



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 12, 2011

Contact: Barbara Milligan, Executive Director, 508-495-1878 or director@highfieldhall.org

Highfield Hall awarded federal grant for education programs

Historic Highfield, Inc. has been awarded a \$76,000 federal grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The grant, through the Museums for America program, will create a new educational initiative at Highfield Hall that will focus primarily on programming for children and families.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is a grant-making federal agency supporting museums and libraries across the United States. Historic Highfield applied for the grant under the category of Building Institutional Capacity with a goal to create programming excellence by providing staffing and an operational framework to support educational activities and grow the base of support for the organization. Specifically, the project, "Building Capacity through Programming Excellence" will bring best practices in educational programming to Highfield Hall so that programs are reflective of community need, based on clear strategic outcomes, and effectively measured against those outcomes. The funding will increase program resources by providing staffing, staff training, and an improved infrastructure for tracking and utilizing program information. The long-range goal of the project is to create curriculum-based educational programs and develop interactive website content.

Elizabeth Nevins, a museum education consultant from Malden, Massachusetts, will help guide the project and establish priorities. Nevins, who holds a Masters in Museum Education and Early Adolescent Education, has done work with Historic New England, the Old North Foundation, and the Connecticut Historical Society. Grant funds will also allow Historic Highfield to hire a part-time education coordinator who will help develop and present programs across the subject areas of art, history, culinary, gardens and nature.

"Our long-range vision for Highfield is really coming together," commented Barbara Milligan, Executive Director. "With the Sunken Garden completed, and now with our grant project being funded, we can truly begin to focus on the idea of establishing Highfield Hall as a learning laboratory for children and families." Milligan went on to explain that the project will begin by

establishing a baseline of existing programs serving the community so that the programs developed by Highfield will be unique, serve specific community needs, and not duplicate what other organizations might already be doing. Historic Highfield will be establishing an advisory committee to help envision and guide new programs. The committee will consist of local residents who have expertise in the areas of art, history, gardening, the natural environment, or education.

The IMLS received 281 applications requesting nearly \$54,000,000 in funds and made 160 awards totaling more than \$18,000,000. There were 15 grants awarded in Massachusetts which included the Museum of Science, the Institute of Contemporary Art, The Peabody Museum at Harvard, and the Massachusetts Historical Society. This is the second IMLS, Museums for America grant to be awarded to Historic Highfield. The first, in 2008, funded the installation of a permanent exhibition, *The Highfield Story*, which is used to share the dramatic history of Highfield with the nearly 20,000 people who visit the Hall each year.

Highfield Hall is the heart of Falmouth's cultural and community life, an engaging historic property where the public can participate in year-round programs and events in the arts, music, cooking, science and nature. Highfield Hall is operated by Historic Highfield, Inc., a nonprofit organization founded in 1994 to save, restore, and operate the 1878 mansion, located at 56 Highfield Drive, off Depot Avenue, in Falmouth. Directions and information about programs and private rentals can be found at www.highfieldhall.org or by calling (508) 495-1878.

-end-