



For Immediate Release
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Contact: William C. Martin
media@NTD.org

OCTOBER DEAF ARTS WEEKEND HAS RECORD ATTENDANCE IN HARTFORD

West Hartford, CT: Aaron M. Kubey, Executive Director is proud to announce that the National Theatre of the Deaf garnered record attendance during their **Deaf Arts Premiere Weekend** held on October 15th thru the 18th in the Greater Hartford area. This celebration helped to launch the 2009 NTD season in Connecticut which included hosting a new feature film starring NTD alumni and the kick-off of the Connecticut public performances of the Little Theatre of the Deaf. An audience of over four hundred people participated in all the events despite the inclement autumn weather. The weekend provided opportunities for both Deaf and hearing audiences to enjoy a variety of presentations of the theatricalized style of American Sign Language created by NTD and to learn about the new season and unique programming opportunities.

The weekend began on Thursday, October 15th when **Aaron M. Kubey** gave an informative public book review of, "*HANDS OF MY FATHER, A Hearing Boy, His Deaf Parents, and the Language of Love,*" by **Myron Uhlberg** at the South Windsor Public Library. Mr. Kubey next appeared on Friday, October 16th at the first in a series of "Angels Get Togethers" that was held at the Goodwin Library in Hartford, where he spoke about the challenges currently facing Deaf actors in obtaining roles on Broadway and in regional theater productions across the country.

On Sunday, October 18th at Cinestudio on the campus of Trinity College NTD presented Connecticut premiere of the award-winning film *Universal Signs*. The film was greatly appreciated by the diverse audience and was followed by a lively Q&A session hosted by the writer-director **Ann Calamia** and producer **Catherine Miller**, with an audience-wide reception afterward. *This film screening and presentation was supported in part by the Greater Hartford Arts Council and the United Arts Campaign.*

Universal Signs (www.universalsignsmovie.com) is a modern day silent film told primarily in American Sign Language with captions for the hearing and non-signing audience. It is a theatrical experience with an original interpretive score by Academy Award® Winning composer, Joseph Renzetti. While the main character is Deaf, the story of *Universal Signs* is one with which all people can connect – one of forgiveness, redemption, and love. In addition, all of the deaf characters are played by deaf actors.

While film-goers were viewing *Universal Signs*, children and families enjoyed a sponsored performance and workshop of the Little Theatre of the Deaf at the South Windsor Middle School. The audience was treated to a presentation of *Tree Wise*, one of two shows on the 2009-2010 LTD touring roster, and a subsequent lecture demonstration workshop.

Tree Wise is an original script created by professional Deaf Actress Antoinette Abbamonte, and has been adapted by professional Deaf playwright Garrett Zuercher for the Little Theatre of the Deaf. *Tree Wise* tells the story of a girl who has Deaf parents and has made a new friend at school. Through the help of a very special tree, the children and their classmates understand more about Deaf Culture. The tree teaches sign language to the children ...and to the audience through sign language games.

The National Theatre of the Deaf operates under the comprehensive mission to produce theatrically challenging work of the highest quality, drawing from as wide a range of the world's literature as possible; to perform these original works in a style that links American Sign Language with the spoken word; to seek, train and employ Deaf artists; to offer our work to as culturally diverse and inclusive an audience as possible; to provide community outreach activities that will educate and enlighten the general public, opening their eyes and ears to Deaf culture and building linkages that facilitate involvement in our methods of work.

For more information about the **National Theatre of the Deaf** go to the web site at www.ntd.org or contact the National Theatre of the Deaf office at 860-236-4193 (Voice) or 860-607-1334 (Video Phone).

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