

SPRING / SUMMER 2006

# FOCUS

NTID

National Technical Institute for the Deaf • Rochester Institute of Technology

A close-up photograph of a young woman with blonde hair, wearing a black graduation cap and gown with a yellow sash. She is smiling broadly and looking slightly to the right. The background is blurred, showing other graduates and a yellow circular light.

**Congratulations  
to the Class of  
2006!**

# Pursuing Their Passions

by Kathleen S. Smith

Whether they're focusing on a unique interest they brought with them to campus or delving into a newly discovered activity, many students find that college is the perfect place to pursue their passions. The students featured here each have unique talents and interests—passions that express their individuality and bring great personal satisfaction.

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**“One person with passion is better than 40 people merely interested.”**

E. M. Forster

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## Gaining a Worldly Perspective

Spring break 2006 found third-year student Michelle Gerson in the Philippines, along with two other RIT/NTID students and one staff member, offering a leadership workshop to 75 deaf students at the College of St. Benilde (CSB).

Officials of the Postsecondary Education Network-International (PEN), a grant program based at RIT/NTID, invited the four to present the workshop for CSB, one of PEN's partner institutions.

The group talked to CSB students about preparing for the transition from college to work, described their own community service experience, and shared anecdotes about working in the real world.

Gerson, a Professional and Technical Communication major from New Jersey, who had never been out of the United States, says the experience was life changing.



**New Best Friends** Michelle Gerson embraces Filipino children, whom she describes as “beautiful...their big doe eyes, their wide-eyed looks of curiosity...it took every ounce of self control not to adopt all of them!”

“I never thought that I could have that kind of impact on someone from another country,” she says. “I felt I crossed cultural boundaries, literally and figuratively.”

Gerson was so energized by the experience that she even is considering international relations as a career field.

“I took great pride in representing NTID,” she says. “I hope I have the opportunity to go abroad and help the

international deaf community.”

Denise Kavin of PEN-International says the workshop at CSB was such a success that PEN is considering creating an on-the-road leadership training program to bring RIT/NTID students to different countries to conduct workshops on leadership and transition for their peers.

## Opening Doors and Windows Through Theater

Roughly a dozen RIT/NTID students and faculty members involved in an original NTID production, *Windows of the Soul*, traveled to New York last spring to perform at the New York City Deaf Theater Festival. The play, written and directed by Luane Davis Haggerty, faculty member in the NTID Department of Cultural and Creative Studies, depicts stories revolving around deaf characters and deaf culture.

Cast member Louis Labriola, a third-year Business major from Yonkers, called working on *Windows* “a great experience.”

Labriola, president of the NTID Drama Club, says, “Doing this show



**All the World's a Stage** NTID students celebrate their performance at the New York City Deaf Theater Festival.