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## **CHICAGO CHILDREN'S MUSEUM PARTICIPATES IN BLUE STAR MUSEUMS**

*Museum offers year-round free admission to military families*

(May 23, 2011—Chicago, IL) – After participating last summer in Blue Star Museums, Chicago Children's Museum (CCM) now offers year-round free admission to all active duty military personnel and their families. In addition, CCM also offers free individual admission to firefighters, police officers and educators. Blue Star Museums is a partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, and more than 1,300 museums across America to offer free admission to all active duty military personnel and their families from Memorial Day through Labor Day 2011. 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](http://www.arts.gov/bluestarmuseums).

"At Chicago Children's Museum, we see it as an absolute necessity to provide as much support as we can to these families in service to our country, and we're happy to partner with such meaningful initiative," said CCM President and CEO Jennifer Farrington.

"Blue Star Museums may be the program at the NEA of which I am proudest," said NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman. "Blue Star Museums recognizes and thanks our military families for all they are doing for our country, and simultaneously begins young people on a path to becoming life-long museum goers."

"Last year the success of the inaugural year of the Blue Star Museums program showed that partnerships between the nation's museum and military communities are a natural," said Blue Star Families Chairman Kathy Roth-Douquet. "We are thrilled that 300,000 military family members visited our partner museums in the summer of 2010. We hope to exceed that number this year as the military community takes advantage of the rich cultural heritage they defend and protect every day. We appreciate the NEA and the nation's museums who chose to partner with us. We also are grateful to our friends at the MetLife Foundation, the lead supporter of the Blue Star Museums outreach initiative, whose generous donation helps make our work possible."

This year, more than 1,324 (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 500 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, and the American Association of State and Local History.

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. Participants include The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond, Virginia, The Children's Museum & Theatre of Maine in Portland, Maine, the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium in Dubuque, Iowa, the Chinese American Museum in Los Angeles, California, the Museum of Flight in Seattle, Washington, and the Toy and Action Figure Museum in Pauls Valley, Oklahoma.

### **About Chicago Children's Museum**

The mission of Chicago Children's Museum is to create a community where play and learning connect. CCM is the only cultural institution in the city dedicated to young children and the important adults in their lives. Playful experiences--including over fifteen interactive exhibits--tap into how kids learn, and engage them at an early age so they develop a lifelong love of learning. Located at Navy Pier, Chicago's number one attraction at 700 East Grand Avenue, CCM is the final stop for CTA buses #29, #65, #66 and #124. For more information, please visit [www.chicagochildrensmuseum.org/hours.html](http://www.chicagochildrensmuseum.org/hours.html).

### **About Blue Star Museums**

Blue Star Museums runs from Memorial Day, May 30, 2011 through to Labor Day, September 5, 2011. The free admission program is available to active-duty military and their immediate family members (military ID holder and five immediate 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](http://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](mailto: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, nonpartisan, 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. Membership includes military spouses, children and parents as well as service members, veterans and civilians.

To learn more about Blue Star Families, visit [www.bluestarfam.org](http://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](http://arts.gov).

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