
Cantigny Renews Support for National Blue Star Museums Program

Robert R. McCormick Museum and First Division Museum are among 1,800 museums to offer free admission to military personnel and their families

WHEATON, IL, May 21, 2013 – 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 1,800 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.

“This is a nice way of showing appreciation and respect for military families,” said Paul Herbert, executive director of the First Division Museum at Cantigny Park. “Even though we've had a free admission policy in place, the Blue Star program raises awareness. Most importantly, our benefactor, Colonel Robert R. McCormick, was a World War I veteran and loved welcoming soldiers to his Cantigny estate. So we are honoring the Colonel's generous legacy as we recognize the efforts of today's service members.”

The Blue Star program launched in 2010 and this will be Cantigny's fourth 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.

“Blue Star Museums is a collaboration between the arts and military communities,” said NEA Acting Chairman Joan Shigekawa. “Our work with Blue Star Families and with more than 1,800 museums ensures that we can reach out to military families and thank them for their service and sacrifice.”

“This is something that service members and their families look forward to every year and we are thrilled with the continued growth of the program,” added Blue Star Families CEO Kathy Roth-Douquet. “Through this distinctive collaboration between Blue Star Families, the National Endowment for the Arts and museums across the United States, service members and their families can connect with our national treasures with this 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 nearly 5,000 members. Membership is free and never expires.

The McCormick Museum and First Division Museum at Cantigny are open Tuesday through Sunday. More information, including hours and upcoming events, is available online at Cantigny.org and 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 1,800 museums across America. The program runs from Memorial Day, May 27, 2013, through Labor Day, September 2, 2013. 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

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. For details about Cantigny Golf, including the Cantigny Golf Academy and 9-hole Cantigny Youth Links, please visit CantignyGolf.com.

About Blue Star Families

Blue Star Families is a national, nonprofit network of military families from all ranks and services, including guard and reserve, dedicated to supporting, connecting and empowering military families. With our partners, Blue Star Families hosts a robust array of morale and empowerment programs, including Books on Bases, Blue Star Museums, Operation Honor Corp, Blue Star Careers and Operation Appreciation. Blue Star Families also works directly with the Department of Defense and senior members of local, State and Federal government to bring the most important military family issues to light. Working in concert with fellow nonprofits, community advocates, and public officials, Blue Star Families raises awareness of the challenges and strengths of military family life and works to make military life more sustainable. Our worldwide membership includes military spouses, children, parents, and friends, as well as service members, veterans and civilians. To learn more about Blue Star Families, visit <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.

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