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**NOMA and Poydras Home Partner for Aging Art Enrichment Pilot Program:
Artful Minds at NOMA, Guided Museum Tours for Individuals with Dementia**

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New Orleans, LA – (May 22, 2015) – The New Orleans Museum of Art (NOMA) will partner with Poydras Home to launch an art exploration pilot program specially designed to benefit people with Alzheimer's and other dementias. For the first time in New Orleans, this type of program, which has been successfully implemented at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, will train NOMA staff to optimally serve those with memory support needs and their caregivers through exposure to positive art experiences. Ten residents of Poydras Home, along with key Poydras Home staff and family caregivers, will experience NOMA's collections with specially trained museum docents and staff for a series of 6 visits over a period of 3 months beginning June 1 and lasting through August 18, 2015 in the Artful Minds Pilot Program.

Arts & Minds is the consulting organization for Artful Minds at NOMA and will provide the training to museum docents and staff. Arts & Minds is a non-profit organization committed to improving quality of life for people living with Alzheimer's disease and dementia through meaningful art-centered activities that create positive cognitive experiences, enhance communication, and reduce isolation. Participants and their caregivers are empowered to strengthen social, emotional and spiritual bonds by engaging with art. This growing international movement of arts in health seeks to increase stimulation of cognitive function to support retained capabilities including visual and spatial perception, verbal and non-verbal expression, attention, humor, social connections and self-esteem.

At the point of completion, the pilot program will be evaluated by all partners with hopes of extending it to qualifying members of the public.

"We wanted to bring this program to New Orleans as part of fulfilling NOMA's mission of providing innovative experiences for all of our audiences," said Deputy Director for Interpretation and Audience Engagement, Allison Reid. "We are grateful to our partners at Poydras Home for piloting this program with us, so we can create a program that fosters communication and connections through visual art for those living with Alzheimer's and dementia."

"Poydras Home's long history of mission-driven dedication to provide expert level memory support to all residents affected by Alzheimer's and other dementias make us ideal candidates to populate this innovative pilot program with NOMA. We are proud participants in this art enrichment effort that can broaden the depth of positive life experience for our residents," says Poydras Home CEO Jay Rive.



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“Combining the concept of art and the mind is a pioneering initiative taking place in this part of the country, and is far-reaching in its implications because art is a commanding medium for stimulating connections and function within the brains of patients with Alzheimer’s disease,” said Dr. Nicholas Bazan, Professor and Director, Neuroscience Center of Excellence, LSU Health New Orleans. “This disease is one of our society’s foremost contemporary challenges, particularly in regards to the specifics of disease development, which still remain elusive. Art, in all its forms, is an important element for activating circuitry in the brain and ultimately can be a helpful instrument for restoring function and slowing down the progression of this disease.”

The inspiration for Artful Minds grew out of the childhood friendship of New Orleans natives Tripp Friedler and Sassy Kohlmeyer, both firsthand witnesses to the effects of Alzheimer’s and dementia in their own family members. Sassy Kohlmeyer, art educator at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, collaborated with Carolyn Halpin-Healy, co-founder with Dr. James M. Nobel of Arts & Minds, to extend the expertise of this impactful program to her hometown with the help of Tripp Friedler. It is their hope that the program takes root at NOMA and will bring the joy of art to the visiting community of Poydras Home in this initial effort.

“Having lived with the devastating effects of dementia on both our parents and their caregivers we wanted to create a program that would help both parties,” explains Tripp Friedler. “Artful Minds is a small step in bettering the lives of participants and their caregivers. We believe in the power of art as a non-pharmacological intervention that includes cognitively and emotionally stimulating activities. Art programs such as this can forge positive emotional connections with art and one another.”

Artful Minds at NOMA is sponsored by Tripp Friedler, Boysie Bollinger, Hermie Kohlmeyer, Merritt Lane and other donors.

About New Orleans Museum of Art and the Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden:

The New Orleans Museum of Art, founded in 1910 by Isaac Delgado, houses nearly 40,000 objects encompassing 4,000 years of world art. Works from the permanent collection, along with continuously changing special exhibitions, are on view in the museum’s 46 galleries Fridays from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Saturdays and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. The adjacent Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden features work by over 60 artists, including several of the 20th century’s master sculptors. The Sculpture Garden is open seven days a week: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. The New Orleans Museum of Art and the Besthoff Sculpture Garden are fully accessible to handicapped visitors and wheelchairs are available from the front desk. For more information about NOMA, call (504) 658-4100 or visit www.noma.org.

Founded in 1817, the Poydras Home works to respect and preserve the dignity of the human spirit among the elderly by continuing the legacy of care through quality supportive services for the elderly, promoting understanding for their particular needs and advocating on their behalf. Poydras Home is located in the heart of Uptown at 5354 Magazine Street. Visit www.poydrashome.com or call 504-897-0535 for more information.

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