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MUSCATINE ART CENTER NEWS RELEASE

Muscatine Art Center | 1314 Mulberry Avenue | 563-263-8282 | www.muscatineartcenter.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 27, 2017

MUSCATINE ART CENTER JOINS BLUE STAR MUSEUM NETWORK

Active duty military, families receive free admission to museums through Labor Day

MUSCATINE, Iowa – The Muscatine Art Center announced Friday (May 26) the launch of Blue Star Museums, a collaboration among the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), Blue Star Families, the Department of Defense, and more than 2,000 museums across America to offer free admission to the nation's active duty military personnel and their families from Memorial Day through Labor Day.

The program provides families an opportunity to enjoy the nation's cultural heritage and learn more about their community, especially after a military move. A list of participating museums is available at arts.gov/bluestarmuseums

"The Blue Star Museums program is a great opportunity for the NEA to team up with local museums in every state in the nation to support our service members and their families," said NEA Chairman Jane Chu. "It means a lot to offer these families access to high-quality, budget-friendly opportunities to spend time together."

This year's Blue Star Museums represent not just fine arts museums, but also science museums, history museums, nature centers, and dozens of children's museums, including newly participating museums: the Edgar Allen Poe Museum in Richmond, Virginia; The Blues Foundation's Blues Hall of Fame Museum in Memphis Tennessee; the Hagerman Fossil 3 Beds



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National Monument in Hagerman Idaho; and the Buffalo Bill Center of the West in Cody, Wyoming.

Museums are welcome to join Blue Star Museums throughout the summer.

“Whether they want to blast off at a science museum, take a walk through nature, or encounter animals at the aquarium, Blue Star Museums will help service members and their families create memories this summer,” said Blue Star Families Chief Executive Officer Kathy Roth-Douquet. “This fantastic collaboration with the NEA brings our local military and civilian communities together, and offers families fun and enriching activities in their home towns. We are thrilled with the continued growth of the program and the unparalleled opportunities it offers.”

Blue Star Museums is a collaboration among the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, the Department of Defense, and more than 2,000 museums across America. The program runs from Memorial Day, May 29, 2017 through Labor Day, September 4, 2017. The free admission program is available to any bearer of a Geneva Convention common access card (CAC), a DD Form 1173 ID card (dependent ID), or a DD Form 1173-1 ID card, which includes active duty U.S. military - Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, as well as members of the National Guard and Reserve, U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, NOAA Commissioned Corps - and up to five family 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 participating museums and plan your trip, visit arts.gov/bluestarmuseums.

All summer long, Blue Star Museums will share stories through social media. Follow Blue Star Museums on Twitter @NEAarts and @BlueStarFamily, #bluestarmuseums, on Facebook, and read the NEA Art Works blog for weekly stories on participating museums and exhibits.



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Museums who wish to participate in Blue Star Museums may contact bluestarmuseums@arts.gov, or Wendy Clark, NEA Director of Museums, at clarkw@arts.gov. This is the latest NEA program to bring quality arts programs to the military, veterans, and their families. Other NEA programs for the military include the Creative Forces: NEA Military Healing Arts Network.

Muscatine Art Center has introduced new features into the historic house. Visitors can now learn about the history of the house and family through a touchscreen video and can explore the collection with two new touchscreen kiosks. Muscatine Art Center Director, Melanie Alexander explains,

“Visitors often want details about the artwork and artifacts on view in the historic house, but the look of the historic house is lessened by covering the walls in labels,” Alexander said.

“Technology is putting information at the fingertips of visitors who can pick and choose the objects of most interest to them.”

A Learn to Look Family Gallery has been added to the second floor of the mansion along with a new glass installation. “Spring Motor Phonographs, Circa 1900” from the collection of Brian Walter is on view in three of the second floor rooms of the Musser McColm home. “Not So Ordinary”: Iowa Regionalists and Scenes of Rural Life” is on view in the Stanley Gallery through July 30, 2017. The exhibition features our remarkable regionalist collection.

The Muscatine Art Center is located at 1314 Mulberry Avenue in Muscatine, Iowa. Hours are Tuesday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Thursday evenings until 7:00 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Admission is free. Donations are appreciated. Visit www.muscatineartcenter.org for more information about programs and events and to download a class brochure.



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The National Endowment for the Arts Established by Congress in 1965, the NEA is the independent federal agency whose funding and support gives Americans the opportunity to participate in the arts, exercise their imaginations, and develop their creative capacities. Through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector, the NEA supports arts learning, affirms and celebrates America's rich and diverse cultural heritage, and extends its work to promote equal access to the arts in every community across America. Visit [arts.gov](https://www.arts.gov) to learn more about NEA.

Blue Star Families is a national, nonprofit network of military spouses, children, parents and friends, as well as service members, veterans and civilians, dedicated to supporting, connecting, and empowering military families. With our partners, Blue Star Families leverages data-driven insights to curate resources for military families, including career development tools, local community events for families, and caregiver support. Each summer since 2010, Blue Star Families has engaged tens of thousands of volunteers and served more than 4 million military family members. 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. With Blue Star Families, military families can find answers to their challenges anywhere they are. Visit [bluestarfam.org](https://www.bluestarfam.org) for more information.