

# NTID

RIT

**FOCUS Magazine**

Fall/Winter 2019

**NTID's  
global  
reach**





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## From the president

# A growing reach



Photo by Michael Guinto

After the excitement of celebrating 50 years of NTID, you'd think that things would settle down. There's a yearly rhythm that begins with each new SVP class

and ends with each graduation ceremony, after all, so there's a well-worn path for us to follow. Now that the festivities have ended, it's time to return to business as usual, right?

Not so for NTID. For us, there's no such thing as "business as usual."

Here on campus, the first question in any situation is always, "What's next?" What are our next steps? What can we do differently—and better? What is a natural way for us to grow from here? These are always especially important questions to answer when celebrating a milestone; it's a time to take stock, look around and make some decisions.

In our case, some of our growth will come through increasing international partnerships, such as with Beijing Union University and Tianjin University of Technology, and through increasing our students' knowledge and understanding of the world through study abroad opportunities (see p. 7).

Some of our growth will come from students who receive extraordinary co-op experiences that become extraordinary job opportunities, which eventually gift them with the ability to share their success with

future students (see p. 10).

In some cases, our growth will be pushed forward by students who come here for research opportunities they can't find anywhere else (see p. 14). When they leave, they carry those experiences—and their memories of RIT/NTID—with them to be shared with family, friends and potential future RIT/NTID students.

Some of our growth will come through looking at ourselves: how we're leveraging our assets to increase greater community engagement and working with our alumni to support new generations of students (see p. 16).

And some of our growth also will come through understanding and welcoming new technologies. This lets us develop programs that allow our students to emerge from the other end of an outstanding and accessible education into a world ready and waiting for them (see p. 17).

Above all, our growth will come from our community: our students, faculty, staff, alumni, retirees and friends, all of whom make everything we do possible. For examples of how our community pushes NTID forward in new and exciting directions by developing programs, events and activities for a more well-rounded student body, see p. 2.

Thank you for your continued support. Onward!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gerard".

Gerard J. Buckley, SVP '74, '78  
NTID President  
RIT Vice President and Dean

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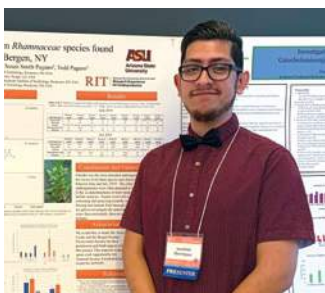
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# On-campus happenings: fall 2019

From apples to actors, the fall 2019 semester offered a full range of fun and educational events for students, alumni, and the Rochester community. Here are a few:

**1 “Moonlight Sonata”**  
RIT/NTID retirees Paul and Sally Taylor participated in a question-and-answer session with their daughter, award-winning filmmaker Irene Taylor Brodsky, and her son, Jonas, after a screening of Brodsky’s most recent documentary “Moonlight Sonata: Deafness in Three Movements” during Brick City Homecoming & Family Weekend. The film follows the journey of Jonas, who is deaf and learned to play Beethoven’s “Moonlight Sonata,” famously written while the composer was losing his hearing. The film also highlights the journey of Brodsky’s father, Paul Taylor, who, in addition to being deaf, is navigating the aging process. Jonas’, Paul’s, and Beethoven’s journeys make up the three movements of the emotional documentary.

themed treats, dancing and a welcome message from NTID President Gerry Buckley, the festival is designed to give new and returning students a sense of community and connection.

**3 North Korea armament**  
A panel of experts helped demystify the complicated history of North Korea for a packed house during Brick City Homecoming & Family Weekend. Discussing where U.S. foreign policy fits in the history of the Korean peninsula, participants included: Former Special Envoy to North Korea Joseph DeTrani, a retired U.S. ambassador and professor in the Department of Defense and Strategic Solutions at Missouri State University; Stephen Noerper, senior director for policy and education at the Korea Society, and a professor at Columbia University; and Terence Roehrig, a professor of National Security Affairs at the Naval War College, and director of the Asian-Pacific Studies Group.

**2 Apple Festival**  
An annual campus tradition, Apple Festival is an opportunity for new students to learn about the variety of student clubs and organizations available at RIT/NTID. With sweet apple-



Photo by Michael Guinno

Photo by Michael Guinno



Photo by Matthew J. Sluka



Photo by Matthew J. Sluka



Photo by Michael Guinto



Photo by Michael Guinto

4

5

6

**4 “I and You”**

RIT/NTID Performing Arts and RIT’s College of Liberal Arts presented the play “I and You” in October. Featuring deaf and hearing cast members and captioning in the college’s newly updated 1510 Theatre, the play focuses on two students whose work on an assignment leads them to share secrets and a deeper connection.

visual art, ASL and written literature, film, theater, deaf studies, linguistics, history, deaf education, and cultural studies. In addition to the conference, an exhibit of deaf art opened at Rochester’s Memorial Art Gallery.

**6 People of the Third Eye**

Audiences experienced various genres of ASL performance art and poetry, personal narratives, creative storytelling, and dramatic monologues during “People of the Third Eye” in November. During the performance, special guest artist and RIT/NTID alumna Nancy Rourke engaged in live-action painting to complement the story.

**5 Experiencing deafness through art**

The first-ever ARTiculating Deaf Experiences Conference was held at NTID in November. Close to 200 attendees participated in the international conference examining deaf experiences from various perspectives such as

**Susan L. Murad**





Photo by Michael Guinno

**Making Connections** NTID students dressed to impress and, with resumes in hand, met with more than 50 employers at the annual NTID Career Fair.

# The art and science of employment

**F**or most of NTID's 50-year history, the Center on Employment, or NCE, has worked with students and alumni to assist them with their job search, and has developed and enhanced relationships with employers to encourage and aid them in hiring students for cooperative work experiences (co-ops) and permanent employment.

"Our goal is to help employers see the upside of bringing qualified deaf and hard-of-hearing employees into their workplace," NCE Director John Macko says. "We use a 'can do' approach, and mentor students to do the same."

Macko and his team of employment advisors use a variety of strategies with employers and students to achieve their goals.

# The **return** on investment

Students and alumni tell us how working with NCE prepared them for success:

“

Our goal is to help employers see the upside of bringing qualified deaf and hard-of-hearing employees into their workplace. **We use a ‘can do’ approach, and mentor students to do the same.**”

John Macko, NTID Center on Employment

## With Students:

### **Talent + Positivity = Success**

NCE staff works with students to prepare them for the interview process through mock interviews. Faculty and staff volunteers serve as “hiring managers,” reviewing student portfolios and asking questions. These sessions are recorded and reviewed with the student along with written feedback.

“Teaching students how to be resilient, advocate for themselves, and view the inevitable barriers they face as deaf people in a hearing world as challenges to be overcome is key to helping them succeed,” Macko says. “It’s a source of pride for us when we have a student come back from a successful job interview and tell us they used the information they learned to answer questions and get their dream job.”



Photo by Michael Guinto

## **Amanda Bui**

From Fremont, California, Bui majors in mobile application development and completed a co-op at Lockheed Martin. “NCE has supported me and allowed me to step into the real world, and I finally conquered my fears and succeeded. My co-op was an opportunity to gain knowledge and have new experiences.”



## **Nikolas Kelly**

A supply chain management major from Raytown, Missouri, Kelly completed a co-op with Dow Chemical in Midland, Michigan. Of his experience at RIT/NTID, Kelly says, “There is a culture here that supports and prepares future deaf and hard-of-hearing professionals to strive in their careers.”

Submitted photo

### Jo Bempong

A 2018 computer engineering master's degree recipient from Richardson, Texas, Bempong now works for Texas Instruments and was a recruiter at the 2019 NTID Career Fair. "Being a recruiter at the fair this fall, I was staggered by the sheer number of diverse students with potential. I was able to leave knowing that, without a doubt, the number of deaf people becoming professionals in this hearing-dominated world is going to escalate in the near future."



Photo by Michael Quinto



# 1,000+

presentations of the "Working Together: Deaf and Hearing People" workshop by NCE staff over the past 30 years

### With Employers: Diversity Delivers Value

NCE staff has presented their "Working Together: Deaf and Hearing People" workshop more than 1,000 times over the past 30 years to companies large and small. NCE professionals visit companies to provide practical information and solutions they can implement in their workplace immediately, often at little to no cost. They frequent industry conferences and fairs to share the stories of talented RIT/NTID students, and invite recruiters from public, private, and government entities to attend the college's annual career fair. Often, RIT/NTID alumni working for these companies come back to campus to recruit.

"That's when it comes full circle," Macko says. "We find that once an employer hires one of our students for co-op or permanent employment, they become 'evangelists' of RIT/NTID. They realize our students bring new perspectives, energy, and ideas to their workplace, and they find benefits that are far beyond the original filling of an open position."

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Susan L. Murad



Photo by Michael Quinto

### Adam Brodack

A networking and systems administration major from St. Louis, Missouri, Brodack credits NCE for helping him secure a permanent position at The Dow Chemical Company. "NCE has helped me develop a professional and unique resume, and they helped me land a job as an ITS connectivity specialist at Dow right after graduation."



## International reach

**Studying in France** RIT/NTID students got to immerse themselves in French culture with a faculty-led two-week trip to France that included an excursion to the world-famous Eiffel Tower.

Submitted photo



# Exploring global perspectives

**N**TID is offering RIT/NTID students and faculty new opportunities to experience the world in new ways through academic coursework and programs, study abroad excursions, and international collaborations with other universities.

As articulated in RIT's strategic plan, "Greatness through Difference" ([rit.edu/strategicplan](http://rit.edu/strategicplan)), solutions to our world's complex problems "will emerge from diverse and creative communities that understand the value of partnership and whose commitment to the common good is paramount." NTID's new offerings in the global arena extend RIT's and NTID's history of successful international initiatives and alliances.

### Study Abroad

NTID's faculty-led study abroad excursions started about five years ago

for deaf and hard-of-hearing students as well as for hearing students enrolled in NTID's American Sign Language–English interpretation program and in the Master of Science program in secondary education. When NTID faculty lead these study abroad excursions, deaf students can travel together with signing faculty, which provides a positive, enriching group experience. Study abroad opportunities to Chile, Costa Rica, and Japan have taken place, and this year, two new faculty-led study abroad excursions were offered to France and Russia. Another study abroad trip to China will occur this spring. And, as always, RIT's general study abroad opportunities at its global campuses in Dubai, Croatia, and other locations are accessible to deaf and hard-of-hearing students through support from NTID's Department of Access Services.



### France

NTID faculty members Christopher Kurz and Lisa Johnston led 11 students last summer on a two-week tour to France where they learned about the language, culture, and history of the deaf community. France was an ideal location because it has a large deaf population and a rich history of deaf education and rights, and American Sign Language has its roots in France. Excursions included visits to the La Balme-les-Grottes (the birthplace and museum of Laurent Clerc, the first deaf teacher in America, and the Caves of La Balme), Louhans (the birthplace and museum of 19<sup>th</sup> century deaf rights advocate and writer Ferdinand Berthier), Beaune



## International reach



Photo by David Torres on Unsplash

**Cultural treasures** The Moscow Metro functions as a showcase of art and architecture.

(a medieval walled city and the center of Burgundy wine production), the Palace at Versailles, the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame Cathedral, the Louvre, the Visual Theatre, and Institut National de Jeunes Sourds de Paris—the world’s first free school for the deaf. Students enrolled in a three-credit spring semester course, which culminated in the study abroad trip to France in the summer.

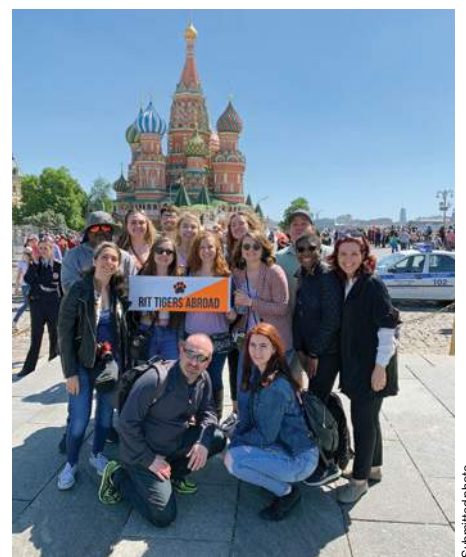


### Russia

Led by NTID staff members Regina Kiperman-Kiselgof and Dmitriy Kiselgof, who are originally from Ukraine and St. Petersburg, this study abroad program included a three-credit spring semester

course that culminated in a two-week excursion to Moscow and St. Petersburg.

During this program, 12 students had the opportunity to meet and interact with deaf people in various settings, including Russian universities, associations, theater, and government. They took part in painting their own Russian nesting dolls and learning and engaging in Russian games using Russian Sign Language. Visits to notable historic sites in Moscow and St. Petersburg included Red Square, the Kremlin, St. Basil’s Cathedral, Moscow Metro, Swan Lake Ballet Theater, State Hermitage Museum, Raising Drawbridges, St. Isaac’s Cathedral, Church of the Savior on Spilled Blood, Peter and Paul Fortress, Peterhof Palace, and an evening cruise on the Neva River.



Submitted photo

**Visiting Russia** During the Russia study abroad program, participants toured St. Basil’s Cathedral on Red Square, one of Moscow’s most famous works of architecture.





**Learning ASL** Twenty-nine students and seven faculty members from the Technical College for the Deaf at Tianjin University of Technology and the Special Education College at Changchun University attended the New Signers Program at NTID this past summer. They joined RIT/NTID NSP program participants on a field trip to Niagara Falls.

Submitted photo



## China

NTID faculty members Yufang Liu and Tao Eng will lead a group of deaf and hard-of-hearing students to China next spring. Students will tour the major cities of Beijing, Tianjin and Changchun; visit important local cultural sites, including the Great Wall of China, the Forbidden City and old Beijing Hutongs; experience Chinese deaf college life and Chinese deaf culture; learn Chinese Sign Language; and enjoy authentic Chinese cuisine. Students will enroll in a three-credit spring semester course that will culminate in the trip to China.

In addition to this new study abroad opportunity, NTID also is developing international partnerships with institutions in China to increase opportunities for deaf

and hard-of-hearing students to study, work, and pursue experiential learning abroad as well as increase opportunities for NTID faculty to engage with global partners. Over the past three years, NTID has established partnerships with Tianjin University of Technology, Changchun University, and Beijing Union University to offer joint academic programs and student cultural exchanges as well as faculty exchanges. Building on the work of the Postsecondary Education Network (PEN) International, which benefited from the generous support of the Nippon Foundation, these efforts will grow as additional external funding is secured.

“These partnerships are instrumental in giving our students global enrichment experiences that will make them even more marketable upon graduation,” says NTID President and RIT Vice President and Dean Dr. Gerry Buckley. “In addition,

these partnerships have led to several new research projects and grants in accessibility, sign language, deaf education, and STEM education with our faculty and students. Moreover, we have been able to attract a number of talented international students to study at RIT/NTID, which further enhances the diversity of our student body and broadens everyone’s perspectives.”

**Ilene J. Avallone**

### FOCUS Extra:

Four percent of RIT/NTID’s students come from countries other than the United States. Visit [bit.ly/NTIDglobal](https://bit.ly/NTIDglobal) to watch a video about some of RIT/NTID’s international students.





We deeply value our partnership with RIT/NTID and have found great success in recruiting top talent for our organization.”

Niko Kouknas, PNC Senior Campus Recruiter

# Opportunities abound at 19<sup>th</sup> annual career fair

**M**ore than 50 local and national corporations, federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations participated in the 19<sup>th</sup> annual RIT/NTID Career Fair. These representatives had the chance to meet hundreds of deaf and hard-of-hearing students for co-ops and permanent employment.

The NTID Center on Employment is responsible for the career fair and has worked to build relationships with employers to increase participation in the fair. Many employers who attend the fair send representatives who have graduated from RIT/NTID. A total of 26 alumni representatives came back to RIT/NTID to recruit students from their alma mater to their respective companies.

NCE Director John Macko says, “College students often have never met people who are involved in their specific fields of study at this point in their lives, and alumni return to the career fair with the knowledge that they are role models and proof that deaf and hard-of-hearing people can find success post-graduation.”

Grace Yukawa, an RIT/NTID student who majors in mechanical engineering says, “The RIT/NTID Career Fair is a massive opportunity to meet employers and recruiters. It connects the name on your resume to your face and makes a great impression on employers.”

After taking the day to network and pursue job opportunities, Yukawa adds, “You can get great insight on what their working environment is like and how well you get along with them!”

Dylan Panarra



Emily Lederman (computer science) chats with Chris Sano from Microsoft during the career fair.

Photo by Michael Guineto



NCE presented the Outstanding Employer Partner Award for consistently hiring deaf and hard-of-hearing students and graduates to two companies this year, Tobyhanna Army Depot and Rochester School for the Deaf.

Photo by Michael Guineto



ng able to be put into a  
 nd I am sure you're thinking  
 ou know, safety factors, you  
 ou know, you have to make  
 st, but you also have to make  
 fe for humans to take. So  
 s, if we say



NCE hosted an event prior to the career fair that included several employer representatives who accepted questions from students regarding careers and what employers are looking for in potential employees.

Photo by Michael Guinto



Photo by Michael Guinto

Recent graduate Grace Yukawa, '19, and Gerry Buckley, NTID president, at the career fair.



Photo by Michael Guinto

RIT/NTID alumni from a variety of national corporations, federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations returned for the 19<sup>th</sup> annual career fair.



# Blazing New Trails



**ARTiculating Deaf Experiences**  
A packed house looks on as Tabitha Jacques, director of the Dyer Arts Center, introduces a presenter.

Photo by Michael Guinto



**RIT/NTID's Office of Development and Alumni Relations** has undergone several significant changes over the past several months, rising to new challenges and seeking new opportunities.

### **Office of External Affairs**

Under the leadership of Bryan Hensel, executive director, the Office of Development and Alumni Relations has expanded its mission, absorbing several programs and offices and changing its name to NTID's Office of External Affairs.

The office now counts asset and venue management, event planning, and national outreach as new parts of its mission.

"We're developing an exciting synergy that will enable new relationships both within NTID and between NTID and its community," says Hensel. "Between the ability to stage large events, manage logistically complex projects, and leverage NTID's significant financial, physical, and cultural assets to build a home for our alumni community and an attractive investment for our corporate partners, we anticipate great things from this group."

### **A Significant (and Successful) Homecoming**

Homecoming 2019 was a significant milestone for RIT/NTID. Not only were Christopher and Staci Wagner, two RIT/NTID alumni, recognized as university-wide award recipients for their hard work in support of the college (see p. 16), but the career fair also was scheduled the same week (see p. 10).

Activities included a reception honoring the Wagners and this year's Distinguished Alumni Award recipient, Michael Rizzolo, president and CEO of Interpretrek; a panel focusing on the geopolitical implications of North Korea's recent activity in developing nuclear weaponry; and the annual alumni hockey tailgate, which exceeded attendance expectations.



Photo by Michael Guinio

**Recognizing hardworking alumni** The audience looks on during a reception honoring NTID's Distinguished Alumnus Award recipient Michael Rizzolo and RIT's Volunteers of the Year Award recipients Christopher and Staci Wagner (shown on stage).

### **ARTiculating Deaf Experiences Conference**

With nearly 200 participants, the ARTiculating Deaf Experiences Conference, hosted at RIT/NTID in November 2019, can readily be considered a success.

Encompassing topics ranging from the history of deaf theater in France to an examination of signed poetry, the conference drew academic experts and researchers from around the globe.

Helmed by Patti Durr, NTID associate professor of cultural and creative studies, and Tabitha Jacques, director of NTID's Dyer Arts Center, the conference grew out of a desire to recognize NTID's contributions to the history of deaf culture and the college's continuing role in the development and transformation of deaf cultures around the world.

The conference included a first-of-its-kind partnership with the University of Rochester's Memorial Art Gallery to display pieces from the Dyer Arts Center's permanent collection in an exhibit, as well as a preview performance of "People of the Third Eye," a stage production based on the lived experiences of deaf and hard-of-hearing people.

Sponsoring partners included the Center for Disability Rights, CSD's Connect Direct, and Interpretrek.

### **Celebrating SAISD's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with Marlee Matlin**

In December 2019, RIT/NTID hosted Marlee Matlin, Academy Award-winning actress and activist, for a talk about her journey through addiction, recovery, and sobriety.

Matlin's visit came about due to the work of Keven Poore, director of RIT/NTID's Substance and Addiction Intervention Services for the Deaf (SAISD), an on-campus organization providing access to resources and referrals for students and members of the local community struggling with substance abuse, addiction, recovery, and sobriety.

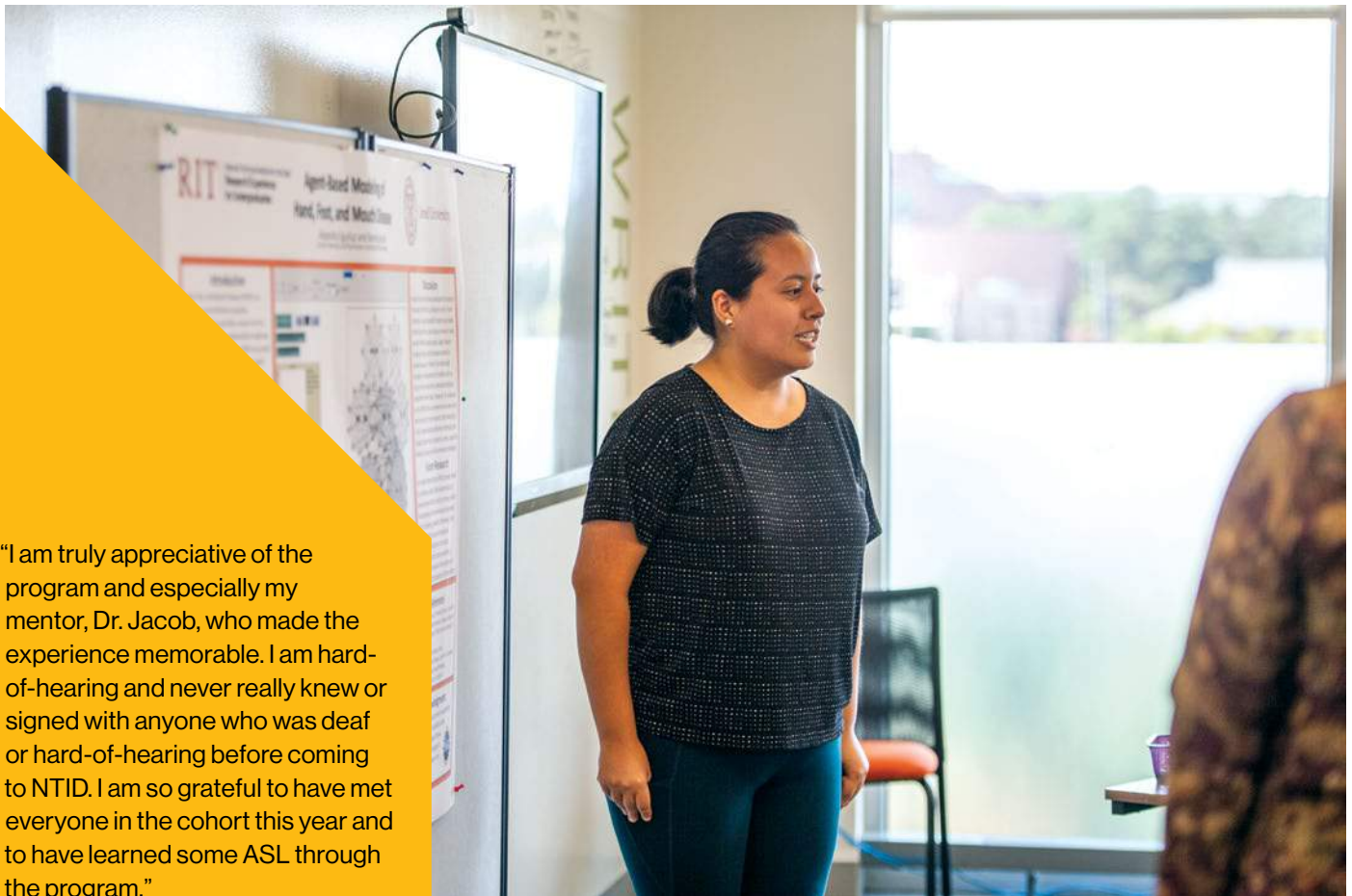
"Marlee Matlin has been a role model for many," says Poore. "Her ability to be so open about her experience, from addiction to recovery, is compelling and was a perfect fit for SAISD's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary."

Matlin's presentation, based on her 2009 book, titled "I'll Scream Later," drew an audience of more than 400 community members and students from both RIT/NTID and Rochester School for the Deaf.

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**James McCarthy**

## Student research



"I am truly appreciative of the program and especially my mentor, Dr. Jacob, who made the experience memorable. I am hard-of-hearing and never really knew or signed with anyone who was deaf or hard-of-hearing before coming to NTID. I am so grateful to have met everyone in the cohort this year and to have learned some ASL through the program."

—Alexandra Eguiluz

Photo by Michael Guineto

# Twice as nice

## All-deaf cohort finds success in RIT/NTID's second Research Experience for Undergraduates

In 2019, Rochester Institute of Technology's National Technical Institute for the Deaf hosted the second summer of an all-deaf cohort of the National Science Foundation's Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU), which brought deaf and hard-of-hearing students from across the country together to do research at RIT/NTID.

"There have been other REUs that invite one, two or a few deaf students each year, but we are the first REU to host a full cohort of students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing," says Bonnie Jacob, associate

professor in NTID's Department of Science and Mathematics. "In 2019, we had students from several universities, including Cornell, Gallaudet, Georgia Tech, University of Virginia, a few from RIT, and more."

RIT/NTID's REU was eight weeks long. The first week was a research boot camp, focusing on basic mathematical, statistical, scientific, and programming skills to get students ready for their research projects. For the remainder of the REU, students chose their own projects and worked in pairs. Each pair was mentored by RIT/NTID faculty who



## Where the REU students came from

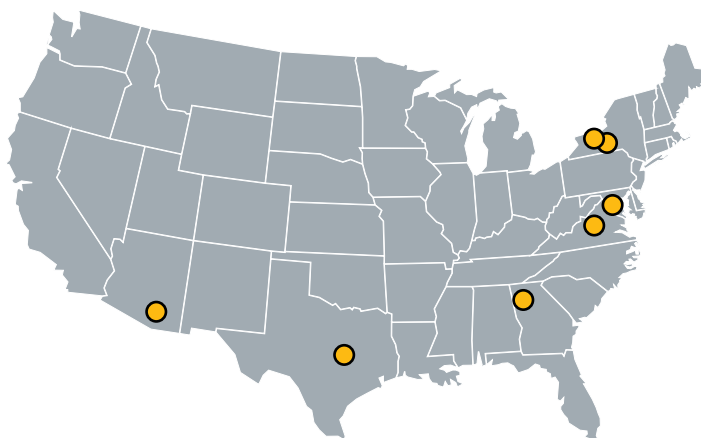
Ashton Huckaby  
**Austin Community College**

Alexandra Eguiluz  
**Cornell University**

David Martin  
**Georgia Institute of Technology**

Samantha Forshay  
**Gallaudet University**

Dean Bowler  
**Georgia State**



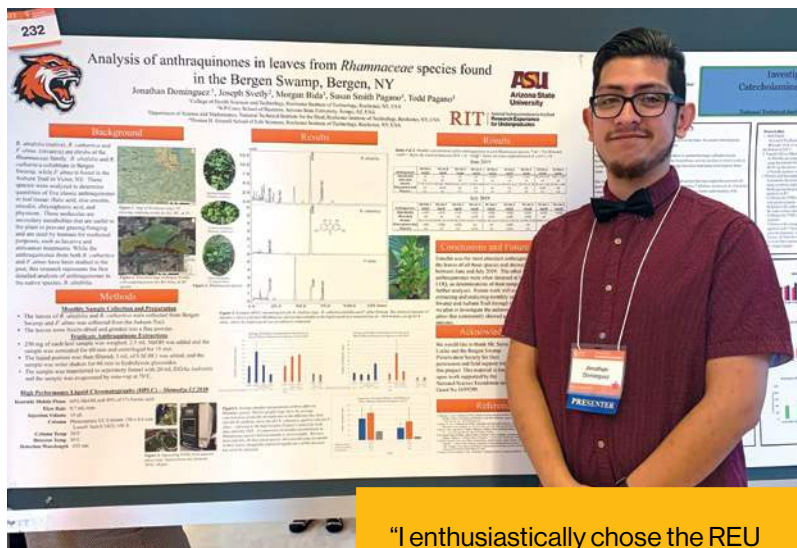
Emily Flynn  
**University of Virginia**

Benjamin Bauman  
Jonathan Dominguez  
Madilyn Smith  
**RIT**

Landon Meyer  
Joseph Svetly  
**University of Arizona**



Submitted photo



Submitted photo

are experienced in working with students who are deaf or hard of hearing. After eight weeks, the students presented at RIT's undergraduate research symposium.

Jacob also noted that it was exciting to see the growth shown by the students. "Students who may not have evinced much confidence in the field at the beginning of the program tend to grow into researchers who are able to see their own progress through the summer, culminating in the symposium," says Jacob.

After the symposium, The RIT/NTID REU group nominated Alexandra

Eguiluz for the competitive Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR) Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) Symposium. Equiluz was selected and invited to the prestigious symposium in Washington, D.C., where she presented her work modeling how hand, foot, and mouth disease spreads through a daycare. Currently, some of this year's REU participants are working with their advisors to submit their work for publication in peer-reviewed journals.

**Dylan Panarra**

"I enthusiastically chose the REU program because it would grow my expertise and allow me to explore my curiosity in science. During the REU, I collected the endangered, native plants in the field then extracted the desired phytochemicals in the lab, analyzed them through instruments and developed my knowledge of scientific research. It was beneficial to me because it helps me on my journey to pursue a Ph.D."

**-Jonathan Dominguez**

## Alumni honorees



Photos by Michael Guinto

**Distinguished Alumnus (left)** Michael Rizzolo of Interprettek speaks about his experience as a student and how he has given his support to RIT/NTID through the years. **Volunteers of the Year (right)** Christopher and Staci Wagner discuss their work supporting RIT/NTID's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Alumni Reunion Weekend.

# Opening the doors of opportunity

The selection of two RIT/NTID alumni as the university-wide Volunteers of the Year award recipients for 2019 represents a significant milestone for NTID. And for one of them, it began with a single step.

"The moment I stepped onto the RIT/NTID campus in 1987 as a transfer student, I found my home and my identity," says Staci Wagner ('92), one of RIT's two Volunteers of the Year, along with her husband, Christopher D. Wagner (SVP '88, '94).

"I am who I am today because of RIT/NTID," adds Mr. Wagner. As the chief operations officer of Customer Experience for Purple/ZVRS, he recognizes that he's come a long way. "Always leave the doors of opportunity open no matter where you are," he reflects.

"I was truly humbled when we received the award," says Ms. Wagner. "It is a heartfelt honor, especially coming from a place we call home."

The Wagners were recognized this year for their leadership in coordinating, organizing and staging RIT/NTID's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Alumni Reunion Weekend,

which brought more than 3,000 people to campus in June 2018. This gathering represented the single largest alumni event in the history of RIT.

"I believe we were recognized not just for the successful execution of the reunion celebration, but also for the fact that, as alumni, we have set an example of giving back to RIT/NTID—or, in other words, paying forward the good deeds and outstanding education we received," says Mr. Wagner.

"It was a way of saying thank you to RIT/NTID," says Ms. Wagner, of her work on the reunion. "The sky was the limit for me during my time as a student, but the sky is so much bigger for today's students. I can't wait to see what's in store for them."

Equally as excited is Michael Rizzolo (BITP '76, '78, MS '86), 2019 recipient of NTID's Distinguished Alumni Award. As president and CEO of Interprettek, an interpreting agency with a national reach, Rizzolo has his own connection with RIT/NTID.

"As a little perspective, NTID was all of six years old when I arrived on campus," says Rizzolo. "So I've seen a lot in 50 years. When I started, NTID was graduating

students with diplomas or certificates, and now we're seeing graduate students and some are going on to do doctoral work. It's amazing to see that change."

He also feels that he owes the college for changing his life.

"I didn't plan on a career in interpreting," he says. "But it just happened. The Basic Interpreter Training Program was my introduction to the deaf world, so now it's been 40 years. I've taught at NTID, I've been able to provide services, and I've set up a scholarship for two students every year through Interprettek, so I'm giving back to future generations, too."

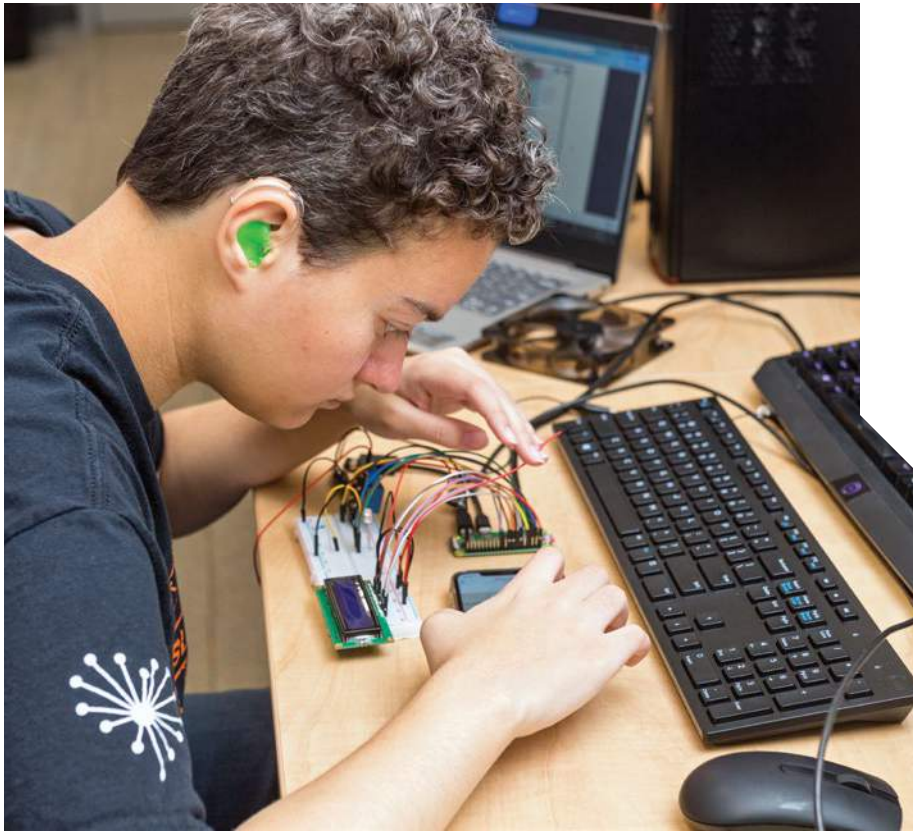
Rizzolo says he can't overstate the value of giving back, especially to an institution that's given him so much, important life lessons included.

"It's so important to stay in touch with other students and faculty," he says. "Just stay in touch, encourage them, and let them know their effort was worthwhile. That's the value of staying in touch with the alumni community, supporting each other and growing your network."

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**James McCarthy**





# Design. Build. Publish.

### Apps by RIT/NTID mobile app students:

**Weather App:** Displays current weather for the day in the user's location.

**Teach2Connect App:** Best practice tips and advice for faculty working with deaf students.

**NTID 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion App:** Programming information and ticket sales for attendees to use during the three-day event.

**Deaf Refugees Conference App:** Information for attendees to use during the conference.

**All Access App:** Makes information about local businesses accessible for app users who are deaf or hard of hearing, deaf-blind, or non-native English speakers.

**Memorial Art Gallery:** Provides accessible content regarding artwork in forms of text-based content, captioned videos in sign or spoken language, audio descriptions, adjustable font size, and more.

**Greenhouse App (design underway):** Used to monitor, access, and control climate conditions in greenhouses.

**Development Progress** Christine Maldonado, a third-year student in the mobile app development program from St. Augustine, Florida, works on her capstone project, a greenhouse control system, for Pelligrino's Pickle Pagoda. Once finished, the greenhouse app she helped build and publish will be used to monitor, access, and control climate conditions in greenhouses.

Today there are billions of mobile phone users as well as a seemingly endless array of mobile apps designed to meet every need. It should be no surprise that this vast and growing market needs skilled mobile programmers—professionals who know how to design new mobile apps and successfully launch them into the marketplace.

NTID recognized this need and, in 2016, accepted its first cohort of deaf and hard-of-hearing students in the mobile app development program. To date, 20 students have enrolled, and last year, the first students graduated from the program. These students, and others who have started in an NTID associate degree program, continue their education in RIT's bachelor's degree program in web and mobile computing in RIT's Golisano College

of Computing and Information Sciences. NTID's associate+bachelor's degree option makes this a seamless transition.

Information and Computing Studies Department Chair David Lawrence says the skill sets of RIT/NTID students in the mobile app development program set them apart from students in other mobile app programs.

"Our students design and build apps and are required to publish them in iOS and Android stores before they graduate," Lawrence said. "This experience, as well as doing a co-op and completing a capstone project, gives our deaf and hard-of-hearing students a competitive advantage in demonstrating discipline-related skills for the job market when they seek employment."

**Ilene J. Avallone**

Photo by Michael Guirto



**Sharing personal experiences** Leticia Arellano of Gallaudet University moderates a panel of artists who contributed to the Dyer Arts Center's "Color to the Cube" exhibit, which was a juried group show featuring deaf artists of color during fall 2019.

