

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Lisa Gibson, 860-278-2044 x309

Lynne Williamson, 860-278-2044 x251

Deaf Jam: *Flying Words Project* Portrays Vibrant World of ASL Poetry

Hartford, CT -- October 11, 2005 -- The Institute for Community Research, in collaboration with the Carol Autorino Center for the Arts and Humanities at Saint Joseph College and the National Theater of the Deaf, will present the poetry of *Flying Words Project* in a performance featuring deaf poet Peter Cook and 'hearing voice' Kenny Lerner. The performance will take place on Friday, November 4 at 7:30 PM, at Hoffman Auditorium on the Saint Joseph College campus at 1678 Asylum Avenue, West Hartford. The poets will hold a 'talk back' with the audience after their performance. Tickets are priced at \$18 general admission, with discounts for seniors, alumni, students and children (K-8).

Flying Words Project has brought American Sign Language (ASL) poetry to hearing and deaf audiences around the world. Their work bridges many genres of poetry and performance, seamlessly incorporating spoken word with an emphasis on performance rather than text; the craft of acting as it conveys expression through movement; and ASL as an evocative, symbolic, body-centered form of communication.

Internationally renowned deaf artist Cook brings the words of poetry to life through ASL and body language. Whether depicting a deer leaping into a battlefield or a leaf landing in a pond, Cook becomes the moving picture before the audience. Interwoven with Cook's imagery are the spoken words and sound effects of collaborator Lerner, a professor at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf at Rochester Institute of Technology.

"To witness the work of *Flying Words Project* is to witness a milestone in literary history," Dirksen Bauman, Associate Professor at Gallaudet University has noted. "*Flying Words Project* has accomplished what poets have been trying to do for several centuries now; to make their poems more visual, more embodied, more alive."

Flying Words Project has performed nationally and in Europe in places such as the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, Harvard University, The People's Poetry Gathering in NYC, and Theatre de Lucernaire in Paris. They have received grants from the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Puffin Foundation. Cook and Lerner began collaborating on *Flying Words Project* in 1984. They are the authors of two videotape anthologies, *The Year of the Walking Dogs* (1984-90) and the *Can't Touch Tours* (1990-2003). *Flying Words Project* has also been active in promoting ASL poetry around the United States through workshops and by organizing the First National ASL Literature Conference (1991). They were recently featured at the 36th International Poetry Festival in Rotterdam, Netherlands.

-more-

Deaf Jam: *Flying Words Project* Portrays Vibrant World of ASL Poetry

October 11, 2005

Page 2

In addition to Friday evening's performance, *Flying Words Project* will conduct a workshop earlier in the day at Saint Joseph College with students from the English Department and Hartford teens from The Institute for Community Research's (ICR) Youth Action Research Program. Coordinated by the Cultural Heritage Arts Program at ICR, both events will provide greater Hartford area audiences the opportunity to experience the creativity of deaf poetry and to learn more about the character and cultural expressions of the deaf community. Hartford has a historic role as the home of the first school for deaf students in America, now the American School for the Deaf located in West Hartford.

The performance is supported by the Aetna Foundation; the Greater Hartford Arts Council through its United Arts Campaign and the United Way Community Campaign; the National Endowment for the Arts; the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism; The Institute for Community Research; Saint Joseph College; and the National Theater of the Deaf.

Tickets for Friday evening's performance can be purchased at the Frances Driscoll Box Office at Saint Joseph College, by telephone at 860-237-5555, or online at www.sjc.edu/arts. For more information about the performance, contact Lisa Gibson, Director of Design and Media Relations at The Institute for Community Research, at 860-278-2044 ext. 309.

The Institute for Community Research is an independent research institute that conducts applied research and supports community enhancement programs on issues of health, education and cultural heritage. Its Connecticut Cultural Heritage Arts Program encourages and promotes traditional artists and their communities through an active process of documentation, technical assistance, and public presentations to bring their work and the history of their communities to new audiences.

###