

## Cantigny Supports National Blue Star Museums Program

*Robert R. McCormick Museum and First Division Museum are among 1,500 museums to offer free admission to military personnel and their families*

**WHEATON, IL, May 22, 2012** – Cantigny Park, part of the Robert R. McCormick Foundations, today announced its participation in Blue Star Museums, a collaboration among the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), Blue Star Families, the Department of Defense and more than 1,500 museums across America. Participating museums will 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 admission, but the park's regular parking fee 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 summer program ends.

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

The Blue Star program launched in 2010 and this will be Cantigny's third year of participation. Museums in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico and American Samoa are taking part. The complete list is posted online at [arts.gov/bluestarmuseums](http://arts.gov/bluestarmuseums).

“Through Blue Star Museums, the arts community is extending a special invitation to military families,” said NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman. “For families with limited time together, those on a limited budget, and ones that have to relocate frequently, this offers an opportunity to enjoy one another and become more fully integrated into a community.”

“We are happy to provide an opportunity for our nation’s service members and their families to connect with our national treasures,” added Blue Star Families CEO Kathy Roth-Douquet. “Military families have an unparalleled opportunity to visit some of the country’s finest museums for free.”

In addition to the Blue Star Museums program, Cantigny Park offers the Colonel Robert R. McCormick Cantigny Honor Club for veterans and active-duty military (regular, reserve and National Guard). Honor Club was introduced in July 2010 and now has more than 4,000 members. Membership is free and never expires.

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](http://Cantigny.org) and [FirstDivisionMuseum.org](http://FirstDivisionMuseum.org).

**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 please contact the museum directly. Participating museums are listed at [arts.gov/bluestarmuseums](http://arts.gov/bluestarmuseums)

**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 [bluestarfam.org](http://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).

**About Cantigny Park**

Cantigny Park, part of the Chicago-based Robert R. McCormick Foundations, is the 500-acre Wheaton (Illinois) estate of Robert R. McCormick (1880-1955), longtime editor and publisher of the *Chicago Tribune*. It is home to 30 acres of spectacular gardens, the Robert R. McCormick Museum, the First Division Museum and a 27-hole championship golf course. All are open to the public. Cantigny also is a favorite destination for special events, weddings, concerts, lectures, workshops and other recreation and learning opportunities for all ages. Full-service banquet and dining facilities are on site. More information, including hours, directions and a calendar of upcoming events is online at [Cantigny.org](http://Cantigny.org). For details about Cantigny Golf, including the Cantigny Golf Academy and 9-hole Cantigny Youth Links, please visit [CantignyGolf.com](http://CantignyGolf.com).

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