

The Sign Post

Newsletter for the Central California Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf



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Interpreters Share Unique Travel Assignment Experiences

Fresno Interpreters Kaitlin Rickerd (NIC) and Katie Carlson (NIC) both have had very unique interpreting assignments which called them to travel abroad. Kaitlin had the opportunity to interpret for a tour traveling through Ireland and Katie was able to experience interpreting on a seven day cruise to Mexico. Here we share with you a glimpse into their individual experiences.

How did you get the job?

Kaitlin Rickerd (KR): I started looking for and contacting tour companies to inquire about how and if they handle interpreter requests from Deaf travelers. I found one tour company that organizes a "Deaf Week" tour of Ireland for both Deaf and hearing travelers for which the company provides an interpreter. I contacted the company and asked about their requirements and how I might be able to have my name added to the pool of interpreters they utilize. They were not hiring at the time but, luckily, the company retained my contact information and about a year later contacted me to let me know that a position was available.

Katie Carlson (KC): Thanks to some amazing references I was contacted by the Los Angeles area interpreting coordinators and asked if I was available/interested in applying for a position interpreting on a seven day Mexican Rivera cruise to three destinations in Mexico. My first thought was: where do I sign up?!

What was the application process?

KR: The company is based on the east coast and all of my application forms were received and submitted via e-mail. In addition to my resume and copy of my certification, I was required to send an initial letter of interest to the company, outlining my reasons for applying, any previous travel experience, and why I felt I was qualified for the position. The second part of my application consisted of a phone interview, where I was questioned about my submitted paperwork as well as given further details about the job.

KC: I was asked to complete a cruise-specific questionnaire and submit that along with my resume. I was hired based on my qualifications, previous work experiences, and references from interpreters who were already contracted with the company.

How did you get paid?

KR: The tour company previously utilized local interpreters with informal payment arrangements, so as the first independently contracted interpreter, the company and I had to come to an arrangement on how I would bill for my services. In the end, we decided that I would receive a stipend for my flight prior to the tour and receive payment for my interpreting services post tour.

KC: Prior to embarking, there were copious amounts of communication and discussion that took place via e-mail between the interpreter coordinators and the interpreters. Included was a detailed contract to complete as well as an outline of the pay rate and billing information, which was to be utilized for developing an invoice to be individually submitted on the last day of the cruise. Payment to all interpreters was received upon completion of the assignment. We were technically hired as staff interpreters of the cruise line.

Tell us about the work! What were your responsibilities, expectations, and roles?

KR: The tour was a semi-guided tour, meaning there was no specific guide that stayed with the travelers the entire time, instead there were different bus drivers and guides for the excursions. My role was as an Interpreter/Host, which meant that I was not only responsible for interpreting but also for hosting the group as a whole. Hosting duties included keeping track of the tour schedule, check in at the hotels, providing information about the day excursions, selling tickets for day excursions if needed, and in general, being a representative of the company and the point of contact for the tourists if they should have any questions or concerns. The group I traveled with consisted of both Deaf and hearing American tourists and I was lucky that the entire group was patient and understanding about my dual role.

As a semi-guided tour, the travelers had the freedom to participate in offered excursions or to do whatever else they wanted. Excursions included day bus tours of the Connemara Region and Kylemore Abby, the Dingle Peninsula, The Aran Islands, a Jaunting Car ride through the Killarney National Park, an Ennis Walking Tour, and a tour of the Guinness Brewery. Travelers could pick and choose what excursions they wanted to go on in the *Continues on page 2*



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Leadership Meetings are open to all CCRID members. See the calendar at our website for date, time and place.

Contact ccrid@ccrid.org with any questions regarding meetings.

The Sign Post is prepared quarterly, in January, April, July, and October. Please send ideas, items or information for announcements to newsletter editor Shannon M. Simonelli at ccrid@ccrid.org one month prior to publication date.

Continued from Page 1: Have Terp, Will Travel Abroad!

specific locations. The excursions that the majority of Deaf participants chose were the excursions the interpreter went on as well. This particular tour had some Deaf people traveling together, so there was not a big issue of not having an interpreter for a specific excursion and even when I was available, some Deaf people chose to go off on their own without the presence of the interpreter. Most of the interpretation occurred on a bus, and I can attest that interpreting while standing backwards on a bus moving along a very bumpy road is not an ideal situation for an interpreter! I suffered a few bumps on the head, some motion sickness, and even landed in a few travelers laps when hitting a particularly big pothole in the road! Luckily, the consumers were understanding and we all did our best to make it work. KC: While this distinctive experience was amazing and memorable, it was also overwhelming and exhausting. It started in San Pedro with an informational meeting at the start of the first day so that all 50 interpreters could be together with the coordinators in one place and meet each other before the craziness of the week began. Of the entire cruise, about one-third (or 800) of the travelers were Deaf or hard of hearing. That meant a lot of interpreting needs with only 50 interpreters! Interpreting for such various consumers (some even from other countries) provided me with not only a challenge but a positive experience.

For each given assignment, we were to report to the location 5-10 minutes early. When we were done with that job, we checked in with the coordinators to see if any of our assignments had changed or if we were needed elsewhere. Due to the excessive size of the ship, I

continually felt lost between the aft, forward, starboard and port in addition to all 15 levels! Some of the locations we were assigned to interpret included shifts at the photo gallery, guest relations desk, excursions reservation desk, dining rooms, spa, salon, fitness, on-deck activities, medical facility, ice skating, and theatrical performances. When docked, we were also assigned to various land excursions such as bus, walking or hiking tours. Some interpreters even got to work while swimming with dolphins and riding a zip line!!

There were a few general rules given to all interpreters: no consumption of alcohol during an assignment, on our down time we could do as we pleased but needed to stay professional (sadly that meant no pool deck time in just our bikinis or swim trunks!), and lastly, we were to remain strictly in our roles as an interpreter and nothing else (not act as a guide or waitress/waiter, host, etc). When it came to rooms and food, we were treated just as any other passenger on the ship: we ate when we had time and reported to our assigned dining halls. As the coordinators emphasized, while it was a cruise, it was *not* a vacation. We were there to work so that our consumers could enjoy *their* vacation. I still had a blast and can't wait to do it again!

Since returning, some people have asked us if our experience was worth the time off of regularly scheduled work and with enthusiasm, we can respond YES! It definitely was worth it, both financially and in terms of the work experience we have gained. We both had a great time, met people we never would have otherwise, and would jump at the chance for another opportunity such as this.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Stepping Up

CCRID Members who have passed an interpreting assessment, certification test, or have completed an aspect of professional development:

- Monet Sieckman, NIC Written
- Nancy Kanta completed a 2 year legal interpreter training and internship at University of Northern Colorado. She shares that it was a challenging yet wonderful experience!

Cherished Tidings

CCRID members who have had life-changing events:

- Christy and David West welcomed Luke Neil West born 10/31/10.
- Maja and Jeremy Freund welcomed their fifth child, Levi Gaven Freund on 11/4/10.
- Michelle Ashby and her husband, Robert, celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary on 11/21/10.
- Nancy Kanta would like her friends to know that she made a full recovery after being in the hospital from 11/23/10 to 12/2/10.

All names included with expressed permission.

ACHIEVEMENT

In November, CCRID presented Reno Coletti with a lifetime membership, in recognition of his valuable contributions to the establishment of our chapter.



EVENTS

January

9, 2pm—4pm, Leadership Meeting; Suzanne Conway's residence, Fresno
29, 9am—4pm How Do I Interpret for THAT Sport?, The Tower at Riverpark

February

6, 2pm—4pm, Leadership Meeting; Suzanne Conway's residence, Fresno
26, 9am—11am, Terp Time, Professional Development: **Topic TBA**
 DHHS Fresno

March

26, 9am—3pm Must Be Present to Win: Stress & Disconnect (For Interpreters), The Tower at Riverpark
26, 6pm—8:30pm Must Be Present to Win: Stress & Disconnect (For non-interpreting professionals in the field of deafness), DHHS Fresno
13, 2pm—4pm, Leadership Meeting; Suzanne Conway's residence, Fresno
 email ccrid@ccrid.org for directions

For details and event fliers go to the calendar listed at www.ccrd.org