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In the past, RSD has received many generous gifts using the donor envelope included in our newsletters. With our new format however, an envelope is not included. We hope that you will continue with your loyal support. Please use the form below with your own envelope when sending your gifts to RSD. Your generosity ensures that RSD is able to provide exceptional educational opportunities for deaf children.

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Rochester School for the Deaf.

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Rochester School for the Deaf
1545 St. Paul Street
Rochester, NY 14621

Thank you!



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Building Futures is designed to inform staff, families, and friends of Rochester School for the Deaf about the school's programs and services. Communication with RSD is encouraged. To learn more, please contact RSD today. Call 585-544-1240 (Voice/TTY) or visit www.RSDeaf.org.

Harold M. Mowl, Jr., Ph.D., Superintendent/CEO



Building Futures

Winter 2007

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Curriculum in Motion

In its continual efforts to provide the highest level instruction possible, Rochester School for the Deaf (RSD) has introduced new programs and implemented curriculum changes for students from the Early Childhood Center (ECC) through High School.

In the ECC, students arrive at a variety of language levels, and their teacher must find the best ways to serve differing needs, all with the basic goal of achieving literacy and language development through English and American Sign Language (ASL). Because needs vary, a flexible system called the Creative Curriculum has helped RSD with critical assessment and instruction planning geared toward the individual.

In addition, the use of Kendall Conversational Proficiency Levels and a new ASL teacher, Mr. Ron Rood, has helped to encourage students toward communication competency and overall development.

Mrs. Marilyn Curley, Director of ECC Programs at RSD states, "Yes, our curriculum has changed, and I am confident that these changes are pointing us more sharply and more quickly in the right direction."

In the Elementary School, multi-age, team-taught classrooms are becoming the norm. Not all students progress at the



Preschool teacher Ms. Mary Jo Birecrew and ASL teacher, Mr. Ron Rood teach Bode Aggas and Emma Doughty how to communicate using ASL.

same rate, so with this model, classes are now focused on the individual and where they are along the path of learning. Team-taught classes combine two grades into one: kindergarten and first graders, and second and third graders. They work side by side, at their own pace, with two teachers who observe, assess, and instruct.

Middle School has also combined some grade levels into single classes. Tech Lab and Library classes, for example, meet in multi-age groupings of 6th, 7th and 8th graders.

"The younger children in the class are intellectually stimulated by older children," says Mrs. Denise Stappenbeck,



High school students in Ms. Judy Cannioto's AP English Literature and Composition class discuss the dramatic irony in Sophocles' *Oedipus Cycle*.

Director of Elementary and Middle School Programs. "And the older students are learning to develop leadership and responsibility skills through interaction with younger peers."

Through this system, teachers are encouraged to take into account learning styles, multiple intelligences,

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Rochester School for the Deaf 1545 St. Paul Street, Rochester, NY 14621

RSD is a Preeminent Provider of Educational, Developmental and Evaluation Services to Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children and Their Families in the Nation

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Students “Mix It Up”

On Tuesday, November 14, 2006, RSD students from Kindergarten through 12th grade participated in the third annual “Mix It Up Day,” dedicated to encouraging students to gain a better understanding of others they might not usually interact with. The goal was to help students shed prejudice about others through fun and enlightening activities.

A group of middle school and high school Natural Helpers—a peer assistance program for school-age kids—along with five RSD staff members, met several times during the weeks prior to help plan and implement events for the day.

For grades K–5, Ms. Peggy Jennings read and discussed Charlotte Zolotow’s book, *William’s Doll*, about a boy who wanted a doll, and the bias surrounding his desire for such a “girlish” thing. Students also enjoyed activity stations prepared by Ms. Jennings and Ms. Rosemary Sadwick that encouraged them to work together and share, including the

Curriculum in Motion

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and individual interests, which helps them to shape and develop a program suited to the needs of each child.

At the High School level, RSD has introduced an Advanced Placement (AP) English class as well as Regents-level Physics and Pre-Calculus classes. The move comes as a response to the call for a more challenging course of study for students.

AP English Teacher, Ms. Judy Cannioto is impressed with her students. “Eight students enrolled in the AP English Literature and Composition class. This remarkable group is working at the college level, reading novels, writing essays and pushing themselves to achieve excellence.”

RSD is one of only a few schools for the deaf offering advanced placement study. Mrs. Nancy Heaney, Director of High School Programs, points out that the classes are another way in which the school is meeting the academic needs of students. Those who pass the rigorous AP exam in the spring will earn college credit, moving them forward on their path to excellence.

Whether in their first years or their final years here, every student at RSD is entitled to the best instruction possible. The school continually seeks ways to make this happen, reshaping its curriculum and programs so that all students are given the opportunity to achieve their potential.



Senior, Joe McCarthy and 6th grader, Kim Klimentyeva get acquainted by exchanging questions and answers.

creation of a “friendship bookmark” with different color beads representing each student in the class.

For students in grades 6–12, the Natural Helpers announced the results of a survey regarding top concerns of students and staff, which helped everyone to get a better insight into the types of issues and their relative importance at RSD. The older students also participated in an activity that helped them key in on the positive attributes of others. After getting acquainted with a partner, they wrote the student’s name and a positive trait about him or her on a piece of paper and inserted it into a balloon. The balloons were inflated, mixed up, thrown in the air, then popped... revealing the name and trait.

Social Studies Specialist, Ms. Barbara Di Giovanni stated, “Overall, it was a very successful celebration. This is the third year we’ve done “Mix It Up Day”, and it just gets better and better!”

Many of the day’s activities were videotaped by Mr. Rick Simpson. Also Ms. Elisa Maltzan’s students prepared a computer graphic program tied to the theme of the day. Teamwork, sharing, friendship, understanding and acceptance were key words of the day, and we hope that students internalize the positive message of “mixing it up.”



Natural Helper, Social Studies Specialist Ms. Barbara Di Giovanni explains the survey.

Retreat Sparks Learning

Leave it to the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) to help students with their understanding of parliamentary procedure, knowing their rights as a deaf person, or what’s most important when stranded in outer space!

Students from RSD and St. Mary’s School for the Deaf (SMSD) in Buffalo met at Silver Lake State Park, near Perry, NY, for a weekend Jr. NAD Leadership Retreat, November 3-5, 2006. They participated in thought-provoking workshops and presentations designed to build leadership abilities, effective communication skills and more.

The first workshop, conducted by Ms. Wendy Dannels, SMSD alumna, was a “survival” exercise set in outer space. In the workshop scenario, the group was stranded 200 miles from their “mother ship” and had to determine what items from a supplied list were most and least important for survival. Ms. Dannels gave them a guide to help in decision-making. Using the acronym ‘HEART’ to clarify leadership traits (Honesty, Earn, Accountability, Respect and Teach), students had to make tough choices for the good of the group. Students learned how to work as a team and how to communicate effectively through this entertaining workshop.



Left to right: First row: Matthew Poe, Cory Behm, and Derrick Behm
Second row: Barbara Spiecker, Monica Keller, and Staci Kuppe.

The next session featured a presentation by Mrs. Elizabeth “Libby” Pollard, former NAD President and a specialist in parliamentary procedure. Mrs. Pollard discussed the role of NAD and its impact on Deaf culture, and NAD programs such as Miss Deaf America and the College Bowl. She then turned her talk to parliamentary procedure, and how to run effective meetings for Jr. NAD. Students learned about agenda, order of business, motions, amendments, and election of officers. A mock meeting was run, and Mrs. Pollard was impressed with the students’ wisdom and maturity.

The final session of the retreat was presented by RSD alumnus David Spiecker, whose topic on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was well received. Mr. Spiecker discussed the rights of a deaf person with an interpreter. For instance, interpreters cannot interrupt deaf students’ personal conversations with each other in academic settings, and have the right to resist interpreting non-academic conversations while in the classroom. He also

presented a mock situation about a deaf person’s job promotion and training for that person. Is it the deaf person’s right to have an interpreter supplied at no charge? Some very relevant points were made and students learned a great deal.

The students from both RSD and SMSD were grateful for the opportunity to take part in the weekend Jr. NAD retreat, and they thank the presenters for their time and expertise.



Elizabeth “Libby” Pollard discussing parliamentary procedure.



David Spiecker presenting on aspects of the ADA.

Honoring Two of RSD’s Best Friends

On December 18, 2006, RSD Board member and Past President Mrs. Carolie Simone (far left) with husband Dr. Albert Simone (far right), President of Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), hosted RSD seniors and juniors for their annual holiday dinner at the Simone’s historic Liberty Hill home.

To honor them for their many years friendship and support to the school, RSD seniors Barbara Spiecker (left) and Abigail Worek (right) presented the Simone’s with a one-of-a-kind framed artwork designed by Miss Worek.

Joining RSD seniors and juniors in their tribute to Mrs. Carolie Simone and Dr. Albert Simone, who will retire from RIT in 2007, were Dr. Harold Mowl, Jr., RSD Superintendent/CEO, Dr. Alan Hurwitz, RIT Vice President and Dean for NTID, several RSD and RIT/NTID staff, and student leaders from the university.



Scholarships for RSD Grads

Scholarship grants are available to RSD graduates who are currently enrolled in an undergraduate college program. For more information, contact Samantha Merithew in the Superintendent’s office at 585-336-5801 (TTY), 585-336-5800 (Voice), or smerithew@rsdeaf.org (E-mail).