



For Immediate Release
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**US DEPARTMENT OF STATE'S INTERNATIONAL VISITOR
PROGRAM BRING ESTEEMED DEAF VISITORS FROM
ARGENTINA TO WEST HARTFORD AS PART OF LEARNING
AND FACT-FINDING COLLABORATION TO EXPAND DEAF
CULTURE AND AWARENESS**

West Hartford, CT: Betty Beekman, Interim Executive Director of The National Theatre of the Deaf was proud to be an active host for the Deaf visitors from Argentina who came to Connecticut on December 20 to learn more about Deaf Culture in the U.S. and how to create and design a similar theatre company in Buenos Aires with associations to NTD.

Organized by Brock Hotaling, Executive Director of the International Visitor Committee of Connecticut who in his report about the success of the visit to the State Department said:

They visited the American School for the Deaf in West Hartford under the directorship of Ed Peltier, and had an extended session with the Director of the National Theater of the Deaf under Betty Beekman. **I was fortunate in being able to attend, and it was simply the most amazing program we've done in the past seven years.** Observing what NTD does and how they do it, and listening to Ms. Beekman talk about their world-wide travels... **was nothing short of amazing and made me quite proud to live in Connecticut and be represented by such a pioneering organization.**

The group from Argentina was here under the auspices of the State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program. The American Embassy in Buenos Aires had asked that this program achieve the following goals:

- Examine the current status of Deaf rights in the United States, including access to education, employment and quality interpreters, (at the state, federal and local levels)

- Meet with organizations that work with Deaf Culture, Advancement of rights for the Deaf, and Training and certification of interpreters for the Deaf.
- Specifically meet with the National Theatre of the Deaf.

Among the group of visitors who attended the day long meeting at ASD where the following esteemed representatives of Deaf Culture in Argentina:

1. **Ms. Andrea Albor**, Coordinator, Department of Interpreters, ISPEE, Ministry of Education, City of Buenos Aires Government; and professor, Argentine Sign Language Technical Institute, Superior Institute of Villasoles.
2. **Ms. Laura Astrada**, Sign Language Interpreter for the National Institute Against Discrimination and Racism (INADI); for the Superior Special Ed Institute of the City of Buenos Aires; and for the Basic sign language skills course Buenos Aires University; and Program Coordinator, Center for the Study and Development of the Deaf Community (CEA) Coordinator, Sign Language Interpretation, Superior Special Ed Institute of Santa Fe Province (SADOP)
3. **Ms. Maria Elena Juarez**, Secretary General, Tucuman Province Confederation for the Deaf (CAS)
4. **Ms. Florencia Laurence**, Administrator, Ministry of Federal Planification, Public Investment and Services.
5. **Ms. Mercedes Pandullo**, Assistant Teacher for the Deaf, School #29B Ayrolo, Buenos Aires City; Sign Language Teacher, Special Ed School Raspanti, Haedo, Buenos Aires Province
6. **Ms. Mariana Reuter**, Former Quality Control Coordinator, Ministry of Economy and Production; Quality Control Operator, Avionics and CH Systems Electronic, S.A.; Scan Operator, LP and Associates
7. **Mr. Ricardo Vera**, Speaker at Deaf Seminars (CAS)

Entering its **45th anniversary**, NTD is the oldest, continuously performing professional touring theatre company in the country. During its history, NTD has completed over 100 national and 31 international tours and has appeared in all 50 states and on all 7 continents.

For more information contact Betty Beekman at 860-236-4193 or log on to NTD.org

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