



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 27, 2012

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**Theatre Communications Group Announces Launch of
Blue Star Theatres Program for Military Families:
Senator Jack Reed and NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman to Lead
Announcement Event**

New York, NY – Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for theatre, is pleased to announce the launch of the **Blue Star Theatres** program. In partnership with Blue Star Families and with support from MetLife Foundation, the Blue Star Theatres program will connect a variety of theatre offerings to military personnel and their families across the United States. This initiative recognizes the profound contributions of service families and seeks to build stronger connections between theatres, military families and their communities.

On Friday, September 28, a press conference will be held from 1:45–2:15pm at Trinity Repertory Company in Providence, RI, to launch the Blue Star Theatres program. This event will feature **Teresa Eyring**, executive director, TCG; **Michael Gennaro**, executive director, Trinity Repertory Company; **Rocco Landesman**, chairman, National Endowment for the Arts; The Adjutant General of Rhode Island, **Major General Kevin McBride**; **Senator Jack Reed** (D-RI); **Mark Smith**, executive director, Blue Star Families; **Dennis White**, president and CEO, MetLife Foundation; and **Michelle Faulkner**, Surface Warfare Officers School Command (SWOS) Ombudsman, Naval Station Newport.

Blue Star Theatres will build on the work already occurring at many theatres nationwide, including: playwriting classes to empower creative expression for veterans; community discussions on plays whose themes resonate with military families; free or discounted ticket programs; job postings and casting notices on military bases; and much more. TCG and Blue Star Families will connect theatres with local bases, and develop and disseminate best-practices for engaging with deployed personnel, veterans and service families.

“Theatre has the power to deepen communal connection and inspire creative expression,” said **Teresa Eyring**, executive director, TCG. “It can provide an invaluable means of integrating military families into our communities, while helping us process the consequences of these long years of war.”

“Thanks to the generous support of the MetLife Foundation, and the contributions of TCG and theatres across the country, military families will now have another way to enjoy time together through the arts in their communities,” said Blue Star Families executive director, **Mark Smith**. “TCG and participating theatres have gone above and beyond to offer interactive experiences for service members and their families, creating truly enriching opportunities.”

“MetLife Foundation is proud to expand our partnership with Blue Star Families and support the launch of the Blue Star Theatres program,” said **Dennis White**, president and CEO, MetLife Foundation. “Opening doors to theatres across the country is a wonderful way for members of our military and their families to share time together and experience the arts in their communities. The Blue Star Theatres program is also a way for MetLife Foundation to say ‘thank you’ to our servicemen and women.”

“Three years ago, the National Endowments for the Arts partnered with Blue Star Families to launch Blue Star Museums,” said **NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman**. “We are thrilled that TCG and the theatre

community have also been inspired to work with Blue Star Families in order to answer the First Lady and Dr. Biden's call to help give our service members and their families the opportunities and support they have earned."

"I salute the NEA, Blue Star Families, TCG and participating theatres around the country for putting military families center stage and spearheading this new program," said **Senator Jack Reed**, a former Army Ranger and Chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, which oversees federal funding for the arts. "Building off the success of the Blue Star Museums program, this initiative will help provide valuable educational and cultural opportunities for our service members and their families. The Blue Star Theatres program is a natural extension of the Obama Administration's Joining Forces program, which focuses on helping military families with initiatives like hiring more military spouses and enhancing academic opportunities for students in military families. These types of programs remind our troops and their families how much we value and appreciate their service to our nation."

Twenty-two TCG Member Theatres have already signed on to participate in Blue Star Theatres, including: Actors Theatre of Louisville (KY), American Conservatory Theater (CA), American Repertory Theater (MA), Artists Repertory Theatre (OR), Burning Coal Theatre Company (NC), California Shakespeare Theater (CA), Childsplay (AZ), Dallas Theater Center (TX), Florida Studio Theatre (FL), Folger Theatre (DC), Gamm Theatre (RI), Geffen Playhouse (CA), Hartford Stage (CT), HERE Arts Center (NY), La Jolla Playhouse (CA), McCarter Theatre Center (NJ), Portland Center Stage (OR), Seattle Repertory Theatre (WA), Signature Theatre (VA), Trinity Repertory Company (RI), William Inge Center for the Arts (KS) and The Wilma Theater (PA).

For more information about Blue Star Theatres, visit: <http://www.tcg.org/advocacy/bluestar/map.cfm>.

Blue Star Families is a non-partisan, non-profit organization, created by real military families. We are committed to *supporting* one another through the unique challenges of military service and asking the larger civilian population to help as well, *connecting* military families regardless of rank, branch of service or physical location, and *empowering* military family members to create the best personal and family life possible for themselves. For more information, visit <http://www.bluestarfam.org/>.

MetLife Foundation was established in 1976 to continue MetLife's longstanding tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. The Foundation's commitment to building a secure future for individuals and communities worldwide is reflected in its dedication to empowering older adults, preparing young people and building livable communities. Since it was established, MetLife Foundation has provided more than \$530 million in grants and \$70 million in program-related investments to nonprofit organizations addressing issues that have a positive impact in their communities. For more information, visit www.metlife.org.

For over 50 years, **Theatre Communications Group** (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre, has existed to strengthen, nurture and promote the professional not-for-profit American theatre. TCG's constituency has grown from a handful of groundbreaking theatres to nearly 700 member theatres and affiliate organizations and more than 12,000 individuals nationwide. TCG offers its members networking and knowledge-building opportunities through conferences, events, research and communications; awards grants, approximately \$2 million per year, to theatre companies and individual artists; advocates on the federal level; and serves as the U.S. Center of the International Theatre Institute, connecting its constituents to the global theatre community. TCG is North America's largest independent publisher of dramatic literature, with 11 Pulitzer Prizes for Best Play on the TCG booklist. It also publishes the award-winning AMERICAN THEATRE magazine and ARTSEARCH®, the essential source for a career in the arts. In all of its endeavors, TCG seeks to increase the organizational efficiency of its member theatres, cultivate and celebrate the artistic talent and achievements of the field and promote a larger public understanding of, and appreciation for, the theatre. For more information, visit www.tcg.org.

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