

The Museum of Modern Art

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TO MUSEUM VISITORS:

As an experiment nine months ago The Museum of Modern Art opened its galleries to the public without charge on Mondays. The idea of eliminating our usual admission fee of \$1.75 so that more people could enjoy and use the Museum was energetically pushed by various segments of our audience -- artists, students, senior citizens -- and enthusiastically pursued by the Museum staff and Trustees. The need to provide free access to our galleries was fully borne out by the results: Monday attendance rose from an average of 1,500 to about 4,500 visitors a day.

However, we have lost essential income because of this experiment. We are aware that traditionally art museums and libraries have been free, although theater, opera, concerts, films, and most universities have generally charged admission. But, like all educational institutions, we are being squeezed by rising costs and lower income from our limited endowment. The Museum of Modern Art, which is not a City museum, relies largely on admission, membership dues, and contributions to cover its overall operating expenses. Our annual operating deficit has now reached \$1.3 million.

We have sought -- unsuccessfully -- to obtain a foundation or corporate grant so that we could continue our free day policy, or even extend it, as many of us would like to do. We estimate that one free day a week costs us about \$150,000 a year.

Rather than totally abandon a program which has proved to be important to thousands of people, we are now making a public appeal. The contributions of those who can pay something on Mondays will enable others who pay as little as a penny to enter the Museum.

Please pay what you can and as much as you can. Your contribution is tax-deductible. Our colleagues at the Metropolitan Museum have found this system part of the solution to the problem. We hope it will work here too.

Thank you for your support, and we hope you enjoy your visit.

John B. Hightower