

The Perfect Job

By Kenita Gibbins

I worked to help my husband graduate from Denver University. Working went on until our first baby arrived. Part time fun jobs were found while the kids were growing up like different kinds of exercise classes at the Jewish Community Center. I also did classes for the Denver Public School Adult Education. Two seasons I taught people how to write a Christmas Letter. They were not allowed to say, "We went to Spain. We had a good time." For gosh sakes tell your friends why you had a good time.

When our youngest child turn 14 years old, the mother learned to be computer literate and had no trouble getting employment. My last full time work was with my husband in his blind shop at Lowry Air Force Finance Center. Shops or cafeterias in government buildings are run by blind people. We retired after eight years.

Finally, I interviewed for the only job I ever really wanted. I became a docent at the Denver Art Museum. The paycheck doesn't exist, but instead I receive an education only available at the museum. The education never stops because of new exhibitions, new ways pop-up to enrich our tours. Museum docents across the United States join our classes first for help regarding the training methods our tour guides receive. These classes are given at symposiums each year.

Docents can go emeritus after 15 years unless they still love giving school tours and can keep up with the children. Last week my tour was for 10 third-grade students and their chaperones. The joy of seeing children having fun discovering art warms my heart. They see more details now that they know you don't just look and "drive-by".

The rewards happen with adults too. One man told me with his arms crossed he didn't have time to stay for the entire 45-minute tour. I told him that was okay. Guess what? His attention went on alert, and he lingered after the tour. The chart in my head checked success. Many adults are afraid to ask or answer questions. They seem to think they might say something wrong, even if there are no right or wrong answers. Young people don't have this fear.

One of the most important services the museum offers is ways to see art for the blind and low vision visitors. Just think how futile it would be to go somewhere where you cannot see or touch anything. We learn to offer verbal descriptions of the art. Besides our voices, the access teams have tactile tools for our blind guests to experience. They can feel a painting with the images raised or objects that are heavy like a small sculpture. Using our voices is what we do at Windsor Gardens Writing Group. We want our peers to see what we see through our words.

Helping people as a DAM docent gives me a feeling of success. Hooray!