



Cantigny Joins Blue Star Museums Program

Robert R. McCormick Museum and First Division Museum are among more than 600 museums to offer free admission to military personnel and their families

WHEATON, IL, May 26, 2010 – Cantigny Park, part of the McCormick Foundation, today announced its participation in Blue Star Museums, a partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), Blue Star Families and more than 600 museums across America to offer free admission to all active duty military personnel and their families this summer from Memorial Day through Labor Day.

Cantigny's two museums—the Robert R. McCormick Museum and First Division Museum—are always free, but the regular parking fee for the general public is \$5 per vehicle. The park waives this fee for active duty members of the military, and will continue to do so when the Blue Star Museums program ends.

“The program is a great way to show appreciation and respect for military families,” said Matt LaFond, Cantigny Park executive director. “Even though we already had a free admission policy in place, this will raise awareness of what we offer. Most importantly, our benefactor, Colonel Robert R. McCormick, was a World War I veteran and he loved welcoming soldiers to his Cantigny estate. With this program we are honoring the Colonel's legacy while doing our part to recognize the extraordinary efforts of today's service members.”

Museums in all 50 states and the District of Columbia are taking part. The American Association of Museums, the Association of Art Museum Directors, and the Association of Children's Museums each sent a letter from NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman inviting museums to participate. In addition to 30 children's museums across the country, participating museums represent a broad range of art, history, science and cultural topics. The complete list of participating Blue Star Museums is available at arts.gov/national/bluestarmuseums.

“America's museums are proud to join the rest of the country in thanking our military personnel and their families for their service and sacrifice,” said Landesman. “I cannot imagine a better way to do that than inviting them in to explore and enjoy the extraordinary cultural heritage our museums present.”

“There have always been wonderful examples of partnerships between museums and military installations, but the scale of this gift from the museum community to military families is thrilling,” added Blue Star Families Chairman Kathy Roth-Douquet. “Military families work hard for this country, and it is gratifying for us to be recognized. We anticipate that thousands of families will participate in the program and visit museums this summer – many of them for the first time.”

The McCormick Museum and First Division Museum at Cantigny are open Tuesday through Sunday, from 10 am to 5 pm. More information is available online at Cantigny.org and FirstDivisionMuseum.org.

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About Blue Star Museums

Blue Star Museums runs from Memorial Day, May 31 through to Labor Day, September 6, 2010. The free admission program is available to active duty military and their immediate family members (military ID holder and five immediate family members), which includes active duty Reserve and active duty National Guard. 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 arts.gov/national/bluestarmuseums. The site includes a list of participating museums and a map to help with visit planning.

About Blue Star Families

Blue Star Families is a national, non-partisan, non-profit 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 with civilian community and leaders. Membership includes spouses, kids, parents, service members, veterans and civilians. For more information, please visit BlueStarFam.org.

About the National Endowment for the Arts

The NEA is a public agency dedicated to supporting excellence in the arts – both new and established – bringing the arts to all Americans, and providing leadership in arts education. Established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government, the Arts Endowment is the largest annual national funder of the arts, bringing great art to all 50 states, including rural areas, inner cities and military bases. For more information, please visit arts.gov.

About Cantigny

Cantigny, part of the Chicago-based McCormick Foundation, is the 500-acre Wheaton (Illinois) estate of Robert R. McCormick, longtime editor and publisher of the *Chicago Tribune*. Cantigny Park is home to the McCormick Museum, First Division Museum, formal gardens, picnic grounds, walking trails and a Visitors Center with banquet and dining facilities. More information, including hours, directions and upcoming events is online at Cantigny.org. Cantigny Golf, adjacent to the park, features a 27-hole championship golf course, full-service clubhouse, Cantigny Golf Academy and the 9-hole Cantigny Youth Links. For more information, visit CantignyGolf.com.

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