



April 2006

### **Wallace Foundation Awards \$2 Million Challenge Grant to the Brooklyn Museum Innovative Free Community Programming**

Brooklyn, NY, April 10, 2006—The Brooklyn Museum has been awarded a \$2 million Excellence Award from the New York-based Wallace Foundation. This award, to be matched with \$2 million in additional funds to be raised by the Museum over the next four years, will be used to create a restricted endowment to support innovative and free community programming. Submissions for the 2005 grants, which range from \$200,000 to \$2 million, were by invitation only.

The funds will be used to support the Museum's extremely popular *First Saturdays* programming, a monthly free evening of art, education, and entertainment, and to develop other community-focused events.

"We are immensely grateful to The Wallace Foundation for this generous award that recognizes and supports the Museum's major commitment to innovative programming for our diverse audiences, and specifically to continue to present *First Saturdays* and to create new community-focused initiatives. *First Saturdays* as well as other engaging and non-traditional programs at the Brooklyn Museum, reinforce our community-based orientation and our ability to attract visitors of all ages, races, and economic means," stated Dr. Arnold Lehman. "This is what museums in 21<sup>st</sup>-century America should be committed to."

"The goal of The Wallace Foundation Excellence Awards is to encourage organizations to sustain and expand the impact of their work with local constituencies and to draw national attention to the importance of participation building to the health and growth of the arts field," said Christine DeVita, President of The Wallace Foundation. "The Excellence Awards honor organizations that have made a commitment to engage people more deeply in the arts part of their organization's DNA. The Awards are an important part of our efforts to develop and share effective ideas and practices for enhancing arts participation and bring the transformational benefits of the arts to all."

Under the leadership of Dr. Lehman, Director since 1997, the Brooklyn Museum has been committed to increasing the diversity of its audience to reflect the population of Brooklyn, and to actively engage both traditional and non-traditional visitors. The centerpiece of these efforts is the eponymous *First Saturdays* program, currently sponsored by Target and the New York Community Trust, which takes place each month except September. The Museum remains open until 11 p.m., and beginning at 5 p.m. admission is free. A full range of public programs are presented during each *First Saturday*, among them film, art-making, gallery talks, lectures, dance lessons, and a dance party to live music or a deejay. All galleries are open and many of the evening's activities take place in them. Launched in October 1998, this tremendously successful event has attracted almost 75,000 visitors during the past year.

## **Brooklyn Museum**

200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11238-6052  
T (718) 638-5000 F (718) 501-6134  
[www.brooklynmuseum.org](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org)

The revitalization of the Museum during Dr. Lehman's tenure has doubled the number of visitors overall; over 40% of all visitors are now people of color; and the average age of visitors has decreased from 57 to 40.

Seventeen other innovative institutions across the United States have also received Excellence Award Grants from The Wallace Foundation, among them the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Jazz at Lincoln Center, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and the San Francisco Symphony.

The mission of The Wallace Foundation, one of the largest foundations in the United States, is to enable institutions to expand learning and enrichment opportunities for all people, in part through expanding participation in arts and culture. Through The Wallace Foundation Excellence Awards, arts organizations and community-based cultural centers are encouraged to develop new practices that expand participation in the arts to make them an essential resource for individual learning, personal enrichment, civil engagement, and community health. The Wallace Foundation Excellence Awards were created to recognize those leading organizations that are effectively building participation in the arts with imaginative efforts to broaden, deepen, or diversify their audiences.

The Wallace Foundation is an independent national foundation dedicated to supporting and sharing effective ideas and practices that expand learning and enrichment opportunities for all people. Its three current objectives are strengthening educational leadership to improve student achievement, enhancing out-of-school learning opportunities, and expanding participation in arts and culture. More information and research on these and other related topics can be found at The Wallace Foundation Knowledge Center at [www.wallacefoundation.org](http://www.wallacefoundation.org) or by calling (212)-251-9783.

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Contact: Sally Williams, Public Information Officer (718) 501-6330, [sally.williams@brooklynmuseum.org](mailto:sally.williams@brooklynmuseum.org)

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Admission:**

Contribution \$8; students with valid I.D. and older adults \$4. Free to Members and children under 12 accompanied by an adult. Group tours or visits must be arranged in advance by calling extension 234.

### **Directions:**

Subway: Seventh Avenue express (2 or 3) to Eastern Parkway/Brooklyn Museum stop; Lexington Avenue express (4 or 5) to Nevins Street, cross platform and transfer to the 2 or 3. Bus: B71, B41, B69, B48. On-site parking available.

### **Museum Hours:**

Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; First Saturday of each month, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.; all other Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.