

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 9, 2005

Event: Hill-Stead Museum Receives IMLS Grant
Place: Hill-Stead Museum, 35 Mountain Road, Farmington, CT 06032
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HILL-STEAD MUSEUM RECEIVES MUSEUMS FOR AMERICA GRANT

\$143,520 in Funding Will Support New Interpretative Programs

Hill-Stead Museum, Farmington, CT was recently awarded a \$143,520 **Museums for America** grant from the Institute of Museum and library Sciences (IMLS), the largest federal grant program for museums in the country. The IMLS is an independent grant-making agency dedicated to creating and sustaining a nation of learners by helping libraries and museums serve their communities.

Hill-Stead successfully competed among 543 applicants to receive one of 169 awards for sustaining cultural heritage, supporting lifelong learners, and serving as a center for community engagement. The grant will allow the museum to develop its historic gardens and landscape, and expand related interpretative programs and materials. The funding also advances key institutional goals of preserving character-defining landscape features, interpreting landscape design, and teaching valuable lessons about the historical and ecological evolution of the New England landscape. IMLS grant reviewers described Hill-Stead's proposal as "ambitious" and "a major advance with enduring impact." They

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lauded the museum for increasing the physical and intellectual accessibility of its grounds. Cynthia Cormier, Director of Education and Curatorial Services, calls the award “an exciting resource for serving the general public, as well as educators, students, youth groups, naturalists and hiking and garden clubs.” She adds, “We will expand our menu of outdoor activities, fresh air opportunities for urban youth and heritage programs.” Beginning in September 2005 and spanning 26 months, the project includes hiring contractors with expertise in historic gardens landscape and ecology. These experts will reach out to schools and adult learners with new programmatic offerings—for example, guided bird and ecology walks.

A National Historic Landmark, Hill-Stead Museum in Farmington is noted for its 1901 33,000-square-foot house filled with art and antiques. Pioneering female architect Theodate Pope designed the Colonial Revival-style house, set on 152 hilltop acres, to showcase the Impressionist masterpieces amassed by her father, Cleveland iron industrialist Alfred A. Pope. Collections include original furnishings, paintings by Monet, Degas, Manet, Whistler and Cassatt, as well as numerous works on paper and Japanese woodblock prints. Stately trees, seasonal gardens, over three miles of stonewalls and woodland trails for walks or cross-country skiing accent the grounds. A centerpiece of the property is the c. 1920 sunken garden designed by Beatrix Jones Farrand, and today the site of poetry and music performances. The house is open year-round for tours Tuesday through Sunday, 11 am – 4 pm, November - April, and 10 am – 5 pm, May - October. For tour information and driving directions, call 860.677.4787.

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