

The Sign Post

Newsletter for the Central California Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf



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Determination Leads the Way to Gallaudet

Becky Edens-Paul, EIPA & Heather Cruz, NIC

Fresno interpreters Becky Edens-Paul and Heather Cruz both have had the phenomenal opportunity to study at Gallaudet University in Washington D.C. for a short period of time. Here they share with us their experiences with embarking across the country to study at Gallaudet.

Determination plays a key role in where we are in our interpreting professions. It was that determination that we used to take out a loan in order to go to Gallaudet University and that we would later be determined to pay off. Our stories are a little different but offer the same advice, you are never too old or too young to set another goal and succeed.

Becky: My time at Gallaudet is irreplaceable to me. I was lucky enough not only to go for a summer session but also I got the opportunity to do a pre-summer program and a full semester as well. Although there were major differences between the short session and the semester of classes, both left me with incredible relationships and experiences.

The opportunity to go to Gallaudet was something that I presented to my husband one day to which he immediately responded "Do it!" There were two reasons I wanted to go: One, I had graduated my interpreter training program and thought "Now what?" Two, I had never been able to leave home for college due to financial issues and it was always something I felt that was missing in my life. So, my loving spouse moved in with my parents temporarily so we could afford to send me across the county to Washington D.C.

I was assigned a dorm with a terrible mattress, an annoying room mate, and an over priced meal plan - I loved it all. Most of the summer courses are all day, intense classes geared for interpreters including topics such as ASL classifiers and ASL fingerspelling. I was in classes with other interpreters



who ranged from ones who were well established in their communities to those who had not yet started their careers (me), but there was no doubting there was something for everyone to learn.

There was no room for nerves the first day as we got up in front of the class to only use classifiers to describe the scene from Rambo we watched or to get the lexical hand shapes thrown at us in a stare down. Although there were only a few Deaf people on campus I made it my mission to try to talk to one new

person a day, through this I met some amazing people with amazing stories.

With all of the classes though, I have to admit I went for my own personal benefit, reminding myself everyday how lucky I was to be there. One of my best days in Washington DC was the day I went on a walk and realized I was passing the White House! There were a lot of firsts that summer: my first time feeling like I went away on my own, my first time living in a new state and my first time feeling independent to make my own choices.

Heather: Although I spent significantly less time at Gallaudet than Becky, my time there was equally extraordinary. I enrolled a two week summer session and it all seemed to happen so fast. On my initial day in Washington DC I arrived on the plane, took a shuttle to the campus, checked into my dorm and hurried off to my first class. Originally I enrolled in only one medical settings class so that I would be able to do a significant amount of sight seeing. By the end of my experience I actually had very little time for sight seeing because so many activities filled my entire day, leaving only the weekends for true free time. The class itself was amazing. Ironically, most of my classmates were pre-med students from California. We even had the fortune of having a

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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...The Experience of a Lifetime

nurse and a practicing medical physician enrolled in the class. We would discuss diagnosis, prognosis and treatment. Our Deaf instructor would then help us visually expand our explanations.

Since I did not know anyone in Washington D.C. it was a relief to have such an awesome class with which to share my experiences. One of the first questions asked of me was if I wanted to join them for a kayak ride on the Potomac. I took advantage of every opportunity that happened to come my way and thoroughly enjoyed every minute of it. With these students I also had the chance to join them in their scheduled activities with the counseling department, during which I learned many invaluable lessons.

Living in the dorms I had the pleasure of rooming with a Deaf girl from Japan. Her native language was Japanese

Sign Language and she was learning ASL. I experienced total immersion; we had to find ways to understand each other through a little bit of ASL, gesturing, fingerspelling and the use of her electronic translator. Because of this we became good friends.

Both: Even today we regularly continue to utilize all that we learned from our tenure at Gallaudet. Regardless of the monetary costs, it was an invaluable experience. Learning at Gallaudet has helped us become the interpreters we are today and the opportunity to go there is not taken for granted. It was more than just classroom learning (although that was



Becky Edens-Paul with Gallaudet University President Dr. Robert R. Davila in 2007.

above and beyond what we had been exposed to in the past) that we gained from the opportunity. We also now have had the experience of being in a new place with new people who have expanded and confirmed who we are and who we want to become. These are memories that we will hold for years to come.

So if you have been considering enrolling in a session at Gallaudet, our advice to you is GO FOR IT! Why not? It's your time now, so use it!

For more information about summer sessions and other programs at Gallaudet University go to <http://summer.gallaudet.edu/>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Stepping Up

CCRID Members who have passed an interpreting assessment or certification test:

- Bobbi Rumsey, Ed:K-12
- Erin Uribe, Ed:K-12
- Sarah McQuillan, ESSE



Cherished Tidings

CCRID members who have had life-changing events:

- After 9 years of spiritually marriage, Jeff Bise and Christine Gough held an official wedding ceremony and reception on June 26, 2010 in Christine's home state of Kansas.

All names included with expressed permission.

CHALLENGE

What would you do in each of the situations below?

Discuss the conflicts, decisions you would make, and the possible long and short term outcomes. Scenarios are from "Encounters with Reality" by Brenda E. Cartwright.

- A Deaf friend of yours calls and asks you to go with him when he buys a motorcycle. He says he doesn't want you there as an interpreter, just as a friend. During the negotiations, the salesman doesn't realize you can hear and tells a coworker he doesn't want to sell a Harley to a "spic." You're both of Mexican-American decent.
- You have agreed to interpret at a church not of your faith but enjoy it a great deal. The pastor of the church tells you that you'll need to become a member of their church in order to continue interpreting there.
- You're interpreting for a Deaf person in the emergency room whom you know to be HIV-positive. When the lab technician draws blood, you see she doesn't put on gloves.



EVENTS

July

10, 9am—12pm Membership Renewal Party, DHHSC-Fresno

August

15, 2pm—4pm, Leadership Meeting; Suzanne Conway's residence, Fresno email crid@crid.org for directions

September

10, 6:30pm Kick-Off Dinner, presenting Austin W. Andrews in Sign Power, DHHSC, Fresno

11, 9am-4pm NIC Interview: Aim High with Austin W. Andrews, DHHSC, Fresno

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

19, 2pm—4pm, Leadership Meeting; Suzanne Conway's residence, Fresno email crid@crid.org for directions

October

1, 6pm—8pm, Mini workshop—Topic TBD

10, 2pm—4pm, Leadership Meeting; Suzanne Conway's residence, Fresno email crid@crid.org for directions

9, 9am—11am, Terp Time, Professional Development. Topic: NIC Interview Practice using the Austin W. Andrews method