



Media Contact:

Kimberly Ketcham, Marketing & Communications Director, 253-789-5902, kimberly.ketcham@wshm.wa.gov



Media Contact:

Hillary Ryan, Communications Manager, 253.284.4732, hryan@museumofglass.org



Media Contact:

Lisa Terry, PR and Communications Manager, 253-272-4258 x 3047, LTerry@TacomaArtMuseum.org

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**Tacoma Museum District Honors Active Duty Military
With Blue Star Museum Program**

The Tacoma Museum District joins more than 1,800 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

[Tacoma, Wash. – May 21, 2013] The Tacoma Museum District will again offer free admission to active duty military personnel and their families from Memorial Day (May 27) through Labor Day (September 2) as part of the Blue Star Museum Program. Visit Washington State History Museum, Museum of Glass, and Tacoma Art Museum to experience the rich culture in our area. Leadership support for the Blue Star Museums program is provided by MetLife Foundation through Blue Star Families. The complete list of participating museums is available at www.arts.gov/bluestarmuseums.

"We are proud to support our service men and women by giving them and their families free access to history and the arts in Tacoma," explains Kim Ketcham, Marketing & Communications Director for the Washington State History Museum. "It's an honor."

"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."

“Blue Star Museums is something that service members and their families look forward to every year and we are thrilled with the continued growth of the program,” said Blue Star Families CEO Kathy Roth-Douquet. “Through this distinctive collaboration between Blue Star Families, the National Endowment for the Arts and more than 1,800 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.”

This year, more than 1,800 (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 450 new museums this year. Museums are welcome to join Blue Star Museums throughout the summer. The effort to recruit museums has involved partnerships with the American Association of Museums, the Association of 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 75 children’s museums. Among this year’s new participants are the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, California, Grand Traverse Lighthouse Museum in Northport, Michigan, the Totem Heritage Center in Ketchikan, Alaska, and the World Museum of Mining in Butte, Montana.

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 **any** bearer of a Geneva Convention common access card (CAC), a DD Form 1173 ID card, 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. Please see the chart of the acceptable IDs (PDF). 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. 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, 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.

Washington State History Museum

The Washington State History Museum is where fascination and FUN come together! People of all ages can explore and be entertained in an environment where characters from Washington's past speak about their lives. Through interactive exhibits, theatrical storytelling, high-tech displays, and dramatic artifacts, learn about our state's unique people and places, as well as their impact on the country and the world.

Currently on display is *Let's Ride! Motorcycling in the Northwest*, with more than two dozen vintage and historic bikes available to enjoy. Come to one of our Rally Days or join our Poker Run on June 1, benefitting WSHM. Enjoy contemporary Native American art at our In the Spirit exhibit opening June 8, and at our market and festival on August 17. Also in August, the museum premieres the *Cooper* exhibit focusing on the legendary unsolved skyjacking by D.B. Cooper and its effects on aviation security. Admission is always free to members, and is free for active duty military and their families from Memorial Day through Labor Day 2013. Otherwise, admission prices are \$9.50 for general admission, \$7 for students and seniors. Summer hours are Tuesday-Sunday, 10am-5pm. 1-888-BE-THERE or WashingtonHistory.org.

Museum of Glass

Starting May 17, Museum of Glass is celebrating the deep connection between Australian and local glass artists in *Links: Australian Glass and the Pacific Northwest*. This is the first American museum exhibition dedicated to the wide spectrum of Australian studio glass and the connection between artists and institutions in Australia and the Pacific Northwest.

Over the summer, Museum of Glass will also be presenting the Visiting Artist Summer Series. Each week a different artist will be featured for a five-day artist residency each week through Labor Day weekend. Each summer, the

Museum invites emerging, established, and internationally-renowned artists to the Hot Shop to experiment, innovate and create with molten glass. The artists work with the Museum's Hot Shop Team, exploring and demonstrating various glassmaking techniques and styles. Some of these artists use glass as their primary medium while others look to the Hot Shop Team for the technical expertise to translate their designs into glass. Included with each residency is a *Conversation with the Artist*, a public lecture and slide presentation, at 4 p.m. on Sundays.

Tacoma Art Museum

This summer, there is something for everyone at Tacoma Art Museum. Through July 7, see the "ArtArt" of internationally-known artist, author, and illustrator Eric Carle in *Beyond Books: The Independent Art of Eric Carle*. Get a taste of Northwest artist through the eyes of local collectors in *Creating the New Northwest: Selections from the Herb and Lucy Pruzan Collection*, opening June 15. Explore colorful, rarely-seen works in *Austere Beauty: The Watercolors of Z. Vanessa Helder*, opening July 27. Take a closer look at what it means to have your portrait made in *Sitting for History: Exploring Self-Identity through Portraiture*, opening July 27. And don't miss the premier collection of Dale Chihuly's extraordinary glass art on public long-term display in *Chihuly: Gifts from the Artist*.

Bring the family and create art together in the Open Art Studio, have lunch in the cafe, and find a unique memento in the Museum Store. Admission is always free to members, and is free for active duty military and their families from Memorial Day through Labor Day 2013. Otherwise, admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for students and seniors (65+), and free for children age 5 and under. We also have a family admission ticket for \$25 that admits two adults and up to four children under 18 years old. For more information, visit www.TacomaArtMuseum.org or call 253-272-4258.

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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