THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART ANNOUNCES NATIONAL EXPANSION OF OUTREACH PROGRAM FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE

Program funded by MetLife Foundation Brings Training to Museum Educators and Healthcare Professionals Across the Country

New York, October 17, 2007—The Museum of Modern Art announces a nationwide expansion of its outreach program for individuals living with Alzheimer’s disease. This new initiative, The MoMA Alzheimer’s Project: Making Art Accessible to People with Dementia, builds on the success of the Museum’s Meet Me at MoMA program, which brings people with Alzheimer’s and other dementia, along with their caregivers, to the Museum for interactive tours of masterworks from the collection. The nationwide expansion is funded through a two-year, $450,000 grant from MetLife Foundation.

The MoMA Alzheimer’s Project will broaden the reach of Meet Me at MoMA through the development of program models that can be adapted by other museums, assisted living facilities, nursing homes, and Alzheimer’s Association chapters across the country.

"We have seen through the Museum’s Meet Me at MoMA program how visual art offers people who have Alzheimer’s or other dementia an entry for communication and an opportunity for engagement, not only with art, but with their caregivers, loved ones, and society at large,” said Francesca Rosenberg, Director of Community and Access Programs at MoMA. "This generous grant will enable us to share what we’ve learned and help others across the country to develop similar programming to enhance the lives of those in their community."

"Programs such as Meet Me at MoMA are important, because they offer people with Alzheimer’s and their caregivers opportunities for mental and social stimulation through art,” said Sibyl Jacobson, president, MetLife Foundation. "We are pleased to support MoMA’s innovative program and help to expand it nationally."

Meet Me at MoMA was launched in 2006 as a way to encourage expression and enjoyment for individuals in the early to middle stages of Alzheimer’s disease. Trained educators engage participants in lively dialogue by focusing in depth on icons from MoMA’s collection, including works by modern masters such as Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock, and Andy Warhol. More than 1,500 individuals living with Alzheimer’s and other dementias have participated in the program, which is held monthly and offered free of charge.

The MoMA Alzheimer’s Project will utilize the expertise developed by MoMA educators to produce a training manual designed to equip caregivers and museum professionals nationwide with methods for making art accessible to people living with early and middle-stage Alzheimer’s; to develop a web-based resource to provide tips on teaching methodology and techniques for best practices; and to conduct in-person training sessions at Alzheimer’s Association chapters and
museums across the country to emphasize practical approaches for enhancing participants’ lives with art. MoMA educators will also participate in national conferences focusing on art and healthcare.

MetLife Foundation’s grant will also enable MoMA to work with New York University’s School of Medicine to conduct a study to measure how programs such as Meet Me at MoMA positively impact people with early-stage Alzheimer’s, as well as their caregivers. The study will assess the importance of arts programs in healthcare and will be used to design future programs and outreach. According to the Alzheimer’s Association, more than 5 million Americans are currently living with Alzheimer’s disease.

PUBLIC INFORMATION
For further information about The MoMA Alzheimer’s Project or Meet Me at MoMA, the public may call The Museum of Modern Art, Department of Education, at 212-408-6347, or visit www.moma.org/alzheimersproject.

MoMA AND ALZHEIMER’S
Making Art Accessible to People with Alzheimer’s is a nationwide initiative that builds on the success of MoMA’s long history of serving people with disabilities and special needs. As the Museum is committed to enabling all visitors to experience its unparalleled collection of modern and contemporary art, MoMA offers a variety of Access Programs that annually serve over 10,000 individuals with physical, developmental, emotional or learning disabilities, and those who are blind, partially sighted, deaf or hard of hearing, as well as senior citizens.

From 2003-2006, MoMA, along with staff from Artists for Alzheimer’s, a project sponsored by the Hearthstone Alzheimer’s Family Foundation, began focused interviews with people with Alzheimer’s, and pilot programs with groups from Hearthstone. After this initial phase, MoMA independently expanded and deepened its research and program development. This included workshops for lecturers focusing on gallery teaching strategies and best practice, artwork selection, and audience appropriate activities. Educators also receive bi-annual training from professionals from the New York City Alzheimer’s Association and Mount Sinai School of Medicine. In January 2006, MoMA launched “Meet Me at MoMA” programs for individuals with Alzheimer’s and their family members or care partners as well as groups from support networks and assisted living facilities.

MoMA educators have learned that the act of looking at art can be a rich and satisfying experience for people without full access to their memory, thus providing relaxation and pleasure for those who live with Alzheimer’s and their caregivers. Studies show that Alzheimer’s disease has a major impact on those who help care for an affected individual.

METLIFE FOUNDATION
MetLife Foundation was established in 1976 by MetLife to carry on its longstanding tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. Grants are made to support health, educational, civic and cultural organizations and programs throughout the United States. The Foundation contributes to arts and cultural organizations with an emphasis on reaching broad audiences through inclusive programming and making arts more accessible for all people. Since 1986, the Foundation has supported research on Alzheimer’s disease through its Awards for Medical Research program and has contributed more than $10 million to efforts to find a cure. More information about the Foundation is available at www.metlife.org.
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