

# NEW WINTERTHUR PROGRAM AIMS TO HELP PEOPLE WITH ALZHEIMER'S

## *"Historical Journeys" Relates Items to Participants' Everyday Lives*

**WINTERTHUR, DELAWARE**—"Historical Journeys," a new, free program at Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library, relates the everyday lives of people in the early stages of dementia to Winterthur's themes.

"It's all about helping visitors reflect a little in a comfortable environment where they can share about themselves," said Lois Stoehr, Associate Curator of Education.

No other local museum offers programming specifically for this audience, Stoehr said. Because June is Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month, Stoehr said this offers a timely opportunity to join the global conversation about the brain, Alzheimer's disease, and other dementias.

"Historical Journeys" was inspired by "Meet Me at MoMA," which began at Manhattan's Museum of Modern Art in 2006. MoMA worked with the MetLife Foundation to make guidelines available for other museums.

At Winterthur, the 90-minute program debuts July 14 with "The du Pont Family and Yours." Stoehr expects guides to include portraits, photos, physical objects and even garden elements (if the weather cooperates) to "show the way the du Ponts related to each other and relate that to the visitors' own experiences." Upcoming programs include:

- August 11: Apples and Baking.
- September 8: Marriage and Family.
- October 13: Textiles and Talents.
- November 10: Arts of the Pennsylvania Germans.
- December 8: Holidays with the du Ponts.

Stoehr read about MoMA's tours in the journal *Museums and Social Issues* and thought that they would be a natural fit for Winterthur, where the collection includes many objects similar to things people use in their own homes and can therefore inspire reflection on many aspects of life.

"The Winterthur audience tends to be older, and we want to continue meeting its needs as it ages," she said. "Good interpretation in a museum setting meets people where they are and uses objects to help them look introspectively and to relate to one another. We do interpretation well and take it seriously."

Last year, two students from a University of Delaware museum education course put together a preliminary template, and guides have been recruited to lead tours. These guides and staff from Winterthur's Public Programs department have been working with the representatives of the Alzheimer's

Association Early Stage Initiative to learn about Alzheimer's disease and best practices to work with people with dementia. The tours are intended for people in the early stages of dementia, capable of living on their own and fairly highly functioning, Stoehr said, although she hopes to eventually offer additional tours for individuals with more advanced symptoms and their caregivers.

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Rooms like the Chinese Parlor in Winterthur Museum will be among those included in the "Historical Journeys" program. Image Courtesy of Winterthur, by Gavin Ashworth.

### **MEDIA CONTACT**

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Winterthur—known worldwide for its preeminent collection of American decorative arts, naturalistic gardens, and research library for the study of American art and material culture—offers a variety of tours, exhibitions, programs, and activities throughout the year. General admission includes a tour of some of the most notable spaces in the 175-room house as well as access to the Winterthur Garden and Galleries, special exhibitions, a narrated tram tour (weather permitting), the Campbell Collection of Soup Tureens, and the Enchanted Woods children's garden. \$20 adults; \$18 for students and seniors; \$5 for ages 2–11.

### **Museum hours**

10:00 am- 5:00 pm, Tuesday- Sunday.

Winterthur, located on Route 52, six miles northwest of Wilmington, Delaware, and five miles south of U.S. Route 1, is closed on Mondays (except during Yuletide), Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day.

Winterthur is committed to accessible programming for all. For information, including special services, call 800.448.3883, 302.888.4600, or TTY 302.888.4907, or visit winterthur.org.



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The Delaware Valley Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association estimates that 284,000 people have been affected by dementia in the 18 counties it serves in Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Reservations for the Winterthur programs are required, preferably a week in advance, through the association at 800-272-3900. These programs are free for participants, with or without caregivers.

A 2008 study by MoMA and the New York University Center of Excellence for Brain Aging and Dementia of MoMA's monthly programs yielded several statistically significant findings that show improved mood for participants with Alzheimer's and caregivers.

For more information on Winterthur's "Historic Journeys," please contact Lois A. Stoehr, Associate Curator of Education, at 302.888.4645 or [Istoeh@winterthur.org](mailto:Istoeh@winterthur.org), or Kerry Brown, at the Alzheimer's Association, at 215.561.2919, ext. 307, or 800.272.3900 (24/7 Helpline), or [Kerry.brown@alz.org](mailto:Kerry.brown@alz.org)

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