

Achievement in Audio Description - Visual Art / Museums / Visitor Centers:  
Hannah Goodwin, Museum of Fine Arts - Boston, MA.  
Presented Saturday, November 16, 2019  
by Kim Charlson, American Council of the Blind



It is my honor to recognize **Hannah Goodwin and her team at the Museum of Fine Arts** for their tireless efforts to provide outstanding verbal description throughout the museum's extensive permanent collection, as well as in its special exhibitions. First and foremost, the access department should be commended for the training which they have provided to over 50 volunteers specializing in access. These access guides receive extensive training on best practices related to verbal description which includes ample opportunities to practice in the galleries with one another and to receive feedback from individuals who are blind. The chance to develop an understanding of description, as well as the skills required to bring visual art to life means that when they do start leading tours, access guides are confident and thoughtful describers.

This award was originally presented to the Museum of Fine Art at the ACB 2019 convention in Rochester. Hannah wasn't able to be there in person to accept the award, so I accepted it on her behalf, and told the membership that we would find an appropriate time and occasion to present the award to Hannah. I think today and the Bay State Council of the Blind is a most appropriate occasion.

I am also going to share some of the words of the original nominator of Hannah and the MFA – Amber Percy, who is here today. Her words could echo mine or many of us: As a visitor who is blind and enjoys taking part in access tours, I can attest to the significant talents of the guides. They talk about the art work in a way that is not overbearing to the visitors own interpretation and connection with the work. Thus, I am able to explore a visual work through an exchange of information and ideas, a dialog with my guide; this experience allows me, as well as many other visitors, to experience a connection with art works that we would never have imagined possible.

For these and so many other reasons, Hannah, her staff and volunteers deserve recognition for their achievements in audio description. Hannah is a true leader in the arts access space, and the MFA is a real treasure, and we are all very fortunate to have it right here in our own backyard. Let's not do what so many people often do when something wonderful is right in their own backyard – let's not ignore it. Let's go and visit and participate in the outstanding programming Hannah and her team develop for our benefit. It's there waiting for all of us to enjoy.

Hannah, thank you for all you do.