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PALO ALTO JUNIOR MUSEUM & ZOO TO PARTICIPATE IN BLUE STAR MUSEUMS

The Palo Alto Junior Museum & Zoo is one of the more than 2,000 museums across America to offer free admission to military personnel and their families this summer in collaboration with the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, and the Department of Defense.

Palo Alto, CA – May 21, 2014 – Today the Palo Alto Junior Museum & Zoo announced the third year of its participation in Blue Star Museums, a collaboration among the National Endowment for the Arts, 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 including National Guard, Reserve, and their families from Memorial Day through Labor Day 2014. Leadership support has been provided by MetLife Foundation through Blue Star Families. The program provides families an opportunity to enjoy the nation’s cultural heritage and learn more about their new communities after a military move. The complete list of participating museums is available at arts.gov/national/blue-star-museums.

“As we kick off our fifth year of Blue Star Museums, more museums than ever are part of this military appreciation program,” said NEA Acting Chairman Joan Shigekawa. “Together with Blue Star Families and more than 2,000 museums, we are proud to help connect military families with the cultural resources in their communities.”

“Blue Star Museums has grown into a nationally recognized program that service members and their families look forward to each year,” said Blue Star Families Chief Executive Officer Kathy Roth-Douquet. “It helps bring 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.”

This year, more than 2,000 (and counting) museums in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and American Samoa are taking part in the initiative. Museums are welcome to join Blue Star Museums throughout the summer. The effort to recruit museums has involved partnerships with the American Alliance of Museums, the Association of the Art Museum Directors, the Association of Children’s Museums, the American Association of State and Local History, and the Association of Science-Technology Centers. 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. Among this year’s new participants are the High Museum in Atlanta, Georgia, The Thinkery children’s museum in Austin, Texas, the Audubon Broadmoor Wildlife Sanctuary in Natick, Massachusetts, and Henricus Historical Park in Chester, Virginia.

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 2,000 museums across America. The program runs from Memorial Day, May 26, 2014 through Labor Day, September 1, 2014.

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- 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/national/blue-star-museums.

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

Museums that wish to participate in Blue Star Museums may contact 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 the NEA/Walter Reed Healing Arts Partnership; Great American Voices Military Base Tour; and Shakespeare in American Communities Military Base Tour.

About the Palo Alto Junior Museum & Zoo

The Palo Alto Junior Museum & Zoo is a place where children and their caregivers come to explore, discover, create and play. The zoo is home to more than 50 species of animals – about 200 specimens in all – many of which are brought into classrooms as part of the museum and zoo's outreach program with local schools. We offer science programs for schools and community groups, as well as classes, summer camps and birthday parties. For more information, please visit www.cityofpaloalto.org/jmz.

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, connection 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 Corps, Blue Star Careers and Operation Appreciation. Blue Star Families also works directly with the Department of the 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 www.bluestarfam.org. Join us on Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest.

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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