

NDSC Education Grant Recipients Kansas City 2022

Edward Barta

Yellowstone Art Museum, Billings, MT

I truly enjoyed all the events I attended at the Symposium. The Nelson-Atkins hosts were remarkable, as is their museum. The information I gathered from a number of different topics I believe can be used in some fashion at my host museum here in Billings. I can see starting a teen docent program, I can see making some adjustments to the tours we give 4–5-year-olds, and I can also see how we can better serve our seniors. I look forward to sharing this information locally, as I know the information I will share can make a difference. Finally, thank you for your support in helping me attend this great event. I am seriously thinking of attending NDS in Atlanta!!

Anna Bethune

Weisman Art Museum/ Minneapolis Institute of Art

I am truly grateful for the grant I received and am already writing an article for the newsletter for MIA regarding the docent symposium and what a positive experience it was and how useful it will be for the future. I am reporting to the Weisman at a training session in the near future. I will give as much coverage as I can to encourage attendance in Atlanta! It promises to be a superb event as was Kansas City.

Tomoko Deeney

Arnold Arboretum, Boston, MA

The education grant gifted me an incredible opportunity to attend the National Docent Symposium in Kansas City, MO, to witness the depth of devotion in volunteerism and the energy that makes our cultural institutions strong in the United States. I was inspired to talk to museum staff to hear their efforts to reexamine what our institutions can do for society as they are our guiding light and source. By attending a workshop given by the Walters Art Museum and hearing Glenn North's powerful ekphrastic poems, I have renewed my own commitment to continue considering diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion. My most favorite memory from the weekend is being in a space with many kindred spirits who were generous, genuine and always fun. I write with my deepest gratitude for the experience.

Frank T. Francisconi

Lyman Allyn Art Museum, New London, CT

I had the good fortune of being able to attend the 2022 NDS conference in Kansas City, Missouri. Receiving a grant from the NDS was crucial in allowing me to spend four days hanging out with an amazing, fun and friendly group of docents; committed and

enthusiastic about continuing to learn and grow and adapt. That so many veteran docents (many of whom have been docents for much longer than I have) travelled from all over the USA (and Canada) to learn and share was amazing and I'm glad I got a chance to meet some of them. Docents really ARE a great group of people! Every session I attended was well-worth attending. Unlike many conferences, workshops and seminars I went to when I was working! The presenters, all docents, were primo. I'll be sharing my experiences from KC with my fellow docents at the Lyman Allyn Art Museum. Thank you to the NDSC for awarding me a grant, allowing me to attend, and putting on such a wonderful, well-run conference. And what I heard is true. The barbeque in Kansas City is really, really good. Much better than the barbeque in Connecticut!

Barbara Green

Portland Art Museum, Portland, OR

Receiving a grant to attend the National Docent Symposium in Kansas City this year enabled me to participate in an immersive long weekend filled with art appreciation, like-minded folks, singular experiences. I made contacts with fellow docents, exchanged ideas and swapped techniques and not once had to “explain” what a docent does! It does not get better than that!

Patricia Harper

The Crocker Museum, Sacramento, CA

I cannot thank the committee enough for selecting me as a grantee! It opened possibilities that over the months led to my attending the 2022 Symposium in Kansas City. I became a docent at the Crocker Museum in Sacramento in 2019 and before I had a chance to reach my comfort zone, the doors of my museum, as well as others were shuttered for random periods of time due to the pandemic. Thus began my need to connect with other docents, and other museums to learn more about shared experiences and resolutions resulting from the highly political transitioning in the arts and museums community.

I turned to the NDSC for many online conversations, tours, and events; posted on their website and Facebook community. Having been encouraged to attend a NDSC Symposium, by my mentor during my docent training; I threw in my hat when the Grant Application process was announced and am forever grateful that I did.

Not only was my time at the Symposium filled with education and ideas; I met some amazing people, who loved the experience, as well...and I fell in love with Kansas City, especially with the hospitality and docents of the Nelson-Atkins Museum.

Agnieszka Kamins

Rienzi Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX

It was such a great opportunity to attend the Symposium and meet so many devoted docents! All the lectures were very interesting, and I learned a lot as well as exchanged many ideas. Also, it was great fun to attend all the activities like visiting museums and city attractions. I loved the BBQ dinner accompanied by live Jazz music at the historic Union Station.

Sandra Kelly

Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO

When I first heard about the symposium, I knew it was something I really wanted to attend but wasn't sure how that would be happening. I was thrilled when I was selected to be a grant recipient! Being local, it was wonderful to have the perspective of a participant. I have been in the process of organizing the vast amount of information gathered and have already set up meetings with both members of the Nelson-Atkins and Museum of Deaf History, Arts and Culture docents to share topics, techniques, and ideas that I learned. I'm also looking forward to hearing from other attendees about the workshops they participated in. Thank you so much for this incredible opportunity.

Susan Leavy

Fitchburg Museum of Art, Fitchburg, MA

First a word about the Nelson-Atkins volunteers: Absolutely wonderful. Someone always seemed to be there when I had an urgent question, whether about directions, materials or comfort. Kudos to each one. I spent a pre-session at the Nelson-Atkins. The things I learned about some of the "science" of curating art was phenomenal. Behind the scenes will be what I seek out in my next symposium, for sure. The willingness of fellow docents to share was almost as terrific, on balance, to the breakout sessions themselves. My particular favorite was the Heard Museum, *Remembering the Future*. Those presenting made it feel as though we were museum visitors. Not an easy off-site goal! Well done. The staff at Intercontinental are to be commended as well. What patience!

Yvette Newborn

Rancho Los Alamitos Historic Ranch and Gardens, Long Beach, CA

My visit to Kansas City for the National Docent Symposium was informative and enjoyable. I walked past the bronze statue of Winston Churchill daily on my way to the hotel. My orange plastic portfolio kept all my notes "corralled." It was interesting to see and hear how other Museums or Historic Sites are keeping relevant in this climate of re-evaluation. I continue to be curious about how docents can be more representative of the communities they serve. Attending NDS validated the important vision we have for our Rancho Los Alamitos Historic site. We have been purposed to tell stories from various perspectives. I learned other institutions have embarked on the same journey with some success and some challenges. Sharing dynamic authentic stories with youth will help build a more inclusive community. Thank you for the honor of receiving the grant.

Christina Petruska

Cape Cod Museum of Art, Dennis, MA

Thanks for making the Symposium a very special event. It was the first I attended, and I can only rave about every element of this wonderful gathering. I have so many notes, ideas, plans to share with our docents that instead of reporting back at our last meeting, I've scheduled a special meeting to regale them all with things I've brought back from the time spent in Kansas City. Everyone involved in organizing the many elements deserve kudos. It seemed to run so smoothly with so many big and little details expertly planned. So, thanks to everyone and the Cape Cod Museum of Art will be with you again in Georgia.

Juana Wilson

Rienzi Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX

It was a dream coming true when I received congratulations on being awarded the grant to attend the NDS Symposium, in KC. As a new Docent at Rienzi, this was going to be the most effective and practical experience before returning to the Museum life after being away for almost 2 years because of Covid.

The sessions were incredible, not only on the presentation but also on the new ideas that were being generated through the professional exchanges with other participants. During the Welcome Dinner, it was a privilege to talk to and listen to the other grantees and their passion while describing the projects they were working on.

This Symposium and the conversations with more experienced colleagues have given me the opportunity to learn more about the importance and meaning of art in our lives, and the tremendous need to make it more accessible to all ages and cultural groups. A very special thank-you note to the Education Grants Committee, and the grantees for their kindness and friendship. It meant a lot to me.