

MEET A MICATAN

AN INTERVIEW WITH MARIA LAURA ANGEL



Maria Laura Angel is one of MICATA's first Regional Ambassadors, and will cover eastern Missouri. She is an English into Spanish and Spanish into English translator and interpreter.

• **Where are you based and what brought you to the Midwest?**

My name is Maria Laura Angel and I am from Buenos Aires, Argentina, but I live in Hannibal, Mo. My now husband has lived here since 1999 so I came to join him and do a Master's degree in 2003.

• **What got you started in translation/interpreting?**

My love for languages started when I was in elementary school since I attended a bilingual school where we learned English from kindergarten onwards. When I was in high school, I continued studying the language in a private institution and the summer before my senior year I traveled to England, more specifically Wimbledon, to live with a family and improve my English. It was one of the best experiences of my life and I realized that I wanted to do something related to languages when I went to college. After much researching and looking through different schools, I found one that offered a degree in interpretation and translation. From the moment I knew about this program, I knew that that was what I wanted to do the rest of my life!

• **What are your language combinations and specialties?**

My language combinations are English<>Spanish. I learned some French before moving to the United States, but without using it, it is starting to fade off. I would love to study more and be able to be fluent in French too.

• **What is your favorite thing about being a translator/interpreter?**

My favorite thing about being an interpreter is that I learn many topics that I wouldn't know about if it weren't because I had to prepare them for a conference. For example, for several years I have worked with Nestle Purina for visits and conferences regarding their pet

products. I am an expert on that now! On another occasion I went to South Dakota to translate for an open pit mine conference. Walking through those mines with that cute yellow construction helmet and interpreting every technical word was quite a challenge!

• **What is your least favorite thing about being a translator/interpreter?**

My least favorite thing is that being a translator can be a lonely job sometimes. I am a very social person and when I am doing a translation at home where it's just me, my computer and the dictionaries, I miss that interaction with other people.

• **What has been your strangest assignment?**

My strangest assignment was probably when I had to interpret for a person who was in the hospital, recovering from a bad illness and I got to spend three weeks with her right by her bed. I don't know if it was strange, but it certainly did not follow the patterns of all other assignments.

• **What are your goals for this year?**

This is a very special year for me. I have always worked as an interpreter and translator part-time, but for the last 5 years I was also a language instructor in the local high school. This year I decided to leave my job at the school and work as an interpreter/ translator full time. What is more, I started another master's program in translation and interpretation so my goal is to focus more on my linguistic career and establish my business as a full time interpreter/ translator.

• **What are your interests and hobbies outside translation?**

I have another passion and that is dance. I've always loved to dance and I've participated in teams and classes all my life. At the moment I teach a program called Zumba where I get to share with my students not only my passion for dance but also my own culture, as it includes many Latin rhythms.

• **What advice would you give someone starting out as a translator or interpreter?**

For someone just starting out as a translator or interpreter, I would tell them to study and prepare themselves as much as they can. Being a translator doesn't mean only knowing two languages. It requires much preparation and practice. There are many courses and interesting programs/certifications out there that somebody starting in this business could use to prepare for their new career.