

**Number of
Metro Art
Docents
to Triple Following
Apprenticeship**



Metro Art Docent Susan Zagha leads tour of Vermont Sunset Metro Rail Station.

By GARY WOSK

(June 13, 2001) MTA this summer will triple the number of its Metro Art docents – that group of volunteers who lead free public tours of the artworks found throughout the Metro Rail system.

The 26 soon-to-be docents, presently undergoing a 40-hour apprenticeship program, will join the 12 tour group leaders already on the job. The training program takes volunteers behind the scenes of the broad range of art in the Metro Rail system and provides insights into the artists.

Once trained, the newly fledged docents will conduct two-hour tours of the art and architecture featured at 50 light-rail and subway stations.

The volunteers, who range in age from the late 20s to late 60s and include a doctor, a waitress, a law student and a art history major, were inspired by newspaper articles about the docent program and by the Metro Art tours they took.

"I was very relieved and glad people were inspired by the articles," said MTA Docent Program Coordinator Robin Izon. "The response was overwhelming, and the group is very diverse."

Shorter waiting period for tours

According to Izon, the waiting period for weekday tours will drop from six weeks to three weeks. Additional weekend tours will be offered as well. The number of tours scheduled each month will increase from five to approximately 15.

During the 15-week apprenticeship program, volunteers meet the artists, learn how they were chosen for the project, the challenges they faced, the ins-and-outs of the creative process, and how the artwork is funded and maintained.

Following their apprenticeship, volunteers will lead a minimum of 12 tours a year of selected segments of the 59.4 mile system.

The 50 Metro Rail stations and Gateway Transit Center feature the work of more than 75 artists commissioned to enhance the transit system in one of the country's largest and most celebrated public art programs.

Since the program's inception in August 1999, docents have led 165 tours of various segments of Metro Rail, which translates into nearly 4,600

people. The MTA is believed to be the first transit agency to benefit from such a program.

Free tours for groups of 15 or more (maximum 60) are available by request. To reserve a Metro Art guided tour, or for more information, members of the public may call 922-4278.

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