

ACB's Audio Description Project – 2017 Annual Report  
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The purpose of the American Council of the Blind's Audio Description Project (ADP) is to boost levels of description activity and disseminate information on that work throughout the nation. Its major goal is to sponsor a broad range of activities designed to build awareness of audio description among the general public as well as its principal users, people who are blind or have low vision.

2017, our ninth full year of activity, was an extraordinarily active year for ACB's Audio Description Project (ADP). Here's a summary of that work:

- sponsored a "mini" AD conference in Reno, NV—as usual at our "off-year" gatherings, we focused on of particular interest to AD consumers: "Audio Description Accessibility and Technology; Open Forum with Representatives from Major Providers and Streaming Services" and "Audio Description Advocacy"
- offered the 2017 Audio Description Awards: Achievement in Audio Description - Performing Arts: Lori Ward, Tennessee Performing Arts Center, Nashville TN; Achievement in Audio Description - Media: ABC Digital; Achievement in Audio Description - International: ABLE - New Zealand; Achievement in Audio Description - International: Dr. Anna Jankowska, Poland; Special Recognition Achievement in Audio Description: Timothy Wynn, Florida; Dr. Margaret R. Pfanstiehl Memorial Achievement Award in Audio Description - Research and Development: Actiview, California; Barry Levine Memorial Award for Career Achievement in Audio Description: Diane Johnson, Descriptive Video Works-Canada Achievement in Audio Description
- held two Audio Description Institutes—in the Washington, DC area in conjunction with the mid-year meeting, we held our eleventh Institute with a record 21 registrants—during the Institute, was interviewed (as was Kim Charlson) by CBS Sunday Morning for a feature on audio description (yet to be aired); in Reno, at our twelfth ADI, we trained 18 registrants
- screened an audio described film, "La La Land" for approximately 75 attendees at the ACB Described Film Night screening in Reno—we also loaned equipment to BPI for its presentation of "Moonlight"

- continued to earn income from Amazon.com fees associated with the purchase of DVDs on the ADP website--since 2009 and the inception of the ADP we've earned \$9,953.68; in 2017 alone: \$988.47

- the ADP website—[acb.org/adp](http://acb.org/adp)—now has 2,082 “Likes” on the ADP Facebook page and we continue to broaden the ADP reach on Twitter—in 2017, we provided weekly updates on audio-described DVDs and Blu-ray discs (142 in 2017—about the same as in 2016)—we also provided updates on TV shows including video description and our comprehensive listing of broadcast television programs with audio description; [did on creating the Master List of over 1,400 titles now available on the streaming platforms.](#)

- [words on the expansion of AD on television from 50 to 87.5 hours per quarter?](#)

- DC Aid Association grant award--\$15,000 was awarded to ACB for an ADP project supporting an audio described tour of two areas at the United States Holocaust Memorial and Museum in Washington, DC. The tour has been finalized and we sponsored a gala inaugural during the 2017 mid-year meeting on February 24, 2017 (also conducted an Access Awareness/Audio Description training at the Holocaust Museum on December 7); a subsequent DC Aid Association grant award of \$15,000 is being used to develop an audio described tour of the Smithsonian Institution's “Insect Zoo” (in process)—Dr. Francisco Lima of Recife, Brazil is reaching completion of his post-doc fellowship at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History focused on how AD can be used to provide access to scientific illustrations. He is collaborating with the ADP on the development of the AD tour for the museum's Insect Zoo.

- the BADIES (Benefits of Audio Description In Education contest): the 2018 version of the contest was announced in September 2017 and we received 36 entries (the most ever) from students ages 8-18

- “The Eclipse Project”—We worked with describers in Nashville and others to offer live, real-time description of the solar eclipse on August 21, 2017; wrote and distributed press release on the event; conducted interviews with “Blind & Beyond”, the Kentucky Post-Courier and the Canadian Broadcast Corporation

- offered an AD workshop at The Actors' Center in Washington, DC—recruited two individuals for the February 2018 ADI

- as a member of FCC/Disability Advisory Committee Video Programming subcommittee, stressed the need to determine the substantive nature (if any) of visual information included with emergency announcements and how it might be described most effectively
- continue to work with Paul Cichocki (formerly of Pixar) and Alec Koven on development of Actiview app for movie AD downloads
- ongoing work with Martine Abel and Frederic Schroeder of the World Blind Union on a survey of member nations regarding the state of AD in their countries. The survey has been checked for accessibility and its translations into French, Spanish and Portuguese are now complete.
- worked with United Airlines on including AD with in-flight entertainment system
- working with the Italy-based ADLAB PRO as a member of its evaluation committee, examining training programs for audio describers
- consulted with several individuals on obtaining AD for cruise vacations—have developed and distributed a “white paper” on the state of description/access for blind passengers and cruises
- ongoing work on developing a certification effort with the ACVREP (the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation & Education Professionals)—produced a “white paper” on certification for distribution to the field for feedback
- the ACB publication *The Visual Made Verbal: A Comprehensive Training Manual and Guide to the History and Applications of Audio Description*—is now available as an audio book through the NLS, in text and MS WORD from the ACB Mini-Mall and has been published in Russian, Portuguese and Polish print versions (Spanish, French and Arabic versions are in early stages of development).
- throughout 2017, I traveled a great deal to train describers, speak on description, build AD tours and promote the ADP—domestically, I visited New York City; Providence, RI; Philadelphia, PA; San Francisco, CA (AD training for staff at APPLE) Fairbanks, AK; Louisville, KY; Reno, NV; Hodgenville, KY (Lincoln’s birthplace), and Elon, NC – internationally, travels included trips to Barcelona, Spain; Casablanca, Morocco (twice);

Buenos Aires, Argentina; Recife, Brazil; Trieste, Italy; Mexico City, Mexico; Panama City, Panama; and Malaga, Spain