

The Astonishing Power of Words

By Kenita Gibbins

Last week the Windsor Gardens Writers sat facing in a rectangular shape and gave each other the joy of laughter. We also shared rude awakenings of being duped by fraud. The words we heard caught some of us in scams because we still want to believe in the honesty of people. Our sharing helped heal each other. Our skills of saying innuendoes about what we want to say but should not say never fail to amaze.

Our remarks can help our neighbors also. Probably more than half of our population at Windsor Gardens has some kind of visual problems. More than we suspect are completely blind and others have low vision. We all must learn to use our most descriptive words when visiting with a neighbor or a new friend at Blossoms. We can't just point to a painting in Centerpoint. We have to think about how much we enjoyed radio stories in gone by times. If someone can't see, they need descriptions of what you want them to observe. Raising your voice doesn't help unless their hearing is low too. We must use the of power of words to comfort since we live in a community of people who worry about losing independence, sight, a loved one and God forbid our minds.

As a docent I'm striving to be better with my descriptions at the Denver Art Museum. I want to help people see the painting with my verbal skills. Just think how boring it would be to go to an art museum and not be able to touch or see anything. Our tools also come into play with tactile art that a person can feel. We have access days when we set up tables with docents to explain what they touch. Our city can be proud that more and more places are meeting the needs of many visitors with disabilities.

Saying 'see' to a blind person does not bother them. Offering an arm is okay also. They just don't like for you to grab their arm. Most blind or low vision people have a concept of color including those blind from birth. Recently I did a private tour for a blind women, and her little German Shepherd dog. I'm used to telling stories about the paintings and the painter. She wanted to know the placement of everything in the scene plus the colors and texture used with the paint. Another time I talked with a blind and deaf woman plus her sighted companion. She could speak clearly and I assume she didn't lose her hearing in her early years. The companion spelled letter-by-letter each word that I spoke about the art piece her friend could feel. I relished the time it took to communicate because it was so worthwhile. The companion invited me to write my goodbye on her hand. It only takes one rude awakening to be empowered with words.