

# Let's Give Back

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*Recipient of the Region IV Scholarship to the 2011 RID National Conference*

I'm on the flight home from my first RID conference, and thoughts are buzzing around my head like mosquitoes. What a whirlwind!

Living in Oklahoma City, I am surrounded by the most wonderful community interpreters. I'm sure you feel the same way about yours. There is a general culture of "giving back to the community" and supporting one other. I have always felt so thankful to be in such a place, doing what I love. Since receiving the NIC in March, I have felt the need to branch out, to see and experience what other communities have to offer; not only for myself, but for the ranks of new interpreters who will come up behind us. I want them to have the same great experiences I've had in my career since I've been given so much.

In researching the conference I realized there were some scholarships available. My boss encouraged me to apply, so I thought, "Why not?" Imagine my surprise when I was awarded one of the two Region IV scholarships to attend the RID conference! I was honored and humbled that they chose me.

Entering the hotel was like entering another world. Like ants at a picnic, we took over the hotel. Everywhere you looked there were interpreters. There was a great sense of camaraderie evident everywhere we went. Conversations were easy, even when I didn't know anyone. It was thrilling to be with others of my own kind. No one else understands interpreter-ese, you know, the half-English, half-signed sentences we only use with each other.

One of my goals for this conference was to take something back that I could use to impact the community at home. But I have to say, I think it was the experience itself that influenced me the most. There's nothing that compares to spending every waking moment for a week surrounded by your peers; not only that, but the caliber of workshops and presenters was incredible, unlike anything I'd seen before.

I'm definitely going to be more involved in regional and national conferences. In all the years I've been interpreting, this week was the single most impacting event of my professional career. I encourage you to save up your money and go at least once. You will never be the same. Everyone should have this experience. Apply for scholarships, just for the fun of it, because you never know what could happen.

I would like to thank Region IV for giving me this wonderful opportunity and helping me to go to Atlanta. Let us follow their example and endeavor to enrich the communities that raised us and nurtured us in our profession. Only then will generations feel the impact of our lives, our work and the Deaf-heart that ever guides us.

Here are some of my favorite memories:

1. Steve Phan's use of the word "kvetch" while voicing for Cheryl Moose.
2. Dr. Adan Penilla's Interpreting the Middle East in ASL workshop. Absolutely amazing!
3. Laughing hysterically until 3:00 am with our OKRID President and Vice-President. Good times. Good memories.