

Nassau County Museum of Art Awarded Prestigious Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services

Roslyn Harbor, NY - Thanks to a grant from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), Nassau County Museum of Art (NCMA) will partner with Queensborough Community College's (QCC's) Literacy Program, to develop CALTA (Culture and Literacy through Art), an innovative, multi-generational visual literacy program that uses visual art as a catalyst for literacy and critical thinking in adult English Language Learners (ELLs) and their families. CALTA is a pioneering visual literacy initiative which integrates museum and literacy resources to build verbal and written literacy skills for English as a Second Language (ESL) adult students and their families. This planning phase will include a survey to determine national need and identify similar efforts, the development of a curriculum and the establishment of a professional development institute for docents, museum educators and adult ESL educators. NCMA sees tremendous potential in adapting this model across diverse cultural organizations and educational institutions nation-wide.

“Projects funded by IMLS’s National Leadership Grants focus on education, health, computer literacy, and problem solving skills. We believe that museums and libraries play an important role in building a competitive workforce and engaged citizenry. We are equally confident that these institutions will elevate museum and library practice through this work,” said **Anne-Imelda Radice, IMLS Director**.

“It is a pleasure to announce that the Nassau County Museum of Art is leading the way with this truly special educational partnership,” said **NCMA Acting Director, Constance Schwartz**, “The Museum’s world class exhibitions and collections are central to the program. Reflecting the needs of the changing demographics of the population in the communities of Long Island, Queens and beyond, this program will create a dynamic focus for immigrant families seeking to integrate into the mainstream of society.”

NCMA’s award is among the 21 museums receiving a total of \$5,884,929 in 2009 National Leadership Grants. These grants advance the ability of museums and libraries to preserve culture, heritage, and knowledge while enhancing learning. The projects selected for funding were identified by reviewers as examples of those that would have a national impact in the museum field and serve as models to museums across the nation.

NCMA and The QCC Literacy Program, which have a long-standing partnership, share the common objective of being educational and cultural points of connection for families. NCMA has worked for several years with Long Island elementary schools to deliver *Museum PALS (Pairing Art and Literacy in Schools)*, a visual, verbal and written literacy program. This planning grant facilitates the development of *CALTA (Culture and Literacy through Art)*, an extension of this *PALS* model that will serve adult ELLs and their families.

“Together, we will open new doors for adults and children of all ages, expanding and enhancing the depth and breadth of their English language skills, critical thinking abilities, and cultural knowledge,” notes **Kitty Bateman, Associate Professor, Basic Educational Skills, and Director, QCC Literacy Program, Continuing Education**, which has provided free English language instruction to ELLs for more than 20 years.

Patricia Lannes, NCMA Director of Education was quoted as saying, “We are honored that IMLS shares our interest in making the museum experience accessible and meaningful to adult immigrants and their families, and ELL communities. This program provides the opportunity for museums to illustrate the value of art in its own right, while imparting visual, verbal and written literacy skills. This planning grant will allow us to further develop our model collaborations between educational institutions and museums, positively impacting the communities they serve, building social and cultural capital, and advancing civic dialogue for all.”

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation’s 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. The Institute's mission is to create strong libraries and museums that connect people to information and ideas. The Institute works at the national level and in coordination with state and local organizations to sustain heritage, culture, and knowledge; enhance learning and innovation; and support professional development. To learn more about the Institute, please visit www.ims.gov.

