

November 2, 2018

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SAMA GRADUATES FIRST CLASS OF GALLERY HOSTS

Bedford – The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art recently graduated its first class of gallery hosts. These individuals went through a four-week training session this summer at SAMA’s Bedford Museum that taught participants the ins and outs of working in a museum.

Chuck Olson, a professional artist and Professor of Art at Saint Francis University, led the class, which included training on ways to enjoy and enhance one’s experiences visiting museums and galleries, how to look at and talk about art from a personal perspective, and how to feel comfortable answering visitors’ questions. The class also included a brief course on art history based on artwork from the Museum’s collection.

Those who completed the four-session course are now qualified to serve as gallery hosts. Each individual is asked to donate three hours per month at one of SAMA’s five museums. Gallery hosts can give tours, assist visitors, answer questions and add to visitors’ museum experience. SAMA’s gallery hosts can be identified by their personalized “Ask Me” host pins.

“As a SAMA-Bedford gallery host, I serve as a somewhat inconspicuous guide, available to answer visitors’ questions about the artists and their artwork,” said SAMA volunteer Joan Hawk. “I have had several delightful conversations with visitors about our exhibitions as I give them background on the artists. This has sometimes prompted in their sharing stories of personal experiences with contemporary artists they have met. The biggest reward, for me, has been that no one has left the Museum without commenting on the quality of art, its setting, the gift shop and the information provided by staff and hosts.”

The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Bedford is located in the historic Anderson House at 137 E. Pitt St. The Museum is open daily 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Fridays 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. The Museum is closed Tuesdays. Cost of admission is \$10 per person or free admission for SAMA members, ages 21 & under and 65 & older. The Museum offers free admission for Bedford residents on the first and third Wednesdays of every month. Parking is available on the street or in the lot at the rear of the building. For more information, please visit www.sama-art.org.