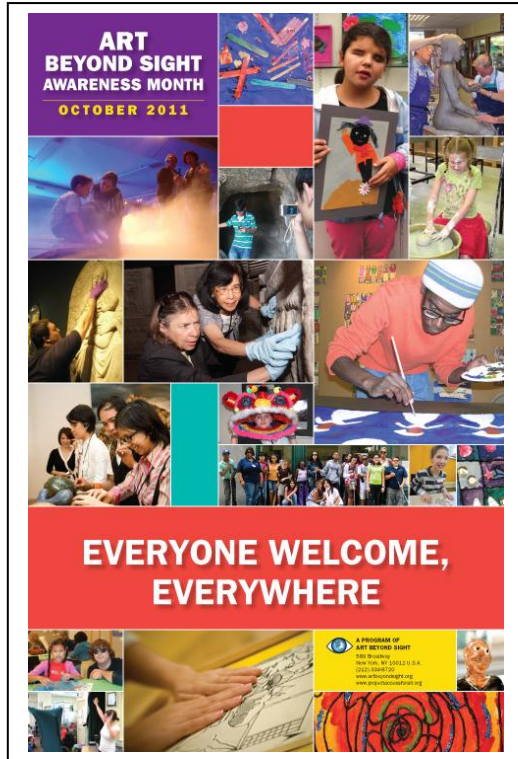


Art Beyond Sight Awareness Month

October 2011 Alert I



Welcome to all newcomers and long-time participants. Throughout the years, Awareness Month has brought together museums, schools, cultural institutions, libraries, and service organizations to encourage the public to experience the arts in more than one way. Once more, this October we are celebrating art education and creativity for people with vision loss and other disabilities.

You might remember that last year, Art Beyond Sight/Art Education for the Blind created Project Access for All, the first national database of accessible arts/ cultural institutions. Earlier this year Project Access was promoted by NYC's Mayor at his annual ADA event, attended by more than 500 New Yorkers with disabilities. We are beginning to promote it with national organizations that represent or serve people with disabilities but we need more US states represented.

Please help by registering your organization now – as part of your celebration of Art Beyond Sight Awareness Month. You control all of the material on your organization, and can access it for updates as often as you wish. Note: Only the services that you have will appear on the website. Check it out and get on board! <http://projectaccessforall.org/>

❖ **Would you like more brochures?**

Send an email to Marie Clapot at aeb@artbeyondsight.org. Be sure to indicate the number of brochures needed and your mailing address.

❖ **Need to get press coverage?**

If you haven't contacted your local press about Art Beyond Sight Awareness Month, DO SO TODAY, and if you need any help, feel free to contact Art Beyond Sight for direct quotes from its staff to include in your press release – or to give Art Beyond Sight's phone number to reporters. It is (212) 334-

8723. Also, feel free to print and include our factsheets in your press kits. Here's a link to them:

<http://www.artbeyondsight.org/change/aw-pressroom.shtml>

Kudos to the Dallas Museum of Art and the Tennessee School for the Blind who both received excellent pre-Awareness Month coverage from local press:

<http://www.dallasartnews.com/2011/09/art-beyond-sight-awareness-month-at-the-dallas-museum-of-art/>

http://blogs.dallasobserver.com/mixmaster/2011/09/dallas_museum_of_art_hosts_spe.php

http://www.dallasmuseumofart.org/Events/dma_aio2011

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20110916/NEWS01/309130080/Students-TN-School-Blind-find-outlet-arts?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>

❖ **Want to publicize your Awareness Month events?**

This is our final call for entries for the Art Beyond Sight Calendar. Send details to aeb@artbeyondsight.org. Be sure to include your organization's name and the event date, time, location, and contact if pre-registration is required. The calendar is found on Art Beyond Sight Web site; click on "calendar" at the bottom of the home page or click on this direct link to it: <http://www.artbeyondsight.org/change/aw-calendar.shtml>

❖ **Have a success story to share in a future Alert?**

Send information and a digital photo or two to Marie (again, address above), who will be writing features for them this year.

Project Access for All Profiles

Throughout the month of October we will be featuring some of the registered Project Access institutions. This week, Art Beyond Sight spoke with Manuel Bagorro, Project manager for Carnegie Hall's *Musical Connections*.

Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute

In 2010 Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute launched its *Musical Connections* program. It offers free and accessible concerts in all five of New York City's boroughs as well as programs that reach out to places with limited access to

live music, including homeless shelters, correctional facilities, and senior service organizations. Art Beyond Sight interviewed Manuel Bagorro, Project Manager for *Musical Connection*, to learn more about this initiative:

Art Beyond Sight (ABS): *How did the Weill Music Institute and its pilot program, Musical Connections, come to fruition? Was there a specific event that led to their creation?*

Manuel Bagorro (M.B): There was a growing interest within the organization in ways to connect with audiences in acute need, particularly those with limited or no access to live music. Conversations with [New York] City agencies and potential venue partners clearly identified the demand for programming that offered the transformative power of music and creative self expression in healthcare settings, correctional facilities, senior care organizations and homeless shelters. The decision was made in 2009 to pilot the program, building on Carnegie Hall's existing community programs, particularly the Neighborhood Concert series, and longstanding work within homeless shelters, to reach deeper in to the community and offer thoughtful and diverse programming in these settings.

ABS: *What have been some successes that the institution and program have had? What have been some recent events that occurred?*

M.B: A roster of 60 exceptional artists undertake this work with one of the central tenants of the program being a commitment to professional development. A range of training sessions offers an opportunity for artists to learn more about the significance of music in these settings and hear from venue staff as well as residents as they plan their performances or residencies. This commitment to questioning and the ongoing evaluation work around the program undertaken by WolfBrown Associates have encouraged reflective practice and truly responsive programming. One of the interesting things coming out of the evaluation is the ability to see multiple outcomes from the work in four key areas: rehabilitative/clinical, wellness, institutional, and creative.

Other stand-out successes have been the songwriting projects, which offer a powerful way to honor the creative capacity and life experiences of program participants and also generate wonderful new songs. 3-month residencies with public culminating concerts have taken place at Hudson Guild, a multi-service community center, Valley Lodge, a homeless shelter for seniors, many of whom have mental health challenges, and the HIV/AIDS Pediatric Care unit at Jacobi Medical Center in the Bronx. A documentary about the work at Valley Lodge can be seen here -

<http://www.carnegiehall.org/Video/Video.aspx?id=4294971882>

Recent events have included a series of instrumental and compositional workshops and concerts at Sing Sing Correctional Facility, an ongoing partnership with Jacobi Medical Center exploring the idea of creating a

"musical hospital" and compositional work in secure juvenile detention facilities - <http://www.wnyc.org/articles/wnyc-news/2011/jun/20/cindy-feature/>

ABS: *Have you worked specifically with people who are blind or visually impaired? And if so, what was the program and experience like?*

M.B: We have brought interactive concerts to VISIONS at Selis Manor through our partnership with Hudson Guild. Visions offers an adapted learning environment and meeting place for youth, adults, and seniors who are blind or visually impaired, as well as training, adapted recreation, volunteer and social work services. Artists enjoyed playing these concerts; the audiences were engaged, enthusiastic and open to hearing a wide range of repertoire. Artists also enjoyed hearing from audience members and learning about ways to adapt interaction strategies in their programs for sight impaired listeners. We are planning three concerts at Selis Manor in early 2012.

ABS: *What has been the response to the Musical Connections program?*

M.B: The response has been wonderfully positive and speaks to the power of this work to bring rehabilitation, creativity, and individual/institutional well-being, as well as great joy and consolation. A quote from a participant in the creative work at Sing Sing speaks to the impact of the program on him and his fellow participants:

"We discovered an honesty - a level of openness and camaraderie among ourselves that wasn't as apparent before. You can't force determination or drive on anyone, but by simultaneously inspiring and directing growth it gives us our own fuel and a clearer map to our destination. The combination of the completely inspirational performances with (the Musical Connections artists') clear direction generates an immense impetus to improve."

ABS: *What do you hope the Weill Music Institute and the Musical Connections program will accomplish in the future? Are there plans to expand the programs and create new ones?*

M.B: The program has expanded in 2011/12 to include over 180 separate concerts and over 200 artist-led creative sessions and workshops, offering audience and staff in our partner venues a mixture of single, interactive concert experiences and longer term creative projects and songwriting residencies. We plan to continue our work with WolfBrown to think about best practices and how sharing our experiences can support and foster community programs in other national centers. We also hope that Musical Connections will continue to underline the importance and dynamic nature of this work in the field.



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Recently, the Musical Connections program hosted songwriting workshops at the Hudson Guild Community Center and the Valley Lodge Center. Songwriters from the Hudson Guild Community Center and the Valley lodge Center collaborated with artists from the Musical Connections roster to produce twenty-two original songs and live performances of them. Shown in the above photos, participants clapping their hands.

STAY TUNED!

Our next alerts will feature more Project Access profiles and more information about our upcoming Telephone Crash Course Conference

Thank you for participating in Art Beyond Sight Awareness Month 2011!