearing students, Rickie shares: "The only greatest obstacle you are facing is yourself. Only you have the power to transform your shortcomings into motivation to succeed. Never accept what others say about you, and rise above the things that are holding you back. Give everything your best shot. Then and only then will you find what truly makes you happy and successful."

Karmon Norris Cain

Karmon Norris Cain advises students who are deaf and hard of hearing to be sure to attend college for the right reasons.

"Don't go to college for only social reasons. If you want to learn more and be serious about your future work, go for a postsecondary education."

Understanding the importance of following her own advice, Karmon pursued her postsecondary education at **Jacksonville State University** (JSU) in Jacksonville, Alabama, and majored in Computer Information Systems (CIS). "Because I learned that more and more computers will be needed in the future," Karmon says, "I decided to major in CIS with a minor in Mathematics, my favorite subject." As a student, Karmon received a Special Recognition Award in CIS and held several offices in the Student Organization for Deaf Awareness (SODA). She was also the recipient of SODA's Leadership Award for 1996-1997.

As a student who is deaf, she also took advantage of the services provided by Jackson-

ville State University—interpreters, notetakers, and tutors. She graduated in May 1997.

Currently, she works for the Georgia Department of Education as Secretary for the Georgia Parent Infant Network for Educational Services program. "Before I got this position," she shares, "I was a teacher's aide at the Atlanta Area School for the Deaf for one and a half years."

Karmon enjoys her work. "I enjoy the mathematical logic that goes into processing monthly expense statements. I also really enjoy using the computer everyday for different purposes. Growing up, I always dreamed of working with children, and—sure enough—I now work for a program that focuses on young children with sensory impairments."

She is thankful for not only the technological advantages that the computer brings, but she also appreciates what e-mail, the TTY, hearing aids, and her ring flasher provide. All of this technology aids her in her daily life.

In November of 1999, Karmon married Michael Cain, another JSU alumnus. "We met in college," she says. "We recently got a house in Snellville, Georgia." She and her husband enjoy their new home and life in Snellville. "I enjoy going to church, e-mailing friends, playing sports, shopping, and outdoor activities."



"If you want to learn more and be serious about your future work, go for a postsecondary education."

Justin Cribb



"I'm very blessed to have a family that loves and supports me."

Justin Cribb describes himself as "cute and chubby, but I'm also very intelligent, dependable, and lots of fun to be with!" Justin grew up in Florence, South Carolina, and has one brother who is also hard of hearing. Both Justin and his brother have degenerative hearing losses. They are very close and enjoy riding horseback, camping, and fishing with their family. "All of my mother's family lives in the same county, and I enjoy spending time

with them," Justin says. "My extended family is very important to me. I'm very blessed to have a family that loves and supports me," says Justin. His father is a minister, and Justin loves being called the "preacher's kid." He enjoys signing music for different churches and helping others learn sign language.

He attended Darlington County Schools, and—after visiting a mainstream program in Conway, South Carolina—he decided to transfer to the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind in his sophomore year. He was a member of the Beta Club and was Student Council Vice President. In his senior year, he was President of the Student Council and captain of the football team. "I was involved in many sports activities that I had never experienced before," he says.

After graduation, Justin attended **The University of South Carolina, Spartanburg** for one semester. He then became a student at **Spartanburg Technical College (STC)** in January, 1999. He chose STC because of the wonderful interpreting services, the strong deaf program, and the skilled instructors.

Growing up, Justin, his father, and his brother worked together building horse trailers, sheds, and additions to their house. He learned electrical skills from his dad and decided that was the career he wanted to pursue. He is majoring in Industrial Electronics and is looking forward to a career in this field. Justin has an innate ability in electronics and has a bright future ahead of him. "Electronics is a good major, because technology is the future," says Justin.

Justin works as a Residential Advisor at South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind with boys ranging from ages fifteen to seventeen. He is responsible for teaching independent living skills, helping them with homework, and planning afternoon activities. Justin will graduate in 2001.

Tamiko Cromwell

A graduate of **Spartanburg Technical College (STC)**, Tamiko Cromwell majored in Automated Office. This major allows her to work closely with computers, which she enjoys. She graduated from James Island High School and attended **Trident Technical College** for a year. While talking with a deaf friend, Tamiko learned about the Cooperative Program for the Deaf and Blind in Spartanburg, South Carolina. She transferred to STC in 1996. In the future, she may continue her education by attending Cosmetology School.

Tamiko attributes her success in college to notetakers, tutors, and interpreters. "Tutoring helped me understand my courses. The interpreters were with me most of the day and suggested different learning techniques that helped me improve my grades. My interpreter, Melba Bishop, saw me listening to music with headphones. She suggested I try wearing an FM System during class. From that moment on, I wore it in all my classes. The support staff recorded materials on tape, and my grades improved dramatically. Who would think somebody hard of hearing could be an auditory learner?"

Tamiko is working as Residential Advisor at the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind. She supervises students and assists them with homework and other duties. She is also an Outreach Specialist for PEC. She assists Nancy Lane in preparing for workshops and mailing materials. She gives presentations to PEC affiliates, educating them on issues related to deafness and how colleges can better serve deaf and hard of hearing students. She does an outstanding job and has been very beneficial to the faculty.

Tamiko was born prematurely, causing her to become hard of hearing. She weighed two pounds and one ounce at birth and stayed in the hospital for three months. Her mother told Tamiko that she could hold her in one hand

when she was born. Even though she overcame her struggles at birth, she learned that in life you still have to struggle to get what you want.

In her free time, Tamiko enjoys vacationing with her family, cooking, and jewelry-making. She also styles hair for her friends and family. Tamiko was "Miss First Baptist" in her hometown in 1994. She participated in the Black History Programs and was a judge in the Miss Deaf Beauty Pageant while attending college. She won first place in STC's "Celebrate the Arts" for her poetry.

Tamiko encourages people to think for themselves. "College is not for everyone," she says, "but having goals will ensure success. If you decide to further your education, please be serious about it. College helps you learn a lot about yourself."

"College helps you learn a lot about yourself."



Phabian Dean

Phabian Dean is a six foot, four inch, 325-pound mountain of a man who works as a resident education parent at the Mississippi School for the Deaf. At age 24, he has the huge responsibility of caring for fifteen boys, ages ten through twelve, who seem to admire him greatly.

In 1976, Phabian was born in Jackson, Mississippi, at the University Medical Center. At six months old, his family noticed he was not responding to the music at church. After having several tests done, Phabian's mother found that he was deaf. At age one, he began school at the Magnolia Speech School for the Deaf. He attended school there until he was five and then began classes at the Mississippi School for the Deaf (MSD). Phabian attended MSD until he graduated from high school in 1996.

At MSD, Phabian was accustomed to making the honor roll. Some of his favorite classes were math, art, and English. However, he preferred and loved sports. He made All-American in football and basketball. He excelled in Track and Field, winning the "Best Field" plaque from his school.



"Bad decisions may ruin your goals, your reputation, and your life. Don't blow it!"

Phabian's talents carried over in college where he played football. He enrolled in **Hinds Community College** (HCC) in 1996 with printing as his major; however, he quickly realized that drafting would better suit him. "I loved college life," he says. "I made a lot of new friends and was well known for playing defensive end on the football field." The Hinds Community College Eagles won the State Championship for 1997-98. Phabian had articles written about him in the newspaper as well as special interviews for the Sports programs on television.

Phabian was very pleased that he made drafting his major at HCC. Although it was a real challenge at times, he enjoyed working on the computer. "I was very glad to be a student under teachers who were so knowledgeable and helpful," he says. He was also very appreciative of having skilled interpreters from the Disability Support Services in every class.

In Phabian's free time, he loves to ride horses, exercise, and travel. "As a Christian," he says, "I love to converse about God and His goodness. I also love to talk to older, more mature people, but—at the same time—I enjoy talking to the fifteen young, deaf children I tend to every day. I enjoy teaching them the skills they need to succeed in life, such as the importance of good behavior, how to budget their money, what to look for in a good friend, and how to be responsible."

When thinking about his own future, Phabian wants to marry someone with a good personality and someone who will love God and will be a good mother. He wants to have at least two children, live in the country, and have lots of horses. "I don't care about riches; I'm not really material minded. I'd rather focus on having a good home than focus on wealth," he says.

To all students now attending college, he offers this wisdom: "You now have your first decisions to make as responsible adults. You have no one to supervise your every move, so make good decisions and good choices for your future. You hurt only yourself if you don't. Also, bad decisions may ruin your goals, your reputation, and your life. Don't blow it!"

Leslie J. Garcia

Leslie J. Garcia was born hard of hearing. "When I was two years old," she says, "my parents realized that something was wrong when I didn't respond to someone talking behind me or to other sounds." Leslie's parents enrolled her in a private Catholic school, Villa Madonna in Tampa, Florida. "I thank God," she says, "for giving me the best teachers, the Salesian Sisters at Villa Madonna, because they were an important part of my life."

In second grade, Leslie began speech reading training, which is a skill that has benefited her through every stage of her life, she says. She graduated from Tampa Catholic High School and continued on to **Hillsborough Community College** in Tampa where she earned an A.S. (Associate of Science) degree in Business Management and Marketing. She presently works for the SunTrust Private Banking Group and has been in the field of banking and finance for ten years now.

Currently she is pursuing additional postsecondary studies in American Sign Language at Hillsborough Community College. "Returning to college after ten years wasn't easy," she shares. "I had a difficult experience in my first class of sign language. As always, accustomed to trying to listen to and lipread my instructors, I sat in front of the class, but this time it did not work! My teacher was deaf and did not use voice while teaching ASL. Even though there were interpreters in the back of the class voicing for the hearing students, I was unable to both listen to and watch them and watch the instructor at the same time. I was frustrated that my unique learning needs were ignored. I felt like a tennis ball, as my head bounced back and forth while I tried to lipread the interpreters in the back of the class and watch the instructor's sign language in the front of the class. This was the most upsetting feeling; I felt that I wasn't acknowledged in the 'Deaf World,' and eventually I dropped the class. If I had known then what I know now about requesting assistance for classroom



"Say not, 'I cannot' but 'I can!'"

accommodations with the office of services for students with disabilities that almost all colleges now have, I probably would have been able to get the instructor to work with me on possible solutions."

"Still," she adds, "I did not give up, because I believed in myself and in my dreams. I know that no matter how impossible things may seem at the moment, someday and somehow I will reach the goals that I have in view."

Leslie is now almost finished with her first course in Beginning Sign Language with a great teacher, Debbie, "who has been a blessing," she adds. Leslie does not intend to be a professional interpreter, but she would like to be available to help children who might need someone such as herself who knows what it is like to be in their shoes. "I want to make a difference in someone's life like my family, my husband, and my teachers have made in mine. My personal motto is: Say not, 'I cannot' but 'I can!'"

Madalyn Powell

"I tell myself that there is nothing I can't do."



Madalyn Powell is a hard of hearing student at **Tulsa Community College**, beginning her second year towards her degree in Human Services. In August of 1999, she was diagnosed with a considerable hearing loss but has still maintained a 3.8 GPA. She also teaches at Hillcrest Child Development Center and has been teaching the two-year-old class sign language.

"I contribute a large portion of my success," she says, "to the Resource Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. They have provided me with an assistive listening device to use while in class, a cassette player, tapes, batteries, a notetaker binder with carbon paper, transcription for movies, and

a tutor if needed. They also send letters to my instructors before the beginning of classes, informing them of my needs. Rondalyn Reynolds has been instrumental in putting me in contact with agencies, such as Vocational Rehabilitation where I qualified for the purchase of both of my hearing aids and Quota International of Tulsa who awarded me a \$500 scholarship last year." Madalyn has been pleased to encounter understanding instructors who are willing to wear the assistive hearing device she needs to comprehend the material covered in her classes.

"Since my involvement with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Resource Center," she shares, "I have a better understanding about those with a hearing loss."

Madalyn understands the importance of finding humor in her disability. "In a class I am currently taking, the instructor left the room in order to give us the privacy needed to vote on issues of concern," she explains. "Once the instructor was in the hallway, he asked me to keep an eye on the class and make sure they did not take advantage of the situation. I began to laugh uncontrollably, but—of course—my classmates had no clue what I was laughing about. Now, for those of you who do not have a hearing loss, this may not be that funny, but I can honestly say that this was the first time in my life that I was sure I didn't miss some part of the conversation."

Madalyn will be transferring to **Oklahoma State University-Tulsa** in the Fall of 2001 to complete her Bachelor's degree in Human Services. "My advice to deaf and hard of hearing high school students is to be patient, and try to stay positive. I tell myself that there is nothing I can't do, and when I get frustrated and discouraged, I look to God and have the faith that He will guide the way."

Jennifer Christine Rogers

Jennifer Christine Rogers was born May 4, 1980, one month after the due date. “This,” she says, “was soon recognized as the first mark of my personality—a strong-willed, unique individual who could never settle for less than what I was able to achieve.” From the beginning, Jennifer explains, obstacles were a part of her life. “The first and significant obstacle that I faced and will face for the rest of my life occurred when I was one-and-a-half years old. I was diagnosed with a severe hearing loss. As a result, at the age of two I was sent to school to learn how to function in the ‘hearing world.’ At Sunset Acres Elementary School, I learned how to accept my deafness and my hearing aids as a part of myself. I knew that my deafness was not something to be



“I know that being different is a gift.”

resented and that the hearing aids were nothing to be ashamed of.”

As Jennifer continued with school and with the support of her family and teachers, she learned the importance of knowledge. Reading and studying became an essential and integral part of her life. “In the early 1980s, closed captioning was not readily available to the public. Therefore, I did not watch much television. Now I do, but it is still reading!” Jennifer discovered that the more she read, the more she found herself enjoying reading and writing. “I found it easier to express myself through these mediums, because both the ‘deaf world’ and the ‘hearing world’ use the written word, a mutual form of communication,” she says.

After kindergarten, she attended public school until she graduated from the Liberal Arts Magnet Program. In addition, she attended speech therapy from elementary school until her sophomore year in high school. “A natural introvert, I had to learn to become an extrovert,” she shares, “someone who speaks out not only in the classroom but in life as well. I learned to ask questions, to respect others’ opinions and my own, and to stand up for my beliefs and ideas. These aspects have taught me how to become a stronger person in the face of others’ efforts to intimidate me because of their ignorance of my hearing impairment. Being deaf does not mean I am dumb!”

Jennifer’s determination to succeed in the hearing world led her to improve herself intellectually. “I learned,” she says, “that I thrive on knowledge and the exploration of new aspects of life. From an early age, I saw life’s obstacles as adventures to overcome; however, not all had happy endings. The point is to survive, to learn, and to live. I did—through high school, with my family, and now in college.”

During the summer of 1998, she was accepted to the Louisiana Scholars’ College at **Northwestern State University**, an elite honors college. “Here I discovered a close relationship with my professors, a friendly and helpful staff, and

terrific peers who accepted not only my hearing impairment but my entire self. Here I am not singled out as the 'Deaf Girl.'" As an award for her academic efforts after completing the Spring 2000 semester, Jennifer made the Dean's List.

"I have always known that I was different, and I have accepted that," she says. "However, I am not only different because of my hearing impairment but as a person. I was reared in a community that acknowledges differences as a part of an individual. Also, I was always encouraged to ask questions, because knowledge was considered important to the development of my identity. Part of human nature is to seek new things and discover one's limits. I realize

that no one person has the same limits as another. That is something each individual has to learn for himself or herself."

Jennifer is a strong believer in herself and her ability to control her destiny through her actions and ideas. "I know that being different is a gift," she says. "Individuality and variety is what keeps the world interesting. I was raised to accept my differences as a part of who I am. It helps me develop an understanding of how far I can reach for a goal. I know that challenges are a part of life and that I am able to reach new ideas by meeting each obstacle with the knowledge that a lesson will be taught. It is my own decision to learn that lesson."

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