

ACROSS GENERATIONS

By Kristin Rock *MATESOL Candidate 07*

On December 16, 2006, Elana Solon, the daughter of a Monterey Institute alumna, took her place among the growing body of Monterey Institute graduates. Elana's mother, Carol Solon, earned her MA in French Studies with a specialization in Translation in 1988. Now, more than eighteen years later, Elana Solon has graduated with her MATESOL degree. When Elana was asked about why she wanted to come to the Monterey Institute, she admitted that it hadn't even occurred to her that this would be the perfect place to continue her academic career until she applied in 2005. Although she knew the Monterey Institute was a wonderful place, she always thought of the Institute as her "mom's grad school."

In fact, Elana was with her mother the entire time Carol was in school. After Elana was born, Carol decided that she wanted to change professions and go back to school. Carol earned her BA from the University of California at Santa Cruz and then went on to study at the Monterey Institute. The family lived close to the graduate school



and as an 8- and 9-year-old, Elana spent a lot of time on campus with her mother. Elana commented, "... [I] even hung out at my mom's on-campus job, quietly drawing pictures under her desk and working on my own homework." It was during this time period that Elana was able to witness firsthand the diversity of the student body as well as the friendliness of the students and faculty. She also observed all the hard work her mom put into the program in addition to taking care of Elana as a single mother.

In spite of the fact that Carol now lives on the east coast, when Elana entered the MATESOL program at the Monterey Institute, her mom continued to offer support in the form of encouraging, de-stressing telephone conversations. In addition, Carol was able to celebrate with her daughter on graduation day in December. When Elana was asked shortly after the ceremony what had been favorite part of the program, she said that the two things she values the most are her new life-long friends and the interesting discussions they had outside of the classroom which were related to what they were studying in their courses. She also mentioned that she is most proud of completing her portfolio (which has already served her well in more than one interview!) and of graduating. Elana's graduation from the MATESOL program strengthens the already special bond between mother and daughter and serves as a touching testimony of the impact Monterey Institute graduates have in their immediate world and beyond.

Carol and Elana Solon celebrate together in their matching graduation hoods