

Bryn Mawr Rehab Hospital's Art Ability Program Expands Long-term Collaboration with the Philadelphia Museum of Art

At a collaborative event on April 8, more than 60 students from the Philadelphia Museum of Art's Form in Art program for legally blind adults were educated and entertained when two demonstrating artists from Bryn Mawr Rehab Hospital's Art Ability program presented morning and afternoon interactive educational sessions. It was the first time in the museum's history that professional artists were invited to interact with the classes in such a way. This invitation was in conjunction with a special month-long exhibition of Art Ability work at the museum.

Patricia Goodrich of Richlandtown and Robert Davis of Collegeville, Pennsylvania, both sculptors, shared how they became interested in art, where their inspiration comes from and how living with a disability has influenced their work.

Ms. Goodrich reinforced how physical disability and artistic expression are not mutually exclusive by asking the Form in Art students to place their hands on the part of their body that drives their art. Participants placed their hands on the heart, or head, or gut.

After an energetic Q&A session, the group moved out to the Education Corridor where the Art Ability artists showed and explained their finished work which was on special display at the museum. Ms. Goodrich even showcased rocks on which she had etched words in Braille – allowing an even more meaningful way for the students to interact with her work.

The Form in Art program at the Philadelphia Museum of Art combines studio classes and art history into a unique course for legally blind adults. Form in Art students have created artwork and have been inspired by the art works in Art Ability's annual



(l-r) Art Ability Artist Patricia Goodrich; Art Ability Curator Susanna Saunders, Ph.D.; Art Ability Artist Bob Davis; Street Thoma, Manager, Accessible Programs, Philadelphia Museum of Art; Heather Zoumas-Lubeski, Director, Community Outreach and Special Events, Bryn Mawr Rehab Hospital

exhibition. The goal of the collaboration between the museum and Art Ability is to broaden participants' appreciation of art, create hands-on learning opportunities, enhance each participant's self-image and provide new connections and networking opportunities for the artists. As the largest program of its kind in the nation, Art Ability is dedicated to creating community awareness of people with disabilities, and encouraging people with disabilities to reach beyond their limitations and find fulfillment and inspiration through art.

Artwork from the Bryn Mawr Rehab Hospital Art Ability Program was exhibited at the Philadelphia Museum of Art from March 22 through April 17, 2011. Part of the "Community Partnerships" education display, Art Ability work from local, regional, national and international artists were on view in the Education Corridor of the museum.

For more information on the Art Ability program: call: 484-596-5607, email: artability@mlhs.org or web: brynmawrehab.org/artability



Above: Art Ability Artist Bob Davis demonstrating the hands on appeal of his work



Left: Art Ability Artist Patricia Goodrich interacts with the students



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