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THE GRAND RAPIDS ART MUSEUM PARTICIPATES IN BLUE STAR MUSEUMS

The Grand Rapids Art Museum is one of more than 1,500 museums across America to offer free admission to military personnel and their families this summer in collaboration with the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, and the Department of Defense

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., June 4, 2012 – The Grand Rapids Art Museum is participating once again in the Blue Star Museums program, a collaboration among the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, the Department of Defense, and more than 1,500 museums across America to offer free admission to all active duty military personnel and their families from Memorial Day through Labor Day 2012. Leadership support has been provided by MetLife Foundation through Blue Star Families. The complete list of participating museums is available at www.arts.gov/bluestarmuseums. In addition to participating in this program for Blue Star Families, GRAM extends its free admission policy year round for all active military personnel.

“Through Blue Star Museums, the arts community is extending a special invitation to military families to enjoy over 1,500 museums this summer,” said NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman. “This is both an opportunity to thank military families for their service and sacrifice, as well as a chance to create connections between museums and these families that will continue throughout the year. Especially for families with limited time together, those on a limited budget, and ones that have to relocate frequently, Blue Star Museums offers an opportunity to enjoy one another and become more fully integrated into a community.”

“As we enter the third consecutive year of the Blue Star Museums program, we are happy provide an opportunity for our nation’s service members and their families to connect with our national treasures,” said Blue Star Families CEO Kathy Roth-Douquet. “Through this distinctive collaboration between Blue Star Families, the National Endowment for the Arts and more than 1,500 museums across the United States, military families have an unparalleled opportunity to visit some of the country’s finest museums for free.” This year, more than 1,500 (and counting) museums in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and American Samoa are taking part in the initiative, including more than 300 new museums this year. Museums are welcome to join Blue Star Museums throughout the summer. The effort to recruit museums has involved the partnership efforts of the American Association of Museums, the Association of Art Museum Directors, the Association of Children’s Museums, the American Association of State and Local History, and the Association of Science-Technology Centers. This year’s Blue Star Museums represent not just fine arts museums, but also science museums, history museums, nature centers, and 70 children’s museums. Among this year’s new participants are the American Civil War Center at Historic Tredegar in Richmond, Virginia, the New Mexico Museum of Space History in Alamogordo, NM, the Cleveland Botanical Garden in Cleveland, Ohio, the Children’s Creativity Museum in San Francisco, California, the Menil Collection in Houston, Texas, and the World Figure Skating Museum & Hall of Fame in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

About Blue Star Museums

Blue Star Museums is a collaboration among the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, the Department of Defense, and more than 1,500 museums across America. The program runs from Memorial Day, May 28, 2012 through Labor Day, September 3, 2012. The free admission program is available to active-duty military and their family members (military ID holder and up to five family members). Active duty military include Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, and active duty National Guard and active duty Reserve members. Some special or limited-time museum exhibits may not be included in this free admission program.

For questions on particular exhibits or museums, please contact the museum directly. To find out which museums are participating, visit www.arts.gov/bluestarmuseums. The site includes a list of participating museums and a map to help with visit planning. Museums that wish to participate in Blue Star Museums may contact bluestarmuseums@arts.gov, or Wendy Clark at 202-682-5451.

This is the latest NEA program to bring quality arts programs to the military, veterans, and their families. Other NEA programs for the military have included Operation Homecoming: Writing the Wartime Experience; Great American Voices Military Base Tour; and Shakespeare in American Communities Military Base Tour.

About Blue Star Families

Blue Star Families is a national, nonprofit network of military families from all ranks and services, including guard and reserve, with a mission to support, connect and empower military families. In addition to morale and empowerment programs, Blue Star Families raises awareness of the challenges and strengths of military family life and works to make military life more sustainable through programs and partnerships like Operation Honor Cards, MilKidz Club and Blue Star Museums. Membership includes military spouses, children and parents as well as service members, veterans and the civilians who strongly support them. To learn more about Blue Star Families, visit www.bluestarfam.org.

About the National Endowment for the Arts

The National Endowment for the Arts was established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government. To date, the NEA has awarded more than \$4 billion to support artistic excellence, creativity, and innovation for the benefit of individuals and communities. The NEA extends its work through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector. To join the discussion on how art works, visit the NEA at arts.gov.

About the Grand Rapids Art Museum

The mission of the Grand Rapids Art Museum (GRAM) is: to inspire discovery, enjoyment, and learning about art; to serve as a welcoming and inclusive cultural resource; to collect, conserve, and interpret works of art of the finest quality. Established in the heart of downtown Grand Rapids, the new Art Museum is internationally known for its distinguished design and LEED Gold certified status. Established in 1910 as the Grand Rapids Art Association, GRAM has grown to include more than 5,000 works of art, including American and European 19th and 20th century painting and sculpture and more than 3,500 works on paper. Embracing the city's legacy as a leading center of design and manufacturing, GRAM has a growing collection in the area of design and modern craft.

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