



## December 2014 Issue



### Director's Message

#### Plumbers, Interpreters and Customer Care

Customer care is the process of meeting people's expectations throughout an entire transaction cycle. Let me give you an example: Today, I called a plumbing company that I have used for many

years and asked them to help me with a plumbing problem in my house. Unfortunately, the person who answered the phone stated that their plumber was on an extended job and would not be able to come to my home for three weeks. Because I trust this company, I asked the person if they knew of a different company or plumber they could recommend. The response was they did not know of anyone and had no idea what to tell me. My first thought, after this conversation, was that I was not an important customer to this company and that my needs were of no concern to them. I felt the person I had spoken to was unconcerned about the urgency of my situation. Sadly, I began to wonder if I should continue to use the services of this company for my home or if I would be better served by finding a different company. The experience I had with this plumbing company caused me to reflect on the customer service that interpreters and interpreter educators offer their respective customers. In interpreting, customer service may be defined in part as the way an interpreter greets a caller during a VRS call or how an interpreter educator responds to a student's question. Realistically, a VRS caller may judge the

entire company based on the greeting on a call of one interpreter.

Just as the plumbing company has left a negative impression on me, interpreters and interpreter educators can leave a negative impression on the people with whom they interact.

So we must ask ourselves: Are we providing the service that we, ourselves, expect? Just as I wanted to feel valued by the plumbing company and satisfied with its service, the people for whom we interpret and those we teach want and deserve to feel valued and satisfied that their needs are being met.

Perhaps we should remember what Steve Jobs recommended: "Get closer than ever to your customers. So close that you tell them what they need well before they realize it themselves."

## Educator Empowerment Series Classes, Now Available!

Learn more and register at  
[www.vrsii.com/programs](http://www.vrsii.com/programs)

**VRSII Interpreter Educator Symposium:  
“Creating Connections – Expanding  
Possibilities: Infusing NCIEC Resources into  
Interpreter Education”**

The VRSII is pleased to host its sixth Interpreter Educators Symposium, March 4 through 6, 2015, in Salt Lake City. The 2015 symposium will feature presenters from the National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers (NCIEC) and will offer participants the opportunity to explore and analyze resources developed by NCIEC during the past five years using funds from a federal grant.

Some of the resources to be presented include: complete curriculum packages, learning modules, American Sign Language (ASL) glossaries of specialized vocabulary, a library of newly-developed source texts in both ASL and English, archived webinars and consumer education and self-advocacy resources, among others.

“The NCIEC has been vital to the training and education of interpreters since federal monies were first given in the 1960’s. The establishment of interpreter training programs and national training would not have occurred had it not been for these federal grants,” says Carolyn Ball, VRSII executive director.

During the symposium, participants will be organized by role, e.g. interpreter education program, in-service trainer, mentor; by topic of interest, such as community interpreting, specialized settings, consumer education and self-advocacy; or by interest in particular resources.

One day of the symposium will be dedicated to participants learning and understanding potential uses for the resources and one-and-one-half days will be used to allow participants to implement resources in a group presentation. Through

presentations, participants will gain hands-on experience with the resources.

NCIEC presenters will include: Pauline Annarino, Cathy Cogen, Beverly Hollrah, Trudy Schrader and Anna Witter-Merithew.



**Pauline Annarino**



**Cathy Cogen**



**Beverly Hollrah**



**Anna Witter-Merithew**



**Trudy Schafer**

### Register Now for the Educator Empowerment Series (EES) 2015 Classes

The VRSII will again offer its Educator Empowerment Series classes during 2015. The new class schedule is now available on the VRSII website at [www.vrsii.com/programs](http://www.vrsii.com/programs).

EES classes offer ongoing training for interpreters and interpreter educators. Class topics focus on relevant, contemporary issues in the field of ASL interpreting and are taught by VRSII faculty and other leading trainers in the interpreting industry. Participants from across the nation can enjoy top-level training as well as networking with peers. Currently, travel and accommodations are compensated for accepted participants.

Learn more about this outstanding educational opportunity by visiting [www.vrsii.com/programs](http://www.vrsii.com/programs).

### VRS Interpreting Institute – Creating Bonds



**Ann Pattenaude**

Professional interpreters know the importance of having a trusting relationship with fellow interpreters. Feedback is more likely to be given and openly received in a working relationship where trust exists – it is vital to quality interpreting in any situation. The VRSII’s School-to-Work (STW) Program creates strong and lasting

bonds.

Pattenaude, now a mentor in the VRSII’s STW Program, was an intern in the first cohort of the program, in 2010. She says it was a unique opportunity where lasting bonds of trust were easily developed – not only between members of her own cohort, but between members of all STW Program cohorts. “We run across each other throughout the country,” she says. “In the individual cohorts, people develop life-long relationships, go on road trips – become roommates. Professionally, the bonds have led to some unique opportunities. Several STW graduates across the

country are involved in scheduling interpreting assignments. When critical assignments arise, STW graduates have reached out to trusted classmates who have flown in to help. The STW Program has created a high-level network. Pattenaude says interns have attended each other’s weddings, worked together, worked with other STW interns in different cohorts who live in the same area, celebrated the birth of new babies and have attended the funeral of one intern who passed away. A lasting bond exists between all STW graduates.



**2010 STW Program cohort**

The STW program has given its graduating interns a unique connection that not all interpreters enjoy, but Pattenaude says other factors can help interpreters create an environment of trust and support and counsels interpreters with the following advice:

- Share your work and have confidence that other interpreters “have your back.”
- If you feel defensive or threatened, or the person with whom you are working exhibits these characteristics, it’s important to have the courage to confront the feelings, address and work through them. This will make the next assignment more productive.
- Try to foster familiarity: Arrange a pre-conference call with fellow interpreters.
- Trust the other interpreter’s “intention” and believe they are there to provide support.

- Interpreters share the common foundation of professionalism. Even if you don't know the interpreter with whom you are teaming, focus on that foundation.
- Self-awareness is a powerful tool. Approach an assignment with the common goal of a successful interaction and be aware of your own strengths and weaknesses.

"The connection between professional interpreters is a starting point for a relationship," Pattenaude says. "There aren't many of us – less than a 10,000-person network of certified interpreters to span the nation. Anyone who has gone through school together or worked together has a bond that can last forever. Keep growing your network. Having contacts across the nation is very handy." To learn more about the STW Program, visit [www.vrsii.com/schooltowork](http://www.vrsii.com/schooltowork).

### Enduring Support



Lasting professional and personal relationships are developed in the VRSII's School-to-Work (STW) Program.

These relationships and friendships were especially apparent at the most recent Conference of Interpreter Trainers

conference in Portland, Ore., in October.

In the spring of this year, the 2010 STW Program cohort lost a fellow intern to cancer. During the time the CIT conference was held, a cancer walk for pancreatic cancer, the type of cancer that claimed the life of their classmate, was also held in Portland. Several members of the 2010 STW cohort participated in the walk in honor of the classmate they lost. Their deceased classmate's daughter flew in to attend the walk with them as well.



Cancer walk participants – 2010 cohort members



"This cancer walk was an amazing experience," says Ann Pattenaude, 2010 cohort member and now a STW Program mentor. "More would have come if they could."



### **Apply Now for the 2015 School-to-Work Program Summer Session**

Applications are now being accepted for the next session of the VRSII's School-to-Work (STW) Program, which will begin June 4, 2015. Applications are due by Feb. 13, 2015. The STW Program helps interpreter education program graduates bridge the gap from graduation to work readiness. To learn more, visit [www.vrsii.com/stwlearnmore](http://www.vrsii.com/stwlearnmore).



2014 STW cohort

- A trip for two IEP faculty to the 2016 Conference of Interpreter Trainers conference
  - Award recognition at the conference
- Winners will also participate in the VRSII's Innovator Showcase workshop in Salt Lake City.

Applications for the 2015 award will be accepted through July 31, 2015. To learn more, click [here](#).

### **Do You Have an Outstanding Interpreter Education Program? Apply for the SVRS® Excellence and Innovation in Interpreter Education Award!**



Applications are now being accepted for the SVRS® Award of Excellence in Innovation. This award recognizes the accomplishments of Interpreter Education Programs (IEPs) that

are working to raise interpreter education standards and enhance the overall quality of professional interpreting.

Specifically considered are IEPs that leverage technology, exceed typical education standards and incorporate interaction with the Deaf community within their programs.

The winning IEP will receive:

- \$8,000 to be reinvested in the IEP
- \$2,000 for the purchase of training materials