



## St. Rita Graduate Rick Raymond

Ever since he can remember, music has been a part of Rick Raymond's life. At age ten he began playing the piano, joining in his family's appreciation for music. For years he practiced with an inspiring teacher who encouraged him to compete in state performances and share his talents with others. He even learned about music composition and began writing his own music during his high school years. Through his musical accomplishments, Rick found himself reaching new levels of creativity and personal expression. And although music had become to play a significant part in Rick's life, he found himself subtly putting this talent on hold for what turned in, to almost eight years.

Rick graduated from St. Rita School for the Deaf in 1990 and recounts many times running around the school grounds for gym class. He said high school seemed like eons ago, but still remembered certain teachers and his involvement with the soccer, basketball, and baseball teams at St. Rita. After graduating from high school, Rick attended the Rochester Institute of Technology and the National Technical Institute for the Deaf. He studied computer graphics and production media, leading him to an Applied Science Associates degree. For the past eight years, Rick has worked for the Community Press Newspaper in Cincinnati where he preps pages and photographs for print. He enjoys his job and teaches some of his fellow employees how to use basic sign language to communicate.

Working second shift and forty hours a week keeps Rick very busy, but he continues to find time to offer his leadership to his church. He is very concerned that very few churches around the country minister to the deaf. His church, Friendship Baptist in Colerain, currently has four members who are deaf. There are about six interpreters who share in the worship services and communicate the messages of faith. Over the years, Rick has felt a calling to get more involved in sharing the word of Christ with people throughout his community. You may even find him at your door some Saturday morning, accompanied by an interpreter and sharing his convictions. He recently attended a religious deaf camp at Seneca Lake Baptist Assembly. It was there that he was voted to be an officer at the upcoming Ohio Southern Baptist Conference for the Deaf. He will serve as Vice President for two years and then serve as President for the next two years. "Many deaf people have lost their soul for salvation because there is nowhere for them to worship", said Rick. His goal as an officer of this organization is to find a home church for deaf people in Ohio so that they may learn about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is, unfortunately, easy for many of us to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of everyday living. Most of us are so busy with work and our families, that we often don't make time for ourselves. We don't nurture our own spirits. Our life's journey provides us with many bends in the road. We may find ourselves in a certain place at a certain time that seems ordinary at first glance. But sometimes, if we just look again there are often little signs that cause a moment to seem almost meant to be. Last summer, Rick Raymond had one of these moments. While attending a wedding of a friend, he saw a memorable face from his past. A face that he hadn't seen in many years. She reminded him of his love for music. A part of him he had put on hold until his life reached a slower pace. He said hello and felt that their meeting was not by chance, but a sign to rethink some decisions he had made. The very next day he made a call to the person who had inspired him as a boy. It had been years since they had spoken and too long since they had met as teacher and student.

Since that very day, Rick has continued his musical studies and vows to always make time for the things he enjoys in life. He has composed over 35 pieces and believes there is no end to what he can express through his music. "I can look at any picture and hear in my head what it would sound like." Picturing his future and what he may accomplish, it would be interesting to hear what that would sound like. Whatever the notes are, they are bound to be music to his ears.