



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Blue Star Theatres Program for Military Families
Reaches 57 Participating Theatres:
League of Resident Theatre's President Tim Shields to Lead Announcement Event**

New York, NY – Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for theatre, is pleased to announce that 57 theatres have now joined 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, October 19, a press conference will be held from 2:30-3:00pm (MT) at the Ricketson Theatre at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts (Denver, CO) as part of the League of Resident Theatre's (LORT) annual conference. This event will feature **Teresa Eyring**, executive director, TCG; **Colonel Loren "Skip" Johnson**, commander, 140th Mission Support Group, Buckley Air Force Base, Greely Air National Guard Station (Aurora, CO); **Sheri Lapan**, senior director, Blue Star Families; **Tim Shields**, president, LORT; and **Kent Thompson**, producing artistic director, Denver Center Theatre Company.

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.

"We're grateful that so many LORT and TCG Member Theatres have stepped up to give back to our service members and their families," said **Teresa Eyring**, executive director, TCG. "Theatre can provide an invaluable means of integrating military families into our communities while helping us process the consequences of these long years of war."

"I'm honored to represent the 39 LORT theatres that have signed on to participate in the Blue Star Theatre program," said **Tim Shields**, president of LORT and managing director of the McCarter Theatre Center in Princeton, NJ. "Theatre remains a place in our communities where all can gather to have a common experience; to participate in an art form that through the stories it tells provides such deeply felt emotion and entertainment. At the McCarter Theatre Center, we look forward to welcoming service members and their families so that they'll be able to have those experiences and join in that community. When we each give back to those who have given us so much, we strengthen our own organizations and communities."

"Thanks to the generous support of the MetLife Foundation, and the contributions of TCG and theatres across the county, 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.”

Fifty-seven TCG Member Theatres have already signed on to participate in Blue Star Theatres, including: 2nd Story (RI), Actors Theatre of Louisville (KY), Alliance Theatre (GA), American Conservatory Theater (CA), American Repertory Theater (MA), Arena Stage (D.C.), Arkansas Repertory Theatre (AR), Artists Repertory Theatre (OR), The Arvada Center (CO), Asolo Repertory (FL), Barter Theatre (VA), Berkeley Repertory Theatre (CA), Burning Coal Theatre Company (NC), California Shakespeare Theater (CA), Center Theatre Group (CA), Childsplay (AZ), Cincinnati Playhouse (OH), Cleveland Play House (OH), Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center (CO), Coterie Theatre (MO), Court Theatre (IL), Creede Repertory Theatre, (CO), Curious Theatre (CO), Dallas Theater Center (TX), Denver Center Theatre Company (CO), Florida Studio Theatre (FL), Folger Theatre (D.C.), Ford’s Theatre (D.C.), Gamm Theatre (RI), Geffen Playhouse (CA), Geva Theatre Center (NY), Goodman Theatre (IL), Hartford Stage (CT), HERE Arts Center (NY), Kansas City Repertory Theatre (MO), La Jolla Playhouse (CA), Lincoln Center Theater (NY), McCarter Theatre Center (NJ), The Old Globe (CA), Penobscot Theatre Company (ME), People’s Light and Theatre (PA), Pittsburgh Public Theater (PA), PlayMakers Repertory Company (NC), Portland Center Stage (OR), Seattle Repertory Theatre (WA), Signature Theatre (VA), South Coast Repertory (CA), Stages Theatre Company (MN), Syracuse Stage (NY), THEATREWORKS (CO), Theatre Aspen (CO), Trinity Repertory Company (RI), Two River Theater Company (NJ), Virginia Stage Company (VA), William Inge Center for the Arts (KS), Wilma Theater (PA) and Yale Repertory (CT).

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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